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## Young Fishermen Exiled in Big Cities are Disillusioned.

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(By R. I. POLLETT.)

During the past two years hundreds of young fishermen from Newfoundland have left their time-honored inheritance of the sea and migrated to the cities of Canada and the United States to begin life all over again under totally different conditions of employment and surroundings. Some of them no doubt have an idea of what they were going to do there; and while they by no means shuddered at the thought of leaving their homes, they could not so consistently happy and content as have the hundreds of young fellows who have only wanted to get away from the old place and into the big world to be living in a new one but one to heaven. It is after the big majority perhaps, who are having the toughest fight to get themselves to the new life; it is the many who ran all the way to the first boat from home, whose attachment has been in some overwhelming complete.

**GOOD-BYE, EVERYBODY.**  
Of course, no healthy young fellow is blamed for wanting to look out the back-yard fence, especially on days when he hears so much of the wonders and conditions that exist there. In the case of Newfoundlanders, Canada and the United States are preconceived as beautiful and alluring pictures because of the names of those countries, and that of the latter, have been to them synonyms for "Promised Land" ever since they can remember. They have always heard the States spoken favorably of;

many of them have relations living there. It was inevitable that when the time came for them to go out into the world, Newfoundlanders should go across the Gulf.

That time seems to have come for many during the past couple of years, brought about in great measure by the vacillating condition of the fish markets. Young fishermen who would otherwise be content with their boats and fishing gear, which they love as a part of themselves, have been discouraged. For Newfoundlanders eat, of course; and when the returns of a long summer's drag fails to cover the necessities of a comparatively frugal living, as they sometimes do, there is bound to be an alarm. That's the worst—for the country. There are few other avenues of employment in Newfoundland. So the hard-working, healthy young fellows seek other and more propitious fields in a foreign land.

There is another type of immigrant, however, who would leave the fishing skills in any case. This type has classified itself as "educated" and comprises fellows who have worn long pants to school—who readily recognize letters as a superiority in the ordinary life of fishermen. These fellows hardly ever learn the skill except to his their lips. They have a vocation in books and current literature and cannot be blamed for observing a deep contrast between their often prosaic surroundings and future at home, and the alluring outside world with glowing possibilities of life in a city, as depicted to them in what they read, especially if that literature be a sort of American "Get

Abroad—Be Somebody" propaganda bunkum, as it sometimes is. They have developed imagination and are ambitious; and ambition is not for fishermen. So they, too, turn their backs from the sea; and they, too, see a barren land. Eventually they leave. But for them the Kyle is perhaps much of an Argosy, with a Golden Fleece, figuratively, very, very woolly indeed.

SO, THIS IS IT

Whatever idea a person who has never been to a city can have of a city is, more often than not, illusory. That is certain. So the immigrant from an outpost in Newfoundland arrives at his destination at one of the centres of the world, usually in a wonderful tumbling down of things. That in itself is disturbing, since the realities are beyond his wildest imaginings. Possibly he has had some preconception of big buildings here and there, but hardly of Towers of Babel in everyone's back garden; and if it is night when he arrives, illuminated letters written apparently across the sky and the less obtrusive glitter of a thousand and two other electric signs and signals are bound to cause drop-jaw and altogether dangerous preoccupation—and all around him is the bustle and "God for us all" abandon of a giant railway terminus. The immigrant is in another land; in fact, seemingly, he is another person. He has little trouble, however, in recovering, but when that is accomplished, he is inevitably within the confines of the four walls of a house with all modern inconveniences and soon will have buried excitement in a deep sleep.

If Mr. Fisherman has come to the city alone and is cast upon his own resources, his position is not an enviable one, even if he have the friendship with bells on, such as unfortunately is too often, at this time, at the sugar-leaf stage of growth. If, however, there is an uncle or a thirty-first cousin in the hectic experience, in short, there is no job in the city the hazards are less great. For there are hazards, plenty of them: impressions upon going out into the bazaar with the rest of the fish are non-existent. The background is not big enough to hold all the variety of wonderful things to be met with in "Main Street," so it admits nothing that can be assimilated. This bewilderment of the mind is one of the hazards of a stranger to a city. He doesn't know what to think and he doesn't think. It's awful. In fact, there is hardly any way to describe the mental disposition of a person who suddenly finds himself for the first time on any Broadway, New York, having come from one of the isolated and consequent old-fashioned spots on the coast of Newfoundland—not even if it's a personal experience.

