

Henry Hudson

A Brief Statement of His Aims and His Achievements

Thomas A. Janvier

A decorative graphic consisting of several thick blue lines of varying lengths and orientations (vertical, horizontal, diagonal, and curved) set against a solid green background. The lines are arranged in a way that suggests a stylized architectural or abstract design.

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Saint Ethelburga's Church, Interior

SAINT ETHELBURGA'S CHURCH, INTERIOR

HENRY HUDSON

**A BRIEF STATEMENT OF
HIS AIMS AND HIS ACHIEVEMENTS**

BY

THOMAS A. JANVIER

TO WHICH IS ADDED
A NEWLY-DISCOVERED PARTIAL RECORD
NOW FIRST PUBLISHED

OF
THE TRIAL OF THE MUTINEERS
BY WHOM HE AND OTHERS
WERE ABANDONED TO THEIR DEATH

1909

TO

C. A. J.

CONTENTS

PART I

[A Brief Life of Henry Hudson](#)

CHAPTERS: [I](#), [II](#), [III](#), [IV](#), [V](#), [VI](#), [VII](#), [VIII](#), [IX](#), [X](#), [XI](#), [XII](#), [XIII](#), [XIV](#)

PART II
Newly-discovered Documents

ILLUSTRATIONS: *Frontispiece*, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

PREFACE

It is with great pleasure that I include in this volume contemporary Hudson documents which have remained neglected for three centuries, and here are published for the first time. As I explain more fully elsewhere, their discovery is due to the painstaking research of Mr. R.G. Marsden, M.A. My humble share in the matter has been to recognize the importance of Mr. Marsden's discovery; and to direct the particular search in the Record Office, in London, that has resulted in their present reproduction. I regret that they are inconclusive. We still are ignorant of what punishment was inflicted upon the mutineers of the "Discovery"; or even if they were punished at all.

The primary importance of these documents, however, is not that they establish the fact—until now not established—that the mutineers were brought to trial; it is that they embody the sworn testimony, hitherto unproduced, of six members of Hudson's crew concerning the mutiny. Asher, the most authoritative of Hudson's modern historians, wrote: "Prickett is the only eye-witness that has left us an account of these events, and we can therefore not correct his statements whether they be true or false." We now have the accounts of five additional eye-witnesses (Prickett himself is one of the six whose testimony has been recovered), and all of them, so far as they go, substantially are in accord with Prickett's account. Such agreement is not proof of truth. The newly adduced witnesses and the earlier single witness equally were interested in making out a case in their own favor that would save them from being hanged. But this new

evidence does entitle Prickett's "Larger Discourse" to a more respectful consideration than that dubious document heretofore has received. Save in matters affected by this fresh material, the following narrative is a condensation of what has been recorded by Hudson's authoritative biographers, of whom the more important are: Samuel Purchas, Hessel Gerritz, Emanuel Van Meteren, G.M. Asher, Henry C. Murphy, John Romeyn Brodhead, and John Meredith Read.

T. A. J.

New York, *July* 16, 1909.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS

No portrait of Hudson is known to be in existence. What has passed with the uncritical for his portrait—a dapper-looking man wearing a ruffed collar—frequently has been, and continues to be, reproduced. Who that man was is unknown. That he was not Hudson is certain.

Lacking Hudson's portrait, I have used for a frontispiece a photograph, especially taken for this purpose, of the interior of the Church of Saint Ethelburga: the sole remaining material link, of which we have sure knowledge, between Hudson and ourselves. The drawing on the cover represents what is very near to being another material link—the replica, lately built in Holland, of the "Half Moon," the ship in which Hudson made his most famous voyage.

The other illustrations have been selected with a strict regard to the meaning of that word. In order to throw light on the text, I have preferred—to the ventures of fancy—reproductions of title-pages of works on navigation that Hudson probably used; pictures of the few and crude instruments of navigation that he certainly used; and pictures of ships virtually identical with those in which he sailed.

The copy of Wright's famous work on navigation that Hudson may have had, and probably did have, with him was of an earlier date than that (1610) of which the title-page here is reproduced. This reproduction is of interest in that it shows

at a glance all of the nautical instruments that Hudson had at his command; and of a still greater interest in that the map which is a part of it exhibits what at that time, by exploration or by conjecture, was the known world. To the making of that map Hudson himself contributed: on it, with a previously unknown assurance, his River clearly is marked. The inadequate indication of his Bay probably is taken from Weymouth's chart—the chart that Hudson had with him on his voyage. A curious feature of this map is its marking—in defiance of known facts—of two straits, to the north and to the south of a large island, where should be the Isthmus of Panama.

The one seemingly fanciful picture, that of the mermaids, is not fanciful—a point that I have enlarged upon elsewhere—by the standard of Hudson's times. Hudson himself believed in the existence of mermaids: as is proved by his matter-of-fact entry in his log that a mermaid had been seen by two of his crew.



A BRIEF LIFE OF HENRY HUDSON

HENRY HUDSON

I

letter I F ever a compelling Fate set its grip upon a man and drove him to an accomplishment beside his purpose and outside his thought, it was when Henry Hudson—having headed his ship upon an ordered course northeastward—directly traversed his orders by fetching that compass to the southwestward which ended by bringing him into what now is Hudson's River, and which led on quickly to the founding of what now is New York.

Indeed, the late Thomas Aquinas, and the later Calvin, could have made out from the few known facts in the life of this navigator so pretty a case in favor of Predestination that the blessed St. Augustine and the worthy Arminius—supposing the four come together for a friendly dish of theological talk—would have had their work cut out for them to formulate a countercase in favor of Free Will. It is a curious truth that every important move in Hudson's life of which we have record seems to have been a forced move: sometimes with a look of chance about it—as when the directors of the Dutch East India Company called him back and hastily renewed with him their suspended agreement that he should search for a passage to Cathay on a northeast course past Nova Zembla, and so sent him off on the voyage that brought the "Half Moon" into Hudson's River; sometimes with the fatalism very much in evidence—as when his own government seized him out of the Dutch service, and so put him in the way to go sailing to his death on that voyage through Hudson's Strait that ended, for him, in his mutineering crew casting him adrift to starve with cold and hunger in Hudson's Bay. And, being dead, the same inconsequent Fate that harried him while alive has preserved his name, and very nobly, by anchoring it fast to that River and Strait and Bay forever: and this notwithstanding the fact that all three of them were discovered by other navigators before his time.

Hudson sought, as from the time of Columbus downward other navigators had sought before him, a short cut to the Indies; but his search was made, because of what those others had accomplished, within narrowed lines. In the century and more that had passed between the great Admiral's death and the beginning of Hudson's explorations one important geographical fact had been established: that there was no water-way across America between, roughly, the latitudes of 40° South and 40° North. Of necessity, therefore—since to round America south of 40° South would make a longer voyage than by the known

route around the Cape of Good Hope—exploration that might produce practical results had to be made north of 40° North, either westward from the Atlantic or eastward from the North Sea.

Even within those lessened limits much had been determined before Hudson's time. To the eastward, both Dutch and English searchers had gone far along the coast of Russia; passing between that coast and Nova Zembla and entering the Kara Sea. To the westward, in the year 1524, Verazzano had sailed along the American coast from 34° to 50° North; and in the course of that voyage had entered what now is New York Bay. In the year 1598, Sebastian Cabot had coasted America from 38° North to the mouth of what now is Hudson's Strait. Frobisher had entered that Strait in the year 1577; Weymouth had sailed into it nearly one hundred leagues in the year 1602; and Portuguese navigators, in the years 1558 and 1569, probably had passed through it and had entered what now is Hudson's Bay.

[Fac-simile of Title-page of a Sea Handbook of Hudson's Time](#)

[\[LARGER IMAGE\]](#)

As the result of all this exploration, Hudson had at his command a mass of information—positive as well as negative—that at once narrowed his search and directed it; and there is very good reason for believing that he actually carried with him charts of a crude sort on which, more or less clearly, were indicated the Strait and the Bay and the River which popularly are regarded as of his discovery and to which have been given his name. But I hold that his just fame is not lessened by the fact that his discoveries, nominally, were rediscoveries. Within the proper meaning of the word they truly were his discoveries: in that he did un-cover them so effectually that they became known clearly, and thereafter remained known clearly, to the world.

II

Because of his full accomplishment of what others essayed and only partially accomplished, Hudson's name is the best known—excepting only that of Columbus—of all the names of explorers by land and sea. From Purchas's time downward it has headed the list of Arctic discoverers; in every history of America it has a leading place; on every map of North America it thrice is written large; here in New York, which owes its founding to his exploring voyage, it is uttered—as we refer to the river, the county, the city, the street, the railroad, bearing it—a thousand times a day.

And yet, in despite of this familiarity with his name, our certain knowledge of Hudson's life is limited to a period (April 19, 1607-June 22, 1611) of little more than four years. Of that period, during which he did the work that has made him famous, we have a partial record—much of it under his own hand—that certainly is authentic in its general outlines until it reaches the culminating tragedy. At the very last, where we most want the clear truth, we have only the one-sided account presented by his murderers: and murderers, being at odds with moral conventions generally, are not, as a rule, models of veracity. And so it has fallen out that what we know about the end of Hudson's life, save that it ended foully, is as uncertain as the facts of the earlier and larger part of his life are obscure.

An American investigator, the late Gen. John Meredith Read, has gone farthest in unearthing facts which enlighten this obscurity; but with no better result than to establish certain strong probabilities as to Hudson's ancestry and antecedents. By General Read's showing, the Henry Hudson mentioned by Hakluyt as one of the charter members (February 6, 1554-5) of the Muscovy Company, possibly was our navigator's grandfather. He was a freeman of London, a member of the Skinners Company, and sometime an alderman. He died in December, 1555, according to Stow, "of the late hote burning feuers, whereof died many olde persons, so that in London died seven Aldermen in the space of tenne monthes." They gave that departed worthy a very noble funeral! Henry Machyn, who had charge of it, describes it in his delightful "Diary" in these terms: "The xx day of December was bered at Sant Donstones in the Est master Hare Herdson, altherman of London and Skynner, and on of the masters of the grege frere in London with men and xxiiij women in mantyl fresse [frieze?]

gownes, a herse [catafalque] of wax and hong with blake; and there was my lord mare and the swordberer in blake, and dyvers oder althermen in blake, and the resedew of the althermen, atys berying; and all the masters, boyth althermen and odor, with ther gren staffes in ther hands, and all the chylders of the gray fresse, and iiij in blake gownes bayring iiij gret stayffes-torchys bornying, and then xxiiij men with torchys bornying; and the morrow iij masses songe; and after to ys plasse to dener; and ther was ij goodly whyt branches, and mony prestes and clarkes syngying." Stow adds that the dead alderman's widow, Barbara, caused to be set up in St. Dunstan's to his memory—and also to that of her second husband, Sir Richard Champion, and prospectively to her own—a monument in keeping with their worldly condition and with the somewhat mixed facts of their triangular case. This was a "very faire Alabaster Tombe, richly and curiously gilded, and two ancient figures of Aldermen in scarlet kneeling, the one at the one end of the tombe in a goodly arch, the other at the other end in like manner, and a comely figure of a lady between them, who was wife to them both."

The names have been preserved in legal records of three of the sons—Thomas, John and Edward—of this eminent Londoner: who flourished so greatly in life; who was given so handsome a send-off into eternity; and who, presumably, retains in that final state an undivided one-half interest in the lady whose comely figure was sculptured upon his tomb. General Read found record of a Henry Hudson, mentioned by Stow as a citizen of London in the year 1558, who may also have been a son of the alderman; of a Captain Thomas Hudson, of Limehouse, who had a leading part in an expedition set forth "into the parts of Persia and Media" by the Muscovy Company in the years 1577-81; of a Thomas Hudson, of Mortlake, who was a friend of Dr. John Dee, and to whom references frequently are made in the famous "Diary" such as the following: "March 6 [1583]. I, and Mr. Adrian Gilbert and John Davis did mete with Mr. Alderman Barnes, Mr. Townson, and Mr. Young, and Mr. Hudson about the N.W. voyage." Concerning a Christopher Hudson—who was in the service of the Muscovy Company as its agent and factor at Moscow from about the year 1553 until about the year 1576—the only certainty is that he was not a son of the Alderman. There is a record of the year 1560 that "Christopher Hudson hath written to come home ... considering the death of his father and mother"; and, as the Alderman died in the year 1555, and as his remarried widow was alive in the year 1560, this is conclusive. Being come back to England, this Christopher rose to be a person of importance in the Company; as appears from the fact that he was one of a committee (circa 1583) appointed to confer with "Captain Chris. Carlile ... upon his intended discoveries and attempt into the hithermost parts of America."

