

, their catch being brought home and disposed of to the English and the French.⁶

It is an old tradition that fishing vessels belonging to Jersey, on their way to Iceland to engage in the summer fisheries, when nearing their destination were overtaken by a northeast gale which drove them southwest for some days until finally they fell in with a land whose waters teemed with codfish. They loaded their vessels there and then returned to Jersey. It was shortly after this that Cabot made his voyage of discovery in 1497, and it was always maintained by the old Jersey settlers in Newfoundland that Cabot learned from Jersey fishermen who visited Bristol of the western land that they had discovered. Be that as it may, it is a certain fact that the Channel Island fishermen were among the first, if not the first, fishermen to visit Newfoundland. It has been asserted by Jerseymen that a ship belonging to Du Moulin visited the harbor of St. John's in 1500, and at Bras D'Or and Blanc Sablon in Labrador fishing establishments belonging to Channel Islanders were in operation very early in the sixteenth century.

Rut, in the account of his voyage to the New-found-isle, relates that "on the third day of August, 1527, entered into a harbour called St. John's, and there we found eleven sail of Normands, one Breton and two Portugal barks, all a-fishing."⁷ The Normands were no doubt the fishing people of the Norman isles, now known as the Channel Islands.

In the old Jersey records it is mentioned that in 1591 John Guillaume was fined by the Royal Court for selling in France the fish which he had brought from Newfoundland. They also inform us that by the end of the seventeenth century the Newfoundland-Jersey trade, which had brought a large amount of prosperity to Jersey, had declined, owing to the fact that Colbert, the prime minister of Louis XIV, had put a high duty on fish imported into France in foreign vessels. The trade revived, however, about 1730, and the period from that date to the French Revolution was a very prosperous one for Jersey and Newfoundland commerce. In 1731 there were seventeen vessels from Jersey engaged in Newfoundland trade; in 1732 there were twenty-four; in 1771 there were forty-five; and in 1785 there were fifty-nine vessels. Besides these Jersey vessels there were a number of Guernsey vessels engaged in the same trade.⁸

Harris, in his history,⁹ notes that in May, 1591, the fishermen of Guernsey, through one Colin, applied to the municipality of St. Malo for permission to fish in Newfoundland, but were refused. This refers to that portion of the coast of Newfoundland which came under the jurisdiction of the French in 1662 by the secret arrangement made between Charles II and the French king, whereby all the southern coast of the island west of Cape St. Mary's was to be held by the French. The Guernsey and Jersey people had, prior to 1662, fished in Placentia and Fortune Bays, and the Villeneuves had a fishing

⁶ Jersey Chronicles in archives of Jersey.

⁷ Purchas His Pilgrimes, 1625.

⁸ Falle: *op. cit.*, and Jonathan Duncan: *The History of Guernsey*, London, 1841.

⁹ Henry Harris: *John Cabot, the Discoverer of North America, and Sebastian, His Son.* London, 1896.