

CHAPTER X

JAN MAYEN AND THE GREENLAND SEA

SEPARATED from other lands by oceanic depths far greater than the height of its famous Beerenberg, isolated Jan Mayen Island in 70° N., 83° W., — fog-enshrouded and ice-beset — is the sole tiny bit of occupied land in the great Greenland Sea. Discovered by Hudson in 1607 and named Touches, it was claimed and occupied by the Dutch, to the discomfiture of England. Its whaling history is described later.

For nearly two centuries Jan Mayen was merely a geographic phrase, until in 1817 it was visited and surveyed by that scientific whaler, William Scoresby, Jr. He reported that Mount Esk was an active volcano, the most northerly in the world. It was visited in 1856 by Lord Dufferin, who described it charmingly in "Letters from High Latitudes." Rabot, landing on its unfrequented east coast in 1891, explored Esk and Faskrud fiords.

The most important phase in the history of Jan Mayen was its occupation in 1882 by the Austrian Von Wohlgemuth (Chapter XIX) for scientific research. In his report, Wien, 1886,