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CHAPTER XXXII.

NEWFOUNDLAND--ST JOHN'S--THE CITY AND THE HARBOUR-- COD-FISHING--SEALING--THE SCENERY OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

We are off to Newfoundland. The mid-day cannon fires from the citadel of Halifax, and, punctual to a minute, the Allan liner steams down the harbour. The fogs are rolling in densely from the sea, obscuring the shores, with now and again a ridge of trees high on the hills breaking sharply through the mist like aerial vegetation. We gain the open sea unconsciously, for the coast is invisible, and the water as quiet as a lake. We strike up acquaintance with folks on board from all parts of the world. Some people from New Zealand--a Scottish farmer, too, who has been forty-two years in Nova Scotia, and is going home "on the sly" to take his brother and sisters by surprise--a Dutchman from the Cape of Good Hope, who is a member of the Legislature there, and left the colony last "Yune"--and an old lady from Newfoundland, voluble in praise of its "dear rugged rocks." Two days we rush at full speed through the mist, the steam-whistle blowing night and day, and the fog-horn of some passing ship moaning feebly in reply. We emerge from the mist, and come in sight of the shores of Newfoundland. Round about us are icebergs, of all shapes and sizes, that gleam with dazzling whiteness in the sun. We pass close to an immense block, its dipping crystal edge glittering with a delicious transparent light green that contrasts most beautifully with the pure snow encrusted on its surface. To right and left shoot out wild, precipitous headlands. Before us appears the mouth of the harbour, an exceedingly narrow gut, rent open in some convulsion of nature, and nearly invisible till we are close upon it. The steamer cautiously enters between the sheer heights that sink abruptly into the water--quaint rocky peaks overlooking the passage, the "Narrows" as it is called--and barren slopes, only half concealed by a threadbare covering of stunted grass, descending steeply on either hand. These Heads are perhaps unparalleled

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in narrowness, and an intruding rock lessens the width still more; but there is a great depth of water close inshore. The ship's cannons are fired, and the reports echo and re-echo with deafening roar from side to side of the contracted gullet. The steamer glides on. One of the passengers, who had been told by some wags that "there wasn't a drop of milk to be had in the island," runs to the deck-rail, and, pointing to some quadruped far up on a dizzy height, exclaims, "Look, look, there's a cow, a cow!"--much to the disgust of all the Newfoundlanders on board. An overpowering odour of cod-fish greets our noses, and at the same moment the town of St John's is fully displayed to view, forming a horse-shoe against the high ground facing the entrance.

The little harbour, locked in by the high hills, is lively with tacking fisher-boats, schooners, and small steamers. The wharf is crowded by a sample of the inhabitants--St John's merchants in light tweeds; young women in their "braws;" boys in seafaring costume, like miniature fishermen; shaggyheaded, rough-faced "sealers;" shopmen and clerks; wharfmen and carters ; here a policeman in dark clothes and peaked cap, not unlike a rifle volunteer; here a Roman Catholic priest in broad-brimmed hat. We find out in a little while that the large assembly is not from unusual interest in the steamer (as we had fondly flattered ourselves !) but it is owing to this being the Corpus Christi holiday, when all the Catholics, the majority of the population, are out enjoying themselves. Carrying our bundles through the crowd, we hear loud whispers of who and what we are ; for in this island everybody knows everybody else, and as it isn't the family of Mr O'Malley of Heart's Content, or Mr Mauvaise of Carbonear, or the Flaherty's of Harbour Grace, it can be no other than "the Kennedy's." In an hour and a half the steamer moves off again, our late fellow-passengers regarding us as castaways upon a desert island. When the steamer dwindles away, we feel cut off from the outer world.

