
ART. 5.—NOTES ON THE COAST OF LABRADOR.
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sented by DR. MORRIN.*

[Read, 16th January, 1841.]

NAME OF THE COAST OF LABRADOR.

I shall not attempt to confute the claim of Cortereal and others, who are supposed to have given the name of *Labrador* to that tract of country lying between the St. Lawrence and Hudson's Bay, and shall merely give what I think is the true account, and which is supported by the universal tradition of the coast, viz. :—That one Labrador, a Basque whaler, from the Kingdom of Navarre in Spain, did penetrate through the straits of Bellisle, as far as Labrador Bay, some time about the middle of the Fifteenth Century ; and, eventually, the whole coast took the name from that bay and harbour.

DISCOVERY.

Among the nations of Europe, from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century, the most remarkable for enterprise and maritime adventure were the Northmen, viz. : the inhabitants of Norway, Sweden and Denmark. These people not only frequented the coasts of the western nations of Europe, but also, penetrated into the Mediterranean, as far as the Archipelago, thus visiting

the three quarters of the world! It is further stated, that in the Tenth Century they had discovered and colonised Iceland, and shortly after Greenland; that continuing their discoveries, they finally had explored the coast of Labrador and Newfoundland, at least 400 years before the voyage of Columbus. The only difficulty in receiving this account as authentic is, that the discovery was not followed up, there is no succession of voyages or colonization to be met with. There has (as yet) no positive mark of Europeans been found on the Labrador or Newfoundland Coast of so early a date. It is true, there is no want of remains of buildings and tumuli of such ancient date, that tradition ascribes them to the Esquimeaux, which in one instance, at least, was false: this occurred three years ago, at Little Mecatina, in the cove called Esquimeaux Harbour, where a person had occasion to remove part of a *Terasse*, to make a garden. He found an iron instrument, of about eighteen inches in length, of a crooked form, which I conjectured to be a *Cerp*, such as were used 300 years ago in Spain—if my supposition is right, the remains must have been those of the Basques, as the Norman and Breton countries are not vine countries.

The Esquimeaux tradition, concerning the Norsemen, is clear enough:—That they were a gigantic race, of great strength—were very fierce, and delighted to kill people—that they, themselves, could not be killed by either dart or arrow, which rebounded from their breasts as from a rock. The Esquimeaux suppose these giants still to exist, only very far north.

Captain Scoresby, in his "History of the Whale Fishery," says, that the Norsemen were the first that were engaged in the business, and that for several centuries, they alone followed it; that, during the Eleventh Century, they communicated their

knowledge of the art to the inhabitants of the shores of the Bay of Biscay, who, conjointly with the Norsemen, carried on the fishery until the middle of the Fourteenth Century, about which time occurred the great plague, called the Black Death. After this event, it appears, the Icelanders and Norsemen withdrew from the business; and during the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries the Basques were the only whalers in Europe. Anderson, in his "History of Commerce," says, that whalebone, for ladies' stays, became an article of commerce in the Fifteenth Century, and that the market was supplied by the Basques. The question now is, where did the Basques procure the bone? It is admitted, that the whales, frequenting the Bay of Biscay, were of the humpback, finner, and bottlenose species, which do not produce bone, and it seems pretty clear, that they either went to Greenland or the coast of Labrador for it. Of the Basques frequenting Greenland, for whales, we have no accounts, but of their visits to the Labrador there are abundant proofs.

First.—The tradition of the coast, which at all times, admitted that the Basques were the first discoverers, and that they had long frequented the coast before the French, (which last, we shall see, had fisheries before the year 1500. In all the early voyages, as of Cabot, &c., the Basques are always mentioned as met with; and the Basque vessel, found on the coast of Newfoundland, by Cabot, in his first voyage, is clear evidence of their prior acquaintance with the northern shores of America. I shall say nothing of the vocabulary of Basque names found throughout the Gulf Province, of which Quebec and Canada are not the least remarkable.

As to the claims of the French, although posterior to the Basques, they are yet anterior to the voyage of Cabot. It is

recorded, that when Cartier, in 1532, was commissioned to make discoveries in Canada, he made application for pilots, among the Bretons, who, it is said, had, for a long time, carried on the Baccalos fishery, at the *Entré du Golf* (that is at Brest). I do not know how many years may be meant for a long time ; in this instance, however, I know, that it requires a *long time* to establish any fishery, because they are things not to be created by Acts of Parliament or Council. Putting the two long times together, I suppose forty years will not be thought to be too long? Thus, it would seem, the Bretons did carry on fisheries, on the coast, as early as the time of the first voyage of Columbus.

In the annals of the town of Dieppe, in France, there is authentic evidence to show, that the inhabitants of that town did carry on Baccalo fisheries, on the coast of Newfoundland, and before the year 1500.