Apparatus for Correcting Errors of the Compass

General Read thus summarized the result of his investigations: "We have learned that London was the residence of Henry Hudson the elder, of Henry Hudson his son, and of Christopher Hudson, and that Captain Thomas Hudson lived at Limehouse, now a part of the Metropolis; while Thomas Hudson, the friend of Dr. John Dee, resided at Mortlake, then only six or seven miles from the City ... By reference to a statement made by Abakuk Prickett, in his 'Larger Discourse,' it will be found that Henry Hudson the discoverer also was a citizen of London and had a house there." From all of which, together with various minor corroborative facts, he draws these conclusions: That Henry Hudson the discoverer was the descendant, probably the grandson, of the Henry Hudson who died while holding the office of Alderman of the City of London in the year 1555; that he "received his early training, and imbibed the ideas which controlled the purposes of his after life, under the fostering care of the great Corporation [the Muscovy Company] which his relatives had helped to found and afterwards to maintain"; that he entered the service of that Company as an apprentice, in accordance with the then custom, and in due course was advanced to command rank.

That is the net result of General Read's most laboriously painstaking investigations. The facts for which he searched so diligently, and so longed to find, he did not find. In a foot-note he added: "The place and date of Hudson's birth will doubtless be accurately ascertained in the course of the examinations now being made in England under my directions. The result of these researches I hope to be able to present to the public at no distant day." That note was written nearly fifty years ago, and its writer died long since with his hope unrealized.

But while General Read failed to accomplish his main purpose, he did, as I have said, more than any other investigator has done to throw light on Hudson's ancestry, and on his connection with the Muscovy Company in whose service he sailed. Our navigator may or may not have been a grandson of the alderman who cut so fine a figure in the City three centuries and a half ago; but beyond a reasonable doubt he was of the family—so eminently distinguished in the annals of discovery—to which that alderman, one of the founders of the Muscovy Company, and Christopher Hudson, one of its later governors, and Captain Thomas Hudson, who sailed in its service, all belonged. And, being akin to such folk, the natural disposition to adventure was so strong within him that it led him on to accomplishments which have made him the most illustrious bearer of his name.

III

"Anno, 1607, Aprill the nineteenth, at Saint Ethelburge, in Bishops Gate street, did communicate with the rest of the parishioners, these persons, seamen, purposing to goe to sea foure days after, for to discover a passage by the North Pole to Japan and China. First, Henry Hudson, master. Secondly, William Colines, his mate. Thirdly, James Young. Fourthly, John Colman. Fiftly, John Cooke. Sixtly, James Beubery. Seventhly, James Skrutton. Eightly, John Pleyce. Ninthly, Thomas Barter. Tenthly, Richard Day. Eleventhly, James Knight. Twelfthly, John Hudson, a boy."

With those words Purchas prefaced his account of what is known—because we have no record of earlier voyages—as Hudson's first voyage; and with those words our certain knowledge of Hudson's life begins.

St. Ethelburga's, a restful pause in the bustle of Bishopsgate Street, still stands—the worse, to be sure, for the clutter of little shops that has been built in front of it, and for incongruous interior renovation—and I am very grateful to Purchas for having preserved the scrap of information that links Hudson's living body with that church which still is alive: into which may pass by the very doorway that he passed through those who venerate his memory; and there may stand within the very walls and beneath the very roof that sheltered him when he and his ship's company partook of the Sacrament together three hundred years ago. Purchas, no doubt, could have told all that we so gladly would know of Hudson's early history. But he did not tell it—and we must rest content, I think well content, with that poetic beginning at the chancel rail of St. Ethelburga's of the strong life that less than four years later came to its epic ending.

The voyage made in the year 1607, for which Hudson and his crew prepared by making their peace with God in St. Ethelburga's, had nothing to do with America; nor did his voyage of the year following have anything to do with this continent. Both of those adventures were set forth by the Muscovy Company in search of a northeast passage to the Indies; and, while they failed in their main purpose, they added important facts concerning the coasts of Spitzbergen and of Nova Zembla to the existing stock of geographical knowledge, and yielded practical results in that they extended England's Russian trade.

The most notable scientific accomplishment of the first voyage was the high northing made. By observation (July 23, 1607) Hudson was in 80° 23'. By reckoning, two days later, he was in 81°. His reckoning, because of his ignorance of the currents, always has been considered doubtful. His observed position recently has been questioned by Sir Martin Conway, who has arrived at the conclusion: "It is demonstrably probable that for 80° 23' we should read 79° 23'."^[1] But even with this reduction accepted, the fact remains that until the year 1773, when Captain Phipps reached 80° 48', Hudson held the record for "farthest north."

To the second voyage belongs the often-quoted incident of the mermaid. The log of that voyage that has come down to us was kept by Hudson himself; and this is what he wrote in it (June 15, 1608) with his own hand: "All day and night cleere sunshine. The wind at east. The latitude at noone 75 degrees 7 minutes. We held westward by our account 13 leagues. In the afternoon, the sea was asswaged, and the wind being at east we set sayle, and stood south and by east, and south southeast as we could. This morning one of our companie looking over boord saw a mermaid, and calling up some of the companie to see her, one more came up and by that time shee was come close to the ships side, looking earnestly on the men. A little after a sea came and overturned her. From the navill upward her backe and breasts were like a womans, as they say that saw her, but her body as big as one of us. Her skin very white, and long haire hanging downe behinde of colour blacke. In her going downe they saw her tayle, which was like the tayle of a porposse, and speckled like a macrell. Their names that saw her were Thomas Hilles and Robert Rayner."

[Mermaid] from de Brey. Edition 1619

I am sorry to say that the too-conscientious Doctor Asher, in editing this log, felt called upon to add, in a foot-note: "Probably a seal"; and to quote, in support of his prosaic suggestion, various unnecessary facts about seals observed a few centuries later in the same waters by Doctor Kane. For my own part, I much prefer to believe in the mermaid—and, by so believing, to create in my own heart somewhat of the feeling which was in the hearts of those old seafarers in a time when sea-prodigies and sea-mysteries were to be counted with as among the perils of every ocean voyage.

This belief of mine is not a mere whimsical fancy. Unless we take as real what the shipmen of Hudson's time took as real, we not only miss the strong romance which was so large a part of their life, but we go wide of understanding

the brave spirit in which their exploring work was done. Adventuring into tempests in their cockle-shell ships they took as a matter of course—and were brave in that way without any thought of their bravery. As a part of the day's work, also, they took their wretched quarters aboard ship and their wretched, and usually insufficient, food. Their highest courage was reserved for facing the fearsome dangers which existed only in their imaginations—but which were as real to them as were the dangers of wreck and of starvation and of battlings with wild beasts, brute or human, in strange new-found lands. It followed of necessity that men leading lives so full of physical hardship, and so beset by wondering dread, were moody and discontented—and so easily went on from sullen anger into open mutiny. And equally did it follow that the shipmasters who held those surly brutes to the collar—driving them to their work with blows, and now and then killing one of them by way of encouraging the others to obedience—were as absolutely fearless and as absolutely strong of will as men could be. All of these conditions we must recognize, and must try to realize, if we would understand the work that was cut out for Hudson, and for every master navigator, in that cruel and harsh and yet ardently romantic time.

¹ "Hudson's Voyage to Spitzbergen in 1607," by Sir Martin Conway.
The Geographical Journal, February, 1900.

IV

It is Hudson's third voyage—the one that brought him into our own river, and that led on directly to the founding of our own city—that has the deepest interest to us of New York. He made it in the service of the Dutch East India Company: but how he came to enter that service is one of the unsolved problems in his career.

In itself, there was nothing out of the common in those days in an English shipmaster going captain in a Dutch vessel. But Hudson—by General Read's showing—was so strongly backed by family influence in the Muscovy Company that it is not easy to understand why he took service with a corporation that in a way was the Muscovy Company's trade rival. Lacking any explanation of the matter, I am inclined to link it with the action of the English Government—when he returned from his voyage and made harbor at Dartmouth—in detaining him in England and in ordering him to serve only under the English flag; and to infer that his going to Holland was the result of a falling out with the directors of the Muscovy Company; and that at their request, when the chances of the sea brought him within English jurisdiction, he was detained in his own country—and so was put in the way to take up with the adventure that led him straight onward to his death. In all of which may be seen the working-out of that fatalism which to my mind is so apparent in Hudson's doings, and which is most apparent in his third voyage: that evidently had its origin in a series of curious mischances, and that ended in his doing precisely what those who sent him on it were resolved that he should not do.

All that we know certainly about his taking service with the Dutch Company is told in a letter from President Jeannin—the French envoy who was engaged in the years 1608-9, with representatives of other nations, in trying to patch up a truce or a peace between the Netherlands and Spain—to his master, Henry IV. Along with his open instructions, Jeannin seems to have had private instructions—in keeping with the customs and principles of the time—to do what he could do in the way of stealing from Holland for the benefit of France a share of the East India trade. In regard to this amiable phase of his mission, under date of January 21, 1609, he wrote:

"Some time ago I made, by your Majesty's orders, overtures to an

Amsterdam merchant named Isaac Le Maire, a wealthy man of a considerable experience in the East India trade. He offered to make himself useful to your Majesty in matters of this kind.... A few days ago he sent to me his brother, to inform me that an English pilot who has twice sailed in search of a northern passage has been called to Amsterdam by the East India Company to tell them what he had found, and whether he hoped to discover that passage. They had been well satisfied with his answer, and had thought they might succeed in the scheme. They had, however, been unwilling to undertake at once the said expedition; and they had only remunerated the Englishman for his trouble, and had dismissed him with the promise of employing him next year, 1610. The Englishman, having thus obtained his leave, Le Maire, who knows him well, has since conferred with him and has learnt his opinions on these subjects; with regard to which the Englishman had also intercourse with Plancius, a great geographer and clever mathematician. Plancius maintains, according to the reasons of his science, and from the information given him, ... that there must be in the northern parts a passage corresponding to the one found near the south pole by Magellan.... The Englishman also reports that, having been to the north as far as 80 degrees, he has found that the more northwards he went, the less cold it became."

['How the Earth Is Round' Fac-simile of Page 'The Arte of Navigation' London. Edition 1596](#)

[\[LARGER IMAGE\]](#)

Hudson's name is not mentioned by Jeannin, but as no other navigator had been so far north as 80°, there can be no doubt as to who "the Englishman" was. The letter goes on to urge that the French king should undertake the "glorious enterprise" of searching for a northerly passage to the Indies, and that he should undertake it openly: as "the East India Company will not have even a right to complain, because the charter granted to them by the States General authorizes them to sail only around the Cape of Good Hope, and not by the north." But Jeannin adds that Le Maire "does not dare to speak about it to any one, because the East India Company fears above everything to be forestalled in this design."

Precisely that fear on the part of the East India Company did undercut the French envoy's plans. In a postscript to his letter he adds: "This letter having been terminated, and I being ready to send it to your Majesty, Le Maire has again written to me.... Some members of the East India Company, who had been informed that the Englishman had secretly treated with him, had become afraid

that I might wish to employ him for the discovery of the passage. For this reason they have again treated with him about his undertaking such an expedition in the course of the present year. The directors of the Amsterdam Chamber have written to the other chambers of the same Company to request their approval; and should the others refuse, the Amsterdam Chamber will undertake the expedition at their own risk."

In point of fact, the other chambers did refuse (although, before Hudson actually sailed, they seem to have ratified the agreement made with him); and the Amsterdam Chamber, single-handed, did set forth the voyage.

In view of the fact that the French project in a way was realized, a curiously subtle interest attaches to Jeannin's showing of how narrow were the chances by which Hudson missed being taken into the French service, and was taken into that of the Dutch. A French ship, under the command of a captain whose name has not been preserved, did sail for the North—almost precisely a month later than Hudson's sailing—on May 5, 1609. Beyond the bare fact that such a voyage was made, nothing is known about it: whence the inference is a reasonable one that it produced no new discoveries. But suppose that Hudson had commanded; and, so commanding, had not sailed that unknown captain's useless course but had brought his French ship into what now are our bay and our river; and that the French, not the Dutch, had founded the city here that now is—but by those hair-wide chances might not have been—New York?

