

## THE DISCOVERER OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

(By our Newfoundland Correspondent.)

I propose, in this paper, to furnish a brief sketch of Sebastian Cabot, the discoverer of Newfoundland and of Northern America, of whom little is known by the generality of readers.

Three hundred and seventy-five years ago, on the 24th of June, 1497, at five o'clock in the morning, a small vessel, of some two hundred tons, was approaching these shores; and as the early haze cleared away, the thrilling cry of "land ho" rang through the ship. The name painted on the stern of this good ship was "The Matthew of Bristol," and she was manned by stout West Country sailors. Her commander was Sebastian Cabot—one of the greatest names on England's roll of naval heroes, second only to that of Columbus. Though of Italian extraction, he was born in Bristol, and spent his youth and most of his manhood in the service of England, so that she may fairly claim him as one of her own sons. His father, John Cabot, a Venetian, was an intelligent, thoughtful man, who, with his son Sebastian, had given much attention to those maritime enterprises that were then engaging the boldest spirits of Europe. When the news of Columbus's great discovery flew from nation to nation, giving a new direction to men's thoughts, and kindling in the minds of multitudes a quenchless desire to explore the secrets of the new hemisphere, the thought presented itself to the mind of Cabot that by taking a north-west course, instead of the track which led the great navigator to San Salvador, he would reach, by a shorter route, the eastern coasts of Asia, and open up intercourse with the Cathay of Marco Polo—the great object of maritime adventure in those days. On application to Henry VII. he obtained letters patent sanctioning his undertaking, but the expense of the enterprise was borne by the Cabots and their connections. And so, in the month of May, 1497, this daring navigator took his departure from the port of Bristol, and turned his prow to the north-west, to traverse stormy seas which were yet unfurrowed by European keel. It is uncertain whether his father accompanied him; but in contemporary and subsequent records, the whole glory of the enterprise is justly attributed to his son Sebastian. Nothing whatever is known of the voyage. No diary was kept on board, and the commander gave to the world no account of what took place beyond the bare results of his voyage. Few can both do great things and describe them adequately. Julius Cæsar is the one exception to this rule. Without any flourish of trumpets, these silent Englishmen sailed from Bristol, out into the unexplored wilds of the North Atlantic, never fancying that they were doing anything great. Yet the greatest and most momentous consequences flowed from this voyage of "The Matthew." The continent of North America was discovered by Englishmen, and the claim to possession which first discovery then established kindled that passion for colonization which has since dotted the globe with English colonies, and fostered that swarming tendency which has gone on deepening and strengthening in the race ever since, and which was never so productive of momentous results as at the present hour. The honour of England was pledged to hold what the daring enterprise of her seamen had discovered. Had not Cabot led the way to these shores, other European races might have monopolised these vast regions, and the English tongue would not have been spoken from Atlantic to Pacific, as it is to-day. From the discovery of Newfoundland by Sebastian Cabot all these great results have flowed.

It would be interesting if we could decide with certainty on what part of our coast Cabot first landed; but the evidence is insufficient to determine this point. The common opinion is that the headland of Cape Bonavista was the portion of the coast first sighted by Cabot, and by him named in gratitude by the Italian designation of "Bona Vista," or happy sight; and that he called the whole country "Baccalaos" from the abundance of codfish, the native term for which is "Baccalao." This account has often been repeated, but in reality there is no foundation for it. The Red Indians of this island did not call codfish "baccalao," that being a name given by the Basques, who were the earliest cod-fishers on these coasts, and named the cod "baccalos," and called Newfoundland, Cape Breton, and Nova Scotia the "Baccalaos" or Codlands. Nor is there any evidence to show that Cape Bonavista was the first land seen by Cabot. I have carefully studied all the accounts of his voyages, which are sufficiently bewildering and contradictory, and without going into details, I shall only say that there is a strong probability that the land first seen by Cabot was the Labrador coast, close to the Straits of Belle Isle, so that he discovered Newfoundland and the continent of America at the same time. The chief evidence in support of this opinion rests on a map drawn by Cabot, though unfortunately not now in existence; but underneath it the engraver placed an inscription which has been preserved, and which records that "he discovered that land which no man before that time had attempted, on the 24th June, 1497, about five o'clock in the morning. This land he called 'Primavista,' first seen. That island which lieth out before the land, he called of St. John, on this occasion, because it was discovered on the day of St. John the Baptist." The only island of any considerable size, standing apart from the land, in the latitude in which Cabot then was, is Newfoundland. Turning westward at this point, he ranged along the shore till he made the coast of Nova Scotia, and then bore up for England, where the news of his discovery made a profound sensation. The following year he made a second voyage, still hoping to discover the strait which would conduct him to the Indian seas, and on this occasion he sailed along the whole coast of North America, from Labrador to Florida. By both these achievements he made himself the discoverer of continental America, for at that date Columbus had only discovered some of the West India Islands. Were justice done to his memory the whole of the northern continent should be called Cabotia, for he first surveyed its coasts and attempted to colonise its shores. The southern portion of the continent should bear the honoured name of Columbia.

