

NEWFOUNDLAND AND ITS CAPITAL.

UP to a very recent period the history of Newfoundland has been merely a record of mis-government and misfortune. Separated from her sister provinces by the silver, or rather the blue streak, which surrounds her, it was the policy of traders across the Atlantic on the one hand, and of the adventurers who flocked to her shores on the other, to take care that this isolation should be rendered positive and permanent. It was the policy of both parties, moreover, to take care that those whom they brought into the country to reap the harvests of the sea for them should be kept as poor and distressed as possible, consistent with active vitality. "How can it be otherwise," said Governor Waldegrave in his letter to the Duke of Portland (1796), "while the merchant has the power of setting his own price on the supplies issued to the fishermen, as well as on the fish which they catch for him,"—a system still in vogue to the present moment, and which is as fertile of disaster to-day as it was in 1796.

But in spite of all they could do to prevent it, the would-be colonists, with a pertinacity which did them credit, gained their hold inch by inch and foot by foot; and with the advance of time and the changes brought about as much by adverse as well as favourable events, they began to assume a state of advanced and progressive permanency; and, in spite of severe discouragements, they held their ground, increased in numbers, and improved their social position. The advance they made furnished ample proof that among these hardy pioneers, sprung from two of the greatest and most energetic races of the world—the Saxon and the Celtic,—were men of the right stamp for building up a community, men of moral courage and force of character, who saw in their rough surroundings a location which might one day be made a desirable home for themselves and their children; and that home, Newfoundland, is indelibly impressed upon the memory of every Newfoundlander. No matter where his residence, he has that affection for it that every one naturally feels for his native land.

Up to a very recent period, Newfoundland was comparatively little known to

Canadians. I shall therefore, as concisely as is consistent with a lucid explanation, endeavour to enable all who take an interest in its welfare, to furnish them with some idea of the province.

The general impression about Newfoundland has been that it is merely a barren, fog-enveloped island, where a few thousand fishermen secure a precarious existence by catching and curing the fish which abound in its waters. The facts are singularly at variance with this impression. It is in reality no more subject to the affliction of "fogs" than other of the Maritime Provinces, and much less so than some of them. But a limited portion only of the people are engaged in the fisheries; every avenue of commercial, professional, agricultural, and mechanical industry affording occupation for the rest, as elsewhere. A glance at the map of North America shows us, moreover, a large island, somewhat triangular in shape, lying right across the entrance of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and occupying an important position, its eastern projection being the nearest to Europe and its south-western extremity near to that of the North American continent. It ranks the tenth largest amongst the islands of the globe, having an area of 42,000 square miles, being one-sixth larger than Ireland, and equal to two-thirds that of England and Wales. It is moreover the oldest and nearest of Britain's American possessions, though perhaps the least known of them all, and, owing to its position, forms the key to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, a fact which, in case of war, would be of vital importance not only to Great Britain, but to her British North American possessions.

There is no doubt as to the excellence of certain portions of its soil for the cultivation of agricultural products, while the value of its grazing lands that are scattered here and there over thousands of acres of fertile valleys, is equally beyond question. The island is rich in timber,—the total area of its limits cannot fall short of one thousand square miles, it being thus evident that in regard to forest wealth and lumbering capabilities, it holds a very important place. Such may also be said of its mining capabilities, and to-