

STEWART'S

Literary Quarterly Magazine,

DEVOTED TO

LIGHT AND ENTERTAINING LITERATURE.

GEORGE STEWART, JR.,

EDITOR & PROPRIETOR.

VOL. III.

SAINT JOHN, N. B., JANUARY, 1870.

No. 4.

THE ISLAND OF CAPE BRETON: ITS HISTORY, SCENERY AND RESOURCES.

By J. G. BOURINOT, Sydney, Cape Breton.

INTRODUCTION.

I propose, in the present sketch, to take the readers of the *QUARTERLY* to a section of the Dominion of Canada, far out of the ordinary route of American or Canadian tourists, and give them a brief description of its scenery and resources. I refer to the island of Cape Breton, lying to the north-east of the province of Nova Scotia, from which it is separated by a narrow strait, much frequented by American fishermen, who annually visit the Gulf of St. Lawrence in search of mackerel. This island was known as Isle Royale, and was the scene of events of great importance during the eighteenth century. On its southern or Atlantic coast, the French had erected a pile of fortifications, as a part of their ambitious design of controlling the two great arteries of this continent—the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi—and hemming in the old British Colonies by a cordon of fortresses. But after the fall of Louisburg in 1758, Cape Breton ceased to be the battle-ground of nations, and consequently passed into obscurity. Now and then some adventurous tourist, seeking “fresh woods and pastures new,” or some enterprising American, interested in mining speculations, finds his way to this island, as it were a sentinel placed by nature to guard the approaches to the Laurentian Gulf and River; but most of the readers of this periodical probably know very little about Cape Breton. But those who, like the writer, have often rambled over the island, must come to the conclusion that it affords not only an extensive field for the employment of capital, but innumerable attractions to those in search of health or pleasure. Its rivers and lakes teem with salmon and trout of a size and quality that must make the eyes of the *bon-vivant* and sportsman sparkle; the moose still roams in the valleys of the northern section of the island. From its lofty headlands and mountains, the spectator will see a wide expanse of country still covered with the virgin forest, or the foam-flecked bosom of the ever-restless Atlantic. Its noble lake—more properly a gulf, separating the island into two nearly equal parts

—abounds with scenery resembling in many respects that of the Hudson or Lake George. Large numbers of the Miamees, who played so important a part in the wars of old times between the French and English, still live in wigwams or on small farms in the vicinity of the lake. Several settlements of that unsophisticated race, the Acadian French, are scattered over the island, principally on the sea-coast, and have changed but little since the days when their forefathers were driven from the fertile farms of the Grand Pré and the Gaspereaux. Then there are the ruins of the "American Dunkirk," where any one of antiquarian propensities can pick up many relics of the days of French dominion in America, and trace the line of the formidable fortifications which long menaced the integrity and security of the old Colonies on this continent.

SYDNEY.

The tourist who comes to Sydney in a steamer or sailing-vessel, first finds himself at what is called "the Bar"—the resort of the shipping engaged in the coal trade. A row of wooden shanties, disfigured by huge, glaring signs, on which the names of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales and other members of the Royal Family appear conspicuously; a long dirty street following the course of the harbour; a number of shops, in which everything, "from a needle to an anchor," is sold; rude wharves of logs jutting out for many feet; a long wooden platform, where the vessels ship their cargoes of coal—such are the characteristics of Sydney Bar. A steamer of the smallest size, called the *Banshee*—rather an ominous name—connects with the old town of Sydney, which is five miles higher up. The harbour is justly entitled to its reputation of being one of the finest sheets of water on this continent; for it is remarkably expansive and free from shoals and rocks. In old times it was known as the *Baie des Espagnols*; indeed, it is still frequently called Spanish Bay or River.

The capital was founded some twenty years after the fall of Louisbourg, and is prettily situated on a peninsula; but notwithstanding its age, it is a very insignificant town, and has a decayed look about it that shows the absence of a large commerce. At the time of which I am writing—the latter part of June—we saw two men-of-war anchored in the middle of the river, but when we looked for the Union Jack, we saw the Tri-colour gaily floating in the breeze, not only from the ships but from a large white building close to the shore.* We saw a ruined battery at the entrance, and an old flag-staff near by, but nowhere was there any evidence of British dominion. From the land came the notes of "Partant pour la Syrie," and we caught a glimpse of French marines marching on the esplanade. One's memory naturally recalled the days when the *Fleur-de-lis* floated from the French ports throughout *Isle Royale* by right of ownership. Had Cape Breton been ceded once more to France? A bystander kindly relieved the inquisitive stranger from the dilemma by informing him that the

