

# ROD AND GUN IN CANADA



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## LABRADOR AS A COUNTRY FOR CRUISING.

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Nine years ago we made our first expedition to Labrador. We sailed from Yarmouth, England, to St. John's, Newfoundland, in order to get a pilot who would recognize at least some of the headlands, when eventually we should find the land of our destination. For our vessel was only 97 tons burden—ketch rigged—and none of us had ever put foot in the country before. We had been warned, moreover, that from Belle Isle to Cape Chidley at the south side of the entrance to the Hudson Bay Straits, there were no lights, no landmarks, no buoys or sea marks, no artificial harbours, and no advantageous aids to navigation of any kind. We had expected a warm welcome in St. John's—which we literally received, for that unfortunate city was on fire when we arrived—and the heat in that magnificent natural basin, surrounded by its wonderful cliffs, was phenomenal. The crossing had taken us 17 days from the Fastnet rock—not a bad record considering we had lost three days in fog, and had run south as far as the Flemish Cape. But the best crossing we ever made was the succeeding year on the homeward passage. Leaving St. John's, Newfoundland, on the 28th of November, we heaved to off Great Yarmouth pier-head, on the east coast of England, in exactly 12½ days—six hours had been spent with our head hove to the westward in the channel—except for that we had a fair wind varying from one quarter to the other the whole way across—and this small sailing vessel had maintained an average speed of 7.1 knots per hour from start to finish. It is easy enough to cross the Atlantic in a small boat, for after all, owing to the deep water, the seas are true, but the danger comes in trying to do it quickly. If any one wants a new sensation let him run in a small sailing boat with a low freeboard, of say three feet, for days together as we did, at times getting 240 knots out of the ship in 24 hours. The "fate" of the ship seems occasionally unavoidable as the towering green mountains rise behind, but they subside again, melting with a final rush under the stern, though the ship is apt to give very uncomfortable "yaws" from side to side, and unless you have two stout men at your wheel, and they well used to it, you are apt to let the ship broach-to, especially in the dark, and then—the Deluge.

Looking back on the various cruises we have made since then—which include journeys round England, West Scotland, West Ireland, and Wales—round the Shetlands—Orkneys—Farøes—and all round Iceland, I can only say none have greater capacities for a summer cruise for pleasure (mine have been in the capacity of a medical missionary among fishermen) than the rugged coasts of Labrador. If one looks out Labrador in an Encyclopædia, one finds its character so shockingly

destroyed, one would fancy it was the natural home of the Furies, and that incessant gales hurled mountainous seas in unbroken succession through a network of icebergs against unknown, death-dealing crags. Now, being a Master Mariner and Captain of my own boat, which has now developed into an 84-ton steel (unsheathed) schooner-rigged steamboat, and having cruised so many times the whole coast, I am in a position to say this is very far from being the true state of affairs—that I was able to cruise one year from St. John's, Nfld., the whole coast to Okkak (north of Cape Mugford) in a small launch 45 feet long by 8 feet wide, arriving back on November 13th, shows how different is the real state of affairs; indeed, one year having had an accident to my steamer, I was able to continue my peregrinations without much risk in an open 16-foot-lugged-rigged dingy.

I have been tempted, Mr. Editor, to write you a first article on these lines because I feel sure if some of your readers, who own yachts or who make summer trips together in hired vessels, were to know how easy it is to get a pilot among the Newfoundland fishermen who knows the Labrador coast, and who has himself taken a small and often poor and ill-formed vessel year after year with perfect equanimity along that coast in search of codfish, I am sure many more would visit the coast for a summer cruise. There are a great many attractions which very few other coasts offer in these days, and a run down on the outside Newfoundland, say from Halifax, or if preferable through the Gulf along the west coast of Newfoundland, is only a matter of a few days. Every year numbers of small fishing and trading schooners go down this very trip. My advice is to any one going down, go north along the Newfoundland west coast. It is a lovely coast, exquisite scenery, and plenty of free salmon and trout fishing. Pass through the Straits of Belle Isle, a perfectly easy matter for the water is *all* deep, to along the north shore, and you can run your bowsprit around there practically the whole way, before you would touch your keel. But *return by the east coast* of Newfoundland without any doubt, for the prevailing winds, when September once comes in, are westerly, and this is still truer of October and November. This gives you a weather shore and smooth water the whole way. But beyond that, beautiful natural harbours are so numerous you can, if you wish to do things comfortably, make a harbour every night. This is what the fishing craft do. It is well to remember you would not have even the risk of a lonely tour. On both your journeys north and south, you find plenty of sailing craft of every description running north or south with you, and this is a great source of relief, if one has never cruised the coast before. For these men have the ripe ex-