

THE VOYAGES  
AND COLONISING  
ENTERPRISES OF  
SIR HUMPHREY  
GILBERT VOLUMES I-II

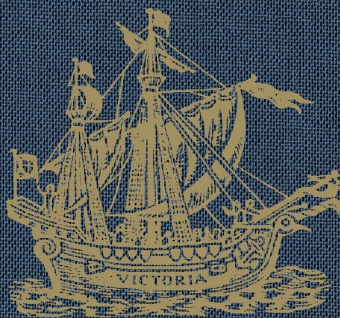
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THE VOYAGES  
AND COLONISING  
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SIR HUMPHREY  
GILBERT VOLUME I

David Beers Quinn



THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY

# The Voyages and Colonising Enterprises of Sir Humphrey Gilbert

Volume I

Edited by  
DAVID BEERS QUINN

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THE VOYAGES AND  
COLONISING ENTERPRISES  
OF  
SIR HUMPHREY GILBERT

*With an Introduction and Notes*

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VOLUME I

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## PREFACE

THESE volumes represent an attempt to assemble all the documents that throw any light on the voyages and colonising enterprises of Sir Humphrey Gilbert. Many of them have previously been printed, notably by Hakluyt and by Carlos Slafter in his *Sir Humfrey Gilberte and his enterprize of colonization in America*. A number are published for the first time. Wherever possible the original manuscripts have been used for the texts which have been printed. It is not, however, to be expected that all the extant materials have been discovered, and it is likely, in particular, that further agreements between Sir Humphrey Gilbert and adventurers with him in his colonising projects will be found in private collections. Enough has been found to illustrate clearly the preparatory and tentative character of his schemes. It would have been surprising if Gilbert's plans had succeeded, but it is interesting and important that they should have been made, and they form the first stage in a series of attempts that were necessary before English settlements could be firmly planted in America. A few documents on Ireland have been included as Ireland was the earliest field for English colonisation in the sixteenth century and profoundly influenced the attempts to establish colonies in America.

While recent workers, notably Dr. J. A. Williamson and Professor E. G. R. Taylor, have done much to elucidate the colonising movement in the sixteenth century, little detailed attention has been paid to Sir Humphrey Gilbert. The pioneer biography by W. G. Gosling, published in 1911, remains the only study of any value and, though it contains a great deal of valuable material, it is out of date in certain respects. In the introduction I have attempted, besides making a brief analysis of the documents, to give an outline of his life, with some indication of the materials for a further study.

In making this collection I have received much assistance. I am particularly indebted to four people: to Alison Quinn for a great deal of labour on the documents and for assistance at almost every point in my study; to Miss Norah H. Evans, Assistant Librarian at Birkbeck College, for the careful preparation of my book-lists and for help in many other ways; to Mr. J. R. Carey, Lecturer in Spanish at King's College, London, for translations; and to Mr. Edward Lynam for consistently valuable advice. Amongst those to whom I owe grateful thanks for advice, criticism, information, translations and transcripts are Dr. A. P. Newton, Dr. R. C. Anderson, Professor E. G. R. Taylor, Mr. Seymour de Ricci, Mr. J. W. Blake, Sir Wasey Sterry, Professor R. B. Merriman, Miss M. K. Dale, Mr. H. Beharrell, Miss A. M. C. Latham, Mrs. E. Hurstfield, Miss G. H. Hamilton and the late Mr. Hugh R. Watkin of Bovey Tracey. Acknowledgements are due to Commander Walter Raleigh Gilbert of Compton Castle, near Paignton; to the Marquess of Salisbury and Mr. J. V. Lyle for transcripts and permission to print documents from the Cecil MSS. at Hatfield House; to Sir Frederick and Lady Anstruther-Gough-Calthorpe of Elvetham Hall, Hartley Wintney, Hampshire, for giving me access to the Calthorpe MSS.; to Mr. George Brudenell of Deene Park, Peterborough, and Miss Joan Wake for transcripts of documents from the Brudenell MSS., which will shortly be published by Miss Wake; and to Mr. Arthur Snow, clerk of the Incorporation of Weavers, Tuckers and Shearmen of Exeter, for allowing me to examine the records of the Merchant Adventurers of Exeter. I have also received courteous assistance from the librarians, town clerks and archivists of the British Museum, Bodleian Library, Bristol, Dartmouth, Exeter, Lambeth Palace, the National Maritime Museum, the Public Record Office, and Totnes. My thanks are due, finally, to the Royal Geographical Society and to the National Portrait Gallery for facilities to reproduce the *Frontispiece* to vol. I and the map facing p. 374, respectively.

DAVID B. QUINN

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
SOUTHAMPTON, *August* 1939

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2. Somerset House.
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5. Archiepiscopal Library, Lambeth.
6. College of Arms, London.
7. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.
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<sup>1</sup> Not seen.

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## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE FOOTNOTES

Where the reference gives the Public Record Office number alone, the class to which the document belongs may be found by reference to pp. xviii–xix.

*APC.* *Acts of the Privy Council.*

BM. British Museum.

*Cal. Carew.* *Calendar of Carew papers.*

*CSP Col.* *Calendar of state papers, colonial.*

*CSP Dom.* *Calendar of state papers, domestic.*

*CSP For.* *Calendar of state papers, foreign.*

*CSP Ir.* *Calendar of state papers relating to Ireland.*

*CSP Sp.* *Calendar of letters and state papers relating to English affairs, preserved principally in the archives of Simancas.*

Gosling. Gosling, *Life of Sir Humphrey Gilbert.*

Halliwell. *The private diary of Dr. John Dee.* Ed. by J. O. Halliwell[Phillips].

HMC. Historical Manuscripts Commission.

PRO. Public Record Office.

Slafter. Slafter, *Sir Humfrey Gilberte and his enterprise of colonization in America.*

## INTRODUCTION

The one Hand holdeth a General's Truncheon, and the other is laid on the Globe of the World, Virginia is written over ; on his Breast hangs the Golden Anchor, with the Pearl at Peak ; and underneath are these Verses : which tho' none of the best, may here supply the Place of an Epitaph.

Here may you see the Portrait of his Face,  
Who for his Country's Honor oft did trace  
Along the Deep ; and made a noble Way  
Unto the growing Fame, Virginia  
The picture of his Mind, if ye do crave it,  
Look upon Virtue's Picture, and ye have it.

PRINCE, *Devon worthies*.<sup>1</sup>

### I. EARLY LIFE

**H**UMPHREY GILBERT was the second son of Otho (or Otes) Gilbert of Compton and Greenway, Devonshire, and Katherine Champernoun, daughter of Sir Philip Champernoun of Modbury, Kent. He was probably born at Greenway, 'in the Parish of Brixham, a pleasant and commodious Seat, of long continuance in his family; standing on the East-side of the Dart upon a rising Ground, a little mile above the Town of Dartmouth in this County. It hath a delightful Prospect of that River, and views the Boats & Barges as they pass & re-pass upon it; a large scope of Lands, and the Royalties of Fishing and Fowling are belonging to it'<sup>2</sup>. Otho Gilbert was a land-owner of some importance, but his will, dated 16 May 1545<sup>3</sup>, does not refer to the main part of his properties, which were apparently entailed to his eldest son John. The will disposes of various properties to his wife<sup>4</sup>, his children Humphrey, Adrian, Otho and Katherine, and others. Humphrey was left the manor of Hanford, and lands in Reinge, Borington and

<sup>1</sup> Description of a portrait which does not appear to have survived.

<sup>2</sup> Prince, *Devon worthies* (1701), p. 326.

<sup>3</sup> P.C.C. 38 Alen O.B.

<sup>4</sup> Shortly after her husband's death she married Walter Raleigh of Fardel.