* The residence of the French Consul, Hon. J. Bourinot, one of the Senators of the Dominion.

largest man-of-war—one of the old style of battle-ship—was the *Jean Bart*, a training vessel, which makes a trip every year to the principal ports of North and South America, and was at that time on her return to France. The other vessel belonged to the French squadron stationed on the coast of Newfoundland for the protection of the twelve or fifteen thousand men who are annually engaged in the deep sea fisheries. The fleet has been in the habit, for many years, of making Sydney their principal rendezvous, as St. Pierre and Miquelon—two barren and insignificant islands to the southward of Newfoundland—are not the most attractive places of resort, even in the summer season.

Sydney clearly has seen better days, for it was the seat of government in those times when Cape Breton was separate from the jurisdiction of Nova Scotia. Then it had a Lieutenant-Governor and other public functionaries all to itself, besides a number of regular troops. Those were the halcyon days of which the old folks love dearly to talk. Then the ladies never sighed for beaux; ambitious mammas had their time well occupied in manœuvring how best to snare the red-coated gentlemen whom propitious fortune had brought into that little community of loyal subjects. Sydney then was a town of large pretensions: there was no end to the squabbling among the public officials, who made up at least one half of the population; the *duello* was of almost weekly occurrence. The Governors were generally military men, choleric and fond of having their own way (well, we all like that), and as there was no legislature, nor anybody in particular to control them, and as the General Government "at home" cared little about what was done in so unimportant a dependency of the Crown, these men did pretty much as they chose during their tenure of office. One sad day, however, the startling news came to Sydney that Cape Breton was no longer to enjoy a government of its own, but that it was annexed to the peninsula of Nova Scotia. Much indignation was displayed at the intelligence, but the *fiat* was irrevocable, for fifteen thousand people in Cape Breton could hardly defy the power of Great Britain. From that hour the glory of Sydney departed, but her people still fondly cherish the memories of that golden past. The fine harbour opposite the town is too often deserted—its streets are grass-grown—many of its houses are tumbling down, and few of them are freshly painted—and its total population cannot exceed a thousand souls. Sydney, however, may have a future yet, for the enterprising Americans engaged in developing the coal trade are about building a railway to connect the new mines with the harbour.

Sydney is in the very centre almost of the carboniferous district of the island, which covers an area of at least two hundred and fifty square miles. Some years ago the mines and minerals were in the hands of a single English Company, who alone had the right to work them. An extravagant English nobleman, the Duke of York, fifty years ago, obtained a monopoly of the minerals of the province from the Crown, and he subsequently made over all his rights to a celebrated firm of London jewellers, to whom he was largely indebted. The "Blue-noses," however, soon got tired of so monstrous an arrange-

ment, and succeeded, after many years of agitation, in breaking it up, and throwing the mineral resources of the province open to the competition of the world. The result has been that some of the wealthiest capitalists of New York and Boston have embarked a large amount of money in the development of several very valuable coal mines within a few miles of Sydney. Villages of large size have grown up in the course of seven or eight years, in the vicinity of these collieries; harbours have been dug out, and immense docks constructed at an enormous expense. The same spirit of enterprise that has connected the old world with the new by the telegraph wire—that is developing the great West, binding the Atlantic and Pacific together by an iron band, and opening up new channels of trade in the remotest quarters of the world—is to be seen actively at work in this little island of the Gulf.

LOUISBURG.

One fine Monday morning we started—that is to say, a Boston gentleman and the writer—at an early hour, for the ruins of the old French fortifications, which are about twenty-five miles from the present capital. The only attractive feature of the road is the river Miró, one of the largest streams on the island, at times widening into broad lakes, covered with islets wooded to the water's edge, or contracting to such an extent that persons on the opposite bank can converse together with ease. The farms in this part of the country are extremely poor: the houses small and giving few evidences of comfort in their external and internal arrangements. Nowhere did we see either vegetable or flower gardens, to indicate that the people have any ideas beyond providing the merest necessities of life. On the road we passed many women, healthy-looking, and sun-burnt, and it was amusing to see the attempts of some of the younger females to look fine with veils and parasols. The great majority of the inhabitants of Cape Breton, it may here be stated, are Highland Scotch, and Gaelic is therefore the language one hears on all sides. A Highlander, of course, is justified in considering Gaelic extremely euphonious, but the American or Englishman, who hears it for the first time, will hardly agree with him, even when it comes in gentle whispers from the lips of a fair Scotch lassie.

