

Sir Humphrey Gilbert

## DEDICATORY VERSE IN PRAISE OF EXPLORATORY VENTURES

by Francis Drake, Martin Frobisher, and others

in Sir George Peckham, A true Report of the late discoveries and possession, taken in the right of the Crown of England of the Newfound Lands: by that valiant and worthy gentleman, Sir Humphrey Gilbert knight.

Wherein is also briefly set down her highness lawful title thereunto, and the great and manifold commodities, that is likely to grow thereby, to the whole realm in general, and to the adventurers in particular. Together with the easiness and shortness of the voyage.

London, 1583 \_\_\_\_\_ Excerpts

### Sir William Pelham, Knight,<sup>1</sup> in commendation of the discourse following.

Like as the Fishes, breeding in the deep,  
Through all the Ocean are allowed to range:  
Nor forced in any certain bounds to keep,  
But as their motions carry them to change.  
To men like liberty, doth reason give:  
In choice of soil, through all the world to live.

To valiant minds each land is a native soil,  
and virtue finds no dwelling place amiss.  
Regard of honor measures not the toil,  
To seek a seat wherein contentment is.  
That seat, that soil, that dwelling place of rest:  
In this discourse, most lively is expressed.

Our foreign neighbors bordering hard at hand.  
Have found it true, to many a thousands gain:  
And are enriched by this abounding land,  
While pent at home, like sluggards we remain.  
But though they have, to satisfy their will:  
Enough is left, our coffers yet to fill.

Then England thrust among them for a share,  
Since title just, and right is wholly thine:  
And as I trust the sequel shall declare,  
Our luck no worse, then theirs before hath been.  
For where the attempt, on virtue doth depend:  
No doubt but God, will bless it in the end.

### Sir Frances Drake, Knight,<sup>2</sup> in commendation of this Treatise.

Who seeks, by worthy deeds, to gain renown for hire:  
Whose heart, whose hand, whose purse is pressed: to purchase his desire  
If any such there be, that thirsteth after Fame:  
Lo, here a mean, to win himself an everlasting name.  
Who seeks, by gain and wealth, t'advance his house and blood:  
Whose care is great, whose toil no less, whose hope, is all for good  
If any one there be, that covets such a trade:  
Lo, here the plot for common wea[ll]th, and private gain is made.  
He, that for virtue's sake, will venture far and near:

Excerpted in modernized English, and images & footnotes added, by the National Humanities Center, 2006: [www.nhc.rtp.nc.us/pds/pds.htm](http://www.nhc.rtp.nc.us/pds/pds.htm). Images reproduced by permission of the National Portrait Gallery, London, United Kingdom.

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Pelham: Lord Justice of Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Frances Drake: English navigator, explorer, and privateer/pirate who led English trading and raiding voyages to the Caribbean and completed the second circumnavigation of the world (1577-80).



Whose zeal is strong, whose practice true, whose faith is void of fear,  
If any such there be, inflamed with holy care.  
Here may he find, a ready mean, his purpose to declare:  
So that, for each degree, this Treatise doth unfold:  
The path to Fame, the proof of zeal, and way to purchase gold.

### M. John Hawkins,<sup>3</sup> his opinion of this intended Voyage.

If zeal to God, or country's care, with private gain's access,  
Might serve for spurs unto th'attempt this pamphlet doth express.  
One coast, one course, one toil might serve, at full to make declared  
A zeal to God, with country's good, and private gain's regard.  
And for the first this enterprise the name of God shall found  
Among a nation in whose ears the same did never sound.  
Next as an endless running stream, her Channels doth discharge:  
That swell above their bounds, into an Ocean wide and large.  
So England that is pestered now, and choked through want of ground  
Shall find a soil where room enough, and perfect doth abound.  
The Romans when the number of their people grew so great,  
As neither wars could waste, nor Rome suffice them for a seat.  
They led them forth by swarming troupes, to foreign lands amain  
And founded divers Colonies, unto the Roman reign.  
Th'Athenians used the like device, the Argives thus have done,  
And fierce Achilles Myrmidons when Troy was overrun.  
But Rome nor Athens nor the rest, were never pestered so,  
As England where no room remains, her dwellers to bestow,  
But shuffled in such pinching bonds, that very breath doth lack:  
And for the want of place they crawl one o'er another's back.  
How nobly then shall they provide that for redress herein,  
With ready hand and open purse this action doth begin.  
Whence glory to the name of God, and country's good shall spring,  
And unto all that further it, a private gain shall bring.  
Then noble youths courageously this enterprise discharge;  
And age, that cannot manage Arms, let them support the charge,  
The issue of your good intent, undoubted will appear,  
Both gracious in the sight of God, and full of honor here.