Colonel Bouchette, in his Chronology, says, that one Jean Denys, of Harfleur, did in the year 1506, published a chart of the Gulf and the adjoining shores. If it is true that Denys, or some one else, did publish such a map, at that time, it will follow, to any reflecting mind, that there must have been a considerable communication with this part of America, before the voyage of Cabot, considering there is not the least probability that any formal survey was taken, and that the state of society and science, at the time, did not admit of any rapid communications of ideas ; and further, what could have incited private individuals to be groping among unknown coasts, and for what object? I say nothing of the Welsh claim of discovery ; as I believe, that during the Twelfth, Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries, the northern shores, say the coasts of Labrador and Newfoundland, were occasionally visited

by the Icelanders, Irish, Welsh, Bretons and Basques ; and, further, during the last century, considerable fisheries were carried on there by the people bordering the Bay of Biscay ; and the coasts, well known before the voyage of Columbus.

I think also, these coasts at early times, were often confounded with Iceland.

As to the Basque whalers, there is good reason to believe, that they had explored the Gulf, and part of the River St. Lawrence, before the year 1490.

I have offered these hints, not as established points, but as objects of discussion to the antiquary and historians of America, who may have access to manuscripts and other sources of information, which I have not ; and I would observe, that some documents, connected with the whale and baccalos fisheries, may be found among the people inhabiting the shores of the Bay of Biscay, and also, among the western Irish and Welsh, which might throw light on the subject.

It may be objected to the above, that if America was known before the voyage of Columbus, how could it be kept a secret ? Firstly,—There was nothing splendid in the Coasts of Labrador and Newfoundland, nothing to tempt avarice—a land of rocks and ice did not invite settlement—the only object of pursuit was either fish or oil, and these could only be procured by labor. There was nothing to interest nobles and princes, who, with these principles were the only objects of history at that day. Secondly, whaling partook of the mystery attending every branch of industry, and which only the initiated were let into ; this spirit of mystery was so common in those times, that the court of Spain thought to keep the discovery of Southern America a secret even fifty years after the voyage of Columbus ; and were, says Hume, both surprised and alarmed to find

an English merchant ship in those seas. It was not the discovery of an unknown country that gave such eclat to the voyage of Columbus, but the supposed discovery of one already known, viz. : India—that region of romance, which in all ages has filled the imagination with golden visions.

ESTABLISHMENT OF BREST, NOW CALLED "BRADORE."

As I have already observed, that the Bretons had for a long time carried on the cod fishery here before the voyage of Cartier, it may not be far from the truth to say, that Brest was founded about 100 years before Quebec, or about 1508—at what time it assumed the appearance of a village, or when the French government first interfered I have not been able to ascertain; probably the government did not interfere before their attention was called, by the settlers themselves, who would naturally quarrel about limits, rights, &c. However, towards the end of the century, Lewis Roberts, in his "Dictionary of Commerce," printed in London in 1600, says:—"It was the chief town of New France; that it was the residence of the governor, almoner, and other public officers; that the French drew from them large quantities of baccalo, whale fins and train, together with castor and other valuable furs; and further, that the French had also a fort, at Tadoussac, solely to traffic with the Indians for furs."—A map of North America accompanies the work

As to the truth of Lewis Roberts' remarks, there can be no doubt, as may be seen from the ruins and terraces of the buildings which were chiefly constituted of wood. I estimate, that at one time, it contained 200 houses, besides stores, &c., and, perhaps, 1,000 inhabitants in the winter, which would be trebled during the summer.

It may be asked, with reason, what could induce people to

settle in such an "out-of-the-way place" as the corner of the Straits of Belleisle, while so many other places, more accessible and equally good for the fishery, were left aside—it being subject to ice and fogs, currents, &c., to a far greater degree than any other part about the gulf. The resolution of this difficulty is easy enough. Firstly—When the Basque whalers, in the Fifteenth Century, first embarked in the pursuit of the *Balæna Mystacetus*, it is probable that they frequented that part now called the South West Ground, that is the outer edge of the ice from the Straits of Belleisle to the Straits of Hudson—this is accounted a very rough and dangerous fishing ground, and it probably was no better in former times; while there, they could not help observing, that the stream of whales came from the west; this would induce them to follow the line, in hopes of finding a smoother fishery, which would lead them into the Straits of Belleisle, and finally, one Labrador did advance to the Bay so called, and gave his name to the coast. Secondly—The east point of Bradore Bay was, and is yet, the rendezvous of every sort of fish and fowl that resort to the north during the summer; and it is, without dispute, to this day, the best fishing ground in the world for seals, cod, caplin, &c., and formerly for whales—an excellent harbour, or rather excellent harbours; and smooth shoal water were objects not to be misunderstood by any one. After the whalers had frequented the bay for some time, they were joined by the Bretons from Brest, who chiefly came for codfish. It must be borne in mind, that at the time I speak of, the coast was occupied by a warlike and powerful tribe of natives, who appear to have been hostile to the Europeans from the first, and continued their hostility while the country remained in the hands of the French. This alone, was sufficient cause for the first settlers to

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concentrate for mutual defence, as no straggling establishment could be safe. About the year 1600 Brest was in its greatest prosperity; its first cause of decay was the grant *en seigneurie* of four leagues of coast, on each side embracing the town, to a certain nobleman, called Courtemanche, who had married a daughter of Henry IV. of France. This happened about the year 1630, and, much about the same time, the whole tribe of the Esquimaux, who had given the French so much annoyance, were totally extirpated or expelled from the Gulf shores. These two causes dispersed the fishermen to other stations, and the place had ceased to be a town, and indeed, was little more than a private establishment towards the close of the century, and the name changed to Bradore.

