

prosperity about the year 1600, and about thirty years later the whole tribe of the Eskimos was totally extirpated or expelled from that region. After this the town began to decay, and towards the close of the century the name was changed to Bradore.' " (p. 108-9).

That there was a harbour of Brest in the Straits of Belle Isle in the sixteenth century, we know from the *Relation Originale* of Jacques Cartier. When Jacques Cartier passed through the straits in 1534 he found a Breton fishing-vessel looking for the harbour of Brest, which was already at that time apparently a rendezvous for the fishermen on the banks. Cartier knew the harbour, and he directed the fishermen to it. But the harbour he directed them to was not the present Bradore Bay; it was a bay eight or ten leagues farther along the coast. And Cartier says nothing about any settlement at Brest; he spent several days in the harbour, taking in wood and water, and if there had been any houses on shore he would have been sure to mention the fact.

It must be clear to anyone with even an elementary knowledge of Canadian history that these accounts of Brest are almost wholly fabulous. Brest, says Judge Prowse, began to decay about the year 1600. Its decline and fall, therefore, appear to have been contemporaneous with the founding of Quebec, which took place in 1608. While Champlain was struggling to establish a colony, first at Port Royal, and afterwards at Quebec, there was already a settlement on the Straits of Belle Isle which had flourished for nearly a century. What is remarkable is that this pioneer among American towns is not mentioned in any of the contemporary records. Champlain, who was Governor of Quebec up to 1635, does not refer to it, nor does the lawyer-historian Lescarbot. There is no mention of it in the Jesuit Relations nor in the "Correspondence Générale" of the French Government, and even travellers along the Côte du Nord are

silent about it. In 1702, the Sieur de Courtemanche (who is the original of Judge Prowse's *Seigneur Courtemanche*, sailed along the north shore of the St. Lawrence to the Straits of Belle Isle; we have the account of his voyage written by himself, in the archives at Ottawa; but there is in the manuscript not one word about a settlement, or the ruins of a settlement, on the Straits of Belle Isle. And Jean Allefonce, in his "Routier," or course from Belle Isle to Quebec, is equally silent.

The conclusion is irresistible that the settlement of Brest never existed. It is a bit of mythology. Quite recently the source of the legend has been discovered by Dr. S. E. Dawson, of Ottawa. Dr. Dawson's curiosity was roused by an entry in Harris's "Notes pour servir à la bibliographie, etc., de la Nouvelle France," in which is given a title, the translation of which runs as follows:—

"Copy of a letter sent from New France, or Canada, by the Sieur de Combes, a gentleman of Poitou, to a friend, in which are described briefly the marvels, excellence, and wealth of the country, together with the appearance and manners of the inhabitants, the glory of the French, and the hope there is of christianising America."

This letter, it was added, was written from Brest, in Canada, on the 13th of February, 1608. It had been sold in Paris, at the La Coste sale, and bought by a library in America.

The book was found by Dr. Dawson in the Lenox Library, New York. It had been bought by Mr. Lenox in 1854, and 125 francs had been paid for it. So far as is known, it is a unique copy; and the imprint of the printer, Leon Savine, Lyons, is, so far as can be learned, not met with again. All that one can do here is to reprint the passage dealing with Brest:

"We arrived at Cape Bellisle the twenty-seventh of the month of August, of the year 1605, about three o'clock