

A NAVAL ENGAGEMENT OFF THE PORT OF ST.
JOHN NEARLY 200 YEARS AGO

BY EDWARD JACK.



AMONG celebrated Canadians of the seventeenth century d'Iberville stands foremost, a man of undaunted courage, heroic resolution, and remarkable enterprise. Whenever duty called, regardless of every obstacle, we find him pushing to the front, whether as commander of a frigate fighting the English, or as leader of a band of Canadians going through the woods to attack St. John's, Newfoundland, or even struggling against the ice in Davis Straits, he was always sure to hold his own, if not to carry his point. Denonville, speaking of him as a young fellow, says: "D'Iberville is a very wise, enterprising youth, who knows what he is doing. There are eight brothers, children of the late M. Le Moine. They do honor to the country."

In the year 1696 d'Iberville was commander of a French frigate off the coast of New France. Baldwin, the missionary who accompanied him, has left a description of what was done by this extraordinary man in the years 1696-97. This relation, so far as I know, is yet unpublished, and is to be found among the manuscripts at Ottawa. In this document, after mentioning the arrival of d'Iberville's frigate at Spaniard's Bay on the 26th of June, 1696, Baldwin says:—

"We found there some Frenchmen with letters from M. de Villebon informing us that the enemy awaited us at St. John's river. God be praised, we resolved to meet them there. On the 4th of July the Indians embarked with us and we set out for the River St. John. We had fine enough weather although we had much fog. When off Cape Sable we heard the sound of cannon; this appar-