

A  
LECTURE  
ON  
PLACENTIA.

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Delivered in the T. A. Hall, by  
H. W. LeMessurier,  
March, 1910.

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The subject of my lecture this evening is Placentia Bay—one of the most historic spots in our Island home. It is one which to deal with properly in all its phases of natural features nomenclature, history, people and commerce would occupy a very much longer time than is allotted to a lecturer.

The Bay of Placentia is the largest of the many bays which indent our coast. Situated on the South Coast of Newfoundland it lies in a North N. Easterly and S. S. W. direction and in conjunction with Trinity forms the Peninsula and Isthmus of Avalon. The Isthmus is so narrow between the waters of Come-by-Chance in Placentia Bay and those of Bay Bulls Arm in Trinity Bay that not quite one and three quarters of a mile of land divide them. In the time of the French occupation a rough road was made between these points over which the French used to haul their boats and which path has since been used by the fishermen of Placentia and Trinity Bays to carry bait from one bay to the other. The French first, and afterwards the English, contemplated making a ship canal across this Isthmus and several times it was surveyed for that purpose, for in the days when sails were the only means of propelling a seagoing ship a canal would have saved many a mile when it became necessary to go from Trinity Bay to Placentia Bay. A good story is told in conjunction with one of these surveys. When Sir Thomas Cochrane was Governor of Newfoundland, he went to Placentia Bay to inspect the short cut

across to Trinity Bay. He set out in his own yacht taking with him Colonel Kelly, who was the officer in command of the Troops stationed in St. John's; the Private Secretary; Mr. J. Dunscombe, his aide-de-camp; and two officers; one of them of the Royal Engineers, the other of the Royal Artillery. Colonel Kelly was a typical Irishman, who having seen service at Waterloo was slightly lame from a bullet wound in his leg. At that time, one Paddy Wise lived at Come-by-Chance, and it had been intimated to him that it was likely that Sir Thomas would pay him a visit, and that his services would be required as a guide. Paddy waited for some time, daily expecting the arrival of the Governor, who, to him was a very great personage. Unexpectedly one afternoon a yacht anchored at Come-by-Chance and after a little delay a boat was launched and the Governor and his staff was rowed to the shore. At the house of Paddy Wise all was in confusion for a few moments. Paddy was away at a little distance, and when the Governor arrived some one was despatched to call him. The Governor, who was in plain clothes, left the officers of his suite, who were in uniform, and wandered a short distance among the trees, surrounding the house, on a look out for the old French footpath. Meantime Paddy had arrived at the house in great haste, had taken Colonel Kelly to be the Governor, and had ordered the "missus" to prepare some refreshments whilst he went to get some wood to make up the fire. Before Paddy went for the wood Colonel Kelly asked him what sort of a road led across to Trinity Bay. "Begorra yer honor," said Paddy, "and its a mighty wet one just now, although it would be no trouble to carry yer honor over the bad spots." "Is it a long distance, Paddy?" said the Colonel. "Bedad yer honor, its no aisy walk for the likes of you, although not more an' a mile." "Well," said Col. Kelly, "if the road is like that I'm d—d if I will risk my leg over it for the best man that was ever

born." Paddy went out to get the wood for the fire and as he was picking it up the Governor approached him and addressed him with: "Good day, my man." "God save you," said Paddy. "Is your name Patrick Wise?" said the Governor. "Bedad it's that same," said Paddy. Paddy thought that as the Governor was in plain clothes he must be one of the servants, and this accounted for his brusque manner. "Now, my man," said the Governor, "what is the state and direction of the road to Trinity Bay?" "Not making you a saucy answer, you may make your mind aisy about it, as his honor the Governor in there says the devil a fut he's going to put on it." "But," said the Governor, highly amused at Paddy's mistake—"Arrah don't be butting me," interrupted Paddy, "and your betthers waiting to discourse me," and off he marched to the house, at the door of which had gathered the suite. The Governor followed Paddy, and much to the latter's alarm, he saw that the man to whom he had spoken so roughly must be some one of importance, as great deference was paid him. In a loud whisper he enquired as to who was the man in plain clothes, and on being informed that it was the Governor, sadly exclaimed: "Wirrasthru, but its lost entirely I am for I was sure he was only the sarvant man." Looking at Colonel Kelly with an imploring glance on his countenance, he said: "Sure I know your honor'll put in a good word for a poor honest Irishman like yourself, sure if you were him I know I'd be safe." Paddy was assured of forgiveness and next day he piloted the Governor across the Isthmus. To the day of his death he spoke of the time that he made the "awfulest mistake of his life."

Placentia Bay is triangular in shape, the base of the triangle may be said to be a line drawn from Cape St. Mary's on the east to Cape Chapeau Rogue on the west, a distance of 48 miles. From the centre of the base to the head of the bay is 66 miles. Its west-

ern side is much longer than the eastern, stretching for 85 miles from Cape Chapeau Rouge to Black River, whilst from Cape St. Mary's to the same place is 67 miles. A line drawn from Placentia on the east to Presque on the west encloses its principal islands to the north. On the western shore inside of Presque and near to the shore lie the islands of Great and Little Valen, Burgeo Islands, Ship Island, Barren Island, Woody Islands and Sound Island. Parallel to these and from four to five miles distant, lies the great island of Merasheen, 21 miles in length, with a cluster of islands, called the Ragged Islands, lying contiguous to its western shore. To the east of Merasheen lies Red Island in line with Long Island and several minor islands. Outside of Great Paradise, and on the western shore, a number of islands are strung along from thence to Jean de Bay, or Bay D'Argent. The principal ones are Marticot, Fox Island, Long Island west, Green Island, Oderin, Emberly, Flat Islands, with several islands inside close to the shore. To sail down inside these islands on a fine summer's day is a most delightful cruise, the scenery being varied and charming. The bay is noted for its numerous fishing banks and shoals. From Merasheen Head the great Merasheen Bank reaches for miles out into the bay, a shoal rock is situated on this bank in a line between Long Island and Placentia and is called the Telegraph Rock because one of the cables was laid over it and was cut through. Parallel to Merasheen Bank, and on the west is the White Sail Bank and the Oderin Bank. Further west and off of Mortier Bay lies the Mortier Bank. On the east of the Merasheen Bank are the shoals known as the Red Island rocks and Bennett's Bank, between which and the Point Verde Bank, which is parallel to, and in with the eastern shore, is a deep trough. On the eastern shore from Cape St. Mary's to the Gibraltar a series of fishing shoals and some island rocks stretch in a line from one to two