V

Mr. Henry C. Murphy—to whose searchings in the archives of Holland we owe so much—found at The Hague a manuscript history of the East India Company, written by P. van Dam in the seventeenth century, in which a copy of Hudson's contract with the Company is preserved. The contract reads as follows:

"On this eighth of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and nine, the Directors of the East India Company of the Chamber of Amsterdam of the ten years reckoning of the one part, and Master Henry Hudson, Englishman, assisted by Jodocus Hondius^[2], of the other part, have agreed in manner following, to wit: That the said Directors shall in the first place equip a small vessel or yacht of about thirty lasts [60 tons] burden, well provided with men, provisions and other necessaries, with which the above named Hudson shall, about the first of April, sail in order to search for a passage by the north, around the north side of Nova Zembla, and shall continue thus along that parallel until he shall be able to sail southward to the latitude of sixty degrees. He shall obtain as much knowledge of the lands as can be done without any considerable loss of time, and if it is possible return immediately in order to make a faithful report and relation of his voyage to the Directors, and to deliver over his journals, log-books, and charts, together with an account of everything whatsoever which shall happen to him during the voyage without keeping anything back.

"For which said voyage the Directors shall pay the said Hudson, as well for his outfit for the said voyage as for the support of his wife and children, the sum of eight hundred guilders [say \$336]. And in case (which God prevent) he does not come back or arrive hereabouts within a year, the Directors shall farther pay to his wife two hundred guilders in cash; and thereupon they shall not be farther liable to him or his heirs, unless he shall either afterward or within the year arrive and have found the passage good and suitable for the Company to use; in which case the Directors will reward the before named Hudson for his dangers, trouble, and knowledge, in their discretion.

"And in case the Directors think proper to prosecute and continue the same voyage, it is stipulated and agreed with the before named Hudson that he shall make his residence in this country with his wife and children, and shall enter into

the employment of no other than the Company, and this at the discretion of the Directors, who also promise to make him satisfied and content for such farther service in all justice and equity. All without fraud or evil intent. In witness of the truth, two contracts are made hereof ... and are subscribed by both parties and also by Jodocus Hondius as interpreter and witness."

Fac-simile of Title-page of a Sea Handbook of Hudson's Time

[LARGER IMAGE]

Of Hudson's sailing orders no copy has been found; but an abstract of them has been preserved by Van Dam in these words: "This Company, in the year 1609, fitted out a yacht of about thirty lasts burden and engaged a Mr. Henry Hudson, an Englishman, and a skilful pilot, as master thereof: with orders to search for the aforesaid passage by the north and north-east above Nova Zembla toward the lands or straits of Amian, and then to sail at least as far as the sixtieth degree of north latitude, when if the time permitted he was to return from the straits of Amian again to this country. But he was farther ordered by his instructions to think of discovering no other route or passages except the route around the north and north-east above Nova Zembla; with this additional proviso that, if it could not be accomplished at that time, another route would be the subject of consideration for another voyage."

It is evident from the foregoing that never did a shipmaster get away to sea with more explicit orders than those which were given to Hudson as to how his voyage was, and as to how it was not, to be made. On his obedience to those orders, which essentially were a part of his contract, depended the obligation of the directors to pay him for his services; and farther depended—a consideration that reasonably might be expected to touch him still more closely—their obligation to bestow a solatium upon his wife and children in the event of his death. And yet, with those facts clearly before him, he did precisely what he had contracted, and what in most express terms he was ordered, not to do.

² Hondius, an eminent map-engraver of the time, was a Fleming, who, being driven from Flanders by the Spanish cruelties, made his home in Amsterdam, where he died in the year 1611.

VI

Hudson sailed from the Texel in the "Half Moon" (possibly accompanied by a small vessel, the "Good Hope," that did not pursue the voyage) on March 27-April 6, 1609; and for more than a month—until he had doubled the North Cape and was well on toward Nova Zembla—went duly on his way. Then came the mutiny that made him change, or that gave him an excuse for changing, his ordered course.

The log that has been preserved of this voyage was kept by Robert Juet; who was Hudson's mate on his second voyage, and who was mate again on Hudson's fourth voyage—until his mutinous conduct caused him to be deposed. What rating he had on board the "Half Moon" is not known; nor do we know whether he had, or had not, a share in the mutiny that changed the ship's course from east to west. With a suspicious frankness, he wrote in his log: "Because it is a journey usually knowne I omit to put downe what passed till we came to the height of the North Cape of Finmarke, which we did performe by the fift of May (stilo novo), being Tuesday." To this he adds the observed position on May 5th, 71° 46' North, and the course, "east, and by south and east," and continues: "After much trouble, with fogges sometimes, and more dangerous ice. The nineteenth, being Tuesday, was close stormie weather, with much wind and snow, and very cold. The wind variable between the north north-west and north-east. We made our way west and by north till noone."

Dutch Ships of Hudson's Time. From de Veer. *Drie Seylagien*, Amsterdam, 1605

His abrupt transition from the fifth to the nineteenth of May covers the time in which the mutiny occurred. Practically, his log begins almost on the day that the ship's course was changed. In the smooth concluding paragraph of this same log, to be cited later, he passes over unmentioned the mutiny that occurred on the homeward voyage. Judging him by the facts recorded in the accounts of the voyage into Hudson's Bay, it is a fair assumption that in both of these earlier mutinies Juet had a hand.

I wish that we could find the bond that held Hudson and Juet together. That Juet could write, and that he understood the science of navigation—although those were rare accomplishments among seamen in his time—fail sufficiently to

account for Hudson's persistent employment of him. For my own part, I revert to my theory of fatalism. It is my fancy that this "ancient man"—as he is styled by one of his companions—was Hudson's evil genius; and I class him with the most finely conceived character in Marryat's most finely conceived romance: the pilot Schriften, in "The Phantom Ship." Just as Schriften clung to the younger Van der Decken to thwart him, so Juet seems to have clung to Hudson to thwart him; and to take—in the last round between them—a leading part in compassing Hudson's death.

One authority, and a very good authority, for the facts which Juet suppressed concerning the third voyage is the historian Van Meteren: who obtained them, there is good reason for believing, directly from Hudson himself. In his "Historie der Nederlanden" (1614) Van Meteren wrote: "This Henry Hudson left the Texel the 6th of April, 1609, and having doubled the Cape of Norway the 5th of May, directed his course along the northern coasts toward Nova Zembla. But he there found the sea as full of ice as he had found it in the preceding year, so that he lost the hope of effecting anything during the season. This circumstance, and the cold which some of his men who had been in the East Indies could not bear, caused quarrels among the crew, they being partly English, partly Dutch; upon which the captain, Henry Hudson, laid before them two propositions. The first of these was, to go to the coast of America to the latitude of forty degrees. This idea had been suggested to him by some letters and maps which his friend Captain Smith had sent him from Virginia, and by which he informed him that there was a sea leading into the western ocean to the north of the southern English colony [Virginia]. Had this information been true (experience goes as yet to the contrary), it would have been of great advantage, as indicating a short way to India. The other proposition was to direct their search to Davis's Straits. This meeting with general approval, they sailed on the 14th of May, and arrived, with a good wind, at the Faroe Islands, where they stopped but twenty-four hours to supply themselves with fresh water. After leaving these islands they sailed on till, on the 18th of July, they reached the coast of Nova Francia under 44 degrees.... They left that place on the 26th of July, and kept out at sea till the 3d of August, when they were again near the coast in 42 degrees of latitude. Thence they sailed on till, on the 12th of August, they reached the shore under 37° 45'. Thence they sailed along the shore until we [sic] reached 40° 45', where they found a good entrance, between two headlands, and thus entered on the 12th of September into as fine a river as can be found, with good anchoring ground on both sides."

That river, "as fine as can be found," was our own Hudson.

Van Meteren's account of the voyage, although not published until the year 1614, was written very soon after Hudson's return—the slip that he makes in using "we" points to the probability that he copied directly from Hudson's log—and in it we have all that we ever are likely to know about the causes which led to the change in the "Half Moon's" course. For my own part, I believe that Hudson did precisely what he had wanted to do from the start. The prohibitory clause in his instructions, forbidding him to go upon other than the course laid down for him, pointedly suggests that he had expressed the desire—natural enough, since he twice had searched vainly for a passage by Nova Zembla—to search westward instead of eastward for a water-way to the Indies. As Van Meteren states, authoritatively, he was encouraged to search in that direction by the information given him by Captain John Smith concerning a passage north of Virginia across the American continent—a notion that Smith probably derived in the first instance from Michael Lok's planisphere, which shows the continent reduced to a mere strip in about the latitude of the river that Hudson found; and that he very well might have conceived to be confirmed by stories about a great sea not far westward (the great lakes) which he heard from the Indians.

But the starting point of this geographical error is immaterial. The important fact is that Hudson entertained it: and so was led to offer for first choice to his mutinous crew that they should "go to the coast of America in the latitude of forty degrees." His readiness with that proposition, when the chance to make it came, confirms my belief that his own desire was to sail westward, and that he made the most of his opportunity. And the essential point, after all, is not whether the mutiny forced him to change, or merely gave him an excuse for changing, his ordered course: it is that he was equal to the emergency when the mutiny came, and so controlled it that—instead of going back, defeated of his purpose, to Holland—he deliberately took the risk of personal loss that attended breaking his contract and traversing his orders, and continued on new lines his exploring voyage. It is indicative of Hudson's character that he met that cast of fate against him most resolutely; and most resolutely played up to it with a strong hand.

VII

As the direct result of breaking his orders, Hudson was the discoverer of our river—to which, therefore, his name properly has been given—and also was the first navigator by whom our harbor effectively was found. I use advisedly these precisely differentiating terms. On the distinctions which they make rests Hudson's claim to take practical precedence of Verrazano and of Gomez, who sailed in past Sandy Hook nearly a hundred years ahead of him; and of those shadowy nameless shipmen who in the intervening time, until his coming, may have made our harbor one of their stations—for refitting and watering—on their voyages from and to Portugal and Spain.

The exploring work of John and of Sebastian Cabot, who sailed along our coast, but who missed our harbor, does not come within my range: save to note that Sebastian Cabot pretty certainly was one of the several navigators, including Frobisher and Davis, who entered Hudson's Strait before Hudson's time.

Verrazano was an Italian, sailing in the French service. Gomez was a Portuguese, sailing in the Spanish service. Both sought a westerly way to the Indies, and both sought it in the same year—1524. Verrazano has left a report of his voyage, written immediately upon his return to France; and with it a vaguely drawn chart of the coasts which he explored. (It is my duty to add that certain zealous historians have denounced his report as a forgery, and his chart as a "fake"—a matter so much too large for discussion here that I content myself with expressing the opinion that these charges have not been sustained.) Gomez has left no report of his voyage, but a partial account of it may be pieced together from the maritime chronicles of his time. He also charted, with an approximate accuracy, the lands which he coasted; and while his chart has not been preserved in its original shape, there is good reason for believing that we have it embodied in the planisphere drawn by Juan Ribero, geographer to Charles V., in the year 1529. On that planisphere the seaboard of the present states of Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island is called "the land of Estevan Gomez."

Lacking the full report that Gomez presumably made of his voyage, and lacking the original of his chart, it is impossible to decide whether he did or did not pass through the Narrows and enter the Upper Bay. Doctor Asher holds that he did make that passage; and adds: "It is certain that the later Spanish seamen

who followed in his track in after years were familiar with the [Hudson] river, and called it the Rio de Gamas." In support of this strong assertion he cites the still-extant "Rutters," or "Routiers," of the period—the ocean guide-books showing the distances from place to place, marking convenient stations for watering and refitting, and describing the entrances to rivers and to harbors—"from which we learn," he declares, "that the Rio de Gamas, the name then regularly applied to the Hudson on the charts of the time, was one of these stages between New Foundland and the colonies of Central America."^[3]

In regard to Verrazano—admitting his report to be genuine—the fact that he did pass through the Narrows into the Upper Bay is not open to dispute. He therefore must have seen—as, a little later, Gomez may have seen—the true mouth of Hudson's river eighty-five years before Hudson, by actual exploration of it, made himself its discoverer. But Verrazano, by his own showing, came but a little way into the Upper Bay—which he called a lake—and he made no exploration of a practical sort of the harbor that he had found.

It is but simple justice to Verrazano and to Gomez to put on record here, along with the story of Hudson's effective discovery, the story of their ineffective finding. Fate was against them as distinctly as it was with Hudson. They came under adverse conditions, and they came too soon. Back of the explorer in the French service there was not an alert power eager for colonial expansion. Back of the explorer in the Spanish service there was a power so busied with colonial expansion on a huge scale—in that very year, 1524, Cortes was completing his conquest of Mexico, and Pizarro was beginning his conquest of Peru—that a farther enlargement of the colonization contract was impossible.

