

The Scotchmen in Newfoundland.

Their Connection With Our Trade and Industries.

H. F. SHORTIS.

I know that I am attempting something wherein I cannot give satisfaction to all, and I am sure to omit the names of some who should be mentioned, but still I am going to do my best.

To give a complete history of the Scotchmen who have done so much to build up Newfoundland is beyond my humble efforts, but it should have been attempted long ago. The subject is an entrancing one, and the Scotchmen of Newfoundland have carried their prestige to such an eminence in so many directions, that it is almost impossible to know the best way to begin this article. We find them as Pioneers, Explorers, Sailors, Sportsmen, Scholars, Poets, Educationalists, Engineers, Doctors, Lawyers, Ministers and Bankers, not to mention Merchants and Patriots. In all these different ways they have excelled, and well may this country be proud of its illustrious Scotchmen. We find them in the very highest positions as Governors, Premiers and taking the chief seats in the Courts of Justice. Probably the one amongst the greatest wealth in Newfoundland was Sir Robert Gillespie Reid, from Cupar Angus, the original builder and operator of our railway system, with its many diversified branches in electricity and machine shops, besides his fleets of nearly twenty of the finest steamships that were all built on the Clyde, every one of which was a good Scotch name. When giving a historic sketch on any Newfoundland subject, we have to go back to the very earliest records, otherwise an article of this kind would carry weight with Newfoundland readers, so that I must start from the beginning.

EARLY HISTORY.

The very first information that we have of Newfoundland, comes from the old Norse Sagas with records of his voyages in the years 985 and 986 to Heilaland, Markland and Vinland—that is Labrador and Newfoundland. In the Sagas of Erik the Red, we have the information that Thorfinn Karlsefni had with him on his voyage TWO GAELS, whom he called Haki and Halka. In his best book on Northern Voyages, states were two Scotchmen. Their names were Haki and Halka. I must give a few words about these pioneers, as they were undoubtedly the first Scotchmen to plant their feet on this hemisphere. They were noted as two very fast runners, and were swifter than the deer. The Sagas mention that they were placed ashore, and Karlsefni remained there for three days. The Scotchmen had instructions to run to the Southward, and investigate the nature of the country and return again on the third day, which they did, one bringing some berries and the other some herbs or wild grass. Now if there anyone doubting of their being Scotchmen, please listen to the description of their dress. They were clad in a garment which they called "Kialfal" (probably the Gaelic name), there was a hood on their heads. The dress was so fashioned that it was opened at the sides and was sleeveless, and was fastened between the legs with buttons and loops, while elsewhere they were naked. There was no doubt about it that

they wore a Tam-o-Shanter and the national Kilts that all Scotchmen are still as proud of. We are often greatly disappointed about the meagreness of information in those old Sagas, but it certainly is refreshing to get a few facts like these, and it shows that the old Norsemen were attracted by the handsome appearance of the Kilts, just as we are to-day; and it must have been a strange dress to them, or they would never have mentioned it so particularly. Now to make the proof of their being Scotchmen doubly sure, the Saga relates—"It was when Lief, son of Erik, was with King Olaf in Norway, and that he bade him proclaim Christianity to Greenland, that the King gave him these two Scotchmen. The King advised Lief to have recourse to these people if he should stand in need of feetness, as they were swifter than the deer." King Alfred reigned in England 880 to 901, and we know how the coasts of Scotland and England were harried by the Vikings from the North during his time, so it is really not surprising at all to realize that these events that I am relating are authentic. Now that I have mentioned the old Norsemen, I must give the facts about the voyage of Columbus in 1492.

A SCOT WITH COLUMBUS.

In the list of officers and sailors on his first voyage, the crew were most cosmopolitan—in nationality. Among them there was a Jew (Louis de Toves), and, of course, an Irishman from Galway (William Harris), and an Englishman (Arthur Laves), Italians, Spaniards and other nationalities, though of course the Spaniards were largely in the majority. It is also related that there was a Scotchman (name not stated), but here is an interesting fact, "That after Columbus himself, this Scotchman was the first man to tread the soil of the New World." (Excerpt from translation of the early voyages of Columbus.) This brings us to the voyage of John Cabot in the "Mattheus" in the year 1497. The records of this voyage are very meagre. We know that John Cabot was an Italian, and that there was a crew of eighteen men, but with the exception of Castione, a man from Burgundy, we have no record of who the others were, but I am ready to vouch if we could only find the "ship's articles," you would find that there was not only a Scotchman but an Irishman also in that crew. The next one hundred years is almost a blank in our records, but we do know that fishing operations were kept up with England, and I have no doubt that some Scotchmen came this way. In 1610 John Guy was appointed our first Governor, and we have the records of his first settlement in Conception Bay. The fishermen were then determined to live here all the year round, which was a great step forward. In 1616, John Mason, the next Governor, wrote a most interesting account on Newfoundland life, to stir up immigration. This account was sent to his friend, Sir John Scott, in Edinburgh, and was published there by Andrew Hart, in 1620. Both John Guy and John Mason were Englishmen, but Mason had charge of two British men-of-war in 1606 on a very important mission to reclaim

