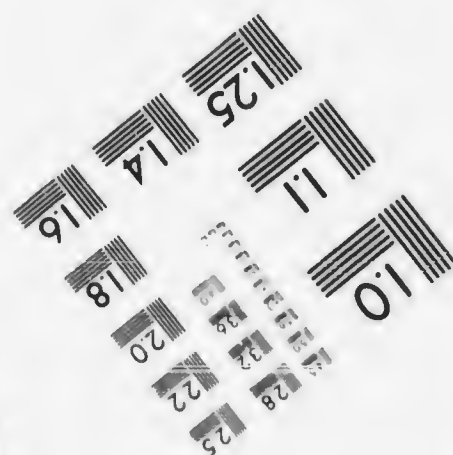
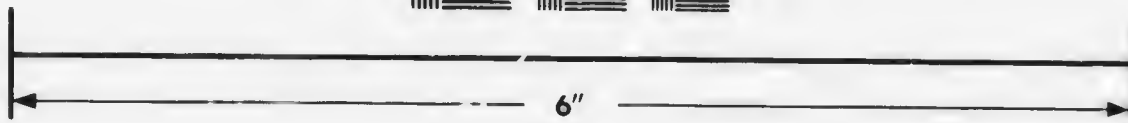
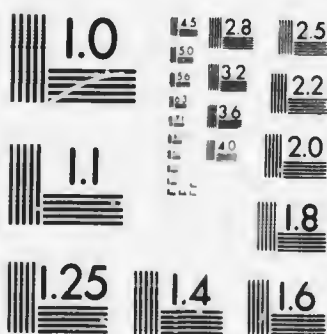


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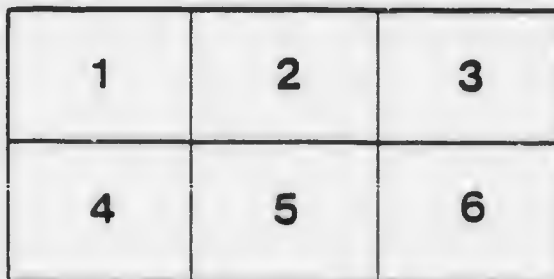
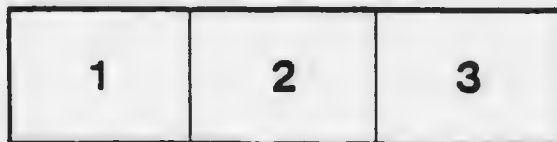
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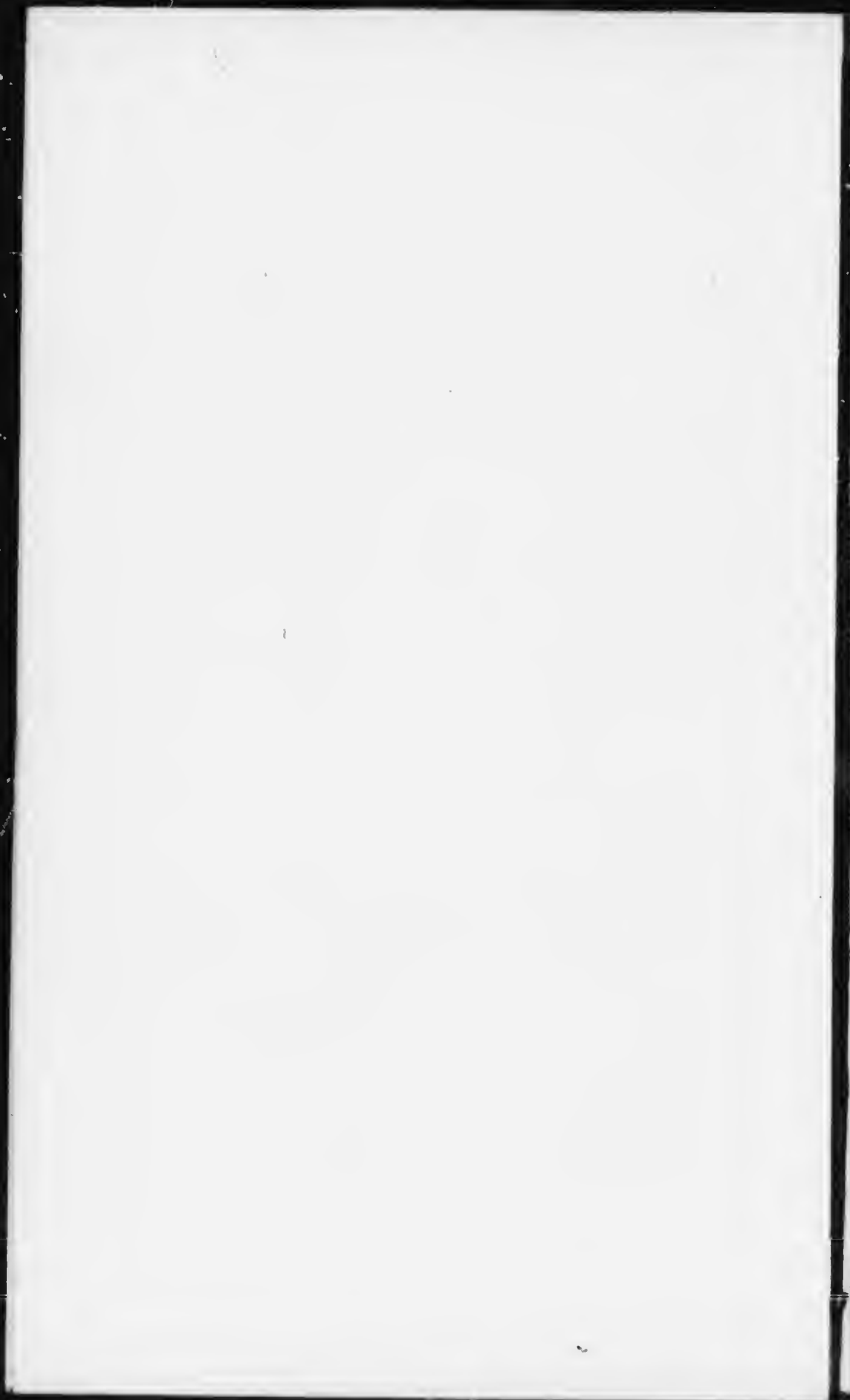
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THE PRESENT CONDITION  
OF  
**NEWFOUNDLAND,**  
WITH SUGGESTIONS  
FOR  
IMPROVING ITS INDUSTRIAL  
AND  
COMMERCIAL RESOURCES.

BY STEPHEN MARCH, ESQ.,

*Member of the Assembly for the District of Trinity Bay.*

DEDICATED BY PERMISSION

To His Excellency KER BAILLIE HAMILTON, Esquire, &c., &c., &c.,  
Governor of the Colony.

St. John's, Newfoundland,

J. T. BURTON, PRINTER

1854.



