

100,000*l.* worth of fish were annually exported. The ships left England in March, and returned in September, and these voyages formed a nursery for English seamen. In 1635 the French obtained permission from England to dry fish on the shores of Newfoundland. This may be said to have laid the beginning of the troubles which are now so active. The island was kept in a deserted condition by the merchant adventurers up to 1729. They persuaded the authorities at home that it was uninhabitable, in order that they might retain the fishing rights in their own hands. Masters of vessels were obliged to bring back to England each soul they embarked, under penalty of 100*l.* When at length this tyranny gave way, a governor sent from England, and the island colonized, the fishermen were still so poor as to be in complete subjection to the merchants under the "supplying system." This baneful "truck" practice begun so long ago, continues in use unto this day, with equally evil results. The only support of the fishermen (who form the bulk of the population) is fish. Upon the result of the fishing season the year's comfort and prosperity depend. But this, to be done on a profitable scale, requires a considerable plant. There are only three classes in Newfoundland: the merchants, the planters, and the fishermen. The last class are in durance to the first, through the