

ing the trial of the gang and the hanging of some of the subordinates, while the chief offender escaped.

And so the afternoon waned as we jogged from village to village, leaving behind us at each post-office a group of excited people discussing the robbery, till we arrived at my stopping place one stage from the end of the mail route; and thus I missed seeing the triumphant entry of the mail-carrier into his native village and could but feebly imagine the surprise, ejaculations, and general excitement, and but dimly wonder how many stamps and registered letters had by that time been put on record as lost to a defrauded and impoverished country.

T. MOWER MARTIN.

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### Compensation.

A face of wistful brightness,  
Clear shining after rain;  
A smile that tells of lessons  
In the mystery of pain.

Eyes that can look forth calmly,  
Yet with a hidden glow;  
A cheek with quick responding  
To the life-blood's ebb and flow.

A soul in touch and kinship  
With the things beyond our ken—  
That yet hath felt deep yearning  
For the gifts more prized of men.

When lo! the years unheeded—  
Their sign the silver thread—  
Have brought for all past missing,  
A wondrous grace instead—

The rare sweet grace of sharing  
All other hearts can know—  
From the little child's first feeling,  
To the depths of joy or woe;

And more—for its own deep longing  
The spirit hath found rest;  
A strange, new power of thrilling  
In answer to earth's best—  
The glad, fair best of sky and tree and flower,  
And all men's souls have wrought—God's own rich dower.

M. ALGON KIRBY.

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### The Discovery of Newfoundland by John Cabot in 1497.

ON the 24th June, 1897, four centuries will have elapsed since John Cabot, with an English crew from Bristol, discovered Newfoundland, and also the coast of North east America. In the Dominion of Canada, and in Newfoundland, preparations are now being made to celebrate this great event. Around this famous voyage there is no such halo of romance as surrounds the glorious exploit of Columbus, but for the English-speaking people the expedition of his Genoese compatriot has had more far-reaching consequences, and more direct influence on our race than the ever-memorable discovery of the New World. It gave North America to the English by an indefeasible title—the right of discovery—and above all, it afforded an outlet for the pent-up energy of a great insular people. The first rill of that great stream of maritime enterprise and mighty commerce which now overspreads the world began to flow in the Newfoundland trade and fishery. The little vessels that sailed from the West of England to the New World were the founders of Greater Britain beyond the seas, the makers of a great Colonial Empire. From the discovery of Newfoundland by the English may directly be traced the modern expansion of England, her vast commerce, her maritime supremacy. The great De Witt says: "The navy of England became formidable by the discovery of the inexpressibly rich fishing bank of Newfoundland." The most illustrious naval authority in the Tudor age, Raleigh, says: "The Newfoundland fishery was the mainstay and support of the western counties" (then the great maritime centre of England), and "that if any accident should happen to the Newfoundland fleet it would be the greatest misfortune that could befall England."

As we can see from the records, the fishing and trading to Newfoundland begun in 1498 by poor traders and fishing skippers like Bradley and Thirkall, was soon taken up by merchants like Master Grubes, of Plymouth (whose vessels are mentioned by Rut), and by shipowners like Master Cotton, of Southampton, in whose fine vessel our gallant Whitbourne first sailed to the Island.

We are fully convinced that Newfoundland was the first part of North America seen by Cabot on his great voyage of discovery, and in this paper we shall endeavour to set forth shortly the grounds on which we base our claim.

Historians and antiquarians are still discussing the numerous portraits of Columbus; neither his exact likeness nor his landfall has yet been definitely settled, and so it has fared with Cabot. Three places in North-east America claim the honour of being the first point on which he planted the banner of England and the Standard of Venice—Labrador, Cape Breton and Newfoundland. To arrive at a true and satisfactory solution of this much discussed question we must be guided by principles and rely on sound historical evidence; all gossiping and unreliable statements made by the mendacious Sebastian Cabot and others, years after the event, must be eliminated from the enquiry, reliance should only be placed on unquestioned contemporary documents relating to this first voyage written immediately after John Cabot's landing in Bristol, August 5th, 1497.

We must also confine our enquiry entirely to the first voyage, which was simply a voyage of discovery; much confusion has arisen through mixing up the first with the second expedition. For the first voyage the only records that have come down to us and on which we can safely rely are the letters written by the Italians soon after Cabot's return, the official records mainly from the Privy Purse accounts of Henry VII., and Ayala the Spanish Envoy's letters to Ferdinand and Isabella. We must also bear in mind the primitive navigation of those early days, the clumsy ships, the imperfect nautical instruments, and the leisurely way in which these ancient mariners sailed their vessels, to use a West of England phrase, they were beasts of burthen and not birds of passage—unlike the ocean tramps of our day that run ashore every season through neglect of the lead, the medieval mariner went by latitude, lead and look-out on dark nights, and in bad weather he lay-to; on a wind he went to leeward like a log. You could not, for such a vessel at that time, lay down a straight course on the Atlantic. If Cabot, as the Italians say, had gone north from Ireland, and then sailed west, he would undoubtedly in a direct course have made the land at Northern Labrador; but he did not go a straight course, he was driven up and down by light E. and N.E. winds early in May, and when approaching the land, if the nights were dark or foggy, he would lay-to, and probably during three days passing across the Labrador current, which extends in June from 250 to 300 miles from Newfoundland, his vessel would be drifting south. Cartier, on the same course, made Cape Bonavista, and John Cabot might make the land anywhere from Belle Isle to Cape Race, though it is probable he would, like Cartier, come up with the great auks off the Funk Islands, and knowing from the appearance of these birds, which had very short wings and could not fly, that he was near the land, he would boldly strike in and make a landfall as Cartier did at Bonavista. It is quite clear that on this westerly course he must have made land somewhere on the Labrador or on the east coast of Newfoundland; to pass all this long line of coast extending north and south 1,200 miles, and then to make Cape Breton, is wildly improbable, if not impossible. There are two other very strong points against the Cape Breton theory; one is the name Cape Breton, which appears in the very earliest maps; no one can doubt that this designation was given by French fishermen, who were amongst the very first to visit North America; there is no trace of Cabot and his discovery in this name. The other is the undoubted fact that Cape Breton was not known to be an island, and its insular character is not shown in any map for forty years after Cabot's landfall. It was not frequented by European fishermen until long after Cabot's voyage, and there are no names on its coast beyond Cape Breton marked on any map prior to 1540.

The claims of Labrador may, we think, be summarily disposed of. All the references in the earliest accounts of the voyage are to an island or islands. Moreover, Soncino, writing to the Duke of Milan Dec. 18th, 1497, says: "The