Let us see what kind of place we have been cast on for a couple of weeks, till the next Allan boat appears. To begin at the beginning, St John's is the capital of Newfoundland, the oldest colony of Britain. The island is something larger than Ireland, lies at the mouth of the Gulf of St Lawrence, and is the most easterly portion of America. The population is 161,000, so there are a good many acres of land (and rock) per head. St John's itself has 23,000 inhabitants. A queer place it is, with one really good business street a mile and a half long, following the water-frontage and running at the back of the wharves. Higher up on the hill is another street, less regular, full of heights and hollows, corners and angles, and not so substantial in its buildings. The rest of the town is composed of bye-streets, lanes, and a nebulous collection of wooden huts perched higgledy-piggledy upon the stony braes that rise in and about the town. The better class of houses are of brick, some

faced with plaster, too many with an old, unwashed appearance. If the folks used whitewash or paint on their houses, it would wonderfully brighten up the town. The larger shops are very respectable, and do a deal of quiet business, St John's being the emporium for the whole island. There are far too many stores for the size of the town, but the entire shopping of Newfoundland centres here in the spring and autumn. You will see one shop ornamented with the sign of a white polar bear, another with a big black seal--here a dog over a door, here a large golden cod-fish. One noticeable thing is the startling frequency of drinking-shops. Every other little store is "Licensed to sell Ale, Wine, and Spirituous Liquors." Very often there are two together; sometimes there are actually four! The license is small, and enough care has not been exercised in keeping them down. In every public-house, though, there is hung up a list of habitual drunkards, and the proprietors of the bar-rooms are prohibited, under a heavy penalty, from selling liquor to these marked men. But the drouthy customers employ a youngster to get the drink for them, so that the magisterial enactment is of small avail.

Through the streets drive little fish-carts and other vehicles, drawn by the most diminutive shaggy horses. Burly red-whiskered men in rough blue guernseys walk along, trailing heavy cod-fish in their hands. A crowd of shock-headed children and dirty-faced women are filling their cans at one of the public wells. A knot of bulky black dogs are snarling over some fish-refuse. There are scores of dogs here. You see them prowling about the streets, romping with the children, or sunning themselves in doorways. No matter where you go, you are always knocking against some bass-voiced dog or other. Everybody, even the very poorest person, seems to own one. The dogs are of all kinds, but few, I think, of the pure breed. There are far more Newfoundland dogs in Scotland than here. Half the poor brutes are muzzled--"to keep them from fighting with the other half," as an Irishman explained to us! Every

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second or third dog you see has its coat frayed away across the back, and its loins chafed, from having to be put in harness during the winter to draw logs for firewood. In the outskirts you come upon great squalor and poverty. You walk on rough cobble pavements and climb foul steep bye-ways, with rocks cropping up in the middle of them. You see ricketty black houses, all off the straight, and shored up with long poles. At one part the slovenly huts are enclosed with high palisade fences like a Maori "pah," while alongside them the abrupt gravelly slope has been scratched into a little patch of

cultivated ground. You come upon long rows of squalid dwellings--the narrow door cut in half across, the lower leaf shut, and a slatternly female lolling over it, exchanging gossip with another dirty-faced woman leaning out of the door adjoining. No matter how decayed or wretched the house, it possesses a little shop, principally for the sale of tape and confectionary, with hens dancing in and out behind the counter. Nets, sails, oil-tuns, and anchor-chains lie on all hands. Long-legged pigs, goats, and scraggy cows dispute supremacy with bare-legged, bare-headed children, who play at "ring-bajing" and other games in the middle of the street. Down at the shore the fishermen are drying and mending their nets, and at wooden stands erected on the wharves people are buying cod, salmon, and halibut.

On the other side of the harbour, opposite St John's, you walk through a real fishing-village, composed of decrepit shanties, many of them tottering on piles above the water others poked away into little rocky gullies, or mounted on the edges of shelves and cliffs, and propped up to prevent their being blown over. Above and amongst the houses are erected large "flakes" or stagings for drying, cod-horizontal platforms covered with boughs and supported on tall poles. Very interesting it is to look down upon them, covered with a field of stiff grey-looking fish, and see a gang of men and women walking about, turning over the cod in long ridges, or stacking them in bunches like sheaves on a corn-field. The road through this fishing-hamlet is narrow, rocky, winding--occasionally leading over the top of the drying-platforms, and at others bringing you amongst the unhealthy huts that lie in the damp cold shade beneath these brushwood roofs. One moment your feet will be splashing in a hill-stream, next going through puddles of fish-brine. In this place you ascend a wooden plank with ledges, like the entrance to a hen-house ; in that, you walk along a crazy kind of balcony in front of some trembling huts--now winding amongst herring barrels--now going alongside big ships loading up with seal-skins that they are to take to Britain to be "dressed"--now passing immense wooden vats filled with seal-fat, slowly melting by its own weight and the heat of the sun, and being drawn off in barrels for shipment. On every hand boats, oars, and nets--everywhere the smell of cod liver oil, seal-oil, and fish.