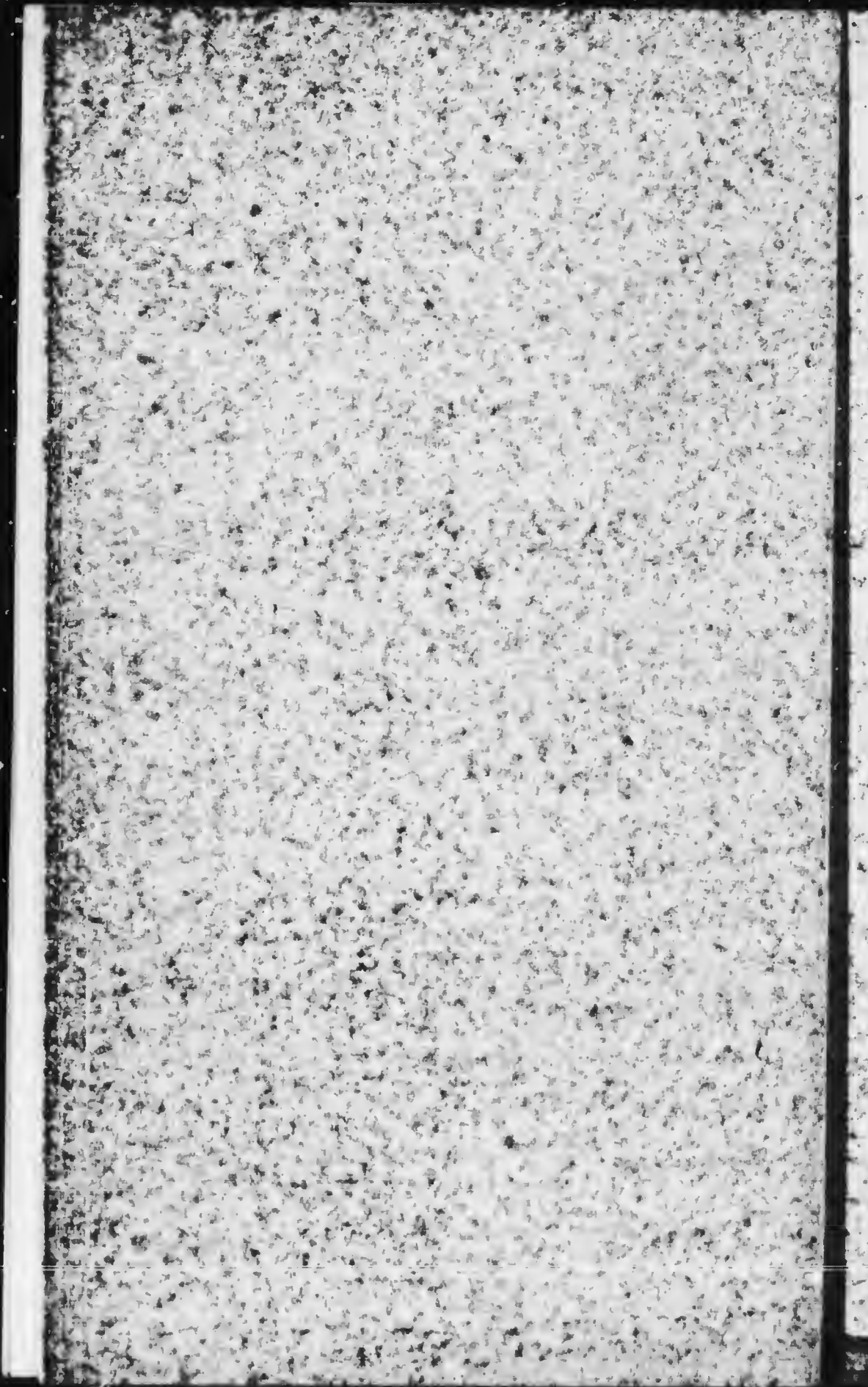
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TO HIS EXCELLENCY,  
**KER BAILLIE HAMILTON, Esquire,**

*Governor and Commander-in-Chief, in and over the Island  
of Newfoundland, and its Dependencies, &c., &c., &c.*

The following brief attempt to point out some of the Causes  
Of the present depressed state of this fine Colony,  
And to suggest some practical remedies,  
Is, with his permission, Respectfully inscribed.

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## P R E F A C E .

THE substance of the following pages, has already been laid before the Public, in a series of letters recently published in *The Public Ledger*.

The Author has been induced to publish his letters in the present form, by the request of his friends, who have, by very flattering testimonials, expressed their approval of their contents.

It is due to the public to state that, in this humble attempt to benefit my country, I have been assisted by a friend, who has chosen that the result of our joint labours should be published in my name, rather than in his own.

STEPHEN MARCH.

St. John's, N. F.,  
December 4th, 1854. }

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## CHAPTER I. THE CRISIS.

D THE last eight years of Newfoundland's history has been the most remarkable period of her colonial existence. In common with the world at large, she has had her share of suffering in this eventful age. The calamities of this colony commenced with the fire, which burned the metropolitan city, St. John's, on Tuesday, June 9th, 1846. All the Merchants' stores, with one exception only, from River Head to the foot of Garrison Hill, were burned down. The Post Office, Bank, Commercial Rooms, Custom House, Theatre, and Episcopal Church—all were consumed in less than ten hours! The scenes of that eventful day will never be erased from the mind of the thoughtful spectator, while memory retains its power in the body. The fire broke out in a Cabinet-maker's shop, near the top of Queen Street, about half-past 8 o'clock, A. M., and soon spread with fearful rapidity in the West end of the city. At 10 o'clock ten thousand persons were actively engaged in the two lower streets in extinguishing the flames and preserving property. When, lo! the fire burst forth from the Nunnery and Roman Catholic School House, situated on a most commanding position, North West of the town. The flames from the two buildings shot fiercely to the skies. A strong West wind, blowing a gale at the time, took the burning embers and flung them on all the city beneath. A panic seized the people. The soldiers were compelled to abandon their engine to the flames. Sir JOHN HARVEY, Colonel LAW, and other gentlemen, encouraged the men to persevere; but the fire broke out in all directions, and baffled their energy and zeal. What a moment in that city's history! Mothers, with infants in their arms, and with young children clinging to their skirts, fled to the hills for life. Others fainted in the streets; their little ones imploring help from the passers by. The aged and sick were carried on the shoulders or in the arms of their sons and relatives. There was the corpse hurried along for fear its grave should be in funereal flames. Excited and conscience-stricken mortals were seen upon their

knees, and with hands outstretched to Heaven implored mercy. Despair paralyzed the energies of others, who sat in vague astonishment at the scene. Desperate men, who saw the savings and labours of years destroyed in an hour, broke forth into cursing and raving blasphemy; and in many instances abandoned themselves to the influence of strong drink. *A city was destroyed in a day.*

On the 19th of the following September, a most awful tempest raged round the whole coast of Newfoundland, strewing its shores with the wrecks of the fisherman's property. The destructive influence of this storm was more extensively felt than the fire. It fell upon the *sources* of the city's wealth. It withered the land. St. John's has arisen, like a Phoenix out of its own ashes. But who shall restore the lost property to hundreds of planters who were utterly ruined by the storm? Who shall give back to the bereaved families and the disconsolate widows, the husbands and sons who found a watery grave?

Close on the track of the fire and the storm came the potatoe disease, a greater scourge than either of the former. Its ravages were followed by hunger, starvation, and deathly famine in several instances. Extensive and repeated failures of the fisheries have brought up the rear of these calamities; and the country is sounding the depths of ruin!

