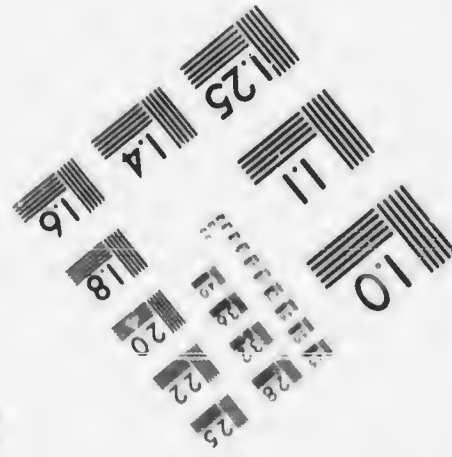
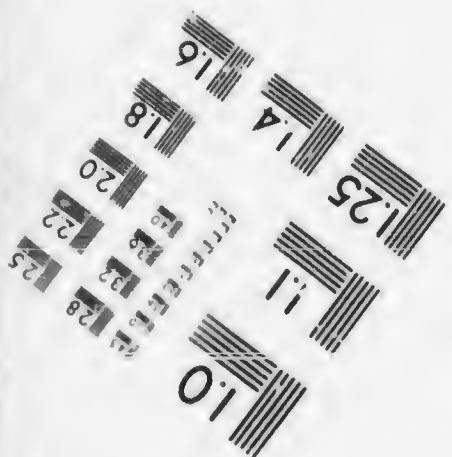
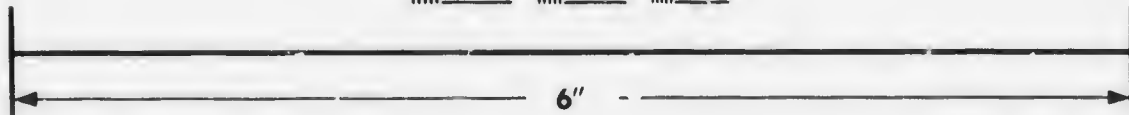
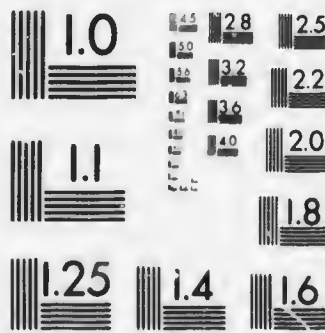


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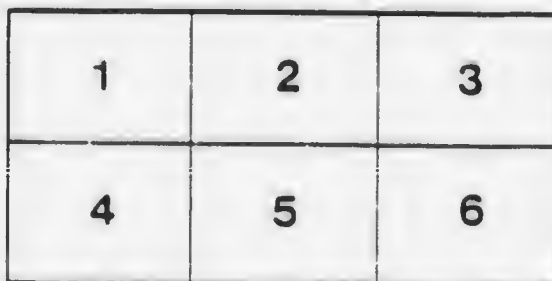
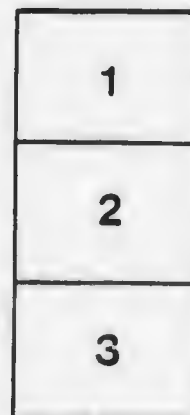
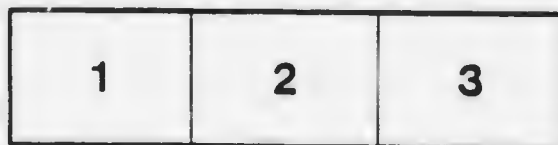
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# NEWFOUNDLAND

LOYAL TO ITS MOTHER ENGLAND

AND

ITS POSITION AND RESOURCES

BY

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OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S COLLEGE, CANTERBURY, AND BONAVISTA,  
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## NEWFOUNDLAND.

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PERHAPS no country has suffered more from an imperfect or prejudiced recognition of its attributes than Newfoundland, "Britain's oldest colony." It would be a grateful task were I, a native, able to remove, if possible, some at least of the many false impressions which have gathered around it. It is, I know, jestingly said that the words "cod, fog, dog," comprise the average Englishman's knowledge of Newfoundland. It is indeed not unfair to say that some people have expressed to me their surprise that a Newfoundlander "so much resembled an Englishman," and have asked me if I had "much difficulty in acquiring English," and "what language" we usually speak in Newfoundland!

Before drawing attention to the physical features of the island, I would ask you to feel thoroughly assured of the loyalty of all Newfoundlanders to the Queen and the British Crown. They steadily refuse to recognize all external interference, and it is this loyalty which is giving importance to the position the island is now holding in respect to the French claims regarding its "rights," and indeed





ownership, which, if not at present realized by the Mother Country in the multitude of its duties and engagements, will assuredly be intensified, and compel attention on her in some possibly unexpected manner and time. It is an island, as is England, as was Greece, "distinguished," as Thirlwall writes in regard to the last, "among European countries by the same character which distinguishes Europe itself from the other continents, the great range of its coasts compared with the extent of its surface," a peculiarity which Schlegel also recognizes as an important condition of political and commercial power. Italy had this advantage, and it is, and has been, one of the greatest in the local condition of England. A maritime population is synonymous with the strength and bravery of the people of the sea. Hence the resolution and loyalty with which the Newfoundlander is determined to assert his rights as against the claims of the French. He will not hear of such a thing as "French rights." "Treaty privileges" he may admit, but with no inconsiderable reluctance, so long as they are strictly limited to what has been agreed to by France and England, and the recognition of the ownership of the island by England. Newfoundland, although Britain may not have sufficiently valued its colony, is certainly part of her possessions, and of course can in no sense and to no extent be a possession of France at the same time. England will soon learn that its inhabitants are bent on maintaining their position as an independent



British colony. Canada has tried to bring Newfoundland into her embrace, and failed. The United States also would rejoice at the idea of obtaining control over the key to North America, but the islanders cling with a Spartan-like fidelity to the parent "tight little island," and favour no alliance with another power; and it would be a disastrous day which would cause them to regard England in any sense but "home." Their loyal object is to secure Newfoundland for the British Crown, and it remains to be seen whether colonial loyalty must succumb to foreign invasion, which the course being taken by the Frenchman is in effect. To Newfoundlanders nothing can be more ridiculous than the suggestion to buy out "rights" which do not exist. The situation of the island, the nearest point of America to Europe, its advantages as a naval nursery, and its natural strength of position make it a prize to be coveted by any world power, and especially important to England, by whom it would almost seem to have been purposely neglected by some strange cause as yet hidden from the ken of politicians. For in truth as a British possession it has had a most unfortunate history, which to the historian rather aggravates the present difficulty. It will appear, on examining the annals of the country, that Newfoundland has been most unjustly treated from the very beginning of its existence as a fishing station even to the present time. It will be thereby seen how monopoly depressed, and merchant princes made strenuous efforts to keep New-



foundland and its advantages to themselves. Fishing captains were compelled to give bonds of 100*l.* to bring back to England all such persons as they took out, and "all plantations in Newfoundland were to be discouraged;" but yet, in spite of these stringent regulations, and strange reports of the climate, and false impressions of the sterility of the soil, a fishing population of ten thousand had settled there in 1785. "Even so late as 1797 we find the naval governor for the time being sharply rebuking a sheriff for having during his absence permitted a resident to erect a fence, and ordering certain sheds for the shelter of the inhabitants to be removed, and prohibiting others to erect chimneys to their sheds, or even light fires in them of any kind." At the commencement of this nineteenth century cultivation of the soil was held under such restrictions as almost to be prohibited, and of course it was to the interest of the fishing monopolists to preserve the unsavoury statute of William III., which regarded the island as the property of these merchants, as well also as that of George III., the tenor of which was "to keep alive the principle of a ship fishery carried on from England." Large sums of money were expended by the British Government to promote the settlement of the Canadian provinces, but no help was afforded to Newfoundland. It is a matter of debate whether the difference in the benefits derived from the island by France and England respectively, is not one merely of degree. Since the year 1817.



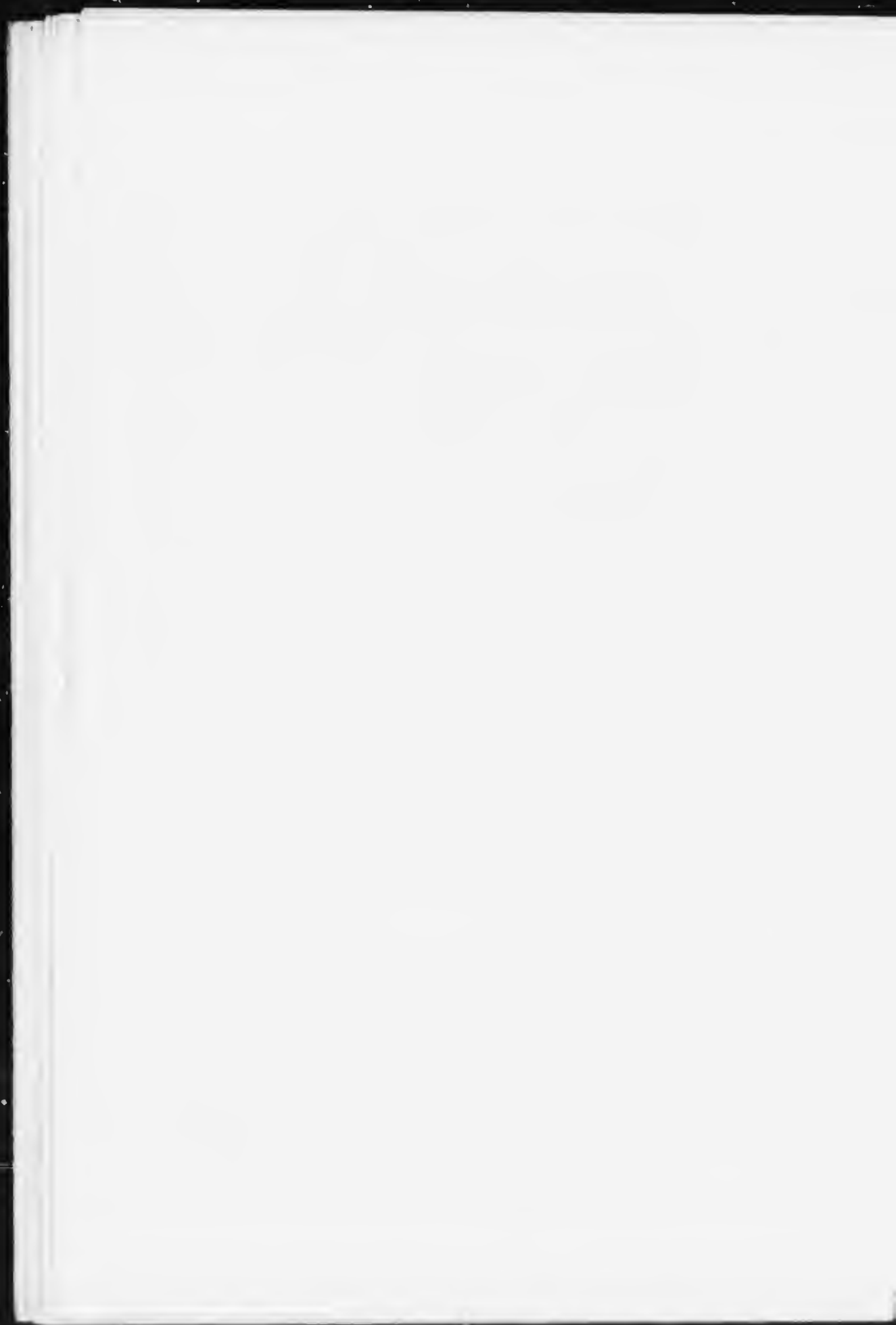
when an attempt was actually made to transport the principal part of the then 70,000 inhabitants to the neighbouring provinces, a constitution has been granted to Newfoundland, and the progress of the country since that time has been encouraging. Yet year after year the French are making new encroachments on us. They hamper the market of our staple industry by paying considerable bounties on all fish caught in our waters by their fishermen, and recently, in the matter of lobster canning, claim territorial rights which no treaty can establish. Our youth are discouraged and disappointed, and steamers from our shores are carrying the flower of Newfoundland to a country which no longer shows the British flag, and absolutely nothing is done to check the exodus. I have just received a letter which speaks of seventeen young men leaving a settlement with a population of about four thousand, this next spring, either to make or to lose their fortunes in the States. They are all the sons of hardy fishermen, who have at last come to realize that 200,000 people cannot be supported by the wealth of the seas as easily as 10,000 could be a century past. At last, however, the English people have had their interest aroused, and by means of the friendly English press, our island is being known as it deserves by those who will thus learn to value it, and by its means knowledge of the truth is spreading, before which the words of a leader in the House of Commons on the appointment of a Bishop to Newfoundland not very many years since, that he "buried