Nevertheless, while the French held the country it was the centre of considerable trade, as an old Frenchman, named Jean Junot, used to say, that when he came first to the country, he saw 150 vessels rendezvoused in Bradore Bay, with five ships of war, preparatory to their departure for France, and that this was usually the case every year—this man spoke of the year 1720. This place remained in the hands of the family of the Courtemanche's for three generations, and then, came to the possession of one M. De Bouruac (Brouague? one of the Council of Seven in Quebec), who was either a nephew or grandson of the last Count De Courtemanche—he held it till the Conquest. After the Conquest, Bradore, and 150 miles of coast westward, were monopolised by a company, called the Labrador Company, established in Quebec, who for sixty years, carried on the fishery, chiefly for seals, with success, until the last fifteen years, when the fisheries failed, and finally, they were obliged to abandon and sell out—this happened in the year 1820, since when, this part of the coast has been gradually

filling in with settlers, who have augmented from a dozen individuals to more than 250. The produce of the fishery during the time of the Company did not average £2,000 per annum; latterly, it has augmented from £10,000 to £15,000, and last year it exceeded £20,000.

PRESENT STATE OF THE COAST.

I have observed above, that for the last ten years, there has been a considerable increase both in produce and settlers. There is now in the first, one hundred and fifty miles from the Province line, about fifty establishments, more or less extensive, chiefly sedentary seal fisheries; of these fifty, nearly half are in the neighbourhood of Bradore, which is only three miles from Blas Sablon (Blanc Sablon) river, the eastern extreme of the Province.

Indeed, for some years back, the fisheries have been so crowded thereabouts as to seriously annoy each other, and endless quarrels are going on. So far there has been no blood spilt, but, if government does not soon interfere and enforce some regulations, there is no saying what may happen in a country where the total absence of every mark of authority has bred a contempt for government and laws—where violence is the best title, and *audace* confers most right. To understand the matter, I shall describe what a seal fishery is:—

Seals are migratory animals, issuing out of the north, in the month of December, to winter in the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, and returning in June. While on their voyage, they generally congregate in shoals of thirty to one hundred, and, commonly touch on several parts of the coast in passing. When a seal fishery is to be established, houses and stores are built, fixtures erected; craft, with nets, hawsers, leads, an-

chors, &c., to be procured ; these, with tools, utensils, and provisions, cost several hundred pounds, sometimes thousands. A solid frame of nets is fixed in a convenient place, into which the seals enter—get entangled among the nets—drown, and are taken ashore in boats. This is the process of seal fishery, as practised in and above the Straits of Belleisle ; now, if a very trifling net is placed before the aforesaid frame of nets, it will as effectually bar it off as a stone wall ; if another frame is placed too near, it will, either partially or wholly, do the same. By this it will be seen, that all seal fisheries require a berth or limit.

The ancient French government decided, that this berth should be several leagues, which is much too great, and would, in a great degree, hinder the settlement of the Coast. Now-a-days, there are some who say, that a few yards is a sufficient berth ; however, the old settlers do not choose to submit to these self-made legislators, and thence the cause of the quarrels I mentioned before, one wishing to retain the profits of his capital and industry, and the other insisting on a part of the harvest which he neither laboured for nor sowed. The foregoing remarks equally apply to the salmon fisheries in the rivers.

As to the recovery of debts and enforcement of contracts, it is not thought of, unless the parties of their own good will, choose to do it.

It does not become a private individual to propose a remedy for these, and other evils which press on the settlers of the coast ; nevertheless, I shall with due deference, offer the following, which may be improved afterwards. As the inhabitants of the Magdalen Islands are much like those of the Labrador in many points, I think, a Colonial vessel, of 100 tons may be equipped and manned, with, say twenty men ; a discreet person ap-

pointed as commander, and commissioned as Surrogate Judge, for the Labrador and Magdalens only ; with power first, to decide regarding limits and berths for the fisheries. Second—To hold courts for the recovery of debts, to the amount of £50., with appeal to the King's Bench, in Quebec. Thirdly—To decide all disputes between masters and crews, as to duty, wages, &c. ; and fourthly, with the assistance of a jury, to ascertain the amount of damages by interlopers, forcible entry and detainer, which indeed, could only be estimated by a coast jury. Now, although a civilian may seem to be most fit for a judge, yet, the nature of the cases that would come before him, would be so similar to shipping and sea affairs, that I think, a retired naval officer would be a more competent and fitting person. It would be absurd to think of applying the *Coutume de Paris* to the Labrador—further, without sufficient physical force to enforce his decrees, any judge would be useless on the coast.

