

CHAPTER
VIII.

on which the waves break with great violence. Among the cataracts is one called the Spout, on the eastern coast of the great southeastern peninsula, formed by a body of water impelled through a fissure of a rock, and falling from such a height as to exhibit the appearance of volcanic smoke, visible far at sea, and thus furnishing a landmark.

The winter in Newfoundland is intensely cold, and of so long duration that the summer is too short for the bringing of corn, and other objects of agriculture, to maturity. The atmosphere is tempestuous, and in summer extremely foggy. Yet the air is wholesome in an uncommonly high degree. The fogs often render navigation dangerous, yet a circumstance has been observed concerning them which appears to be peculiar. "It often occurs that the whole of the ocean around Newfoundland is enveloped in so dense a fog, that it is apparently impossible for a ship to proceed on her course, without incurring the most imminent danger of shipwreck: but, at the same time, there is generally a small space, within a mile or two of the shore itself, entirely clear of the vapour, and, as it were, forming a zone of light around the coast: so that a person, acquainted with this singular phenomenon, will, in some cases, be enabled to attain his port; while a stranger, on the other hand, is afraid to approach the island."* From the bleakness of the atmosphere, and the poverty of the thin soil, the efforts of agriculture would be vain for the sustenance of mankind. Moss, trees, and shrubs are the chief spontaneous products. The timber

* Chappell's Voyage to Newfoundland, p. 63.