miles off the coast. There is a feature about our bays on the south coast which is rather peculiar. The eastern shores are low and contain but few harbors, in fact none for a stretch of nearly thirty miles, whilst the western sides are high, very rocky and contain good harbors. The land of St. Mary's Bay is low on the eastern side, and has no harbor until St. Mary's is reached, just thirty miles inside of its headlands. Placentia is also low land on the eastern side and there is no harbor for 27 miles inside of Cape St. Mary's, and not until Placentia is reached can one be made. Fortune Bay is singularly the same, the barred harbors of Fortune and Grand Bank being 25 miles from Point May and the land low lying. There is good agricultural land on the eastern side of Placentia Bay, from Cape St. Mary's to Placentia, and here has been produced the finest butter made in Newfoundland. So much for the physical features of the bay which I hope have not been too dry.

And now I come to the name "Placentia," which is given to the bay and its principal town. I know that I am treading on rather dangerous grounds in attempting to locate the origin of this name, but one can but do his best in this matter, and it is too important an item to overlook in this lecture. I wish you to remember that most of the early cartographers were either Spanish, Portuguese or Italians, who obtained their information from men who had been on voyages to the New World. The cartographical history of Placentia is as follows:—

One of the first maps to delineate the bay is known as the Freducci map. It is an undated M.S. map thought to be about 1513, but it draws the Peninsula of Avalon and Placentia Bay more correctly than any map for one hundred years or more afterwards. The bay is unnamed in this map.

In the Vieges Map—in 1534—Placentia Bay bears the name of "B. Andre."

In the Haleynne Map—1543—it is called "B. de St. Andre."

In the Map of Jehan Roze—1543—it is called "Baia de St. Andre."

On a Portuguese Portulan, undated, but after 1542, is found "I plasamse." Newfoundland then appears as an archipelago.

On a map of same date, known as the "Coate Portugaise du Depot," the Peninsula of Avalon is shown, and Placentia Bay appears as a bay written "Plaesanse."

On the map of John Vallard, of Dieppe, 1547, is found "Ille de Plaisance."

In the Descliers Map, 1546, Avalon is an island, and Placentia is not mentioned; in the Descliers map of 1550, however, the Peninsula of Avalon is shown and "Te de Plaisance" marked as a bay.

The late Bishop Mullock, in his lecture on Newfoundland, gives "Plaisance" as the original name.

It does not appear that the harbor was marked on the charts until the French occupied it in 1660, but it was known before then, for Sylvester Wyet called there in 1594 and found over sixty sail of fishermen belonging to St. John de Lux and Sibiburo. In his narrative, he says after leaving Placentia he sailed for the western side of the bay, where his boats were attacked and injured by the savages. Wyet may have reached Long Island and there encountered the Red Indians who had an encampment there, as is evidenced by the many remains of stonework, etc., which from time to time have been found there.



Now Plaisance is a French word meaning a pleasure. It is similar to the word Placentia which is from the Latin and means a pleasant place. Why should the French have adopted the Latin name if they found that the place had been named Plaisance in the beginning. I am of the opinion that the name was not given by either the French or Spaniards. It is a curious fact that the name Placentia is intimately connected with the English Kings. King William IV., when Prince William Henry, Duke of Clarence, and Captain of H.M.S. Pegasus in 1786, was Surrogate at Placentia. Placentia was the place where King Henry the VIII. was born, but it was not situated in Placentia Bay.

In "The Skirts of the Great City," written by Mrs. A. C. Bell, we find recorded that at the Manohouse of Greenwich Henry IV., in 1408, made his will and that Henry V. gave the said house to the Duke of Exeter, and in 1417 it was bestowed on the Duke of Gloucester, who largely added to it and converted it into a palace to which he gave the name of Placentia. After his death it reverted to the Crown and here Henry VIII. was born. In the Chapel of the Palace of Placentia, Mary Queen Dowager of France was married to the Duke of Suffolk. It subsequently became part of the Greenwich Hospital. Who knows after all whether the name was not given by an Englishman to what we now call Placentia. There is a small town in Spain which is called Placentia and Placenzia. In that well-known novel "Charlie O'Malley," written by Charles Lever, who was a member of the English Consular service, and served on the continent, this town of Placentia is twice mentioned and spelt Placentia. "Sir Arthur Wellesley took up his head quarters on the 10th July at Placentia," see chapter 56, and again "O'Shaughnessy's letter to O'Malley," respecting the duel, is dated "Placentia."

It may be urged that the early maps do not show the word as it is now spelt, but I do not place much faith in the early maps, as the cartographers in nearly every instance obtained their information second hand. Judging from the mistakes made by the surveyors of later date, who have published charts of our coast, it is not likely that the early cartographers were any more correct. Take for instance the bay to the eastward of Hermitage Bay marked Hare Bay, the name is not the original one and the mistake occurs from a misconception of the pronunciation of a French word. The original name was Bay de l'Hiver or Winter Bay and it was the bay to which the French of St. Pierre, who remained in Newfoundland during the winter, resorted and spent their time, where fuel was easily obtainable. The surveyors took the word to be Bay de Levre or Hare Bay, and so misnamed it. I have been often struck by the fact that we know of no names on our coast that can be traced to the Breton or the Basque.\* At the time of the discovery of Newfoundland the Basque, Breton and Norman Isle fishermen visited our shores, in fact it is a tradition in Jersey that they knew of the Newfound Isle before Cabot did. The Basque spoke a distinct dialect called Eskuara, the Breton spoke Armoric, and the men of Normandy and the Norman Isles used the old Norman French. Whilst we have many names that are traceable to the Channel Islands we have not one that we can trace to the Breton or the Basque. In this conjunction it must be remembered that it was the fishermen who first explored the country, men who were not likely to be familiar with any other than their native dialect. Was the Armoric language dead among the Breton fishermen in 1500? Or did the names they gave to places fall into disuse?

In Lahontan's voyages to North America (1689) published by Thwaites, Placentia is mentioned as we spell it and in Sir Humphrey Gilbert's voyage to

\* It has since been ascertained that Port au Port, Port aux Glacis, Saville's Cove are of Basque origin.