I shall, now, offer some observations on that part of the coast occupied by the Hudson Bay Company. First,—The King's Domain, properly so called, being leased to the highest bidder, by Government, for a certain term, ever since the year 1732. This district stretches from the parishes on the North Shore to Cape Cormorant, about 90 leagues, or 270 miles. The lessees, from the first have only occupied themselves with the Indian trade and two or three salmon fisheries. The number of establishments, in this tract are six, viz. : Tadoussac, Portneuf, Jérémie, River Godbout, Seven Isles, and River Moisie. The number of people employed, about twenty, who are servants of the Company, and occupied in trading with the Indians. The next tract, usually called the Mingan Seigneurie, which, the occupiers say, extends from Cape Cormorant to a river named Oroman, about 80 leagues or 240

miles ; (it appears from Bouchette, that the Seigneurie, originally, extended only to the River Goynish ; this is 20 leagues shorter) however, as this *Seigneurie*, like all others, was granted under certain conditions, which if not fulfilled, the land should return to the King, as if never granted, it is as clearly the King's domain now as what is above it, because the *Seigneurs* have not only, *not fulfilled* their conditions, but have exerted every effort to prevent it ; instead of conceding, and peopling the Seignury, they strive, by threats and otherwise, to keep off all intruders, as they call British fishermen and coasters *who touch* on these inhospitable shores, and as the lessees of the Domain, have also generally, held the Mingan Lordship, the two have always been confounded together as if held under the same tenure. The number of establishments, on this last tract, are four, viz. : Mingan, Napisippi Natasquan, and Musquarow, employing about twenty men. Here we have upwards of 500 miles of coast in the path of the commerce of Quebec, comprising half of the sea coast of the Province and its chief harbours, locked up and held desert for the only object of enabling a few adventurers to cheat the miserable aborigines living on this tract, for it cannot be called trade where no competition is allowed. The former Government of Lower Canada has been, mainly, the cause of this state of things ; and I believe, the history of the world will not furnish an example of so preposterous an act, for so base a purpose.

I suppose there is no difference of opinion, in the policy of having these 500 miles settled as soon as possible, and, as the lease will expire in a year or two, the Government may immediately have the tract surveyed and marked off in lots for location ; taking care to retain the chief landing and watering-places in the harbours as public property. Some of the west

parts, I suppose, may be available for the purposes of agriculture, but, by far the greatest part being nothing but granite, can only be valuable as fishing stands,—I think, half-league lots will not be too large for land of that description. Some of the lots will be taken up immediately, and, in due time, every place where a boat can be secured will be settled. In a maritime point of view, were these parts settled, it would be highly beneficial to the commerce of the St. Lawrence, while, as a source of produce for export, it would add considerably to the trade and wealth of the Province.

ABORIGINAL INHABITANTS.

The Mountaineer Indians, inhabiting the coast, are a tribe of what M^cKenzie calls the Knistineau. It appears, that the chief part of the Indians, from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic Ocean, and from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains, are so alike in manners, language and habits, that they may be pronounced one great division of the Malay race;—I say Malay, because the greater part of this great family of man are so called at present; whatever difference does exist among them, I think, may be sought for by the amalgamation with the Mogul race. When they have had much communication with the whites their manners are greatly modified, while in their original state they display astonishing similarity—their chief characteristic, everywhere, is cunning; next, insensibility to physical evils. Thirdly—They are very generally cannibals—few of the American tribes can be absolved of that charge, and among the Islanders of the South Sea and Indian Archipelago it seems still more common. In person, the Malay is much the same as the European, unless their having great mouths and strong teeth. I consider the Malay race to be one of the four great

families of man, and placed by Providence on the Continent of America ; their progress has been therefore, west, and after peopling the South Sea Isles and Indian Archipelago, they have progressed as far as India. It appears, by the ruins of towns, lately discovered in Central America, that in times past, some tribes had made a degree of advance to civilisation ; and as when men make temples and statues they can also build ships ; this was probably the time of their emigrations ; and it is a question, whether the Hindoo Mythology and Institutions, about which there has such a rout been made, were not the native products of this Continent, and carried to Asia by some tribes of Malays. To return to those inhabiting the Coast, their number, from the Saguenay downwards, is about 700 of all ages, and including those about Lake St. John, may amount to 1,000,—I am afraid, however, that this estimate is too large. They are a very timid and inoffensive people, not but that they show occasionally some outbreaks of ferocity, particularly when intoxicated—their long subjection has debased and given them all the vices of slaves, liars, cheats, and drunkards. About 200 years ago they were, at least as warlike and enterprising as any tribe on this continent. At that time, they totally extirpated the Esquimaux, a very brave and numerous people who inhabited the Gulf shores. It is true they had assistance from the French, yet it was mainly the Mountaineers that achieved it. At that time, it is probable, the Mountaineer Tribe was four times as numerous as now ; they were the first of all the natives of America who had friendly communication with the Europeans, and the first that learnt the use of firearms. Long after the expulsion of the Esquimaux, they continued sending war parties to the North, and, Mr. Lloyd, of St. Paul's River, told me, that he knew an old Mountaineer, who related to him,