Offewell in Devonshire. Otho Gilbert died on 18 February 1547 and the inquisition *post mortem*, held on 13 October 1547, gave the age of his eldest son as eleven and three-quarter years and showed that he was born in January or February 1536<sup>1</sup>. His will was proved on 16 June 1547 and by it Humphrey and Adrian were left, until the age of twenty-one, under the guardianship of Philip Penkevell, one of the executors of the will. Penkevell is described in the will as 'brother' of Otho Gilbert and in the inquisition as his brother and steward. He may have been a foster-brother or half-brother. In any case he was a man of some substance and, at his death in 1562, held considerable property, including the manor of Padstow<sup>2</sup>. John Gilbert was a ward of the Crown and on 6 February 1552 Philip Penkevell obtained the custody of part of his lands in Devonshire during his minority<sup>3</sup>.

The only account of Humphrey Gilbert's youth is that given by John Hooker<sup>4</sup>. According to him Gilbert was a precocious child whose father left him some money for his education and whose mother sent him to Eton and thence to Oxford. Instead of going from there to the Inns of Court he attracted the attention of Katherine Ashley, an aunt, who had him brought into the service of the Princess Elizabeth, who took a particular liking to him. This account cannot be checked in any detail as there is no other record of his being at Eton<sup>5</sup> or Oxford. In a letter of 11 July 1581 Gilbert stated that he had been in Elizabeth's service for over twenty-seven years<sup>6</sup> and in another letter of 7 February 1583 he puts the period as twenty-eight years.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C 142/84, 36.

<sup>2</sup> C 142/134, 180.

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. Pat. R. Ed. VI 1550-3*, p. 109.

<sup>4</sup> Document no. 131, pp. 431-2. Hooker as chamberlain of Exeter had a good opportunity of getting information about Gilbert. He also knew him in Ireland.

<sup>5</sup> Sir Wasey Sterry, who is compiling a register of Etonians, kindly informs me that while there is no proper record of Gilbert's schooling at Eton 'there is a fragment of a Hall account, which I date at about 1553, which contains a payment by the Provost in respect of his "famuli", one of whom is named Gilbert. The Provost at the time was Sir Thomas Smith. I doubt, however, whether he was anything but a servant, though of course at the time it was not unusual for boys of gentle birth to be taken into great men's households'.

<sup>6</sup> Document no. 74, p. 241.

<sup>7</sup> Document no. 102, p. 340.

This would place his entry into Elizabeth's household in 1554 or 1555. Katherine Ashley had been Elizabeth's governess and was deprived of her office and disgraced for Protestant sympathies in June 1556, so that Gilbert must have been established at Hatfield before that date, and it is possible that he too had to leave the princess's service for a time, as he is found living at one of the Inns of Chancery in May 1558.

The usually accepted date of Gilbert's birth is 1539, but this is not well attested<sup>1</sup>, and it is much more probable that he was born in 1537. This would make him seventeen or eighteen when he entered Elizabeth's service and would leave time for him to have a year or two at Oxford after leaving Eton. Support for this assumption may be found in a document in the Admiralty records. It is a note of a licence granted to Gilbert's uncle, Sir Arthur Champernoun, to fit out ships as privateers against the French, and 'Humfrey Gilbert of New Inne in London gent.' is named as one of the sureties<sup>2</sup>. The date is 18 May 1558, and it is very improbable that Gilbert would have been accepted as a surety if he was still a minor, so that it would appear that he was born before 18 May 1537. If this reasoning is correct, and taking into account that his elder brother John was born in January or February 1536, Gilbert's birth may be placed between January and May 1537.

New Inn, where Gilbert was residing in 1558, was an Inn of Chancery pertaining to the Middle Temple, and was situated between Clare Market and the Strand. It seems extremely probable that he was a student there at this time, but there is no evidence that he proceeded, as was usual, to one of the Inns of Court.

In 1562 Elizabeth, in order to weaken the Guise party in France, which was being aided by Philip II, and with the hope of recovering Calais, made an alliance with the Huguenots. The treaty of Hampton Court, 20 September 1562, bound her to assist them with men and money, while she was to hold Havre until Calais was restored. An expedition to occupy Havre was

<sup>1</sup> It is first found, so far as is known, in 1757 in *Biographia Britannica*, IV, 2192.

<sup>2</sup> HCA 14/5, no. 288. I am indebted for this reference to Mr. J. W. Blake.

prepared and Humphrey Gilbert was commissioned to raise 100 footmen, whose pay commenced on 11 September, nine days before the treaty was signed. The English force, under the Earl of Warwick, landed at Havre on 29 October 1562, but did little to help the Huguenots, who lost ground steadily and, in March 1563, made an agreement with Catherine de Medici and turned against their English allies, who seemed to be concerned solely with establishing themselves in French territory. Towards the end of May the garrison at Havre was surrounded by a French force and on 5 June Gilbert was wounded in a skirmish by an arquebus shot. Warwick, reporting this to the Queen, declared 'surely, there is not a vallyanter man that lyveth; and so hath his dedes well shewyd it now at this time'<sup>1</sup>. The blockade and an epidemic forced Warwick to surrender on 28 July and the remnant of the English force was shipped home in August. Gilbert's pay ceased on 4 August, but he was given some money to pay the travelling expenses of his men from Portsmouth to their homes<sup>2</sup>. Apparently his band was not finally disbanded, but was sent for service on the Scottish border, where its lieutenant was mentioned in July 1564<sup>3</sup>, but there is no evidence that Gilbert served in person in the north.

## 2. THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE

From a tentative suggestion made by Gosling, writing in 1911<sup>4</sup>, it has become a fact accepted by recent English writers that Gilbert first became interested in overseas expansion during his stay at Havre. Dr. Williamson goes so far as to say 'Humphrey Gilbert came home from the war with two projects which alternately occupied his mind for the rest of his life. One

<sup>1</sup> Warwick to Elizabeth, 6 June 1563, in Forbes, *A full view of the public transactions, in the reign of Elizabeth*, II (1741), 429. See too Churchyard, *Generall rehearsall of warres*, sig. G4v; Stow, *Annales* (ed. by Howes, 1615), p. 654.

<sup>2</sup> Account of Sir Maurice Denny, treasurer of the army sent to Newhaven, 1562-3. AO 1/283, 1069. Payments to Gilbert, for himself and his troops, amounted to £1,113 9s. 4d., and deductions included £1 8s. 4d. in fines 'for not commyng to churche'.

<sup>3</sup> *CSP For.* 1564-6, no. 548.

<sup>4</sup> Gosling, *The life of Sir Humphrey Gilbert*, pp. 55-6.

was to raid the Spanish West in the manner of the Huguenots. The other was to open the North West Passage to Cathay<sup>1</sup>. There is no definite evidence to support these assertions and they should not be made categorically, but it is possible that amongst the people Gilbert encountered there were Thevet, the French geographer, and the Englishman, Richard Eden, while many of the Huguenots were undoubtedly concerned in expeditions to the West Indies and in projects for a colony in Florida, which Jean Ribault established and from which he returned in July 1562. It is clear, however, that Gilbert must have begun his geographical studies and developed his interest in America and the North-west Passage shortly after his return to England, although nothing is known of his activities between 1563 and 1565. By the time Gilbert returned from France English interest in the colonisation of North America had just begun to be stimulated through Ribault's arrival in England in March 1563, and the publication of his account of his Florida expedition<sup>2</sup> (the first detailed account of a visit to North America to appear in English). There were also plans for an Anglo-French expedition under Ribault and Thomas Stukeley, with Elizabeth's encouragement, in the summer of 1563 to occupy the site of the French colony which had been abandoned. Although the expedition fell through, Ribault remained in England until 1565 and Gilbert may have met him, although he was in prison for part of the time. An English venture by Hawkins was intended to establish a colony there in 1564, but was forestalled by a new French force under Laudonnière, and Hawkins contented himself with calling on his way back from the West Indies in the summer of 1565 and trying to induce the French to come home. Ribault, after his return to France, went out to Florida and within a few weeks after his arrival was killed by the Spaniards. Laudonnière and the survivors came home<sup>3</sup>, and interest in England was sufficient for an account of the end

<sup>1</sup> *Age of Drake* (1938), p. 40. See also *Cambridge history of the British Empire*, I (1929), 54.

