

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY
AND MONTHLY RECORD OF GEOGRAPHY.

A Journey in the Interior of Labrador, July to October, 1887.

By RANDLE F. HOLME.

(Read at the Evening Meeting, February 15th, 1888.)

Map, p. 280.

It is a curious fact that the part of the American Continent which is nearest to the British Isles, and on the same latitude, is of all that continent the least known. Labrador has been almost universally avoided. The reason for this is not far to seek. It is the same that explains why Newfoundland, the oldest of all British Colonies, is perhaps the least developed. Each of these countries was first sought by fishermen, who found the coast, of Labrador especially, a real "abomination of desolation." On the Labrador coast not a tree is to be seen. There is nothing there but bare rocks, and occasionally a little stunted grass. It is almost perpetual winter.

The reports of the fishermen and mariners, to whom this uninviting prospect was displayed, gave the country its character, and there has been created a false impression that the interior of the country is fairly sampled by the coast.

The Arctic current, with its icebergs and icy waters, freezes the coast, but has no effect on the inland. At a distance of not more than 12 miles from the coast there commences a luxuriant forest growth, which clothes the whole of the country, with the exception of a few spots, chiefly towards the north, called "barrens." These barrens are what we should call *moors*, and are the homes of vast herds of cariboo. The climate a few miles inland is totally different from that on the coast. A journey of 20 or 30 miles in summertime up the country from the sea is like passing from winter to summer.

Before entering upon any details of my recent journey, it will be as well to inquire to what extent Labrador is at present populated, and how far the interior has been explored.

The whole of the south and the greater part of the east coast is devoted in the summertime to the cod-fishery. For the purpose of this