

PRIZE ESSAY,

ON THE

FUTURE DESTINY OF NOVA SCOTIA.

INTRODUCTION.

THE history of the rise and fall of nations, affords the only data from which we may gather the future destiny of those that now exist. Like swarms of ephemeral insects, Empires have arisen in the morning, occupied their few hours of sunshine in petty jealousies or deadly feuds, and then passed off the stage: for no senators however grave; no resources however ample; no walls however strong, have ever for a very long period preserved the most mighty people. That there is one who sitteth on the circle of the Heavens reigning supremely over all the nations of the Earth, saying to them in his Providence, as to the waves of the Ocean, "hitherto shall thou go and no farther," the history of the past plainly testifies. The proudest empires he hath laughed to scorn, and in a day hath laid low in the dust all their magnificence and boasted glory; while the weak and oppressed he hath succoured, and raised up to be an exceedingly great people. Yet, however paradoxical the principles upon which their revolutions may seem to depend, there are some causes, which may be clearly perceived, as accounting for both the rise and fall of Empires; and operating with the regularity of a general law. Knowledge, for instance, is the grand engine which removes the obstacles that hinder the onward progress from a state of barbarism to that of civilization and refinement. It is the chief agent in tilling the soil, in establishing manufactures, and protecting commerce. The histories of Greece and Rome strikingly exemplify the correctness of these remarks. From small beginnings they gradually arose under the fostering aid of science; and when her light shone in its brightest effulgence, the greatest national prosperity obtained. The same facts apply to the British Empire—England emerged from a state of barbarism under the genial influence of cultivated mind, which radiating like the Sun in his meridian splendor has rendered her a paragon of excellence among the surrounding nations, both in point of national greatness, and literary fame. Having premised thus much with respect to this one grand element, which is absolutely essential to the improvement, and pros-

perity of a country, let us now enquire what are the capabilities of Nova Scotia, and thence deduce such conclusions as the circumstances of the case may warrant respecting its future destiny.

HISTORY OF NOVA SCOTIA.

THE history of Nova Scotia presents none of the gorgeous drapery of Eastern or classic lands, to impress the mind with great and noble thoughts. It does not tell us of stupendous piles, all glorious as the hand of the most sublime artist could make them; of buildings whose domes courted Heaven, and drank in the living light from the sky; of oracles, which but lately have ceased to give forth a response; of temples, which ring with no chant; of the dilapidated palace where the shout of revelry has forever died away upon the breeze; of the hall, where the echo of the warrior's voice has for ages been lost in eternal silence. Yet its records possess sufficient interest and instruction to call forth the attention of all who seek their own and their country's good. Nova Scotia was first discovered by John Cabot, a Venetian, resident in England, during the tranquil reign of Henry the Seventh; after which it came into the possession of the French and English alternately, until the year 1749, at which period Halifax was first settled under Governor Cornwallis. From that time to the present, this Colony has gradually advanced in improvement. The forests, formerly the home of the Red man, who lived by the chase, have been to a great extent felled; his wigwam has given place to the more commodious dwelling of the white man; the marshes have been drained, and roads established. The face of the country has been changed: and the climate is improving in proportion to the progress of agriculture. Though its scenery cannot compare in point of sublimity with that of other countries, yet it is agreeably diversified by hills, and dales; numerous and beautiful lakes; harbours studded with islands; rivers; brooks and streams in profusion. All these combine in enlivening and embellishing the country, naturally picturesque from its variety of highlands and prairies. In 1817 the census