Newfoundland, written by Haies (1583) he says: "To the west of which,"—viz.: Cape St. Mary's—"goeth in the bay of Placentia. We sent men on land to take view of the soyle along this coast, whereof they made good report, and some of them had will to be planted there."

The nomenclature of the settlement: in Placentia Bay are mainly of French origin, some are corruptions of either French or other foreign names and many names that were originally French have been Anglicised. It is worthy of note that although the French occupied Placentia as early as 1660, many places from Cape St. Mary's to Sound Island have English names which do not find any equivalents on the old French charts. We have Distress, Lear's Cove, Patrick's Cove, Seal Point and Ship Cove, South of Placentia; and Famish Gut, Pinch Gut, Trinny Cove, Little Harbor, Little S. Harbor, Southern Harbor, Piper's Hole and Black River, north of it. Perch, Breme, Angle Cove, Girdle, Virgin, Barachois, are all of French origin. One name on the Cape St. Mary's shore is rather puzzling, that is Curslett, or as the fishermen pronounce it Cusslett. It may have been originally Corselet or Breast Plate, or it may have been called Couset, after Couset Bay near Plymouth, at which place Sir Humphrey Gilbert's ships sailed from, on their journey to Newfoundland. As his men landed on the shores of Placentia Bay it is not to be supposed, judging from the course he afterwards sailed, that they landed further north than Curslet. Point Verde still retains the ancient name given it by the French and the land which makes the point on the inside is called the Downs, the original name being the French Dunes, which means the same thing, heights on a coast. What is now called Privaceur Point, was originally Creve Cœur Point, namely Heart Breaking Point. Moll Point was originally Mal Point, off which lies

the Mal Rock. Roche Point or Rocky Point, Ram Island or the Rams, the original name of which appears to have been Rame's Island, and probably called so because of the wild vetches or peas which may have been found there. Little Placentia, Ship Harbor, Long Harbor are to be found on some of the early charts, but not on all. The rest of the places on the eastern shore, not named by me have all English names excepting LaManche. LaManche, noted at one time for its lead mines, is not from appearance what the meaning of the French word Manche would lead you to suppose, viz. : channel, narrow sea or shore. LaManche is merely an open cove and one which is not safe for crafts to anchor in with any wind, but one off shore.

Harbor Buffett on Long Island was originally Havre Bouffee, squally or puffy harbor. It has been since spelt Bouffet and translated as side-board harbor.

On Long Island remains of the Red Indians have been found, showing that at one time they resorted there to manufacture stone pots and arrowheads.

Bordeaux Head was, no doubt, named by some Frenchman in remembrance of the old land. Come-by-Chance appears to have been the Olivers Cove mentioned by the Abbe Baudoin. Piper's Hole, Black River, North Harbor are all of English origin. Sound, Woody, Barren, Ship, Ragged and White Islands, were all French named in Cook's day. And here I would like to say that I have noticed in the press and in the Post Office Directory that Barren Island is misnamed and called Barron Isle. As far as I can find out, no person by the name of Barron ever dwelt there. It was named Isle Sterile or Barren Island because of its barren appearance compared with the other islands which were all well wooded. Barren Island has a plateau rising about 200 to 300 feet high at the base of which lies Western Cove and Barren

Island Harbor. The plateau is reached from the east side by a steep bit of cliff, in which is worn some steps, known as the Devil's Ladder. This plateau has no trees on it and is covered with moss and small berry bearing bushes. In my experience in Placentia Bay Barren Island was always spoken of as "the Barren Island" by the old people. Where are you going? I'm going down to the Barren Island. Where did you get the herring? At the Barren Island.

The ghosts of the Hanlons, Sheas, Flynnns, Connors, Nugents, Culletons and Wadmans must have great discussions over the ignorance of this generation, when they would attempt to affix the name of one Barron to their beloved home. You will think that I am a bit astray in talking about the ghosts having discussions, but I'm not. I have the best authority for saying so; for one John Hanlon, an Irishman of some note in the Bay and whose home, when the voyage was ended, was Barren Island, and who served for years as master of voyage on the Isle Valen room, made me solemnly promise that in the event of his death whilst he was absent from Barren Island, his body should be carried and buried there. This I promised to do after I had ascertained from him his reason. Och, now is it to be buried up here in Oliver's Cove among the ignoramuses? Is it? No indeed, I want to be laid with me own townies the ould Irishmen so that I can be neighbourly like! But Jack, what difference can it make to you when you die where you are buried? Difference hay, sure if I was buried in a strange place I'd have no one to discourse with? But when your dead you don't discourse with anyone! Don't you hay, be my soul, but ivery Saturday night an Irishman comes out of his grave and has a shaugh of the pipe and a discourse wid his neighbour whin it comes twelve o'clock and I don't intend to be cheated of what's the right of every Irishman. Poor old Jack had his desire and was buried among his old neighbours.

It was at Barren Island, that during one election contest, an aspirant for legislative honors, was making an address in Wm. Flynn's big kitchen. Jack was there and not agreeing with the speaker's politics, he interrupted several times, his first interruption occurred in this wise. The orator had a fashion of closing his eyes while speaking and used very good language, sometimes altogether too flowery and too abstruse for his audience. He had been speaking about five minutes when Jack, who was one of the audience, gave a sort of cough and said: "Hould on a minute, mister." The orator, rather put out at being interrupted, enquired why he should stop and John answered him: "Wait till I send for me brother Phil, for divil a one here understands yer jaw breakers but him." By way of explanation, Phil. Hanlon was the school master and a very well educated man, who delighted in using long words, which he knew how to use when occasion required.

The Ship Island next to Barren Island, had at one time a planked place where the French used to haul up their boats, it became surmounted with gravel and a small pond formed there which for years was thought to be of some depth. A few years ago a heavy freshet washed an opening in it and the water flowed away leaving a floor of wood cropping up. It was at first thought that buried treasure lay beneath it, but after digging for some time that theory was exploded. It is now known that it was a resting place for boats, common in various parts of Newfoundland where the French carried on the fishery.