It is but fair to state that another opinion regarding Cabot's "Prima Vista" is held by some competent judges who maintain that the first land made by the adventurers in

"Matthew" was Cape North, the northern extremity of Cape Breton, and that the island described as "lying opposite the same" was Prince Edward's Island, which was long afterwards known as the Isle of St. John. They hold that Cabot skirted this island, and sailed along the southern coast on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, beyond the side on which Quebec at present stands; that returning by the northern shore of the Gulf "still trending eastward," they coasted to the latitude of 53° 0', and then sailing by Newfoundland Island, which they took to be and depicted as an archipelago, they continued their course southward to the Chesapeake, and so home.

The limits of this short paper do not permit me to dwell, at any length, on the after career of Cabot. The penurious Henry VII. appears to have bestowed upon him neither honours nor rewards. His discoveries brought no immediate returns, and probably the close-fisted Monarch thought he paid him handsomely when he presented him with ten pounds as a reward of his services, and not only so, but made a note of it in the account of his privy purse expenses, lest any one should accuse him of neglecting the great seaman. Cabot remained for a number of years in England, loved and admired for his genial, modest disposition, his ardent and enterprising spirit that was ever urging on new maritime adventures. At length he entered the service of the King of Spain, who estimated his worth so highly that he at once made him Pilot Major of the Kingdom. In the service of Spain he made many voyages, discovered Brazil and explored the Plata and Paraguay rivers. When Edward VI. ascended the throne he returned to England, and was appointed Chief Pilot with a pension of £166 per annum. For many years he was the very soul of the maritime and commercial enterprises of England, and was the first who, in company with others, opened up the trade with Russia. He died in his 80th year in London. His friend Richard Eden gives us a glimpse of him, in his closing hours, when bound for that far off country where "there is no more sea," and he had loved the sea so well, and played with its wild waves so long that even in his last moments the music of ocean was in his ears, and in the wanderings of his fevered fancy, he spoke of a divine revelation to him of a new and infallible method of finding the longitude which he was not permitted to disclose to any mortal. The dying seaman was again, in imagination, on his beloved ocean, over whose billows his intrepid and adventurous youth had opened a pathway, and on whose mysterious secrets he had pondered for three score years. Soon he entered the quiet haven where the hail-storms are unfeeling, and the rough winds are hushed for evermore. It is probable that he died in London, though even that is not certain any more than the exact date of his death. No man knows where his dust reposes. No monument was erected to perpetrate the memory of one of the noblest and bravest seamen that ever trod the deck of an English ship. He gave a continent to England, and in all that wide region there is not a headland, bay, creek or harbour called by his name. The navy and commerce of England received from his genius their first onward impulse; but no monumental record marks the few feet of earth which, in return for all his services, England gave as a resting-place for his ashes. His maps and discourses were never published, and were allowed to sink into perpetual oblivion. The world's benefactors seldom meet their reward here. Never was there a more flagrant case of the world's ingratitude than that presented in the case of Sebastian Cabot. Have our North American Colonies done anything to wipe away the blot? In the splendid Parliament Buildings at Ottawa has a niche been devoted to the statue of the discoverer of North America? If so, few are aware of it. In the year 1860 Newfoundland came to the rescue, and when the Prince of Wales visited these shores we presented him with a fine specimen of our Newfoundland dogs, having first baptized the animal by the name of "Cabot," out of respect to the memory of the discoverer of this island. It is surely possible to do better than that. The erection of a statue here or in the capital of the Dominion to the memory of Cabot, would be but a little tardy justice done to the merits of this great man after a lapse of more than three centuries and a half. It is known that there is still, in some one of the private picture-galleries of England, a portrait of Cabot, painted for Edward VI. by the great painter, Holbein. Though taken at an advanced age, it is said to have been an admirable and characteristic likeness, presenting a man of commanding stature, on whose noble countenance the lines of profound thought were deeply marked; while the dark hazel eye gave token of the force and ardour of character which made him a leader of men. An engraving of this fine portrait would be a boon to the public.