<sup>2</sup> Published by Thomas Hackett, 30 May 1563, as *The whole and true discoverye of Terra Florida*. See also H. P. Biggar, 'Jean Ribaut's discoverye of Terra Florida' in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xxxii (1917), 253-70.

<sup>3</sup> Williamson, *Hawkins*, pp. 96-100, 110-5; *Age of Drake*, pp. 60-1, 65.

of the French colony to be published in 1566<sup>1</sup>. Conditions were, therefore, suitable for Gilbert to develop a knowledge of and to obtain information on North America.

It was not towards Florida, however, that his interests were attracted particularly, but towards the north-west passage. Anthony Jenkinson returned to England on 28 September 1564 after his second attempt to develop an overland trade with the East Indies and China by way of Russia. Although he had done something to establish trading connections with Persia, he was dissatisfied with the results of his journeys for the Muscovy Company during the previous seven years because no direct contact had been made with the Far East, and on his return he took up again the old project of Stephen Borough for an expedition by way of one of the northerly sea passages to China. At the end of May 1565 he addressed a petition to the Queen, putting forward arguments for the existence of a northerly passage and offering his services if Elizabeth would sponsor an expedition. Discussing the chances as between a north-east and a north-west passage, he said that some affirm 'the same by the North-west (Takinge there Authoritye of Certen awthors who wrote by Conjecture) which opinion I do not wholly dissent from; So am I fully perswaded that to the Northeaste there is no doughte of a passage to be fownde'; and put forward arguments in support of his view<sup>2</sup>. A short time after this, probably before the end of the year, Humphrey Gilbert prepared a petition to the Queen on the same topic<sup>3</sup>. He did not commit himself on the question of whether a north-east or north-west venture was likely to be more successful, but offered to undertake 'the discoveringe of a passage by the Northe, to go to Cataia, & all other the east partes of the worlde', provided that he, with his two brothers, was given monopoly rights and received one-fifth of the customs on goods brought by the

<sup>1</sup> N. le Shalleux, *A true and perfect discription, of the last voyage or navigation, attempted by Capitaine John Rybaut, deputie and generall for the French men, into Terra Florida, this yeare past. 1565*, published by Thomas Hacket. The Epistle is dated 25 May 1566.

<sup>2</sup> The two versions, dated respectively 30 and 31 May, are collated in Morgan and Coote, *Early travels to Russia and Persia*, pp. 159-66.

<sup>3</sup> Document no. 1, pp. 105-6.

passage for ninety-nine years. His two brothers were obviously John and Adrian, but who his 'freindes' were, who were to help him finance the expedition, is not known. The existing draft of the petition is not likely to have been presented to the Queen<sup>1</sup>, but some such petition was sent in, and it is not clear how distinct Gilbert's project was at the beginning from that of Jenkinson. Some time towards the end of 1565, or early in 1566, both the petitioners were brought 'before the Queenes Majestie, and certain Lordes of the Counsell' to expound their views, which, it appeared, diverged, Jenkinson maintaining that, while there might be a north-west passage, he was sure that the north-east passage was easily navigable. Gilbert, apparently, took the contrary view that the evidence for a north-west passage was superior. Our only report of the debate is given by Gilbert, who sets down three propositions made by Jenkinson and his own answers to them. Jenkinson asserted, firstly, that a fisherman of 'Tartaria' had told him he had sailed far to the east and believed that there was a passage. Gilbert replied that this was not expert evidence. Secondly, Jenkinson said that a unicorn's horn, which must have come from the Far East, had been found on the northern shores, of which Gilbert said that it could not have been a unicorn's horn and was probably the horn of an animal found in the north. The third point was that there was a continuous westward flowing current, which Gilbert said was due to rivers flowing into the north<sup>2</sup>. The issues were trivial, but Gilbert, if he reports the discussion correctly, succeeded in displaying some geographical knowledge.

The next development was that the two joined forces, Jenkinson presumably giving way to Gilbert's preferences. They apparently made a joint appeal for royal privileges, but, before he left England on 4 May 1566 for Russia on Muscovy Company business, Jenkinson wrote, probably to Cecil, on behalf of both of them to complain that no notice had been taken of their previous petitions and putting forward the terms which they desired to have granted to them<sup>3</sup>. From Russia, Jenkinson endeavoured to remind Cecil once more, and showed some

<sup>1</sup> See note 5, p. 106 below.

<sup>2</sup> Document no. 15, pp. 156-8.

<sup>3</sup> Document no. 2, pp. 106-7.

suspicion of Gilbert by asking that, if Gilbert were granted any privileges, he, Jenkinson, should be joined with him<sup>1</sup>.

When Jenkinson wrote, Gilbert was just completing the first version of 'A discourse of a discoverie for a new passage to Cataia'<sup>2</sup>. His introductory letter to his elder brother, Sir John Gilbert, is dated 30 June 1566 and informs him that the 'discourse' and its 'universall Map' is intended to prove to him, by 'the authoritie of learned Geographers, the reasons of wise Philosophers, [and] the experience of painfull travellers', that 'my hope of this discoverie and passage, was not so rashe, or foolishe, as you heretofore have deemed'<sup>3</sup>. The only form in which we have the 'discourse' is that which was printed in 1576, and this contains a certain amount of material added by Gilbert between 1570 and 1576, and possibly certain editorial changes made by George Gascoigne. Substantially, however, it is clear that the greater part of the essay was that written in the early part of 1566.

The 'discourse', as written in 1566, was an academic exercise by a fairly recent recruit to geographical studies, endeavouring to set down all the evidence available to him on the possible existence of a north-west passage. That many of its arguments were silly and credulous and that it was largely out of date by the time it was published should not obscure its significance at the time it was written. It was the first considerable English treatise on a project about which, for forty years, many had thought, and, though many of his authorities may be cited at second-hand<sup>4</sup>, Gilbert showed some evidence of research, for example in his citation of Cabot maps and documents<sup>5</sup>, as well as a good general knowledge of European geographical lore. Where he frees himself from bondage to his authorities Gilbert's writing is clear, vigorous, and even passionate and, when he pleased, he could show some critical skill. It is fair to say that, in the discussion as between a north-west and a north-east

<sup>1</sup> 26 June 1566. Document no. 3, pp. 107-8.

<sup>2</sup> Document no. 15, pp. 129-65. <sup>3</sup> pp. 134-5 below.

<sup>4</sup> See Taylor, *Tudor geography, 1485-1583*, pp. 32-6. For a more favourable view see Rowse, *Grenville*, pp. 84-6.

<sup>5</sup> p. 147 below.

passage, he 'handles Jenkinson's arguments with a critical sense that would have played havoc with his own, if it had been so directed'<sup>1</sup>. The cordiform map which is added to the treatise is generally recognised to have little originality and to have been taken from the general map published by Ortelius in 1564<sup>2</sup>.

In discussing 'What commodities woulde ensue, this passage once discovered'<sup>3</sup> Gilbert concentrated on the benefits to trade which would arise if a direct trade with Asia could be established. He stressed the short-circuiting of Spanish and Portuguese enterprise that would follow. He also noted the possible value of trade with the American Indians. He suggested that a colony might be established as a trading base and a half-way house between England and Asia 'about Sierra Nevada', on the west coast of North America. In addition he suggested, and was among the first Englishmen to do so, that colonisation in America should be attempted for its own sake. 'Also we might inhabite some parte of those Countreys', he said, 'and settle there such needie people of our Countrie, which now trouble the common welth, and through want here at home, are inforced to commit outrageous offences, whereby they are dayly consumed with the Gallowes.' Settlement, however, for him was still a trading convenience or a social prophylactic, and it is not until he had gone to Ireland and become concerned with plans for land settlement there that he began to appreciate the possibilities of colonisation as a source of territorial wealth and power for its promoters.

