

## THE FRENCH OCCUPATION.

In 1663, Captain Doublet, of the French navy, obtained a grant of the Island, together with the Magdalens, for the purpose of carrying on the fisheries in their waters. Associated with him were two companies of fishermen from the towns of Granville and St. Malo. They seem to have confined their operations to a few harbors, and not to have attempted any settlement, beyond such as was necessary for the carrying on of their industry. Mr. Stewart, in his "Account of Prince Edward Island," a valuable little work published in 1806, tells us that "From the best information, it does not appear that any settlements, with a view to cultivation, were made by the French on the Island, till after the Peace of Utrecht; and it is said their government never encouraged the settlement, and refused, after Sieur Doublet's patent was vacated, to give grants in perpetuity to the people who had settled in the Island, with a view to force the settlement of Cape Breton, and to draw as many people as they could round the different fortified posts they held on the continent."

In the early years of the eighteenth century, the Island seems to have been a place favored by the French inhabitants of Acadia, who resorted thither, but subsequently abandoned it. This is to be gathered from the correspondence of Lieutenant Governor Caulfield, of Nova Scotia, with the home government in London, to be found in Murdock's Archives. Writing from Annapolis Royal, on 16th May, 1716, to the Board of Trade and Plantations, he says that "The Island of St. John's, which the French of this colony seemed to like, in case they were obliged to quit us, is entirely abandoned by these inhabitants, who went there out of this government."

As there were no English here at that time, it is evident that, save for Indians, the Island was uninhabited. But this abandoned condition did not long continue. The French authorities at length recognized the Island's importance to them, and decided to settle it. No doubt they came to this decision because they saw what a convenient place the Island could be made, as a source of supplies for their forces in Cape Breton and elsewhere in its vicinity, and as commanding the trade of the neighboring territories. The English in Nova Scotia were equally alive to its importance. Paul Mascarene, in a description of Nova Scotia, transmitted in 1720 by Governor Phillips to the Lords of Trade, clearly points this out. He advocated the construction of a small fort on the neck of land between Bay Verte and the Bay of Fundy, and to show its necessity, says, "This is more so by reason that the French have sent four ships this summer, with two hundred families, with provisions, stores and materials for the erecting of a fort and making a settlement on the Island of St. John's, which lies in the Bay of Verte, part of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, part of which Island (which is near fifty leagues long) is but three or four leagues distant from the main, and six in all from Chignecto. When this settlement is made by the French, they will from thence command all the trade, and carry a greater sway over all the Bay of Fundy than the English, who are the undoubted owners, but have only the name of possession of it till such measures are taken as are hereby humbly proposed." He emphasizes his contention by adding, "For it is to be remembered that each of these places has a French popish missionary, who is the real chief commissioner of his flock, and takes his commands from his superiors in Cape Breton," a statement interesting in itself, because of the light