that in his youth, he had often formed one of these parties, and he used to describe the manner of their assaults on the Esquimaux encampments, which was so perfectly similar to the description of Mr. Hearne, in his expedition to the Coppermine River, that it is needless to mention it here, as it always ended in the total destruction of the whole, without respect to sex or age. These wars only ceased when the Mountaineers were converted to Christianity, by the Jesuits, about the year 1720.

In 1730, says Bouchette, the French government first devised the means of raising a revenue from these Indians, under the name of "Licences to Adventurers to trade within a certain limit;" these licences soon became leases for a term of years, and these lessees soon formed a system of subjecting the natives to certain rules for their own advantage. All monopolies have been found, when left to their own way, to become corrupt and oppressive—the monopoly of the Fur Trade has not been the least so. To show how heavy this bears on the Indians, we must first recollect, that the lessees pay to Government £1,200, per annum, which alone, operates as a poll tax of about two guineas a head on young and old; next, these lessees have a number of agents, clerks, voyageurs and servants, whose pay and subsistence amount to as much more; next, there are houses, stores, vessels, boats, &c., to be kept up, and it is to be supposed, those that take the lease expect to gain something by it, the whole of which must be drawn from the labor of the natives; it may be safely said, that they have been paying a capitation tax of five or six pounds, for more than a century! It is an indisputable truth, that if the professional traders were withdrawn to-day, the Indians would not be benefitted in the smallest degree, for some time at least, as their extreme ignorance, and habits of inebriety would lay them open to adventurers,

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who would fleece them without any scruple—such is the tone current through the country, that an Indian is always looked on as lawful game. It may be expected, that I should offer some remarks regarding the measures to be adopted for their amelioration and improvement. My ideas on this subject are decided. First—All attempts to better the adults will be labor lost; if they improve at all, it will be by the example of settlers near them—the young only may be expected to repay the trouble and expense of cultivation. I have read, somewhere, that a Society was lately formed in London, for the Improvement of the Indians of Canada, and, that its efforts had been partially successful in Upper Canada. Now, if a school could be established at the Light-house, at Point des Monts, on the principles of the Society, to instruct the Indian youth of both sexes, teaching the boys English, with the use of the tools of coopers and boat-builders and joiners, with some lessons of gardening, and the girls the usual domestic arts of the sex, taking care that English should be the medium, for there are strong objections against French. After the trial made, and if successful, a second school may be erected about the Mingan Isles : by this means, it is my opinion, that considerable amelioration may be effected throughout the tribe; and Government may well pay the expenses, seeing the large revenue derived from the poor Indians for so long a time—it would be no more than retribution due.

ESQUIMAUX.

When the French first frequented the coast, it was in possession of the Esquimaux, up as far as the west end of Anticosti. It appears, that they had not been long in possession before the arrival of the Europeans, and that they had got it by

conquest. During the time they held the coast, it would seem, the Esquimaux country was the *Champ d'honneur* of all the tribes of Indians from New England and the Lakes to Hudson's Bay : Micmacs and Abinaquis, from Nova Scotia and Maine ; Iroquois, from Lakes Champlain and Ontario ; Algonquins and Nascapiés, north of the St. Lawrence, all sent their war parties against the Esquimaux : as to their immediate neighbours, the Mountaineers, a continual war raged between them.

Notwithstanding all these enemies, the Esquimaux maintained their conquests with a strong hand ; and it is probable, would have progressed farther south if the Europeans had not arrived.

No account of their numbers has come down to us ; yet, from various items, it would appear to be seventy thousand. When De Monts first settled Port Royal in Nova Scotia, in 1605, he was surprised with the appearance of an Indian army, near his settlement, of four hundred men, who had just returned from an expedition against the Esquimaux. It would seem by this, that the parties who ventured into the Esquimaux country were numerous.

I take the Esquimaux to be a division of the Mogul family of Asia, who landed in the N.W. corner of America, advanced east, round the Arctic Sea to Greenland, and then south to the River St. Lawrence, which seems to be their furthest progress on the east side. On the west-side of the continent, I am of opinion, that the chief part of the Indians, west of the Rocky Mountains, are of the Mogul race, or a mixture of them and of Malays : it is, also, probable, that the original Mexicans were a tribe of Moguls ; how much further south they have advanced, I have no means of knowing.