Before he had written his letter to Sir John Gilbert, Humphrey Gilbert must have been engaged for military service in Ireland for his pay as a captain commenced on 12 July 1566<sup>4</sup>, and he deserted his north-west schemes for the Irish wars between July and the end of November, but renewed them on his return to England about the beginning of December. He

<sup>1</sup> Manhart, 'English search for a North-west Passage' in *Studies in English commerce and exploration*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> See HARRISSE, *Découverte et évolution cartographique de Terre-Neuve*, p. xvi; ANTHIAUME, *Cartes marines, constructions navales, voyages de découverte chez les Normands*, II, 481 seq.; WAGNER, *Cartography of the north-west coast of America*, I, 77; II, 107. The map is reproduced facing p. 164 below.

<sup>3</sup> pp. 160-1 below.

<sup>4</sup> HMC, *DeL'Isle and Dudley*, I, 393.

thereupon presented a new petition to the Queen on his own behalf, and without mention of Jenkinson<sup>1</sup>, asking for privileges for a north-west discovery, to be begun after March 1568<sup>2</sup>. He refers to the act of parliament, confirming the privileges of the Muscovy Company, passed in November 1566, and claims, probably incorrectly<sup>3</sup>, to be already a member of the company. He implies that he is willing to undertake the discovery under the auspices of the company, provided he is assured of certain privileges for himself. He desired to have for him and his assigns the right to trade for forty years by the passage with one or two ships, paying only nominal customs. He asked for one-tenth part of all the lands discovered, which he undertook to hold of the crown, and also that he should be governor for life of all such lands. The latter requests are significant for they show that during his few months' service in Ireland he had become interested for the first time in the territorial aspects of settlement. Cecil made a number of notes on this document<sup>4</sup>, suggesting improvements in its drafting and certain provisos to safeguard the interests of the Crown, and this indicates that he approved the project in general.

Gilbert drew up a revised draft of his petition<sup>5</sup>, embodying Cecil's suggestions, and a copy of this was sent to the governor and assistants of the Muscovy Company for their consideration. Gilbert was willing to recognise the general privilege of a monopoly of trade to Asia by the north which the company held, as Sir William Gerrard and alderman Rowland Hayward, in their reply to Cecil on 24 January 1567<sup>6</sup>, acknowledged. The detailed criticisms appended to Gilbert's articles<sup>7</sup>, however, indicated that the company required substantial modifications in his scheme before they would accept it. They were determined 'to have the rule and orderinge of all discoveries towardes the said parties, agreynge to their priveledges'. They were there-

<sup>1</sup> Document no. 4, pp. 108-10. It is possible that Jenkinson was back in England for a short time during the winter of 1566-7 (Morgan and Coote, p. xlix), but there is no evidence that he revived his interest in the north-west passage.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 13, n. 2, below.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 108, n. 3, below.

<sup>4</sup> p. 110 below.

<sup>5</sup> SP 12/42, 23 (i).

<sup>6</sup> Document no. 5, pp. 110-1.

<sup>7</sup> Document no. 6, pp. 111-5.

fore hostile to Gilbert's request for one-tenth of the lands discovered and to that giving him and his associates customs privileges. They required that all participants should be members of the company and under their control. Subject to these qualifications they were willing to allow that 'Mr Gylbarte accepting the freedome of the said socyetye maybe appointed in persone and not by substytute, to be Captene and governour of the Contries by hys travell to be founde'. Other items in the petition might be left to the Queen. In effect the reply was a rejection of any autonomous enterprise by Gilbert and offered him the support of the company only if he became its servant and carried out his discoveries under its orders.

On 15 March 1567 the Spanish ambassador, Guzman de Silva, wrote to Philip II to say that he had heard of Gilbert's plans for an expedition to Asia by the north-west<sup>1</sup>. He showed sufficient knowledge of the proposed route to make it possible that he had seen Gilbert's map, and he was under the impression that he intended to proceed with the project, for he proposed to get in touch with him to learn of his intentions in more detail. It is fairly clear that by this time, however, Gilbert had given up the project owing to the obstructive attitude of the Muscovy Company, and, in April 1567, he undertook to raise another company of men for the Irish service and left for Ireland during May<sup>2</sup>.

Professor Taylor suggests, on rather slight evidence, that the elder Hakluyt had been in touch with Gilbert and had given him advice regarding his north-west project<sup>3</sup>, and it is clear that John Dee had some knowledge of Gilbert's plans, for, writing on 9 February 1571, he expressed the hope that he might renew his enterprise<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Document no. 7, pp. 115-6.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 13 below.

<sup>3</sup> Adrian, Humphrey Gilbert's younger brother, had a chamber in the Middle Temple where Hakluyt lived. Hakluyt and John Ashley wrote a letter, assigned to 1567-8, to Ortelius, showing their belief in the existence of a north-west passage and containing a passage parallel with one in Gilbert's 'Discourse'. Taylor, *Writings and correspondence of the two Richard Hakluyts*, pp. 5-6, 77-83.

<sup>4</sup> Document no. 8, pp. 116-7.

## 3. IRELAND

For the greater part of four years, between 1566 and 1570, Gilbert was soldiering and planning colonies in Ireland. The Elizabethan re-conquest of Ireland was a slow, expensive and painful process, full of financial, military, political and administrative problems of which colonisation was one. For the statesmen and administrators colonisation was a policy of despair, a recognition of their failure to fit Irish society neatly and cheaply into the steel framework of Tudor administration. To the greedy, adventurous and ruthless speculators who served there, or were aware of the government's problems, Irish colonisation had a different aspect. Colonisation was a 'project' which might provide them with land and wealth at the expense of the conquered Irish and, with government backing, might prove more profitable than monopolies, piracy, office or alchemy at home.

In the autumn of 1566 the first large-scale attempt to conquer north-west Ulster was prepared. The Lord Deputy, Sir Henry Sidney, was to march from Dublin and a force, under Randolph, was to come from England to co-operate by sea and seize Derry. Humphrey Gilbert, as captain of a company of soldiers, was enlisted to accompany him and probably sailed from Bristol on 6 September. The fleet put in at the English town of Carrickfergus and Gilbert was one of those who landed to take part in some fighting in its vicinity, his first taste of Irish war. The expedition proceeded to Derry where a successful landing was made and a fortified camp constructed. Randolph and Gilbert were joined by Sidney on 12 October, but the Lord Deputy left Ulster within a few weeks, having failed in his main purpose of meeting with and defeating Shane O'Neill. He left a garrison behind at Derry, but took Gilbert with him to Drogheda and despatched him with letters to Cecil and the Queen, dated 12 November<sup>1</sup>. It was probably at this time that Gilbert first dis-

<sup>1</sup> *CSP Ir. 1515-74*, pp. 308, 317-18; Churchyard, *Generall rehearsall of warres*, sig. Q4-4v; Calthorpe MS. 16, f. 380.

cussed with Sidney the long-mooted plan for a plantation of English settlers in Ulster<sup>1</sup>.

In England Gilbert renewed his petitions to the Queen for permission to embark on the discovery of the North-west Passage in a year's time<sup>2</sup>, but, following the unfavourable report of the Muscovy Company on his project at the end of January 1567, he appears to have begun to interest his Devonshire friends in the possibilities of a colony in Ulster, as an alternative to an expedition to Cathay.

In May he went back to Ireland with a fresh company of soldiers<sup>3</sup> and with his plans far enough advanced for him to get the cautious approval of Elizabeth, who, early in June, told Sidney to discuss them with Gilbert and make a full report on the Ulster situation<sup>4</sup>. The latter had changed in favour of the English with the death of Shane O'Neill and it seemed as if something might be done about establishing a colony. A further recommendation for Gilbert was sent in a letter of 6 July<sup>5</sup> and Sir Francis Knollys suggested that, as soon as some land settlement between the native O'Neills and the immigrant Scots could be arrived at, Gilbert should be installed as president of a provincial administration and, with his friends and such labourers and craftsmen as could be sent over, entrusted with the establishment of a colony in the remaining lands<sup>6</sup>. Sir Arthur Champernown, Gilbert's uncle, was sufficiently interested to make a journey to Ireland to discuss further arrangements with Sidney.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately we do not know the details of the project or Sidney's comments on it, but it seems probable that Gilbert and Champernown, when confronted with the complex and unsettled state of Ulster, renounced the scheme of their

<sup>1</sup> See R. Dunlop, 'Sixteenth century schemes for the plantation of Ulster', in *Scottish Historical Review*, xxii (1924), 51-6.