Newfoundland is not alone in her sufferings. During the past seven years, the Almighty has been shaking the earth. He "arose out of His holy habitation," "stretched out His arm," and at one withering stroke, vegetation was diseased. A nation's food was destroyed in its season. Ireland suffered the horrors of famine, and the scourge of the pestilence. All nations felt the blow in a greater or lesser degree. Had such a famine been inflicted a hundred years ago, Ireland would have wanted grave-diggers. But christian and Mahomedan people sent her the fruits of their benevolence. "God arose" the second time "to judgment," and His Hand was upon the Commercial Establishments of Europe. Old and venerable firms fell to ruins. The great body mercantile staggered, as a man struck to the heart. Circulation stopped. God struck a third blow; and "kingdoms were moved." "Thrones were cast down." Among the royal fugitives, a great king was seen to fly to the world's "city of refuge," and lifting up his hands, exclaimed "*thank God I am once more on Britain's shore.*" The avenger of iniquity commanded the pestilence, which had

hitherto visited only isolated portions of the world, to walk through the whole earth. Every nation trembled, as its victims fell beneath "the destruction which wasteth at noon day." "A thousand has fallen at our side, and ten thousand at our right hand." War succeeds the pestilence. It cleaves the world in twain; and dead men "solder up the rift." To talk, therefore, of the calamities of a single colony, in an age of universal sorrow, may appear to some a grand impertinence. Surveying,

"Woe's wide empire; where deep troubles toss;  
Loud sorrows howl; envenomed passions bite;  
Ravenous calamities our vitals seize,  
And threatening fate wide opens to devour."

Newfoundland may ask "What then am I who sorrow for myself?"

It is the crisis of her history. In politics, in commerce, and in morals, this colony has reached a point peculiarly interesting, doubtful, and dangerous. "*Responsible Government*" is the watch word of political partisans. "The old system," they say, "must be demolished." Not knowing where to lay their hand on the real causes of the country's distress, they blindly accuse the Government. A large and increasing debt, with all its incumbrances, threatens the colony with ruin. The civil administration has been impeded. Its wheels have been locked. Delegates have crossed and re-crossed the sea; to point out to Imperial Authorities at home the state of things abroad. The wisdom of our ablest men is baffled in their attempts to relieve the condition of the country. Dissensions and disputes run high among the ruling powers. Fierce factions are forming. It is but the beginning of strife. On the heights of political power there are signs of an approaching storm. *It is the crisis of Newfoundland's political history!*

The Commercial system of the colony is changing. The old system of supplying for the fisheries is breaking up. An ever-widening, ever-deepening grave of pauperism threatens to engulf the supplier and the supplied. Poverty and debt—twin genii of evil, play the fisherman, as a victim, into each other's hands. They are sapping the foundations of his character. His honesty and integrity are tottering to their fall. The Merchant cannot trust him with a winter's supply, as formerly. The failure of the shore-fishery; the want of useful and remunerative sources of labour and profit; the ravages of the potato

disease; the lottery of the seal-fishery; and the universal poverty of the outport population, are elements of destruction to the old system of "Supply," which wait for the grasp of a bold and vigorous arm to mould them into means of good. "*Reciprocity with the States*" is the great subject of talk on 'Change. The great Republic has long had her eye upon our "wealth of the seas," and is sparing no pains to obtain Her Majesty's consent to the exchange of our fisheries for the barren waters of Cape Cod. *It is the crisis of our Commerce!*

The geographical position of Newfoundland has, at length, awakened attention. Long has this storm-beaten Island stood with outstretched arms to the travellers of the sea, offering her services as Nature's Great Post Office. But the nations of the earth have passed her in contempt. They have branded her with an ancient curse. They have deemed her a modern Tyre—"a rock for the fisherman to spread his nets upon." Girdled with ice, enveloped in fogs, emitting effluvia from flake and vat, they have imagined her a land of terrors. But the light of science is beginning to guild her rugged brow. Men of sound practical judgment have discovered her grand destiny in the kingdom of nature. They view her as the Guardian Angel of the coasts of the Continent. She shields the gardens and fields of the West from the mountains and masses of ice from Greenland and Labrador. Possessed of the finest harbours and bays in the world, she stands as a mid-way port of call on the marine high road of commerce, from the kingdoms of the East to the Republic of the West. Men of capital, energy and skill, are building a Telegraph line across the country. They are giving us a material guarantee that they will place Newfoundland within five days or five seconds of Great Britain! When they have endowed her with all the accomplishments of science, she will be an important link in the mighty chain of fraternity which shall girdle the globe. *It is the crisis of her history!*

In this condition of Newfoundland how various are the tempers and character of its people! From the quiescence of the selfish apathist, to the extreme of fear, in those whose tottering fortunes threaten them with destruction, the native character is seen as diversified in its varieties as in degrees. I shall not suffer my own energies to relax in consequence of the former, neither shall I yield to despondency from the influence of the latter. But I shall proceed to examine and point out the several remedies proposed for the amelioration of our commercial condition.

## CHAPTER II.

### EMIGRATION.

The physical and moral condition of Newfoundland at the present moment is a cause of general and unfeigned sorrow. The poverty and distress of the outport population are unparalleled in degree. Before the festivities of the "merry christmas," and the "happy new year" of the great world of christendom shall have passed away in the approaching season, hundreds of the people of the colony will be ready to perish with hunger, unless the merchants or the government supply them with bread in return for labour. The able-bodied man, the strong youth, the infant at the breast, the man of hoary hairs, the widow, the fatherless, the afflicted, will all alike suffer the horrors of famine and the sorrows of want.

I am not painting fancy sketches. The living image of famine is before me. I reside in the outports. I am a frequent visitor to the abodes of the fishermen. I am familiar with their habits, their wants, and their deplorable condition. And I am convinced from personal observation, and the many facts which reach me from the most authentic sources in all parts of the land, that the government must either feed the people during the winter, or remove them to a place of provision and labour. The only interest I have in sounding the alarm is the honour of the government and the salvation of its subjects. Shall the mightiest nation upon the face of the earth have the splendour of its escutcheon dimmed by the dying breath of its famine-smitten people?

*"But the Colonial Government is in debt; and so deeply involved, that like a ship aground, it cannot move to the rescue of those that are ready to perish. Therefore, the people who cannot obtain supplies for the winter, nor support themselves by the fishery, must emigrate."*

Emigration, as a means of relief, meets with advocates and opponents; the latter considerably outnumbering the former. Let us examine both sides of the question.



The advocates for emigration consider the failure of the shore-fishery. "It is inadequate to the support of the people who have, until recently, subsisted upon it." The general destruction of the potatoe crop by disease every season, and the sterility of the soil on the sea coast, are viewed as evidences in proof that Newfoundland has no sources of support for man independent of its fisheries. The readiness and ease by which the surplus population might be shipped off at a small expense, borne by the government, to more fertile lands and genial climes, is an argument in favour of the emigration scheme. It is said "the remedy is at our own doors." We have not to look across the broad Atlantic, and prepare for a long, tedious and expensive voyage, as our friends and countrymen of Great Britain have. We are within a few days' sail of Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia,—colonies of our own Empire, and in each of which our perishing fishermen could obtain labour and bread. Of Canada, no mention need be made—it is a land of promise—it is already marked out as the future home of many a Newfoundlander. Rushing forth with mighty speed to the heights of commercial power and greatness, Canada commands the wonder and admiration of the world. The whole of the Newfoundland population might live upon "the crumbs which fall from the rich man's table." Should it be thought too distant and too expensive a voyage, to expatriate our poor to Canada, we have Nova Scotia near us, a Province which, though long considered as a second Newfoundland, has commenced her march on the highway of prosperity. Proverbial as this country has been for her sterility and ungenial clime, yet she is going a head of sixteen of the older States of America in the productions of her soil and the manufactures of her people.\*

Besides the proximity of this flourishing Province, the advocates of emigration have received from the Nova Scotians a hearty invitation through the correspondence of the Hon. JOSEPH HOWE. That gentleman writes under date of June 5, 1854.

