

Nor tempt its savage sternness. Eastwards far—
 Half way to Europe—where the unquiet sea
 Heaves aye its bosom 'gainst the clinging mist
 Which weighs it down, amidst the twilight grey
 And dank, the frequent sail of fishing craft
 Or Basque or Breton loomed. There, æons long,
 Great fleets of bergs, freighted on Arctic shores,
 Sailing with rending shock of glaciers vast,
 Had dropped their stony burdens in the depth
 And shallowed up the black abysm, and made
 Fit home for finny tribes innumerable.
 Beyond this dim and melancholy veil
 Of mist, enshrouding all the Western Sea,
 But few had cared to pierce; for legends dread
 Haunted the rock-bound coast. The Demon's Isle
 Guarded the northern passage. In the thick air
 The shuddering sailors heard the shrieks and howls
 Of fiends malignant, high o'er roar of waves,
 Torturing the souls of men, whose battered bones
 Were beaten small in seethe and hiss of foam,
 Grinding for ever on the shelving rocks
 That skirt the dreary coast of Helluland.—²
 Nor there alone, for ghostly teachers told
 How, when the blessed saving Cross of Christ
 Swept over Europe, all the evil fiends
 In terror fled to the West; and still we see
 Ill-omen'd and distorted struggling shapes
 Of gnomes and goblins frozen into stone
 In forms fantastic on the western fronts
 Of high cathedrals. So the demons fled,
 And, sheltered by impenetrable mists,
 Over the whitening bones of drown'd men,
 On gloomy forest shore or rocky coast,
 Held hideous carnival.

With steadfast mind
 Into this hidden world sailed Champlain. Few before
 Had followed up St. Lawrence mighty flood.—
 Basque whalers, pressing hard their monstrous prey,
 Or traders to a savage rendezvous
 At Tadoussac, held for a few short weeks
 Of summer; else deserted all the year.
 No trader he—our sailor—loftier thoughts
 His bosom swelled: to trace the setting sun

² Helluland: The name given by the Northmen to Labrador.