We have seen that the grand object of Cabot, in his early voyages, was to find a short route to Cathay, or China. "There is no new thing under the sun." What we call new has already existed, ages ago, in rude and embryonic form, and now merely recurs in fully developed shape, and perfected to its ideal. The crude idea of Cabot that China would be reached by sailing to the north-west will soon be realised in a far grander way than he conceived. The Canadian Pacific Railroad will, in a few years, be completed, including, I venture to predict, a branch across Newfoundland, having St. John's for its eastern terminus, and a line of steamers from its western extremity connecting it with China and Japan—the Cathay and Cipango of the early navigators. This will be the shortest, safest, and easiest route for the trans-continental traffic between England and China. Cabot was right after all. Along this line the most direct and practicable communication will be maintained between Shanghai and Liverpool. The proper course between China and Europe is via Newfoundland. It is shorter by a thousand miles than the American Pacific line. One day these rocks will re-echo the scream of the locomotive, as the train arrives with passengers from China en route for Europe, and the "Heathen Chinese," with streaming pig-tail and flowing robe, will pay a flying visit to Cabot's "Prima Vista."

At the Chelmsford Assizes recently a prisoner who pleaded "Guilty" to a charge of breaking into a church to steal, delivered to the judge, Mr. Baron Martin, a brief written address, which commenced with this appeal:—"My Lord,—I have been over eighteen weeks a prisoner waiting for my trial. If it impresses your kind judgment in my favour I shall be ever thankful, and I will bring you as fine a bird for a present as ever was brought from India next voyage." The reading of this excited, of course, much merriment. The learned judge sentenced the prisoner to three months' imprisonment, observing, "But mind, you must not bring me that bird."

## FIELD AND FLOOD.

On the 20th ult., the "Dauntless" Base Ball Club of Ayr defeated the "Beavers" of Paris by thirteen—27 to 14.

Four boys named Denny, from St. John, N.B., won the four oared race at the Fourth of July regatta at San Francisco.

The cricket match played on the 27th ult., between Ottawa and Kingston, resulted in the victory of the former with over 100 runs to spare.

A lacrosse match between the Knickerbocker Club of New York and the Lancaster Club was to come off at the latter place on the 7th inst.

A new yacht, owned by Alex. Cuthbert & Co. of Cobourg, was launched at that place on the 29th ult. She has been named the "Lady Stanley."

The grand lacrosse match between the "Knickerbockers" of New York and the Montreal "Shamrocks" comes off this day, the 10th inst. A sharp contest may be anticipated.

A cricket match was played on the 30th ult., at Hastings, between the Hastings club and the Norwood club, resulting in favour of the Hastings club by two runs and eight wickets.

A movement is on foot to send George Brown, the champion oarsman, to Washington with his new boat, to compete in the single scull race which comes off on the Potomac in September.

It has been arranged among Toronto sportsmen to hold a three days' meeting on the new race course in that city, on the 12th, 13th and 14th of September. Full particulars will be given in due time.