High above St John's stand the square double-towers of the large Roman Catholic Cathedral, overtopping every other building, and symbolising, as it were, the peculiar ecclesiastical rule. For the Roman Catholics are in the ascendant in St John's. Taking Newfoundland as a whole, the Protestants are

the most powerful in point of numbers, but in the capital they are in the minority. Politics here is reduced to Protestants versus Catholics. The former "rule the roast" at present-the Catholics have been a long time "out." The principal cause of trouble is of course the school system, on which the large sum of 80,000 dollars was expended last year. The Roman Catholics have the denominational system--the Protestants are non-sectarian, though the Church of England desires a separate grant, like the Catholics. Most of the people here are Irish. The fishermen, sealers, carters, all the poorer class, are Irish. Pats and Mikes crop up as plentifully as the bricks with which some of the side-walks are paved. Scotch people are few, but they are nearly all to be found in the prosperous part of the community--the "codfish aristocracy" by name. The large proportion of the inhabitants of Newfoundland are natives, no immigration having taken place for the last twenty-five years. The original settlers came from the West of England and West of Ireland. The rich Irish brogue has been perpetuated, and has leavened the language of the island; for even the children of Scotch parents, from association with Irish boys and girls and Irish servants talk with a strong Hibernian accent. "There's any amount of Irish here," a friend advised us in all seriousness, "so put Irish songs into your programmes; or," he added, "Jacobite songs will do just as well--anything with a spice of treason in it!"

There are two Scotch churches, or rather two congregations, as one of the buildings has been burned down. The houseless flock now meet in the Temperance Hall, and are much attached to their pastor, the Rev. Mr Patterson. The other church is well-attended, has a capital choir, no organ; and one

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Sunday we heard an effective sermon from the Rev. Mr. Harvey, who has written some brilliant magazine articles on the colony. In the afternoon we were present at the Pontifical Vespers in the Cathedral, this Sunday being "within the octave of Corpus Christi." The capacious edifice was crammed, the passages and porches being crowded to excess. The towering altar occupied one entire end of the cathedral--an elaborate lofty arch, surmounted by a cross, and the whole front of it lighted up with scores of candles arranged in groups, circles, and spans, that shone in the daylight like a blaze of gold. The organ was weak, the choir so-so. The chanting of the priests, and the intoning of the bishop, as he sat on a dais with his pastoral crook in his hand, was very monotonous. The service concluded, a procession filed out to the open air--the bare-headed

priests with the flickering candles not looking very happy in the drizzling fog. Following them were a hundred or two of the girls belonging to the convent schools, dressed in blue, pink, green, and white--the little ones being scarcely visible for the throng of gratified mothers pressing in to see their offspring. The approach of the bishop was heralded by incense-bearers and the strewing of roses on the cathedral steps--the great man appearing under a purple canopy, attended by youths in white, bearing golden lamps on the ends of staves. As he passed, the vast crowd uncovered their heads and knelt low before him, leaving us standing conspicuously in all our nonconformity. The procession was at intervals punctuated with banners bearing the pictures of saints. At the head of it was a brass band, out of tune, playing a stately solemn march--farther back, a drum and fife band discoursing cheerfully in a different key---a short way behind this again, another brass band in yet another key, crashing out a joyful melody --and the cacophony still further increased by the jubilant but discordant clangour of the cathedral bells.

Newfoundland is self-contained, and possess its own legislature. The Newfoundlanders have not yet joined the great Dominion, and, as the Canadians satirically say, will not do so till they have contracted a heavy public debt. They are canny and clannish, and have not a penny of foreign debt. All money borrowed is from amongst themselves. But Newfoundland is quite willing to enter the Confederation if her own terms are acceded to. As compensation for the handing over of her revenue, which is £220,000 per annum, she stipulates for £200,000 and a railway to be built from St John's on the east coast to St George's Bay on the west-- a line which will shorten the journey to America and lessen the danger from icebergs. The people of Newfoundland are almost wholly interested in sealing and cod-fishing, the sea being so bountiful as to divert men's minds from any other pursuit. Vegetables, flour, and butter are shipped from the United States and Canada--manufactured goods are chiefly imported from Britain. There is some good country for stock-raising, yet all the cattle comes from Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. "Yes," the folks say ironically, "fine beasts they send us from Canada --bullocks that have been hauling logs all winter and ploughing in the spring--as tough as leather!"