[Fac-simile of Title-page of the Most Famous Sea Handbook of Hudson's Time](#)

[\[LARGER IMAGE\]](#)

Therefore we may fall back upon the assured fact—in which I see again the touch of fatalism—that not until Hudson came at the right moment, and at the right moment gave an accurate account of his explorations to a power that was ready immediately to colonize the land that he had found, were our port and our river, notwithstanding their earlier technical discovery, truly discovered to the world. As for the river, it assuredly is Hudson's very own.

³ Asher mentions, in this connection, that "Nantucket Island also figures in some of these rutters under the name of the island of Juan Luis, or

Juan Fernandez, and is recommended as a most convenient stage for those who, coming from Europe, wish to proceed to the West Indies by way of the Bermudas."

VIII

From Juet's log I make the following extracts, telling of the "Half Moon's" approach to Sandy Hook and of her passage into the Lower Bay:

"The first of September, faire weather, the wind variable betweene east and sooth; we steered away north north west. At noone we found our height [a little north of Cape May] to bee 39 degrees 3 minutes.... The second, in the morning close weather, the winde at south in the morning. From twelve untill two of the clocke we steered north north west, and had sounding one and twentie fathoms; and in running one glasse we had but sixteene fathoms, then seventeene, and so shoalder and shoalder untill it came to twelve fathoms. We saw a great fire but could not see the land. Then we came to ten fathoms, whereupon we brought our tacks aboard, and stood to the eastward east south east, foure glasses. Then the sunne arose, and we steered away north againe, and saw the land [the low region about Sandy Hook] from the west by north to the north west by north, all like broken islands, and our soundings were eleven and ten fathoms. Then we looft in for the shoare, and faire by the shoare we had seven fathoms. The course along the land we found to be north east by north. From the land which we had first sight of, untill we came to a great lake of water [the Lower Bay] as we could judge it to be, being drowned land, which made it to rise like islands, which was in length ten leagues. The mouth of that land hath many shoalds, and the sea breaketh on them as it is cast out of the mouth of it. And from that lake or bay the land lyeth north by east, and we had a great streame out of the bay; and from thence our sounding was ten fathoms two leagues from the land. At five of the clocke we anchored, being little winde, and rode in eight fathoms water.... This night I found the land to hall the compasse 8 degrees. For to the northward off us we saw high hils [Staten Island and the Highlands]. For the day before we found not above two degrees of variation. This is a very good land to fall with, and a pleasant land to see.

"The third, the morning mystie, untill ten of the clocke. Then it cleered, and the wind came to the south south east, so wee weighed and stood to the northward. The land is very pleasant and high, and bold to fall withal. At three of the clocke in the after noone, we came to three great rivers [the Raritan, the Arthur Kill and the Narrows]. So we stood along to the northermost [the Narrows], thinking to have gone into it, but we found it to have a very shoald

barre before it, for we had but ten foot water. Then we cast about to the southward, and found two fathoms, three fathoms, and three and a quarter, till we came to the souther side of them; then we had five and sixe fathoms, and anchored. So wee sent in our boate to sound, and they found no lesse water than foure, five, sixe, and seven fathoms, and returned in an houre and a halfe. So we weighed and went in, and rode in five fathoms, oze ground, and saw many salmons, and mullets, and rayes, very great. The height is 40 degrees 30 minutes."

That is the authoritative account of Hudson's great finding. I have quoted it in full partly because of the thrilling interest that it has for us; but more to show that the record of his explorations—the "Half Moon's" log being written throughout with the same definiteness and accuracy—gave what neither Gomez nor Verrazano gave: clear directions for finding with certainty the haven that he, and those earlier navigators, had found by chance. On that fact, and on the other fact that his directions promptly were utilized, rests his claim to be the practical discoverer of the harbor of New York.

For more than a week the "Half Moon" lay in the Lower Bay and in the Narrows. Then, on the eleventh of September, she passed fairly beyond Staten Island and came out into the Upper Bay: and Hudson saw the great river—which on that day became his river—stretching broadly to the north. I can imagine that when he found that wide waterway, leading from the ocean into the heart of the continent—and found it precisely where his friend Captain John Smith had told him he would find it, "under 40 degrees"—his hopes were very high. The first part of the story being confirmed, it was a fair inference that the second part would be confirmed; that presently, sailing through the "strait" that he had entered, he would come out, as Magellan had come out from the other strait, upon the Pacific—with clear water before him to the coasts of Cathay.

That glad hope must have filled his heart during the ensuing fortnight; and even then it must have died out slowly through another week—while the "Half Moon" worked her way northward as far as where Albany now stands. Twice in the course of his voyage inland—on September 14th, when his run was from Yonkers to Peekskill—he reasonably may have believed that he was on the very edge of his great discovery. As the river widened hugely into the Tappan Sea, and again widened hugely into Haverstraw Bay, it well may have seemed to him that he was come to the ocean outlet—and that in a few hours more he would have the waters of the Pacific beneath his keel. Then, as he passed through the Southern Gate of the Highlands, and thence onward, his hope must have waned

—until on September 22d it vanished utterly away. Under that date Juet wrote in his log: "This night, at ten of the clocke, our boat returned in a showre of raine from sounding the river; and found it to bee at an end for shipping to goe in."

That was the end of the adventure inland. Juet wrote on the 23d: "At twelve of the clocke we weighed, and went downe two leagues"; and thereafter his log records their movements and their doings—sometimes meeting with "loving people" with whom they had friendly dealings; sometimes meeting and having fights with people who were anything but loving—as the "Half Moon" dawdled slowly down the stream. By the 2d of October they were come abreast of about where Fort Lee now stands. There they had their last brush with the savages, killing ten or twelve of them without loss on their own side.

After telling about the fight, Juet adds: "Within a while after wee got downe two leagues beyond that place and anchored in a bay [north of Hoboken], cleere from all danger of them on the other side of the river, where we saw a very good piece of ground [for anchorage]. And hard by it there was a cliffe [Wiehawken] that looked of the colour of a white greene, as though it were either copper or silver myne. And I thinke it to be one of them, by the trees that grow upon it. For they be all burned, and the other places are greene as grasse. It is on that side of the river that is called Manna-hata. There we saw no people to trouble us, and rode quietly all night, but had much wind and raine."

In that entry the name Manna-hata was written for the first time, and was applied, not to our island but to the opposite Jersey shore. The explanation of Juet's record seems to be that the Indians known as the Mannahattes dwelt—or that Juet thought that they dwelt—on both sides of the river. That they did dwell on, and that they did give their name to, our island of Manhattan are facts absolutely established by the records of the ensuing three or four years.

During October 3d the "Half Moon" was storm-bound. On the 4th, Juet records "Faire weather, and the wind at north north west, wee weighed and came out of the river into which we had runne so farre." Thence, through the Upper Bay and the Narrows, and across the Lower Bay—with a boat out ahead to sound—they went onward into the Sandy Hook channel. "And by twelve of the clocke we were cleere of all the inlet. Then we took in our boat, and set our mayne sayle and sprit sayle and our top sayles, and steered away east south east, and south east by east, off into the mayne sea."

Juet's log continues and concludes—passing over unmentioned the mutiny

that occurred before the ship's course definitely was set eastward—in these words: "We continued our course toward England, without seeing any land by the way, all the rest of this moneth of October. And on the seventh day of November (stilo novo), being Saturday, by the grace of God we safely arrived in the range of Dartmouth, in Devonshire, in the yeere 1609."^[4]

From the standpoint of the East India Company, Hudson's quest upon our coast and into our river—the most fruitful of all his adventurings, since the planting of our city was the outcome of it—was a failure. Hessel Gerritz (1613) wrote: "All that he did in the west in 1609 was to exchange his merchandise for furs in New France." And Hudson himself, no doubt, rated his great accomplishment—on which so large a part of his fame rests enduringly—as a mere waste of energy and of time. I hope that he knows about, and takes a comforting pride in—over there in the Shades—the great city which owes its founding to that seemingly bootless voyage!

⁴ From Mr. Brodhead's "History of the State of New York" I reproduce the following note, that tells of the little "Half Moon's" dismal ending: "The subsequent career of the 'Half Moon' may, perhaps, interest the curious. The small 'ship book,' before referred to, which I found, in 1841, in the Company's archives at Amsterdam, besides recording the return of the yacht on the 15th of July, 1610, states that on the 2d of May, 1611, she sailed, in company with other vessels, to the East Indies, under the command of Laurens Reael; and that on the 6th of March, 1615, she was 'wrecked and lost' on the island of Mauritius."

IX

What happened to Hudson when he reached Dartmouth has been recorded; and, broadly, why it happened. Hessel Gerritz wrote that "he ... returned safely to England, where he was accused of having undertaken a voyage to the detriment of his own country." Van Meteren wrote: "A long time elapsed, through contrary winds, before the Company could be informed of the arrival of the ship [the "Half Moon"] in England. Then they ordered the ship and crew to return [to Holland] as soon as possible. But when they were going to do so, Henry Hudson and the other Englishmen of the ship were commanded by government there not to leave England but to serve their own country." Obviously, international trade jealousies were at the root of the matter. Conceivably, as I have stated, the Muscovy Company, a much interested party, was the prime mover in the seizure of Hudson out of the Dutch service. But we only know certainly that he was seized out of that service: with the result that he and Fate came to grips again; and that Fate's hold on him did not loosen until Death cast it off.

Hudson's fourth, and last, voyage was not made for the Muscovy Company; but those chiefly concerned in promoting it were members of that Company, and two of them were members of the first importance in the direction of its affairs. The adventure was set forth, mainly, by Sir Dudley Digges, Sir Thomas Smith, and Master John Wolstenholme—who severally are commemorated in the Arctic by Smith's Sound, Cape Digges, and Cape Wolstenholme—and the expedition got away from London in "the barke 'Discovery'" on April 17, 1610.

Purchas wrote a nearly contemporary history of this voyage that included three strictly contemporary documents: two of them certainly written aboard the "Discovery"; and the third either written aboard the ship on the voyage home, as is possible, or not long after the ship had arrived in England.

The first of these documents is "An Abstract of the Journal of Master Henry Hudson." This is Hudson's own log, but badly mutilated. It begins on the day of sailing, April 17th, and ends on the ensuing August 3d. There are many gaps in it, and the block of more than ten months is gone. The missing portions, presumably, were destroyed by the mutineers.

The second document is styled by Purchas: "A Note Found in the Deske of

Thomas Wydownse, Student in the Mathematickes, hee being one of them who was put into the Shallop." Concerning this poor "student in the mathematickes" Prickett testified before the court: "Thomas Widowes was thrust out of the ship into the shallop, but whether he willed them take his keys and share his goods, to save his life, this examine knoweth not." Practically, this is an assurance that he did make such an offer; and his despairing resistance to being outcast is implied also in the pathetic note following his name in the Trinity House list of the abandoned ones: "put away in great distress." There is nothing to show how he happened to be aboard the "Discovery," nor who he was. Possibly he may have been a son of the "Richard Widowes, goldsmith," who is named in the second charter (1609) of the Virginia Company. His "Note"—cited in full later on—exhibits clearly the evil conditions that obtained aboard the "Discovery"; and especially makes clear that Juet's mutinous disposition began to be manifested at a very early stage of the voyage.

The third document is the most important, in that it gives—or professes to give—a complete history of the whole voyage. Purchas styles it: "A Larger Discourse of the Same Voyage, and the Successes Thereof, written by Abacucks Prickett, a servant of Sir Dudley Digges, whom the Mutineers had Saved in hope to procure his Master to worke their Pardon." Purchas wrote that "this report of Prickett may happily bee suspected by some as not so friendly to Hudson." Being essentially a bit of special pleading, intended to save his own neck and the necks of his companions, it has rested always under the suspicion that Purchas cast upon it. Nor is it relieved from suspicion by the fact that it is in accord with his sworn testimony, and with the sworn testimony of his fellows, before the High Court of Admiralty when he and they were on trial for their lives as mutineers. The imperfect record of this trial merely shows that Prickett and all of the other witnesses—with the partial exception of Byleth—told substantially the same story; and—as they all equally were in danger of hanging—that story most naturally was in their own favor and in much the same words. From the Trinity House record it appears that Prickett was "a land man put in by the Adventurers"; and in the court records he is described, most incongruously, as a "haberdasher"—facts which place him, as his own very remarkable narrative places him, on a level much above that of the ordinary seamen of Hudson's time.

