

ambiguity in the early application of the name "Newfoundland," it will hardly be disputed that *most at least* of the ancient papers from which he cites *do refer* to voyages to the Island. In this connection we must note Sir Humphrey Gilbert, on August 5th, 1583, took formal possession of the country, "acting under a commission from the Queen of England;" and also that there is evidence to show that from 1583 to 1713 England exercised continued acts of dominion; grants of land were made, commissions were issued, and regulations drawn up for the government of the country. When we notice that in 1698 the British Parliament passed a bill (10 and 11, Wm. III., cap. 25) which had reference to the *whole country*, the seas and Islands adjacent, and which was principally a formal sanction of the customs and regulations which had existed previously, there seems very little room for further doubt.

If the references to British Sovereignty during the earlier period of its history seem somewhat scanty we must remember the "New Land" was not likely to claim a large share of public attention. The age was not a reading one, and while the men of letters were occupied with events of greater moment, such as the Reformation and Court affairs, it was not probable much allusion would be made to a distant isle, the sole interest of which lay in its fishing possibilities.