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to favor the north rather than the southern coast. The "trade way," as Master Hayes calls it, to Newfoundland was shortest; its advantages were known. "We ought to shape a course most likely to minister to [our] supply. At that time of year a multitude of ships repairing thither for fish, we should be relieved abundantly with many necessities."

In a soft gale of wind five ships with 260 men departed from Causet Bay June 11, 1583. "Our voyage undertaken with Sir Humphrey Gilbert," Master Hayes added regretfully, "began, continued, and ended adversely."

The Port of the Fishermen

Master Hayes sensed the beginning of the trouble in this enterprise of the English nation. While its commander, Sir Humphrey, was both "vertuous and heroycal," he could not keep discipline among his people. Most of them were strangers to salt water, being ex-soldiers and miners. Some Channel pirates had been released from jail to make the voyage. Almost at the start the largest ship, supplied by Walter Raleigh, deserted. Of the two small craft, *Squirrel* proved to be unhandy, being overloaded topside with cannon. *Swallow* parted company in a fog to plunder fishing craft. (The pillagers from the Channel were little disposed to labor at a settlement.)

The chief trouble was caused by the length of the voyage. Owing to their late start, the voyagers missed the favoring winds after the equinox; for seven weeks the vessels ranged north and south to escape head winds. The three remaining vessels limped in to the rendezvous at St. John's with their people sick and wearied. One ran aground in the narrow entrance of the sheltered harbor.

There, however, they found a strange community of fishermen at home. Thirty-six sail, Portuguese, Spanish, French, and English filled the bay. Huts and frames for drying fish lined the shore. In fact these armed fisherfolk would not suffer the discovery fleet to

enter until Sir Humphrey sent in a boat with his letters of authority from the Queen.

Luckily the English fishing crews were "admirals" or rulers of this maritime summer colony. They received the letters with good will—fired a salvo of welcome, and sent out small craft to tow the stranded vessel from the rocks. As Parkhurst had predicted and as Sir Humphrey had hoped, the mariners from Bristol, St. Malo, and Viana had organized the harbor base and supplied themselves well. Straightaway Sir Humphrey commandeered supplies for his ailing expedition. Each day the fishermen sent over the choicest things, wines and marmalade, fresh salmon and lobsters. And fat partridges and raspberries from the shore.

Even the methodical Master Hayes was struck by the singularity of this country; for beyond the comfortable village there was only wild animal life and wild growth untouched by the hand of husbandman. The fishers took him to view their Garden, as they called it, but he found there only brambleberries and the natural flowers of the place. It cheered him greatly to hear that the Portuguese had filled an island, Sable Island, with swine to breed and peas to harvest.

Sir Humphrey's sanguine spirit rose to the occasion; he set forth claim in the name of the Queen's Majesty to all land within 200 leagues around; he set surveyors and plan makers to work, and he set his mineral finder, a German named Daniel, to search for ores. One act of discipline he carried out, sending home the lawless *Swallow* (which had rejoined the fleet) with the sick and disaffected of his people. In the frigate *Squirrel* he inspected the forested coast of his Newfoundland. Meanwhile to his joy the industrious Daniel brought him discoveries of ore, both copper and silver. Or so Daniel said.

Master Hayes, who was ill at the time, did not feel so sanguine about the finds of metal. The copper seemed to him to be iron, and he doubted the silver. He asked the opinion of his "General."

"Content yourself," Sir Humphrey assured him, "I have seen enough. Touching the ore, I have sent it aboard [*Delight*] whereof I would have no speech to be made so long as we remain within



harbor—here being Portugals, Biscains [Biscayans] and Frenchmen not farre off, from whom must be kept any muttering of such matter.”

Odd that in this same spot forty-one years before Jacques Cartier and Roberval had argued so hotly over the ore found on the St. Lawrence.