Dr. Asher's comment upon Prickett's "Discourse," is a just determination of its value: "Though the paper he has left us is in form a narrative, the author's real intention was much more to defend the mutineers than to describe the voyage. As an apologetic essay, the 'Larger Discourse' is extremely clever. It manages to

cast some, not too much, shadow upon Hudson himself. The main fault of the mutiny is thrown upon some men who had ceased to live when the ship reached home. Those who were then still alive are presented as guiltless, some as highly deserving. Prickett's account of the mutiny and of its cause has often been suspected. Even Purchas himself and Fox speak of it with distrust. But Prickett is the only eye-witness that has left us an account of these events; and we can therefore not correct his statements, whether they be true or false."

My fortunate finding of contemporary documents, unknown to Hudson's most authoritative historian, has produced other "eye-witnesses" who have "left us an account of these events"; but, obviously, their accounts—so harmoniously in agreement—do not affect the soundness of Dr. Asher's conclusions. The net result of it all being, as I have written, that our whole knowledge of Hudson's murder is only so much of the truth as his murderers were agreed upon to tell.

X

In the ruling of that, his last, adventure all of Hudson's malign stars seem to have been in the ascendant. His evil genius, Juet, again sailed with him as mate; and out of sheer good-will, apparently, he took along with him in the "Discovery" another villainous personage, one Henry Greene—who showed his gratitude for benefits conferred by joining eagerly with Juet in the mutiny that resulted in the murder of their common benefactor.

Hudson, therefore, started on that dismal voyage with two firebrands in his ship's company—and ship's companies of those days, without help from firebrands, were like enough to explode into mutiny of their own accord. I must repeat that the sailor-men of Hudson's time—and until long after Hudson's time—were little better than dangerous brutes; and the savage ferocity that was in them was kept in check only by meeting it with a more savage ferocity on the part of their superiors.

At the very outset of the voyage trouble began. Hudson wrote on April 22, when he was in the mouth of the Thames, off the Isle of Sheppey: "I caused Master Coleburne to bee put into a pinke bound for London, with my letter to the Adventurars imparting the reason why I put him out of the ship." He does not add what that reason was;^[5] nor is there any reference in what remains of his log to farther difficulties with his crew. The newly discovered testimony of the mutineers, cited later, refers only to the final mutiny. Prickett, therefore—in part borne out by the "Note" of poor Widowes—is our authority for the several mutinous outbreaks which occurred during the voyage; and Prickett wrote with a vagueness—using such phrases as "this day" and "this time," without adding a date—that helped him to muddle his narrative in the parts which we want to have, but which he did not want to have, most clear.

Prickett's first record of trouble refers to some period in July, at which time the "Discovery" was within the mouth of Hudson's Strait and was beset with ice. It reads: "Some of our men this day fell sicke, I will not say it was for feare, although I saw small signe of other grieffe." His next entry seems to date a fortnight or so later, when the ship was farther within the strait and temporarily ice-bound: "Here our Master was in despaire, and (as he told me after) he thought he should never have got out of this ice, but there have perished.

Therefore he brought forth his card [chart] and showed all the company that hee was entered above an hundred leagues farther than ever any English was: and left it to their choice whether they should proceed any farther—yea or nay. Whereupon some were of one minde and some of another, some wishing themselves at home, and some not caring where so they were out of the ice. But there were some who then spake words which were remembered a great while after." This record shows that Hudson had with him a chart of the strait—presumably based on Weymouth's earlier (1602) exploration of it—with the discovery of which he popularly is credited; and, as Weymouth sailed into the strait a hundred leagues, his assertion that he had "entered a hundred leagues farther than ever any English was" obviously is an error. But the more important matter made clear by Prickett (admitting that Prickett told the truth) is that a dangerously ugly feeling was abroad among the crew nearly a year before that feeling culminated in the final tragedy.

Prickett concludes this episode by showing that Hudson's eager desire to press on prevailed: "After many words to no purpose, to worke we must on all hands, to get ourselves out and to cleere our ship."

And so the "Discovery" went onward—sometimes working her way through the ice, sometimes sailing freely in clear water—until Hudson triumphantly brought her, as Purchas puts it, into "a spacious sea, wherein he sayled above a hundred leagues South, confidently proud that he had won the passage"! It was his resolve to push on until he could be sure that he truly "had won the passage" that won him to his death.

When they had entered that spacious sea—rounding the cape which then received its name of Cape Wolstenholme—they came to where sorrel and scurvy-grass grew plentifully, and where there was "great store of fowle." Prickett records that the crew urged Hudson "to stay a daye or two in this place, telling him what refreshment might there bee had. But by no means would he stay, who was not pleased with the motion." This refers to August 3d, the day on which Hudson's log ends. Prickett adds, significantly: "So we left the fowle, and lost our way downe to the South West."

By September, the "Discovery" was come into James Bay, at the southern extremity of Hudson's Bay; and then it was that the serious trouble began. By Prickett's showing, there seems to have been a clash of opinions in regard to the ship's course; and of so violent a sort that strong measures were required to maintain discipline. The outcome was that "our Master took occasion to revive

old matters, and to displace Robert Juet from being his mate, and the boatswaine from his place, for the words spoken in the first great bay of ice."

For what happened at that time we have a better authority than Prickett. The "Note" of Thomas Widowes covers this episode; and, in covering it, throws light upon the mutinous conditions which prevailed increasingly as the voyage went on. As the only contemporary document giving Hudson's side of the matter it is of first importance—we may be very sure that it would not have come down to us had it been discovered by the mutineers—and I cite it here in full as Purchas prints it:

"The tenth day of September, 1610, after dinner, our Master called all the Companie together, to heare and beare witnessse of the abuse of some of the Companie (it having beene the request of Robert Juet), that the Master should redresse some abuses and slanders, as hee called them, against this Juet: which thing after the Master had examined and heard with equitie what hee could say for himselfe, there were proued so many and great abuses, and mutinous matters against the Master, and [the] action by Juet, that there was danger to have suffered them longer: and it was fit time to punish and cut off farther occasions of the like mutinies.

"It was proved to his face, first with Bennet Mathew, our Trumpet, upon our first sight of Island [Iceland], and he confest, that he supposed that in the action would be man slaughter, and proue bloodie to some.

"Secondly, at our coming from Island, in hearing of the Companie, hee did threaten to turne the head of the Ship home from the action, which at that time was by our Master wisely pacified, hoping of amendment.

"Thirdly, it was deposed by Philip Staffe, our Carpenter, and Ladlie Arnold [Arnold Ludlow] to his face upon the holy Bible, that hee perswaded them to keepe Muskets charged, and Swords readie in their Cabbins, for they should be charged with shot ere the Voyage was over.

"Fourthly, wee being pestered in the Ice, hee had used words tending to mutinie, discouragement, and slander of the action, which easily took effect in those that were timorous; and had not the Master in time preuented, it might easily have overthrowne the Voyage: and now lately being imbayed in a deepe Bay, which the Master had desire to see, for some reasons to himselfe knowne, his word tended altogether to put the Companie into a fray [fear] of extremitie, by wintering in cold: Jestng at our Master's hope to see Bantam by Candlemas.

"For these and diuers other base slanders against the Master, hee was deposed, and Robert Bylot [Bileth, or Byleth], who had showed himself honestly respecting the good of the action, was placed in his stead the Masters Mate.

"Also Francis Clement the Boatson, at this time was put from his Office, and William Wilson, a man thought more fit, preferred to his place. This man had basely carried himselfe to our Master and the action.

"Also Adrian Mooter was appointed Boatsons mate: and a promise by the Master, that from this day Juats wages should remain to Bylot, and the Boatsons overplus of wages should bee equally diuided betweene Wilson and one John King, to the owners good liking, one of the Quarter Masters, who had very well carried themselves to the furtherance of the businesse.

"Also the Master promised, if the Offenders yet behaued themselves henceforth honestly, hee would be a means for their good, and that hee would forget injuries, with other admonitions."

Hudson's fame is the brighter for this testament of the poor "Student in the Mathematickes" whose loyalty to his commander cost him his life. At times, Hudson seems to have temporized with his mutinous crews. In this grave crisis he did not temporize. For cause, he disrated his chief officers: and so asserted in that desolate place, as fearlessly as he would have asserted it in an English harbor, that aboard his ship his will was law.

But his strong action only scotched the mutiny. Prickett's narrative of the doings of the ensuing seven weeks deals with what he implies was purposeless sailing up and down James Bay. He casts reflections upon Hudson's seamanship in such phrases as "our Master would have the anchor up, against the mind of all who knew what belongeth thereto"; and in all that he writes there is a perceptible note of resentment of the Master's doings that reflects the mutinous feeling on board. Especially does this feeling show in his account of their settling into winter quarters: "Having spent three moneths in a labyrinth without end, being now the last of October, we went downe to the East, to the bottome of the Bay; but returned without speeding of that we went for. The next day we went to the South and South West, and found a place, whereunto we brought our ship and haled her aground. And this was the first of November. By the tenth thereof we were frozen in."

And then the Arctic night closed down upon them: and with it the certainty that they were prisoners in that desolate freezing darkness until the sun should

come again and set them free.

5 Captain Lake Fox has the following: "In the road of Lee, in the river Thames, he [Hudson] caused Master Coalbrand to be set in a pinke to be carried back againe to London. This Coalbrand was in every way held to be a better man than himselfe, being put in by the adventurers as his assistant, who envying the same (he having the command in his own hands) devised this course, to send himselfe the same way, though in a farre worse place, as hereafter followeth." Prickett tells only: "Thwart of Sheppey, our Master sent Master Colbert back to the owners with his letter."

XI

Nerves go to pieces in the Arctic. Captain Back, who commanded the "Terror" on her first northern voyage (1836), has told how there comes, as the icy night drags on, "a weariness of heart, a blank feeling, which gets the better of the whole man"; and Colonel Brainard, of the Greely expedition, wrote: "Take any set of men, however carefully selected, and let them be thrown as intimately together as are the members of an exploring expedition—hearing the same voices, seeing the same faces, day after day—and they will soon become weary of one another's society and impatient of one another's faults."

The Greely expedition—composed of twenty-five men, of whom only seven were found alive by the rescue party—in many ways parallels, and pointedly illustrates, the Hudson expedition. There was dissension in Greely's command almost from the start. Surgeon Pavy's angry protests compelled the sending back in the "Proteus"—paralleling the sending back of Coleburne in the pink—of one member of the company; and Lieutenant Kislingbury—paralleling Juet's insubordination—objected so strongly to Greely's regulations that he gave in his resignation and tried, unsuccessfully, to overtake the "Proteus" and go home in her. Being returned to Fort Conger, he was not restored to his rank, and remained—as Juet remained after being superseded—a malcontent.

One of the commentators on the expedition thus has summarized the conditions of that dreadful winter of 1883-84: "It was now October, and the situation of the explorers was becoming desperate, but the bickerings seem to have increased with their peril. As the weary days of starvation and death wore on, nearly every member of the party developed a grievance. Israel was reprimanded by Greely for falsely accusing Brainard of unfairness in the distribution of articles. Bender annoyed the whole camp by his complaints regarding his bed-clothes; Pavy and Henry accused Fredericks, the cook, of not giving them their fair share of food; and Pavy and Kislingbury had a quarrel that barely stopped short of blows. Then Jewell was accused of selecting the heaviest dishes of those issued.... Bender and Schneider had a fist fight in their sleeping bag; and on one occasion Bender was so violent that a general mutiny was imminent, and Greely says in his written record:

'If I could have got Long's gun I would have killed him.' Bender brutally

treated Ellison, who was very weak; and Schneider abused Whistler as he was dying—the second occurrence of the kind.... The thefts of food by Henry, and his execution, formed a culmination to the dissensions, though it did not entirely stop them. Never was there a more terrible example of the demoralizing effects of the conditions of Arctic life and privations upon men who in other circumstances were able to dwell at peace with their fellows."

Barentz's Ship in the Ice. From de Veer. *Drie Seylagien*, Amsterdam, 1605

Out of those conditions came like results aboard Hudson's ship: discontent developing into insubordination; hatred of the commander; hatred of each other; petty squabbings leading on to tragedies—as minor ills were magnified into catastrophes and little injuries into deadly wrongs. Strictly in keeping with the mean traditions of the Arctic is the fact that the point of departure of the final mutiny was a wrangle that arose over the ownership of "a gray cloth gowne."

Prickett records: "About the middle of this moneth of November dyed John Williams our Gunner. God pardon the Masters uncharitable dealing with this man. Now for that I am come to speake of him, out of whose ashes (as it were) that unhappie deed grew which brought a scandall upon all that are returned home, and upon the action itself, the multitude (like the dog) running after the stone, but not at the caster; therefore, not to wronge the living nor slander the dead, I will (by the leave of God) deliver the truth as neere as I can."