"Your letter of the 3rd inst., has given me pain and pleasure—pain, because I was grieved to know that the inhabitants of a neighbouring Colony should periodically suffer for want of the necessaries of life;—and pleasure, when I reflect how easily they might, in a few days, be transported to a country, where at all seasons, the industrious and the frugal can command, not only the necessaries, but many of the luxuries of life. Though I have never been in Newfoundland, those of its inhabitants that

\* Sir Gaspard Le Marchant's Report.

I have seen here, are a robust, hardy class of men, that in Nova Scotia would live in plenty, with an extensive choice of pursuits.

"In Nova Scotia we do not follow the fishery so exclusively as in Newfoundland, nor lumbering as in New Brunswick. The bulk of our people are farmers. A large body living on the sea-coast are fishermen, but not fishermen only. Having plenty of fine timber, when the fishery is unproductive, our men go into ship-yards and build vessels either for themselves, or for their friends,\* and manning them, go into the carrying trade or coasting business. A fair proportion of our people are also mechanics, in the towns and villages, or work in the numerous saw and grist mills upon the streams and rivers of the country.

"The abstract of the last Census will shew you the various classes and distribution of labour.

"The Government Report that I also send, will show you the extent to which our people engage in navigation, and the general fruitfulness of our soil.

"I think 1000 men and their families, arriving here early in the season, could be distributed over Nova Scotia, and find immediate employment, in ordinary years. But we are now commencing lines of Railway, to extend all over the Province, and shall have work enough for all that may land in Halifax at almost all seasons of the year, at wages varying from 4s. to 5s. per day.

"Should the Governor of Newfoundland desire to ship any of her surplus population here, or should any of the people desire voluntarily to emigrate, not only would the Governor of this Province give every encouragement to persons seeking employment here; but I am quite sure that my Brother Commissioners of the Railway, would do everything in their power to give employment upon the public works advancing under their superintendence.

"I shall be very glad to hear from you at any time on this subject, and should any of your friends come hither, give them a line to me.

"I have the honor to be,

"My dear Sir,

"Yours truly,

"JOSEPH HOWE"

Seeing, therefore, that there is a flourishing Province within reach, accessible at a small expense; affording abundant provi-

\* So might the Newfoundlander, but he sits upon the bare rock, "like Patience on a Monument, smiling at grief;" and in the meantime, the timber of his own forest rotting! See 6th chapter.

sion for an immigrant population, and a hearty welcome given by a high official authority, the advocates of emigration have good substantial ground for this argument.

The opposers of emigration are found in several classes of the community. The mercantile body oppose it. The boats and sinew by which they catch their fish, and man their sailing fleets, would be taken from them. Although it is a painful fact for British merchants to see their wharves crowded with hungry men, and to know that there are still more destitute families at home, whom they cannot supply with food without injuring their own interests in an unjustifiable degree; yet it is an advantage to have a large selection of dealers. But it is also well known that emigration would take away the best dealers. It would not be the pauper body—the meal men—who would be the first to avail themselves of the government aid to emigrate; but the go-a-head men, the men of push and energy. What small degrees of moral good yet exists among the dealers in the shape of skill in fishing, and honesty in paying, would be drained off in the *exodus* of the people, and the merchants would be left with a “*cullage*” class. Density of population is not the evil complained of in the present crisis by the merchant. He is convinced that double the population might be supported in the country if capital and skill could only be expended in opening its resources.

In strong affinity with the mercantile body is a large class of persons “of the old school,” whose motto is “We have had no good since the legislature came among us.” Associated with their marine ideas, the House of Assembly is the *Jonah* of the ship. “Have him overboard” say they, “and we shall be lightened of a little.” In their opinion the fishing population is the crew requisite for working the ship, and in the present storm, they would not hear of casting overboard the crew as a means of lightening the vessel. This party not having sufficient wisdom to discover the real causes of their country’s calamities, administer their censure according to their prejudice.

The strongest opponents of emigration are found among a class of high spirited men, whose faith in the capabilities of the colony to support ten times its present population, is approved by their praiseworthy endeavours to develop them. Their patriotism is not opposed to the expatriation of the people, from the abstract principle, but because it is allied with knowledge, founded on facts, of the country’s resources. The vast forests of timber, the arms and estuaries of the sea, the fertile soil of those parts,



the existence of the most precious and valuable minerals imbedded in the rocks, are extensive sources for labour and profit, which in their opinion it is a shame to neglect.

The following extracts from a letter to the Author are given as a fair specimen of the arguments of this class, who oppose emigration from the best of motives:—

“BONAVISTA, 21st August, 1854.”

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Your attempt to agitate the public mind upon the question of ship-building in this colony is a move in the right direction, towards lessening the evils under which our population frequently labour when their potatoe crops fail, and the fishing voyages do not afford them support for their families. Would that every member of the House of Assembly was imbued with the like patriotic spirit as yourself, and felt the same disposition to benefit their constituencies. In such a case there would be less ‘complaining in our streets,’ and fewer applications for relief.

“I cannot agree with your views on emigration. On the contrary I deprecate all emigration from the colony, inasmuch as it is capable of maintaining an immense number of inhabitants, beyond those who are now in it, were their energies only properly directed, and the resources of the country amply developed. Where fine luxuriant timber grows, there is a soil capable of producing anything suitable to our climate, and must not be overlooked by you in procuring timber for ship-building.

“We have fine land in this Bay. In fact the difficulty with us would be to discover where it is not so, either in the arms and bays between Cape Bonavista and Cape Freels. And in some portions of it, the process of clearing it for cultivation is so easy that a man will readily prepare ground sufficient to plant a barrel of potatoes per day. In such a case, what is to prevent a man from preparing five or six acres in the course of a few months, to plant in the spring with potatoes and grain?

“Spring wheat will mature very readily in this district in ordinary seasons, and, if sown early, will ripen for the sickle by the middle of August. Barley is a sure crop, and you may raise it here of a quality equal to any in the most fertile parts of the British dominions. You may be equally as certain of a crop of oats.

“Therefore if any portion of our population must emigrate, let them seek the arms and estuaries of this Bay, where every facility for ship-building and cultivating the soil awaits them.”

With this majority of opinion against emigration, it is not likely that the Colonial Government will move in the matter

\* WILLIAM SWEETLAND, Esq.

Besides, it is very doubtful whether the class of paupers who hang about our Court Houses and other meal depots, would avail themselves of the means of expatriation, although gratuitously afforded them. The love of home makes them cling with great tenacity to their native soil. But to do violence to the tree, in tearing it up by the roots, would render its growth in a transplanted soil very precarious. Those who are familiar with the causes of Ireland's gigantic scale of emigration, know that famine and pestilence had done their strange work before the peasantry of that beautiful country were loosened in their affection for their native land. The best class of emigrants are those who have the means voluntarily to leave home and seek their fortunes in another country. Of this class, a large number are annually leaving this colony for Canada and the United States.