the Hebrides, with Andrew Knox, Bishop of the Isles. (The Norsemen claimed sovereignty of the Hebrides even to the islands of the Clyde in olden times). It was probably for good services rendered here that Mason received the appointment of Governor of Newfoundland in 1616, and we see in his discourse that he was determined to get Scotchmen to emigrate to Newfoundland, as undoubtedly he recognized them as the most desirable settlers, not even excepting those buccaneers from the South of England.

NEW SCOTLAND NAMED.

John Mason, on his return to England, in 1620, became acquainted with Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, and it was his efforts to enlist him in colonization that induced this hero to embark in his splendid work. In Mason's map, published in Vaughan's Golden Fleeces, in 1625, we find the present district of Burgeo and LaPoile was named Alexandria. It is quite possible that the Guy colony, which had already sold portions of their Grant to Falkland and Vaughan, claimed this western district as being between the latitude of Cape St. Mary's and Cape Bonavista, and there was a prospect of getting Sir Wm. Alexander to start his plantation in this section of our country. Perhaps he had larger ideas, for we find that in 1621 he received the princely grant of the whole peninsula of Nova Scotia from James I., to which he gave the first Scotch name that I can get any record of in America. Although Newfoundland cannot claim Sir Wm. Alexander, still it was undoubtedly by reason of Newfoundland that he was induced to start his plantation, and in his book he gives some very interesting facts about the earliest Newfoundland settlements. Before leaving John Mason, I will give a short verse of his published in the Golden Fleeces that will show what he thought of this country, and his efforts for its welfare:—

"Oh, Newfoundland Isle by Britains priz'd
dear,
That hopeful Land which Winters six
I tried
And for our profit meet at full descri'd."

"How this Land shall thrive he doth bewray
Thus ships and coine increase, where
at least in thought
For Fish and Trains, Exchange and
all unbought."

A GOOD SCOTCH NAME.

I cannot pass over Sir David Kirk, that sturdy old Loyalist, who kept the flag flying at Ferryland, and offered a new home for Charles I., should his enemies prove too much for him. It was he who assisted Sir Wm. Alexander so successfully in capturing Canada from the French. Sir David Kirk has a good Scotch name; his birthplace was in the North of England, and from his records we know that he was knighted by His Majesty in Scotland. It is a difficult matter to trace the earliest mercantile connection between Scotland and Newfoundland, but no doubt after the Jacobite wars in 1745, many Scotchmen came to Newfoundland as well as to Canada. We find the Scotchmen excelling at whatever they put their hands to, but it is remarkable that they never took kindly to fishing. It has often been remarked that a Scotchman will start out as master or shareman in a boat's crew, but it is regularly characteristic of him that inside of a year of two British men-of-war in 1606 on three boats, and his part of the work in future is to remain on shore and manage the business, while the others do the fishing.

GREENOCK TO THE FORE.

While we have representatives from every Shire in Scotland, and many claim their birthright from Berwick to Aberdeen, and from Dumfriesshire

to the Hebrides, still Greenock was undoubtedly headquarters, and it was the mercantile influence from that centre that brought so many Scotchmen to Newfoundland. Two hundred years ago Greenock was a fishing village, straggling row of thatched cottages, with only six slated roofs in the town, but from that time, about 1707, its commercial activity started with America. It was principally with the West Indies at first, but about 1760 ship-building was established, fostered no doubt by its connection with Newfoundland. The vessels built in Greenock have always been held in the highest esteem, and still continue. A Graving Dock was first established in 1788, and from humble beginnings it now exceeds over 100 acres in extent, capable of docking the largest steamers at all times. Other important manufactures started at this time, sail cloth, rope-walks, also anchors and chains and cables, which have since developed into extensive and world-wide business of spinning mills and other important industries including boilers, steam engines, locomotives and other similar works. The seal and whale fisheries, once vigorously prosecuted, are now extinct. It was the foreign trade of Greenock with the West Indies and Newfoundland that first brought prosperity to that town, but their industries are now so diversified and world-wide that its trade is very different to-day. It is indeed very interesting to note that while Newfoundland benefited so much from the Scotchmen that came here, still those who remained at home prospered greatly also.