One of the Ragged Islands is known as John de Gong. What the name is derived from it is hard to say. It is evidently a corruption of some French word. Inside of the Barren Island lies LaPlant. Evidently here the French had a plantation or more likely it was named so because of the wood which abounded there even in my time. Plant was a favorite resort for winter "liviers" and many a boat, skiff, jack and punt

were built there. It was here that the Placentia Bay Munchausen located his adventure in the winter time with the lobster that made a trail in the snow ten feet wide and disappeared in a hole in the ice on the pond that "you'd a thought a big steamer had been launched so much water was thrown up." La Plant is not properly written on our charts. If the word used means Plantations the article should be masculine and be spelt le, if it means a plant or the sole of the foot the substantive should be written Plante as the article would then be correctly written La.

Burgeo Islands are similarly named to Burgeo on the South Coast. The word is a corruption of some French word thought by some to be Bras Jean. Just inside of Burgeo is Seivellys Cove. Who the cove is called after I do not know. Here lived one James Pittman who being present at a political meeting where the Opposition candidate was holding forth, quickly nonplussed the orator by requesting permission to ask one question. It being granted Jim said: "Mister, kin you pay a thousand pounds for a canary bird?" What has that question to do with this election? "Don't you bate round the bush me man," said Jim, "but answer straight, kin you pay a thousand pounds for a canary bird?" "No I can't," said the candidate, "and I wouldn't if I could." "That's enough," said Jim, "we don't want any more of your jaw if you can't pay a thousand pounds for a canary bird," and the orator had to give up his speech. Jim had read in the English papers about a bribery case in which a candidate paid one thousand pounds to the wife of a voter, for a canary bird.

The Grammers, some rocks off the north end of Great Isle Valen are the Granmeres or Grandmothers. Merasheen is very evidently a corruption of mere chien, a sea dog, the French name among sailors for the seal. On Merasheen Island are two places with names evidently of Irish origin, one is Glow na yoh

and the other is Glow na buch, the one means the valley of the yew and the other poor man's valley. Now that the old Irishmen have passed away, these names do not seem to have been preserved by the present generation. On the east side of the same island lies what is commonly called Rose au Rue, the original name was Roches Rouge or Red Rocks.

Clattice Harbor is either a corruption of French or else a man's name. Valen Island is called after a courtier of Louis XIV's, time who was deported to Placentia and given some grants of Newfoundland to remove him from the temptations of Parisian society.

Grandy's Point was first named le Grandies Point. Presque is well named as it is almost a pond. In its northern arm lies St. Kyran's where the parish priest, the Rev. W. P. Doughtney, lives in a very charming little spot. The chapel, built of stone by the late Father James Walsh, an uncle of Father John Walsh, the Parish Priest of Renew's, is about half a mile distant and very picturesquely situated, half way between St. Kyran's and St. Leonard's. In front of it lies a pond with a stretch of trees between, and to the back of it rises abruptly to the height of 600 feet Mount Calvary, which is the eastern rampart that keeps the waters of the Bay in bounds. This chapel boasts of a marble altar which was brought from Rome by Father Walsh. Unfortunately the building was gutted by fire on St. Stephen's Day, 1882, but was very quickly restored by the indefatigable and very worthy Parish Priest who still ministers to the people in that parish.

Just above Presque is Toslow or Toslow John as it was called thirty years ago. The name is a corruption of Tasse D'Argent, or silver cup, which is a very appropriate one, for the little harbor is cup-like in shape, and the quartz in the rocky cliffs gives it a silver like appearance. On the hill overlooking the harbor is a cairn or survey mark known as Cook's Cairn which was put there by Cook when he surveyed the Bay in



1767. A Mr. Gaulton was his pilot. I knew his daughter, Mrs. Movelle, who died at Merasheen in 1873 or 1874, aged 108 years. At Toslow dwelt the Baron Munchausen of Placentia Bay. Many people used to despise his story telling ability, and hint very rudely that he was not truthful. I had a great respect for his ability in concocting a story, and for the touch of humor which generally pervaded his tales. Had he been educated he would most certainly have attained to celebrity as a writer of fiction.

He was a man with a most remarkable memory. He could remember word for word what he <sup>heard</sup> read and would take up a newspaper and read out of it what he had heard, although he did not know a from x and the paper might be upside down. One day he made his appearance at my office, I had been expecting him for some time and had kept, for his special benefit, a French paper which had come to me by mistake. I noticed that he was very impatient and wanted to open up a conversation, but I pretended I was busy and kept him waiting. At length I said: "T—, here is a paper for you, amuse yourself with it for a while, as I'll soon be finished with this letter." The paper was French, but that didn't matter to T—, who opened it and pretended to read it with great satisfaction. Seeing me lay the blotting paper on the letter I was writing, he said: "Oh! be d—! did you see about this awful fire?" "What fire?" said I, "read it out." He then commenced a detailed account of the great fire in Boston, news of which had reached us two days previously. Such was his marvellous memory, that he recounted almost word for word the account of that great conflagration as it appeared in the columns of the Montreal Family Herald, which he had, no doubt, heard his nephews read the night previous to his coming to me. Not only did he remember the names of the principal sufferers by the fire, but gave me an accurate

account of the value of the property destroyed and the amount of insurance carried.

Another time he came to me and said: "I wants to consult you on law." (I was the only J.P. within a radius of fifty miles). "What's the matter now?" "The matter is that S——, threatens to take me fish off the flake." "Why?" "Oh! cause Mike owes him for a pair of boots he got in the spring." "Well, is Mike a minor?" "A miner is it, why he never struck a stroke wid a pick in his life." "I don't mean a miner who mines, I mean is he under age. What age is he?" "Well he's going on seventeen." "Oh, then he is seventeen?" "Yes." "Fishes with you?" "Yes." "You throw together?" "Yes." "And who makes the fish?" "The missus and the girls." "Well, I am afraid that as Mike is under twenty-one and you have all his catch you'll have to pay for the boots." He looked very dubious and I foresaw a long argument unless I could choke him off. An inspiration struck me and I took down from a shelf an old Journal of the House of Assembly, turned it upside down, opened it, and after turning over a few pages I said: "Now, there is the law, read it for yourself and decide as to whether I am right or wrong." He bent over and pretended to read and then exclaimed: "Well, I'm d——d but your right, and I'll have to pay him the money."

Another curious old fellow lived in the same place, he was a very good customer, but forever grumbling. One day I said to him: "Skipper Bob, if you don't like our goods and prices, why not go somewhere else with your dealings?" "Well now," said the old man, "I often talks that over wid meself, but do you know I thinks Mr. Lem. better deal wid the devil you do know than wid the devil you don't."