It is, however, a matter of thankfulness, that our moral and physical disease admits of more remedies than one. We have means in our possession of ameliorating our present afflicted condition, and to make Newfoundland both "*healthy, and wealthy, and wise.*"

## CHAPTER III. BOUNTIES.

This is an old prescription, discarded by the modern faculty. Whoever should venture to propose a bounty on fish, would be looked at to see if he wore a cocked hat, a sword, and silver shoe-buckles.

“ Like a fine, old English Gentleman,  
One of the olden time.”

English statesmen, who have taken the lead in all things wise and practical, have generally legislated for freedom, and protection, in opening and prosecuting the resources of commerce, leaving the means to the capital and skill of the people. The matter of bounty is considered a sinking fund, from which neither interest or capital can be regained. Bounties may have been beneficial in the commencement of colonization, and in encouraging certain branches of trade beset with more than ordinary difficulties. They have been recommended as stimulants in certain weak stages of the growth of new trades—a kind of Godfrey's caudle, given during the teething of some young brat of commerce. But as permanent support they are certainly to be deprecated. England's Colonies are now grown up, and like strong, healthy, vigorous young men, are able to do for themselves.

“ But may not Newfoundland be an exception? Would not a bounty on fish enable us to compete with the Americans and French in the fish markets of the world, and be a panacea for all our ills?”

Certainly. At least, to a very great extent. But the principle is bad, and every way objectionable. From what source could the parent government obtain money for a bounty? “ From the public Treasury.” How is the public Treasury supplied? “ By taxes from the people?” And shall all the trades of England be taxed to support the fishery of Newfoundland? You may just as well ask for the Queen's letter patent

to make a collection in all the churches for a poor brother! What return can we make? "Sailors to fight the Russians." Then every old woman will say, "Keep your bounty and I will keep my boys."

The fact is, bounty to any trade is not only bad in principle, but ultimately ruinous in its effects. It gives a fictitious prosperity to trade. The life it infuses is artificial, and its action spasmodic. It implies the absence of life in the trade. The receiver of bounty is destitute of the principle of self action. It can only stand as it is held up, or walk as it is moved by some galvanic process. It is a corpse, rather than a living, healthy, member of the Board of Trade. To say the best of a bounty bolstered business—to say that it does possess the element of life, it is like a bad limb of the law, it must be continually bribed to do business; or like a bad pump which won't work until you have poured a bucket of water into it. It is defective somewhere. And to continue the bounty is to prolong and enlarge the evil until it destroys itself.

The principle of bounties with the Americans and the French differs from the above. They give bounties as a matter of state policy. It is only a form of their administration of the naval department. It is not given to a trade abstractedly considered, but as allied with improvement in their maritime affairs. With them the trade is a secondary thing, a mere medium—the primary business is extension of naval power. And this is a false position, an old theory, an unsound speculation, and like all other things bare and visionary, is destined to fall. It has been stated in the British Parliament, and repeated in speeches, in pamphlets and in state documents, that, "twenty years' enjoyment"—possession rather—"of the fisheries of Newfoundland would make any power the 'most formidable by sea and land.'" (Morris's Letters to Earl Grey.—Bliss's Colonial system.) One fact is worth a thousand theories. What is the fact? That France has had 40 years' uninterrupted possession of "the best fisheries of Newfoundland," has laid out vast sums of money in their vigorous prosecution, and yet she is a second-rate naval power. Great Britain generously gave to France this "splendid nursery for the navy," and what are the "ruinous and deplorable results?" They are the following:—In point of power the navy of Great Britain is colossal. It is yet supreme on the world of waters. In comparison with it the navy of France is but a gun-boat under the stern of a ship of the line. In point of action and manœuvre, France is slow and tardy as a barge in

contest with a clipper. The present war brings out these facts. Long after Sir CHARLES NAPIER had unfurled his flag in the Baltic, and made the Russian shores tremble with the roar of his cannon, France had neither bent her sails, nor hoisted her anchors. 'Tis true, she had at the time a fleet in the Black Sea; but we have abundant facts to prove that notwithstanding all the advantages of 40 years' possession of this "splendid nursery for the navy," she would, in case of war with England, be obliged to shelter her ships behind her fortresses: or they would be sunk beneath the overwhelming power of the British fleet, as when it took "the spoils of Trafalgar" from France and Spain combined. *Unless God, in the kingdom of nature, endow a nation with material and moral elements for maritime power and glory, nothing artificial can accomplish it.* The elements of naval greatness are maritime position, love of freedom, indomitable energy, thirst for enterprise, moral qualifications for ruling. England possesses these in an eminent degree. Her insular position, her vast colonial possessions, her gigantic commerce, are inexhaustible sources of naval means. The gift of the Newfoundland fisheries to France was but a crumb from the rich man's table. France can never be great on the ocean. Her sea-bred sons are but her serfs. Her Paris Padres have been, and are now to some extent, her rulers. The blood of the tar is not in her. She is great in the camp. She has marked the earth with ruin; but her

" — control stops with the shore."

Her moral qualifications for ruling well are excessively defective—radically bad. It is an apostolic maxim, "*If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?*" 1 Tim. 3, 5. This great truth will admit of universal application. If a man, or a nation cannot do that which is least, how shall he accomplish that which is great? Can France rule herself? Her bloody revolutions answer "No." To this day *despotism* is her only safe-guard. How then can she extend a fostering and paternal care over colonies and dependencies in "the uttermost parts of the earth?" Look at Russia, envious, jealous, and ambitious. The Czar has built a great Armada; but beyond a summer's excursion in the Arctic seas, practising gunnery at icebergs, he has no sea-room for his fleets. God has given him nothing but a fish-pond in the East, and a mill-dam in the North. He is a whale in a wash tub. America possesses all the elements of maritime greatness. First



born of Britain's sons, she inherits all her father's greatness: not the least of which is his naval genius, which is rapidly developing itself in unrivalled strength on the lengthened lines of the Atlantic and Pacific sea-boards.

America will, therefore, soon discard the bounty principle. She would do it now; but having a surplus revenue and New England senators with great interests in the fisheries, and no small degree of influence in the forum, she has not the freedom of will at present. France will dole out her bounty to another generation. She will then learn that free-trade policy, and the great principles of reciprocity, will accomplish more for extending her oceanic influence and maritime greatness, than taxing her people to catch cod-fish on the Banks of Newfoundland.

## CHAPTER IV.

### AGRICULTURE.

That Newfoundland is capable of being brought into a profitable state of agriculture, is a fact attested by many witnesses. The old theory of its barrenness has long been exploded. From its earliest history it has had a succession of advocates for cultivation. Upwards of 230 years ago, King James I. was made acquainted with the prolific character of the soil of the country. In his "representation" to that Monarch, 1622, Whitebourne says—"The soyle of this countrey in the valleys and sides of the mountaines is so fruitfull, as that in divers places, there the summer naturally produceth out of the fruitfull wombe of the earth, without the labour of man's hands, great plenty of green pease and fitches, faise, round, full, and wholesome, as our fitches are in England. . . . This being the natural fruitfulnessse of the earth, producing such varietie of things fit for food without the labour of man; I might in reason hence inferre that if the same were manured and husbanded in some places, as our grounds are, it would be apt to bear corne, and no less fertill than the English soyle." Among the many modern opinions on this subject, the late Sir John Harvey in his speech to the Colonial Legislature, in 1843, entered at great length on the agricultural question, he observed—"In point of *rich natural grasses*, no part of British North America produces greater abundance. Newfoundland, in fact, appears to me to be calculated to become essentially a rich grazing country, and its varied agricultural resources appear only to require roads and settlements to force them into highly remunerative development." To multiply the testimonies of eminent practical men is needless. Let the stranger visit the Market House in the city of St. John's, at the time of the Annual Exhibition of stock and farm produce, and all his notions of the country's barrenness must vanish.

