THE

VOYAGES

OF

WILLIAM BAFFIN,

1612–1622.

EDITED,

With Notes and an Introduction,

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

William Baffin, the narratives of whose voyages are now for the first time collected in a single volume, occupies a deservedly high place in the list of our early navigators. Although he is only known to us during the last twelve years of his life, and his previous history is an absolute blank, yet the record of those later achievements secures for him an honourable niche in England's temple of fame. He was a daring seaman, a scientific observer, and a great discoverer.

I propose, in this Introduction, to consider Baffin's position successively in those three capacities. But it will, I believe, be alike an act of justice to those who enabled Baffin to perform his work, and conducive to a more thorough appreciation of that work, if I devote my opening pages to a notice of the grand old Merchant Adventurers, who were the munificent patrons of discovery during the Elizabethan age.

Baffin gratefully immortalised the names of the generous patrons who set forth the voyages in which he served; of Sir Thomas Smith, Sir Francis Jones, Sir Dudley Digges, Sir John Wolstenholme, and Sir James Lancaster; and among these pillars of
England's commercial greatness, Sir Thomas Smith
takes the foremost rank. To his wisdom and pa-
triotism, to his disinterested zeal for discovery, and
adventurous boldness, the marvellous extension of
our trade, and the honour of many of our maritime
exploits, are mainly due.

Thomas Smith of Westenhanger, in Kent, better
known as "Customer Smith", was the son of a
yeoman, of long descent in Wiltshire, and was for
many years one of the Farmers of the Queen's Cus-
toms. By his wife Alice, daughter of the Lord
Mayor, Sir Andrew Judd, he had four sons who
survived him, and three daughters. Alice Judd
was descended from Sir Robert Chicheley, through
whom her children were Founder's Kin of All Souls,
and she was a first cousin of Sir Henry Cromwell,
grandfather of the great Protector.1 Customer Smith
died in 1591, and was buried at Ashford. Of his
four sons, the eldest, Sir John of Westenhanger and
Ashford, was father of Thomas Smythe, first Vis-
count Strangford. His line became extinct with
that accomplished geographer, the eighth Viscount,
who was Vice-President of the Royal Geographical
Society, and died in 1869. Sir Thomas, the second
son, was the Merchant Adventurer. Simon, the
third, was slain at Cadiz in 1597. The fourth, Sir

1 Sir Thomas Murfin, Lord Mayor, had a daughter Alice, wife
of Sir Andrew Judd and mother of Alice, who married "Cus-
tomer" Smith; and another daughter, Frances, who married Sir
Richard Williams, alias Cromwell, and was mother of Sir Henry
Cromwell of Hinchinbrook, and great grandmother of Oliver
Cromwell.
Richard Smythe, was of Leeds Castle, which his
dughter sold to Sir Thomas Colepepper of Holling-
bourne. Of the three daughters, Catharine married
Sir Rowland Hayward, Lord Mayor of London;
Elizabeth married Sir Henry Fanshaw, and Jane
was wife of J. Fanshaw, of Ware Park.

Thomas Smith,¹ the second son, succeeded his
father as Customer to Queen Elizabeth, and became
a successful London Merchant. He inherited, from
his father, the manor of Bidborough, and an estate
in the parish of Sutton-at-Hone, in Kent, called
Brooke Place, where he built a large house. He also
had another house at Deptford, and town houses in
Philpot Lane, and in Gracechurch Street. He be-
came wealthy and influential, and it was his great
merit to have encouraged maritime enterprise and
discovery throughout a long life, not mainly for the
sake of gain, but for the honour of his country.

Sir Thomas Smith was an active Member of the
Muscovy Company, and was among those adven-
turers who despatched the first voyages to Spitz-
bergen. He also took a leading part in the found-

¹ He must not be confused with his contemporary, the learned
Sir Thomas Smith, who was born at Saffron Walden in 1514, and
whose life was written by Strype. This Sir Thomas Smith was
of Queen’s College, Cambridge. In conjunction with Cheke he
brought in a new way of pronouncing Greek, and was University
Orator. He was Secretary of State in the reign of Edward VI,
sent ambassador to France by Queen Elizabeth, again Secretary of
State in 1572, and died in 1577. He must have been many
years the senior of his namesake the Merchant Adventurer. His
descendant is Sir W. Bowyer Smijth, Bart., of Hill Hall, in
Essex.
itation of the East India Company, and was elected its first Governor in 1600. He was Sheriff of London in the same year, and was knighted by James I, at the Tower, on May 13th, 1603. In 1604, he was sent Ambassador to Muscovy, sailing in June, and arriving at Archangel on the 22nd of July. Thence he proceeded to Moscow, and succeeded in obtaining privileges for English merchants from Boris Godunof. He returned in the following year, and was afterwards employed, on several occasions, in affairs of State connected with commerce.

Sir Thomas Smith was re-elected Governor of the East India Company in 1607, and again in 1609; when, for his great services, and for having procured the first and second charters, a sum of £500 was voted for his acceptance. But he refused to take the oath of Governor until the Company took back £250. "The residue his Worship kindly yielded to take." The East India Company flourished mightily under his wise and energetic administration; and in 1610, the largest merchant vessel that had ever been built, was launched in presence of the King. She was named by James I, the "Trade's Increase", and at the same time his Majesty, with his own hands, placed a gold chain, worth £200, with his portrait hanging to it, round the neck of Sir Thomas Smith.