Prickett's deliverance of the truth leaves much to be desired. Without giving any information in regard to Hudson's "uncharitable dealing" with the gunner, he takes a fresh departure in these words: "You shall understand that our Master kept (in his house at London) a young man named Henrie Greene, borne in Kent, of worshipfull parents, but by his leud life and conversation hee had lost the good will of all his frinds, and had spent all that hee had. This man our Master would have to sea with him because hee could write well.... This Henrie Greene was not set down in the owners booke, nor any wages for him.... At Island the Surgeon and hee fell out in Dutch, and hee beat him ashoare in English, which set all the Companie in a rage soe that wee had much adoe to get the Surgeon aboard. [This curiously parallels the fight between Surgeon Pavy and Lieutenant Kislingbury] ... Robert Juet, (the Masters Mate) would needs burne his finger in the embers, and tolde the Carpenter a long tale (when hee was drunke) that our Master had brought in Greene to cracke his credit that should displease him: which wordes came to the Masters eares, who when hee understood it, would have gone back to Island, when hee was fortie leagues from thence, to have sent

home his Mate Robert Juet in a fisherman. But, being otherwise perswaded, all was well.... Now when our Gunner was dead, and (as the order is in such cases) if the Company stand in neede of any thing that belonged to the man deceased, then it is brought to the mayne mast, and there sold to them that will give moste for the same. This Gunner had a gray cloth gowne, which Greene prayed the Master to friend him so much as to let him have it, paying for it as another would give. The Master saith hee should, and thereupon hee answered some, that sought to have it, that Greene should have it, and none else, and soe it rested.

"Now out of season and time the Master calleth the Carpenter to goe in hand with an house on shoare, which at the beginning our Master would not heare, when it might have been done. The Carpenter told him, that the snow and froste were such, as hee neither could nor would goe in hand with such worke. Which when our Master heard, hee ferreted him out of his cabbिन to strike him, calling him by many foule names, and threatening to hang him. The Carpenter told him that hee knew what belonged to his place better than himselfe, and that he was no house carpenter. So this passed, and the house was (after) made with much labour, but to no end. The next day after the Master and the Carpenter fell out, the Carpenter took his peece and Henrie Greene with him, for it was an order that none should goe out alone, but one with a peece and another with a pike. This did move the Master soe much the more against Henrie Greene, that Robert Billot his Mate [who had been promoted to Juet's place] must have the gowne, and had it delivered unto him; which when Henrie Greene saw he challenged the Masters promise [to him]. But the Master did so raile on Greene, with so many words of disgrace, telling him that all his friends would not trust him with twenty shillings, and therefore why should hee. As for wages hee had none, nor none should have if hee did not please him well. Yet the Master had promised him to make his wages as good as any mans in the ship; and to have him one of the Princes guard when we came home. But you shall see how the devil out of this soe wrought with Greene that he did the Master what mischief hee could in seeking to discredit him, and to thrust him and many other honest men out of the ship in the end. To speake of all our trouble in this time of Winter (which was so colde, as it lamed the most of our Companie and my selfe doe yet feele it) would bee too tedious."

That is all that Prickett tells about their wintering; but what he leaves untold, as "too tedious," easily may be filled in. Beginning with that brabble over the "gray cloth gowne," there must have gone on in Hudson's party the same bickerings and wranglings that went on in Greely's party, and the same

development of small animosities into burning hatreds. And it all, with Hudson's people, must have been rougher and fiercer and deadlier than it was with Greely's people: because Hudson's crew was of a time when sea-men, for cause, were called sea-wolves; while Greely's crew was the better (yet exhibited scant evidence of it) by an additional two centuries and a half of civilization, and was made up (though with little to show for it) of picked men.

XII

The end came in the spring-time. Through the winter the party had "such store of fowle," and later had for a while so good a supply of fish, that starvation was staved off. When the ice broke up, about the middle of June, Hudson sailed from his winter quarters and went out a little way into Hudson's Bay. There they were caught and held in the floating ice—with their stores almost exhausted, and with no more fowl nor fish to be had. Then the nip of hunger came; and with it came openly the mutiny that secretly had been fermenting through those months of cold and gloom.

Prickett writes: "Being thus in the ice on Saturday, the one and twentieth of June, at night, Wilson the boat swayne, and Henry Greene, came to mee lying (in my cabbin) lame, and told mee that they and the rest of their associates would shift the company and turne the Master and all the sicke men into the shallop, and let them shift for themselves. For there was not fourteen daies victuall left for all the company, at that poore allowance they were at, and that there they lay, the Master not caring to goe one way or other: and that they had not eaten any thing these three dayes, and therefore were resolute, either to mend or end, and what they had begun they would goe through with it, or dye."

According to his own account, Prickett made answer to this precious pair of scoundrels that he "marvelled to heare so much from them, considering that they were married men, and had wives and children, and that for their sakes they should not commit so foule a thing in the sight of God and man as that would bee"; to which Greene replied that "he knew the worst, which was, to be hanged when hee came home, and therefore of the two he would rather be hanged at home than starved abroad." With that deliverance "Henry Greene went his way, and presently came Juet, who, because he was an ancient man, I hoped to have found some reason in him. But hee was worse than Henry Greene, for he sware plainly that he would justifie this deed when he came home."

More of the conspirators came to Prickett to urge him to join them in their intended crime. We have his weak word for it that he refused, and that he tried to stay them; to which he weakly adds: "I hoped that some one or other would give some notice, either to the Carpenter [or to] John King or the Master." That he did not try to give "some notice" himself is the blackest count against him. The just

inference may be drawn from his narrative, as a whole, that he was a liar; and from this particular section of it the farther inference may be drawn that he was a coward.

In the dawn of the Sunday morning the outbreak came. Prickett tells that it began by clapping the hatch over John King (one of the faithful men), who had gone down into the hold for water; and continues: "In the meane time Henrie Greene and another went to the carpenter [Philip Staffe] and held him with a talke till the Master came out of his cabbin (which hee soone did); then came John Thomas and Bennet before him, while Wilson bound his arms behind him. He asked them what they meant. They told him he should know when he was in the shallop. Now Juet, while this was a-doing, came to John King into the hold, who was provided for him, for he had got a sword of his own, and kept him at a bay, and might have killed him, but others came to helpe him, and so he came up to the Master. The Master called to the Carpenter, and told him that he was bound, but I heard no answer he made. Now Arnold Lodlo and Michael Bute rayled at them, and told them their knaverie would show itselife. Then was the shallop haled up to the ship side, and the poore sicke and lame men were called upon to get them out of their cabbins into the shallop.

"The Master called to me, who came out of my cabbin as well as I could, to the hatch way to speake with him: where, on my knees, I besought them, for the love of God, to remember themselves, and to doe as they would be done unto. They bade me keepe myselife well, and get me into my cabbin; not suffering the Master to speake with me. But when I came into my cabbin againe, hee called to me at the horne which gave light into my cabbin, and told me that Juet would overthrow us all; nay (said I) it is that villaine Henrie Greene, and I spake it not softly. Now was the Carpenter at libertie, who asked them if they would bee hanged when they came home: and, as for himselife, hee said, hee would not stay in the ship unless they would force him. They bade him goe then, for they would not stay him....

"Now were all the poore men in the shallop, whose names are as followeth: Henrie Hudson, John Hudson, Arnold Lodlo, Sidrack Faner, Philip Staffe, Thomas Woodhouse or Wydhouse, Adam Moore, Henrie [sic] King, Michael Bute. The Carpenter got of them a peece, and powder, and shot, and some pikes, an iron pot, with some meale, and other things. They stood out of the ice, the shallop being fast to the sterne of the shippe, and so (when they were nigh out, for I cannot say they were cleane out) they cut her head fast from the sterne of our ship, then out with their top sayles, and toward the east they stood in a cleere

sea.

"In the end they took in their top sayles, righted their helme, and lay under their fore sayle till they had ransacked and searched all places in the ship. In the hold they found one of the vessels of meale whole, and the other halfe spent, for wee had but two; wee found also two firkins of batter, some twentie seven pieces of porke, halfe a bushell of pease; but in the Masters cabbin we found two hundred of bisket cakes, a pecke of meale, of beere to the quantitie of a butt, one with another. Now it was said that the shallop was come within sight, they let fall the main sayle, and out with their top sayles, and fly as from an enemy. Then I prayed them yet to remember themselves; but William Wilson (more than the rest) would heare of no such matter. Comming nigh the east shore they cast about, and stood to the west and came to an iland and anchored... Heere we lay that night, and the best part of the next day, in all which time we saw not the shallop, or ever after."

That is the story of Hudson's murder as we get it from his murderers; and even from Prickett's biased narrative so complete a case is made out against the mutineers that there is comfort in knowing that some of them, and the worst of them, came quickly to their just reward.

XIII

A month later, July 28, a halt was made in the mouth of Hudson's Strait to search for "fowle" for food on the homeward voyage. There "savages" were encountered, seemingly of so friendly a nature that on the day following the first meeting with them a boat's crew—of which Prickett was one—went ashore unarmed. Then came a sudden attack. Prickett himself was set upon in the boat—of which, "being lame," he had been left keeper—by a savage whom he managed to kill. What happened to the others he thus tells:

"Whiles I was thus assaulted in the boat, our men were set upon on the shoare. John Thomas and William Wilson had their bowels cut, and Michael Perse and Henry Greene, being mortally wounded, came tumbling into the boat together. When Andrew Moter saw this medley, hee came running downe the rockes and leaped into the sea, and so swamme to the boat, hanging on the sterne thereof, till Michael Perse took him in, who manfully made good the head of the boat against the savages, that pressed sore upon us. Now Michael Perse had got an hatchet, wherewith I saw him strike one of them, that he lay sprawling in the sea. Henry Greene crieth *Coragio*, and layeth about him with his truncheon. I cryed to them to cleere the boat, and Andrew Moter cryed to bee taken in. The savages betooke them to their bowes and arrowes, which they sent amongst us, wherewith Henry Greene was slaine out-right, and Michael Perse received many wounds, and so did the rest. Michael Perse cleereth [unfastened] the boate, and puts it from the shoare, and helpeth Andrew Moter in; but in turning of the boat I received a cruell wound in my backe with an arrow. Michael Perse and Andrew Moter rowed the boate away, which, when the savages saw, they ranne to their boats, and I feared they would have launched them to have followed us, but they did not, and our ship was in the middle of the channel and could not see us.

"Now, when they had rowed a good way from the shoare, Michael Perse fainted, and could row no more. Then was Andrew Moter driven to stand in the boat head, and waft to the ship, which at first saw us not, and when they did they could not tell what to make of us, but in the end they stood for us, and so tooke us up. Henry Greene was throwne out of the boat into the sea, and the rest were had aboard, the savage [with whom Prickett had fought] being yet alive, yet without sense. But they died all there that day, William Wilson swearing and cursing in most fearefull manner. Michael Perse lived two dayes after, and then

died. Thus you have heard the tragicall end of Henry Greene and his mates, whom they called captaine, these four being the only lustie men in all the ship."

[An Astrolabie, 1596. From 'The Arte of Navigation.' London. Edition 1596](#)

[\[LARGER IMAGE\]](#)

I am glad that Prickett got "a cruell wound in the backe." Were it not that by the killing of him we should have lost his narrative, I should wish that that weak villain had been killed along with the stronger ones. They were strong. It was a brave fight that they made; and Henry Greene's last recorded word, "Coragio!" was worthy of the lips of a better man. But he and the others eminently deserved the death that the savages gave them, and it is good to know that Hudson's murder so soon was avenged. Juet's equally exemplary punishment, equally deserved, came a little later. On the homeward voyage the whole company got to the very edge, and Juet passed beyond the edge, of starvation. When the ship was only sixty or seventy leagues from Ireland, where she made her landfall, Prickett tells that he "dyed for meere want."

What befell the survivors of the "Discovery's" crew, on the ship's return to England, has remained until now unknown; and even now the account of them is inconclusive. In the Latin edition of the year 1613 of his "Detectio Freti" Hessel Gerritz wrote: "They exposed Hudson and the other officers in a boat on the open sea, and returned into their country. There they have been thrown into prison for their crime, and will be kept in prison until their captain shall be safely brought home. For that purpose some ships have been sent out last year by the late Prince of Wales and by the Directors of the Moscovia Company, about the return of which nothing as yet has been heard."

For three hundred years that statement of fact has ended Hudson's story. The fragmentary documents which I have been so fortunate as to obtain from the Record Office carry it a little, only a little, farther. Unhappily they stop short—giving no assurance that the mutineers got to the gallows that they deserved. All that they prove is that the few survivors were brought to trial: charged with having put the master of their ship, and others, "into a shallop, without food, drink, fire, clothing, or any necessaries, and then maliciously abandoning them: so that they came thereby to their death, and miserably perished."