Hitherto farming has been evidently a matter of necessity rather than of choice. The inhabitants of the country have been "farmers of the sea" rather than the cultivators of the soil.

The "treasures of the deep" have yielded greater profit than the "fruits of the earth." In comparison with other countries, Newfoundland is not the place for emigrant farmers. They had much better go to New Brunswick, Canada, or the United States. But we have a mass of half-starved fishermen on our hands. These demand ~~our~~ apathy and aid. It appears the Government will not induce them to emigrate, and yet is doling out £10,000 a year to keep them alive. Can not a part of this money be profitably expended in assisting the poor to cultivate the ground? No doubt of it. But how? By giving each poor man a grant of land? This is already done in numerous instances. But look at the poor wretch standing in the midst of his rood of rocks! He has not a mouthful of bread to eat! How can he subsist? It is a mockery to turn him to such soil and say "cultivate it." *It is giving a hungry infant a cocoa-nut to crack!* Shall the Government take a number of families, locate them in some fertile bay, or arm of the sea, and assist them for a few years to get ahead? This might do. But it is questionable. It would become a piece of jebbery—a shifting concern—not half the people would stop on the withdrawal of the Government bounty. On the question of opening the country by making good roads, I need not say a word, as this necessary preliminary to the commencement of agriculture is acknowledged by all. But it is high time the Government paid special attention to *this* subject. Hitherto nothing has been done save in the neighbourhood of St. John's, the most sterile part of the country. We have a few bridle paths in other parts of the Island; but on these it is not safe to ride a horse. Hitherto our roads have been made by fishermen who know as much about the business as McAdam knew of ship-building. *There is no agricultural design about our roads.* They are mere sheep tracks. We want a good practical engineer—a man of some responsibility, whose salary would be more than saved by the economy of the lines of road. The Government has frittered away a few thousands in making fishermen's roads, one part of the line coasting on the beach, knee-deep in shingle or in boulders, one edging its way on the ledge of a crumbling rock, one lost in swamp and bush, one wriggling like the trail of a serpent up a precipice; one plunging down gulsh and ravine. Give us roads for the farmer and his team.

Money expended on such roads would go very far towards assisting the poor to purchase the means to cultivate the soil.



Let the Government also come to the aid of the present occupiers of the soil, and offer a bounty of 2s. per yard on stone walls which shall be built as fences round the farm. The man of theory, the amateur farmer, and the ignorant of all classes will ridicule this plan, no doubt; and the Government will say "It is too expensive." But one of the first and most important questions relative to the purchase of a farm is "What is the character of its fences?" The quality of the soil, the character of the roads, proximity to a market, are each important questions with the land purchaser; but the nature and condition of the fences is one of the chief. The fences of a farm should be determined by the nature of the soil. The thorn fences of England grow luxuriantly only in a good subsoil and in a genial latitude. The moors and dales of Yorkshire, cold and barren, the table lands of Lincolnshire from Grantham to the Fens, and the glens and dells of the Peak of Derbyshire, are farming districts sheltered by stone walls. Newfoundland has agricultural resources equal, if not superior to any of the above named districts. *The stone wall is the fence for this country.* It is the most appropriate fence. Materials for it, in many instances, lie upon the surface. It is the most durable. It is the least expensive in the end. It is the great defender of agriculture from the northern blasts, marauding cattle and fire-wood stealers. Newfoundland has suffered more in her agricultural interests from the want of the stone wall fence than from any other cause. *It will never prosper without it!* The labour, capital and skill of the farmer will be largely destroyed without this defence. His dead rail fence will be a constant source of annoyance and an established sinking fund. Whereas if he had a good stone wall, he would have security, ease, and certainty of profit. It would shelter his young corn and grass and cattle in the spring from the chilling blasts. It would attract the heat of the sun, and assist in ripening the crops in its immediate vicinity. It would, were his farm properly subdivided into fields of 4 or 5 acres, prevent the snow in winter from drifting off, and thus preserve the roots of the grasses from killing frosts. It would retain winter's warm, snowy fleeces, gather them into folds, and preserve the face of the earth from those injuries which it suffers in its exposed condition.

In this essentially necessary element of good farming, let the Government come to our assistance, and offer a bounty of 2s. per yard, on all the stone fences, 5 feet high, 2½ feet thick at the bottom and 2 feet at the top. Such a proposal would give

a universal and powerful impetus to agriculture. From the very day of its announcement, hundreds of farmers would rise and go to work with spirit. Great numbers of the poor would find honest employment, who now hang idly about the meal depots.

The Government may say "This is too expensive a work for us." Very well. Proceed on the old plan of spending £10,000 a year in fostering and extending a demoralizing pauperism, and see which will be most beneficial to the Colony, a vile system of elymosinary aid, or a bounty on stone walls to defend agricultural interests. All I ask of the Government is—*A road to my farm and means to defend it.*

## CHAPTER V.

### SHIP BUILDING.

This ought to be one of the most extensive and profitable sources of labour in the Colony. Of all the British North American Colonies, Newfoundland ought to take the lead in ship-building. Her insular position, and her maritime commerce bespeak the ship as the great primary instrument of her support and wealth. The men of Lord North's government 1792, considered "the Island of Newfoundland as a great English ship, moored near the Banks, during the fishing season for the convenience of the English fishermen." A better opinion is entertained of the Colony than formerly. Wisdom did not die with the men who held such a notion of Newfoundland. Her resources are more valuable than they imagined. Her importance as an appendage to the splendid colonial possessions of Great Britain is greater than their calculation. Had they deemed her "*the great dock-yard of the North,*" they would have been nearer the truth than treating her as a mere ship. Newfoundland abounds in all things necessary for a flourishing trade in ship-building. In numerous arms and estuaries of her fine bays, juniper, wickhazel, spruce and pine grow luxuriantly and in great abundance. Her timber forests are invaluable. Moreover, the deep waters of her indented shores, where the influences of storms and tides cannot possibly be injurious, furnish us with numerous dock-yards of nature's own building. The natives of the country are also a sea-faring people. Their home is on the mighty deep. They are the farmers of the sea. They have been cradled on its billows, and are familiar with "the Loary deep" in calm, in gale and storm. Their bread is drawn from the riches of the sea. There is, besides, a native genius for ship-building. It is a business associated with their earliest ideas. It is the plaything of the child—the pastime of boyhood. We have men in the land who, a few years ago were poor out-harbour children, destitute of all education save the handling of tools in their father's coöperation, or the woodman's business in his lonely tilt, but are now able to build a ship, r

her, and fit her out for sea, as well as the ablest men in the dock-yards of Liverpool or the Clyde. Witness such specimens as the *Rothsay*, *Thomas Ridley*, *Jessie*, *Iron Duke*, *Funchal*, *Angler*, *Gitana*, and others too numerous to mention.

