

FROM THESE UNCOUTH SHORES

*Seventeenth-century
Literature of Newfoundland*

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*Behold, e'en from these uncouth shores, among
Unpeopled woods, and hills, these straines were sung.
(George Wither on Hayman's Quodlibets)*

IN THE CUSTOMARY VIEW, the colonial English poetry of Canada begins with the work of Nova Scotian contemporaries of Cowper and Goldsmith; yet a volume of verse written in Newfoundland and taking that island in part as its subject, Robert Hayman's *Quodlibets*, was published in London in 1628, when Milton was a youth of twenty, when Drayton, Donne and Jonson were still alive, and Shakespeare had been dead only twelve years.¹ In truth, *Quodlibets* can scarcely be regarded as a part of the indigenous literature of Newfoundland. Hayman came to the colony in mature years, with literary ideals formed in Oxford and London, and he did not remain there long. His verse has not exercised any influence upon later poets of Newfoundland and Canada. It has, indeed, been unknown to them, for *Quodlibets* has never been reprinted and exists today only in a few copies. Nor does it possess sufficient literary merit to deserve revival, but it has at least the claim to remembrance which Hayman states in his dedicatory address to Charles I. He writes there of his poems (which include translations as well as original works): "Meane and unworthy though they are, yet because some of them were borne, and the rest did first speake *English*, in that Land whereof your gracious Majestie is the . . . *Soveraigne* . . . and being the first fruits of this kind, that ever visited this Land, out of that Dominion of yours; I thought it my duty, to present and to prostrate these with my selfe at your Royall feet."²

Surprising although its appearance at so early a date may seem, *Quodlibets* does not stand altogether alone. Hayman was, if his claim is accepted, the first to publish poetry written in Newfoundland, but he was by no means the first to write about Newfoundland,³ and his work is part of a small body of literature which sprang from a series of attempts between 1610 and 1630 to plant colonies on the island. A company of London and Bristol merchants, with which Francis Bacon was associated, established the first official settlement in 1610; other colonies were sponsored by a separate group of Bristol merchants, by William Vaughan, and by Sir George Calvert, afterwards Lord Baltimore; and still another was planned by Lord Falkland, although never realized. None of the projects met with much success, but they did not fail until they had inspired a number of writings. Captain John Mason, who succeeded John Guy as governor of the first colony, published *A Briefe Discourse of the New-found-land* in 1620, and Richard Whitbourne, who was for a time Vaughan's governor and later an advocate of Falkland's scheme, quickly followed in 1622 with *A Discourse and Discovery of New-found-land*. Vaughan published several volumes relating in appearance or actuality to Newfoundland, notably *The Golden Fleece* (1626). Like Mason and Whitbourne, Hayman was the governor of a colony, the one established by the group exclusively from Bristol, and *Quodlibets* is, in fact, nearly the last of the works prompted by these early attempts at colonization of the island, for by the time it was published fatal or near-fatal difficulties had already fallen upon them.⁴

Mason and Whitbourne do not aspire toward so distinctively a literary status as Hayman does. Writing as men of practical affairs, they profess to give in unadorned prose an accurate description of the island, and to present soberly the arguments for its colonization. They are concerned to show that permanent settlement would give England a great advantage in the fisheries, which had long been exploited by Europeans,⁵ to demonstrate the existence of other valuable resources, and to give evidence of the suitability of the land and climate for agriculture. Despite their desire for accuracy, they are sometimes betrayed by limitations in their knowledge, and sometimes carried away by their zeal as propagandists, particularly when they attempt to argue that Newfoundland offers as great advantages for colonial endeavour as the rival areas of Virginia and New England.

But, if their works are occasionally less than fully accurate, they are occasionally more than narrowly factual, for they record the imaginative impact of the new land upon the Englishman of the earlier seventeenth century. Mason and Whit-

bourne see Newfoundland through different eyes from those of later writers because their view is coloured by characteristically Renaissance experiences and conceptions. On one level, this means that Whitbourne, seeking analogies in the familiar for the unfamiliar, sees the "Cannowes" of the natives as being "in shape like the Wherries on the River of Thames" in Jacobean London, and that he compares the Newfoundland winter to recent severe winters in England when the ladies of the court at Whitehall made sport on the ice of the same river.⁶ On another, it means that his mind and Mason's move naturally from observation and experience toward the mythological. While their aim is utilitarian, the two men belong to an age which did not exclude the poetic from its prose, and their writings lack neither imaginative qualities nor artistry.