himself for life in the frost and fog of Newfoundland," is in a fair way of being laughed out of the chronicles. There can be no doubt that a winter in Newfoundland, especially if lived in a wooden house, is not one of the most enjoyable things the imagination may present; and there can be no doubt that a missionary's life in Newfoundland is one of extreme hardship and peril, a life many nobly undertake, and as nobly perform; but yet it is undeniable that the island, its climate, and its soil have been mistaken, if not misrepresented, and although the very earliest of England's colonies, it has not met with the support and favour so important a possession demands of the Mother Country. Perhaps the hour is at hand when England will discover this to her cost, and when France may have added the interference she is now trying to enforce to other perplexities she may be preparing for a country whom it may some day find convenient under her own difficulties to oppose in arms.

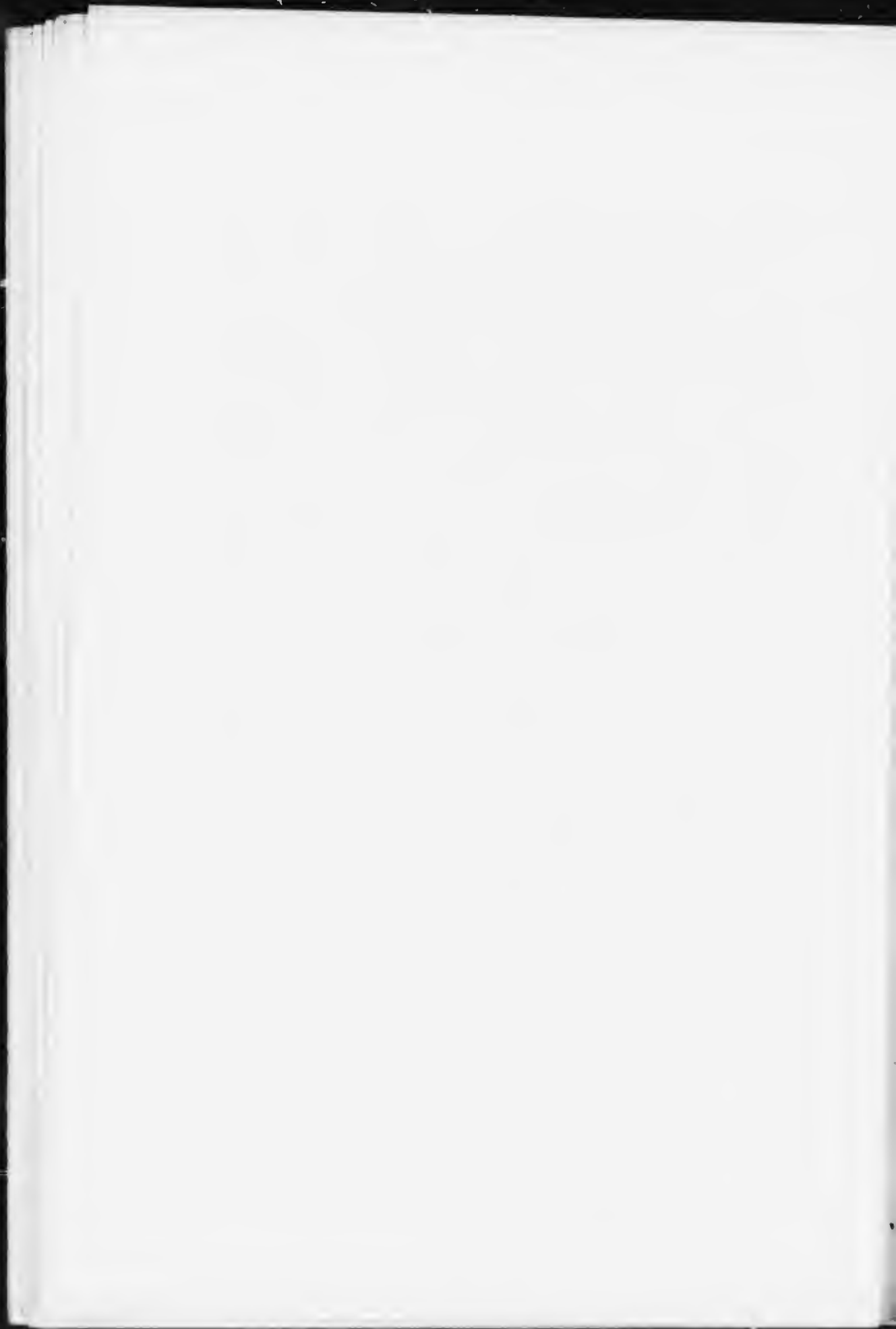
And having made these assertions, it is a more pleasant course to endeavour to remove some of the ignorances which we have ventured to say exist. And firstly the universal fog, which is really rather a myth. Doubtless fogs do accumulate on the coasts, and are a very serious hindrance to shipping. They prevail chiefly in May, June, and July, when the season is opening, and when our coast waters are teeming with icebergs. This is common knowledge. But then it must be remembered that the fogs are generated on the banks of Newfoundland,



which are vast submarine plateaux from 80 to 200 miles distant from the island. Even with an "inshore" wind they seldom approach nearer than a mile to the shore, and while the coasts are completely shrouded by the fogs, up the country, inland, the sun is shining brightly. Occasionally the fog can be seen some miles out hanging like a great black pall over the sea. It is this the passing sailor looks upon, yet not through to the sun-lighted coast beyond. I have no hesitation in saying that the island is not at all incapacitated by the fogs. To the mariner, Nova Scotia (which shares the fogs equally with Newfoundland) is much more difficult of approach, owing to the dangerous shoals which lie off it at a considerable distance, "which prevent vessels running during fogs for a harbour with the same confidence that they do on this coast."<sup>1</sup> We accept it "on the other side" as a fact that it was for the advantage of the merchant princes—the monopolists—to magnify the difficulties and to multiply the fogs so that they might with more facility and less opposition preserve the island to themselves; and these have been kept up and largely augmented by travellers to America, who pass over the "banks," but never really see Newfoundland. It is a fact that on the west, north, and north-east coasts of the island fogs are almost unknown.

During my stay in England of over two years, I have experienced more fogs than it was my

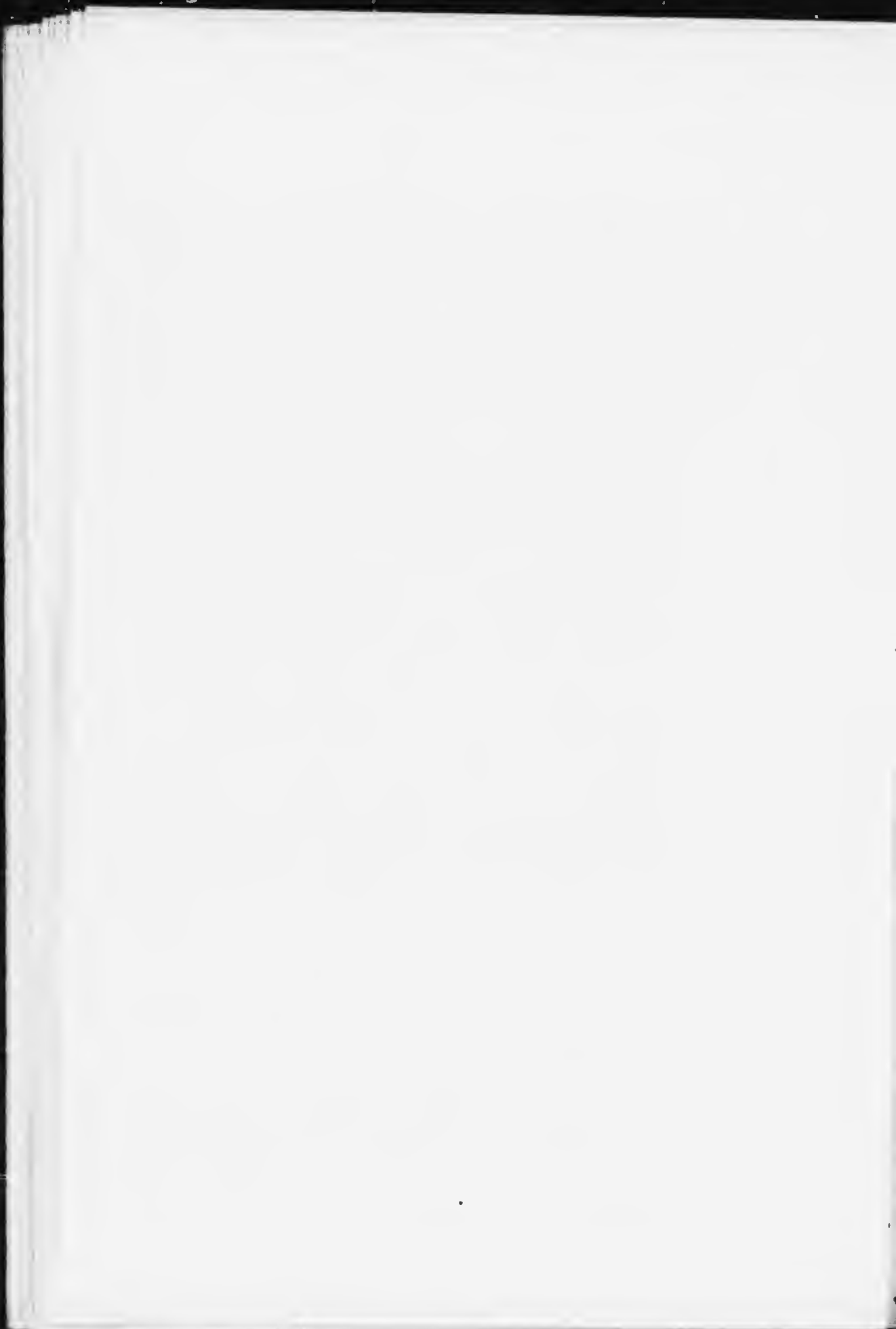
<sup>1</sup> "History of Newfoundland," F. R. Page.



lot to meet with in "Terra Nova" (and I certainly have heard more complaints about the Anglican visitors!), although my residence was on one of the arms of a bay on the east coast. Westerly winds prevail during three-fourths of the year, and these carry the fogs directly away from us across the Atlantic, and the British isles get the benefit of their moisture. In winter there is very little even hovering on the banks, owing to the strength of the Arctic current, which reaches much further south than in summer. Thus it will readily be seen from the nature of these facts that a mystification, or, if you please, a mythification has prevailed in regard to the universal fog of Newfoundland.

