

vessels employed in this expedition was lost, and another having been driven as far east as the Azores, proceeded to England, while Captain Argal alone got into the Chesapeake. The prisoners taken on this occasion narrowly escaped being executed as pirates!

This was the first warlike maritime expedition attempted by the American colonists, if a few parties sent in boats against the savages be excepted. The Dutch were not dispossessed by the useless attempt on their settlement, which appears to have been viewed more as a protest than a conquest, for they continued to increase and to govern themselves for near half a century longer. The first decked vessel built within the old United States, of which we have any account, was constructed by Schipper Adrian Blok, on the banks of the Hudson, and probably within the present limits of New York, during the summer of 1614. This vessel De Laet terms a "yacht," and describes as having been of the dimensions of thirty-eight feet keel, forty-four and a half feet on deck, and eleven feet beam. In this "yacht" Blok passed through Hell Gate, into the Sound, and steering eastward, he discovered a small island, which he named after himself; going as far as Cape Cod, by the Vineyard passage.

According to the same authority, the Dutch at New Amsterdam, who had constructed a fort, and reinforced their colony, soon after built many more small vessels, sloops and periaugas, opening a trade with the savages, by means of the numerous bays, sounds, and rivers of their territory.

It was also in 1614 that the celebrated Capt. John Smith arrived from England, and sailed on a coasting voyage, with the double purpose of trade and discovery. He went himself in a boat, having a crew of only eight men, and the profits, as well as the discoveries, abundantly rewarded the risks.

As early as in 1629 the New England Company employed five ships of respectable size, in the trade with the colony. Most of these vessels were armed, and all took colonists in their outward passages. A small ship was built at or near Boston, in 1633, which was one of the first vessels, if not the first vessel of any size constructed in New England. But the progress of the colony of Massachusetts Bay was so rapid, that in 1639 laws were passed to encourage the fisheries, which may be considered as the elementary school of American nautical enterprise. The first engagement that probably ever occurred between inhabitants of the American colonies, and ene-