Mason, whose practical merits were sufficient to win him high appointment in the navy and later recognition as the founder of New Hampshire,⁷ declares that concerning Newfoundland in his *Briefe Discourse* he has "set downe in few and plain tearmes out of that experience I have gained in three yeares and seventh monthes residence there, the trueth." His work, he says, is "unpolished and rude, bearing the countries badge where it was hatched, onely clothed with plainnesse and trueth" (sigs. A-A^v). In fact, his account is more sober and restrained than Whitbourne's, as well as much briefer, but it is not always clothed with plainness. In connection with his discussion of the climate, for example, he describes the ice floes (which were to figure in the work of Newfoundland's greatest poet three hundred years later) by means of a series of images which stop just short of converting the factual into the mythological, before his long sentence reaches a more prosaic conclusion:

. . . the chiefest reason of the coldnesse in New-foundland in the Winter season is the Yce which beeing congealed into great firme Lands, Even from the North Pole, all alongst the Coast of *Gronland, Grenland, The Northwest passage Terra de laberador* & so towards the Grand bay, all that tract having many Inlets and broken Lands apt as unnaturall wombes to breede and bring foorth such Monsters, which being nursed in their ruder armes, till the Winter season past, are turnde foorth of doores in the Spring to shift for themselves, and being weary of their imprisonments in those angrie Climes with one accord as if they had agreed with winde and streame take Ferrie into Newfoundland, which immuring us in the months of Febru. and March, both which are subject to northeast winds & blowing from this Yce causeth it very cold.

Like Mason, Whitbourne opens his *Discourse and Discovery* by stating his qualification to give an informed and accurate account of Newfoundland: a

knowledge of the country built up over a period of forty years.⁸ And much in his work is severely practical and factual. Thus he lists the supplies necessary for outfitting a ship of colonists to the last bushel of peas and itemizes the cost to a penny. It is a practical concern too which causes him to utter what must be the first unheeded cry of the conservationist in Canada, a protest at the wanton destruction of timber by fishermen. Yet he has an eye also for less commercial resources, and he thinks it worth while to report that there grow in Newfoundland “flowers, as the red and white Damaske Rose, with other kinds; which are most beautifull and delightfull, both to the sight and smell” (p. 7). When he comes to describe a less pleasant aspect of the land, the mosquitoes which infest the woods, he abandons his concern for simple precision, just as Mason does in his account of the ice floes, in order to indulge in a vein of humorous moralizing and to develop an unexpected analogy with the system of law enforcement in Jacobean England:

Neither are there any Snakes, Toads, Serpents, or any other venemous Wormes, that ever were knowne to hurt any man in that Countrey, but onely a very little nimble Fly, (the least of all other Flies) which is called a Muskeito; those flies seeme to have a great power and authority upon all loytering and idle people that come to the *New-found-land*: for they have this property, that when they finde any such lying lazily, or sleeping in the Woods, they will presently bee more nimble to seize on them, then any Sargeant will bee to arrest a man for debt: Neither will they leave stinging or sucking out the blood of such sluggards, untill, like a Beadle, they bring him to his Master, where hee should labour: in which time of loytering, those Flies will so brand such idle persons in their faces, that they may be knowne from others, as the Turkes doe their slaves.

Such was the hold of myth over Whitbourne’s mind that he found in Newfoundland a more remarkable being than the mosquito. He describes very circumstantially his sighting (shared, he assures us, by other witnesses) in St. John’s harbour early in a morning of 1610 a creature “which very swiftly came swimming towards mee, looking cheerfully on my face, as it had been a woman: by the face, eyes, nose, mouth, chin, eares, necke, and forehead, it seemed to bee so beautifull, and in those parts so well proportioned, having round about the head many blue streakes, resembling haire, but certainly it was no haire . . .” Gaining a different view, he tells his reader: “I beheld the shoulders & back down to the middle, to be so square, white and smooth as the backe of a man; and from the middle to the hinder part, it was poynting in proportion something like a broad hooked Arrow.” Unfortunately Whitbourne — who had commanded his own

ship in the fight with the Spanish Armada — lost nerve and retreated from the shore as it came toward him, while his servant and others who were out in a boat repelled it violently when it approached them: “the same Creature did put both his hands upon the side of the Boat, and did strive much to come in to him and divers then in the same Boat; whereat they were afraid, and one of them strucke it a full blow on the head, whereby it fell off from them: and afterwards it came to two other Boates in the said Harbour, where they lay by the shore: the men in them, for feare fled to land and beheld it.” With a commendable concern for accuracy, Whitbourne concludes his account of the remarkable event at St. John’s: “This (I suppose) was a Maremaid, or Mareman. Now because divers have writ much of Maremaids, I have presumed to relate what is most certaine, of such a strange Creature that was thus then seene at *New-found-land*, whether it were a Maremaid or no, I leave it for others to judge”.

