

God to practice their faith free from the limits of the Church of England.

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## National and Economic Reasons to Colonize America (1582 and 1585)

Richard Hakluyt the younger (1552-1616) and Richard Hakluyt the elder (dates unknown)<sup>2</sup>

### I

To the right worshipful and most virtuous gentleman, Master Philip Sidney, Esquire

I marvel not a little (Right Worshipful) that since the first discovery of America (which is now full fourscore-and-ten years), after so great conquest and plantings of the Spaniards and Portugals there, that we of England could never have the grace to set fast footing in such fertile and temperate places as are left as yet unpossessed by them. But, again, when I consider that there is a time for all men, and see the Portugals' time to be out of date, and that the nakedness of the Spaniards and their long-hidden secrets are now at length espied, whereby they went about to delude the world, I conceive great hope that the time approacheth and now is that we of England may share and part stakes (if we will ourselves) both with the Spaniard and the Portugal in part of America and other regions as yet undiscovered.

### Advancing the Honour of England

And surely, if there were in us that desire to advance the honour of our country which ought to be in every good man, we would not all this while have forslown [delayed] the possessing of those lands which of equity and right appertain unto us, as by the discourses that follow shall appear most plainly. Yea, if we would

behold with the eye of pity how all our prisons are pestered and filled with able men to serve their country, which for small robberies are daily hanged up in great numbers, some twenty at a clap out of one jail (as was seen at the last assizes at Rochester), we would hasten and further, every man to his power, the deducting of some colonies of our superfluous people into those temperate and fertile parts of America, which, being within six weeks' sailing of England, are yet unpossessed by any Christians and seem to offer themselves unto us, stretching nearer unto Her Majesty's dominions than to any other part of Europe.

We read that the bees, when they grow to be too many in their own hive at home, are wont to be led out by their captains to swarm abroad and seek themselves a new dwelling place. If the examples of the Grecians and Carthaginians of old time and the practice of our age may not move us, yet let us learn wisdom of these small, weak, and unreasonable creatures.

It chanced very lately that upon occasion I had great conference in matters of cosmography with an excellent learned man of Portugal [possibly Don Antonio de Castilio], most privy to all the discoveries of his nation, who wondered that those blessed countries from the point of Florida northward were all this while unplanted by Christians, protesting with great affection and zeal that if he were now as young as I (for at this present he is threescore years of age) he would sell all he had (being a man of no small wealth and honour) to furnish a convenient number of ships to sea for the inhabiting of those countries and reducing those gentile people to Christianity. Moreover, he added that John Barros, their chief cosmographer, being moved with the like desire, was the cause that Brasilia was first inhabited by the Portugals; where they have nine baronies or lordships, and thirty *engenhos* or sugar mills, two or three hundred slaves belonging to each mill, with a judge and other officers and a church; so that every mill is as it were a little commonwealth; and that the country was first planted by such men as for small offences were saved from the rope. This spake he, not only unto me and in my hearing, but also in the presence of a friend of mine, a man of great skill in the mathematics. If this man's desire might be executed, we might not only for the present time take possession of that good land, but also in short space by God's grace find out that short and easy

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<sup>2</sup> From *The Original Writing and Correspondence of the Two Richard Hakluts*, edited by E.G.R. Taylor (London: Hakluyt Society, 1935).

passage by the north-west, which we have hitherto so long desired and whereof we have made many good and more than probable conjectures....

And here to conclude and shut up this matter, I have heard myself, of merchants of credit that have lived long in Spain, that King Philip hath made a law of late that none of his subjects shall discover to the northwards of five-and-forty degrees of America; which maybe thought to proceed chiefly of two causes: the one, lest passing to the north they shall discover the open passage from the South Sea to our North Sea; the other because they have not people enough to possess and keep that passage but rather thereby should open a gap for other nations to pass that way. Certes [certainly], if hitherto in our own discoveries we had not been led with a preposterous desire of seeking rather gain than God's glory, I assure myself that our labours had taken far better effect. But we forgot that godliness is great riches, and that if we first seek the kingdom of God, all other things will be given unto us, and that as the light accompanieth the sun and the heat the fire, so lasting riches do wait upon them that are jealous for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ and the enlargement of His glorious Gospel; as it is said, 'I will honour them that honour me.' I trust that now, being taught by their manifold losses, our men will take a more godly course and use some part of their goods to His glory; if not, He will turn even their covetousness to serve Him, as He hath done the pride and avarice of the Spaniards and Portugals, who, pretending in glorious words that they made their discoveries chiefly to convert infidels to our most holy faith (as they say) in deed and truth sought not them but their goods and riches. . . .

Here I cease, craving pardon for my own boldness, trusting also that Your Worship will continue and increase your accustomed favour towards these godly and honourable discoveries.

## II

### Reasons for Colonization

1. The glory of God by planting of religion among those infidels.

2. The increase of the force of the Christians.
3. The possibility of the enlarging of the dominions of the Queens Most Excellent Majesty, and consequently of her honour, revenues, and of her power by this enterprise.
4. An ample vent in time to come of the woollen cloths of England, especially those of the coarsest sorts, to the maintenance of our poor, that else starve or become burdensome to the realm; and vent also of sundry our commodities upon the tract of that firm land, and possibly in other regions from the northern side of that main.
5. A great possibility of further discoveries of other regions from the north part of the same land by sea, and of unspeakable honour and benefit that may rise upon the same by the trades to ensue in Japan, China, and Cathay, etc.
6. By return thence, this realm shall receive (by Reason of the situation of the climate, and by reason of the excellent soil) woad, oil, wines, hops, salt, and most or all the commodities that we receive from the best parts of Europe, and we shall receive the same better cheap than now we receive them, as we may use the matter.
7. Receiving the same thence, the navy, the human strength of this realm, our merchants and their goods, shall not be subject to arrest of ancient enemies and doubtful friends as of late years they have been.
8. If our nation do not make any conquest there but only use traffic and change of commodities, yet, by means the country is not very mighty but divided into petty kingdoms, they shall not dare to offer us any great annoy but such as we may easily revenge with sufficient chastisement to the unarmed people there.
9. Whatsoever commodities we receive by the Steelyard Merchants, or by our own merchants from Eastland, be it flax, hemp, pitch, tar, masts, clapboard, wainscot, or such-like; the like good[s] may we receive from the north and north-east part of that country near unto Cape Breton, in return for our coarse woollen cloths, flannels, and rugs fit for those colder regions.
10. The passage to and fro is through the main ocean sea, so as we are not in danger of any enemy's coast.

### Trade Opportunities