

APPEAL

OF THE

Newfoundland School Society.

THE Island of Newfoundland possesses peculiar claims on the justice and gratitude of the British Public.

It is the oldest, and one of the most important of our colonies. It was discovered and annexed to the Crown of England in the reign of Henry VII. by the celebrated navigators, Sir John Cabot, and his son Sebastian; to the latter of whom the discovery of the continent of America seems justly due.

The fisheries of Newfoundland, and the commerce connected with them, have, for several centuries, greatly contributed to our National Wealth, and, as affording an excellent nursery for seamen, have proved, in no small degree, one cause of our maritime ascendancy. An annual export from this country to the amount of two millions, gives the Island a strong claim upon many of our manufacturing towns, and, as the demand for articles of domestic use and comfort will necessarily increase as the morals and habits of the colonists improve, it may be reasonably expected that our general commercial interests will be benefited to a much greater extent than has hitherto been experienced, or even anticipated. Notwithstanding the antiquity of our connexion with Newfoundland, and the manifest advantages, both commercial and political, we have derived from it, of all our colonies, it is that probably, the moral state of which has been most neglected. We have availed ourselves of it for national and private gain, but till lately we have neither given it the civil privileges which our other colonies have enjoyed by the appointment of a resident governor, nor imparted to it intellectual and religious advantages in any measure proportioned to its wants. It has been our policy hitherto to consider it as a nursery for seamen, and to place it under naval government; it is *now* esteemed as a colony to which a native government has been appointed, and is thus made a partaker of the civil and religious privileges of our common country.

It must therefore be admitted that Newfoundland has a claim upon us for heavy arrears. Its population will not

be over-rated at ninety thousand souls, most of whom, either themselves or their ancestors, were inhabitants of the western parts of England, or came from Scotland and Ireland, and are now scattered along a sinuous shore of six hundred and twenty miles in extent, divided into numerous settlements, in various harbours, bays, and creeks, with which this coast abounds, with a Christian Ministry (including all denominations) quite inadequate to their wants, and with a provision for general instruction more inadequate still, there being at present only one free daily school on the Island; and whatever other schools have been instituted for the poor, are of contracted operation, and none of them possess the advantages of the new system of instruction. It would be invidious to dwell on such a condition of society as must necessarily result from so lamentable a deficiency of moral and religious means. Let us then be just to the claims of the destitute population of Newfoundland, and exert ourselves to discharge the debt which our supineness has contracted.

It is not less gratifying than just, to state that the merchants of Newfoundland have been the first to come forward and make this moral restitution, and it is owing to the benevolent exertions of a few individuals of that influential body, that the NEWFOUNDLAND SCHOOL SOCIETY has been set on foot, the object of which is to establish schools throughout the Island for the education of the poor on Dr. Bell's system, as nearly as circumstances will permit. As the inhabitants of the colony consist of individuals of different denominations of religion, it is the desire of the Society to accommodate its education to the moral wants of those it proposes to benefit, in such a manner as, without any sacrifice of principle, may, by the blessing of God, most commend it to their acceptance. While, therefore, the NEWFOUNDLAND SCHOOL SOCIETY adopts Dr. Bell's system of instruction, it is cautious of giving offence by insisting on the general introduction of any particular catechism. The Society intends that all the children of the schools shall receive instruction in the Holy Scriptures, and that, upon one or more days in the week, the children of the Establishment shall be taught the Church catechism, and that the attendance of all other children at such seasons shall be left to the discretion of their parents.

His Majesty's Government has, with its accustomed kindness and liberality, taken this Society under its protection, and has directed a grant to be made "of any land" in the Colony that may be required for building schools; and also "of the sum of £500 towards the expense" of

building the central school, "and £100 per annum for the salary of the master" of the same

The necessity for such an Institution is generally admitted in the Colony, where it has received substantial encouragement from the heads of the Government, the Magistrates, Merchants, and most respectable Inhabitants. The poor, also, are anxious to send their children to the schools, and avail themselves with gratitude of every opportunity which is presented to them. Many adults are learning to read, and the desire for education is so rapidly spreading, that the funds of the Society are, at this moment, altogether inadequate to satisfy the demand which has been made from various Out-Harbours and remote places for schools and teachers.

The first care of the Society has been to purchase a suitable building for a central school at St. John's, the capital of the Island, which, although attended with considerable expense, fully realizes the advantages expected from it. Besides the central school, others are established with every prospect of success at Trinity Harbour, Harbour Grace, Carbonnierre, Petty Harbour, and Quidi Vidi.

The Society has sent out, during the two years it has been instituted, five Masters, four Mistresses, and a Monitor, who are at this time, by their united labours in daily and Sunday schools, dispensing the blessings of education among at least 1100 scholars, children and adults.

Excepting at St. John's, no permanent school-rooms are provided for the children, or dwellings for the masters and their families; so that, for the present, they are assembled sometimes with difficulty,—always with inconvenience, wherever temporary accommodation can be procured. This want of room is severely felt, and the Public are most earnestly and respectfully appealed to, as the only source whence the means can be derived to obviate such a serious evil, the continuance of which would go far to destroy the most promising expectations of success. The benevolent objects of the Society are now so well understood in the Island, that much delay in redeeming the pledges which have been given to its inhabitants, would be as injurious to their best interests, as to the character of the Institution.

For a population so large and so widely scattered as that of Newfoundland, twenty schools would afford but an indifferent provision; to erect these, not less than six thousand pounds will be required in addition to native contributions; and for their permanent support, together with incidental expenses, a demand must be calculated upon of from four to five thousand pounds annually. Much as may

be expected from the kindness of Government, and from the voluntary exertions of the colonists, yet, after all, to meet this great expense, the mother country must be depended on for a parent's interest and a parent's support.

With this conviction the present appeal is made. The case thus submitted to the benevolence of the public is one it is presumed, of sheer necessity, and of evident duty; and all who believe that the happiness of mankind is necessarily and indissolubly connected with the diffusion of religious truth, are affectionately invited to help forward the good work of Christian education in Newfoundland;—a population of 90,000 souls,—descended from British parents,—for the most part in the deepest ignorance,—yet imploring instruction, presents a prospect to the Christian mind, at once affecting and encouraging.

Let us hasten, then, to the performance of a duty, which, if it do not rank among the more splendid achievements of British Charity, is nevertheless essential to that character for Justice, which is the glory of our country.

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE RECEIVED BY

Messrs. WHITMORE, WELLS, and WHITMORE, Lombard-street;
Messrs. HATCHARD and SON, Piccadilly;
Messrs. SEELEY and SON, Fleet-street;
Mr. NISBET, Berner's-street; and
PERCIVAL WHITE, Esq. Clapham.

ALSO BY

SAMUEL CODNER, Esq. Teignmouth;
Messrs. SANDERS and SON, Bankers, Exeter; and
Mr. W. RICHARDSON, Clare-street, Bristol.

In order that no Contributions may be omitted in the Appendix to the Annual Report, the Friends of the Society are respectfully requested to make their remittances before the 25th of March, on which day the accounts of the current year will be closed.

The Committee meet on the first Tuesday in every month, at eleven o'clock. All communications are requested to be addressed to the Assistant Secretary, Mr. MARK WILLOUGHBY, at the Society's Office, No. 13, Salisbury-square.