WHILE MASON AND WHITBOURNE were only incidentally men of letters, Hayman had one contemporary among the early writers on Newfoundland who shared his more decidedly literary aspirations. William Vaughan declared in 1630: “The truth is, I am addicted both to the *Muses*, and *New-found Land*.”⁹ In contrast to Whitbourne, who was of obscure birth and went to sea at the age of fifteen, Vaughan was the younger son of an aristocratic Welsh family, the uncle of that Earl of Carbery who is remembered as Jeremy Taylor’s patron, and he spent his youth in studies at Oxford and Vienna, taking the degree of Doctor of Laws. He had written works in prose and verse on a variety of subjects before he acquired his interest in Newfoundland through the purchase of a large tract of land there for colonization in 1616. He sent out settlers in the next year, but his project did not prosper, and he was obliged to abandon it within fifteen years. While he retained hope, however, he took every means in his writings, as he once put, “to stirre up our *Ilanders* Mindes to assist and support for a time our *New-found Ile*.”¹⁰ Sometimes one may suspect that his purpose was not so much to stimulate interest in Newfoundland as to advertise his own work by claiming for it a novelty of association. *The New-found Politicke* (1626) and *The Newlanders Cure* (1630) are connected with Newfoundland by little more than their titles and prefaces: the former is a translation from the Italian (in

which Florio had a hand) of a political treatise cast in fictitious form, the *Ragguagli di Parnaso* of Traiano Boccalini, and the latter is a medical handbook. However, *Cambrensiūm Caroleia* (1625), a volume of Latin verse commemorating the marriage of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, includes poems in praise of Newfoundland, as well as a map of the island drawn by Mason; and *The Golden Fleece* (1626), a prose work containing intermittent passages of verse, ostensibly takes Newfoundland as its subject, although much else gets in.

As one would expect, *The Golden Fleece* is shaped much more fully than Mason's and Whitbourne's works by classical learning and reading in Renaissance literature, and much less by practical knowledge of Newfoundland. Classical myth informs Vaughan's whole view of the island, and he describes the rich fisheries as "our *Colchos*, where the *Golden Fleece* flourisheth on the backes of *Neptunes sheeps*, continually to be shorne" (III, 9). Ironically in view of his own failure, he considered the legend of Jason so relevant that he actually gave his colony the name "Cambriol Colchos," combining allusion to it with compliment to his native Wales. Similarly, he saw his role in his writing as that of an Orpheus singing the charms of Newfoundland to the hard-hearted English. Hence in *The Golden Fleece* he employs the pseudonym "Orpheus Junior," in imitation of the "Democritus Junior" of Robert Burton, whose *Anatomy of Melancholy* had appeared five years earlier.

The Golden Fleece opens with a dialogue on the question how best to employ the muses in the service of Newfoundland, for which Vaughan, with a characteristic concern for literary tradition, cites Plato's *Republic* and More's *Utopia* as his precedents. The participants are Vaughan himself, the courtier William Elveston, and Sir William Alexander, the proprietor of Nova Scotia, who had written a colonizing tract, *An Encouragement to Colonies* (1624). Elveston and Alexander caution Vaughan that "unlesse a *Booke* containe light matters as well as serious, it cannot flourish nor live *Jovially*, but like leaden *Saturne* stand still in the stall," and they recommend some surprising models for his discourse on Newfoundland: "Excellent in this Art of Cookerie were those *Spaniards*, which wrot the life of *Guzman the Rogue*, and the Adventures of *Don Quixot de la Mancha*" (I, 10-11). Following their counsel, Vaughan devises what he terms "a *Poeticall stile* not too much degenerating from the *Evangelicall gravitie*" (I, 13). His fiction for the remainder of the book (which owes more to Boccalini than to Cervantes) is a court or assizes presided over by Apollo, before whom a number of causes are tried and various witnesses summoned. With a digressiveness worthy of Burton, Vaughan deals at length with the condition of England

in general and religious issues in particular, introducing as his witnesses a curious assortment of figures, Democritus Junior, John Florio, and the inexplicably knighted Sir Geoffrey Chaucer, among others.¹¹