We have cleared away the fog, and opened an undisturbed view of our island, which is really surprisingly beautiful and picturesque. An English gentleman who lives in the midst of English oaks and beeches told me that he was much surprised and amused at the first exclamation which a young Newfoundlander made on coming to visit him one autumn,—“Why all this reminds me of Newfoundland!” And it is remarkable that the first impressions of the navigators and others who visited the country were correct, and are thus summarized by the writer in Purchas' Pilgrimages, who says —

“It is with-in-land a goodley country, naturally beautified with roses sowed with pease, planted with stately trees and otherwise diversified both for pleasuro and profit, and now the report goeth that



our English nation doe there plant and fixe a settled habitation"—say 1583.

In shape an irregular triangle, its coast is deeply indented with numerous bays and inlets, while massive and lofty lines of cliffs everywhere round its seaboard constitute Newfoundland a formidable natural fortress, and in a special sense "the key to an important position," one to be taken and held by who knows who, and what, and when. The harbours of Newfoundland represent some of the finest in the world. That of Trinity alone has been estimated to be capable of sheltering any number of ships one nation could supply at one time. From both a military and naval, as well as from an artistic point of view, the size and beauty of the three great arms of Trinity are exceptionally remarkable. Heart's Content—where is the terminus of the Atlantic cable—is a port for beauty and security rarely surpassed. But it is unnecessary to instance individual places, where so much of interest is to be found. The island has several rivers. The estuaries of most of them are on the east coast, caused by the fact that the land rises much higher on the western side, while here and there along the coast "landwashes" with their intermingling sand and cobbles lend a great and pleasing variety to the coast scenery.

The southern coast is very much broken also, but here the great feature is seen of the groups of islets of every form and size, "from huge heaps of naked rocks, whose scored sides team with seabirds,

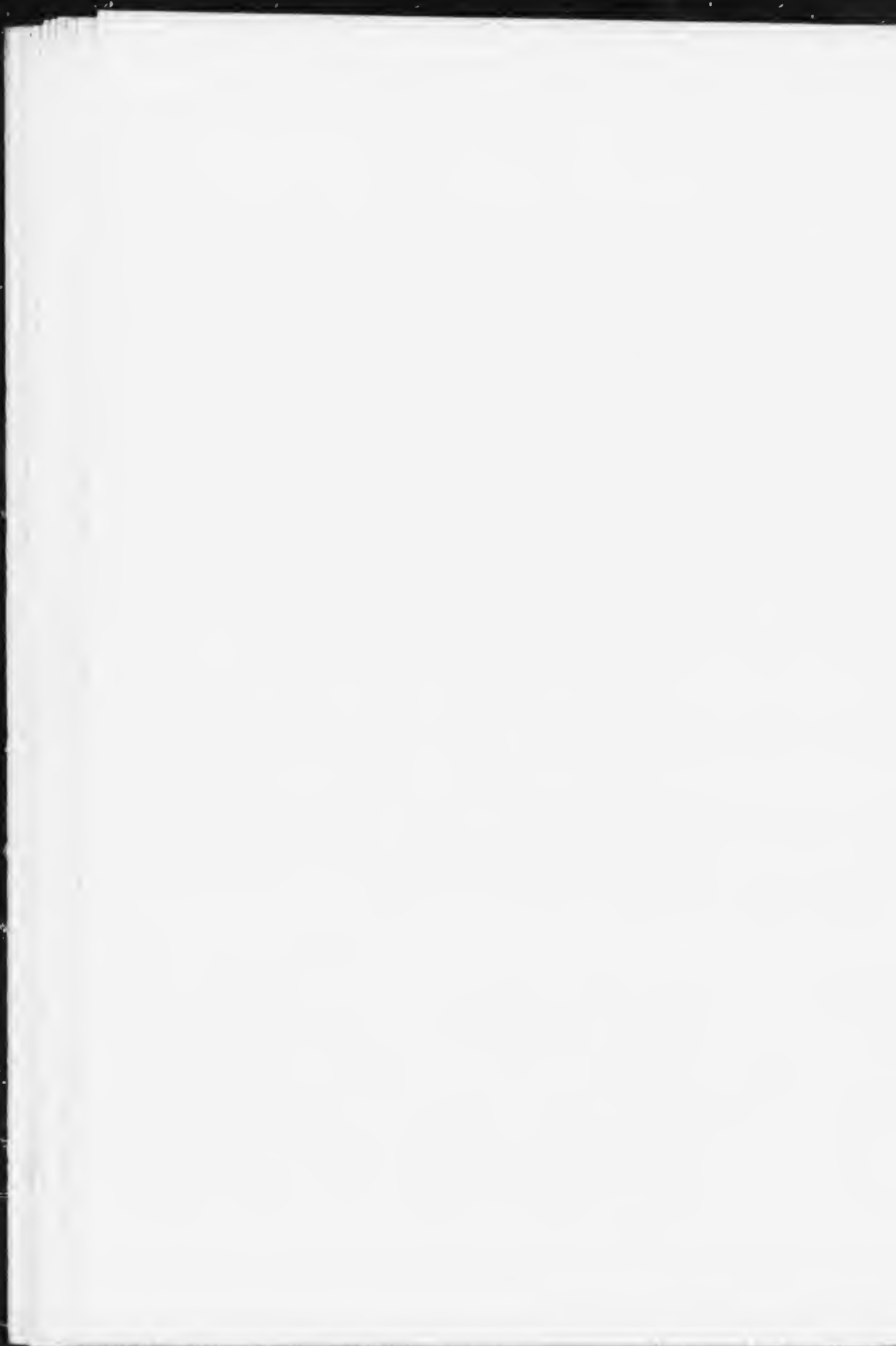




to low banks of the brightest green, where the grasses are intermixed with a profusion of wild flowers." The Burgeo group are 300 in number, but only a few of them are inhabited. A missionary resides on one of the larger islands, and does the greater part of his work in a boat, which work I am told includes services with sermon at five different places each Sunday—no easy task in some seasons. The west coast (and here, as well as with regard to the south coast, I am indebted to others) is more regular. Two rivers of importance flow into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, one of which, the Humber, is navigable for fifteen miles, and will accommodate vessels of the largest size.

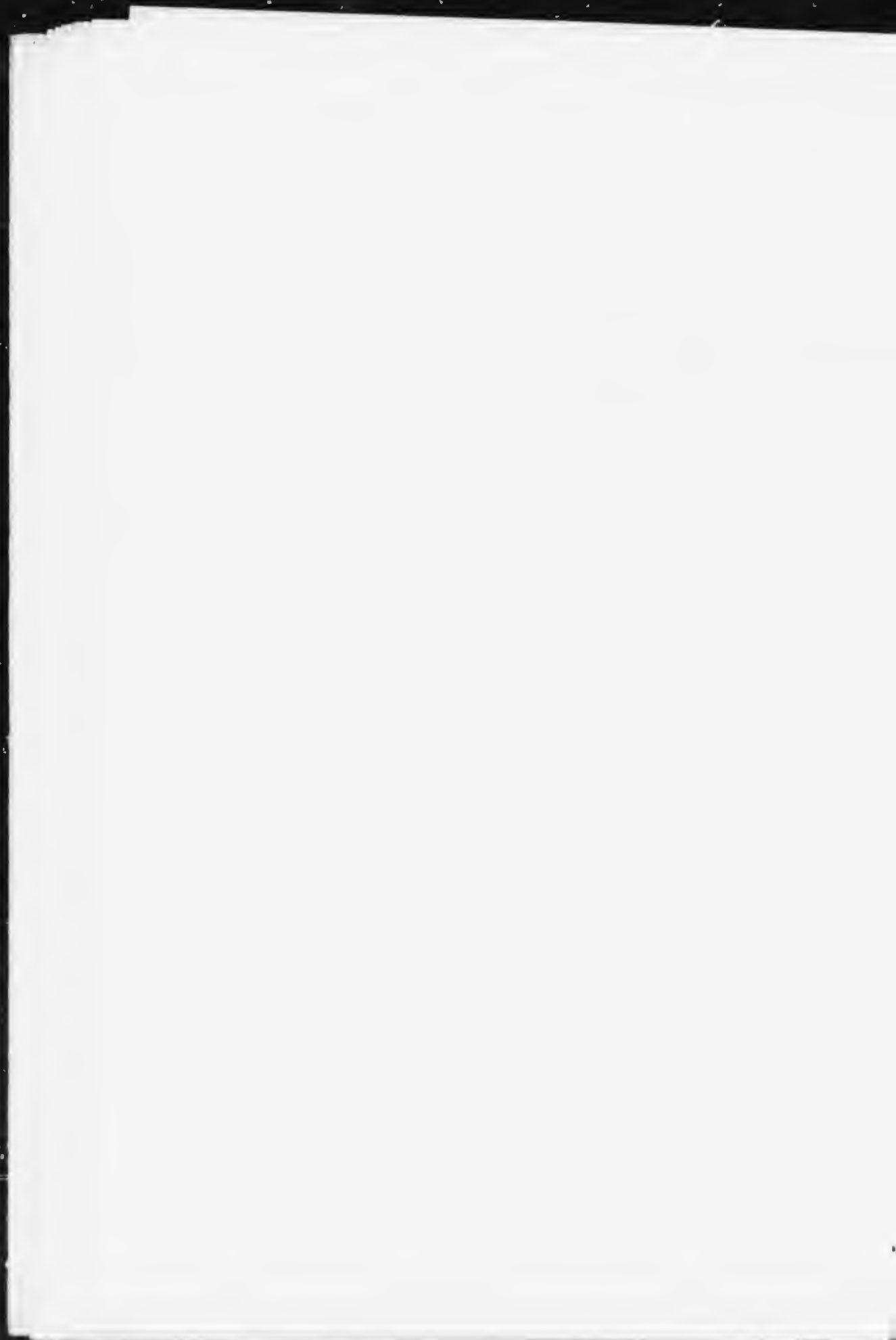
The Bay of Islands must be placed, from all accounts, in the first rank of Newfoundland scenery. Here we have great perpendicular cliffs rising abruptly from the deep waters; further on, lesser hills rich in their covering of birch, spruce, fir, and poplar trees, overtopped in the background by forests of lofty pines strong in the freshness of a virgin soil.