1 The narrative of the Embassy was published unknown to Sir Thomas Smith and without his consent. "Sir Thomas Smith's Voyage and Entertainment in Russia, with the Tragical Ends of Two Emperors and One Empress within one month of his being there," London, 1605. See also Purchas, iii, 747.
The great Merchant Adventurer, while thus developing the trade with India, was ever mindful of Arctic discovery. As a manager of the Muscovy Company, he despatched Jonas Poole to Spitzbergen, in 1609; and he had previously induced the East India Company to send Captain Weymouth in search of a North-West Passage, in 1602. But there were men of less patriotic aims in the direction; and when Weymouth returned unsuccessful, it was resolved that the attempt should utterly be left off. Sir Thomas Smith was, however, a true friend to Arctic discovery, through good report and evil report. He resolutely and persistently advocated the glorious cause, and at length, in 1611, he once more induced the East India Company to adventure £300 towards the discovery of the North-West Passage. Again, "the business did not succeed according to desire". Still, Sir Thomas remained true. In 1614, he urged the Company "not to refuse to adventure again, somewhat more, considering it were dishonourable to withdraw from so worthy a work". Grudgingly it was resolved to adventure £200, "so that there may be no expectation of any further supply".

But, in the meanwhile, a new Company had been formed in 1612, with the special object of Arctic discovery, and Sir Thomas Smith became its first Governor. It was called "the Company of Merchants of London, Discoverers of the North-West Passage", and Sir Thomas gathered round him, as colleagues, Sir James Lancaster, Sir Dudley Digges,
Sir William Cockayne, Sir Francis Jones, Sir John Wolstenholme, Richard Wyche, Ralph Freeman, and William Stone, all names well known in Arctic geography. They had already, before they were actually formed into a Company, despatched Henry Hudson, in 1610, on his last fatal voyage; and in 1612, Sir Thomas Button's expedition started, under the special patronage of Henry, Prince of Wales. The voyages of Bylot and Baffin followed.

Both Arctic discovery and Indian trading ventures received the unceasing and laborious attention of Sir Thomas Smith during many years, and he wore himself out by his incessant work in the service of the great trading Companies. In 1615, he was again re-elected Governor of the East India Company; again, in 1618, though old, and wishing to retire; and again, in 1620, by special wish of the King. His house at Deptford was accidentally burnt to the ground in 1619, nothing being saved, except the people, who escaped narrowly. He was at the very time engaged, with Sir Dudley Carleton, in negotiating with Commissioners from the States General, on matters relating to trade. He feasted them in his house in London, in July 1619.

At length, in July 1621, Sir Thomas Smith was allowed to retire from the Governorship of the East India Company, after serving for upwards of twenty years. He resigned from weakness and old age; after having created and fully established the prosperity of a famous body which, in after years, was destined to found a great Empire. Sir Thomas had
himself adventured £20,000; he had closely attended to details respecting the equipment of ships, training of officers, and regulation of trade; and had instilled his own enthusiasm, and desire to advance the honour as well as the wealth of his country, into the Company's servants. He encouraged the scientific branches of a seaman's profession, and lectures on navigation were delivered at his house by Dr. Hood,¹ and Edward Wright. At the same time, he was careful to ensure the permanent record of the voyages sent out under his auspices, by furnishing historical materials to Hakluyt, and afterwards to Purchas. He was the perfect model of an enlightened and patriotic Merchant Adventurer, a type which has now, alas! disappeared from this country.

Sir Thomas Smith died on the 4th of September 1625, and was buried in the church of Sutton-at-Hone, in Kent. A monument to his memory may still be seen in the south aisle, with the following inscription:

M. S.
To the glory of God and to ye pious
Memorie of the honble Sr Thomas Smith Kt.

(late Gouvernour of ye East-Indian Muscovia French and Sommer-Island Companies: Treasurer for the Virginian Plantations: Prime Undertaker in the year 1612 for that noble Designe the Discoverie of the North-West Passage: Principall Comissioner for the London-expedition against ye Pirates: and for a Voyage to ye Ryver Senega upon ye Coast of Africa: one of ye chief Comis-

¹ The speech made by Dr. Hood in the house of Sir Thomas Smith in Gracechurch Street, in November 1588, was published in the same year. There is a copy in the British Museum.
sioners for ye Nauie-Roial and sometime Ambassadour from ye Matie of Gr. Brit. to ye Emperour and great Duke of Russia and Moscovia etc.) who hauing judiciously, conscionably, and with admirable facility managed many difficult and weighty affairs to ye honour and profit of this Nation rested from his labours the 4th day of Septem. 1625, and his soul returning to Him that gave it, his body was here laid vp in ye hope of a blessed Resurrection.

"From those large Kingdomes where the Svn doth rise;
From that rich newesfound-world that westward lies;
From Volga to the floud of Amazons;
From vnder both the Poles, and all the Zones;
From all the famous Ryuers, Landes, and Seas,
Betwixt this Place and our Anti-Podes;
He gott intelligence, what might be found
To giue contentment, through this massie Round.
But finding earthly things did rather tire
His longing Soul, then answer her desire;
To this obscured Village he withdrewe:
From hence his Heauenlie Voyage did pursue.
Here, sum'd vp all, and when his Gale of Breath,
Had left becalmed in the Port of Death,
The soules fraile Barke (and safe had landed her
Where Faith his Factor, and his Harbinger
Made place before), he did (no doubt) obtaine
That wealth with here on Earth wee seek in vain."

There was a portrait of Sir Thomas Smith, engraved by Simon Passe. The original print is very

1 Simon Passe, the son of another famous engraver, Nicholas Passe, a native of Utrecht, was employed by Hilliard, and was ten years in England. His father, whose works are numerous, was in England for several years, and drew many of his portraits from life. This was also the practice of Simon Passe, whose earliest works were James I and his Queen, Prince Henry with a lance, Raleigh, Buck, Gondomar, Archbishop Abbot. He also engraved the Earl and Countess of Somerset, the Earls of Arundel, Dorset, and Pembroke, Sir E. Cecil and Sir T. Smith.