Inside of the eastern head of Paradise lies Great and Little Bona. Some Latin scholar probably named those places, having found them to be good. Between

Bona and Little Paradise lies a rock, shaped like a woman, called by the French La Blanche Dame. Paradise is considered by some people a misnomer for the place, but it was very easily explained by Mike Martin, who said: "Sure you know it's the proper name for a place it is so hard to get into. You first steers for the Island store where you might git a barrel if you could get over the rocks, and had yer pockets lined wid gold, and then you hauls right over for Browns as if yez were going up to tay wid him, and then just as yer going to strike his stage you puts the hilm hard down hauls tight yer main sheet and scoots up to John Powers, but if Paradise stinks like the earthly one on a hot summer's day I don't want to go there." Marticot is another name which is a puzzle to most geographers. It has been written in its present form since it has been mentioned on a chart. It may mean Martre Cote or the Sable or Marten Coast, or it may be a corruption of a Basque name. On this island is a point with a Scotch name, "Hogmany Point," how it got it is hard to say. Petty Forte west of the entrance to Paradise was originally Pettit Port. None-such, Cape Roger, Burnt Islands, Gallows Harbor, Little Harbor, Boat Harbor, Bay de l'eau, Rushoon and Broad Cove are mainly English named. Bain Harbor, so called because it is shaped like a bath is misnamed Baine Harbor and Bane Harbor by the generality of people. Off Bain Harbor lies Jerseyman's, Petticoat and Cross Islands. The passage inside these islands is called Holloway's Passage. The Jersey people seem to have had a proprietary interest in a great many places in Newfoundland. Jersey Side in Placentia, Jerseyman's Island in Placentia Bay, the Jerseyman's Bank between Fortune Bay and St. Pierre, Jersey Harbor in Fortune Bay all point to the early acquaintance of the Channel Islanders with Newfoundland.

Judy Island is Jeudi or Thursday Island. Oderin is a corruption of Audierne, the name of a seaport of

France. Russhoon is probably a corruption. Broad Cove and Red Harbor, appear but very recently on any charts. John the Bay is the old French Bay D'Argent. Mortier Bay is called after the famous cartographers, Mortier, it has Spanish room within its entrance and just outside Beau Bois and off its entrance is an Island, marked on the chart, Croney Island. A glance at the Island will convince you that the original name was Gros Nez (big nose) as it resembles in shape a regular Wellington nose. Duricle and Tites or Tides Cove are names of which I cannot at present trace the origin. The places further out the Bay which still retain their French names are Port au Bras, Burin, Salmonier, Corbin, Sauker, St. Lawrence and Cape Chapeau Rouge.

I said in the beginning of my lecture that Placentia Bay was the most historic spot in Newfoundland. If it had not been for the occupation of it by the French, the early history of Newfoundland would have been devoid of interest. The French occupation of Canada was speedily followed by the planting of a Colony at Placentia and the establishment there of fortifications making it, as Lahontan said, "a post of the greatest importance and service to the (French) king, in regard that 'tis a place of refuge to the ships that are obliged to put into a harbor, when they go or come from Canada, and even to those which come from South America when they want to take in fresh water or provisions." The date at which Placentia was first occupied appears to have been 1662. Thwaites says: "Placentia, together with a portion of the Southern Shore of the Island (Newfoundland) had been sold in 1662 by Charles II. to Louis XIV., who immediately erected a fortification at this point. Before King William's war the defences had fallen into ruins, and the place became the resort of privateers who sailed forth to attack English fishing and trading vessels. Since 1690 the French had been occupied in restoring

the stronghold, and rebuilding the fort named St. Louis." In August, 1692, Lahontan arrived there from Quebec in the frigate "St. Ann" on his way to France and assisted in repelling the attacks of an English fleet commanded by Commodore Williams. Fifty sail of French Biscay fishermen helped to defend the place, and if it had not been for their able assistance Placentia would certainly have been captured by the English. In a map, or plan of Placentia, made by Lahontan, the position of Fort Louis is shown at the outer entrance to the Gut on the Jersey Side. An old fort is also marked on the Meadows Point, and Castle Hill fort is noted as a redoubt marked out, it was completed the next year and proved a valuable addition to the defences. The houses are shown to be built on the beach, or town side, and the beach or cobble stone is described as a beach of gravel upon which the fishermen dry the fish.

The formation of Placentia is peculiar, a line of shingle beach stretches from the Block House to Dixon's Hill and thence to the Gut on the Jersey Side. Where this beach has formed, was originally part of the harbor of Placentia. Dixon's Hill was an island and there was then no extraordinary rush of tide past Point Verde, gradually the restless sea threw in the shingles and piled it up across the South East Arm connecting the south land with Dixon's Hill. The onward march of the waters can be still noted. If you go to Dixon's Hill and glance over the beach you can see as it were the marks of the waves recorded. How long this beach was being formed it would take an expert geologist to figure out, it must have covered many centuries. It has always been a tradition that a passage way existed into the South East Arm near the Block House, but in Lahontan's plan none such is shown.

Placentia is most picturesquely situated on the Beach and Jersey Side. Its two Arms of the sea, (the

North East Arm which runs inland for ten miles, and the South East Arm five miles long), are beautiful sheets of water. Large rivers and brooks flow into them which teem with salmon and trout. The drive up the South East Road, or out to Point Verde, is most charming on a fine summer's day. The different vistas which present themselves, and the variety of colouring which one gets as you peer through the firs and spruces at the distant Islands in the Bay make most magnificent pictures.

On the 16th September, 1693, an English fleet of twenty-four vessels commanded by Sir Francis Wheeler, anchored in the roadstead of Placentia intending to storm that place. Lahontan, who was again in Placentia, says: "When he (Wheeler) discovered a redoubt of stone lately built upon the top of the mountain, he thought it more advisable to return quietly into Europe, than to make a fruitless attempt. We had planted four cannon upon this high redoubt which so gaul'd the ships of his fleet that they were forced to weigh anchor and hoist sail, sooner than they intended."

In 1696 an attack by the French on St. John's was attempted by the Chevalier Nesmond which, however, was doomed to be a failure, but shortly afterwards another attempt, with fairer prospects, was made. This time the assailants were under the command of the Governor of Placentia, M. Brouillon and Captain D'Iberville, they marched by way of the Southern Shore, sacked all the English settlements, including St. John's: Bonavista and Carbonear only resisting them, and they returned to Placentia by way of Trinity Bay and across the Isthmus of Avalon. In 1705 the garrison at Placentia was strongly reinforced from Canada for the purpose of engaging in attacks upon the English settlements. They made a descent on St. John's, but failed to capture it. They, however, succeeded in ravaging all the other English settlements.