<sup>2</sup> He gives March 1568 in SP 12/42, 23 (i) and March 1569 in document no. 6 below, which can be taken as 1568, 1569, or 1570, but, as both versions of the petition, written December 1566-January 1567, say as well 'followinge Marche come twelve monthes', it is clearly 1568 that is meant. See p. 111 below.

<sup>3</sup> HMC, *De L'Isle and Dudley*, 1, 343; *APC 1558-70*, pp. 345-6; *CSP Ir. 1515-74*, p. 331.

<sup>4</sup> Document no. 9, pp. 118-9.

<sup>5</sup> Document no. 10, pp. 119-20.

<sup>6</sup> Document no. 11, p. 121.

<sup>7</sup> Document no. 12, pp. 121-2.

own accord. Sidney, while he hoped to establish a colony, was well aware of the difficulties. Later he pointed out to Cecil<sup>1</sup> that it would be equally costly for the government to keep an army or finance a settlement in Ulster, but that there was room for many settlers if private speculators could be induced to plant a 'Collany'. To succeed, however, 'they must be so furnished with mony, apparell, victualle, and meanes to tyll the grounde, and seede for the same, as if they should imagine to finde nothinge here but earthe, And in dede Littell els shall they finde savinge only fleshe, and some beastes for careing of the grounde'. As much realism might have saved some of the early American ventures from false hopes or disaster.

Gilbert may have come to England with Sidney towards the end of 1567<sup>2</sup> and he was certainly there in April 1568<sup>3</sup>. He was among those whom Sidney suggested as president of the proposed council of Munster in June and, in August, Sidney asked Cecil to send Gilbert to him in Shropshire<sup>4</sup>, but Gilbert was seriously ill and was unable to return to duty until after Sidney had reached Ireland. He arrived in November with a recommendation that he should be given a better place<sup>5</sup>. He must have been well enough before leaving England to have revived his scheme for a colony in Ireland, this time in Munster, for early in 1569 he is involved in a series of projects for a plantation there. The position in Munster was complicated in the extreme. Desmond, head of the most powerful Anglo-Irish family in the south, was a prisoner in London at Elizabeth's mercy. His cousin, James Fitzmaurice, was thus able to become a power in Munster and to link up with the local Irish lords, who were in a state of intermittent warfare with the English. Sidney paid a brief visit to Munster at the end of 1568, probably accompanied by Gilbert, and reported that something must be done to establish

<sup>1</sup> 20 November 1568. SP 63/26, 18.

<sup>2</sup> His troops remained in service. See *Analecta Hibernica*, no. 4, pp. 294-5; HMC, *De L'Isle and Dudley*, I, 243-4, 400, 403; *CSP Ir. 1515-74*, pp. 358-60, 363, 404, 408. A document, partly written in the first person, records the 'Visions' of 'H. G.' and his 'skrier', the boy John Davis, on 24, 25, 26 February, 14, 15, 17, 22 March, and 6 April 1568. No places are mentioned. BM Add. MS. 36674, ff. 58-62.

<sup>3</sup> C 54/781.

<sup>4</sup> SP 63/25, 11; HMC, *De L'Isle and Dudley*, II, 8-9.

<sup>5</sup> *CSP Ir. 1515-74*, p. 392; HMC, *De L'Isle and Dudley*, II, 9.

English rule firmly there. At this time Sir Warham St. Leger and Richard Grenville, who had bought lands from Desmond and were trying to establish a small colony between Cork and Kinsale<sup>1</sup>, made contact with Gilbert and others to work out a scheme for a corporate settlement round Baltimore, further to the west. The earliest form in which it was put forward showed that the petitioners, Sir Warham St. Leger, Edward Sentlowe, Richard Grenville, Thomas Leton, Humphrey Gilbert, Jacques Wingfield, and Gilbert Talbot, were chiefly interested in the fishing on the south coast, which they proposed to exploit, custom free, if they were given Baltimore and certain islands as bases<sup>2</sup>. Later it developed into an elaborate plan for the complete confiscation of the lands of the native Irish in Munster and the transfer of the province to a private corporation, which should undertake confiscation, plantation and government<sup>3</sup>. This proposal, dated 12 February 1569, was first addressed to Sidney and was forwarded by him to England<sup>4</sup>, and about the same time the petitioners sent another version direct to the Privy Council, which was critically but sympathetically annotated by Cecil<sup>5</sup>, who also prepared a memorandum on the royal rights to be reserved from the grantees<sup>6</sup>. The Privy Council then sent to the petitioners a list of things it was proposed to accept and reject in the petitions<sup>7</sup>. In particular, it was indicated that the whole province would not be handed over, but, with a number of provisos, only a tract of country inland from Cork city to Kilmallock, and westwards to the Blasket Islands, comprising most of counties Cork and Kerry and a small part of Limerick. On 12 April the petitioners, in reply, accepted some of the reservations, but pleaded for the whole of the three counties at least.<sup>8</sup> A reply from the Privy Council, not extant, appears to

<sup>1</sup> A. L. Rowse, *Sir Richard Grenville*, pp. 64-6.

<sup>2</sup> Document no. 13, pp. 122-4.

<sup>3</sup> The documents are summarised in Appendix I. Internal evidence indicates a close connection with document no. 13, but they are not signed. Froude (*History of England*, x (1870), 490) declares that the first of them was attested by twenty-seven names, including Gilbert, St. Leger, Sir Peter Carew, 'Courtenays, Chichesters and others'. It is possible that, since Froude wrote, a sheet containing the names has been lost.

<sup>4</sup> Appendix I, pp. 490-3. <sup>5</sup> Appendix I, pp. 493-4. <sup>6</sup> Appendix I, p. 494.

<sup>7</sup> Appendix I, pp. 494-6.

<sup>8</sup> Appendix I, pp. 496-7.

have maintained its position, and a final reply for the petitioners accepted, in substance, the Privy Council's terms<sup>1</sup>. They desired that the scheme should be referred to Sidney and, accordingly, Cecil sent him a summary version of the petitions<sup>2</sup>, to which Sidney gave his approval in general terms on 30 June<sup>3</sup>. How far Gilbert was involved in these negotiations is not clear, but they are of interest as they may well have influenced the type of territorial and administrative system which he devised for the proposed American colony of 1582-3.

By the time Sidney's approval was given, however, Munster was in flames. James Fitzmaurice joined with the threatened Irish lords to destroy the Grenville-St. Leger colony<sup>4</sup>, and it seemed as if the whole of Munster might be lost to the English. There was also trouble in the Midlands. Sir Peter Carew had recently vamped-up medieval titles to lands long in the possession of the Butler family and had established himself, early in 1569, in the barony of Idrone, co. Carlow. This had antagonised Sir Edmund Butler, who was chiefly affected by the intrusion, and he prepared to join with Fitzmaurice and resist Carew. Sidney sent Gilbert with a force to aid Carew and he was in action in co. Kilkenny in July<sup>5</sup>. This nipped Butler's rebellion in the bud, and Sidney was able to make an expedition through Kilkenny and Tipperary to relieve Cork and to go from there to Limerick, accompanied by Gilbert. On 8 September, at Sidney's departure, Gilbert was made colonel of the army in Munster—in effect, he was to be military governor of the province—and was entrusted with the final suppression of the rebellion<sup>6</sup>. During the next three months, with all the enthusiasm of his first independent command, he drove his forces up and down Munster, destroying, or terrorising into submission, Irish and Anglo-Irish alike. Graphic descriptions of

<sup>1</sup> Appendix I, p. 497.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix I, p. 497.

<sup>3</sup> SP 63/28, 58.

<sup>4</sup> Rowse, *Grenville*, pp. 66-9; G. H. Bushnell, *Sir Richard Grenville*, pp. 49-63.