Cod-fishing is the employment of most part of the people during the summer months. The islanders prosecute the safer and more convenient fisheries along the coast--the Great Banks of

Newfoundland being left to the French and American vessels, which may account for one seeing in the papers such startling financial news as;—" The New York banker, Edward Jones, has put in here short of salt ! " The Government looks diligently after the great industry of Newfoundland. There are three war vessels here to protect the fisheries from the Frenchmen, who claim some ancient rights along the coast, and there is a steamer provided to tell the fishermen where cod is most abundant, just as religiously as there is a steamboat chartered to take the judges on circuit round the island. The papers, too, come out with their telegrams:--' Cod has struck in, " Herring has passed here." "Caplin" strikes in on the 15th June. This is the important cod-bait.

When it makes its appearance coastwise, the cod is approaching the shores of the island too. "Caplin" lasts five weeks, during which time the fishermen have to look alive. The caplins are like sprats, and come in struggling myriads. They are netted in thousands, and are even used as manure on the fields. There are two ways of catching cod—one is by the caplin-bait, the other is by "jigging." The "jig" is a lead imitation of a caplin, with two hooks in its head. A line, with this at the end of it, is thrown overboard, and you jerk away at this till you hook some passing cod. On Saturday afternoon my brothers and I went out with some Scotch friends in a wee steam launch, out through the Heads, and into a bay, where we had "jigging" and caplin-fishing to our heart's content. But we caught nothing; and, after that, what did we care for the many stern beauties of the coast, the " Black Head," " Peggy's Leg," and other remarkable strata ?

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A short experience, too, of the ugly swell that wobbled our little steamer, laid us all prostrate over its gunwale. But a refreshing tea was prepared on board, and, truth to tell, we boiled the bait ! There was almost a whole pailful of the precious " caplin," and if the codfish turned up their noses at it we certainly did not, for it was a delicious meal. So ended our only fishing excursion.

After the summer season is over, the fishermen have about half-a-year's idleness--smoking, drinking, loafing about town all the winter. Then comes the event of the year--the seal fishery. On its success greatly depends the business prospects of the island. There are twenty sealing steamers belonging to the port of St John's, and these lie up all the summer. On the first of March the sealing fleet of steamers and sailing-ships, carrying 5000 men, starts from this harbour and from the various coves along the east coast The sealing-

ground lies off the north-eastern shores of Newfoundland, and the south-eastern shores of Labrador, on the ice that comes drifting from the north. Towards the end of February the seals come southward to whelp on the ice, and in three weeks the infant-seals have acquired the requisite fatness to yield the valuable oil for which they are in part hunted. Therefore, the great sealing-spurt takes place between the twentieth and thirtieth of March. After that date, the "pups" are strong enough to leave the ice and take to the water; and if a vessel fails to sight them within that time, all hope of a successful catch is gone for the season. It is not a thing that you can go back upon--if you miss the seals in those valuable ten days you have lost a golden opportunity *which* only occurs once a year. True, you may go after the old seals; but *though* the sea is alive with them, yet they are difficult to capture, and you only kill one in a thousand after all. In this case, the only chance is when the seals get "jammed." The ice opens, the seals come to the surface, and the pack closes again, shutting them off from the water. The sealer then stalks the seals like deer, with a clumsy blunderbuss about five feet long. Now and then he gets a shot at one of them, but they run at great speed over the ice, and, when exasperated, turn viciously and attack their pursuer. It is poor-paying sport, for in the middle of it the ice very likely will drift asunder, and in a twinkling the whole of the seals will have vanished. On the other hand, we are told of an extraordinary "jam" of 18,000 seals, herded together within two miles square, and all killed at one time in an immense onslaught. There is a great amount of money staked on these ventures. Besides the fitting up and provisioning of the vessel, there is a six per cent. insurance for the voyage--all this may be lost in a week or two. If the steamer is successful, of course the gains are enormous, every seal being worth ten shillings. This season the fleet came back, each vessel with from 3000 and 4000 to 10,000 and 12,000 seals on board.