BURNS' IDEA OF NEWFOUNDLAND

You will find so many old Scotch songs and stories of the Border Chiefs that one would think there must be some interesting stories laid up in Scotland of their yearly exploits in Newfoundland one hundred years ago. Later on Dundee and Aberdeen had their whaling fleets visiting us every Spring, but it was Greenock and the Clyde that were directly interested with the codfish, and I feel sure that our Newfoundland harbors were household words in many homes. Bobbie Burns, that poet so dear to all Scotchmen, had heard of us, and possibly he often wished to visit

Newfoundland abroad,
Where sailors gang to fish for cod."
One of the sights to be seen in the old church yard at Greenock today is the tombstone of "Highland Mary," and she too, as well as her lover, could not have dwelt near the Clyde at that time without having an intimate knowledge of Newfoundland. The trade with Newfoundland still continues, but in a modified way. I find it impossible in this article to give the consecutive historical facts of Greenock's earliest connections with Newfoundland that I would wish, and I expect that I will make some mistakes, but I shall be only too pleased to be set right, and as I said at first, I hope that some abler pen than mine will now record in writing what should have been attempted long ere this.

THE PIONEERS OF COMMERCE.

HUNTER & CO., St. John's. The firm of Hunter & Co., was a very large concern early in the past century. They were leading merchants in 1780 when Mr. Hunter was called as a witness in court to prove the existence of the Labrador Trade at that time. There was undoubtedly many firms that branched off from this establishment.

R. & J. RUTHERFORD. The partners R. & J. Rutherford, who started in St. John's in 1840, and two other brothers, George and Andrew, who started in Harbor Grace, first came to Newfoundland in connection with Hunter & Co. Rutherford's Ram and Rutherford's Penny should have a page for themselves.

Who has not heard of Andrew and Patrick Tasker, the able managers and resident partners of Hunter's firm? The Masonic Lodge has much to thank the Taskers, and their name will live while there are Masons in the country.

STUART & RENNIE. Afterwards Rennie, Stuart & Co., is another very old firm, record of which I have in 1791. Mr. Rennie came originally from Glasgow, and descendants of his ably uphold the name in St. John's to-day.

J. & W. STEWART. Is another firm still well remembered. They are said to be the first to have started our trade with Brazil, and from official returns for October, 1813, the first cargo of 2049 quintals of codfish was exported from Newfoundland to that country. In one hundred years Brazil has become the principal customer that Newfoundland has, and our best thanks should go out to this old firm. James Stewart was a clever man and took a leading place in politics, as well as mercantile pursuits. We find that about 1812 he was appointed one of the advisers to the Governor.

MURPHY & KERR. Was another important Greenock firm, better known in recent years under the name of Goodfellow & Co. Mr. Goodfellow came out as book-keeper to the old firm, and was eventually their successor. It needs no words of mine to state what esteem James Goodfellow was held in by the people of St. John's. He was a leader in every good work for the benefit of Church and State, and when a City

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Council was first established, he was the people's nominee.

KENNETH McLEA & SONS. The senior of this firm came from the North of Scotland. He was a relative of the great Dr. Livingstone. Carbonear was where he first landed, but after a short time he joined J. & W. Stewart at St. John's. He worked his way to manager, then partner and eventually controlled the head office at Greenock. The Newfoundland business could not get along without him, and he came back to St. John's, built "Richmond"—that beautiful residence and grounds near the Cross Roads for Topsail, and lived there for many years. When his sons grew up he started the firm of Kenneth McLea & Sons, but a few years after his death they left for Montreal, where the well known firm of J. & R. McLea still does a considerable share of Newfoundland trade with that city.

I could mention many more Scotch firms which flourished and carried on an extensive business in all its branches, Imports and Exports, Cod-fishery and Seal-fishery in all its different ways from the catching and curing of fish to the building and manning of vessels and steamers for the seal-fishery, but for one reason or another, they have gone out of business.

(To be Continued.)

CARNIVAL TOPICS.—A childrens Carnival to be held about the end of this month is being arranged by the management of the Princess Rink. A carnival for adults will be held later.

Promoted From the Ranks.

There recently came to light the case of a young Army officer who joined the Service as a private, and by sheer merit and bravery rose to a commissioned-officer, he was unable to meet all the numerous demands made upon him for uniforms and travelling, and had to borrow from a money-lender, whose high rate of interest for the loan quickly brought financial disaster to the young soldier. This is but one of the many cases of a man being ruined by promotion. The same thing is constantly occurring among those who hold lower ranks in both the Navy and Army, and it

would cause no little surprise if actual figures could be obtained of the number of men who have had to refuse offers of promotion solely because they have been unable to bear the expenses which would follow in due course. Many seamen are every year offered promotion to the ranks of non-commissioned officers, and decline the honour because they are nearing the expiration of their term of service, and the money they would have to spend on a new uniform—which they would only require for, say, a few months—would make them the losers. Until a system is introduced by which promotion will carry with it sufficient means and allowances to keep up the position, the best men will not always be found on top.



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