

partial settlement along the St. Lawrence, which may be said to have been the precursors, although not the real commencement, of the French occupation of those regions.

What especially strikes us in reading the history of all these voyages, and in studying the maps to which they gave rise, is, that with the exception of one or two instances, about which opinion is much divided, such as the explorations of Verrazano in 1523-4 and the alleged voyage of Thevet in 1555-6, the communication with North and Central America seems to have followed with almost invariable persistency one or other of two well-marked routes, viz. : the Spanish route to the West Indies and the English route to Newfoundland. Between New York and Florida the coast seems hardly to have been known. The earliest maps, up to about 1520, leave its very existence in uncertainty, and for many years after the voyages of Verrazano in 1523-4, and Gomez in 1525, who were the first to traverse and describe the coast, the maps made no indication of the long stretch of coast-line between New York and Florida.

The state of European knowledge regarding the American continent was still very unsatisfactory, when in 1584 Richard Hakluyt wrote his famous Discourse on Western Planting, which has been published by the Maine Historical Society. In 1583 Sir Humphrey Gilbert sailed on his ill-fated voyage, as recorded in Hakluyt. The accounts of this voyage are interesting for the descriptions they give of Newfoundland at that period, but although, as one of the accounts tells us, the voyage was taken partly in order to search for the

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