

regarded as very inadequate to the trouble and expence bestowed upon it. Very little then is cultivated, yet this is caused by the reason already assigned, and an other more potent, the positive prohibition of Great-Britain to suffer the least attempt to colonise. Even in the infancy of the fishery, the fatal effects of cherishing so dangerous a system was evident; but to check the growing evil it was very wisely guarded against by the act 15 Geo. 3. cap. 31. in which all fishermen are enjoined to return to England, and upon no account whatsoever to be suffered to remain in the island, and that no one through poverty might plead inability to return home, the merchant who employed the fishermen was authorized to obtain forty shillings from the wages of each person so employed, to enable him to return at the conclusion of the season. But this custom is become obsolete, yet it is much to be regretted that it is not indiscriminately enforced, as by conniving at this breach of the act, the men, unconscious of doing wrong, may remain in this inhospitable climate, too frequently a forlorn and miserable penitent, to endure through the winter, hunger, cold, and all the miseries which ever are the attendants on poverty.

The fish are caught on the Grand Bank, which is forty leagues distant from the island, and extends 400 miles in length and 200 in breadth. On this the vessels anchor, and continue till they have laden them; when they return to port to discharge their cargo, and then return to their former station. To give some idea how productive this bank must be, I need only mention that a vessel with twelve men, from April to the 15th of July, must catch, salt, and bring into port 10,000 fish, or they are excluded from all right to the established bounty. And it frequently happens that

the same men will send in 15,000 more before the conclusion of the season, making 25,000.

It would encroach too much on the time allowed me to enter into a full and elaborate statement of the advantages resulting from this trade, I shall, therefore, proceed (agreeably to your request,) to give a description of St. John's, the capital of Newfoundland.

The approach towards the island is by no means pleasing or inviting. Dark and gloomy rocks are the features which you first behold, without any thing picturesque or sublime in their appearance. At the distance of a league from this part of the shore I am now describing, you cannot discern the least appearance of an inlet to any harbour. One point, it is true, is distinguished by a white tower, but this seems to be seated on a precipice, to enable some whimsical possessor to view the waves beneath, the sea in the offing, or ships approaching the land. But as you more nearly approach, it displays to you the power of its strength, and shows that you must not enter the narrow chasm beneath unless you are a friend.

This building is called Fort Amherst, and is situated on a part of the precipice on the south side of the entrance of St. John's, which, owing to its not exceeding 500 feet across, very properly received the denomination of the Narrows. On either side, particularly the north, the rocks rise to the height of 400 feet, on the south they are not so high. Yet the view on both is very picturesque. Very few parts are left uncovered with heath interspersed with the juniper and the wild spruce. Still continuing your course under stupendous mountains, on the left you have South Fort Battery, and on the right Chain Rock with its battery; above, high-