

PREFACE.

THE Labrador Peninsula, with the coast and islands of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, possesses a colonial and imperial interest which can scarcely be over-estimated in contemplating the possible future of British North America.

The annual value of the Fisheries in British American waters exceeds four millions sterling, besides being the best nursery for seamen 'the world ever saw.'

The fisheries on the Atlantic coast of Labrador alone yield a yearly return of at least one million sterling; and yet, since the destruction of the town of Brest, at the Gulf entrance of the Straits of Belle Isle, more than two hundred years ago, no attempts have been made to form settlements on an extensive scale on or near the coast.

In the great interior valleys, some ten or fifteen miles from the coast, timber fit for building purposes and fuel exists in abundance, and the climate and soil admit of the successful cultivation of all common culinary vegetables.

West of the Mingan Islands large areas exist suitable for settlement. Limestones and sandstones occupy the coast, and extend about ten miles back over a space of eighty miles on the Straits of Belle Isle, and great