With Daniel's specimens of silver hidden away on *Delight* and the storms of autumn at hand, Sir Humphrey had to decide what the discoverers would do next, and he evolved a plan to meet all his needs. The malcontents among his people—who were slipping away to the fishing craft now departing for England—he would allow to go back with the Bristol vessels. This Newfoundland he had surveyed and claimed; now he would avoid the storms and lay claim to other unknown lands by turning south with his three remaining vessels. Once at sea, safe from tale-telling, he would have tests made of the ores. If the silver proved to be fine, as he hoped, then they would head for England with the news. (And perhaps raid Spanish shipping on the way.)

Neither Drake nor Cartier would have indulged in such wishful thinking. Master Hayes, who thought only of the handling of ships, was well content to leave the hazardous coast. They commandeered supplies for the winter from the departing fishing fleet, and put to sea on a southern course. They left Cape Race behind, and they were off Cape Breton Island when Master Hayes sensed the storm coming from the north.

It was a fair and pleasant evening, he recalls, and on his ship, *Golden Hind* (named after Drake's famous ship), the crew had harpooned a porpoise. On the larger *Delight* the would-be colonists had amused themselves by sounding off trumpets, fifes, and drums.

That night the helmsmen fancied they heard voices crying at them from the dark sky. Master Hayes told them it was no more than the wind. It came on the ships with rain and mist; it drove them on into shoals where white spray flung up until the lookouts cried that it was land ahead. Visibility dimmed to a cable's length and Hayes, keeping his lead line sounding, bore away and tried to signal the heavier *Delight* to come into the wind.

Golden Hind fought away from the shoals in the heavy sea, and *Squirrel* followed. They saw *Delight* strike, and her stern break in.

With the large transport most of the colonists were lost with all the plans of Newfoundland, supplies of food, and the trove of silver ore. A dozen seamen got away from the wreck in the pinnace, and found their way back to St. John's, thence to voyage safely in a fishing bark to France.

With the two surviving crews pinched by hunger Sir Humphrey gave in to their beseeching and headed home for England. "I will set you forth royally next Spring, if God send us safe home," he promised Master Hayes. For the first time the captain of the *Hind* doubted the wisdom of his hero. It seemed to Hayes that they should keep on toward the southern coast of America. The ebullient Sir Humphrey pledged him that next year they would outfit two fleets, one to seek the southern coast, one to settle Newfoundland. Master Hayes doubted they could find the money for that. "Leave that to me—I will ask a pennie of no man. I will bring good tidings unto her Majesty, who will be so gracious to lend me ten thousand pounds."

Troubled by this wild assurance, Master Hayes judged that his commander counted upon the discovery of silver ore to win such a loan from the penurious queen. But the ore itself was lost, with Daniel, who had found it. Master Hayes mistrusted Sir Humphrey's fervency of mind, but left the issue to be decided by God's will.

Again, in mid-ocean with the Azores south of them, he saw signs of a storm gathering. Some of his crew said they beheld on the main yard an apparition of a small fire in the darkness. He spoke the *Squirrel*, urging his general to come aboard the *Hind*. But Sir Humphrey would not have it said that he feared the sea. "I will not forsake my little company going homeward, with whom I have passed so many storms."

The seas ran heavy, breaking short and high, Master Hayes relates. "Munday the ninth of September, in the afternoon the Frigate [*Squirrel*] was neere cast away, oppressed by waves, yet at that time recovered. And, giving forth signes of joy, the General



sitting abaft with a booke in his hand, cried out to us in the *Hind* so often as we did approach within hearing—"We are as near to heaven by sea as by land" . . . the same Monday night about twelve of the clocke or not long after, the Frigat being ahead of us, suddenly her lights were out, and withall our watch cried, the General was cast away, which was too true. For in that moment the Frigat was swallowed up of the sea. Yet still we looked out all that night, and ever after, untill we arrived upon the coast of England."

As soon as the death of Sir Humphrey was known, his half brother, Walter Raleigh, stepped into his place. With a clearer mind and greater means—as well as influence at Court—Raleigh took over the patent to "discover and inhabit" the eastern coast of North America.

Before the next summer two exploring vessels were at sea. They had an experienced Portuguese pilot and two skilled captains with clear orders to search, not the familiar shores of Newfoundland, but the warmer coast to the south.