There, unfinished, the record ends. What penalty, or that any penalty, was exacted of those who survived to be tried for Hudson's murder remains unknown. Their ignoble fate is hidden in a sordid darkness: fitly in contrast with

his noble fate—that lies retired within a glorious mystery.

XIV

Hudson has no cause to quarrel with the rating that has been fixed for him in the eternal balances. All that he lost (or seemed to lose) in life has been more than made good to him in the flowing of the years since he fought out with Fate his last losing round.

In his River and Strait and Bay he has such monuments set up before the whole world as have been awarded to only one other navigator. And they are his justly. Before his time, those great waterways, and that great inland sea, were mere hazy geographical concepts. After his time they were clearly defined geographical facts. He did—and those who had seen them before him did not—make them effectively known. Here, in this city of New York—which owes to him its being—he has a monument of a different and of a nobler sort. Here, assuredly, down through the coming ages his memory will be honored actively, his name will be in men's mouths ceaselessly, so long as the city shall endure.

And I hold that Hudson's fame, as a most brave explorer and as a great discoverer, is not dimmed by the fact that up to a certain point he followed in other men's footsteps; nor do I think that his glory is lessened by his seeming predestination to go on fixed lines to a fixed end. On the contrary, I think that his fame is brightened by his willingness to follow, that he might—as he did—surpass his predecessors; and that his glory is increased by the resolute firmness with which he played up to his destiny. Holding fast to his great purpose to find a passage to the East by the North, he compelled every one of Fate's deals against him—until that last deal—to turn in his favor; and even in that last deal he won a death so heroically woful that exalted pity for him, almost as much as admiration for his great achievements, has kept his fame through the centuries very splendidly alive.



NEWLY-DISCOVERED DOCUMENTS

CONCERNING THE DOCUMENTS

In an article entitled "English Ships in the Time of James I.," by R.G. Marsden, M.A., in Volume XIX of the Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, I came upon this entry: "'Discovery' (or 'Hopewell,' or 'Good Hope') Hudson's ship on his last voyage; Baffin also sailed in her." A list of references to manuscript records followed; and one of the entries, relating to the High Court of Admiralty, read: "Exam. 42. 25 Jan. 1611. trial of some of the crew for the murder of Hudson."

As I have stated elsewhere, none of the historians who has dealt with matters relating to Hudson has told what became of his murderers when they returned to England. Hessel Gerritz alone has given the information (1613, two years after the event) that they "were to be" put on trial. Whether they were, or were not, put on trial has remained unknown. Any one who has engaged in the fascinating pursuit of elusive historical truth will understand, therefore, my warm delight, and my warm gratitude to Mr. Marsden, when this clew to hitherto unpublished facts concerning Hudson was placed in my hands.

Following it has not led me so far as, in my first enthusiasm, I hoped that it would lead me. The search that I have caused to be made in the Record Office, in London, has not brought to light even all of the documents referred to by Mr. Marsden. The record of the trial is incomplete; and, most regrettably, the most essential of all the documents is lacking: the judgment of the Court. So far as the mutineers are concerned, all that these documents prove is that they actually were brought to trial: what penalty was put upon them, or if any penalty was put upon them, still remains unknown.

But in another way these documents do possess a high value, and are of an exceptional interest, in that they exhibit the sworn testimony of six eye-witnesses

to the fact as to the circumstances of Hudson's out-casting. Five of these witnesses now are produced (in print) for the first time. The sixth, Abacuck Prickett, was the author of the "Larger Discourse" that hitherto has been the sole source of information concerning the final mutiny on board the "Discovery." That Prickett's sworn testimony and unsworn narrative substantially are in agreement, as they are, is not surprising; nor does such agreement appreciably affect the truth of either of them. Sworn or unsworn, Prickett was not a person from whom pure truth could be expected when, as in this case, he was trying to tell a story that would save him from being hanged. Neither is the corroboration of Prickett's story by the five newly produced witnesses—they equally being in danger of hanging—in itself convincing. But certain of the details (e.g., the door between Hudson's cabin and the hold) brought out in this new testimony, together with the way in which it all hangs together, does raise the probability that the crew of the "Discovery" had more than a colorable grievance against Hudson, and does imply that Prickett's obviously biased narrative may be less far from the truth than heretofore it has been held to be.

The summing up of the Trinity House examination gives the crux of the matter: "They all charge the Master with wasting [i.e., filching] the victuals by a scuttle made out of his cabin into the hold, and it appears that he fed his favorites, as the surgeon, etc., and kept others at ordinary allowance. All say that, to save some from starving, they were content to put away [abandon] so many." It was from this presentment that the Elder Brethren drew the just conclusion—as we know from Prickett's characteristic denial under oath that he "ever knew or heard" such expression of their opinion—that "they deserved to be hanged for the same."

In the testimony of Edward Wilson, the surgeon—one of the "favorites"—the point is made, credited to Staffe, that "the reason why the Master should soe favour to give meate to some of the companie and not the rest" was because "it was necessary that some of them should be kepte upp"—in other words, that some members of the crew, without regard to the needs of the remainder, should receive food enough to give them strength to work the ship. This is an agreement, substantially, with the charge preferred against Hudson in the "Larger Discourse"; upon which Dr. Asher made the exculpatory comment: "But even if this charge be a true one, Hudson's motives were certainly honorable; with such men as he had under his orders it was dangerous to deal openly. Their crime had no other cause than the fear that he would continue his search and expose them to new privations: and it seems that in providing for this emergency, he had even

increased his dangers." Dr. Asher's excuse, I should add, refers more to concealment of food than to unfair apportionment.

I have no desire to play the part of devil's advocate; but—in the guise of that personage under his more respectable title of Promotor Fidei—it is my duty to point out that if Hudson deliberately did "keep up" himself and a favored few by putting the remainder on starvation rations—no matter what may have been his motives—he exceeded his ship-master's right over his crew of life and death. His doing so, if he did do so, did not justify mutiny. Mutiny is a sea-crime that no provocation justifies. But if the point at issue was who should die of hunger that the others should have food enough to keep them alive, then the mutineers could claim—and this is what virtually they did claim in making their defence—that they did by the Master in a swift and bold way precisely what in a slow and underhand way he was doing by them.

In the more agreeable rôle of Postulator, I may add that this charge against Hudson—while not disproved—is not sustained. The one witness, Robert Byleth, of whom reputable record survives—the only witness, indeed, of whom we have any record whatever beyond that of the case in hand—did not even refer to it. In his Admiralty Court examination—he is not included in the record of those examined at the Trinity House—he said no more than that the "discontent" of the crew was "by occasion of the want of victualls." Neither in his statement in chief nor in his cross-examination did he charge Hudson with wrong-doing of any kind. Byleth himself does not seem to have been looked upon as a criminal: as is implied by his being sent with Captain Button (1612) on the exploring expedition toward the northwest that was directed to search for Hudson; by his sailing two voyages (1615-1616) with Baffin; and, still more strongly, by the fact that he was employed on each of these occasions by the very persons—members of the Muscovy Company and others—who most would have desired to punish him had they believed that punishment was his just desert. That he did not testify against Hudson must count, therefore, as a strong point in Hudson's favor; so strong—his credibility and theirs being considered comparatively—that it goes far toward offsetting the testimony of the haberdasher and the barber-surgeon and the common sailors by whom Hudson was accused.

But it is useless to try to draw substantial conclusions from these fragmentary records. The most that can be deduced from them—and even that, because of Byleth's silence, hesitantly—is that in a general way they do tend to confirm Prickett's narrative. They would be more to my liking if this were not the case.

A curious feature of the trial of the mutineers is its long delay—more than five years. The Trinity House authorities acted promptly. Almost immediately upon the return to London of the eight survivors of the "Discovery" five of them (Prickett, Wilson, Clemens, Motter and Mathews—no mention is made in the record of Byleth, Bond, and the boy Syms) were brought before the Masters (October 24, 1611) for examination. In a single day their examination was concluded: with the resulting verdict of the Masters upon their actions that they "deserved to be hanged for the same." Three months later, 25 January, 1611 (O.S.), the matter was before the Instance and Prize Records division of the High Court of Admiralty; of which hearing the only recorded result is the examination of the barber-surgeon, Edward Wilson. Then, apparently, the mutineers were left to their own devices for five full years.

So far as the records show, no action was taken until the trial began in Oyer and Terminer. The date of that beginning cannot be fixed precisely—there being no date attached to the True Bill found against Byleth, Prickett, Wilson, Motter, Bond, and Sims. (For some unknown reason Mathews and Clemens were not included in the indictment; although Clemens, certainly, was within the jurisdiction of the Court.) The date may be fixed very closely, however, by the fact that the two most important witnesses, Prickett and Byleth, were examined on 7 February, 1616 (O.S.). Three months later, 13 May, 1617 (O.S.), Clemens was examined. And that is all! There, in the very middle of the trial—leaving in the air the examinations of the other witnesses and the judgments of the Court—the records end.

Had document No. 2 of the Oyer and Terminer series been found, some explanation of the five years' delay of the trial might have been forthcoming; and the exact date of its beginning probably would have been fixed. As the records stand, they leave us—so far as the trial is concerned—with a series of increasingly disappointing negatives: We do not know why two of the crew—one of them certainly within reach of the Court—were not included in the indictment; nor why the trial was postponed for so long a time; nor certainly when it ended; nor, worst of all, what was its result.

I should be glad to believe that the mutineers—even including Byleth, who was the best of them—came to the hanging that the Elder Brethren of the Trinity, in their off-hand just judgment, declared that they deserved. If they did, there is no known record of their hanging. A curiously suggestive interest, however, attaches to the fact that at just about the time when the trial ended one of them, and the only conspicuous one of them, seems permanently to have disappeared.

That most careful investigator the late Mr. Alexander Brown was unable to find any sure trace of Byleth after his second voyage with Baffin, which was made in March-August, 1616. Seven months later, as the subjoined records prove, he was on trial for his life. It seems to me to be at least a possibility that the result of that trial may have led directly to his permanent disappearance. If it did, and if Prickett and the others in a like way disappeared with him, then was justice done on Hudson's murderers.

Note—The varying spelling, most obvious in proper names, follows that of the documents.

THE DOCUMENTS

Trinity House MS. Transactions. 1609-1625.
(24 October 1611)

The 9 men turned out of the ship:

Henry Hudson, master.

John Hudson, his son.

Arnold Ladley.

John King, quarter master.

Michael Butt, married.

Thomas Woodhoase, a mathematician, put away in great distress.

Adame Moore.

Philip Staff, carpenter.

Syracke Fanner, married.

John Williams, died on 9 October.

—Ivet [Juet], died coming home.

Slain:

Henry Greene.

William Wilson.

John Thomas.

Michell Peerce.

Men that came home:

Robert Billet, master.

Abecocke Prickett, a land man put in by the Adventurers.

Edward Wilson, surgeon.

Francis Clemens, boteson.

Adrian Motter.

Bennet Mathues, a land man.

Nicholas Syms, boy.

Silvanus Bond, couper.

After Hudson was put out, the company elected Billet as master.

Abacuck Pricket, sworn, says the ship began to return about 12th June, and about the 22d or 23d, they put away the master. Greene and Wilson were employed to fish for the company, and being at sea combined to steal away the shallope, but at last resolved to take away the ship, and put the master and other important men into the shallope.

He clears the now master of any foreknowledge of this complot, but they relied on Ivett's judgment and skill.

Edward Wilson, surgeon, knew nothing of the putting of the master out of the ship, till he saw him pinioned down before his cabin door.

Francis Clemens, Adrian Motter and Bennet Mathues say the master was put out of the ship by the consent of all that were in health, in regard that their victualls were much wasted by him; some of those that were put away were directly against the master, and yet for safety of the rest put away with him, and all by those men that were slain principally.

They all charge the master with wasting the victuals by a scuttle made out of his cabin into the hold, and it appears that he fed his favourites, as the surgeon, etc., and kept others at only ordinary allowance. All say that, to save some from starving, they were content to put away so many, and that to most of them it was utterly unknown who should go, or who tarry, but as affection or rage did guide them in that fury that were authors and executors of that plot.

Instance & Prize Records. (High Court of Admiralty). Examinations, &c. Series I. Vol. 42. 1611-12 to 1614.

Die Sabbto XXV^{to} *January* 1611.