Although the tendency of the whole is to suggest that Newfoundland may provide the cure to all that ails England, it is only in the last third of *The Golden Fleece* that Vaughan comes to the subject of the island itself. There he makes Apollo deliver a verdict in favour of its colonization, following the testimony of a number of explorers and colonizers, including Mason, John and Humphrey Slaney (officials of the London and Bristol company), and Sir Thomas Button (who had sailed into Hudson's Bay in quest of the Northwest Passage). Vaughan no doubt derives the information which he attributes to them partly from conversations and partly from written sources. The comment which he gives Mason is clearly taken from the *Briefe Discourse*. It is likely, indeed, that he had the best of reasons for calling on the evidence of persons other than himself. He was credited later in the seventeenth century by Anthony à Wood with residence in Newfoundland, and more recently by D. L. Thomas in *The Dictionary of National Biography* with having composed *Cambrensiū Caroleia* and *The Golden Fleece* there.¹² But, although the former work is described on its title page as "Reportata a Colchide Cambriola" and the latter on its as "Transported from Cambrioll Colchos," Vaughan does not in his writings themselves make any clear claim to first-hand knowledge of Newfoundland, as he surely would have done if he had possessed it. Hayman, whose word carries some authority, indicates in 1627-28 that Vaughan had not yet visited Cambriol Colchos, although he intended to do so.¹³ He seems to have been kept in England first by the complexity of his affairs and later by illness, and he probably never saw the land which he advertised in his writings and into which he poured much of his fortune.

Hayman knew the works of Vaughan, Whitbourne and Mason, and he was conscious of following to a degree in their footsteps. In *Quodlibets* he commends Whitbourne's "wise, well-pend Booke" (p. 33), and compliments Mason. He praises Vaughan (whom he may first have met at Oxford, where they were contemporaries during the 1590's) both as colonial proprietor and as author of *The Golden Fleece*, and Vaughan provides a commendatory verse for his volume. In an appeal to Charles I to interest himself in the colonization of Newfoundland, which he wrote about the time of the publication of *Quodlibets*, "A Proposition of Profitt and Honor,"¹⁴ he indicates that he would like to have produced a substantial prose treatise on Newfoundland himself but was deterred by the number already in print and by their poor reception. In practice, he makes *Quodlibets*

serve the purpose which such a work might have done.

Hayman combines some of the practical experience of Mason and Whitbourne with the addiction to the muses of Vaughan. His interest in the New World probably dates from his childhood. Born in 1575 (at least, baptized in August of that year), he was a native of Devon, a county which has long taken a leading part in the English fisheries in Newfoundland and which had given birth to many of the great Elizabethan sailors. To one of the latter he was probably related, for his mother appears to have been the illegitimate daughter of John Raleigh, Sir Walter Raleigh's half-brother. During his childhood at Totnes, where his father had established himself as a merchant, Hayman received by way of inducement to adventure on the seas an orange and a blessing from Sir Francis Drake. He describes the episode in an artless poem in *Quodlibets* entitled "*Of the Great and Famous, ever to bee honoured Knight, Sir Francis Drake, and of my little-little self*":

This man when I was little, I did meete,
As he was walking up *Totnes* long Street,
He ask'd me whose I was? I answer'd him.
He ask'd me if his good friend were within?
A faire red *Orange* in his hand he had,
He gave it me, whereof I was right glad,
Takes and kist me, and prayes, *God blesse my boy*:
Which I record *with comfort* to this day.

After studies at Oxford and Lincoln's Inn, and apparently a brief period at the University of Poitiers, he married in 1604 the daughter of a prominent family of Bristol merchants. As a result probably of this connection and of a similar one established through a sister's marriage, he was some years later sent to Newfoundland as governor of the colony of Bristol-Hope, which was planted by Bristol interests at Harbour Grace in 1617-18. How soon he went out and exactly how much time he spent there are both uncertain, and little is known of his activities as governor, but he states in his "Proposition," which is dated no later than 1628: "In this Iland [Newfoundland] at one tyme I Lived fifteene Monethes together, and since I have spent allmost every sommer in it."¹⁵ By 1628 he was disappointed by the Bristol company's lack of support for the colony, and he evidently did not return to it after the publication of *Quodlibets*. Instead, he turned his attention to the establishment of a settlement in Guiana, an enterprise which

may have cost him his life. The time and manner of his death have not been determined, but his will was proved on January 24, 1632-33.