Each steamer carries between two and three hundred men, who lead a life of hardship. They have to sleep on deck in all weathers, till the coal burns down sufficiently to allow them to go below and sleep on the bunks. They never undress themselves; or if they indulge in a clean shirt, it is put on over the dirty one. Their diet is chiefly bread and tea, with the occasional addition of fat pork; also what the sealers call "duff"--a mixture of flour and water put in a canvas bag and boiled in the pork-broth--the result, a kind of coarse dough as hard as wood, which the men chop with their tomahawks and sealing-knives. On Sundays a handful of raisins is thrown in, and then it is "figgy duff." The trip to the sealing-ground is laborious work--hauling, sawing, and driving through the "slob" and heavy "packs"--doubling and beating about amongst ice ready to crush the

steamer like a nut. Great is the joy of the captain when he sees the floes dotted with the "white coats," and hears their baby-like whining. The host of sealers, armed with iron-bound hardwood bludgeons or "gaffs," six or eight feet long, rush upon the ice amongst the round, podgy innocents, that lie helpless like balls of fat-the men laying about them vigorously, stunning the seals by hitting them on the nose, killing them with a long knife, and then stripping off the skin and adhering fat. The hides and fat are salted, and the rest of the body left to decay.

Newfoundland has not a mile of railway, but possesses good metal roads. Every year 90,000 dollars are voted for making and repairing these highways. The chairman of each road board gets ten per cent. of all the money he pays out. The labourers, knowing it to be a Government job, "take it easy;" and the chairman, who in most cases keeps a store, pays them in sugar, meat, or boots, or other necessaries. A chairmanship is a coveted office. There is a heavy feudal feeling about the island. The fishermen, by their improvidence, place themselves under the heel of the fishing-companies and merchants. A man, say, advances 30,000 dollars' worth of goods to a "bay,"

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as a small fishing community is called, the success or otherwise of this transaction depending on the result of the fishing. For if the latter is a failure, then the debt is virtually cancelled--it disappears for ever, and there is no more heard of it. But the storekeeper, to recompense himself for these risks and losses, increases the price of the goods. Then there is a middle-man or agent at the "bay," who also understands a bad fishery means "no pay," and who also "puts it on" to save his own pocket, thereby making a second rise in the price of the goods before they reach the fishermen. "Independence of mind!" a man said--"if the fishermen don't work to suit their employers they don't get any provisions; and if they don't do what the priest tells them, they're cursed outright--its either starvation or damnation!"

St John's has the extraordinary number of eleven newspapers. They are all small sheets, about a quarter the size of an ordinary daily. One of them boasts a circulation of 150; another taxes our credulity by claiming 200. There is a paper which is "published daily," but only comes out twice a week. We called at another office on Tuesday, but Monday's paper had not been issued. "You see," was the explanation, "the holiday last Thursday has thrown us quite out--my boy only appeared yesterday." We were told of one paper that came out "semi-occasionally." One almost expected to hear of another as "bi-doubtfully." The offices here remind me of one

we saw in Canada. Asking for the editor, we were confronted by a brisk young fellow in shirt-sleeves. "Editor? I'm editor, proprietor, printer, compositor, pressman, newsagent, touter, and account-collector, which is the hardest work of all--so I guess if you want any of those gentlemen, just speak to me!" There are about half-a-dozen kinds of money here. First there is the real Newfoundland coinage--the "pound," or four dollars: the "shilling or twenty-cent piece and so on—the currency being on a lower scale of value than ours. All large sums are spoken of and calculated in pounds. Then there is the Canadian money, dollars and cents, and American money, both of which are taken on different discounts. There are also the Spanish and Mexican dollars; while, to increase the confusion, there is a considerable amount of British money in circulation.

