

There can be no doubt that our rivals' demand for *exclusive* rights on the coast assigned to them would be materially strengthened if they could establish as a fact their former sovereignty of the Island. In this case they might very fitly say that by the treaties they "reserved and did not receive their rights," and, if it were once admitted they "reserved" them they would be in a better position to enforce their own interpretation of what the Treaties actually meant; for it will probably be agreed that the *grantor* can with more justice demand permission to explain what he intended to give, than the *grantee*. Some such idea must certainly have prompted the reiteration of the French claim to the ancient Sovereignty of Newfoundland, and very naturally for the same reason British diplomatists felt compelled to demur.

A very brief historical investigation will be quite sufficient to decide the question. The evidence which is available points unmistakeably to John Cabot as the discoverer of the Islands. However slight his claim to be called an Englishman might be, he was undoubtedly an English agent, and acted under a direct commission from Henry VII. The Colony's chief historian, Judge Prowse, has very ably put the case, both for identifying Cape Bonavista with Cabot's Landfall in the New World, and for the subsequent uninterrupted occupation of the Island by the British as a fishing ground. Admitting a certain