

# One Car HAY

Arrived April 26.

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**GEO. NEAL, Ltd.**

## Early Days of the Fisheries and Agriculture in Newfoundland.

H. F. SHORTIS.

There has been no country of its importance in the world which has been so neglected from an historical point of view as Newfoundland. True there have been some attempts made at writing a crude history of its resources and capabilities. All those fall indefinitely short of being a mere outline of the future possibilities of Newfoundland. In all those attempts at writing the history of our country, there is a singular absence of any attempt to show our people in their true light. Here and there in our so-called histories we find certain men singled out for their philanthropy—their capacity for amassing a fortune, or some other cause, and these are taken generally from the upper and middle classes; but there has been no attempt made to show up the heroism, hardihood and adventurous spirit of our people—I mean the fishermen and farmers of every capacity, who have built up Newfoundland, and made her what she is and what she promises to be.

### NOT AUTHORITATIVE.

What has been told up to the present of the people of the country has been gleaned from old legal documents and records, kept by fishing admirals who from time to time visited our shores. These documents are necessarily confined to international relations, the enormous possibilities of the, at that time, one and only industry of the country—the codfishery. All these things are, I admit, very impossible in themselves in relating the history of a country. In this connection it must be borne in mind that the principal factor in compiling the history is the History of its People. By a singular coincidence, all who have hitherto attempted to tell the story of Newfoundland have studiously avoided this subject, which is of vital importance. A book that confines itself to the transcribing of documents dealing with events and epochs in the life of a country cannot claim pretensions

to the dignified title of history. The manners and customs of a people, their leading characteristics, their mode of life, the adaptability for the requirements of their environments, their evolution and growth from a handful of settlers to a unit in the make-up of the Empire or country from which they sprang—these are subjects to be enquired into with the greatest diligence by the men who undertake to unfold to the world the history of a people.

### A FIRST ESSENTIAL.

No one will deny that events are a first essential in the make-up of history, but bare recording of the facts themselves is inadequate to satisfy the inquiring mind. We must know what led up to these events. We must know the circumstances that controlled them, and, above all, we must know the character and quality of the people who were the main spring of them. Where then, I may ask, are we to inquire into the manners and customs of the people whose history we wish to relate? Not from the legal documents, not from the records and ledgers of the merchants' country houses, but from the people themselves. In all conditions of human society, from the primitive savage up to the highest point of western civilization, there is one trait recognizable as of a universal character, and that is an inherent desire to relate past events and exploits, and this universal characteristic of the human mind has been called tradition. It is absolutely necessary for the historian to apply himself diligently to the task of mastering the traditions and stories of a people, in order to show them up in their true light. A history to be complete must be retrospective, and how then can we acquire a knowledge of the past without taking the people into our confidence? It is not only by delving deep into dusty documents that we can acquire all the information that goes to make up history. History, to

be complete, must go hand in hand with tradition. When the great, but somewhat self-laudatory orator, Cicero, tells us, when speaking of history that "to be ignorant of what happened before one's birth is to remain in a state of perpetual childhood," he had in his mental vision the traditions and stories of the Roman people. The poetry of his countrymen had contributed lavishly to the making of Roman history. No one will deny that poetry enters largely into the history of all peoples. There is nothing so closely allied to tradition as poetry, in fact, it is tradition in verse. The deeds and daring—the conquests and failures—the trials and difficulties of the evolution of a nation from its infancy to full-grown manhood—are handed down to posterity by the pens of its poets. This is tradition pure and simple. Why did not those who have hitherto attempted to make the history of our country consult the traditions of our people?

### IN THE FRONT RANK.

Newfoundland, it must be admitted, is fast coming to a front rank in social and commercial prosperity. The sciences and arts are being taught and cultivated. Her sons, when they go abroad, are proud of the land of their birth; but it is of first importance to know how this reformation and civilization were accomplished. Even here in the suburbs of St. John's we have tracts of highly-cultivated land, yielding splendid returns for the labor bestowed upon it. Yet no collector of data has been found to go and visit the holders of these farms and enquire into their growth and development up to the present stage. Surely in bringing these fine holdings into their present state a vast amount of labor has been gone through. In going into the virgin forest, with no capital behind them, save that of their own energy, perseverance and indomitable courage, the original owners of these farms handed down to their children an enduring monument to their own ability and energy. The very fact of these farms being there, are, of themselves, a stimulus to the enquiring mind to seek information about them. Men of such courage and endurance as pioneers of these homesteads must be worth studying. It must be remembered that at the time those men undertook to reclaim the land, everything was against them. Climatic conditions were adverse, as the winters in those days were long and severe. Isolation was the order of the day. There were no connecting roads, and the prospective farmer not only had to face, what would seem to a less determined race, insurmountable difficulties, but he was cut off from social intercourse with his fellowman. Everything was against him. He had to contend against the hostile forces of Nature, an ill-supplied purse and a want of sympathy and intercourse with his fellows. Yet amidst all these adverse circumstances, these men reclaimed the soil from its primitive virginity and made it yield a bounteous maintenance for themselves and their families.

