

land is excellent and the climate temperate." Reference is also made to trees on the coast and to the abundance of fish. No discoverer would refer to a great peninsula like Labrador as an island. The great codfishery does not begin until July and its bleak and rugged shores could never be described as wooded or beautiful and pleasant.

That Newfoundland was the land discovered will admit of very little doubt if we carefully examine the scanty records which have come down to us about John Cabot's first voyage. He arrived in Bristol early in August, 1497, from the first expedition. On August 10th there is an entry in the Privy Purse expenses, "To hym that found the *new Isle*, £10. April 1st, 1498, "A reward of £2 to James Carter for going to the *new Isle*. "To Launcelot Thirkil, of London, upon a prest for his shipp going towards the *new Islande*, 22nd March, 1498, £20. "April 1st, 1498. To Thomas Bradley and Launcelot Thirkil, going to the *new Isle*, £30."

Ayala, in his letter of July, 1498, writes, "The Genoese went on his course . . . I believe the distance is not 400 leagues, and I told him that I thought they were the *Islands* discovered by your Highness."

In his long and amusing letter Soncino says, "He (Cabot) departed in a little ship from Bristol with 18 persons, passing Ibernica (Ireland) more to the west, and ascending towards the north, he began to navigate the eastern part of the ocean, leaving for some time the north to the right hand and having wandered enough he came at last to firm land, where he planted the Royal banners, took possession for his Highness, made certain marks and returned. . . . The sea is full of fish. . . . and the Englishmen, his partners, say that they can bring so many fish that the Kingdom will have no more business with Islanda (Iceland) and that from this country there will be a very great trade in the fish they call stock fish," (dried codfish) a very safe prediction, and which was certainly fulfilled. We must bear in mind that Cabot made the land on the 24th June.

Now this is the time of the "caplin school" in our Island, the very height of the codfishery. Nowhere in the world is there such an abundance of the lordly cod as on the east coast of Newfoundland at this particular season.

It has been clearly shown that the very first result of the discovery of Newfoundland was the dropping of the great Iceland codfishery from Bristol, an immense rise in the dry fish trade, and an increase of barrelled fish, all of which came from the *new Isle* (Newfoundland). In Pasqualigo's letter of 23rd August, 1497, he says that Cabot coasted for 390 leagues and landed; he saw no human beings whatever, but he has brought hither to the king certain snares which had been set to catch game, and a needle for making nets; he also found some felled trees, . . . coming back he saw two islands to starboard. . . . It is quite clear that as Cabot and his companions described the newly discovered country as an island he must have coasted all around it, and 300 leagues, 900 miles, would cover almost the exact distance required to circumnavigate Newfoundland, coming round from the Straits of Belle Isle to Cape Ray he would see St. Paul's and catch a glimpse of the highlands of Cape Breton, or else, if he hugged the shore right along the south coast he would see St. Pierre and Miquelon to starboard. It would take the explorer fully three weeks to coast around Newfoundland. From Cape Race, with the westerly winds prevailing in July, he would reach Ireland in fourteen or fifteen days. This calculation will account for the time he spent between the 24th June and 5th August, the date of his arrival in Bristol.

It is quite clear from these records, how the voyage was carried out, they made a great detour to the north on the outward voyage, and so the distance run was 700 leagues, or 2,100 miles, but having found the *new Isle*, and knowing its latitude and position, they made a straight run home from Newfoundland to Ireland.

There are three facts brought out very clearly by these records—

First,—That the newly discovered land was an island abounding in fish;

Secondly,—That it lay to the westward of Ireland, and was not distant from it more than about 1,600 miles. Soncino is specific, and says it will only take fifteen days if fortune favours from Ibernica. 100 to 120 miles a day was about the usual day's run of these ancient vessels. Ayala, who

wished to show his Sovereign, Ferdinand of Spain, how near was the new island, says it is not more than 400 leagues; now the Spanish league varies from three to five miles, and if we take the average at four miles to the league, this will give almost the exact distance between Newfoundland and Cape Clear in Ireland—1,690 miles:

Thirdly,—The island they had found was the island they were returning to in 1498, and for this purpose Cabot and his companions Thirkall, Bradley, Carter, etc., were fitting out a fishing expedition in April, 1498. It is a matter of history that they did fish in Newfoundland, and our island was the only part of N.E. America known to the European world resorted to by English and foreign fishermen for the next thirty years. The Portuguese, it is alleged, came here in 1501, at the very beginning of the 16th century; our harbours had distinct names which have survived to this day; in 1506 Jean Denys refers to Renewes. Mr. Harrisse found in the Paris National Library the following record: "Let a note be made of the mark of my boats and barks which I leave in Newfoundland in the haven of Jean Denys, called Rougnoust (Renews). As Mr. Justin Winsor pertinently remarks, for the first thirty years after the discovery the sole cartography of North America is the east coast of Newfoundland.

If any further corroboration were necessary to show that Newfoundland was the first land discovered in N.E. America we can point to the inscription on the portrait of Sebastian Cabot, painted by Holbein in the reign of Elizabeth—at that time, what are now Canada and the Maritime Provinces, had distinct names, our island alone was called Newfoundland—it described Sebastian as the son of the discoverer of Newfoundland.

No Newfoundlanders will have any question about its being Newfoundland when he learns from the records that the first fishermen going out to the new isle got supplies for the voyage from no less a person than Henry the Seventh. The first Tudor Sovereign was a keen trader, and there is very little doubt that poor Launcelot Thirkall and Bradley had to pay up heavily in the fall for the Royal monarch's outfit and advance.

Long before the discovery of America England had carried on a great trade and fishery in Iceland; they were always subject to restrictions by the King of Denmark; they had to pay rent for their temporary booths erected on the land; many foreign vessels competed with them, and the English fishing fleet were often plundered by daring Scotch pirates. By the fortunate voyage of Cabot Englishmen suddenly found themselves lords over a country entirely different from treeless Iceland, abounding in timber, game and wild fruit, and with an abundance of fish such as had never been known before in Iceland or elsewhere. In this new isle they were lords of all they surveyed. When the foreign fishermen found out this piscatorial gold mine, as they did immediately, the English lorded it over the strangers; it was their own island and every Portuguese and Frenchman must submit to their authority, and so, as we learn from the old chronicles, every foreign ship had to furnish the island rulers with boat loads of salt, and wines and fruits for the Sunday feast and lordly spree that inaugurated the appointment of each new English fishing admiral and ruler.

If it is admitted that Newfoundland was the first land seen by Cabot, all probabilities point to Cape Bonavista as the first point on our coast discovered by the great Genoese sailor. An unbroken tradition of four centuries points to Bonavista as his landfall, certified moreover by two maps, one made by John Mason, Governor of Newfoundland, and the other constructed by the celebrated French explorer and Geographer Dupont, both were published about 1625, but they had been prepared much earlier, Dupont's about 1605 and Mason's about 1617 or 1618. Mason marks on Cape Bonavista "*a Caboto primum reperta*."—First found by Cabot. And Dupont has written in red ink near Cape Bonavista, "*prima inventa*," first found, and has also placed outside of Cape Bonavista an island of St. Marc.

These two maps make it quite clear that little more than one hundred years after the event, and when men were alive who had known Cabot and his companions, the tradition and belief common to both English and French sailors was in Cape Bonavista as Cabot's landfall; strongly corroborative also are the names of King's Cove, the first good harbour