<sup>5</sup> Churchyard, *Generall rehearsall of warres*, sig. Q4v; SP 63/29, 60; 'The lyffe of sir Peter Carewe, collected by John Vowell alias Hoker, of the cetie of Excestre' in *Archaeologia*, xxviii (1840), p. 137; Holinshed, *Chronicles*, II (1587), 130; *Cal. Carew MSS. 1515-75*, pp. 387-8; Curtis, 'Extracts out of the Heralds' Books in Trinity College, Dublin', in *Journ. R. Soc. of Antiquities of Ir.*, LXII, 32-41.

<sup>6</sup> His 'allowances' etc. *Cal. pat. rolls, Ir., Hen. VIII-Eliz.*, pp. 535-7.

his policy and activities are given by Churchyard and in his own letters<sup>1</sup>. His method of waging war was to devastate the country, killing every living creature encountered by his troops. If a castle did not yield at the first demand he would accept no later submission, but would take it by assault and kill every person in it. He made the Irish lords, who came to surrender, walk to his tent between two lines of heads cut from his dead enemies, and forced them, after abject submission, to enter into bonds and put in pledges for good behaviour. He rode rough-shod over the chartered liberties of the Anglo-Irish towns, 'annswereing them', he told Sidney, 'that the Prince had a Regular and absolute power, and that which might not be done by the one, I wolde do yt by the other in Casez of necessatie'—an interesting statement of the doctrine of prerogative. Churchyard stresses his contempt for the Irish, of whom he said 'that he thought his Dogges eares to good, to heare the speeche of the greateste noble manne emongest them'. His considered opinion was 'that no Conquered nacion will ever yelde willenglie their obedience for love but rather for feare'. This ruthlessness made him almost a legendary figure in Ireland, and Raleigh in 1581, pleading that Gilbert should be sent back to Munster, said that no man had been more feared there<sup>2</sup>. His views on the treatment of subject peoples, from a man who might well have formed the first English settlement among the North American Indians, are of some interest.

By the end of the year the rebellion appeared to be, but was not, crushed, and Gilbert was called from his post to join Sidney at Dublin, where he arrived with a retinue of important persons who had submitted. He was knighted at Drogheda on 1 January 1570 for his services<sup>3</sup>. As early as 12 July 1569 Gilbert had asked to be allowed to return to England on account of an affection of his eyes, and he had made repeated requests for his recall in November and December. He now pleaded urgent

<sup>1</sup> *Generall rehearsall of warres*, sig. Q1-R1; letters to Sidney of 12 November, 1 and 6 December, SP 63/29, 82-3. See also Holinshed, *Chronicles*, II, 130-2; *Cal. Carew MSS. 1515-75*, p. 389; *CSP Ir. 1515-74*, pp. 420-4.

<sup>2</sup> *CSP Ir. 1574-85*, p. 289.

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. Carew MSS. 1575-88*, p. 348; Holinshed, *Chronicles*, II, 132; Churchyard, *Generall rehearsall of warres*, sig. R1.

business in England, was given leave by Sidney and arrived in England about the end of January 1570<sup>1</sup>. His departure from Ireland was intended to be merely temporary, but his leave seems to have been extended to 25 March 1571. He should then have returned, but did not, as the Privy Council noted on 16 July that he had been absent from his charge since Lady Day. He was evidently given permission to remain in England and his company in Ireland was ordered to be discharged in September<sup>2</sup>.

It is possible that it had been intended that he should return to Munster as president of the provincial council that was being established, but, in November 1570, Sir John Perrot was appointed President of Munster and took up his duties in February 1571. In 1572 Gilbert took up again with Sir John Perrot<sup>3</sup> his old scheme for a colony in co. Cork, in collaboration once more with his uncle, Sir Arthur Champernoun. His notes on the project contain important suggestions on English economic policy towards Ireland<sup>4</sup> and a proposal that he should be granted Baltimore and the land adjacent to it for a colony. He also desired to have the right of taking customs from the Spanish fishing fleets off the Kerry coast, a monopoly of trade with the Irish districts of the south-west, mineral rights all over Ireland and the grant of all lands captured by him from the Irish<sup>5</sup>. Nothing is known to have come of this project, but it is clear that he continued to be considered an authority on Ireland, and early in 1574 he prepared for the Queen a memorandum on military measures to be taken in Ireland, without, however, making any proposals for colonisation<sup>6</sup>. His Irish

<sup>1</sup> *CSP Ir.* 1515-74, pp. 413, 425.

<sup>2</sup> *APC* 1571-5, p. 37; *CSP Ir.* 1515-74, p. 458. Although he was paid £4,620 15s. 6d. between 23 June 1569 and 1 September 1571 (AO 1/284, 1072), money evidently remained owing to him. He was ordered to be advanced £600 by the Privy Council in July 1571 (*APC*, p. 37), but his accounts dragged on and were not satisfied by 1575. See *CSP For.* 1572-4, p. 173; *CSP Ir.* 1515-74, pp. 442, 455, 476, 528, 532; *CSP Ir.* 1574-85, pp. 5, 19, 88.

<sup>3</sup> If Carew's annotations on the document are to be credited.

<sup>4</sup> See A. K. Longfield, *Anglo-Irish trade in the sixteenth century*, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> Document no. 14, pp. 124-8.

<sup>6</sup> 'A discourse for the reformation particularly of Munster in Irland . . . written by Humfrye Gilbert knight at the Commaundement of the Quenes most excellent Majestie the 1 of Febr. 1573.' Calthorpe MS. 16, ff. 378-88.

colonising projects, though all abortive, are not unimportant in Gilbert's history as they turned his attention to the possibilities of colonisation in North America, and gave him some knowledge of the conditions and administrative framework within which settlement could be carried out.

#### 4. MANY OCCUPATIONS

Sir Humphrey Gilbert was returned, with John Hawkins, as M.P. for Plymouth in the elections for the parliament which began on 2 April 1571 and lasted until 30 May<sup>1</sup>. The first murmur of the struggle over monopolies, which was to be so important in the later years of the reign, appeared in a motion of the lawyer, Robert Bell, for the calling in of licences to four courtiers—probably patents for obtaining the fines or other income from enforcing the laws or giving dispensation from them. Gilbert seized on this to launch on 16 April a vigorous defence of the royal prerogative. He declared that Bell's motion was derogatory to the prerogative and said 'For what difference is to say, the Queen is not to use the priviledge of the Crown, and to say she is not Queen?' and ended by a statement that the Crown could assert absolute powers. This speech was disliked as 'implying many occasions of mischief'<sup>2</sup>, and on 20 April Peter Wentworth, the outstanding protagonist of parliamentary power, made a bitter attack on Gilbert. 'He noted his disposition to flatter and fawn on the Prince, comparing him to the Cameleon, which can change himself into all colours, saving white; even so (said he) this reporter can change himself to all fashions but honesty'. Gilbert made an attempt to reply but 'he had the d[enial]l three tymes by the howse'<sup>3</sup>. In spite of this Gilbert was put, on 26 May, on a committee to consider a bill which arose out of Bell's motion and, on 28 May, on another to inquire into corruption of members of the House of Commons, and at the rising of parliament on 30 May he spoke on a motion to

<sup>1</sup> Browne Willis, *Notitia parliamentaria*, III, 80.

<sup>2</sup> D'Ewes, *Journals* (1682), pp. 167-8, 242.

<sup>3</sup> D'Ewes, p. 175; 'Hoker's journal of the House of Commons in 1571', in *Trans. Devonshire Association*, XI, 479.

the Queen that she should engage on a forward policy in Ireland<sup>1</sup>.

Gilbert's support for the prerogative power of the Crown is comprehensible, because it was only through it that he could hope to obtain the monopolies and privileges on which his various projects depended. It is significant that Gilbert's reward for defending the leasing out of royal rights of taxation as monopolies to private individuals should have been a grant of this kind for himself. On 25 June 1571 he received an appointment by patent for seven years to act as Receiver-general of fines levied by him for the enforcement of the statutes debarring unlawful games and providing for the maintenance of horses, armour, weapons, munitions and artillery by persons required to serve in time of war. He was to receive half the proceeds of the fines levied<sup>2</sup>.