IN NEWFOUNDLAND, Hayman tells us in his "Proposition," "haveing onely had the overseeing others hard Labour to distract me, I had tyme to see, to confer, to enquire, to observe, and to discover . . ."16 No doubt it was this leisure which gave him the opportunity to compose *Quodlibets*, but the volume is the belated outcome of literary interests which had developed years earlier. They can be traced back to his time at Oxford, where he seems to have made friendships with Robert Burton and with the minor poet Charles Fitzgeffrey, during his residence at Exeter College from 1590 to 1596.17 His entrance to Lincoln's Inn, in October, 1596, brought him to London at the finest moment of Elizabethan literary achievement. He tells us in *Quodlibets*, "I knew the Court well in the old *Queenes* dayes" (p. 38), and, according to Anthony à Wood, he was more dedicated to poetry than to the law: he "studied for a time the municipal Law, but his Genie being well known to be poetical, fell into acquaintance with, and received encouragement to proceed in his studies from, *Mich. Drayton*, *Ben. Johnson*, *John Owen* the Epigrammatist, *George Wither* the puritanical Satirist, *John Vicars* of *Ch. Ch.* Hospital, &c. and at length writing several *specimens* of his wit, which I think are quite lost, had, tho phantastical, the general vogue of a poet."18

In *Quodlibets* Hayman makes little allusion to the great drama which was flourishing during his time in London (although there is nothing to show that he shared the opinion of Vaughan, who wrote at the height of Shakespeare's career, "Stageplayes are the very mockery of the word of God, and the toyes of our life").19 The volume, however, includes complimentary verse to Jonson (as non-dramatic poet), to Drayton, Donne, and a host of minor contemporaries, including Owen, many of whose Latin epigrams Hayman translates, and Wither, who reciprocates with a commendatory verse for *Quodlibets*. Hayman addresses "the Reverend and divinely witty, John Dun," primarily as Dean of Saint Paul's and preacher, but shows also that he knows him as a poet:

As my *John Owen Seneca* did praise,
So might I for you a like piller raise,
His Epigrams did nothing want but verse;

You can yours (if you list) that way rehearse:
 His were neat, fine, divine morality;
 But yours, pure, faithfull, true Divinity.

His verse to Drayton, whom he addresses more familiarly as “*my right worthy friend*,” shows that he has followed the poet’s long career since youth. Feeling his own age upon him, he pays tribute to Drayton’s undiminished ability displayed in the composition of *The Battle of Agincourt* after his sixtieth year:

When I was young, I did *delight* your lines,
 I have *admyr’d* them since my judging times:
 Your *younger muse* plai’d many a dainty fit,
 And your *old muse* doth hold out stoutly yet.
 Though my *old muse* durst passe through frost and snow,
 In warres your *old muse* dares her Colours shew.

As Hayman set about writing *Quodlibets* his mind evidently dwelt much on his earlier literary associations and on his long unfulfilled aspirations as a poet.

In the full title of his volume, Hayman advertises both its contents and the circumstance of its composition in Newfoundland (which he preferred to call “*Britaniola*,” as he makes sufficiently clear): “*QUODLIBETS, / LATELY COME OVER / FROM NEW BRITANIOLA, / OLD NEWFOUND-LAND. / Epigrams and other small parcels, both / Morall and Divine. / The first foure Bookes being the Authors owne: the / rest translated out of that Excellent Epigrammatist, / Mr. John Owen, and other rare authors. / With two Epistles of that excellently wittie Doctor, / Francis Rablais: Translated out of his French at large. / All of them / Composed and done at Harbour-Grace in / Britaniola, anciently called Newfoundland. / By R. H. / Sometimes Governour of the Plantation there.*” In addition to the translations from Owen, Rabelais, and a few other authors, *Quodlibets* contains some three hundred and fifty “Epigrams and other small parcels,” many of them being no more than a couplet in length. Most have as their subject general reflections, morality, and satire, following themes long conventional in the epigram, but a number have special reference to Newfoundland, and in these the kinship of Hayman’s work with that of Mason, Whitbourne, and Vaughan appears.