**GET A JOB, SIR!**

But the immigrant has come to the city to look for work, and get it—not a hard problem perhaps, but nevertheless nothing to be "spotted" at. To begin with, what can he do? He can catch fish, but they're already caught when they come to the city. He can begin on a three-leg and end on a three-leg, but what's the use of that? He can take hold of off-hand, except perhaps with hammer and saw. The fellow is willing, however, and when the assumed or natural austerity of the employment agent fails, sometimes through repeated experiences, to intimidate him, and the applicant can approach the employment office without falling all over the place, there is assurance of his being placed according to qualifications; and as his capabilities are obviously physical, if not ponderously so, he may have a good chance to exercise them in the factory as in hauling up the doorways of a fish-factory codtrap "way" way home.

Having secured work through one of the many opportunities that offer in a big city, the young immigrant sets about in a more consistent way to study his environment. Steadily, now, are unfolded to him the many wonders of the metropolis. One after the other, he learns the utilities of modern times and becomes familiar with their convenience. And the proceeding is, to say the least, entertaining. There is not that feeling of loneliness and timidity sometimes relegated to, small, inconsequential people thrust amongst big, impressive things—not yet. The job in the factory is even more interesting than what might be called his social world. For the first time he sees how things that don't grow are made; and his eagerness to know the "ins and outs" of everything, besides satisfying him of knowledge prematurely, often leads to mirth-provoking situations of which he is the lock, stock and barrel—and the target. But, being an affable fellow, a lot of suffering for somebody is averted, and the new hand is awarded his place in the hearts of the gang. Then again, there is the inevitable fellow-worker who respectfully requests an embossed copy of the immigrant's personal history, thank you, and this is what a Newfoundland in the States—yes, in the big sister Dominion, Canada, even has to do a lot of explaining. In fact, one of the things that surprises the visitor most is the fact that the forty-odd thousand square miles of land, Britain's oldest colony, is as yet terra incognita to some out of

every ten people who enquire whence he came—and the odd one knows very little at all about it. However, if the enquirer is keeping in touch with newspapers of the Eastern States there will be less trouble to establish an idea of what Newfoundland geographically is, if he is told that it is an island right alongside of St. Pierre—only St. Pierre is a mosquito. And as for other pertinent questions—well, every man for his own country peaceful life of the city, it is surprising.

**THE WATER'S FIRE!**

Having been thus initiated into the peaceful life of the city, it is surprising how readily the stranger seems to become an original part of it. Whether pushing his way along the crowded main streets or hopping off to work in the comparative quiet of early morning, there is somehow that feeling of placidity out of the turmoil, dignified acceptance of the ways of the world. No doubt, the possession every week of a pay envelope, has a great deal to do with settlement, the constant jingle being almost like a bell in summer. At this time, theatres and moving picture halls seat him often and feel him not at all; side-shows and amusement parks are "jam on it," so the fortune that he set out to make is, as yet, root-gardens in Hare Bay. He cannot be blamed, either; it is only a starved nature eating her fill. Alas, her fill! Acquaintances are made recklessly, friendships here and there, and life, on the whole, is more than worth living.

It is here also that the young fellow decides against the simple life from which he was rescued. What for, in the name of goodness, are people at home living? Why, they see nothing, hear nothing, and know nothing—that is, nothing of the wonders of their age—living in the happy lot of creation! Probably his very thought of home is in terms of city that many of his friends and past associates should live and die without even seeing a cinema of hearing church bells ring out in harmony across a live world.