Shortly after, Gilbert became involved in another project—an elaborate mining and alchemical venture—which was to occupy him intermittently during the next five years. William Medley, an alchemist, convinced Sir Thomas Smith that he could transmute iron into copper, and Smith joined with Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Cecil and Leicester in obtaining a patent from the Queen, dated 4 December 1571, which granted them a monopoly 'to trye out and make of yron verye true perfytt and good Copper and of Antymonye and leade lykewyse true and perfytt quyckesilver', and incorporated them as 'the Governour & Societie of the newe arte'<sup>3</sup>. The history of this venture is obscure and it is not proposed to deal with it in detail<sup>4</sup>. Sir

<sup>1</sup> D'Ewes, p. 189; *Commons journals*, I, 93; Hooker, pp. 488-9. See Pollard, *History of England 1547-1603*, pp. 362-3; Cheyney, *History of England from the defeat of the Armada to the death of Elizabeth*, II, 286-96; Neale, 'Peter Wentworth', in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xxxix, 40-1.

<sup>2</sup> Pat. R. 13 Eliz., pt. 11, m. 1, C 66/1081; SP 15/20, 47.

<sup>3</sup> Pat. R. 14 Eliz., pt. 12, m. 22-6, C 66/1093. See too BM, Lans. MS. 14, ff. 40-1v.

<sup>4</sup>The accounts given by Strype (*Life of Sir Thomas Smith*, pp. 100, 105, 282-6; *Annals of the reformation*, II, pt. 1, 356), while they contain some information, are not consistent. The documentary evidence for the project includes the following letters: 9 January 1572. Smith to Gilbert (*CSP For. Jan.-June 1583, and addenda 1553-83*, no. 416, SP 70/146, 13, p. 10); 20 January 1572. Smith to Gilbert (*ibid.*, no. 424, SP 70/146, 13, p. 30); 8 February 1572. Smith to Gilbert (*ibid.*, no. 428, SP 70/146, 13, p. 33); 8

Thomas Smith was sent as ambassador to France almost immediately after the grant of the patent, and he left Gilbert to supervise the activities of Medley in the smelting works leased from Lady Katherine Mountjoy at Poole. Gilbert, however, was content to remain in London and receive optimistic reports from Medley, much to Smith's exasperation, between January and May 1572. By May Medley had fallen out with Gilbert and was threatening to give up the enterprise. Gilbert set out on a military expedition to the Netherlands at the beginning of July and did not return until November. By this time the project had collapsed through lack of capital. It was revived in 1574, probably, in part at least, as a legitimate mining venture, and with money borrowed from the Queen. Gilbert retained his interest in it<sup>1</sup>, and Strype mentions accounts going down to Christmas 1576<sup>2</sup>, which show considerable losses. It is not known how much Gilbert lost altogether in the scheme, one which is typical of many speculative ventures of the period.

During 1571 Elizabeth had been manoeuvring to detach France from Spain and preparing for an attack on the latter. In April 1572 she achieved the defensive alliance of Blois with France and the capture of Brille by Dutch freebooters, who had been encouraged to use English ports as a base, which was followed by spasmodic and almost universal risings against the Spaniards. French and English then commenced a programme

February 1572. Smith to Burghley (*ibid.*, no. 431, SP 70/146, 13, p. 41; *CSP For.* 1572-4, no. 113, SP 70/122); 15 February 1572. Lady K. Mountjoy to Burghley (*CSP Dom.* 1547-80, p. 426, SP 12/85, 45); 16 March 1572. Smith to Burghley (*CSP For. Add.*, no. 447, SP 70/146, 13, p. 62); 10 April 1572. Smith to Gilbert (*ibid.*, no. 458, SP 70/146, 13, p. 81); [15 April 1572]. Smith to Gilbert (*ibid.*, no. 464, SP 70/146, 13, p. 86); 19 April 1572. Medley to Burghley (*CSP Dom.*, p. 440, SP 12/86, 14); 19 May 1572. Medley to Burghley (*ibid.*, p. 443, SP 12/86, 44); 20 May 1572. Smith to Gilbert (*CSP For. Add.*, no. 495, SP 70/146, 13, p. 112); 20 May 1572. Smith to Medley (*ibid.*, no. 496, SP 70/146, 13, p. 113); 7 March 1574[-5?]. Smith and Leicester to Burghley (Strype, *Annals*, II, pt. 2, 555); 8 March 1574[-5?]. Smith to Burghley (*ibid.*, p. 557); 16 December 1574. Smith to Burghley and Leicester (BM, Lans. MS. 19, ff. 97-100v); miscellaneous documents which may be connected with the venture, Lans. MSS. 13, nos. 8, 42-3; 14, nos. 8-14; 18, nos. 47, 53; 19, nos. 100-1; 29, no. 16; 31, no. 25; 47, no. 71.

<sup>1</sup> Mentioned in a deed of 29 November 1574. C 54/962.

<sup>2</sup> *Annals*, II, pt. 1, 356.

of intervention, by which parties of 'volunteers' were sent, with government assistance, to the aid of the Dutch. The advance-guard of the English force went over in June 1572 and Gilbert was selected to command the main body of some 1100 men which sailed for Flushing on 8 July<sup>1</sup>. Gilbert had a difficult part to play. Officially he was a volunteer and liable to be outlawed by his own government; secretly, he was in constant communication with Burghley and had arranged that if he was ordered by the Privy Council to return he was to ignore their commands until he received word from Burghley.

<sup>1</sup> The following documents refer to Gilbert's activities: 10 July 1572. La Mothe-Fénélon to Charles IX (*Correspondance diplomatique*, v, 43); 14 July. Herle to Burghley (Wright, *Queen Elizabeth and her times*, 1, 422-6; Kervyn de Lettenhove, *Relations politiques des Pays-Bas et de l'Angleterre*, vi, 454-5; BM, Lans. MS. 15, f. 164); 15 July. Capitulations between Gilbert and Flushing (*CSP For.* 1572-4, nos. 492-3; Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 457; SP 70/124; BM, Cotton MS. Galba C IV, f. 303); 16 July. News (*CSP For.*, no. 478; SP 70/124); July. News (*CSP For.*, no. 511; SP 70/124); 18 July. Smith to Walsingham (Digges, *Compleat ambassador*, p. 231); 20 July. La Mothe-Fénélon to Charles IX (*Corr. dipl.*, v, 60); 21 July. Fogaçe to Alva (Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 462; *CSP Sp.* 1568-79, no. 339; BM, Cotton MS. Galba C IV, ff. 258-62v); 22 July. La Mothe-Fénélon to Charles IX (*Corr. dipl.*, v, 64); 3 August. La Mothe-Fénélon to Charles IX (*Corr. dipl.*, v, 78); 5 August. Lee to Burghley (Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 474-5; *CSP Dom. Add.* 1566-79, p. 422; SP 15/21, 80); [c. 8 August]. Privy Council to Gilbert and instructions to Pickman (*CSP For. Jan.-June 1583, and Addenda 1553-83*, no. 499; SP 70/146, 14, p. 149; Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 483-8; BM, Lans. MS. 155, ff. 130v-134; Harl. MS. 36, ff. 265-7v; Cotton MS. Galba C IV, ff. 304-7v); 10 August. Burghley to Leicester (*CSP Dom.* 1547-80, p. 449; SP 12/89, 3); 11 August. La Mothe-Fénélon to Charles IX (*Corr. dipl.*, v, 88-9); 13 August. Gilbert to Burghley (*CSP For.*, no. 530; Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 488-9; SP 70/124); 23 August. Cotton to Burghley (Wright, 1, 435-7; Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 497-9; BM, Cotton MS. Galba C IV, ff. 267-8v); 23 August. Gilbert to Burghley (*CSP For.*, no. 546; Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 499-500; SP 70/124); [August]. Waye to Burghley (*CSP For.*, no. 547; Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 473-4; SP 70/124); 28 August. La Mothe-Fénélon to Charles IX (*Corr. dipl.*, v, 108); 3 September. Gilbert to Burghley (*CSP For.*, no. 550; Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 505-6; SP 70/125); 6 September. Gilbert to Burghley (*CSP For.*, no. 556; Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 509; SP 70/125); 7 September. Gilbert to Burghley (*CSP For.*, no. 557; Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 510-1; SP 70/125); 8 September. [?] to Alva (*CSP Sp.*, no. 346); 25 September. de Jonge to Killebrew (*CSP For.*, no. 572; Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 529-30; SP 70/125); 27 September. Gilbert to Burghley (*CSP For.*, no. 576; Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 531; SP 70/125); 28 September. Gilbert to Burghley (*CSP For.*, no. 577; Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 532; SP 70/125).