Two of the Ward Brothers have intimated their willingness to row a pair-oar race with any men in America; and Ellis Ward is looking for some one to take a thousand dollars out of (or lose it to) him in a single scull.

A call has been issued for a National Convention of Amateur Oarsmen, to meet in New York on the 28th inst. The Convention will establish a National Regatta, revise the laws of boat-racing, and define what is an amateur.

An All England Angling Contest was recently held in Lincolnshire. Prizes to the amount of several hundred pounds were offered. Over 500 anglers were present. The weight of fish caught was not large, the highest being under 4 lb.

A game of lacrosse played at Woodstock on the 30th, between the "Shamrocks" of Ingersoll and the "Beavers" of Woodstock, resulted in favour of the latter, who took the first, third and fourth games. Time, 45m; 13m. 30s; 47m, and 19m. 15s.

An exhibition game of billiards was played by Joseph Dion at the St. Lawrence Hall in this city on the 30th ult. A game of five hundred points was first played with an amateur, in which the ex-champion ran out before his opponent had scored twenty. His highest run was sixty points.

The Halifax Royal Yacht Club's annual match for the Prince of Wales' challenge cup took place on the afternoon of the 1st inst., on the harbour course, 12 miles. Nine yachts competed, and the "Whisker," Vice-Commodore Wood, was declared the winner. This is the second time she has won the cup.

At the promenade concert given in Halifax on the 1st a handsome \$200 gold watch and chain, the gift of the young men of the city, was presented, with an address engrossed on parchment, to Geo. Brown, the champion oarsman of Nova Scotia. Brown made a characteristic reply, and asked three cheers for Fulton.

The result of the American six-oared College Races, which took place on the 24th ult., at Springfield, Mass., was a victory for the Amherst crew, by a length and a half. Harvard was second, with the Agriculturals third, Bowdoin fourth, Williams fifth, and Yale sixth. The distance was three miles straight away, and was made in 16.32 4-5.

The Goodwood Races took place on Wednesday and Thursday of last week. The race for the Stakes on Wednesday was won by "Spennithorne," the winner of the Northumberland Plate; "Richmond" second, and "Kingercraft" third. Sixteen horses ran. On Thursday the race for the Cup (two miles and a half) was taken by "Favonius," with "Albert Victor" second, and "Verdure" third. Only five ran.

A cricket match was played at Toronto on the 31st ultimo between members of the city club under and over twenty-five years of age. The Juniors scored 68 in their first innings, and 97 in the second, making a total of 165. The Seniors made 41 in the first innings, and 131 in the second, with five wickets to go down. Hurrell, of the Seniors, carried out his bat with a score of 65, one of the largest scores made in Toronto this season.

A cricket match came off on the 27th ult. on the Garrison Ground at Halifax between an eleven from the 1st Battalion, 66th Rifles, and a combined eleven from the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers. It ended in an easy victory for the Rifles, who made 84 in one innings, while their opponents only got 24 in the first, and 57 in the second, innings—a total of 81—leaving the Rifles winners with an innings and two runs to spare.

"Polo," or hockey on horseback, has come into vogue in England. The game was invented, it is said, a few years ago by the officers of a regiment stationed in India. As an exercise for military men this sport is likely to give increased dexterity in the use of the lance or sabre, or other cavalry weapons, as well as a firmer seat in the saddle, and a faculty of quickly turning and striking to the right hand or to the left, which must be very effective in the mêlée of battle.

MR. W. G. GRACE AGAIN.—In a recent match at Lord's between England v. Nottingham and Yorkshire, Mr. W. G. Grace, who played for England, gave the best taste of his quality that he has given this year. He accomplished the extraordinary feat of going in first at ten minutes past twelve, remaining four hours and a quarter at the wickets, against the best bowling of the two strongest counties in England, and carrying out his bat for an unfinished innings of 170 out of 288 runs, without having given a fair chance—his hits were a 6 (two for overthrow), four 5's, eight 4's, fifteen 3's, sixteen 2's, &c. The match was won by England by nine wickets.