Hayman writes, like his contemporaries, as a propagandist of the colonization of Newfoundland, and all their arguments recur in *Quodlibets*. He is conscious, however, that by the time of his work the earliest colonizers had already been

disappointed in their high hopes. In a verse which summarizes all the motives behind the endeavours to establish settlements, he reproves the London and Bristol company for failing to support its colony:

What ayme you at in your *Plantation*?
 Sought you the *Honour* of our *Nation*?
 Or did you hope to raise your owne *renowne*?
 Or else to adde a *Kingdome* to a *Crowne*?
 Or *Christs* true *Doctrine* for to propagate?
 Or drawe Salvages to a blessed state?
 Or our o're peopled *Kingdome* to relieve?
 Or shew *poore men* where they may *richly live*?
 Or poore mens children godly to maintaine?
 Or aym'd you at your owne *sweete private gaine*?
 All these you had *atchiv'd* before this day,
 And all these you have balk't by your delay.

Similarly, he urges Falkland, Vaughan, and Willoughby to persist in their efforts despite setbacks which they have received, and holds up Lord Baltimore as the good example of a colonial proprietor who has actually settled in Newfoundland. He entreats Oxford and Cambridge to "send forth your Sonnes unto our *New Plantation*" in order to spread the gospel (p. 38), praises the Reverend Erasmus Sturton who had already ministered there, and, in a verse dedicated particularly to "*Mistris* Mason, wife to *Captaine* Mason, who lived there *divers yeeres*," he attempts to persuade women of the joys of life in the new land:

Sweet Creatures, did you truely understand
 The pleasant life you'd live in *Newfound-land*,
 You would with *teares* desire to be brought thither:
 I wish you, when you goe, faire wind, faire weather:
 For if you with the passage can dispence,
 When you are there, I know you'll ne'r come thence.

In his zeal to overcome the current decline in interest, he urges the merits of Newfoundland even upon Henrietta Maria, asking her to make herself a "*second Isabell*" (p. 51), while in the prefatory epistle he makes implicitly a similar attempt to gain Charles' support, as he does more directly in his "Proposition".

Concerning his experience in Newfoundland and the conditions of life there Hayman provides disappointingly little detail, usually contenting himself with general assertions of the suitability of the island for settlement. He is anxious, as Mason and Whitbourne had been, to demonstrate that the climate is quite toler-

able for Englishmen, and he argues that it compares favourably with that of England itself, in a verse addressed “*To a worthy Friend, who often objects the coldnesse of the Winter in Newfound-Land*”:

You say that you would live in *Newfound-land*,
 Did not this one thing your conceit withstand;
 You feare the *Winters* cold, sharp, piercing ayre.
 They love it best, that have once wintered there.
 Winter is there, short, wholesome, constant, cleare,
 Not thicke, unwholesome, shuffling, as 'tis here.

He draws a similar contrast between the healthfulness of the new country and the disease-ridden Old World (addressing his lines this time “*To the right worthy Mistres, Anne Vaughan, wife to Doctor Vaughan, who hath an honourable desire to live in that Land*”):

Those that live here, how young, or old soever,
 Were never vext with Cough, nor Aguish Feaver,
 Nor ever was the Plague, nor small Pox heere;
 The *Aire* is so salubrious, constant, cleere:
 Yet *scurvy Death* stalks heere with theevish pace,
 Knocks one downe here, two in an other place.

The punning allusion to scurvy, which somewhat weakens Hayman's case, is sufficiently accounted for, perhaps, by a verse on Newfoundland diet, written for a friend in Bristol:

You askt me once, What here was our chiefe dish?
 In Winter, Fowle, in Summer choyce of Fish.
 But wee should need good Stomackes, you may thinke,
 To eat such kind of things which with you stinke,
 As *Ravens, Crowes, Kytes, Otters, Foxes, Beares,*
Dogs, Cats, and Soyles, Eaglets, Hawks, Hounds, & Hares:
 Yet we have *Partriges*, and store of *Deare*,
 And that (I thinke) with you is pretty cheere.
 Yet let me tell you, Sir, what I love best,
 Its a *Poore-John* thats cleane, and neatly drest:
 There's not a meat found in the Land, or Seas,
 Can Stomacks better please, or lesse displease,
 It is a fish of profit, and of pleasure,
 Ile write more of it, when I have more leisure:
 There and much more are here the ancient store:
 Since we came hither, we have added more.²⁰