Again in 1708 in the beginning of the New Year a force left Placentia and marched on St. John's which was taken, the forts dismantled and the houses destroyed. At the same time an attempt was made to take Carbonear, but it was unsuccessful. An attempt was also made to take Ferryland, but it was successfully resisted. On March 31st the French abandoned St. John's and returned to Placentia. In 1713 by the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht all the French settlements were yielded to England and Placentia from thenceforth became an English possession. The French harbours in Placentia Bay, mentioned by Lahontan to which the French resorted, were Little and Great Burin, St. Lawrence, Mortier and Cape Chapeau Rouge. The inhabitants of Placentia were all removed to Cape Breton. Some of them objected to leaving and would willingly have remained under English domination, but Constabelle (the Governor) urged all to go excepting idlers and vagabonds. Only about two hundred persons were deported, which appears to have been the whole settlement. Somewhere I have seen it stated that a number of French stayed in Placentia, but judging from the scarcity of French names in the Bay I am of opinion that very few remained. Some of the French names are well known Jersey names, and as there were Jersey houses in Placentia, Little Placentia, Burin and St. Lawrence, it is easy to account for the Viscounts, Blanchés, LeFevre, and Corbins. The Tibbos or Thibeaus, Piccots, Movelles, Pomeroy's, St. Croix's are the only French names that I am acquainted with.

So far I have only given but a meagre sketch of the history of Placentia, it has been ably dealt with by His Grace Archbishop Howley in his writings and lectures. Bishop Mullock in his lectures on Placentia says: "It is remarkable that several properties are still held in Placentia by virtue of the original French titles, and such importance did the Government of

Louis XIV., the Grand Monarch, attach to the possession of the place, that all the grants are signed by the King's own hand and countersigned by his Minister Phillippeau. Nor were the French oblivious of the necessity of religion in their new settlement, a convent of Franciscians, a branch of the Convent of Our Lady of Angels of Quebec, was established there in 1689, on the site of the present Protestant Church and burying ground, and a few French tombstones of the date of 1680 to 1690 yet remain to mark out the place where it stood. Most of the French tombstones were taken by the English settlers after the surrender of the place by France, and applied to the ignoble purpose of hearthstones and doorsteps. Newfoundland was then under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Quebec and in 1689 the second Bishop of that See, Monseigneur St. Vallier, made a visitation of Placentia and the neighboring parts in company with Father Georgieu, and some of the Franciscan community of Quebec."

After the surrender of Placentia the English spent a large sum of money in reafortifying it. Fort Frederick was built on the town side of the Gut and a fort placed on Gannons Point beneath the Block House Hill, a sum of £300,000 was spent so I am informed. For some time it was governed from Nova Scotia and therefore was the capital of the Island, but on the appointment of Captain Henry Osbourne, as the first regular Governor of Newfoundland in 1728, Placentia was placed under his jurisdiction. For some years Placentia was but poorly garrisoned and the forts fell into disrepair. In 1762 when the French fleet became possessed of St. John's, Governor Graves, who was conveying a fleet of merchantmen, was met on the Banks by a sloop, which was sent to inform him of the attack of the French on the British settlements. He instantly repaired to Placentia and restored the fortresses of Fort Frederick and Castle Hill.



After the Treaty of Utrecht, mercantile houses commenced to flourish in the Bay. Jersey houses had been early in St. Lawrence, Burin, Mortier, Little Placentia and Placentia, and were in some cases in existence at the time of the French occupation of Placentia. The earliest mercantile premises in Placentia, after 1713, was established by a native of Waterford named Walsh, whose tombstone still remains in the Church at Placentia. He was succeeded by his relatives' firm of Sweetman and Saunders, who carried on a very extensive business for many years. They had a shore establishment which covered a large space of ground; there were two large fish stores, a shop, dwelling house, cook room, cooperage, forge and general store. They had a ship yard where they built crafts of all sizes and from which were launched several foreign going ships. It is said that their greatest collection for one year amounted to over 100,000 quintals. So prolific were the fisheries in those days that an entry on the books of these merchants show that one Green of Point Verde, for himself and his man turned in 500 quintals of fish for one season. The dealings of this firm were chiefly with Waterford and from Ireland they imported many of the Irishmen who subsequently settled in the bay. For many years there was a small garrison at Placentia and some of the descendants of the officers of that garrison are still residents of this Colony.

After the conclusion of the war of 1812 the garrison was removed and the forts and military buildings were allowed to fall to pieces. When quite a lad I visited Placentia in 1854 and remained there nine months. My great-grandmother, who was then quite old, and who was the wife of a lieutenant of the 61st Foot, told me many times of the old garrison days, where the forts lay and where the store houses and barracks were situated, I remember seeing the Artillery barracks which then stood west of the field near

Fort Frederick. The Infantry barracks was on the beach to the rear of Sweetman's house and in a line with the old Court House. The French commandant's house, or Government House, stood until quite recently where the Post Office is. It was built of oak, the frame having been imported from France. The Commissariat House or storekeeper's dwelling, was but a short distance from it on the south-west; in this Mr. Ballard lived for some years. At the time I speak of all Sweetman's buildings were intact, but a small business was carried on by the surviving partner of the great firm, who died shortly after.

There still remains at Placentia some relics of the past. When the old Court House was standing one could point to a tip staff with the Quarterings on it of the House of Hanover; the old Magisterial Bench had been honored by King William IV., Lord Rodney and other notables. Down stairs in the keeper's quarters hung the commission of Lieut. Ed. Collins, who was taken from Placentia by Prince William Henry, educated for and given a commission in the navy. His commission bears the date 4th July, 1803, and appoints him to be Lieutenant of H.M.S. *Foudroyant*, then recently taken from the French. It is signed by three of England's fighting sea kings—S. Vincent, T. Trowbridge and John Fitzroy.