### Master Captain Chester,<sup>4</sup> his commendation of this Treatise.

Mark well this book when you to read begin,  
And find you shall great secrets hid therein.  
For with your selves you may imagine thus,  
That God hath left this honor unto us.  
The journey known, the passage quickly run,  
The land full rich, the people easily won.  
Whose gains shall be the knowledge of our faith,  
And ours such riches as the country hath.  
Pinch not for pence to set this action out,

<sup>3</sup> Sir John Hawkins: English explorer, pirate, and slavetrader; cousin of Sir Francis Drake.

<sup>4</sup> John Chester: English navigator; captain of the *Swan* in Drake's circumnavigation voyage.

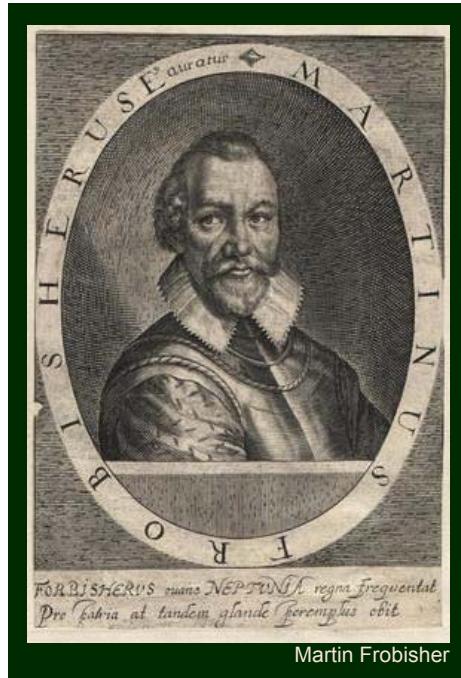
Pounds will return, thereof be not in doubt.  
 Your country shall be bound due thanks to give,  
 For that the poor hereby you may relieve.  
 Unto your Prince good service you shall do,  
 And unto God, a work right grateful too.

### **Master Captain Frobisher,<sup>5</sup> in commendation of the voyage.**

A pleasant air, a sweet and fertile soil,  
 A certain gain, a never dying praise:  
 An easy passage, void of loathsome toil,  
 Found out by some, and known to me the ways.  
 All this is there, then who will refrain to try:  
 That loves to live abroad, or dreads to die.

### **Arthur Hawkins<sup>6</sup> in commendation of this Treatise.**

My friends, if at Th'exchange a man should go and tell,  
 that such, and such commodities he had to sell.  
 Whereof we stood in need and scarcely to be found,  
 Whereby a quick return with profit would redound.  
 I doubt not ere I passed, but you would crave the sight,  
 Of these commended wares, and buy them if you might.  
 Y'are proffered at this time, fair Grapes to make your wine,  
 The pleasant fruits of Spain, the Figs and Orange fine.  
 The speckled Russian Furs that Esterlings us sends,  
 The Rosin, Pitch, and Deals<sup>7</sup> that Dansk and Denmark lends.  
 The Metal here is shown that with a quenchless fire,  
 Inflames our thirsting hearts unstanch'd in desire,  
 A bargain may you have, t'is put into your hands,  
 Of all commodities you have from other lands.  
 And at so easy price you can not choose but gain:  
 A trifle is the most, together with your pain,  
 But what is that some say? our Englishmen give ear,  
 Only to gain, God shield it should be true I hear.  
 If we religious be, let's rig our ships with speed,  
 And carry Christ to these poor souls, that stand in need,  
 Why pause ye thereupon? the freight will quite the charge,  
 For what is done for God, doth find reward full large.



Martin Frobisher

<sup>5</sup> Martin Frobisher: English seaman who led three expeditions in the 1570s to the northern seas in search of a northwest passage.

<sup>6</sup> Arthur Hawkins: undetermined. Dedicatory poems were submitted by four other Englishmen.

<sup>7</sup> Planks of soft wood, such as pine.

## THE TABLE OF THE CHAPTERS CONTAINING THE PRINCIPAL MATTERS IN THIS BOOK.

- I. **The first Chapter**, wherein the Argument of the Book is contained.
- II. **The second Chapter**, sheweth that it is lawful and necessary, to trade and traffic with the Savages. And to plant in their Countries. And divideth planting into two sorts.
- III. **The third Chapter**, doth show the lawful Title, which the Queen's most excellent Majesty hath unto those Countries, which through the aid of almighty God are to be inhabited.
- IV. **The fourth Chapter**, sheweth, how that the trade, traffic and planting in those Countries, is likely to prove very profitable to the whole Realm in general.
- V. **The fifth Chapter**, sheweth that the trading and planting in those Countries, is likely to prove to the particular profit of all the Adventurers.
- VI. **The sixth Chapter**, sheweth that the traffic and planting in those Countries, shall be unto the Savages themselves very beneficial and gainful.
- VII. **The seventh Chapter**, sheweth that the planting there is not a matter of such charge or difficulty, as many would make it seem to be.
- VIII. **The Contents of Article of Assurance**, between the Principal assigns of Sir Humphrey Gilbert Knight, and the four sorts of Adventurers, with them in the voyage for the Western Discoveries.

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