Now and then, as we ascended the brow of some hill, we would catch a glimpse of the Atlantic sparkling in the sunshine, or of some charming little lake, amid a wilderness of shade. At last we came suddenly out of the spruce woods and saw the harbour of Louisburg stretched out before us. No scene could be more desolate than that which met the eye in all directions: a low and barren country, only relieved here and there by some stunted trees and a few frame houses, some distance from one another. A tall lighthouse on the other side, where the land is precipitous and rocky, looked grim and stern amid the desolation. No sound disturbed the stillness of the scene except the cry of the circling sea-gull and the monotonous murmur of the surf as it rolled on the distant ledges.

The old town was built on a point of land formed by the harbour and the ocean, and occupied a considerable area of ground—the walk

around the ramparts being over two and a quarter miles. The streets were regular and broad, with a parade close to the citadel, inside of which again was a square, occupied by the Governor's house, the Cathedral, and the bomb-proof barracks. The walls were defended by about 164 guns of the largest calibre then used, and several formidable batteries were erected at different points around the harbour, as well as on the island at the entrance. The fortifications are stated to have cost the French thirty millions of livres, and to have been twenty-five years in building. The public buildings, as well as the residences of the wealthy merchants, were all of stone—some of them having been faced with a beautiful tufa-stone brought from France.

After the capture of the town by Amherst and Boscawen in 1758, the British generals, fearful that Louisburg might again fall into the hands of the French, ordered that its fortifications should be razed to the earth, and all the cannon and valuable material distributed in Halifax and elsewhere. Old houses can still be shown in Halifax whose foundations are made of stone brought from the French fortress a century ago.

It was very easy for us, with the assistance of a map, to trace the line of the old fortifications, now entirely covered with grass, and affording rich pasture to the cattle of the farmers in the vicinity. One of the old settlers who accompanied us as guide, pointed out several cellars as having belonged to some of the principal buildings, but they were so covered with turf and filled with rubbish, that it was impossible to form any adequate conception of their size. We recognized the old batteries by mounds of sod-covered rocks, and were also shown by the guide a hillock of gravel, supposed to be the remains of the breastwork erected at this particular point by the Provincials during the first siege. The visitor will also notice, with some interest, a large stone at the Grand Battery, on which still appears the following inscription, very roughly done :

GRIDLEY--MDCCXLV.

The student of American history will probably remember this Gridley as the person who, thirty years later, fought on the side of his countrymen against the British at Bunker Hill.

The most prominent objects amid the ruins were some bomb-proof casemates, which are now used as sheep-folds. As we looked into their depths, we saw the roof covered with stalactites, resembling oyster-shells in colour, but icicles in shape. At the termination of the line of the fortifications, we passed a quarry of a dark description of rock—apparently a porphyritic trap—which had probably been used in the construction of the walls. We took a drink out of the well, said to have belonged to the Governor's house, and very excellent water it was. We passed over to the island at the entrance of the harbour, and noticed that it has gradually yielded to the encroachments of the ocean, for the battery that formed a very important part of the defences has long since vanished beneath the waves.

"Just here," said the guide, as we returned in the boat to the main land, "a few years ago, you could see, on a clear day, the ribs of

some of the ships sunk by the French during the second siege—now all traces of them have disappeared.”

We peered down to the bottom, but saw nothing except sea-weed and small shells.

“Do you remember,” here interrupted my Boston friend—“those verses of Moore, in which he recalls a tradition which long existed in Ireland?”

“On Loch Neagh’s banks as the fisherman strays,
When the cold, clear eve is declining,
He sees the round towers of other days
In the waves beneath him shining.
Thus will memory often, in dreams sublime,
Catch a glimpse of the days that are over,
And sighing, look down through the waves of time
For the long faded glories they cover.”

As we stood, a few minutes after the foregoing burst of sentiment on the part of my companion, on the brow of one of the ruined ramparts, we saw before us a very impressive scene. The *contour* of the grass-covered ramparts was boldly marked against the sky, and the huge casemates looked like so many black ovens on the green fields. To the south-west stretched the ocean; to the north rose the cliffs, amid which stood the light-house. The day was exceedingly hot, the sky was cloudless, and there was no wind to disturb the bosom of the harbour. Far out at sea, against the clear horizon, a slight breeze just stirred the waters to a deeper and purer blue; but below us, behind the black point, jutting boldly from the shore, long sheets of light, unshadowed by a single ripple, traversed the harbour basking warm and still in the sunshine of a July day. The idea that was conveyed by the whole scene was one of intense solitude. No doubt this feeling was intensified by the recollection of the very different spectacle that must have been presented during the middle of last century, when a stately pile of fortifications and buildings stood on the point, and the harbour was crowded with vessels from Canada, from Louisiana, from France, from Martinique and Gaudaloupe. Notwithstanding its admirable position for the prosecution of the fisheries and for the purposes of general commerce, Louisburg has been, for a hundred years, comparatively deserted, as if it were under a perpetual curse.

