ROBERT HAYMAN
ca. 1579–ca. 1631

Robert Hayman was born in Devonshire, probably in Totnes, the little seaside town where he saw Drake. After studying at Oxford and Lincoln’s Inn, he was appointed governor “of the plantation of Harbour-Grace in Bristolstope in Britaniola anciently called Newfoundland,” and served there for seven years. One fruit of his study during the long winter nights was a little volume called *Quodlibets lately come over from New Britaniola anciently called Newfoundland, epigrams and other small parcels both moral and divine*, which he published in 1628, after his return. As poetry, it will probably never win him any immortality; but as a human record of a meeting with a great man, it has the curious charm of a fly in amber.

Of the Great and Famous
Ever-To-Be-Honored Knight, Sir Francis Drake,
and of My Little-Little Self

The Dragon1 that our seas did raise his crest
And brought back heaps of gold unto his nest,
Unto his foes more terrible than thunder,
Glory of his age, after-ages’ wonder,

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Excelling all those that excelled before—
It’s feared we shall have none such any more—
Effecting all, he sole did undertake,
Valiant, just, wise, mild, honest, godly Drake.
This man when I was little I did meet

As he was walking up Totnes’ long street.
He asked me whose I was. I answered him.
He asked me if his good friend were within.
A fair red orange in his hand he had;
He gave it me, whereof I was right glad,

10

Takes and kissed me, and prays, “God bless my boy,”
Which I record with comfort to this day.
Could he on me have breathéd with his breath
His gifts, Elias-like,2 after his death,
Then had I been enabled for to do

15

Many brave things I have a heart unto.
I have as great desire as e’er had he
To joy, annoy, friends, foes; but ’twill not be.

1. The name “Drake” would normally turn to “Draco” in Spanish; that is Latin for “Dragon,” and that is the way the Spanish sailors thought of Drake.

2. Elijah was an Old-Testament prophet who ascended in a chariot to heaven, leaving his mant- and his prophetic speech to his son Elisha (II Kings ii).