

PREFACE

I FEEL assured that readers of this *Life of Sir Humphrey Gilbert* will wonder why such an interesting and important character had not before received the attention of historians. It came as a surprise to me, I remember, when I wished to get particulars of his voyage to Newfoundland, to find that no biography of ENGLAND'S FIRST EMPIRE BUILDER had been written, and I then determined to undertake the task myself. I had nearly completed my work when I learned that the Prince Society of Boston had published a life of Sir Humphrey Gilbert; but being intended for members of the Society only, it is out of the reach of the general reader.

I have been at great pains and considerable expense to obtain all possible information on every detail of his career, and can conscientiously affirm that every possible source of knowledge has been explored. In this connection I beg to acknowledge my indebtedness to the Rev. Walter Raleigh Gilbert, of the Priory, Bodmin, Cornwall, for permission to examine his family records and papers. Mr. Gilbert is the direct lineal descendant of Sir Humphrey, and I had great hopes of obtaining some interesting new facts, although Mr. Gilbert warned me that he thought it very unlikely. The search was, unfortunately, fruitless, but I am none the less indebted to Mr. Gilbert. I have also to thank him for permission to reproduce the portraits of Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Sir Walter Raleigh now in his possession. These are thought to be very early portraits if not actually contemporary, and have not hitherto been published.

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