Circumstances have led to neglect of the interior of the island, which is as yet imperfectly known. Government surveyors are now at work from May till October in every year, and the reports of the country they send in admit only of one construction, viz. that it is fitted to sustain a large mining, lumbering, and agricultural population. It appears that the island is a complete network of rivers, the banks of which are clothed with pines, spruce, fir,

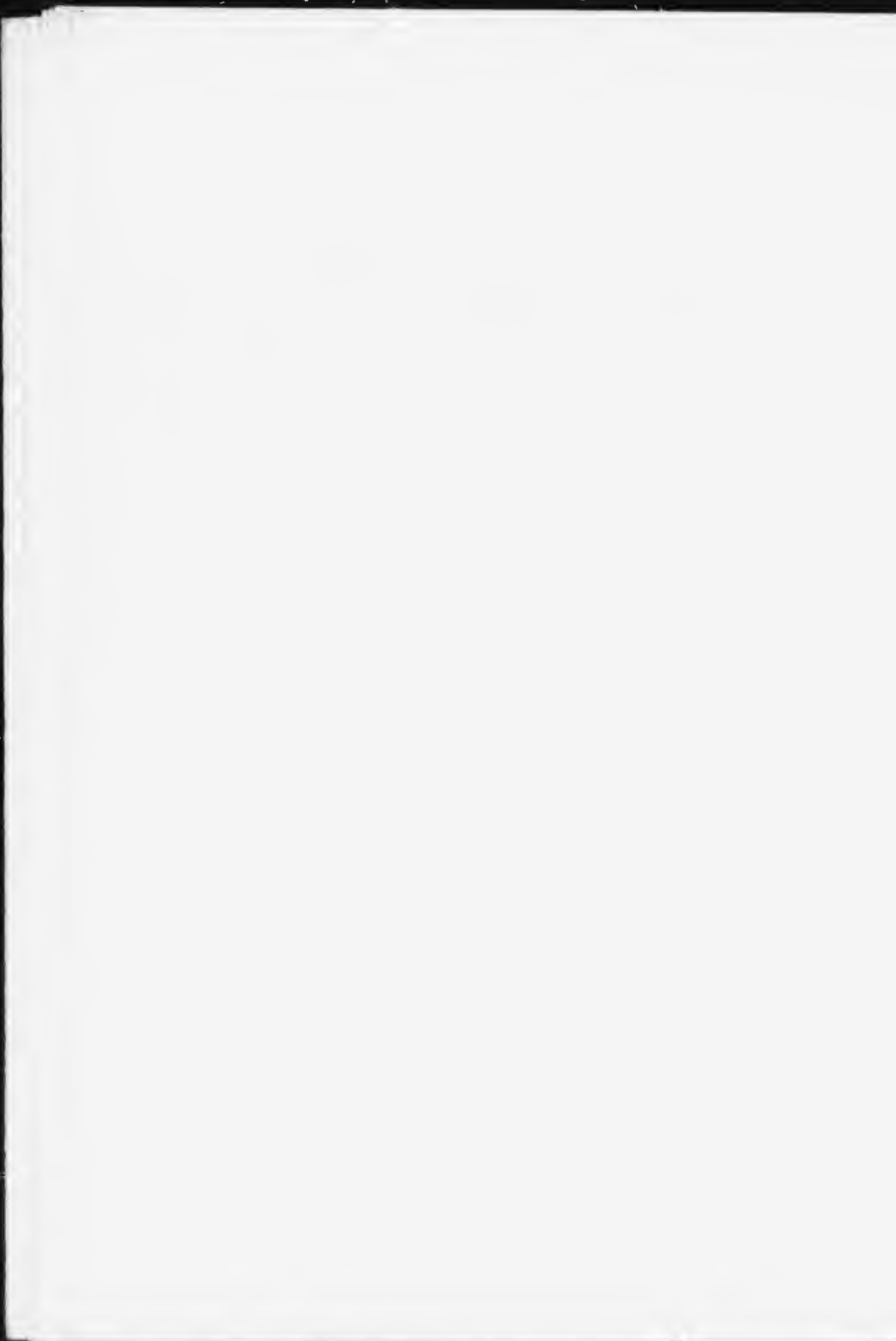


birch, and poplar, which it may be hoped in the not distant future will afford employment to thousands in lumbering and ship-building. To this time, however, this neglected area, full of promise, is a mere solitude without a human inhabitant. The early settlers, and in fact nearly all immigrants to Newfoundland, were fishermen, or had interest in the fishing industry, and so have never left the sea coast. The character of the island stamped that of its inhabitants so long as they clung to the seaboard, and first-rate sailors and fishermen are the result. That Newfoundland is a barren rock, and possesses an unfertile soil, is an impression wholly erroneous. It is unfortunate that all the earlier attempts at agriculture were made in the peninsula of Avalon, which happens to be without exception the least favourable section of the whole island for such purposes. Good arable land can be obtained at this time at a nominal cost all over the island. A settler's grant of 150 acres can be attained on certain conditions for the fee charged by the surveyor, and any amount in addition at the rate of only half a crown an acre. Within the last few years a very considerable bonus has been offered to the tiller of the soil, who is protected and encouraged in many ways by the Government of the colony. Very little land is under cultivation, but quite enough to prove conclusively that the soil can yield rich and abundant crops in great variety.\* It has long since been

\* "Newfoundland the Oldest British Colony." By Joseph Hatton and the Rev. M. Harvey.



pointed out that the most independent and prosperous of the working classes are those who have turned their attention to farming. The majority of our people, however excellent as fishermen, are certainly not farmers, and it is my strong conviction that if Newfoundland is to become an agricultural country, an entirely new stock must make it so. The railway which commenced in 1881 is opening up the country, and a second line is projected to run westward from St. John's, which may yet become the route between the Old and New Worlds by Cape Breton. The opportunity for emigrant farmers is great, for men of energy possessed of a moderate capital, and willing to try their fortunes in "the new land." Of course some capital is necessary, as in the most favoured districts of Canada or sunny Australia. It is indeed strange that this imperial colony, with a population of 200,000, with land of its own capable of cultivation, should be entirely dependent on Canada and the United States for the bread consumed by its inhabitants. Yet this is the case, and perhaps England may take warning, and consider the changes which come over nations politically and otherwise. And I specially desire to draw attention to the list of the commoner vegetables yearly imported into Newfoundland, all which it could grow, to test the truth of my assertion that Newfoundland offers exceptional opportunities to a farmer. All the hardier roots thrive well with us, as also oats and barley. Wheat is in quite an experimental stage, and will probably succeed on some

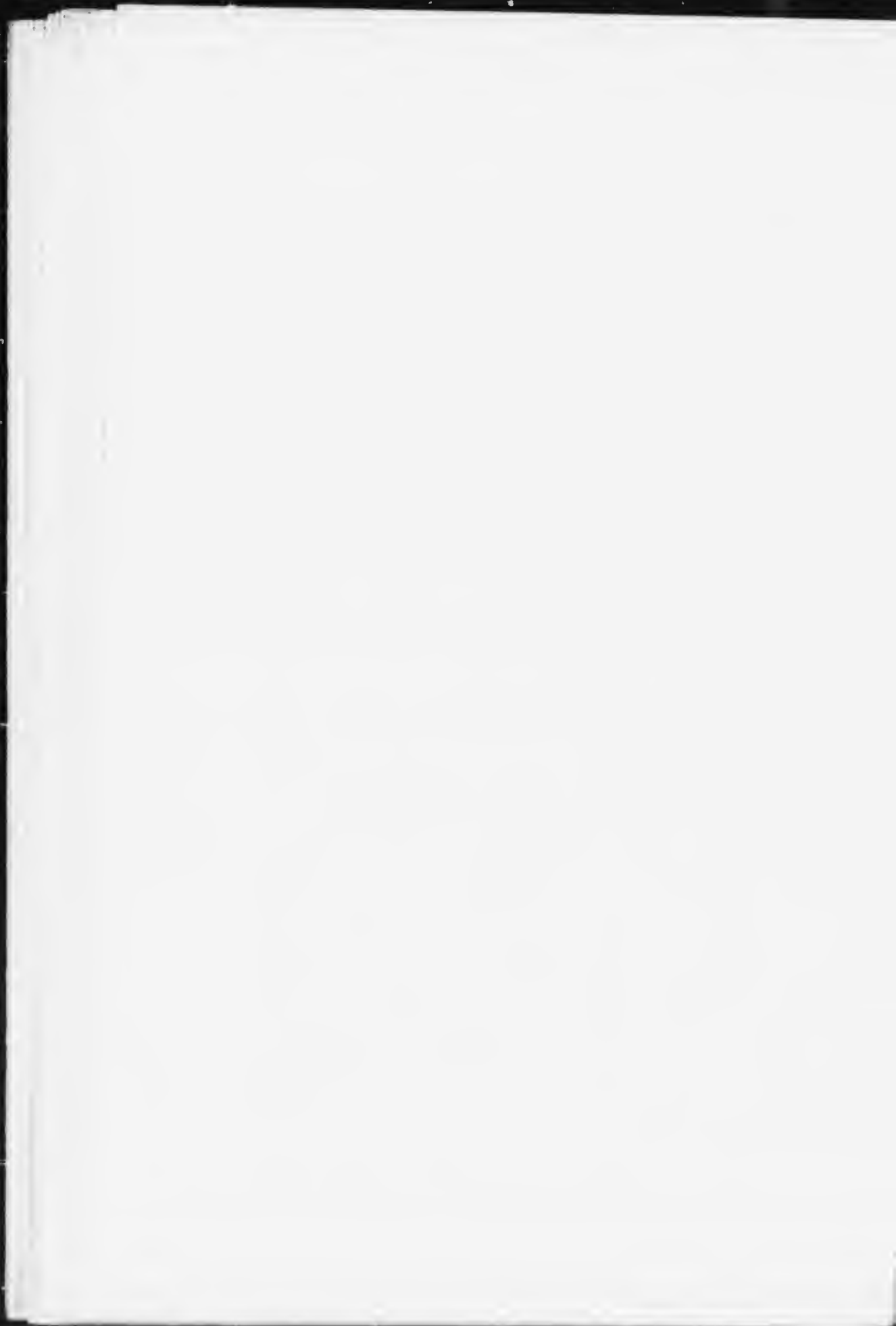


parts of the island, in such places as can actually grow West Indian annuals with a fair amount of success. The Codroy valleys on the west coast are of such reputed richness as to be almost proverbial on the east and more exposed side, where it is commonly reported that the farmers of Codroy refuse to use manure "because it makes the weeds grow."

As a stock-raising country Newfoundland would certainly succeed. Luxuriant grasses abound throughout the island, with abundance of water. Of this probable feature of the Newfoundland of the future one can speak with positive certainty, and it must be admitted without discussion by any one who has been fortunate enough to visit the "out-ports." As soon as the cold winter has passed and the snow disappears, both cattle and horses are "turned out" into the woods to fatten, and remain in the neighbourhood of the settlements to which they belong till the autumn, when they return to their owners in prime condition. The limited area covered by these cattle in summer, and their improved condition a few months later, forms ample ground for the hope that cattle-ranching in the island will in time prove equally successful with the more advanced stage of the industry "a little further west." Sheep-raising in certain localities will, we doubt not, prove eminently successful, if shepherds will come over and try on the millions of acres available for such purposes.

