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HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

No. 33—WORK IN NEWFOUNDLAND.*

THE history of Newfoundland during the 17th and beginning of the 18th centuries is but the record of rivalries and feuds between the English and French fishermen who frequented its coasts in search of cod and seal, until, by the treaty of Utrecht in 1713, it passed finally into the possession of England and thus became the nearest to the mother-country of all her colonies. Sir Walter Raleigh had in his day made unsuccessful efforts to colonize it, but a territory which was described as but "a rough shore with no interior," incapable of occupation save by its aboriginal inhabitants, baffled all attempts to transplant to its sterile soil any fruits of civilized colonization. To this day its English-speaking population is confined to its coast line, where, scattered here and there amid an endless succession of coves and inlets, enveloped during the winter in mist and fogs, they pick up a precarious livelihood from the fisheries, which not unfrequently fail altogether, and where, even in a good season, the frail barks with their precious cargoes are often at the mercy of Atlantic storms. Tribes of Indians once inhabited the country, but they are now fast dying out.

The diocese includes the Labrador coast, where the climate is rigorous and cold (where seal fishing is carried on sometimes in the midst of danger

among floating icebergs), and also the islands of Bermuda 1,200 miles distant across the Atlantic, where roses bloom in January and where the chief products are bananas, oranges and peaches. It was first erected in 1839 when the Venerable Aubrey George Spencer, who had for many years been Archdeacon of Bermuda was appointed the first bishop. He was succeeded by the Apostolic Edward Feild, the labors and successes of whose long episcopate have often been well and ably

told.* Those who doubt or disparage the labors of missionary bishops must feel rebuked by that simple record of faith and duty amid trials and dangers, which their own worldly philosophy would never nerve them to face. Bishop Feild was indebted to the generous kindness of an English friend, the present Primus of Scotland, for what proved the greatest boon to the Bishop of such a see as Newfoundland—the gift of the "Church ship." Amid the gales and storms of that inhospitable coast a voyage in a small schooner was not the cruise of a pleasure yacht. Unable as it often was to "make" the desired haven, compensation for the discomforts of a night's tossing out-

side one of the hundred harbors which jotted the coast, was amply found in the cordial welcome ever shown to its "skipper" and crew next morning, in their errand of mercy and glad tidings to the settlements of the scattered fishermen, who hoisted flags and fired guns whenever the "Hawk," (as the Bishop's ship was called) hove in sight.



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*Compiled from "Historical Sketches," published by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and other sources.

*A sketch of Bishop Spencer with portrait will be found in the November No., 1856, of this magazine, and of Bishop Feild also with portrait in the July No., 1888.