Despite the eulogy of the "Poore-John" (or cod), the picture which emerges of Newfoundland is scarcely that of an earthly paradise. Hayman is both too naïve and too honest to be a very effective propagandist, as the rather unflattering imagery which he applies to the virgin land in the following lines illustrates:

'Tis said, wise *Socrates* look'd like an *Asse*;
 Yet he with wondrous sapience filled was;
 So though our *Newfound-Land* looke wild, salvage,
 She hath much wealth penn'd in her rustie Cage.
 So have I seene a leane-cheekes, bare, and ragged,
 Who of his private thousands could have bragged.
 Indeed she now looks rude, untowardly;
 She must be decked with neat husbandry.
 So have I seene a plaine swarth, sluttish *Jone*,
 Looke pretty pert, and neat with good cloathes on.

Hayman displays great faith in the potentiality of Newfoundland, but he recognizes that his vision of its future is not to be achieved without labour, and he seldom confuses the vision with the actuality.

Writing with the enthusiasm customary in commendatory verses, George Wither professed to see in *Quodlibets* evidence that the muses could flourish in a new world, far from their traditional haunts:

Why doe so many fondly dote upon
Parnassus, *Tempe*, and that *Helicon*
 Renowned by the Greeks? why praise they so
 The *Muses* haunting *Tiber*, *Thame*, and *Po*;
 As if no other *Hill*, or *Grove*, or *Spring*,
 Should yeeld such *Raptures*, as these forth did bring?
 Behold, e'en from these uncouth shores, among
 Unpeopled woods, and hills, these straines were sung:
 And most of theirs they seeme to paralell,
 Who boast to drinke of *Aganippe's* well.
 Despaire not therefore, you that love the *Muses*,
 If any Tyrant, you, or yours abuses:
 For these will follow you, and make you mirth,
 Ev'n at the furthest Angles of the Earth,
 And those contentments which at home yee leese,
 They shall restore you among Beasts and Trese.

Wither's claim anticipates many that were to be made for the literature of the New World during the following centuries, but unfortunately, as the examples

which have been given sufficiently demonstrate, Hayman's verse is of a quite uninspired kind, and *Quodlibets* bears better testimony to his zeal for Newfoundland than to his imaginative power or literary ability. There is less evidence in it than in the prose of Mason and Whitbourne of an imaginative response to the new environment, no trace of that poetic skill which, according to Wood, won Hayman in his youth the encouragement of Drayton and Jonson, or of that wit, so essential to the epigram, which he was reputed to possess in his earlier years, and if there is humour it is of an unconscious variety. He makes it apparent, indeed, that he considers solidity of content more important than wit, and he tends to confuse the function of the epigram with that of the sermon, as the following lines imply:

Sermons and Epigrams have a like end,
 To improve, to reprove, and to amend:
 Some passe without this use, 'cause they are witty;
 And so doe many Sermons, more's the pittie.

Concerned with matter more than manner, he defends his work thus:

Though my *best lines* no dainty things affords,
My worst have in them some thing else than words.

Hayman is quite aware, however, of the deficiencies of his verse, and he does not himself make so great a claim for it as Wither. Rather, he laments, with a modesty which is surely more than merely conventional:

When I doe read others neate, dainty lines,
 I almost doe despaire of my rude rimes.

He recognizes in his address to "*Master Benjamin Johnson, Witty Epigrammatist, and most excellent Poet*" that his great contemporary far surpasses him in the genre in which he writes:

My Epigrams come after yours in time;
 So doe they in concept, in forme, in Ryme.

The same modesty appears in his prefatory epistle to the king, where he describes his work as "some unripe eares of corne, brought by me from the cold Country of *Newfound-land*," and himself as "dull and aged," walking "with short turnes, leaning sometimes on others inventions." He states that he has attempted only "to testifie that the Aire there is not so dull, or malevolent, but that if better wits were transplanted thither, neither the Summers heat would dilate them, nor the Winters cold benumme them, but that they might in full vigour flourish to good

purpose," and he declares that his proof is "rather in hopes of others, than in any actuated performance of mine owne" (sigs. A2-A2^V). His own verse suggests that the muses were no more easily persuaded that the climate of Newfoundland was salubrious than the potential settlers to whom he addressed himself, but perhaps *Quodlibets* is best regarded as a declaration of faith in the literary destiny of the new land or as a challenge to the future. Hayman's humility gives way to pride when he sees himself as the earliest in a long succession of poets, which he believes will include those far greater than himself.