As to the geological peculiarities of the country, will only say that eminent geologists assert that it

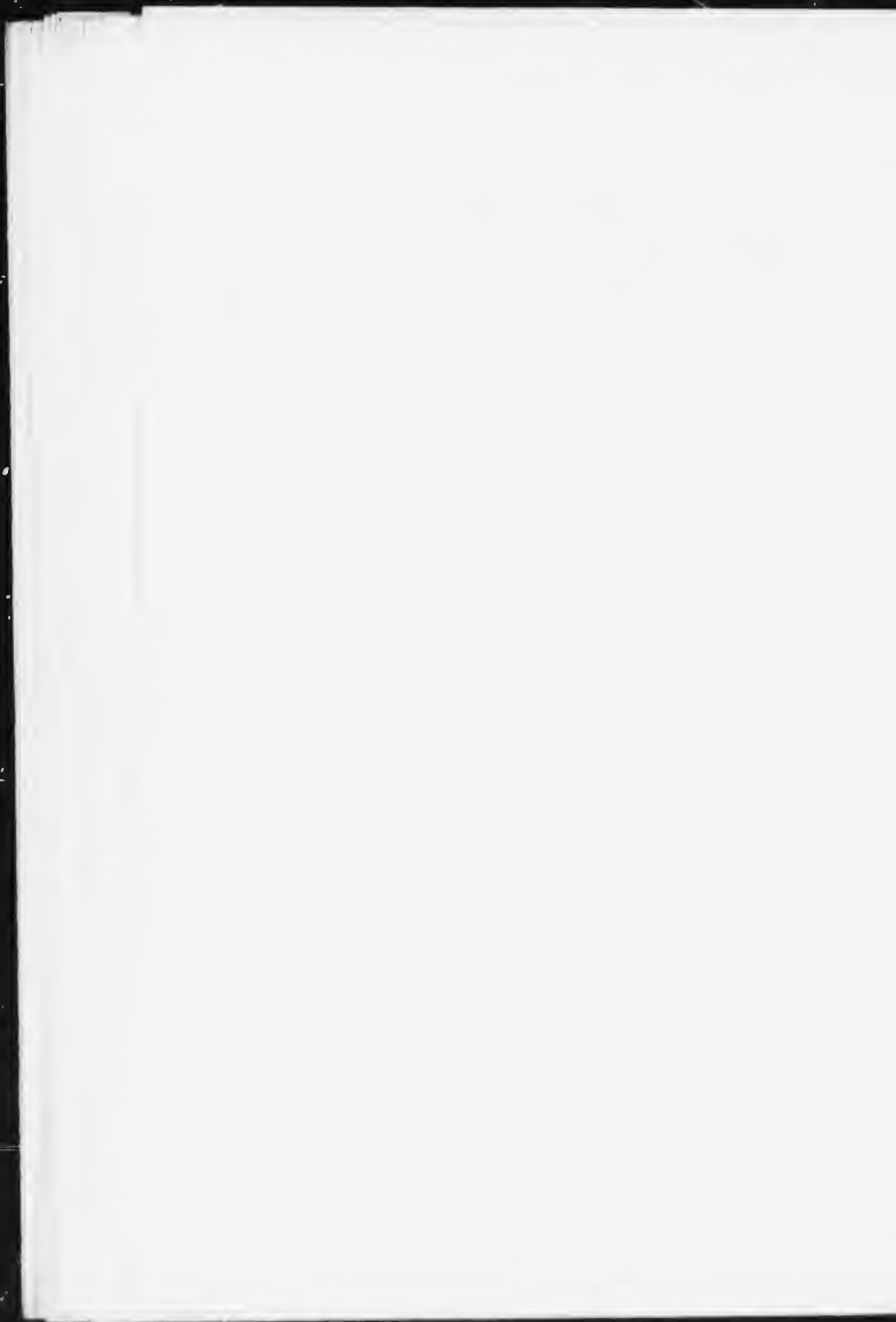




is a mine of mineral wealth. Extensive copper-mining operations at Little Bay and Hall's Bay are gradually bringing Newfoundland to the first rank of copper-producing countries.<sup>3</sup> Gold and silver have been discovered, and lead in large quantities. Valuable coal-beds lie along the line of the projected railway, and it may be hoped that in a few years the necessity of procuring coal from Sydney may be obviated.

The railway to which we have alluded will naturally lead to the development of Newfoundland and her industries. Of the first railway begun in 1881, Harbour Grace is the furthest point reached at present (a distance of hardly 100 miles from St. John's). The original proposal was to construct a line in a northerly direction to the centre of the mining districts in Hall's Bay, the length of which would be about 340 miles, and the Government of the colony contracted with an American syndicate to do the work. The company failed to fulfil its engagements, and the matter has been referred to the law courts, where the case is still pending. There were political reasons why it was not thought advisable to place the work under Government control; but since that time the Government has constructed a line from Harbour Grace Junction westward to Placentia. It is now beyond question that a progressive railway policy is the only safe course for the Legislature, and we have reason to believe

<sup>3</sup> Professor Stewart's lectures quoted in Harvey's *Newfoundland*, pp. 419, 420.



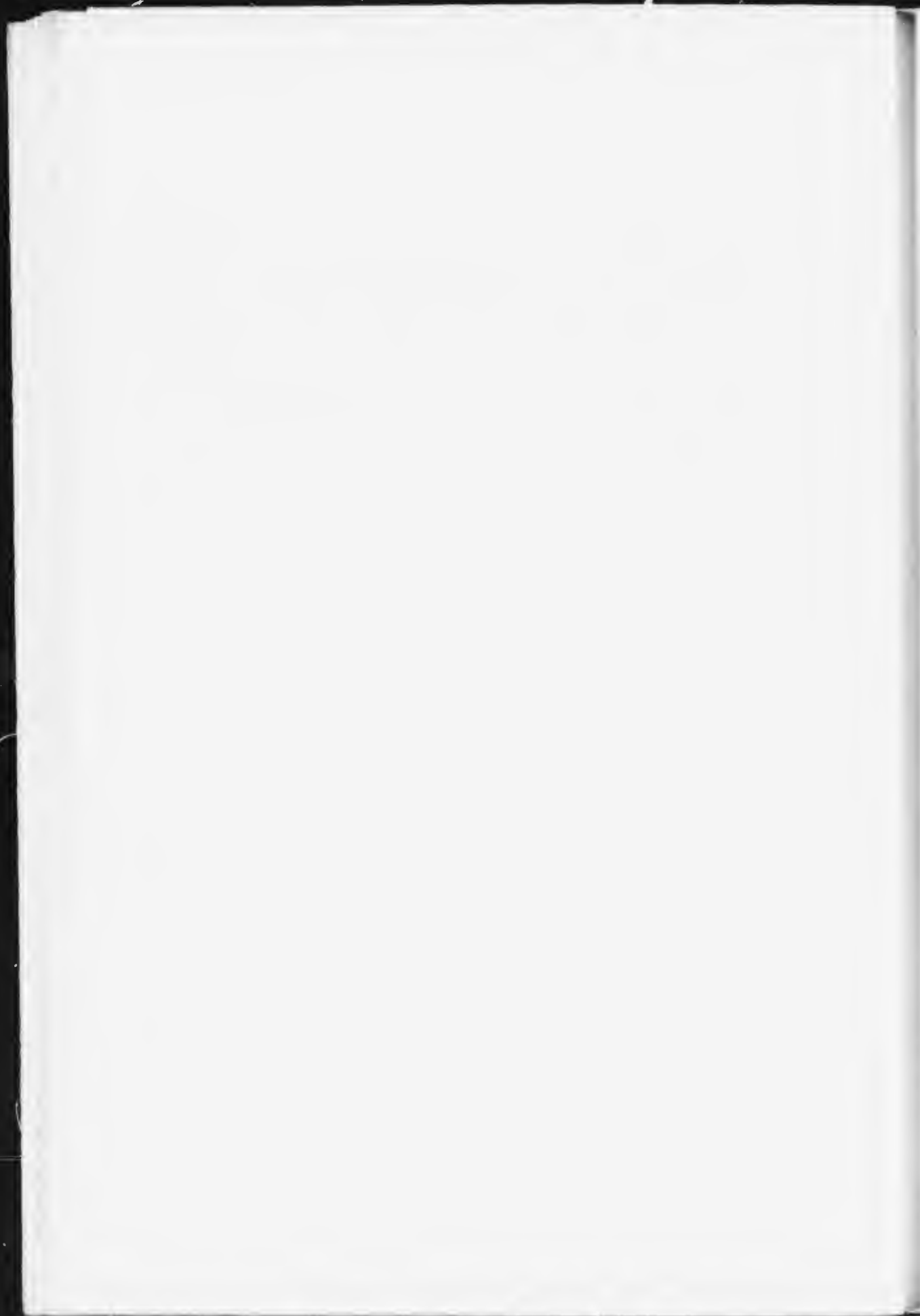
that the initiative steps have been taken in this direction. It can hardly be supposed that Newfoundland, any more than the new revealed centre of Africa, will or can make definite advance worthy of the times we live in and the area to be worked, until the country is developed by the railway system. A country which is one-sixth larger than Ireland, the nearest point of the New World to the Old, endowed with a soil much above the average, with mineral deposits which Professor Stewart, an American mining expert, describes as "practically inexhaustible," with extensive tracts of forest lands<sup>4</sup> (in Bonavista Bay alone reckoned at 1000 square miles), with grazing lands of excellent quality—all within a week's steaming of the Mother Country—offers advantages which cannot be too highly estimated, and to which I have no object in drawing attention but the welfare of our island home, and the benefit of immigrants.

A word here will be useful to justify the appellation of "The Sportsman's Paradise" to Newfoundland. Of late years enthusiastic sportsmen have drawn attention to this interesting feature. The

<sup>4</sup> From Mr. Murray's report of the survey of Gawler Lake:—  
 "Upon the S.W. arm, and at various parts of the lake, groves of pine may be seen where the average girth of the trees is not much if anything less than nine feet, and where many individual trees will reach to eleven, twelve, and even fourteen feet. On about one acre of surface I measured fifteen or twenty trees, the diameters of which varied from two and a half to four and a half feet; and these, moreover, were straight, tall, and sound, with stems running up symmetrically for upwards of fifty feet without knot or branch."



very character of our island, its many rivers, lakes and ponds, its forests, its hilly character and bold seaboard are an almost guarantee of good sport. The angler finds its trout streams stocked to the full, and even near the settlements an average fisherman need have no fear of a good basket in a few hours. By way of genuine enjoyment, of course river fishing is much to be preferred, but ponds are not wanting from which a trout of from three to seven pounds is frequently landed. The rivers also during the spring months (and especially in the Salmonier and Colinet arms of St. Mary's Bay, and within easy reach of St. John's) afford good sport in the shape of *grilse*, the virgin, and also the mature salmon ascending the rivers "to repeat the story of its birth." Salmon-fishing with "fly," vigorous and entertaining employment as it is to the successful angler, is not so productive of pleasure as it might be, owing to the ignorant abuse of the rivers by nets, &c., and we have not had as yet any island Buckland to teach us how to secure and improve the breeding of water produce, sea or fresh. But of late years stringent regulations have been laid down with regard to this unmanly and unsportsmanlike procedure; and now all of us are beginning to appreciate this fresh source of wealth, which is likely to be very extensive. Saw-mills still do irreparable injury and really banish the salmon from many of our rivers. Sea trout-fishing in July and August is engrossing and remunerative sport.



The polar bear frequently pays us a visit on the Arctic ice-floes in winter; and up country, perhaps, the more enterprising sportsman will be so fortunate as to fall in with the bear or wolf, though both these are now scarce. The interior abounds in vast herds of cariboo, commonly called "deer." A full-grown stag is a fine creature, standing as high as a horse, and weighing at times over six hundred pounds. Travellers across the island tell us they are comparatively tame and easy of approach. The herds range from fifteen to one hundred and fifty in number. Ptarmigan (*Lagopus albus*) shooting is the best known and most appreciated sport in Newfoundland. These birds are called "partridge" by the inhabitants. They are found in certain localities in great abundance, but on other parts of the island are becoming very rare. Wild goose, wild duck, curlew in late autumn from Labrador, beavers in the interior, all contribute to make the country a most enticing place for the sportsman. Sea birds, of which we might say much, from the position and natural features of the island abound in great variety.