**ONLY SUPERFICIAL.**

But Mr. Fisherman is being fooled. His innate nature has not then easily accepted the restrictions of city people's and it is only a matter of time before that nature rebels. The change is inexplicable; other than it seems to be a vagary of Nature that she should penalize those who desert her. It is not homesickness; it is something worse. It creeps over him slowly and miserably as liquid glue, until life is anything but a pleasure under the routine that is just now being felt. There is no matter of whatever extent he is being sustained by various institutions of young life in a city, interest in everything is somehow impaired; also, whether the young fellow is naturally broody or devil-may-care, the feeling gets him just the same. Childish songs and rhymes once warbled by the gang around the beach-rocks have an uneasy sentiment coming over brick walls in another land years afterwards; even a baking powder can, if it's the kind he has seen mother using in a corner of comfort to the present mood; and as for a Newfoundland coin, newspaper, picture or any other tangible suggestion of home—well, it may be homesickness after all. Anyhow, instinctively, it seems, threads of the old life are picked up and interwoven, so to speak, through the new, precluding early and permanent settlement into the atmosphere of the city.

**REASONS FOR DISCONTENT.**

The practical side of the deal is not without its flaws, either, and that's the hardest part of it. It is mighty interesting to turn a handle and watch the world go round in a case of pig at one end and sausages at the other; it is extremely comforting, too, to get a pay envelope every week. It is—until the stranger becomes sufficiently accustomed to notice his real position. The facts are disheartening as they are no doubt inevitable. Here he is, a strapping, full-grown man doing apparently twice as much work for half as much pay as the comparatively effeminate city boy who, in no uncertain way, orders him about the place. Now, to be bossed at all is not exactly heartening to the man from the outpost where Jack is always Jack, and Bull—let alone a man's salary! For it is not always easy to remember that he is now a boy just starting in. Besides, it is more than a factory job can do to offer the variety,

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freedom; and above all, the gamble when his spirit craves. So before even if he is educated, he has no experience which often is required of him, the fortune-seeker gets tired of rowing back and forth in the calm, with not a hope of even getting hold of a big one, or the satisfaction of having what he believes to be his rightful share. Altogether, it seems as though he is getting everything but what he wanted his look for, and although he will in time become reconciled to seeming injustices, impatience is a formidable enemy to the fellow who has started out thus handicapped to make his way in the city.

**EMOTIONS GALORE.**

To resume in general, it may safely be concluded that not ten out of every hundred young fishermen who left Newfoundland in the immigration rush of the last two or three years and sought out the city as a means of betterment, have attained anything like they expected or are living as happy lives as they might have lived at home. The fight is too hard with the hazards not having been taken into account, as was the case in the blind desire for adventure. Big, virile fellows who snapped their horny fingers at hazards that would make the city "guy" quake with fear, crumple up and morbidly lie under the petty annoyances and "women's worries" that are nursed to the relentless rhythm of ever-spinning wheels. The mass of brick, stone fronts, paved streets baking in the sun, with never a breath of air, and hurrying humanity red hot and still burning, are a few, lone ones cry from home, with its snug little houses during the sea, resolute voices of children playing in the land-wash—where there is a

breath of air, even though it come pervaded with the manifold emulvie of a fishing village, and filled with the subdued hum of a million fish flies. And they feel it; for there would be no "home, sweet home" if everybody stayed there. Of course there is, and always will be, a potpourri of belated, novelties whose very artificiality, however, seems to insult the man with sea in his blood. In all, the moral

struggle is a prolonged one and certainly was not anticipated by the average fellow who thought going to the States to settle down was like jumping into a load of hay.

**POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE.**  
Settle down! When will they settle down as they might have settled at home, even in the present state of Newfoundland's industries? Not soon. First of all, those young fellows have to spend years in learning a respectable trade before they can think of marrying and paying housekeeping rents, and even then, the chances are they will not be as independent as the fellows who stuck to the country in a hard fight. What the latter will have

will be their own, anyway; theirs will be the pride of ownership, and even though the only excitement in the domestic life comes when the wife forgets to put the salt in the bread, or when the goat gets impaled on the picket-fence, life for them will hold many happy hours which the responsibility of city tenure will never permit.

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