

REPORT

ON

The Mineral Resources of Newfoundland, by James P. Howley,
F.G.S., for the year 1892

St. John's, May, 1892.

As a mineral producing country, Newfoundland has only sprung into notoriety within the past quarter of a century. Previous to that date, in fact, from its very earliest history, there appears to have been a vague suspicion of its containing rich mineral treasures, for we find that Sir Humphrey Gilbert, who took possession of the island in the name of Queen Elizabeth, in 1583, had with him a mining expert, a native of Saxony, whom Sir Humphrey despatched upon a mining exploration along the coast. He is said to have gathered many specimens of ore, supposed to be rich in copper, iron, lead, silver, &c. To quote from the narrative of the voyage: "One Daniel, a native of Saxony, a very expert miner and assayer, brought to the General a piece of ore, of which he said that he would stake his life that it contained a considerable quantity of silver."

Sir Humphrey was greatly elated at the prospect of rich mineral wealth in his newly-acquired possession; but fearing lest the numerous Basque and Portuguese fishermen present should get wind of the fact, he ordered all the specimens to be concealed on board ship till they were again at sea, when they would cause assays to be made. "So confident was he of the value of this ore, that he boasted to his friends that on the credit of the mine, he did not doubt of obtaining from Queen Elizabeth the loan of ten thousand pounds to defray the expense of another similar enterprise."

But the mines of the waters laving the shores of Newfoundland, which were pronounced by Sir Francis Bacon, in 1610, to contain "richer treasure than all the mines of Mexico and Peru," and whose inexhaustible stores of wealth continue to this day as

*The poor mining expert, with most of the crew, and all his precious ores, was afterwards lost in the *Delight*, one of Sir Humphrey's ships, on Sable Island.