In care of the Bradshaw family is the communion service of silver presented by Prince William Henry to the Church at Placentia. In the Protestant Church is placed some of the old tombstones spoken of before, and very graphically described by His Grace Archbishop Howley, in a paper prepared for the Royal Society of Canada, and read on the 27th May, 1902. He has set at rest a question which was in debate as to the interpretation of the inscription on them. The explanation is that the stones record the burial of a Basque fisherman on the 1st May, 1676. The interpre-

tion has been made by the Rt. Rev. Monsigneur LaGasse, Prefect Apostolic of St. Pierre, Miquelon, who is a Basque by birth, and is skilled in the dialect and grammar of this very unique and interesting language. Another headstone records the death of an officer of a French frigate, who was also a Basque, he died in 1694.

One of the chief drawbacks of the earlier days was the limited means of communication with the outside world. In 1840 a mail courier service was established between Placentia and St John's, and Mr. Thomas Kelly was employed to carry the mails. There was no road between those places then, so Tom walked through the woods and across the barrens. Well do I remember the old man, for he always paid us a visit when he came to town and used to delight us with tales of the hares and the beavers, the foxes and the wolves, which he could tell in his own inimitable style and in such an attractive manner as to deceive children and make them believe that the animals really spoke. When the surveyors were cutting a line for the first telegraph wire, one of the men in charge stayed at Tom's and regaled him with some tall yarns. One he told related to mosquitoes. Tom had asked him if he found the gollynippers bad in the woods. "Oh, no," said the Yankee, "they're not a circumstance to the ones we have in the Western States. Why I was working up in a maple district and the mosquitoes bothered me so I got under a sugar pot which was turned upside down. The mosquitoes got so infernally mad that they put their stings through the pot and I clinched them and they flew away with the pot. What do you think of them fellows?" "You don't say they did that," said Tom, "well they were putty considerate, but look stranger, I went down in the Connaught Man's Droke to mark a witchhazel to cut in the fall, to make a stem for the Victoria and Albert, and as I was looking at a stick that was fifteen inches through, a mighty big

gollynipper came buzzing up and made a dart at me, I dodged him so well that at last he got clean mad and let out and put his sting right through the tree, and I clinched it on the other side. Say, mister, was your tin pot mosquitoes as big as that?"

A boat to connect with this courier was run across Placentia Bay by R. Falle & Company, Burin, at their own expense, in 1848. In 1849 Mr. Sweetman sent his boat on the other side, and in 1850 the first contract was made with Mr. John Collins for the regular carriage of the mails from Placentia to Burin, calling at Paradise and Oderin. In 1851 Nicholas Coady, of Burin, secured the contract, but in 1852 it reverted to Mr. John Collins, who successfully ran the service until 1874. At that date his son-in-law, Mr. Wm. Ryan, obtained a contract which included other ports of call. He retained the service until the advent of the *Hercules*, the first steamer that performed the bay mail service. A mail service was also inaugurated, sometime in the fifties, between Little Placentia and Merasheen which Mr. Murphy, of Little Placentia, held the contract for until the *Hercules* deposed him. These packet boats were small sailing craft, very uncomfortable and not fitted to accommodate fastidious passengers, who wanted privacy or ordinary comfort. You can picture to yourself a small cabin, berths each side, a couple of locker seats, a small table, a few trunks on the floor of the cabin, in cold weather a stove emitting sulphur and smoke, the smell of bilge water permeating everything, the only berths, occupied by sick female passengers and no place to lie down or sit down, the deck the only accommodation to be found, and that wet and disagreeably so. Such were the conditions in which passengers in the olden times crossed the Bay, often out in fog and storm, lying too or trying to make a harbor under the greatest of difficulties, with dangerous shoals and rocks innumerable to be wary of. Now the Ss.

*Argyle* carries the mail weekly north and south in the Bay, and the *Glencoe* has her terminus at Placentia from which she sails every week for Port-aux-Basques, while Bowring's coastal steamer also visits Placentia once every fortnight. These boats are all comfortably fitted with every modern convenience. No longer does he, who is a fairly good passenger, have to take pot luck out of the bake pot, or drink kettle tea with molasses sweetening and without milk. Hard biscuit has given place to fresh bread and rolls; and fresh beef, vegetables and fruit have succeeded the brewse, pork-and-duff and boiled fish of the old regime. Many anecdotes could be told about these packets, but time will not permit me to dwell upon this theme, and I can only say that notwithstanding the cramped accommodation and the poor means at their disposal, and the miserable pay received for the work, the old packet men took good care of their passengers and did their best to make them comfortable; and during all the years that they maintained the service, and in all the storms and fogs they encountered, I do not think they lost a human being.

In the early times of the settlement of Placentia Bay there were large mercantile houses situated in different parts of it. There was no trade with St. John's, each mercantile house carried on its business direct with the Mother Land. The fishermen or youngsters, as they were called were brought out from Ireland and from southern counties of England. Forty years ago you could tell by the accent of the people where they or their forebears came from. At Placentia the Villenueves of Jersey had an establishment. Mr. Payne's grandfather was in their employ prior to 1780. The same firm built the Jersey premises at Burin afterwards occupied by the Falles. LeBlanc succeeded Villeneuve in Placentia and Sweetman and Saunders also had, as has been before mentioned, an extensive establishment there. At Little Placentia Kneaves and

Penny and Bouteau carried on a fishery business. In Burin, Villeneuve, Falle, Spurrier and Joliffe and the Hoopers all had business establishments; at St. Lawrence the large Jersey house of Nicole did an extensive business in connection with their other establishment further west. John Brown had a place at Mortier and Little Mortier.

The firm of Spurrier & Joliffe, which failed in 1824, having met with heavy losses at the conclusion of the war in 1812, had their headquarters at Burin, but they had other large establishments at Oderin, Isle Valen and Barren Island. It is said that when John Bindley Garland's son married Mr. Spurrier's daughter, Mr. Spurrier gave her a bank draft for £100,000.

One of the old book-keepers told me that when he was a boy in the office at Burin, the Oderin accounts were short at stock taking of a cask of rum, and the Oderin agent was ordered to account for it. He immediately charged all the principal planters with it, and when their accounts were read over to them those who objected to the charge were credited with it, so that in the end more than half a dozen paid for the lost cask.

At Paradise a Mr. Cooke, of Poole, Dorset, had a fishery establishment. He built the old house and stores that stood on the Island, and at Red Cove he had a farm situated in a very pretty dell, which spot I have visited and seen the remains of the clearing.

At Merasheen an Irish quaker called Keough carried on a large business, and also one Cozens, who succeeded Spurrier at Isle Valen, and was in turn succeeded by C. F. Bennett.