We had some difficulty and much fun in getting a piano for the hall here; In the first place, we called on Mr A., the music seller, who showed us a cottage-piano half a tone flat. "I had to lower it," said he, "for some young ladies who sang at a local concert." The piano, we were told, would have to be taken out of the first-storey window. Last time it was moved he had to saw off the banisters of the stairs, but that came to be troublesome and expensive. He dealt chiefly now in pianettes. "The fact is," said he, "the doors and stairs are so narrow that coffins and pianos have to be taken in and out of the windows." We found there were only two "grands" in the island one at Harbour Grace and one at Mr B.'s, to whom accordingly we went. It was an ancient, highly carved instrument, with sonorous bass, but "tink-a-tanky" upper notes. Off next to see the piano of Mrs C., a widow, whom we surprised in the act of cleaning house. Oh yes, she had a "cottage"--and it was the most "cottagey" piano we ever saw, for the back of it rose almost as high as the ceiling. "It's rather out of tune," remarked Mrs C. ; so we struck A to test it with our "fork," but the key gave no sound. "Just what I said," she exclaimed--"some of the notes are out of tune altogether ! "

Many hours we spent in romantic expeditions amongst the lofty hills that overlook the harbour. Our boots wore out in wild rambles along the rocky nooks of the coast. The shore is indented with deep, gloomy clefts--sheer glistening walls of rock rising on either side, and the imprisoned sea thundering and reverberating up the sides of the terrible fissure. Yet here, on some little alluvial plot between the rocks, you will see a frail fisher-hut sticking as pertinaciously as a limpet. The cliffs are broken into all kinds of shapes. One in Conception Bay is a pulpit thirty feet high, containing a twenty-foot granite minister--gown, bands, and all, of the oldest known strata, clearly proving that Nature from the earliest ages was in favour

of Presbyterianism ! From Signal Hill, on the north side of the entrance, you have sweeping views of the town and its harbour, and all the back country. On this same hill is the little lake that supplies St John's with water. On a height beyond are the old barracks, occupied when the military were here some years ago ; also a battery whence the soldiers used to fire their artillery upon the passing icebergs--splintering peaks and towers, shattering glacial spires here, knocking off glittering minarets there--the most glorious targets, surely, that cannon were ever directed upon. Were the British navy to cruise off the coast of Newfoundland during the month of June, there would be splendid practice for their guns.

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Amongst the hills are many varied and enjoyable walks. Of course there is great wildness--barrenness that haunts the se-coast, and even permeates the town. People jocularly say that St John's had to import earth to form a graveyard. But there is plenty of rough vegetation. At times you feel on a Highland hill, as you wade and tear yourself through bracken, ferns, berry-shrubs, and dwarf-bushes--leap mountain-burnies, pluck the purple heather, or rest on the moss-grown rocks. One moment you are in Scotland; but you descend a hill, or turn a corner, and, hey presto! the scene is changed--you are in the wilds of Ireland. Slopes with bare patches of gravel, boulders, and loose rocks--a wild prospect--desolation relieved perhaps by a solitary squat hovel and a few yards of ground encompassed by a dry-stone wall a foot high--or, perhaps, a small lake circled with a shore of boulders, and frowned upon by rugged cliffs. Near here is the fishing hamlet of Quidi Vidi, situated on a real smuggler's cove--a small inlet of the sea, shut in by high precipices, and with an entrance scarce wide enough to admit a boat--the cluster of huts having a queer old-world look, lying there in a basin of hills, shut off from the winds and locked in from the waves. Over the mountains we roam, and lo! after a tough ascent, are standing on the top of the breezy heights, whence we look down upon the coast as it basks in the warm, brilliant sunshine, and reveals its outline as plainly as a map. Great swelling humps and hummocks, like clenched hands with bare ridges for knuckles, are outstretched fearlessly into the sea--their bases fringed with limpid green shallows, on which the waves seem to break gently in creamy foam. From our giddy elevation we see the fishing cobbles rocking on the lazy swell. Below and beyond, all round the circle of vision, and extending to where the dim fog-bank skirts the remote horizon, lies the broad expanse of ocean, over which the sportive wind sends many a dark ruffle--its surface picked out in many places with gleaming sails and the more vivid silvery whiteness of the outstanding icebergs.

Back from St John's you see some beautiful country, with one or two meadows of tall rich clover; and though much of it has a rank humid greenness to the eye, yet the verdure is very pleasant to look upon after the nakedness of the harbour hills. The interior of Newfoundland, strange to say, has not yet been thoroughly explored. So far as is known, however, there are plenty of moss-hags and moors, some lightly-timbered country, and not a few acres of arable land. One-third of its area is occupied by fresh-water lakes. The island is serrated, pierced by magnificent arms of the sea running fifty, sixty, and a hundred miles into the interior.