NOTES

- ¹ *Quodlibets* has received one recognition from a Canadian literary historian: it is the earliest volume catalogued by R. E. Watters in his *A Check List of Canadian Literature and Background Materials, 1628-1950* (Toronto, 1959).
- ² In quotations from the work of Hayman, Mason, Whitbourne and Vaughan the use of "u", "v", "i", and "j" has been modernized, but otherwise the spelling and punctuation of the originals have been retained. References given in brackets are to the first editions, all published in London except Mason's *A Brieffe Discourse*, which bears an Edinburgh imprint.
- ³ The first book published about Newfoundland appears to be Sir George Peckham's *A True Reporte, of the Late Discoveries, and Possession . . . of the New-found Landes* (1583), which relates to Sir Humphrey Gilbert's voyage. Several early accounts of Newfoundland were included by Hakluyt in his *Principal Navigations* (1589) and by Purchas in *Purchas his Pilgrimage* (1625).
- ⁴ For accounts of these early colonies see D. W. Prowse, *A History of Newfoundland* (1896); A. P. Newton, "Newfoundland, to 1783," *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, ed. J. H. Rose et al., VI (Cambridge, 1930), 119-45, and J. D. Rogers, *A Historical Geography of Newfoundland* (Oxford, 1931).
- ⁵ In fact, however, the early settlements met with considerable opposition from fishermen based on the West Country of England, who regarded them, not without some cause, as attempts to monopolize the trade. See R. G. Lounsbury, *The British Fishery at Newfoundland* (New Haven, 1934), pp. 19-54.
- ⁶ *A Discourse and Discovery* (1622), sig. R3^V, pp. 55-56.
- ⁷ See C. W. Tuttle and J. W. Dean's *Captain John Mason, The Founder of New Hampshire* (Boston, 1887), which includes a reprint of *A Brieffe Discourse* (pp. 143-58).
- ⁸ See the autobiographical preface of *A Discourse and Discovery*, sigs. C-C4^V, and cf. the article on Whitbourne by E. I. Carlyle in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, LXI (1900), 23-24.
- ⁹ *The Newlanders Cure* (1630), sig. A6^V. The "Epistle Dedicatory" of this volume contains some autobiographical passages.
- ¹⁰ *The Newlanders Cure*, sig. A5^V.
- ¹¹ This Chaucer reference appears to have been overlooked by Caroline Spurgeon in her *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion*, but the poet's role

- in Vaughan's work is the one which she shows was commonly assigned to him in the earlier seventeenth century, that of Protestant reformer and supposed author of *The Plowman's Tale*. See *The Golden Fleece*, I, 110-31.
- ¹² See Wood's *Athenae Oxoniensis* (1691), I, 450, and the *D.N.B.*, LVIII (1899), 184-85.
- ¹³ See Hayman's *Quodlibets*, pp. 32-33, and his "A Proposition of Profit and Honor," to which reference is made below. Cf. Vaughan's *The Newlanders Cure*, sigs. A5-A8.
- ¹⁴ Remaining long in manuscript, this work was published for the first time by G. C. Moore Smith in his "Robert Hayman and the Plantation of Newfoundland," *The English Historical Review*, XXXIII (1918), pp. 21-36. Moore Smith provides also some important biographical information, supplementing and correcting the lives of Hayman by Wood in *Athenae Oxoniensis* (I, 494) and by T. E. Jacob in *The Dictionary of National Biography* (XXV [1891], 297-98, and I have drawn upon his work in the two paragraphs below for details of Hayman's birth, parentage, and Bristol connections.
- ¹⁵ Ed. Moore Smith, *EHR*, XXXIII, 31. Moore Smith seems to establish that Bristol Hope was distinct from the older Guy's colony, not a part of it, as historians of Newfoundland have usually assumed.
- ¹⁶ Loc. cit.
- ¹⁷ See *Quodlibets*, pp. 18, 43.
- ¹⁸ *Athenae Oxoniensis*, I, 494.
- ¹⁹ *The Golden Grove* (1600), sig. K.
- ²⁰ In a marginal note Hayman gives a little reassurance to his readers, explaining: "Dogs and Cats are fishes so call'd, and Hounds a kind of Fowle." "These" should probably be read for "There" in the penultimate line of the verse. *Quodlibets* is a carelessly printed volume.