### REAL PIONEERS.

Surely such a class of men were built of sterner stuff than the ordinary run of mankind. They are worthy of investigation and inquiry. Yet, in all the histories of our country, we fail to find anything like adequate tribute paid to such men. Sterling manhood, no matter in what walk of life it is to be found, deserves to be inquired into. There is nothing exceptional in the instances I have above cited. Hundreds of farmers from England, Ireland and Scotland have gone into the primitive forests of Newfoundland, and, having overcome the difficulties and obstacles consequent to a severe climate, such as Newfoundland was then subjected, and accomplished such feats, were it not that their work remains to-day to speak for itself, it would be almost impossible of belief. The first settlers of Newfoundland stand out as a distinct and unique race. They appear to have been, and subsequent events prove that they were, endowed by Nature with a peculiar fitness for opening up a new country. They were possessed of indomitable courage, capability for physical endurance, and an unconquerable determination—qualities which gave them special fitness to become founders of a race which for courage and endurance are second to no people in the world. I fail to see the completeness of a history which, while devoting pages to the natural possibilities of a country (both present and prospective) entirely ignores the men who made those possibilities a living issue in the history of the commercial world.

### IRISH IMMIGRANTS.

In the development of the agricultural, as well as the fishing resources of our country the Irish race played an important part. Driven from their own land in cockle-shell vessels, huddled together like cattle, under the lash of brutal and tyrannical captains, for days without food or water, stricken with fever hundreds of them never reached our shores, and found their graves in the broad Atlantic. Yet those who arrived on our shores became the most enterprising and successful residents in every walk of life, in church, state, fisheries, agriculture, as artisans, teachers and every other branch of industry. Who

can ever forget the sad chapter of 1847; to be exact, on the 8th of May of that year, the first of a long list of fever-laden emigrant ships from Ireland arrived at Grosse Island, in the St. Lawrence, about thirty miles below Quebec? Crowded with human beings driven from their native country by poverty and persecution, these ships (if they could be called such) witnessed scenes of horror and misery which are better not written. Malignant typhus had taken hold of the emigrants. The crowding together of so many passengers, the miserable food and conditions then prevailing in the steerage, the long and anxious voyage across the Atlantic—all added to an epic of sorrow that no pen has adequately recorded. When they arrived at Grosse Island, the inhabitants were naturally alarmed. Temporary but inadequate provision was made to handle the vast number of sufferers. They were huddled into hastily constructed sheds, until these were filled; and there the unfortunate died by hundreds and thousands. Sometimes whole families, sometimes parents, sometimes children were laid away in a common grave; and it is estimated that before the pestilence ended 10,000 unfortunates were consigned to a common grave at Grosse.

(To be Continued.)

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apr22,26

### Defoe's Robinson Crusoe Fame.

On April 26, 1731, Daniel Defoe, journalist and novelist, died from lethargy, or deadly sleep, in Rope-makers' Alley, Moorfields, London. He was born in the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, in 1660 or 1661, and was interred in the neighbouring Bunhill Fields Burial Ground. During that time he wrote two hundred and fifty published works. It might be expected that his most celebrated work would be that published in 1702, just after the accession of Queen Anne, with the title "The Shortest Way with the Dissenters," of whom he was one by birth, for the House of Commons ordered this book to be burned. The author of it was tried at the Old Bailey in 1703 and punished by being placed in the pillory on July 29, 30, and 31 that year. A person thus publicly exposed had his head put through a hole, and his hands through two others, and was thus unable to defend himself if pelted by the mob with stones and garbage, as was usually done. On this occasion, however, the people formed into a guard round Defoe, covered the pillory with flowers, and drank his health. He was also ordered to pay a fine of 200 marks, each of which was equal to thirteen shillings and fourpence; to be imprisoned as long as Queen Anne pleased; and he was required to find securities for good behavior during seven years. All this he suffered for a satirical pamphlet against what is called occasional conformity, which required a Lord Mayor of London, though a Nonconformist, to attend Church of England worship on some occasions. And yet very few have known that such a publication existed, compared with the number who have read his "Robinson Crusoe," of which one of the best and oldest Free Libraries contains five copies, while it has not one of the pamphlet. "Robinson Crusoe" is only a tale, the subject of which was suggested by Alexander Selkirk, a Scotsman, who had lived alone for nearly five years on Juan Fernandez, an uninhabited island off the Pacific coast of Chili in South America. He had been left there at his own request in 1705, when he had quarrelled with his master, the captain of the ship. Such was the lasting fame which Defoe obtained by this book, that in 1877 Queen Victoria granted a pension to three old ladies of his name who had descended from him.

**OVERSTOCKED SALE!**—Everybody in St. John's is waiting for this gigantic \$80,000.00 Sale, where they will buy for the two weeks of the Sale enough wearing apparel to last until prices are brought down by a similar over-supply of the merchandizing centres of the world, which will take at least two years. People, take advantage of this Sale Tuesday next and be in on the market to make as you have heard of others making on a good tip. LONDON, NEW YORK & PARIS ASSOCIATION OF FASHION, Grace Building—apr22,26

**BIBLE CONFERENCE CLOSING SESSION.**—Rev. Dr. Jones will lecture at to-night's meeting of the Llewellyn Bible Conference, which session will be the closing one for the season.

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