In summer "the barren island" is clothed with wild flowers which for beauty, elegance, variety, and quantity will compare with those of any country. Acres of them may be met with all over the country. A book on this subject has been recently published by a clergyman in Newfoundland, which is full of interest, and should be studied by botanists desirous to know what the island can do in honour



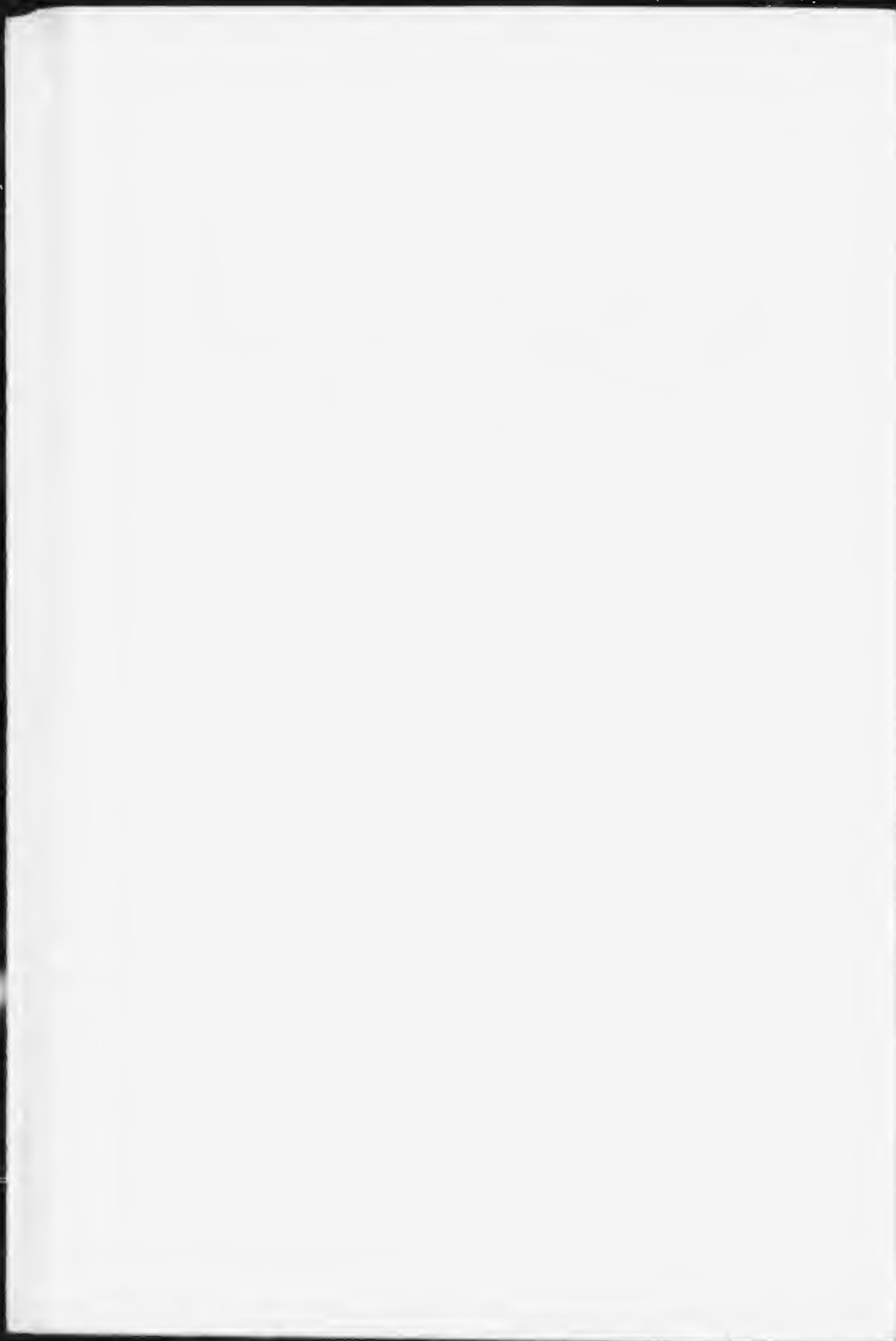


of Flora. It should also be mentioned that the country is by no means lacking in berry-bearing plants, and thus also owes much to Pomona. The best known are the whortle-berry (the grapes of the old Icelandic sagas), the bake apple, the squash berry, the partridge berry and cranberry, together with great quantities of wild strawberry and raspberry, and the delicate capillaire. All these are made into preserves, and form another of Newfoundland's undeveloped sources of produce and consequent wealth.

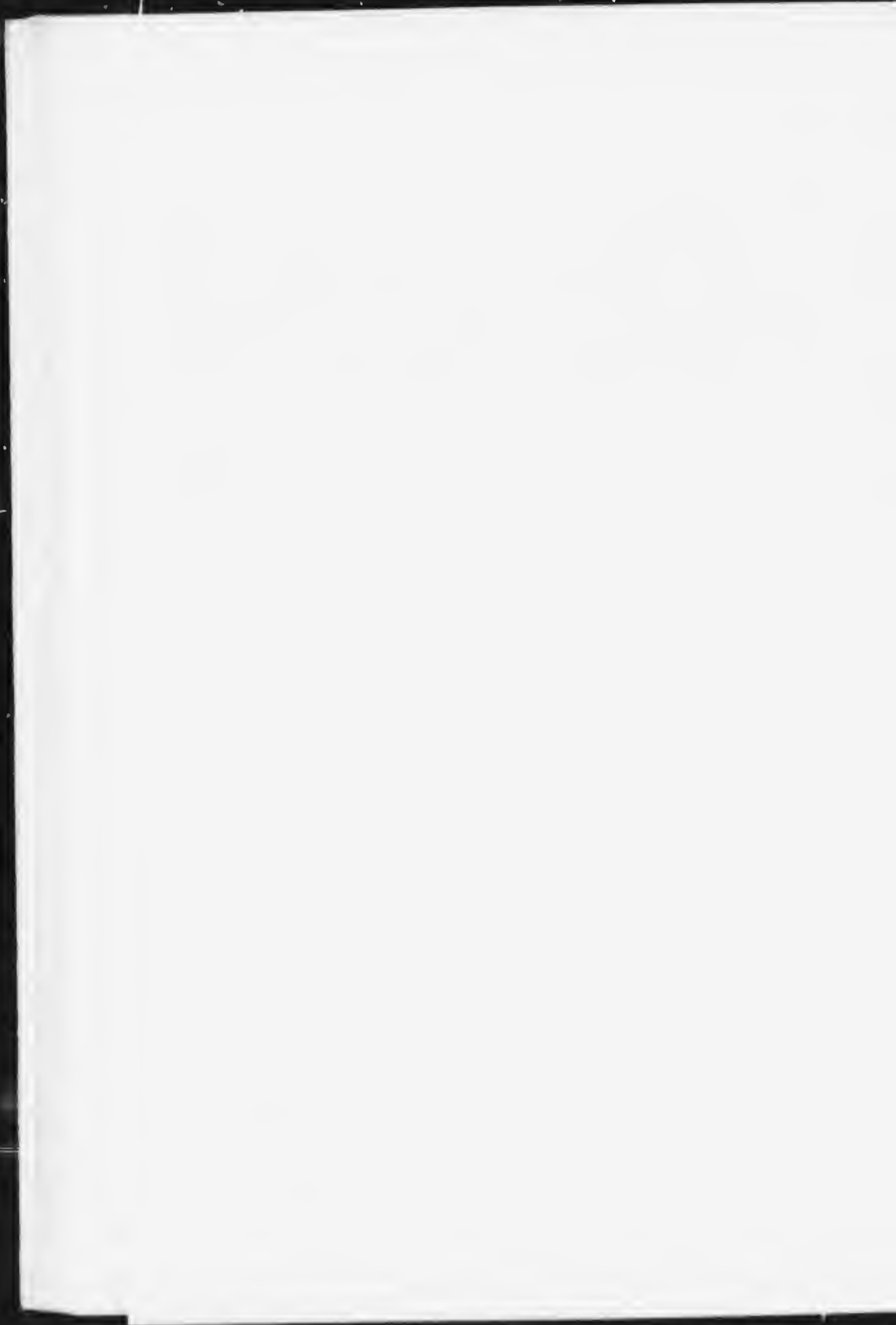
To give a general idea of the climate we cannot do better than follow the course of the seasons. It is the impression of many of us Newfoundlanders that our climate is exceptional. This would naturally be expected from the character of the island when fairly ascertained and the universal fog idea dissipated. A medical man now practising in Newfoundland writes to me thus:—"Newfoundland is recognized as a particularly healthy climate. The changes of temperature are generally so gradual as not to affect the system injuriously. Many persons coming from England, Scotland, and Ireland in delicate health have improved considerably. In fact, all foreigners enjoy good health, equal to that of natives. There is nothing in the climate detrimental to any person of fair ordinary health. The winter, as all over the world, is trying to persons suffering from lung affections." Perhaps this as a preface to a brief account of the seasons will not be out of place, and may serve as a sort of



antidote to tales of ice, and the horrors of icebergs and such like bogies of Eastern birth. Let us begin with what may seem reasonable — winter. The snow may begin to fall in October, but as the ground is rarely frozen in that month, its stay is of short duration, and it is extremely probable that nothing but light falls occur till well into December. There is the natural uncertainty about its fall, and it would be unsafe to go beyond a mere general statement; but of late years it has been rather the exception than otherwise to have anything but “a green Christmas,” which we are as a rule much averse to. January is a moderate month, with usually plenty of skating and sleigh-driving to compensate in some degree for an occasional “bite” of frost. February and March are our worst months, and generally bring plenty of frost, snow, and ice. It is a matter of no little difficulty at times to imagine that any amount of clothing can keep the cold out, and the fine snow has a peculiar aptitude for finding its way into our wooden houses. The salt water in the bays is frozen, and with the northerly gales come the great ice-floes which completely lock our coasts. For days and days, till the eye gets weary of it, nothing but this great field of snow-white ice, not even a drop of water, can be seen far out over the Atlantic. It is a wonderful sight, and never to be forgotten when once seen. This mass of glittering snow and ice is very solid, and on it sometimes a horse and sleigh can be driven with perfect safety and moderate comfort, while the inhabitants with



horse and dog draw logs of wood from the bays across the ice to their homes, to serve as fuel during the busy fishing months of summer. Usually "hauling" wood is done on land from distances of four to ten miles, but such an opportunity as the ice offers ought not to be and is not despised. In March the men go out on the ice armed with gaff, rope and knife to hunt the seal. The fact that a change of wind may carry the ice off again into the open sea, makes seal-hunting from the shore somewhat dangerous. Immediately a change is noticed by those on shore, the ringing of the church bell warns all the hunters that they must make for shore without delay. Some have not gone very far, and find no difficulty in making a safe return; others more venturesome, who have wandered far away, not unfrequently find on nearing land that their escape is cut off, and they must wait patiently till their sturdy honest countrymen can launch a skiff and rescue them. However, a very vivid recollection is present to me of a crew out on the ice all night. They had secured good "tows" of seals, which very materially affected their homeward journey, and when they neared the shore, as evening was closing in, it was to find they were too late, the ice had broken off, and all must make up their minds to a night of exposure or even worse. Watchfires were kept going all the night along the coast to assure them that every effort was being made to reach them, but it was not till daybreak that they could be taken off the ice much exhausted, but



fortunately not a great deal the worse for their trying experience.

The seal fishery is also prosecuted in steamers and vessels specially built for the purpose, and it is the slaughter of seals by these ships in the numbers we have all read of which has raised a sneer at the humanity of the proceeding, and the waste of the carcase is generally the ground of another objection to the industry. But such sentiments go to the root of all slaughter for man's service, and really are not subject to such treatment by rational folk. He, however, who would shudder at the "pitiful cry" of the young seal, should in all fairness remember the bark and growl of the "old doghood," who is not particular what part of a man his teeth come in contact with, provided he gets a firm hold! The destruction of such numbers of seals as we have been reading of in the Newfoundland despatches recently, is but an illustration of that universal law of sacrifice on which our very existence depends, and the necessity man feels of keeping himself alive, and with such comforts as he can secure. It is a most important industry, subject, however, to much fluctuation, and the fishery for this season has been very unyielding.

