

to have flourished then greatly beyond our accustomed belief. These frequent voyages therefore familiarised the minds of the seamen to the dangers of the northern seas, and no difficulty was experienced in manning vessels directed to the west, after the closure of the eastern road was well established.

To reach Cathay by the north was the ambition of every hardy seaman of these days—the western ocean, as the most promising, was again traversed. Martin Trobisher, a name hereafter to be distinguished in the warlike annals of his country, led the way; after fifteen years of delay, under the patronage of Dudley, Earl of Warwick, he succeeded in equipping two vessels, one of thirty, and one of thirty-five tons; as they passed Greenwich, Queen Elizabeth waved them a farewell. If we smile at the needy preparations for so doughty an effort, we cannot but marvel, too, at the dauntless energy which, with such feeble means, could brave the perils of icy seas and coasts, utterly unknown, or chronicled, but in dismal tales of maritime disaster. That so much of success attended these forlorn expeditions, is far more to be wondered at, than their frequently fearful terminations. Much, possibly, of their very success was due to that lightness of draught which fitted them to enter those shallow seas and inlets, in which others of stouter build and lordlier strength would have perished. On the 11th of July, 1576, Trobisher made land, supposed to be the Trieseland|| of the Zeni, by him, but by others, the southern parts of Greenland. Embarrassed by floating ice, he was then compelled to shape a course S. W., by which he reached the coast of Labrador. Sailing to the northward, he entered a straight in latitude $63^{\circ} 8'$. The Esquimaux, in their kajaks, were mistaken by the voyagers for porpoises, or some strange kind of fish. With one of these “strange infidels,” Trobisher set sail for England, where he arrived on the 2nd of October, specially famous for the great hope he brought of the passage to Cathaia.” A curious incident connected with this voyage, led to the attempt to form a settlement on those desolate shores; one of the seamen chanced to bring home with him a stone, as a memorial of his visit to these inhospitable regions,—his wife throwing it into the fire, it “glistened with a bright marquest of gold.” This accident was noised abroad, and the gold refiners having assayed the stone, reported it contained a considerable quantity of that metal. Elizabeth now took the enterprise under her own protection, and Trobisher, in May, 1577, again set forth, with three ships, one the property of

|| This Trieseland is often mentioned. The Basse of Bridgewater, in the last voyage of Trobisher, sailed along the coast, and saw that the land was fertile, fair to look upon, and covered with wood; it is almost impossible to disbelieve so many unconnected relations as have spoken of this land—it does not now exist.—Barrow supposes it to have been destroyed—swallowed up by an earthquake—as there is a bank in the same vicinity.