

North American Fisheries were invested by France at an early period, and to the grasping policy of Louis Napoleon during the last four or five years, with respect to fishing rights on the coast of Newfoundland, for a proof of the anxiety with which he wished to retain and improve them as a nursery for seamen. The fortifications of Louisberg cost thirty million livres, and when taken by the British forces from New England, under Sir William Peperall, for the first time, in 1745, the annual value of the fisheries to the French, which built up Louisberg, were nearly one million sterling, independently of their being the best nursery for seamen the world ever saw.

The city was built to a great extent of bricks brought from France. The walls were defended by more than two hundred pieces of artillery. During the siege 9,000 cannon balls and 600 bombs were discharged by the assailants, and the city was taken on the forty-ninth day after investment. The conquest of the city was regarded by Smollet as the most important achievement of the war of 1744; and the First Lord of the Admiralty at the time declared, that "if France was master of Portsmouth he would hang the men who would give Cape Breton in exchange." Louisberg was restored to the French at the peace of Aix la Chapelle, in 1748; but in the succeeding war it was again invested, in 1759, and the force then employed consisted of twenty-nine ships of the line, eighteen frigates, a large fleet of smaller vessels, and an army of fourteen thousand men, and within three years of a century preceding the fall of Sebastopol, the churches throughout the British empire were thronged with thankful worshipers in gratitude to the Almighty for the success of the British arms, and the second fall of Louisberg.

Louisberg may yet rise again. The site of this ancient fortress and capacious harbor is two hundred miles nearer to Europe than Halifax, and the island of Cape Breton is separated from the mainland by the Gut of Canso, not more than 900 yards broad at its narrowest part. Across this narrow strait a steam railway ferry could always keep up communication with the mainland, and yet leave free this valuable entrance to the gulf. ⁽¹⁾

(1) The Gut of Canso, separating Breton Island from Nova Scotia, is frequented by a great number of vessels, amounting to some thousands annually, who pass through it from the Atlantic to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Admiral Bayfield considers it by far the most preferable route for homeward vessels trading between the southern ports of the gulf and Great Britain, as it affords a safe anchorage until an opportunity for sailing with the first fair wind. The length of the passage of the Gut is $14\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and its least breadth 900 yards. The depth of water is seldom less than fifteen fathoms. Cape Porcupine, on the western shore, rises 640 feet above the sea, and is a very remarkable object. The rocks on each side belong to the Lower Carboniferous Series.

The political importance of the North American Fisheries to France and the United States, have been the cause of the extraordinary efforts made on all occasions of the renewal of treaties by these powers, not only to maintain the position formerly won by their diplomacy, but to take every conceivable advantage of this great nursery for their seamen. The Government of the United States have paid not less than \$12,944,998 for bounties to vessels engaged in the fisheries since the commencement of the Republic (1), and the average amount now paid annually by the Government is very nearly \$340,000. So great is the impetus which the system of bounties has given to the American fisherman that while in 1795 only 37,000 tons of shipping were employed in the Cod fishery, at present there are upwards of 110,000 tons engaged in this lucrative business.

The convention between Her Majesty and the Emperor of the French, relative to the rights of fishery on the Gulf coast of Newfoundland, in the Straits of Belle Isle, and the neighboring coasts, signed at London, January 14th, 1853, created alarm in Newfoundland, and much excitement and anxiety in other British Provinces interested in the fisheries. In 1857, the Speaker of the House of Assembly, Newfoundland, addressed an urgent letter to the Speaker of the House of Assembly, Canada, relative to this convention expressing the opinion that "the ultimate effect of the operation of this measure will, it is confidently believed, be the depopulation of the colony of its British inhabitants, and the consequent possession of Newfoundland by a foreign power." A Select Committee of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland reported on the 26th of February, 1857, and submitted resolutions most strongly condemnatory of the convention, as ruinous to British American interests. An address to the Secretary for the Colonies was framed and adopted, and all constitutional steps taken to arrest the calamity with which the convention threatened them.

The "taking of bait," which consists of herring, capelin and launce, on the coast of the gulf, is perhaps the most material and important question with regard to the fisheries; for without bait the cod fisheries on the Banks and elsewhere, in deep water, would be comparatively valueless. The French were most anxious to obtain the right to purchase and fish for herring and capelin to be

(1) The bounty, according to the laws of 1855, is as follows:—
A vessel between 5 and 30 tons, receives . . . \$3 50 per ton.
" more than " " " " 4 00 "

The small State of Massachusetts has received since the Declaration of Independence bounties to the amount of \$7,926,273, and Maine, contiguous to New Brunswick and Canada, the sum of \$4,175,050.