Business houses have come and gone in Placentia Bay since these old firms were in existence, but none have equalled them in the extent of business they did, and none have since their existence had occasion to

pursue the fishery methods of the earlier times. The old fishery methods necessitated the employment of fishery servants who were brought from the Old Country. These servants were divided into shoremen and fishermen. The shoremen consisted of the master-of-voyage, cooper, carpenter, blacksmith, spitters, headers, cutthroat, stage head clerk and general labourers. These men were boarded and lodged in a house known as the cook-room, which consisted of a large room with big open fire place surrounded by a settle, a large table in the middle of the room, flanked by stools or forms, and in many cases the sleeping places were bunks fastened to the wall and in tiers as on ship-board. In the winter, or fall of the year, the cook-room fire was a merry meeting place. Quite an etiquette was observed in this general meeting room. The master-of-voyage was the supreme head and following him was the chief cooper (who was also the guager), the carpenter, blacksmith, head splitter, etc. Sometimes a witty fellow or good story teller would be put on a par with the principal officers, but when it came to sitting round the fire these worthies occupied each his particular seat and no one ever thought of usurping them. Many is the good tale that was told around the cook-room fire, tales of the Old Country, tales of doings in Ireland, tales of the Banshee, the fairies and of the grandees of the ancient days, tales of ould faction fights, which often found echo after too frequent libations in recriminatory statements that "it was ye Wexford men that lost Ireland." "No bedad, but it was ye Waterford men that lost it." Those were the good old times which are gone never to return. I have mentioned among the fishery servants a stage head clerk. This was the title given to the man who stood on the stage head and pewed the fish into the header. An Irish youngser writing home to his mother told her he was promoted to stage head clerk. She was so delighted she told her neighbours that "Shamus was doing

grand out in Newfoundland, he was now the stage head clerk and glory be to the saints, but he'd be soon coming home with his fortune."

Placentia Bay has been noted in the past for a number of wrecks. There is not a cove or headland on the Cape Shore that has not been the scene of a wreck, which has frequently been attended by loss of life. At a flat rock (Gun Kock) near Cape St. Mary's, where guns are still to be seen, a man-of-war, bound from Burin to St. John's, was wrecked and a number of her crew were drowned. On the south point of Golden Bay some guns are to be seen; here three transport ships with nearly all their men were lost. In later years 1856, a heavy gale of wind sprang up during the caplin school and thirteen fishing boats were lost at Le Perch. The wreck of the barque Ann in 1854 was a mere stranding, but all her cargo was landed and her masts and rigging carried away by boarders. The wreck of the Eliza with a load of molasses, the ship Summers, the Mercade, Rien de Prevoyance, Palmerin, Glide and many others furnish many a tale of funny incidents which occurred at them.

I well remember the landing of the Mercade's cargo as she was stranded at the back of the Downs and the strenuous endeavors of those who ventured to her to get the pianos ashore.

Time fails me to tell of the spring of 1872 and the adventures which befell the vessels that were driven in the bay with the northern ice, which had wheeled round the land by the wind veering steadily from north-east by east to south.

I cannot close without making some reference to the people of Placentia Bay. The large majority of them are of Irish origin; Placentia, Little Placentia, Cape Shore, Fox Harbor, Barren Island, Merasheen, Red Island, Presque and neighbourhood, Paradise and the



region round about Odegin, with the exception of Bain Harbor are chiefly peopled by those whose forefathers came from the Emerald Isle. Harbor Buffett, Sound Island, Woody Island, Ragged Islands, at Isle Valen, and scattered along to Odegin, are the descendants of the English youngsters who came from the southern counties of England. Fifty years ago an expert could easily tell where the people originated from by their accent. You would hear the Cork, Tipperary or Wexford accent among the Irish and the Somerset, Devon or Dorset among the English. \*One accent in Pacentia Bay has always puzzled me, it belongs to the people residing on the shores of Cape St. Mary's, and is peculiarly their own. It is neither English, Irish or French. Its main peculiarity is the pronunciation of the letter R which is rather not pronounced, but avoided and a guttural sound given that I cannot explain. Talking about Cape Shore reminds me that in the fifties a very worthy planter, a son of the soil, was elected from there to represent the District of P'acentia and St. Mary's. He was a very fine looking man, tall, broad shouldered and carried himself well, he had never been in St. John's until he came to take his seat in the House of Assembly. On his return to his native place, he brought back a few town ideas one of which was the introduction of a table bell in the best parlor. "Now Mary," said he to the servant, "when I want you I'll ring this bell and when you hears me ring the bell you must come." Mary forgot all about the bell and some time after, her master vigorously rang it, but Mary didn't answer so her master had to call her and remonstrated with her. Said he: "Mary didn't I tell you when I rang the bell you were to come? Didn't you hear it?" "Laws yes master, but I thought it was the cow in the parlor." As

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\* Since the above lecture was delivered, I have been credibly informed that this accent is peculiar to a part of Brittany, and therefore it must have been imported by the Bretons who were probably early Settlers on this shore.

he afterwards remarked to Pierce Barron, to whom he confided all his town experience, and to whom he told this story: "Could you think that a Christian being could be so stupid."

The good old times in Placentia Bay have passed and gone, never to return. Do not mistake me, I am not repeating parrot like a saying which we often hear about the good old times. I mean that the times when Placentia Bay was peopled by many of those who were fresh from the Emerald Isle, and some from the counties of Southern England, you met a jovial, good-hearted, hospitable people. The old Irishman was always delightfully witty and a good story teller. It was round the cook-room fire in the winter or in the inglenook of the home that he delighted his hearers with his reminiscences of old Ireland or of his early days in Newfoundland.

The customs and traditions of the county he came from were jealously guarded and maintained. One of the good old Irish customs of salutation was even in my day religiously observed on the Western Shore, I mean the salutation of "God save all here," and the answer, "God save you kindly." As I said before, all these customs, &c., have vanished, the old stock has passed away and we are now condemned to an age of so called progress when we are carried about in railways and palatial steamers, when we are condemned to sit near a stove emitting sulphur and other noxious vapors and read by the light of a kerosene lamp the newspaper or dime novel. Do you think that they are an improvement on the open fireplace and the good story teller? I do not, and I therefore think I am quite right about the good old times as far as Placentia Bay is concerned.