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Difficult for Fishermen to Receive Education Half Century Ago.

(H. F. SHORTIS.)

The arrival of so many schooners in our harbours the past week or so, reminds me of my early days, when at least double the number of vessels and crews prosecuted the Labrador fishery during the summer months. Up to the seventies, the great planters utilized their sealing vessels, brigs and brigantines, in carrying out this industry. These vessels were also utilized in conveying cargoes of fish to foreign markets. To my mind, the great gale of 9th October, 1887, struck the finishing blow to our formerly great sailing fleet, engaged in the seal fishery. Many of the best vessels were lost on that memorable occasion on the Labrador coast, and were never replaced. It was on that date that the late famous sealing master, Captain William Jackman, father of Mr. Thomas J. Jackman, H.M. Customs, and Mrs. James J. Maher, proved himself a hero at the Spotted Islands, Labrador, when he rescued 27 persons, mostly females, from drowning, by bringing them ashore on his back, swimming through the surf and removing his own clothing to cover the poor shipwrecked people. They were a noble and fearless race of men in those days, (as they are to-day) to whom self-sacrifice came as second nature, and whose highest ambition was to risk their lives when their fellow-creatures were in peril.

That we have a never-failing source of wealth in our teeming waters has been proven beyond peradventure. Three hundred years bear testimony to that fact, and it is to this circumstance we owe our position in the commerce of the world, and that position is by no means a humble one.

There is every indication that the future holds still greater commercial advantages for us. The outside world is at length fully alive to the possibilities of Newfoundland and her great dependency, Labrador, and capitalists abroad are anxious to get a grip on the new Colony. It is a moot question amongst thinking men as to whether the land possibilities of Labrador will not in the near future outstrip the wealth of its waters. We know comparatively little of that unexplored country. I trust that no matter how attractive the future may be, it will not have the effect of lessening the enthusiasm of our people for their legitimate occupation—the fisheries. For no matter how events may shape their course, the genuine Newfoundland is by instinct and choice—a fisherman. That daring and exciting occupation appeals to their manhood, and they are by nature eminently qualified and fitted for it. It would be nothing short of a national calamity if any set of circumstances conspired to lessen our people's love for the perils of the deep, and the wealth that they have from time immemorial risked their lives to obtain from it.

The development of our country, the establishing of new industries would open up new sources of employment, and our fishermen could avail themselves of this during the winter interval between the seasons; but by all means let them go back in the spring of the year to play that noble calling of which their ancestors were so proud. The fishermen should be taught to look upon every new occupation only as a means of supplementing their incomes during the seasons when weather conditions prevent them from engaging in their regular occupations.

In the city of St. John we have a melancholy example of the result of the younger generation abandoning the occupation of their forefathers. When I was a boy, on my visits to the city, I well remember the most conspicuous figures on Water Street were the sealing masters and planters, as well as fishermen generally. Those stalwart and brawny vikings were the most prominent figures in the city, and they were looked up to with the greatest respect. They were the builders-up of the country—the men who by their daring, courage and industry were the sources of its wealth and prosperity.

Then could be seen the familiar figures of the Hallerans, Fehans, Powers, Whites, Grahams, Pikes, Duffs, Ryans, MacLeys and scores of others that I can call to mind. Where are they to-day? Gone in the course of Nature, having nobly performed their part, but who I ask remains to represent their deeds of pluck and daring? Alas, no one. They have gone, but their names still live, and will continue to live in the hearts of their countrymen at home and abroad. They possessed little "book learning," although some of them were classical scholars; but they knew their business—and knew it well.

The present generation has no idea of what going to school in those days meant. The school building was no high and imposing structure such as we see at the present day, even in the most remote and isolated outport.

I shall endeavor to describe it, as I now remember it: it was usually a

part, or at least, an annex of a family dwelling. The room set apart for the teaching of our youthful minds was invariably too small for the number of pupils in attendance. The business was conducted on the general principle of making two pupils sit in a space that was only sufficient for one.

It was no matter of surprise in those days to see pupils proceeding to the school-house during the late Fall, each bearing his "quantum" of fuel—the hardier boy with a wheelbarrow, and the younger ones with bags, baskets, tubs and every conceivable means of bringing coal to the school-room to contribute to the mutual comfort of all during the long and cold fall and winter days. Then we had the large grate with the pot-bar above it, ornamented in many instances with the pots and hangers, and even the bake-pot in which was baked the home-made bread.

Amongst the teachers of those days the female sex predominated, and I have in my mind at the present time, a lovable old woman with a full-bordered white cap, and glasses perched on her nose, who, it strikes me, now looking back, must have been a monument of patience, considering the gentle and patient manner she handled the refractory youth who attended her school, and how zealously she labored to store our young minds with such knowledge as she possessed.