“The French doubtless believed,” observed my friend as we slowly moved away from the site of the old town, “that they were about establishing a great empire on this side of the Atlantic, when they built a series of fortresses—of which this was the strongest—throughout their wide domain. Indeed, it must be confessed that during the year poor Braddock fell, they seemed in a fair way to realize their ambitious projects and confine the old colonies, for some time at all events, to the Atlantic sea-board. The superior energy of the British, however, triumphed in the end, and the experiment of the French to found an empire in America failed just like the experiment they tried of late in Mexico. But coming to the present, is it not a great pity to see so noble a harbour actually going to waste—only frequented by a few fishing boats? Cape Breton, indeed, as you will see by the time you

have completed your ramble over it, makes very little progress compared with what it should when we consider the variety of resources it possesses. Its largest town has not a population exceeding a thousand souls, and on all sides you will see the want of enterprise and activity. This fine island has been in the possession of the British for over a hundred years, and yet its total population does not equal that of some towns in the far west, which was only the wilderness yesterday. The development of its coal mines has been almost entirely left to American capital and enterprise—what a magnificent country we could make of it, if we had it all to ourselves. Well, at all events no one can prevent us turning to account those natural resources which the Provincials do not appear to value as they should."

The Americans, however, cannot always monopolize the coal mines of Cape Breton—the capitalists of the New Dominion must sooner or later appreciate its resources and position at the entrance of the gulf, and on the pathway of traffic between the old world and the new.

ON THE BRAS D'OR.

There was a slight mist enveloping the harbour when we started on a sultry Thursday morning for Whycocomagh, at one of the heads of the lake, but it commenced to rise as we passed slowly down the river, and reveal the fine farms of the surrounding country. We soon reached the entrance of the harbour and passed up the little Bras D'Or which winds, like a pretty river, in most perplexing fashion, through meadow lands dotted at intervals with clean, comfortable looking cottages. Now and then a tall white spire rose against the sky. Trees fringed the low banks, and paths embowered with foliage wound down to some rude wharf, where fishing boats or "coasters" are moored. Sometimes we thought ourselves landlocked, but just as we appeared to be running ashore and wondered at the temerity of the captain, we would dart among the foliage which concealed the inlet from our view. Then we came to an island—long and narrow—so thickly covered with birch and beech trees that they kissed the very water—

"So wondrous wild the whole might seem,
The scenery in a fairy dream."

One recalled Scott's descriptions of Highland Scenery, and it would have been quite an agreeable incident had we seen an Indian maiden dart from under the foliage, in her bark canoe, but no such thing occurred. In all probability had an Indian damsel presented herself, it would have been with some such mercenary request as—"Want to buy 'em basket?"

Among the passengers was a neatly-dressed and intelligent-looking squaw, of middle age, who was very communicative, and showed, whenever she spoke and laughed, rows of teeth of perfect whiteness. She belonged to Escasoni—the principal Indian settlement on the Bras D'Or, where the Micmacs have a chapel and several farms—but was at that time on a visit to some of her tribe at Whycocomagh. What astonishment would her present mode of conveyance have caused to her red-faced ancestors—those great chiefs who formerly paddled on

the Golden Arm in the birch-bark canoes of their tribe. Rosalie Gogo, however, appeared quite accustomed to the modern way of travelling, and laughed and talked, perfectly at ease, with the pale-faces on board. As she became more familiar with the writer, she opened a charming little quill box, about the size of a cigar-case and exhibited, with much pride, an old piece of parchment, well thumbed and greasy, perfectly redolent of camp life. It had been given to her grandfather—a famous Micmac chief—more than a hundred and thirty years ago, by the French Commandant at Louisburg. Rosalie had taken the treasured heir-loom to Sydney and shown it to the French Admiral and officers, who had given her a handful of louis d'or and frames, and other presents, which would make her camp the resort of all her tribe for some months, until everything was exhausted in finery and feasting. As some of my readers may have some curiosity to read this document of old times, I give it below.*

The steamboat first stopped at Bedeque, a small village in the vicinity of a river of the same name, which waters a very fertile and beautiful district of the island. Having taken on board some empty puncheons, which gave strong evidence of having held something more potent than water, and were evidently replete with interesting associations to the gaping village idlers assembled on the wharf, the steamer again moved swiftly over the lake. The scenery of this part of the Bras D'Or, as we saw it from the deck, is wanting in those great heights which are necessary to give sublimity to the landscape. In the bays and inlets, however, the scenery is exceedingly harmonious, and gives an idea of repose and stillness very pleasant to one just fresh from the constant bustle and excitement of city life. The rivers

[Copied from the original.]