Yet notwithstanding the resources of the Colony for ship-building, and the ample means in our possession for making it an important branch of native traffic, we are spending £60,000 annually in purchasing ships of foreigners, to keep up our mercantile fleet! The building of ships in the Colony has been neglected. It is the exception and not the rule. The reason is plain. *The Merchant can buy his ship of a foreigner cheaper than he can build her in the country.* Who, therefore, can blame him? He does that which is lawful and right. The business of ship-building is urged on the foundation of the fact that while we are spending £60,000 in ships, our own hardy people are absolutely perishing with hunger! We have thousands of able-bodied men, capable of wielding the axe and drawing the saw, spending the whole winter in idleness, and subsisting partly on alms doled out by the Government in the shape of Indian meal and molasses! The pauperism of Newfoundland is awful. It is a dead carcass tied to a living subject. *The great question of the Government is, "HOW CAN WE KEEP THE PEOPLE ALIVE DURING THE WINTER?"* And yet strangers devour our wealth! Our constitution is anomalous. There is a great want of wisdom somewhere. Is it in the Merchant? If worldly wisdom be determined by the great end—*worldly wealth*, we answer "No." Our Merchants are generally wealthy. And what to them is the welfare of the country? It is not their *home*. Here they have no abiding place. They look forward to days of rest in England at the close of life. It is the Colonial Government which suffers most. The Legislature is at fault. How? A Nova Scotia ship-builder brings a schooner ready rigged, and found in all things necessary for business, and sells her in our own ports free of all duty. This is an advantage to the merchant, but an injury to the colony. The Merchant sees his numerous dealers turned off in the fall of the year to starve and beg of the Government—he would fain employ them. His heart bleeds for them. Instead of giving that Nova Scotian £1000 for his schooner, he would much rather supply his own dealers with the means to build him a vessel. But then the Government (his own Government, his own vice, far-seeing Legislature, having, what—spite against him? It looks like it) taxes him, but lets the foreigner go scot free! On every bit of

iron, cordage, hemp, sails, &c., the merchant would place in the possession of his dealers, he must pay heavy duties. The Nova Scotian pays no duty. Therefore, the merchant says to his men—"Go my boys, and buy your bread of them that receive my taxes, I shall buy my vessels duty free." Let the Government see to this matter. Let the tables be turned. Instead of taxing the merchant for his ship-building materials let a duty of 5 per cent on the value of every foreign ship be levied. Let the Government meet the merchant and say, "*We are spending a large sum of money every year in the support of the poor, do you employ as many as you can in building your ships; and for every vessel you build, we will return you the sum you have paid in duty on the imported materials.*"

Such a law would suddenly stem the tide of adversity which threatens to overwhelm the land. Nay, more, it would open sources of wealth to generations yet to come. The labouring population—the bone and sinew of the country—would be relieved of the present demoralizing subsistence on the Government. The best gifted youths would find useful and ample employment. In the present miserable, anomalous condition of the colony, we have no means to train up our youth. Our dockyards would be excellent schools of design in which the native genius would be tutored and developed. The tradesmen of the land would be multiplied, instead of deserting us. Many of our best fishermen's sons, instead of being compelled to pursue a failing business in the fishery alone, would find an excellent exchange in the sail-manufactory, smithery, and block-house. How many of them would gladly drop their lines and jiggers to stitch the canvass, blow the bellows, or bore the block! And how many a poor widow and orphan child would be employed picking oakum all the winter, perhaps singing at their work, instead of brooding over their sorrows in idleness, hunger and despair!

Give us, therefore, a ship-building business—a trade natural to the country, and whose resources literally invite us to direct them to our profit; and Newfoundland will speedily rise from the depths of her distress to a commanding position in the first rank of British Colonies.



## CHAPTER VI.

### FREIGHT.

It is the boast of the Newfoundlander—"I can build my own ship and sail her." This is not an empty boast. The Colony abounds with men of this class. They are rulers of the sea. They make winds and waves their servants—means subordinate for the great business of their lives. They are as bold on the deep as they are skilful in the dock. Fearlessly they sing—

"If a storm should come and wake the deep,  
What matter? I still can ride—and sleep!"

But the majority of the poor are fast losing this energy and boldness of character. Pauperism is doing its deadly work among this once fine, hardy class of men. Years of poverty and disappointed hopes and plans are taking the spirit out of the native. From long, careful observation, I am convinced that there is a rapid tendency to degenerate in physical ability and moral stamina among the poor of our outports. Accumulated misfortunes have crushed their spirit. Ask the Supplier what is the per centage of honesty among his dealers, and he will give you an ominous shake of his head. Bad as this feature is, the loss of energy is equal. The man has no power to be honest—no means whereby he may retrieve his lost fortune. There is even a difficulty in rousing him to useful labour when set before him. He who would enter into a large, populous out-harbour, and endeavour to build up a useful society for labour, would find himself in the predicament of a certain boat-builder, who complained that he had "*nothing to nail to.*" The staunch elements of honesty and energy are destroyed! This is strong language, and may be construed, by certain parties, into a libel on my country. Perhaps so; and what is worse, its great truth will give the greater sting to the libel. I cannot help it. I have set myself to the task of pointing out the resources of my country. I shall set an example in prosecuting them for the good of the people, and I shall not fear to speak plainly of each party with whom I may come in contact.

Among the many evidences I could adduce, in proof of the assertions of the moral state of our outport population, I shall refer to the subject of freight. The merchants of this Colony are paying away to strangers the sum of £30,000 a year for freights. And what are all our sea-born boys doing? Are they so busily engaged with the fisheries that they cannot render any service to the merchants on the sea? Alas! Their time is not half employed. They complain of failing fisheries. They murmur against the merchants and the government, saying "We have no employment." And yet we have the greatest difficulty in engaging them for the foreign service. In how many instances are they lounging on the beach, or hauling sticks to boil the kettle, or walking to the Government meal depot for provisions, or sleeping, or smoking in their punts, while enterprising strangers and foreigners are running away with £30,000 a year for freight.

This is a fact for the fishermen to consider. Shall they continue to spend half their year in idleness, misery and want, when by a little exertion and self-denial, they might pour the comforts and blessings of good wages into their families? Where lies the root of this evil? In the home of the fisherman. A man is what his mother makes him. From her he receives great principles or great prejudices. She will not hear him mention the fact of his taking a voyage to any foreign port. In hundreds of instances, the Newfoundland mother has never been a mile beyond her own hut, except berry-picking or stick-gathering. Her prejudices are, therefore, in general as strong, as her ignorance of the world is great. The love of home, a fine element of our common humanity, degenerates into weakness and a fault under the present deplorable condition of the country. The Newfoundland wife and mother would prefer their husbands and sons to tarry at home, half fed, half clothed, and reduced to extreme destitution, to parting with them for nine months in the year and receive good wages. There is always a good deal of sobbing and crying when Jack goes to the ice or Labrador; but to hear of him going to the Mediterranean, or the West Indies, is to alarm them. Better he should catch the Cholera, or that the Russians should nab him! This antipathy to "life on the ocean" meets with sympathy, when manifested among the mothers of agricultural peasantry; but in the Newfoundlander, under present circumstances, it is inexcusable. It is a question of good policy how to deal with it, remove it as far as possible, and turn the stream of £30,000 a year into our own resources of profit.