The entire seaboard of Newfoundland is occupied more or less by fishermen. The remoter villages are called the "Outports." The people are far from civilisation—few of them can read and write. The boys, when they should be at school, are away with their father at the fishing. A priest even is seldom seen. Such a state of things is far more woeful than the condition of the South Sea Islanders. A half-civilised white man is a more degraded being than a downright savage. In the nearer and more frequented ports there are well-ordered, thriving communities. We met a man in St John's who was a fiddler, and frequently visited "the Ports" in this capacity--that is, he was invited to play at weddings. These are no paltry affairs here. As a reverend "Father" only comes round once in a long while, it is found best to have a lot of marriages at once--sometimes twenty-four at a time. One of the customs is, that the brides decorate the fiddler with long ribbons of different colours, so that the jolly musician is soon as radiant with streamers as an Arctic sky.

We lived at the only hotel in St John's--a small house, with accommodation for about fourteen people. The boarders, who were chiefly Montreal and Halifax business men, sat together at one table, the head of which was graced by our landlord and his lady, in the ancient hostelry fashion. It resembled a family party more than a table *d'hôte*--all conversation was in common, and the joke and laugh went freely round. The fare was capital, and of course largely composed of fish. We had cod every day for dinner, save when a splendid salmon burst upon us--its plump, aristocratic form reposing in a tin dish about three feet long. Once, indeed, we had fried "caplin," but they could not hold the candle to sprats as regards flavour. A plate of fishes' tongues, too, was placed on the table, one day, but proved rather a failure. "A cod, a cod; the whole edible kingdom for a cod!" We never tired of cod, boiled or fried--it was a princely dish. Even the salmon, caught outside the Heads, and as large in size as it was delicate in flavour and free from heavy oiliness, was not to be compared to the cod. It would almost be worth while living in Newfoundland for this alone. Our taste was

also gratified in the matter of vegetables, which were cooked in the Irish fashion—boiled, that is, along with pork or ham. Occasionally too, in default of cabbage, we had

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dandelions and turnip-tops—"neep-shaws" being accounted as much of a luxury here as in Cockneydom.

We enjoyed our stay in St John's to the full. The proverbial hospitality of the Newfoundlanders was not wanting. We met many friendly Scotsmen, and one day received a laconic note: "Parritch will be ready the morn's mornin' at eight o'clock" --true to which invitation we arose early, and walked two miles and a half into the country, where we were treated to delicious milk-porridge. This Scotsman's house stood by itself in the midst of quiet green howes and knowes, and was a cosy, handsome building in the Elizabethan style. It was a change from the majority of the houses here, which are simply square boxes with holes in them. There has not been much taste shown in architecture as yet. Numbers of the wealthy merchants who do business here live in the old country or America--not following the Australian proverb, that "Folks should fix their homesteads where they make their hay." In winter time this Scotsman removed into town, for even the comfort and elegance of the villa were not proof against the wild snowwreaths that buried up the fences. We had a pleasant "crack" here. In the course of it, the lady of the house remarked that life passed quietly in Newfoundland--no hurry, worry, or excitement. The fishing season glided into the winter season, the winter season into the sealing season--they did not measure time by days and hours as they did in Scotland. Still an eighteen-pounder fires every day at noon, while at eleven o'clock P.M., a watchman patrols the street calling out the hour, adding--"And a clear starlight night," or whatever the sky may be. We never felt the time hang heavy on our hands till the Thursday we were to leave St John's. All morning we watched the signal station on the hill--all forenoon, all afternoon, but no signs of the steamer--and it was not till very late at night, just when we had made up our minds to go to bed, that we heard the double bang of the ship's cannon. About one o'clock on Friday morning the "Caspian" sailed, the last sounds we heard from the shore being some kindly parting words in broadest Doric from half-a-dozen young "Scotch chappies," with whom my brothers and I had spent a jolly, friendly time. The steamer glided past the high land of the harbour, that moved in inky black masses against a starlit sky, then emerged from the dark rocky gateway, with the bright shooting rays of the lighthouse running up and down the swell of the water. In half an hour the elevated outline of the coast

was extending behind us, with a gentle aurora rising, above it like another twilight. Good-night to " Terra
Nova."