

**THE TENTH ISLAND; BEING SOME
ACCOUNT OF NEWFOUNDLAND,
ITS PEOPLE, ITS POLITICS, ITS
PROBLEMS, AND ITS
PECULIARITIES**

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The tenth island; being some account of Newfoundland, its people, its politics, its problems, and its peculiarities by Beckles Willson

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The Tenth Island

BEING SOME ACCOUNT OF NEWFOUNDLAND,
ITS PEOPLE, ITS POLITICS, ITS PROBLEMS,
AND ITS PECULIARITIES

BY

BECKLES WILLSON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

THE RT. HON. SIR WILLIAM WHITEWAY, K.C.M.G.
PREMIER OF THE COLONY

AND SOME REMARKS ON NEWFOUNDLAND AND THE NAVY BY
LORD CHARLES BERESFORD, C.B.

LONDON

GRANT RICHARDS

9 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN

1897

*"Some place far abroad
Where Sailors gang to fish for cod."*

BURNS.

Upon a recent re-perusal of Mr Rudyard Kipling's "Song of the English," I was not a little struck by the absence therein of any reference to the "Tenth Island." Happening, shortly thereafter, to discuss the poet with a Newfoundlander, Mr George F. Bearn, we both speculated upon the omission. I suggested, playfully of course, that he should write to Mr Kipling asking him for an explanation. My suggestion was adopted.

"I really must point out to you," wrote Mr Bearn, "how greatly disappointed we Newfoundlanders have been at your ignoring us in your stirring and eloquent 'Song of the English.' You speak of Montreal, of Auckland, of Victoria, of Halifax : and yet seem to pass purposely by that deserted and ruined citadel of the first-born of England's colonies, least blessed and most banned by the Imperial Mother.

"Read our history, sir ; read Lord Dufferin's speech at the Cabot celebrations the other day at Bristol, and see if we have not been loyal and long-suffering. Come amongst us and see if we to-day are less loyal or less ready to shed our blood for the land of our fathers. We too have our message to the Imperial Mother, although the poet of the Empire has not thought fit to transcribe it.

"We have long been accustomed to have our geography

ignored and our politics and our resources misunderstood ; but I beg of you, sir, to repair the injustice you have done to our loyalty."

To this letter Mr Kipling responded as follows:—

*" North End House,
" Rottingdean.*

" Dear Sir,—What can I say in reply to your letter of the 13th, except that it is rather a large order to compress allusions to the whole of our Empire into two hundred lines of alleged verse. And when it comes to my sins of omission—well, I ought to have included Perth, West Australia ; Dunedin of the Southern Island, N.Z. ; the West Indies, and a few other places.

" But indeed I am not unmindful of Newfoundland. Perhaps I may know more about it than you think ; and certainly no man in his senses ever doubted the loyalty of the senior colony. We can leave that, I think, to the Yankees, who seem to take comfort from inventing curious fictions of that nature.

" However, when and if there is another edition of my verses, I will do my best to put in Newfoundland's voice also, but the task is not a pleasant one. If I leave out all reference, I am taxed with 'injustice.' If I make a pointed reference, as I did in 'Our Lady of the Snows,' I am, to put it mildly, supposed to be scaring away immigrants by misrepresenting the climate of the dominion.

" But we will make a bargain. I will put in a four-line

verse among 'The Song of the Cities,' if you, on your part, will drop, and influence other people to drop, allusions to the 'loyalty' of the 'colonies.' In the first place, I dislike the word 'colonies,' and, if you look through my verses, you will find I very seldom use it. It is out of date and misleading, besides being provincial. In the second place, there is no need to talk of 'loyalty' among white men—that is to say, races speaking the English tongue, with a high birth-rate and a low murder-rate, living quietly under laws which are neither bought nor sold. That is one of the things we all take for granted—because the Empire is *Us—We* ourselves; and for the white man to explain that he is loyal is about as unnecessary as for a respectable woman to volunteer the fact that she is chaste.

"Like yourself, I am a colonial in that I was born in Bombay, but it has never occurred to me to say that I am 'loyal,' because, like you, I am a white man, and—one can't step out of one's skin.

"Very sincerely yours,

"RUDYARD KIPLING."