At the school I have in mind, quite a number of migratory youth received their early training. How we used to look forward to their home-coming! If the vessel arrived during the day, we were sure to be on the wharf to extend to them a hearty welcome, and I assure you the youthful wanderer from the North was by no means oblivious to his importance, dressed in his well-fitting guernsey, with his Hamburg boots, copper-topped, and surmounted at the top by a red band of patent leather.

The honors paid to the embryo planter were by no means of a fleeting nature. The honor was permanent and real. The esteem of his youthful companions never flagged during the long winter months. He was the hero of the school. For him the dearest morsel of the lunch was to be provided, and on leaving school at evening, we all vied with each other in our endeavors to be his companion for the remainder of the day.

When, as it sometimes happened, there were two of these youthful fishers attending the same school, we had an easy system of who should be the chief hero. By unanimous consent, the boy who had been furthest north during the preceding summer was voted first place by his class-mates. The hero always had a just sense of his own importance. He looked upon the honors conferred upon him as justly his, and he received silent homage as something justly his due, but never assuming an arrogant tone. He was always pleased when called upon to relate the adventures of the previous summer, which he would do in such a manner as to make even the most youthful abandon their play to listen to his adventures.

The popularity of the Labrador migrant with his school-fellows was just as great on his departure in the Spring as on his arrival in the late Fall. (They would seldom arrive home before the 1st November). This was the fostering spirit that produced such men as the Bartletts, Dawes, Duffs, Murphys, Thomes, Ryans, etc., the builders-up of our country, no matter what may come after in the shape of agriculture, mineral or lumbering developments.

Before I conclude, I venture to express the opinion that representation for Newfoundland-Labrador must inevitably come in the very near future. We must prepare for that event. Of course this representation in the Assembly will include the hitherto neglected Eskimo. His day is fast arriving, and our young friend, Hon. Speaker Cyril Fox, if he wishes to do justice to his high position, must study the language, and there is an Eskimo dictionary in the Museum, which he can look at. That hardy band of men will no doubt send one of their own race to represent them in the Assembly. He will be a decided addition to the personnel of the House. He may possibly be lacking in dignity, but that will be counter-balanced by his picturesque appearance.

I can fancy this hardy son of the North standing on the floor of the House, laying his grievances before the Speaker, a spear in one hand and a tom-a-hawk in the other, in order the more strongly to emphasize his requirements. When civilization shall have introduced amongst these hardy natives such articles as canned milk and cooked beef, when an attempt shall have been made to supercede the blanket and odorous

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seal-skin suit by the brown duster or fan-tailed coat—then shall we have this dusky hunter demanding on the floor of the Assembly a reversion to the old order of things. The toothsome flesh of the whale and walrus will be enjoyed by him, and their nutritive and flesh-producing qualities dilated on in a manner to bring water to the mouth of the epicure. Besides he would materially assist in settling the Labrador Boundary Question, with more dispatch by the slight application of his spent or tom-a-hawk, to that portion of the human anatomy of the lawyers and others engaged, that is least susceptible to physical pain.

Dr. Hemmeon's Address

In a recent issue we gave publicity to an address given by Dr. Hemmeon to the Rotary Club at Halifax, the report of which we took from the Morning Chronicle. As Dr. Hemmeon declares he was misrepresented we publish the following letter which appeared in the Chronicle of October 2. To the Editor of the Chronicle.

Sir,—I am very sure that whoever reported my address to the Rotary Club on "Life in the Wilds of Newfoundland," did not intend to misrepresent me. Some of the discrepancies, however, between what I said and what I thought I said, and what I did say, are so great that I hasten to correct them, lest my friends both in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland pursue me with unwelcome rebukes. Regarding the existence of moose in Newfoundland, I did not make any positive statement. I said that there was a difference of opinion, but that I thought that there were none.

Instead of saying that there are 300,000 caribou, and that 1,500 are killed annually, I expressed the opinion—in these matters one can only express opinions—that there are between 150,000 and 200,000, and that 1,200 are killed annually.

I did not make any comparison between Newfoundland and Canada in game laws enforcement, nor shall I. Bearing in mind topographical and social conditions in Newfoundland, the game laws there, which are most excellent, and are admirably enforced by a highly intelligent and capable Game Board.

The incident which I gave of a novice in hunting becoming excited and shooting more than his share of deer, is the only case I know of and was introduced for fun.

The report is slightly astray in regard to birds. I was speaking against the tendency to multiply species among caribou and illustrated the resultant mischief by citing the common quail, which carries hundreds of different markings, as it is followed from Maine to Florida, but forms only one species.

Minor differences should not constitute grounds for separate species.
DOUGLAS HEMMEON.

Skeleton of Mastodon Found Under City Street

DENVER, Sept. 28. (A.P.)—Eighteen feet below the surface of a street here recently a laborer unearthed bones that were pronounced by scientists to have been part of the skeleton of a mastodon. The teeth and jawbone were intact.

