

by incessantly reiterated arguments. From the very beginning until the very end of its life clever people proved over and over again almost to demonstration that the colony ought not to exist; and vital controversies raged from 1611 to 1817 between settlers and non-settlers, from 1662 to 1714 between French and English, from 1763 to 1904 once more between French and English, from 1783 to September 1910—when this book was in page-proof—between American citizens and the colonial or Imperial authorities; and of all stale unprofitable things argument, proof, and controversy seem worst to those who regard history as a tragic stage rather than as a school of formal logic or a court of law. Historians want their authorities to present characters and events, such as those which Holinshed furnished to Shakespeare, but three-fourths of the authorities on the history of Newfoundland grind out interminable premisses and conclusions in the style of Tidd's *Practice*. One-sided statements of Claim, Defence, and Counter-Claim casuistically and drearily confuted or confirmed one another for three hundred years. Between 1675 and 1757 the very admirals and captains of the Royal Navy wrote some fifty or a hundred annual answers to some fifty or a hundred annual interrogatories, with that glib sameness and definiteness which is only too familiar to lawyers. It might therefore be feared that worse than legal cobwebs would obscure the volumes in which the history of Newfoundland is written.

But another aspect of the same picture presents itself to those who use their imagination. Controversy, after all, was only the sign and symptom of the half-and-half