EDWARD WILLSON, of Portesmouth Surgion aged xxij yeares sworne and examined before the Right Wor^{ll} M^r [Master] Doctor Trevor Judge of His Matyes High Court of the Admiltye concerninge his late beinge at sea in the Discovery of London whereof Henry Hudson was M^r for the Northwest discovery sayth as followeth.

Being demaunded whether he was one of the companie of the Discovery wherof Henry Hudson was M^r for the Northwest passage saythe by vertue of his oathe that he was Surgion of the said Shipp the said voyadge.

Beinge asked further whether there was not a mutynie in the said Shipp the said voyadge by some of the companie of the said Shipp against the M^r, and of the manner and occasion thereof and by whome saythe that their victualls were soe scante that they had but two quartes of meale allowed to serve xxij men for a day, and that the M^r had bread and cheese and aquavite in his cabon and called some of the companie whome he favoured to eate and drinke with him in his cabon whereuppon those that had nothings did grudge and mutynye both against the M^r and those that he gave bread and drinke unto, the begynning whereof was thus viz^t. One William Willson then Boateswayne of the said shipp but since slayne by the salvages went up to Phillipp Staffe the M^{rs} Mate and asked him the reason why the M^r should soe favour to give meate to some of the companie, and not the rest whoe aunswered that it was necessary that some of them should be kepte upp Whereuppon Willson went downe agayne and told one Henry Greene what the said Phillipp Staffe had said to the said Willson Whereuppon they with others consented together and agreed to pynion him the said M^r and one John Kinge whoe was Quarter M^r and put them into a shalopp and Phillipp Staffe mighte have stayed still in the shipp but he would voluntarilie goe into the said shalopp for love of the M^r uppon condition that they would give him his clothes (which he had) there was also six more besides the other three putt into the said shalopp whoe thinkeinge that they were onely put into the shalopp to keepe the said Hudson the M^r and Kinge till the victuals were a sharinge went out willinglie but afterwards findinge that the companie in the shipp would not suffer them to come agayne into the shipp they desyred that they mighte have their cloathes and soe pte of them was delivered them, and the rest of their

apparell was soulded at the mayne mast to them that would give most for them and an inventory of every mans pticuler goodes was made and their money was paid by Mr Allin Cary to their friendes heere in England and deducted out of their wages that soe boughte them when they came into England.

Beinge asked whoe were the pties that consented to this mutynie saythe he knoweth not otherwise then before he hath deposed savinge he saythe by vertue of his oathe that this exãet never knewe thereof till the M^r was brought downe pynioned and sett downe before this eãxtes cabon and then this examine looked out and asked him what he ayled and he said that he was pynioned and then this exãte would have come out of his cabon to have gotten some victualls amongst them and they that had bounde the M^r said to this exãte that yf he were well he should keepe himselfe soe and further saythe that neither did Silvanus Bond Nicholas Simmes and Frances Clements consente to this practize against the M^r of this exãtes knowledge.

Beinge demaunded whether he knoweth that the Hollanders have an intent to goe forthe uppon a discovery to the said Northwest passadge and whether they have anie card [chart] delivered them concerninge the said discovery saythe that this exãte for his parte never gave them anie card or knowledge of the said discovery but he hath heard saye that they intend such a voyage and more he cannot saye savinge that some gentlemen and merchants of London that are interested in this discovery have shewed divers cardes abroad w^{ch} happelie might come to some of their knowledge.

Beinge asked further whither there bee a passadge throughe there he saythe that by all likelielihood there is by reason of the tyde of flood came out of the westernne ptes and the tyde of ebbe out of the easterne which may bee easely discovered yf such may bee employed as have beene acquainted with the voyage and knoweth the manner of the ice but in cominge backe agayne they keepinge the northerne most land aboard found little or noe ice in the passadge.

Beinge asked what became of the said Hudson the M^r and the rest of the companie that were put into the shalopp saythe that they put out sayle and followed after them that were in the shipp the space of halfe an houre and when they sawe the shipp put one [on] more sayle and that they could not followe them then they putt in for the shoare and soe they lost sighte of them and never heard of them since And more he cannot depose.

Rich: Trevor.

Edw: Willsonn.

I certify that the foregoing is a true and authentic copy.

J.F. Handcock,
Assistant-Keeper of the Public Records

London, 9th *June*, 1909.

Admiralty Court. Oyer and Terminer. 6.

No. 2 cannot be found. The bundle commences at present with No. 8.

No. 77. True Bill found for the trial of Robert Bileth alias Blythe, late of the precinct of St. Katherine next the Tower of London, co. Middlesex, mariner, Abacucke Prickett, late of the city of London, haberdasher, Edward Wilson of the same, barber-surgeon, Adrian Matter, late of Ratcliffe, Middlesex, mariner; Silvanus Bonde, of London, cooper, and Nicholas Sims, late of Wapping, sailor, to be indicted for having, on 22 June 9 James I, in a certain ship called The Discovery of the port of London, then being on the high sea near Hudson's Straits in the parts of America, pinioned the arms of Henry Hudson, late of the said precinct of St. Katherine, mariner, then master of the said ship The Discovery, and putting him thus bound, together with John Hudson, his son, Arnold Ladley, John Kinge, Michael Butt, Thomas Woodhouse, Philip Staffe, Adam Moore and Sidrach Fanner, mariners of the said ship, into a shallop, without food, drink, fire, clothing or any necessaries, and then maliciously abandoning them, so that they came thereby to their death and miserably perished. [Latin. Not dated.]

Admiralty. Oyer and Terminer. 41.

[*Abstract*]

Friday 7 *February*, 1616 [O.S.]

Abacucke Prickett, of London, haberdasher, examined, says that Henry Hudson, John Hudson, Thomas Widowes, Philip Staffe, John Kinge, Michael Burte, Sidrach Fanner, Adrian Moore and John Ladley, mariners of the Discovery in the voyage for finding out the N.W. passage, about 6 years past, were put out of the ship by force into the Shallop in the strait called Hudson's Strait in America, by Henry Grene, John Thomas, John Wilson, Michael Pearce, and others, by reason they were sick and victuals wanted, "under account" [i.e.,

if rations from the existing scant store were served out equally] they should starve for want of food if all the company should return home in the ship. Philip Staffe went out of the ship of his own accord, for the love he bare to the said Hudson, who was thrust out of the ship. Grene, with 11 or 12 more of the company, sailed away with the Discovery, leaving Hudson and the rest in the shallop in the month of June in the ice. What became of them he knows not. He was lame in his legs at the time, and unable to stand. He greatly lamented the deed, and had no hand in it. Hudson and Staffe were the best friends he had in the ship.

About five weeks after the said ship came to Sir Dudley Digges Island. Here Grene, Wilson, Thomas, Pearse and Adrian Mouter would needs go ashore to trade with the savages, and were betrayed and set upon by the savages, and all of them sore wounded, yet recovered the boat before they died. Grene, coming into the boat, died presently. Wilson, Thomas and Pearse were taken into the ship, and died a few hours afterwards, two of them having had their bowels cut out. The blood upon the clothes brought home was the blood of these persons so wounded and slain by the savages, and no other.

There was falling out between Grene and Hudson the master, and between Wilson the surgeon and Hudson, and between Staffe and Hudson, but no mutiny was in question, until of a sudden the said Grene and his consorts forced the said Hudson and the rest into the shallop, and left them in the ice.

The chests of Hudson and the rest were opened, and their clothes, and such things as they had, inventoried and sold by Grene and the others, and some of the clothes were worn.

Thomas Widowes was thrust out of the ship into the shallop, but whether he willed them take his keys and share his goods, to save his life, this examine knoweth not.

At the putting out of the men, the ship's carpenter [Staffe] asked the company if they would be [wished to be] hanged, when they came to England.

He does not know whether the carpenter is dead or alive, for he never saw him since he was put out into the shallop.

No shot was made at Hudson or any of them nor any hurt done them, that he knows.

He did not see Hudson bound, but heard that Wilson pinioned his arms, when he was put into the shallop. But, when he was in the shallop, this examine saw him in a motley gown at liberty, and they spoke together, Hudson saying: It is that villain Ivott [Juet], that hath undone us; and he answered: No, it is Grene that hath done all this villainy.

It is true that Grene, Wilson and Thomas had consultation together to turn pirates, and so he thinks they would have done, had they not been slain.

There was no watchword given, but Grene, Wilson, Thomas and Bennett watched the master, when he came out of his cabin, and forced him over board into the shallop, and then they put out the rest, being sick men.

He told Sir Thomas Smith the truth, as to how Hudson and the rest were turned out of the ship.

He told the masters of the Trinity-house the truth of the business, but never knew or heard that the masters said they deserved to be hanged for the same.

They were not victualled with rabbits or partridges before Hudson and the rest were turned into the shallop, nor after.

There was no mutiny otherwise than as aforesaid, they were turned out only for want of victuals, as far as he knows.

He does not know the handwriting of Thomas Widowes. He, for his part, made no means to hinder any proceedings that might have been taken against them.

(Signed) ABACOOKE PERIKET.

[*On the same day.*]

Robert Bilett, of St. Katherine's, mariner, examined, saith that, upon a discontent amongst the company of the ship the Discovery in the finding out of the N.W. passage, by occasion of the want of victuals, Henry Grene, being the principal, together with John Thomas, William Wilson, Robert Ivett [Juet] and Michael Pearse, determined to shift the company, and thereupon Henry Hudson, the master, was by force put into the shallop, and 8 or 9 more were commanded to go into the shallop to the master, which they did, this examine thinking this

course was taken only to search the master's cabin and the ship for victuals, which the said Grene and others thought the master concealed from the company to serve his own turn. But, when they were in the shallop, Grene and the rest would not suffer them to come any more on board the ship, so Hudson and the rest in the shallop went away to the southward, and the ship came to the eastward, and the one never saw the other since. What is otherwise become of them be knoweth not.

He says that the men went ashore (as above) to get victuals; and from their wounds the cabins, beds and clothes were made bloody.

There was discontent amongst the company, but no mutiny to his knowledge, until the said Grene and his associates turned the master and the rest into the shallop.

He heard of no mutiny "till overnight that Hudson and the rest were [to be] put into the shallop the next day," and this examine and M^r. Prickett persuaded the crew to the contrary, and Grene answered the master was resolved to overtrowe all, and therefore he and his friends would shift for themselves.

Such clothes as were left behind in the ship by Hudson and his associates were sold, and worn by some of the company that wanted clothes.

The ship's carpenter never used such speeches, to his knowledge. [This seems to refer to Staffe's question, "Would they be hanged when they came to England?"]

Philip Staffe, the carpenter, went into the shallop of his own accord, without any compulsion; whether he be dead or alive, or what has become of him, he knoweth not.

No man, either drunk or sober, can report that Hudson and his associates were shot at after they were in the shallop, for there was no such thing done.

He was under the deck, when Henry Hudson was put out of the ship, so that he saw it not, nor knoweth whether he were bound or not, but saith he heard he was pinioned.

Henry Grene, and two or three others, made a motion to turn pirates, and he believes they would have done, if they had lived.

He denieth that he took any ringe out of Hudson's pocket, neither ever saw it

except on his finger, nor knoweth what became of it.

Such beds and clothes as were left in the ship, and not taken by Hudson and the rest into the shallop, were brought into England, because they left them behind in the ship.

There was no watchword given, but Grene and the others commanded the said Hudson and the rest into the shallop, and upon that command they went.

He told Sir Thomas Smith the manner how Hudson and the rest went from them, but what Sir Thomas said to their wives he knoweth not.

There was no mutiny, but some discontent, amongst the company; they were not victualled with any abundance of rabbits and partridges all the voyage. He doth not know the handwriting of Widowes, nor hath he seen what he put down in writing.

(Signed) ROBERT BYLETH.

Admiralty. Oyer and Terminer. 41.

13 *May*, 1617.

Frances Clemence, of Wapping, mariner, aged 40, says that Henry Hudson, the master, and 8 persons more were put out of the Discovery into the shallop about 20 leagues from the place where they wintered, about 22d of June shall be 6 years in June next, as he heard from the rest of the company, for this examine had his nails frozen off, and was very sick at the time.

Henry Grene, William Wilson, John Thomas and Michael Pearse were slain on shore by the savages at Sir Dudley Digges Island, and Robert Ivett [Juet] died at sea after they were slain.

Philip Staffe, the ship's carpenter, was one of them who were put into the shallop with the master and the rest; whether he is dead or not, he knows not.

The master displaced some of the crew, and put others in their room, but there was no mutiny that he knew of.

Henry Hudson was pinioned, when he was put into the shallop. (With other answers as in the previous examinations.)

THE END

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