

Sir Humphrey Gilbert and his enterprise  
of colonization in America.  
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*Memoir of*

sick, and some died. All these causes had so weakened the General's forces that scarcely enough suitable men remained to man his vessels.

In this emergency he decided to leave the Swallow at St. John's, to carry home the sick and discontented; and Captain Winter of the Delight was to take the command of her. Captain Maurice Brown of the Swallow was put in command of the Delight and brought into that ship his men of piratical habit who had robbed the fishing vessel a few weeks before. Sir Humphrey chose to go himself in the little frigate Squirrel that he might be better able to explore bays and inlets where larger vessels could not enter so safely. This vessel is supposed to have been his private property; and as he was much attached to the men who had crossed the ocean in it and had been his companions in many perils on the coast, he could not be content to leave them.

On the twentieth of August, 1583, three ships, the Delight belonging to Sir Humphrey, the Golden Hinde, and the Squirrel, well supplied with provisions, stored chiefly in the Delight, the frigate Squirrel somewhat overloaded on her deck with guns and furnishings, as Captain Haies says, "More to give a show than with judgment to foresee unto the safety of her and the men," departed from the harbor of St. John's. On the evening of the next day they reached Cape Race, twenty-five leagues distant to the southwest.

While they were becalmed there, in less than two hours they caught large codfish enough to last them many days, although they made them almost their sole subsistence. From here they directed their course to Cape Breton, intending also to visit Sablon, or Sable Island, because Sir Humphrey had

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had been informed by a "Portugal" that thirty years before his countrymen had placed on this island some cattle and swine which had increased to great numbers and could now be made of much service in planting a colony, either in Newfoundland or on the continent farther south. A knowledge of the climate would have suggested to him that it would require a very hardy race of kine or swine to survive without protection the winters of Sable Island. Sailing along south of Newfoundland with winds unfavorable for eight days without seeing land, they fell among dangerous shoals probably not far from the island he intended to visit. On Tuesday, the twenty-seventh of August, the founding of Gylberte's ship showed white sand at a depth of thirty-five fathoms, and all the vessels sailed a northwesterly course during the next day.

Wednesday night there was much carousing on board the Delight, and she failed on "with little watching for danger." Breakers were fought on board the Hinde and Squirrell, and the Delight was signalled to change her course; but the watch was so poorly kept that the danger was not known till it was too late to escape it. The Delight ran aground, and soon after her stern was broken to pieces. Sixteen of her crew including the master got away in a cock-boat, and were without provisions for seven days, but finally reached the shore of Newfoundland, losing only two of their number.

The Golden Hirde and Squirrell barely escaped the danger. The loss of their largest ship, the one which carried their chief supplies, was very disheartening. The Refiner Henry and Stephanus Parmenius of Buda, the scholar



scholar and poet who was expected<sup>1</sup> to write in Latin a history of the expedition, were both involved in this catastrophe.

Under such discouragements, the weather growing more severe and winter approaching, the men ~~lost~~ hope and courage: and when the provisions began to be scarce, it was impossible to keep up their spirits. In the Squirrel hunger and the want of comfortable clothing led the men to petition the General to return to England before they all perished. Their wish to go home was soon made known by signs to the men on the Golden Hinde; and then they too became equally importunate to abandon the voyage.

There was some show of persistence in the captain and master of the Hinde; but Sir Humfrey saw that with loss of all courage among the crews, nothing could be accomplished, and promptly decided to make the best of his disappointment. He assured the officers of the Hinde that he should return in the spring with a better equipment. He is said to have used these hopeful words: "Be content: we have seen enough; and take no care of expense past. I will set you forth ~~to~~ the next spring, if God send us safe home. Therefore, I pray you, let us no longer strive here, where we fight against the elements."

Accordingly on Saturday afternoon, the thirty-first day of August, they reversed the course and began their return to England. While they were in the act of turning, a monster resembling a huge lion, doubtless a large walrus, swam by them and gave forth his peculiar howl. No wonder they were

<sup>1</sup> This provision for a worthy record enterprise. Had it been successful, Par- reveals the ambition and exalted aims menius would have enjoyed a noble of the man who planned this unique theme, and we might read a noble epic.

## Sir Humfrey Gylberte.

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were amazed at his terrible voice and "ugly demonstration of long teeth." This appearance the General took as a *bonum omen*, "rejoicing that he was to war against such an enemy if it were indeed the devil." Our persistent adventurer always took a hopeful view of all phenomena that disturbed his superstitious followers.

Their efforts to return to England were at first seconded by strong west winds. But the gales increased, and soon their violence raised such lofty tumbling seas as almost to bury the little craft now carrying the projector of the whole enterprise. No entreaty or threatening danger could induce him to sail in the *Hinde* as a safer ship than the *Squirrel*.

They made such rapid progress that in two days they passed Cape Race which they had left eight days before the loss of the *Delight*. Captain Hales attributed a part of this speed to a strong current setting to the northeast, the earliest recognition, perhaps, of what has since been known as the Gulf Stream.

Every near view of our General is now interesting. On Monday, September second, we find him visiting the *Golden Hinde*, to have the surgeon dress his foot which he had wounded by treading on a nail. But the painful errand did not prevent his comforting his followers with the assurance that their "hard success" was all passed, and the good was now to come. On this occasion it was appointed that the two ships should always carry lights by night, to insure their keeping together.

Another storm was soon encountered and passed through in safety and thanksgiving, after which, on a fair day, Sir Humfrey Gylberte made his last visit to the *Golden Hinde*,  
continuing