In person, the Esquimaux is short, about five feet four inches in height, compactly made ; arms and legs short in proportion to the body ; feet and hands small ; chubby face, high cheek-bones, eyes prominent and far apart—in appearance, they are greatly inferior to the Malay tribes : they are however, much stronger, both in the arms and body, and more dexterous in their hands. They are distinguished for courage and probity : and in intellect seem also superior to the Malay race.

It is singular that the French, who were so successful in bringing in the Indian tribes, could make nothing of the Esquimaux ; they continued hostile from their first arrival, until the conquest of the country by the British, (about two hundred and fifty years) and annoyed them all the time. The first person who pacified and brought on the Esquimaux of Labrador, was one Cartwright, an Englishman, who was both a gentleman and a scholar, alike remarkable for his humanity and moral character : this gentleman established a fishing-stand, below Cape Charles, shortly after the peace of 1763, and gave a great part of his time in taming and instructing the natives : he first seized, by surprise two females on an island, and kept them under his eye for several months, teaching them English, and learning from them the Esquimaux language : in the fall, he carried them to England, introduced them into company, and even at Court, where they were graciously received, by Queen Charlotte, who gave them many presents, some of which are yet on the coast. The following spring, Mr. Cartwright carried his pupils back to Labrador, and through their means, soon made the Esquimaux understand, that he was not French, and that he was their friend : he reaped the reward of his philanthropy in a little time ; in less than four years, all the Esquimaux, for six hundred miles around, came in, on the most

friendly terms, and looked up to him as a being of a superior order. Since that time the Esquimaux have troubled no one. About the Moravian settlements they are generally very pious Christians, and those scattered west are at least, nominal ones; the whole are Protestants. About fifty individuals of the tribe live in the Province; they have adopted the English manners, clothing and language; and live exactly the same as the other inhabitants of the coast.

I suppose it would interest no one, to relate the many sanguinary encounters in which the Esquimaux have been the victims or the actors. I have said, that they maintained their conquest along the Gulf Shore until about the year 1600, when the Mountaineers, having received firearms from the French, and learned the use of them, this soon turned the scale, as it does everywhere else, and the Esquimaux were forced to give ground, retiring downwards to the Straits, and concentrating themselves on Esquimaux Island, about one mile from the house of the late Mr. N. Lloyd, of St. Paul's. Here they fortified themselves in a camp, with walls composed of stone and turf, with a ditch outside, in circuit more than half a mile; which remains almost entire to this day. In this fort they maintained themselves till about the year 1640, when they were assaulted by the Mountaineers aided by the French, and either totally extirpated or expelled; the few that escaped retiring to the north, outside of the Strait of Belleisle. In this assault, it is said, more than 1,000 were slain, and by the quantity of human bones scattered over the Island, I should think the number was not overrated. After their expulsion from the Gulf Shores, they occasionally made predatory excursions against the French—coming into the Straits, early in the Spring, in skin-boats—burning fishing rooms, boats, &c., killing the guardians or making them

fly. Twice they assaulted Bradore during the times of the Courtemanches; in one of which they lost four hundred men: indeed, they continued this warfare until three years before the conquest; when, after destroying several fishing stands along the Straits, they were repulsed by some sealing crews, at Penoyer River.

GEOLOGY.

If we take the Coast of Labrador as a whole, it may be pronounced a block of granite; except a space along the Straits of Belleisle, from Bradore to Château Bay, composed of sandstone, and about fifty miles near the Mingan Islands, which is limestone: the rest is altogether granite of every variety. There are several sand flats, which seem to be the accumulation from the discharge of rivers; with a few trifling deposits of clay in certain places.

ZOOLOGY.

There are no land animals here that are not common to Canada, and their habits are well known. However, there are two belonging to the sea, which I have not seen described; these are the Great River Whale, a variety of the *Balæna mysticetus*, and the Harp Seal.

Balæna mysticetus. There are several varieties of this animal. First,—The River Whale, which seems to be found only in the St. Lawrence and the vicinity. Second—The Greenland Whale.* Third—The North Cape or Brazil Whale; and fourth—the White Whale,† the smallest of all, and found far north. The river whale, so called by the Ameri-

* This appears to be the true *Balæna mysticetus*.—(LINN.)