Let the merchants of the country give every encouragement to our native youth who have capabilities for good sea-service. Pay a little more attention to this subject. Consider the misery and abject condition of the fishermen from whom you have derived great wealth. It is in your power to put them into possession of means for life. Keep a stricter eye on the cleanliness, order and provisioning of your vessels. While there is no occasion to give greater wages to natives than to foreigners, let those wages be regularly paid, and a word from you on economy at the time, will not be lost. You will derive considerable pecuniary advantage from it. Your native sailors will, in general, lay out their wages in your own stores. Let the crew be as valuable and as precious in your eyes as the ship. You spare no expense to rig and paint the ship, and shall the bodies and souls of your crew be counted as ballast merely—thrown in and out at pleasure? Kindness to the poor is a divine law, in which we know not most to admire the emanation of divine wisdom, or the manifestation of divine compassion. It is a grand conservative principle. Let the wealthy inhabitants of a city neglect the poor, and leave them to struggle on through life in filthy cellars and crowded garrets, destitute of the common necessities of life; and what a commentary in the ravages of cholera will the Almighty write on his own law—“*Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord!*” Let me call upon our merchants to adopt this principle of kindness to the poor in their business. It will repay them in this life. A well fed, well paid, orderly, temperate crew, supplied with coffee instead of grog, conscious of their employer’s care and kindness, will work and save a ship, where a disorderly set, having no master’s confidence, would loose here.

Let the “schoolmaster be abroad” among the poor of our outports. Ignorance is the mother of prejudice. Give us schools which shall be sources of light and knowledge. In how many of our outports are there young men thirsting for a knowledge of navigation! The greater part of our best ship-masters are self-taught, or at least, they have denied themselves of ease and rest after the toils of the day, to attend a night-school where navigation is taught. If

“Ambition is the stamp impressed by Heaven”

To mark the noblest minds,”

we could point to many an inspired fisherman’s boy, spelling over his lesson of navigation by the light of a dim oil lamp, hang up in the chimney of his father’s house, ambitious to be



the master of some snug schooner fitted out for the ice. To be the master of a schooner is the day dream of hundreds of our planters' sons. Cannot the ministers of education seize this idea, and direct it to vigour and profit? We want a better class of schoolmasters. The present pedagogues are not able to train the many vigorous shoots of native genius found among the numerous poor of our out-harbours. The schoolmaster is not sufficiently paid, nor respected. He ought to take his stand in society by the side of the most gifted professors. Let the Legislature look after the schoolmaster. It is a shame, a disgrace, that our pauper grant should exceed our educational expenditure. When will our government learn that its power, prosperity and stability, depend upon the dissemination of knowledge and the patronage of wisdom?

## CHAPTER VII.

### OAK STAVES.

Let not the reader ridicule the title of this chapter. A greater writer than the Author once promised to give us "a chapter on buttons!"\* And a great man's celebrity has come down to us enhanced by his "*Tale of a Tub*," and "*Meditation on a Broomstick*."† Neither the writers nor their subjects ought to be despised. "Buttons," "Tubs" and "Broomsticks" are among the essentials of civilization and domestic comfort. I pity the husband whose wife is ignorant of them.

*" Sic a wife as Willie had,  
I wad na gie a button for her."*

Talk about quarantine, and preservatives against cholera! Give us tubs and broomsticks! The prosperity of a colony depends exactly upon the same principles of economy as of a household or mercantile establishment. A good economist has an eye to pence as well as pounds. Philosophy, with all its sublime associations, is but a hand-maid to economy. Our estimate of the ordinary means of wealth is founded on wrong principles. We come panting to the world's "*Giggins*," expecting to find nuggets. Let us look at the dust. The rule is "*Many a little makes a mickle*." Many ardent visioned men dream of bounty on the fisheries, splendid fields of agriculture laid out by the Government, and an extensive trade in ship-building, as the means of relief and prosperity. But these remedies will be slow, and accompanied by much disappointment and hardship. The oak-stave business is, apparently, a much smaller matter of business, but it may be made a means of great good, and is in our own hands for immediate adoption. Newfoundland exports, on an average, upwards of £300,000 worth of oil. One item of expense on this is at least £10,000 a year for oak-staves and iron hoops. Here is a wasteful expenditure! On the same coasts which produce our oil, fine forests of fir are

\* Sterne.

† Swift.

growing, which when cut up into staves, make casks strong and tight enough for the finest seal or cod-liver oil we can export. Let us suppose the case of a Newfoundland merchant, doing a large business. He finds, at the end of the year, his expenses as great as his income. In his disappointment he sets vigorously to work to find out what means are destroying his clear gains. He is not lavish in his expenditure, not wasteful in his household economy; he has had as fair a chance in the markets as his neighbours, and his energy, tact and skill have in nowise declined. Yet he is not getting so rich as he reasonably expected. "How is this?" he asks. See him early some morning walking his wharf, pondering things over in his mind! "I am paying away £3,000 a year in salaries and wages! My servants and clerks are eating all my clear gains! I'll lower their wages." Just at this moment his head Cooper crosses his path.

MERCHANT.—"Hollo! Cooper, come here. You fellows struck for more wages last spring. I cannot afford to be paying you and a score more 6s. and 7s. a day. I shall lower your wages."

COOPER.—"I am sorry to hear it, Sir; but it will be no loss to me, as I can get better wages elsewhere."

The Merchant is at a stand. He knows the price of such labour in the market, and that every cooper will leave him. And as his head man in this department is a shrewd, sensible person, with whom he sometimes chats a little about business, he enters more fully into conversation with him on the nature and necessities of his business in this line.

M.—"I *must* cut down my expenses and I *will*."

C.—"Mind where you cut, Sir, or else you will hurt yourself. Your wisdom will be seen in reducing your expenditure in the proper place."

M.—"*Proper place!*" What do you mean?"

C.—"I mean no offence, Sir; but I assure you there is a great deal of waste and extravagance in your cooperage and oil business."

M.—"What! Do my coopers waste their materials? Surely, they do not make firewood of my fine oak-staves which I import yearly at such a high price."

C.—"No Sir, but, excuse me, Sir, you do something quite as bad."

M.—"I! Explain yourself!"

C.—"Well, Sir, last week a crew of poor out-harbour men came to your wharf with a boat load of fine *fir staves*. They begged of you to buy them at £5 per thousand; and as they

had left hungry families at home, they did not want the cash, they would take provisions. You told the fellows to be off about their business, as you did not want their *fir staves*. That day, Sir, you went up to the Commercial Room, and bought *oak staves* for £16 a thousand, congratulating yourself on having purchased them cheaper than usual by £2. Now, Sir, had you bought the *fir staves*, you would have saved yourself £11, besides something in wages, benefitted those poor men, and sent them home happy to their starving families.

M.—“But *fir staves* would not make good oil casks?”

C.—“They would Sir, and even better than oak; the oil retains its paleness in the *fir* cask, whereas in the oak cask there are found, at times, signs of discolour.”

M.—“Who told you that?”

C.—“Mr. R—— E——, and Mr. A—— L—— of Liverpool have given this as their opinion, and I know several merchants who have resolved for the future to ship their oil only in casks made of *fir staves*.”

M.—“You surprise me! If this be true, it will save me a large outlay every year. I shall try it. The next out-harbour crew that come with *fir-staves*, shall be better treated, and I will give some of my dealers supplies for the winter to be paid for in *fir staves*.”

Here is the principle, in detail—a specimen of extravagant, useless expenditure, universally practised throughout the colony. Let the merchants discard the oak-staves—supply their dealers with means to cutting down our own forests, and many a well fed family will, I trust, bless the writer for this chapter on *staves*.

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