In the Netherlands the campaign is a record of suspicion and intrigue between the French and English volunteers, and of military action under the divided leadership of Gilbert and 't Zereets which was incompetently managed and punctuated by quarrels between the commanders. It was carried on against a background of kaleidoscopic diplomatic changes, which did much to make it ineffective.

In July Elizabeth was considering intervention on a really large scale and sent a military mission to help to consolidate the Dutch forces. Gilbert was able to prepare a campaign in co-operation with his immediate employer, the town of Flushing, for an attack on Sluys and Bruges. The army left Walcheren for the mainland and summoned Sluys and Bruges, but did not attempt an assault, and the only result of the action was a successful attack on a Spanish convoy. Gilbert and 't Zereets then decided to divert their forces to an attack on the island and town of Goes. Shipping, sent from Flushing, enabled them to land safely, and desultory and ineffective fighting followed, against forces inferior in numbers, but superior in skill.

By the beginning of August Elizabeth's policy had shifted. The defeat of the main French force at Mons decided her against further entanglements in the Netherlands, and Gilbert was ordered to be very careful not to embroil her with Spain. French and English were endeavouring to involve each other in open hostilities with Spain, and each suspected the other of territorial designs in the Netherlands. Meantime Gilbert retired from Goes after an unsuccessful siege and established his forces in the vicinity of Flushing, where he occupied himself in curbing the activities of the Spanish garrison at Middelburg and defeated a sortie from it in the direction of Flushing.

The coolness between England and France developed into a temporary breach with the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and Elizabeth decided to reduce still further her commitments in the Netherlands, lest she should be involved with both France and Spain. Gilbert was furious at the massacre and his reaction was to propose that Elizabeth should attempt to seize for herself Walcheren and the adjacent islands, although he received no support for these suggestions. Towards the end of September

he made a further landing on Goes and attempted a night attack, which was a disastrous failure, and the crossing of a Spanish force from the mainland at low water, under Mondragon and Avila, decided the commanders of the Anglo-Dutch force to retreat, which they succeeded in doing with some loss. On his return to Flushing, Gilbert refused further offers of service with the prince of Orange and decided to return to England. It is probable that he received secret orders to return to Court. Elizabeth had veered towards an accommodation with Spain, and his recall would be a valuable gesture. Accordingly, he left Flushing at the beginning of November and, with the survivors of his force, had arrived in England before 9 November. Elaborate precautions, which did not deceive the Spanish ambassador, were taken to hide Gilbert's visit to the court after his return, and he and his men remained ostentatiously in disgrace while the negotiations for the renewal of trading relations with Spain were proceeding<sup>1</sup>. Many of Gilbert's men were ill when they returned and some died, and he himself fell sick. On 11 December it was said that his sickness had turned into 'a Quartian'<sup>2</sup>.

Roger Williams, who accompanied Gilbert on the Netherlands expedition and wrote a detailed account of it<sup>3</sup>, leaves an unfavourable impression of Gilbert's personality and military skill. He was given to blustering rages, as when he received a

<sup>1</sup> 4 November. Guaras to Alva (Navarrete, *Documentos inéditos*, xci, 49; Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 571; *CSP Sp.*, no. 360); 9 November. Guaras to Alva (Navarrete, xci, 55-6; Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 576-7; *CSP Sp.*, no. 364); 17 November. Guaras to Alva (Kervyn de Lettenhove, vi, 583-4; BM, Cotton MS. Galba C iv, ff. 289-92). A promissory note, dated 1 November, from the Flushing authorities to Gilbert, provided for the payment to him of 3,700 'Carolus gyldern' (HCA 24/44, no. 13; printed by Marsden, *Select pleas in the Court of Admiralty*, II, 38). He received instalments of this sum on 29 November and 7 December and appointed, on 22 December, Anthony Woolcocke to receive the remainder (HCA 24/44, no. 14).

<sup>2</sup> Digges, *Compleat ambassador*, p. 299.

<sup>3</sup> *The actions in the Low Countries*. Amongst the literary sources are Churchyard, *Generall rehearsall of warres and A lamentable and pitiful description, of the wofull warres in Flaunders*; Stow, *Annals* (ed. Howes); Camden, *Annales*; Meteren, *Histoire des Pays-Bas*. For modern accounts see Markham, *The fighting Veres*, pp. 42-8; Pollard, *Hist. of England 1547-1603*, pp. 331-9; Cheyney, *Hist. of England*, I, 190-3; Black, *Reign of Elizabeth*, p. 125.

defiant answer to his summons from the governor of Bruges. 'Sir Humfrey was in great choler; swearing divers oathes, that hee would put all to the sword, unlesse they would yeeld'. He quarrelled with all his principal associates. Williams blames him severely for the failure of the night attack on Goes, although Gilbert himself laid the blame on 't Zereets. It is probable that one factor in his failures was lack of an adequate artillery train, which Williams recognises as a cause of the ill-success of 'our ignorant poor seige' of Goes. At the least, Gilbert's expedition had the negative effect of occupying considerable Spanish forces, which might otherwise have contributed materially to the destruction of the embryo Republic.

During the intervals between Gilbert's campaigns and speculations he managed to accumulate a considerable amount of land, to marry and have a large family<sup>1</sup>. He obtained leases of land in Merionethshire from the Crown in 1565 and 1568<sup>2</sup>, and, on 23 April 1568, bought three parts of the manor of Otterden from William Aucher of Bishopsbourne, Kent<sup>3</sup>. It was from this family that Sir Humphrey Gilbert, in 1570, chose his wife, Anne Aucher (or Ager), but it is not clear what was her relationship to William Aucher. Gosling<sup>4</sup> says she was the daughter and heiress of Sir Anthony Aucher (d. 1558). Hasted, the historian of Kent, says in one place that she was the daughter of John Aucher, son of Sir Anthony<sup>5</sup>, and this is borne out by a herald's visitation of Kent in 1619<sup>6</sup>, which describes John Aucher as a younger son of Sir Anthony; but in another place Hasted says

<sup>1</sup> Four sons, John, Humphrey, Arthur and Anthony, are mentioned in a deed of 17 February 1581. (Close Roll, 23 Eliz., pt. 6, C 54/1102). He had also two other sons, Otho and Raleigh, and a daughter. Tenison, *Elizabethan England*, III, 103.

<sup>2</sup> Estymanner, 25 June 1565 (Pat. R. 7 Eliz., pt. 4, C 66/1012); Llanaver, 10 May 1568 (Pat. R. 10 Eliz., pt. 3, C 66/1043). These leases are mentioned in a deed of 29 November 1574 (Close R. 17 Eliz., pt. 1, C 54/962). Gilbert in 1567 held some land from Lord Pembroke in the lordship of Chalke (Straton, *Survey of the lands of William, first earl of Pembroke*, I, 101). He obtained another Welsh lease on 11 December 1577, Nevyn in Carnarvonshire (Pat. R. 20 Eliz., pt. 10, C 66/1173).

<sup>3</sup> Close R. 10 Eliz., pt. 25, C 54/781. See also Close R. 12 Eliz., pt. 24, C 54/836.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>5</sup> *History of Kent* (1st ed.), II, 501.

<sup>6</sup> Cited in Tenison, *Elizabethan England*, III, 103.