

Notes in My Library.

A COOL BREEZE FROM THE GULF—THE ISLAND SENTINELS OF CANADA'S GRAND PORTAL—HISTORIC NAMES ON EASTERN SHORES—CABOT'S LANDFALL—WAS CAPE NORTH OR CAPE BONAVISTA, "PRIMA TERRA VISTA"?—EPOCHS OF NEWFOUNDLAND'S HISTORY—INFLUENCE OF THE FISHERIES ON ENGLAND'S MARITIME GREATNESS—THE FRENCH SHORE QUESTION—A BIT OF OLD FRANCE IN THE GULF—PROSPECTS OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

IN these hot summer days, whilst political parties are earnestly striving for the mastery and endeavouring to convince the people who are the true guardians of the public interests, it is a positive relief for one like myself, tied down by official duties to the green cloth table of the House, to allow his thoughts to wander to the delightful bays and harbours of the great gulf—that grand northern portal of the continent—to which, from the earliest times of which we have any authentic record, men, famous in the annals of the world, have often found their way. Here the soft, cool sea breezes create a delicious temperature of which the dwellers in Ontario can hardly have any conception except they happen to be on the banks of the wild Muskoka lakes or in some bay of mighty Superior. Nowhere in America can the tourist find more thorough repose—nowhere can the student find more interesting associations of the past history of Canada than on the shores of those two noble islands, Cape Breton and Newfoundland, which stand like sentinels to guard the Atlantic approaches to Canada. Of Cape Breton I have frequently written in these pages. Almost every bay, every port, every river bears a name which connects us with the history of America for four centuries. As we pass by its shores we recall the times when John Cabot and his English crew in the Bristol ship, the *Matthew*, first saw its headlands; when Basque, Breton and Norman fishermen dragged up the riches of the sea in its prolific waters; when the hardy New Englanders of the expedition, led by Pepperrell in 1745, captured the strongest fortified town in America; when the noble fleet, directed by Boscawen, whitened the ocean that washes its shores; when Wolfe forever associated his name with the grassy mounds that now alone remain to tell of once famous Louisbourg. In the fishing hamlet of L'Anse-au-Loup—probably a memorial of ancient Norumbega—in the Bras d'Or, that beautiful lake, in the spacious Bay of Gabarus, on the lofty headlands of Cape North and St. Lawrence, in the fertile Boularderie, in the prosperous island of Madame with its contented Acadian villages, in the beautiful harbour once known as Spanish and now as Sydney River, in the cloud covered cape called "Smoky" (Enfumé), in the picturesque bay of Niganiche, in the historic cape which has given the island its name since the beginning of the sixteenth century, we have indelible monuments of the past four centuries.

But I must not linger longer among the scenes of my boyhood, interesting as are the associations which cling to its shores. I must ask my reader to cross the Strait, named after the intrepid navigator John Cabot, and land on the great island of Newfoundland to which so much attention has been directed of late. At a very opportune time we find offered for our reading a handsome volume* of about 750 pages, full of historic facts which have never before appeared in print, and illustrated by many valuable maps and sketches relating to the ancient and modern history of this island which, like Cape Breton, is full of the memories of the four hundred years which have passed since its discovery. All around its shores still cling the names which can be traced to Basque, Portuguese, French and English mariners, who, since the days of the Cabots, have ventured on its rich banks and carried back to Europe stores of its never failing wealth. The author of this valuable work is Judge Prowse whose name will be familiar to historical students as that of one who has devoted many years of his life to the study of original documents and records bearing on the his-

tory of the island of which he has become so enthusiastic as to claim for it a most intimate connection with the maritime and colonial greatness of England. The book, in the opinion of an ordinary reader, may be less interesting on account of it assuming the form of chronicles rather than that of a strictly consecutive historical narrative, but this very feature gives it greater value for the student since it affords him an insight into valuable materials which have been long hidden from the historian. The maps and illustrations, so numerous and so well executed, also give to the work a positive value and entitles it to be placed in every well-equipped library alongside of Justin Winsor's "Narrative and Critical History of America," which is so generally recognized as a perfect compendium of ancient maps and books relating to the past history of America.

On reading the preface one will naturally ask the question, What connection can the eminent English critic, Mr. Edmund Gosse, have with this great island of the Gulf? Mr. Gosse gives us on this point information which is new and interesting. His father, it will be remembered by scientific men, was an eminent naturalist and fellow of the Royal Society of London, whose family had been long identified with the history of Poole in Dorsetshire. This town had been long the English port and emporium of the colony, "and each owed to the other a great part of its prosperity." Nearly sixty years ago, "as the bells were ringing people to church at Poole," the father was carried away "with a sinking heart," to a counting-house in Carbonear, where he began those zoological and entomological studies with which his name is now honourably associated in the world of letters. It was then a graceful tribute to the memory of an eminent scientific man, for many years a resident of the colony, that Judge Prowse should ask his son to associate his name with a history of the island of which he has so many interesting memories.

For the purposes of his history, Judge Prowse divides the subject-matter into four great epochs of nearly equal duration. First, there was the early or chaotic era, from 1497 to 1610, "when the island was a kind of no man's land, without law, religion or government, frequented alike by English and foreign fishermen, only ruled in a way by the reckless valour of Devonshire men, half pirates, half traders." Next comes the fishing Admiral period, from 1610 to 1711, "a dismal time of struggle between the colonists and the western adventurers or ship fishermen from England." "This," says Judge Prowse, "may also be designated the colonization period." Then we come to the colonial era under naval governors, from 1711 to 1825, the advent of the first resident governor, Sir Thomas Cochrane, "who is now universally admitted to have been the best governor ever sent to Newfoundland; everywhere are monuments erected to his memory" in the shape of important improvements. Finally, we enter on the modern era, "the struggle for autonomy," the introduction of legislative institutions and responsible government from 1825 to 1895—a struggle which may be said to have come down to the present year, since we have just seen how near the colony has been to a loss of complete self-government, and to a lowering of its political status among the free, self-governing dependencies of the Crown. Happily, however, it has apparently passed successfully through the crisis, and is not likely now to be reduced to a mere Crown colony.

In his enthusiasm for the land he loves so well, Judge Prowse probably claims more for it as a factor in the history of the world than the majority of students who have devoted much attention to the subject will be prepared to admit without further and more substantial evidence than he has adduced. He claims positively for Bonavista "the honour of being the first land seen in America." No doubt the Cabots sighted some part of Newfoundland in the famous voyage of 1497, but no author of high reputation now-a-days supports the theory of Cape Bonavista as the landfall which John Cabot made in that voyage which places his name among the great navigators of the world, and gave England her first claim to the present Dominion, and to the country washed by the Atlantic from Nova Scotia to Florida. The modern name of Bonavista is obviously a memorial of Portuguese or Spanish voyagers of the early part of the six-

* "A History of Newfoundland from the English, Colonial and Foreign Records." By D. W. Prowse, Q.C., Judge of the Central District Court of Newfoundland. With a prefatory note by Edmund Gosse. With 34 collotypes, over 300 text illustrations and numerous maps. London and New York: Macmillan & Co. Imp. 8vo., pp. xxiii + 716.