Travelling in winter in Newfoundland is both difficult and dangerous. The past winter has been unusually severe, and such a thing as a regular mail from St. John's to the northern outports was a physical impossibility, as all mails are carried, the ice rendering it out of the question for steamers to

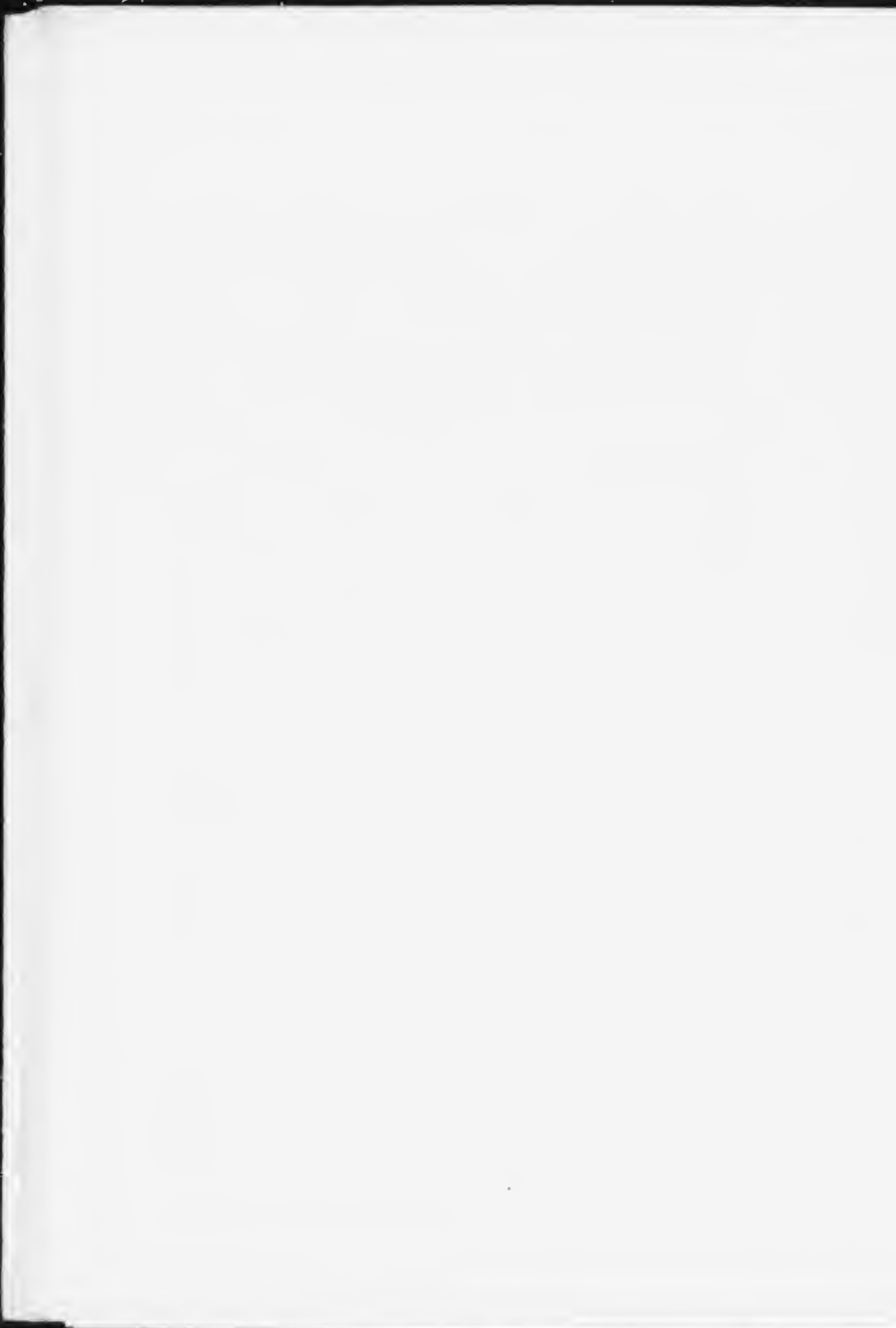




run. We must confess to not a very advanced state of civilization, when a letter is three weeks or a month in transit from the capital to an out-harbour not a hundred miles distant!

The fisherman during the winter months is busy procuring firewood for summer, or material for "flake" or "stage" building, getting his nets and fishing gear in order, or it may be building a skiff, in which latter he excels. On the S.W. corner of the island the cod-fishery is prosecuted during the whole winter when the ice will allow. It is trying work, but fish are plentiful there in winter, and in winter only. When caught the cod is cleaned, salted, and then allowed to remain till spring, when it is dried and cured. On some parts of the coast the herring-fishery is carried on in winter by means of long trenches cut in the ice, through which the nets are lowered into the water. This is quite an industry, and might be largely increased, as will be gathered from the fact that the average catch at the Bay of Islands alone is from 60,000 to 70,000 barrels, large numbers of which are exported to Canada and the United States, and sold at \$4 to \$5 per barrel.

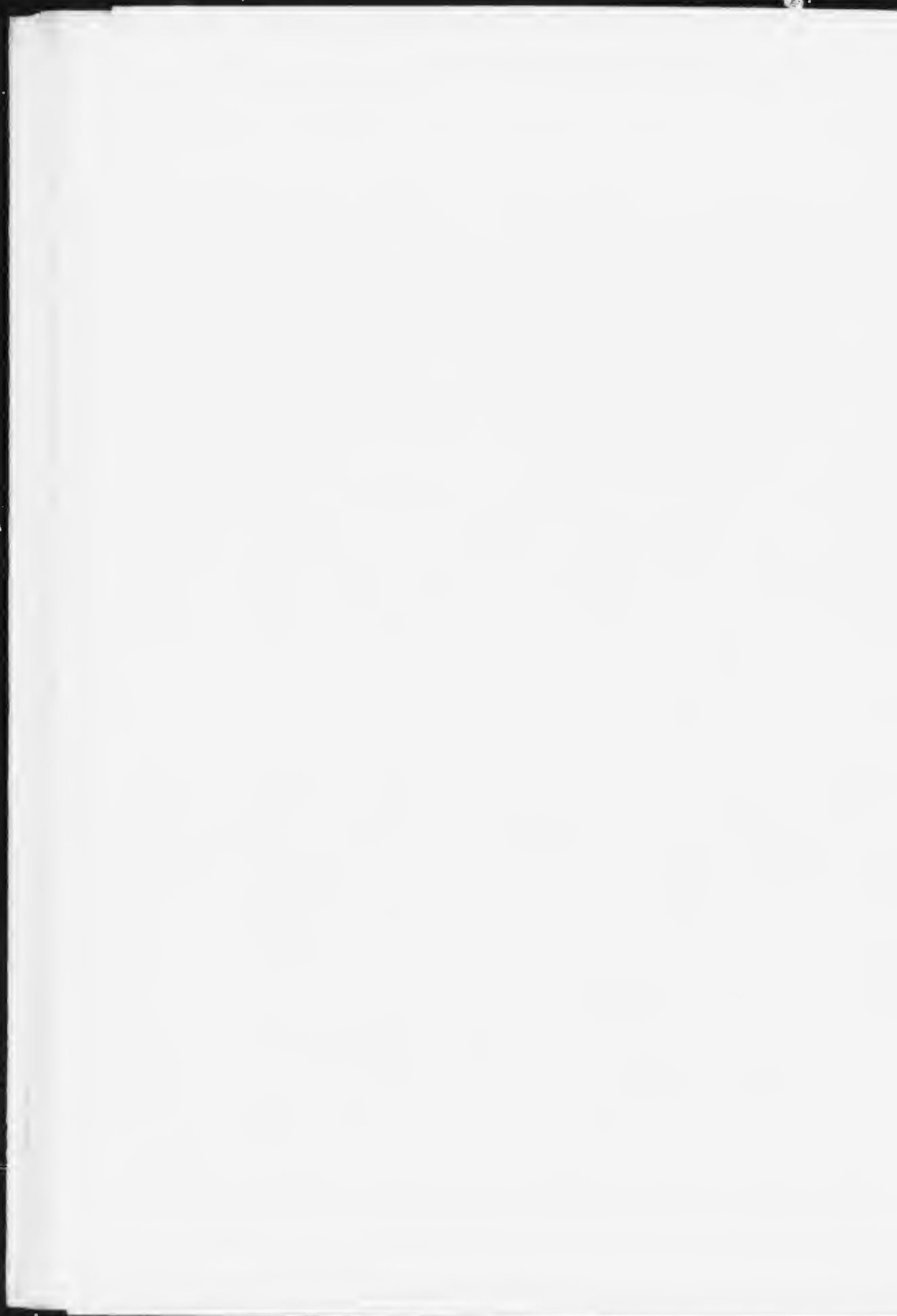
Spring sets in when April has opened. The snow and ice quickly disappear before the melting rays of the sun, causing rivers of snow-water to run everywhere. This snow-water is very penetrating, and makes it a matter of extreme difficulty to keep the feet dry. Hence the "trying character" of a Newfoundland spring, which, however, is of short



duration, for by the 1st of May in ordinary seasons the enterprising gardener has his potatoes, &c., in the ground, and nature springs into life and beauty. At this time the "cod-bait" appears, first the herring, and shortly afterwards the caplin.

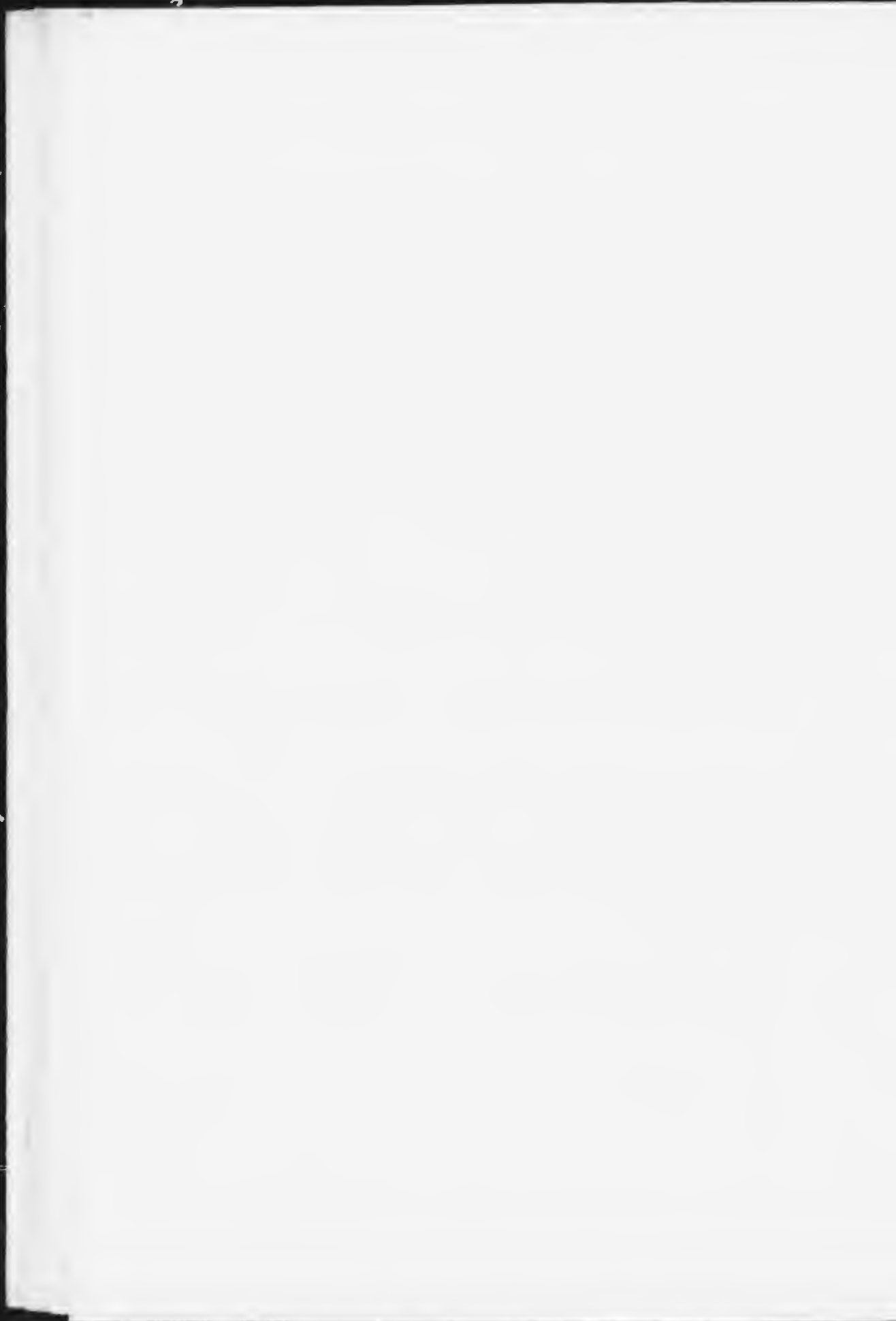
The caplin (*mallothus villosus*) is about seven inches in length, being the smallest of the salmon family, and nearly related to the smelt. Its advent is hailed with delight by all, firstly as being a bait of which the cod is particularly fond, and whose return to shallow waters the caplin is privileged to herald, and secondly as being another of the many delicacies with which our waters are replete. For six weeks or more they remain on the coast, coming in at times in such myriads as to extend along the beach "high and dry" for some hundreds of yards, and are secured in cast nets by the fisherman, or it may be (and it is no uncommon sight) by his wife and children. From morning till night the beach is a scene of great activity. Hundreds of men, women, and children are busied in securing and carrying away to their homes load after load of these fish, but causing no apparent diminution in the numbers which thrust themselves upon our shores. Abundant as caplin are, however, in Newfoundland, their use is almost entirely local, being only found elsewhere in Iceland. No doubt future years will reveal some further use for it, and it is not too early to take steps to remedy the great waste always connected with this fishery.