† *Beluga borealis*.—(LESSON.)

can fishermen, is the largest of all the varieties : in length they attain from sixty to seventy feet, and as they are much more lumpy than other kind, yield the greatest quantity of bon eand oil : some have been killed at Bradore, which made nearly three hundred barrells, or nine thousand six hundred gallons of oil, and thirty-seven cwt. of bone. Captain Scoresby says, that the largest of all whales is the Sulphur, or as he calls it, the Razor-back, which attains the length of one hundred feet or upwards ; but I question, notwithstanding, if the Sulphur contains so many cubic feet as the river whale. In colour they are mottled gray ; the belly and under the tail, milk white. Of all sorts of whales they are the most timid and easiest killed when struck. They live chiefly in the entrance of the St. Lawrence from December until June, when they pass through the Straits of Belleisle, and frequent the southwest ground for the summer, returning by the straits in November. It is said that they have little or no hearing : yet, I have observed, that they have a sense that seems equally acute, for the slightest disturbance in the water, even at a considerable distance, is felt by them instantaneously. Formerly, these animals were extremely numerous, and the quantity destroyed by the Basques and French must have been very great, as the shores of the straits are lined with their enormous bones.

After the conquest, the colonists of New England entered the trade, which employed forty vessels, usually getting their car-goes : this trade continued to the Revolutionary war. After Jay's Treaty, the Americans again began the fishery : but about the same time, the English whalers, from Hull and other English ports, began to frequent the southwest ground, and such was the destruction made by them, that in less than twenty years, they nearly extirpated the whole species. For the last

twenty years it is a rare thing to see one killed, and I question now, if there are fifty individuals remaining of the variety called the river whale.

The *Harp Seal*.* This variety of seal is found from the River St. Lawrence to the Arctic Ocean, Greenland and east to Nova Zembla : in size, they attain the length of seven feet, and four feet in girth. When young they have, for forty-two days, soft, whiteish, yellow hair ; afterwards they become mottled, black, and light blue, and after they have attained their full growth, which is three years, their heads are black, and have two black bars from the shoulders to the rump : the rest of the body is white. They are very numerous, forming the chief subsistence of the Greenlanders and Esquimaux, and are caught in considerable quantities, in nets, along the Coast of Labrador and Newfoundland : they are also killed in vast numbers, on the drift ice, by vessels fitted out from St. John's and other parts of Newfoundland, and elsewhere. They are wandering animals, always in motion, going north in summer, and frequenting the Gulf and Banks of Newfoundland in winter. Although they may be called carnivorous, they are extremely abstemious : it is rare to catch them with any sort of meat in their stomachs ; rest alone seems sufficient to fatten them. In February and March, the females having selected a part of the drift ice, which consists of strong flat pans, get on it and drop their young, which is generally one each, (sometimes, however, they have two, and even three at a birth) : the mothers immediately leave their young and never come near them afterwards ; in some rare instances, it has been known, that the old ones did suckle their young for a day or so, but generally they leave them immediately. When pupped, they

* *Phoca Grænländica.*

are about the size of a house cat, and weigh from fifteen to twenty pounds. For forty-two days they lie on the ice, with very little motion, without food of any kind, or drink, during which time they encrease four times their weight and bulk ; weighing, when ready to cast off their white hair, about seventy pounds—are extremely fat, and produce, on an average, four gallons of oil each. As soon as their white hair falls off they seek the water, where, in a few days, they become very lean. Here we have a deviation from the ordinary laws of nature, which, I think, is one of the strongest proofs of contrivance and design that I am acquainted with. These animals were created by Providence to live among the drift ice ; and as this ice is subject to be suddenly jammed or packed together, without any means of penetrating through it, and often, when in this state, it freezes into a solid sheet—if the Harp Seal were like any other animal, he would infallibly starve to death ; instead of which he suffers no inconvenience. I have heard of serpents and tortoises living long without food, but not of their encreasing in size and weight. Some, I am aware, may think this account of the Harp Seal to be paradoxical : there are few who will be more incredulous on this point than I was myself, until I had an ocular demonstration sufficient to convince any sceptic. The case was as follows : about six years ago, in the beginning of March, the wind being south, a considerable pack of drift ice was jammed against the shore opposite my house ; after a time, the wind ceased, and several square leagues of drift ice adhered to the coast : the drift ice was composed of pans or sheets of ice from half an acre to twenty acres in superficies ; among these pans was a great quantity of broken ice and snow, which, by the pressure, had been thrown up and heaped round each pan, forming ridges of ten, twenty, or even

thirty feet high ; the pressure from outside had lasted long enough to freeze the whole into one solid mass ; as to the pans themselves, they were ten feet thick, and as solid as plate-glass —there was neither crack, fissure, or hole on the entire surface ; upon the pans were many hundreds of young seals, just pupped, —here we left them until the 5th April, when we brought off what we could. At first sight, it was clear no communication could exist from underneath, and as the ridges were twenty feet high, no seal (little fitted for such an exploit) could get over them. I had clear evidence of the growth of the seals during the time ; for while the ice was jamming, several young seals had been killed by pieces of ice rolling down from the ridges and crushing them to death ; they were at hand to compare them with the living ones. I examined the stomachs of several, and found no signs of their having tasted food ; being just in the same state as others taken out of the mother before being pupped.

