

1669.

could not expect to find at Placentia. Still the high estimation with which they were prepossessed in favor of this last port, which it was indeed of great importance for us to preserve, has caused it to be visited from time to time by royal squadrons, and the neighborhood of the English has given rise to several expeditions, redounding to the glory of our nation, as we shall see in the sequel of this history.

There is not one of these posts, which these annoying neighbors have occupied there, from which we have not driven them more than once; our brave Canadians having found the secret of gathering laurels in the most arid country in the world, and almost always amid snow and ice. A stroke of the pen has deprived us of the fruit of so many victories.<sup>1</sup> The island of Newfoundland, large as it is, could not contain all our fishermen and those of England, as Sicily of old could not satisfy the ambition of Rome and Carthage; yet with this difference, that Sicily remained entirely in the hands of those who wrested it from their rivals; while Newfoundland has been left to those who were always beaten there.

First  
Governor of  
Placentia.  
1660.

Before the year 1660, the court of France had interfered but little in the affairs of the island; it left almost all in the hands of individuals, who, at their own cost, fitted out fishing vessels to send there. At last, this same year, Sieur Gargot obtained from the king a grant of the port of Placentia, with a commission as governor.<sup>2</sup> He met great opposition to his taking possession, and he was apparently obliged to desist at first from his rights, and maintained his title of governor but for a short time; for, after a few years, the Sieur de la Poype having been sent to Placentia with a royal commission to take possession, in the king's name, of the fort and settlement at that place, and remain there in the character of governor, it was laid

<sup>1</sup> France gave up Newfoundland by the treaty of Utrecht: Mem. des Commis., ii., p. 127; § 13, of Treaty.

<sup>2</sup> Canada Doc., III., iii., p. 12.