The caplin do not leave us till well into the



summer, when all are working hard at the country's staple industry. For the last five years we have had very poor cod-fisheries, and a poor fishery entails more labour and fatigue than a good one. The perseverance and determination with which the fisherman plies his work throughout the summer, in spite of the cry "No fish!" day after day, is little short of marvellous. He retires to rest early, and is preparing to go out again by midnight. If the catch on caplin bait is poor, he hopes for a better "sign" with the squid, and that failing, he still looks forward to a fruitful return in autumn. Besides the work connected with the fishery, the prosperous man will have his little garden to devote his spare moments to, the produce of which is, as a rule, more encouraging than his labours with the hook and line. The balmy days and the cool nights of a Newfoundland summer are all that can be desired for gardening purposes. Our summers are exceptional, and the only drawback to outport life is perhaps one which Newfoundland shares with all new and unagricultural countries, viz. the difficulty of securing fresh meat. The man who owns a few head of live stock argues with cunning logic that his beast will probably bring in twice as much if killed in autumn, and often compels one to take shelter in the "poor settler's clause" of our game laws, and to depend more or less upon his gun!

Autumn or "fall" is fortunately the prince of our seasons. It begins, if one can stoop to the iron

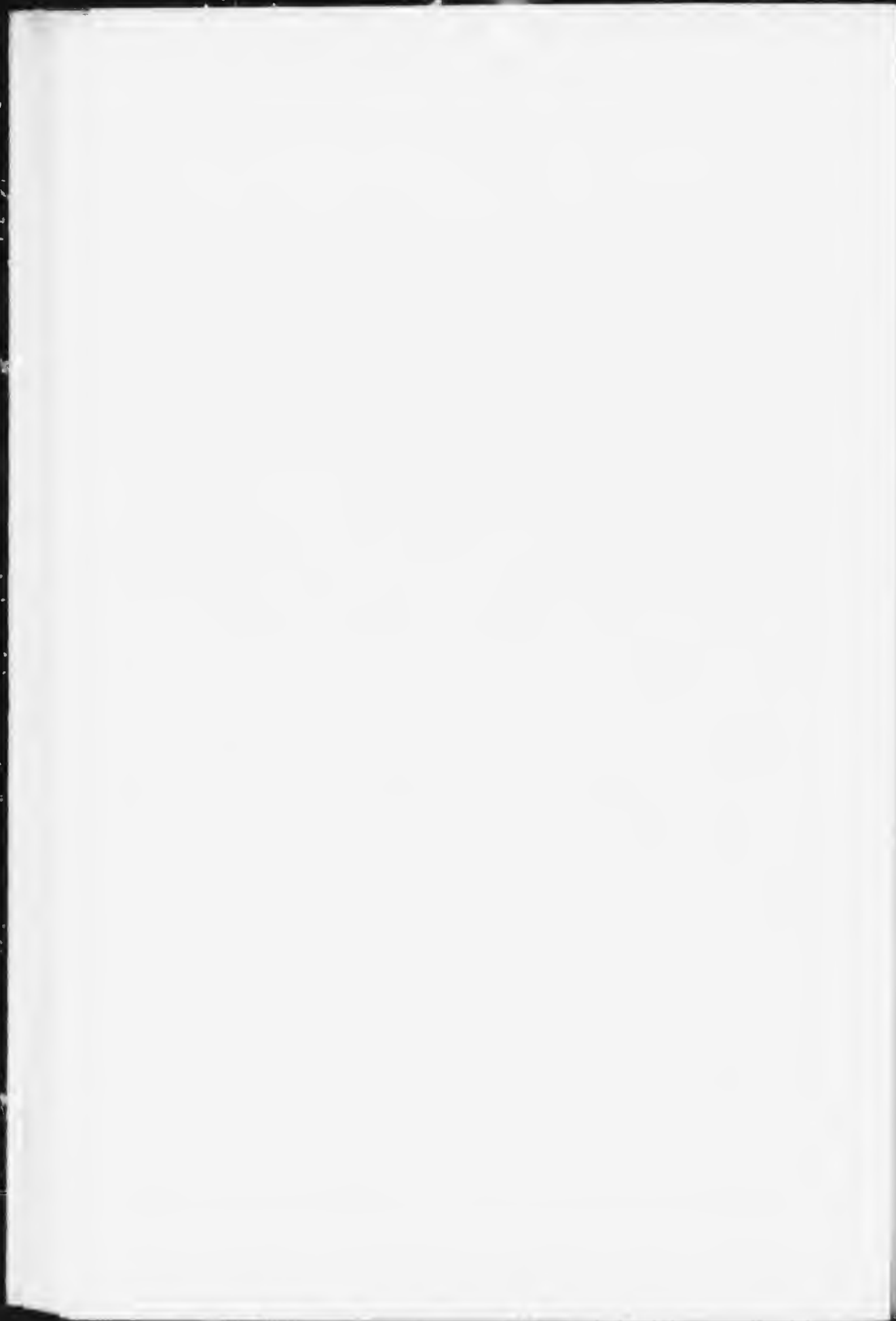


limits of a date, about the middle of September, and is a dry, healthy, and enjoyable time. The fisherman is bringing the harvest of the seas to his merchant, and what with the number of carts and the number of people engaged upon them, the streets, or perhaps better, roads of our settlements present a really picturesque and interesting spectacle. Great "drays" of dry cod are being unloaded, and put in "yassels" on to the culling tables, where each fish is carefully examined, passed thence to hand-barrows, and next to the scales, and afterwards to the fish stores, affording employment for old and young, men and women.

When the work connected with the fishery is over for the year, the fisherman, who is, as a rule, a good gunner, will seek out some favourite haunt of wild fowl, or wanders off to the hills to try his luck with the curlew, great flocks of which pay us a visit on their way south from Labrador to feed for a time on the berries which cover our hills and "barrens." The curlew is followed by the salt-water duck, also on its way south in flocks of thousands. Flying out of the bays, they come close in along the coast and past the rocky promontories, where many a gunner is concealed in his "gaze." This is cold but attractive sport, and when the return journey of these birds is accomplished in early spring, the opportunity is seized again with avidity. The "bull bird," a

\* "Gaze," a shelter built up roughly of stones.





plump little sea bird, also affords considerable sport both in autumn and spring.

I may add a few words about the Newfoundlanders themselves. The "Beothicks" (believed to be the Indian name for "men", with which compare "Innuits" of the Eskimo, an equivalent term), the aboriginal inhabitants of our island, have entirely (I think it may be safely said) disappeared. Accounts of them have been written by various writers, but we are yet waiting for something more satisfactory than has yet been produced. A few Micmac Indians only are now met with in Newfoundland. The population is composed of an intermixed Saxon and Celtic element, derived largely from Devonshire and Cornwall, and in part from Ireland. They are rather over the average size, a fine, hardy, energetic, and industrious people, very hospitable and very faithful, and of deep religious sensibility, and in chivalry and manly courage worthy representatives in every sense of the noble races from which they spring. I am happy to be able to relate a touching incident, illustrative of their attachment to one of their missionary clergymen, who wished to visit a sick woman some sixteen miles distant in the very depth of winter. On the day preceding his intended travelling on foot such a distance almost beyond a possibility. However, several fishermen volunteered to tread a road for the person on the "rackets" (snow-shoes) the whole distance both ways, and the



duty by this means was successfully accomplished.

I have always been struck with the readiness with which the fishermen come forward to give both lumber, time, and labour free of charge, when a church is being built, and how in many other ways they show their appreciation of the labours and services of the holders of the Great Commission. The people are most orderly and law-abiding, and it is my firm belief that their stand in the present fishery dispute has arisen from a sense of real injustice done to them in deference to the French claims. Can it reasonably be supposed that a high-spirited and courageous people, such as they are, will submit to an imperative order to remove their fishing-nets from certain parts of their own waters because the French wish to fish there, even though the order comes from a British ship of war? Yet such is the case. Time after time it happens, and now the "concurrent rights" of the French in certain waters have extended to the exclusive use of nearly half the island. And is it too much to expect that England will support Newfoundland in this matter, as she did Australia in the case of the New Hebrides? When the most Conservative paper in Newfoundland can write, "Loyalty to Great Britain has ceased to be a duty for Newfoundlanders," and can speak of Britain's treatment of us as displaying "marvellous apathy" and "cold indifference," the question has reached such a point as to demand the most careful treatment.



For years we have been cognizant of the strong feeling which has steadily been setting in against this French infringement on our rights and privileges as owners of the land, and no more serious error or ignorance could possibly happen than to imagine that the present action of the Newfoundlanders in remonstrating with the Home Government in respect of the modus vivendi, is other than the climax of these feelings strengthened by the growth of years.

The history of the colony is not such as an Englishman can look back on with pleasure. From the very first impediments hindered it from making any definite advance, and it must not for an instant be supposed that the spirit which brought about those deplorable statutes to which we have referred is completely extinguished. The same spirit which withheld capital and hindered the development of our island in the past, is as much alive as ever to keep and to preserve a fishing population to the disadvantage of the natural resources our island undoubtedly possesses. Even a railway policy will find its opposers in certain quarters. With such facts then before us, is it so much to hope that something will be done by responsible parties to check the great excess of our population, and to encourage the development of the resources of the island, and to remove in some degree the strange pressure or stagnation which seems so long to have brooded over one of the most favoured countries of the New World?



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