It will not be expected that I should vouch for the exactitude of the dates in the foregoing notes ; I had to reconcile them from very contradictory data in the best way I could. I might also have made some observations on the cod fishery ; but they would embrace questions of foreign policy and maritime power, things that I know very little about, and have less to do with.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ICEBERGS.

Various theories have been invented and published regarding the formation of those immense blocks of ice found floating in the Northern Ocean and Banks of Newfoundland. Some have fancied, that they were formed under high cliffs, over which brooks of fresh water ran down ; that the fresh water would freeze in falling and accumulate in large masses, adhering to

the cliff, until their weight became so great that a disruption would take place, and the block tumble into the sea. It is pretty clear, that he who invented this theory had never seen an iceberg; for, first, water falling in any quantity will quickly bore a hole through any mass of ice, and once bored, there will be no further accumulation. Secondly—I know of brooks running down cliffs, which after coating the cliff a few feet with ice, the water always makes a passage between it and the rock. Others have imagined that great banks of snow were drifted against certain capes; where after the accumulation of several years it would consolidate into ice, and finally roll off into the water. These theories appear to be founded on the supposition that all icebergs are formed of fresh water. It is true I have never seen the formation of an iceberg from first to last; nevertheless, I have observed a part of the proceeding, which by being continued, would infallibly produce the final result. Along the shores of the Northern Ocean, when winter sets in, northwest winds become frequent, and last from three to six days: they begin by blowing very strongly, but towards the last they become moderate and even calm; when the cold weather has continued for some time, the water of the sea becomes two, three, or more degrees below the freezing point: this is the time to make ice; on the first calm the whole sea for several leagues off shore freezes in a sheet of from six inches to a foot in thickness, according to the duration of the calm. After a calm, a south east wind usually follows, generally very strong and accompanied with snow; immediately the whole sheet cracks, doubles, pieces sliding under and over each other with considerable violence, until the whole is condensed into a space of about half a mile along the shore, and from ten to twenty feet thick, according to the pressure from outside. The broken ice

so heaped together, is loose at first, but in a little time it consolidates, although under water. Many people think that nothing can freeze under water ; but it is a mistake, at least as regards salt water. When the wind changes the ice separates into pieces of moderate size, and form the usual drift ice of the ocean. If these pieces are driven off any distance and cold windy weather ensues, the waves beat against them making the spray fly over at every surge, which keeps freezing on the upper surface : the fresh water only congealing while the brine keeps drawing off. In this manner the piece augments in size, until the upper part gets top-heavy, when it rolls over, the lower part becoming uppermost. The spray keeps still freezing, and the piece of ice keeps rolling over and augmenting each successive storm while the cold weather lasts. It does not require such a length of time to form a large accumulation of ice as is generally supposed : as the piece encreases in size, the process is accelerated, in consequence of the larger surface, and the greater degree of cold in the larger bulk of ice. I have said, that only the fresh part of the sea water freezes. This is true with respect to ice made from spray, and where the saline part has an opportunity of drawing off : but when the weather is very cold, the whole, salt and fresh, congeals ; the brine being enclosed in the pores of the ice : however, on the first thaw, the brine oozes out. I have often thought, that advantage might be taken of this circumstance to make salt to any amount along the gulf shores ; the frost doing the chief part of the business.

Icebergs are of a blueish colour, opaque and porous ; generally steep, in some places forming cliffs of no inconsiderable height. The cause of this is that the motion of the sea in the water-line keeps cutting through them horizontally until a piece overhangs, which either breaks off by its own weight or by a

stroke of the sea ; the lower part, still adhering to the mass, forms spurs to a considerable distance under water, which are very dangerous to ships.

Salt-water ice is easily known from fresh ; they differ as much as statuary marble does from chrystal : all ice floating about the sea in the months of June and July will be found to be fresh.

As to the circumstance of ice forming under water, it is attended with variations, the reason of which I have not been able to discover : most years it does not happen ; indeed, I do not recollect that it has occurred more than three times during the last five and twenty years. I do not mean drift ice, for that freezes every year ; I mean other substances, as nets, cordage, leads, &c. I have seen a net, sixty feet deep, every mesh incased with ice like a rushlight ; hawsers, chains, and other larger matters, with a proportionably greater crust. When this happens, if the net is not taken up immediately it is lost ; for it soon floats like cork—although ever so heavily sunk—and then forms a solid block of ice. I have known the bottom at a depth of sixty or seventy feet frozen, and resembling a limestone flat ; and all the anchors of a seal fishery, whose flukes were fixed in the sand so firmly that no purchase could draw them out. I have seen, on another occasion, when the fluke of an anchor was only partially buried, when drawn out, the palm brought up a piece of frozen sand, as angular as a stone, and nearly as hard as a piece of Bristol sandstone.

It does not seem that the cold alone is the cause of what I have stated, as in seasons equally cold, or apparently colder, no such freezing is observed. I am unable to give a solution of this difficulty ; all I know is that so it occasionally happens.