J. B. Figgins, director of the Colorado Museum of Natural History, hazarded the guess that the bones were about 2,500 years old. Mr. Figgins said science never had found a complete skeleton of a mastodon, but had pieced together parts found, using the proportions indicated.

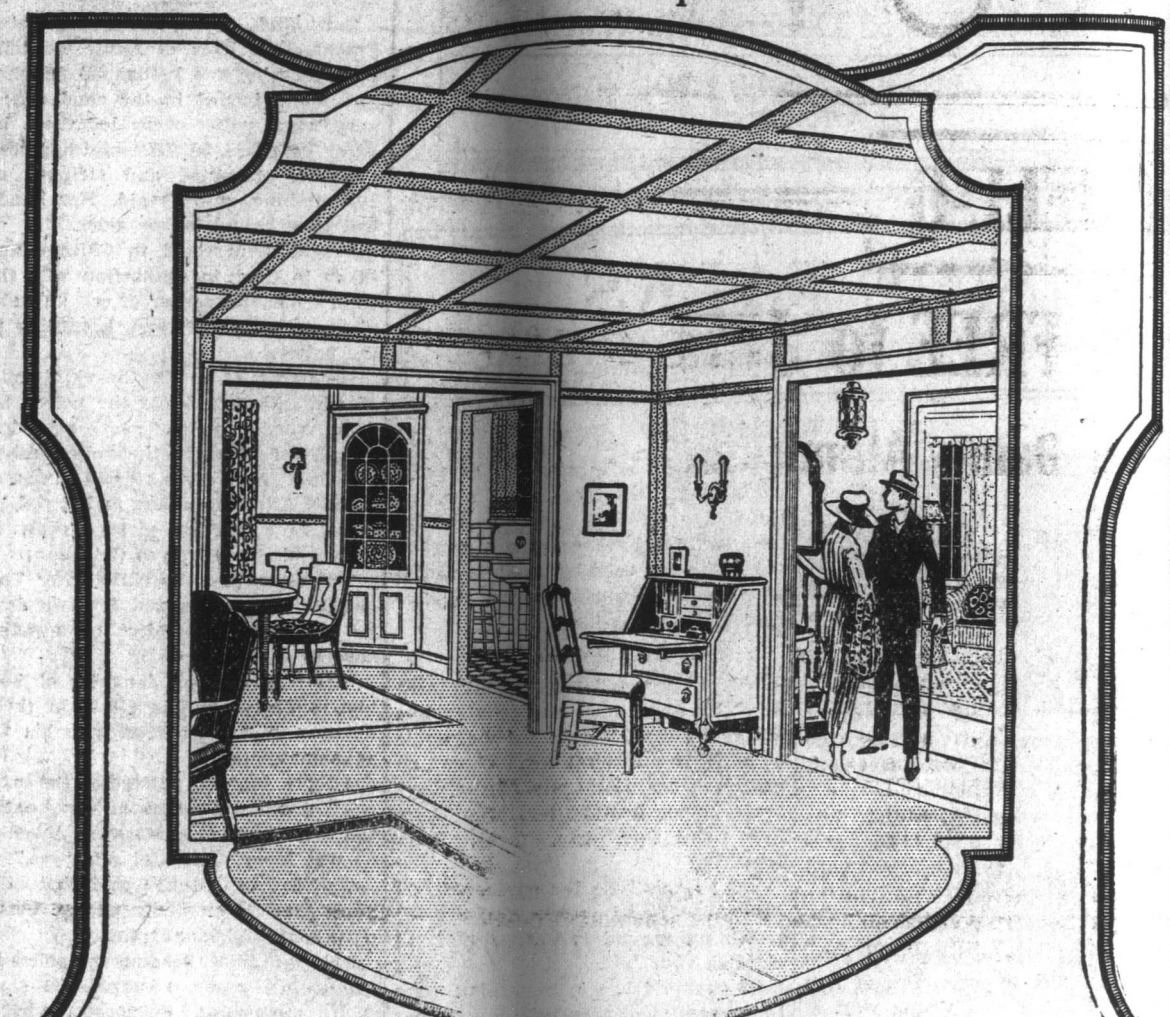
H. B. Thomson, Opt. D. Optometrist and Optician will be leaving St. John's for Grand Falls and towns on the West Coast, by Monday's express; returning to the city again about the last of November.

City Office, 216 Water Street, over T. J. Duley & Co. Jewellery Store. Hours 10 to 5.30, 7 to 8. Phone 4-5-3 for appointment.

Personal

Capt. Fred Hollett, of Burin, is at present in the city, on his way to Port Union, where his vessel Harry and Verna is loading fish for Brazil.

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