*Jean Louis Comte de Raymond, Chevalier, Seigneur d' Oyé, La Tour, et autres lieux, Maréchal des Camps et Armées du Roi, Lieutenant pour Sa Majesté de Villes et Château d' Angoulême, Gouverneur et Commandant des Isles Royale, Saint Jean et autres.

Sur les bons témoignages qui nous ont été rendues de la fidélité et attachement aux Français du nommé Jannot Pequidounouet et de son zèle pour la religion et le service du roi nous l'avons nommé et établi; et par ses presentes, nommons et établissons Chef des Sauvages de l' île Royale.

En foi de quoi nous avons signé ces presentes et y avons fait apposer le cachet de nos Armes et contre-signé par l' un de nos Secrétaires.

Fait à Louisbourg, le 17 Sbre., 1751.

[SEAL.] Le Comte de Raymond.
Par Monsieur le Comte.
Signé: Pichon.

[Translation.]

Jean Louis Comte de Raymond, Chevalier, Lord of Oyé, La Tour, and other places, Field Marshal of the King's Army, Lieutenant for His Majesty of the Towns and Chateau of Angoulême, Governor and Commander of Isle Royale, St. John, and other islands.

On account of the many evidences of fidelity and attachment to the French given by Jannot Pequidounouet, as well as of his zeal for the religion and service of the King, we have nominated and appointed, and do hereby nominate and appoint him by these presents, Chief of the Savages of Isle Royale.

In proof of which we have signed these Presents, and have appended thereto the seal of our Arms, and the countersign of one of our Secretaries.

Done at Louisburg, 17 Sept., 1751.

Count de Raymond.

that flow into it—the Bedeque, Waganatkok and others, are small, rarely exceeding a hundred feet in breadth, but abounding in beautiful curves and rich “intervals.” By the latter term is meant land with spaces between the trees—only found in low alluvial ground.

As we passed the mouth of the Waganatkok, or Middle River—where the mountains rise on either side—I remembered the following simple story that had been told me, a few days previously, by a person well versed in the traditions of the island :

A STORY OF THE WAGAMATKOOK,

Among the streams that flow into the Bras D'Or is one which is now known as Middle River, but in those times when the Miamaes alone roamed over the forests of Cape Breton it was called Waganatkok. At the present time it is surrounded by fine farms belonging to a hardy and industrious class of Scotch, who commenced to flock into the island in the beginning of the present century. In the days, however, of which I am about to speak, there were not more than half a dozen settlers or “squatters” on the lands in the vicinity of the river. The forests of beech, birch and maple were still untamed ; the salmon leaped and flashed beneath the trees that fringed the river's banks ; the trout darted to and fro in its clear water, or lay indolently in the cool, dark pools—undisturbed, except by the Indians, who came periodically in their bark canoes and fished without fear of interruption by the pale-faces.

Sometime in the summer of 1802, a small party of Miamaes, encamped near the mouth of the river, were surprised by the unusual appearance of two white men landing from a large sail-boat. The Indians watched them with much curiosity from behind the trees, and saw them search the ground close to the shore for some hours. Whatever might have been their object, they peered curiously under every rock, but at last one of them seemed to have made some discovery, for he shouted to his comrade, who hurried to the spot. The Indians were too far off to understand the reason for the exclamation and the joy they both manifested ; but, at all events, they proceeded to unload the boat and raise a camp, as if they intended to make a lengthened stay. The Indians then proceeded on their journey, and told the settlers, further up in the country, that two white men had come to the mouth of the Waganatkok, obviously with the intention of settling. Subsequently, two Scotchmen, on their way to River St. Denys, by the ford of the Whycocomagh, stopped at the place in question, and found that the men, who appeared to be American sailors, had erected a little log-hut, and were commencing to clear the ground around it. The new settlers, however, did not appear disposed to be communicative, and so the visitors soon left, and forgot them in the bustle of life in that new country, or, if they ever mentioned them at all, it was to speak of them as American loyalists, who, in those days, were continually coming to the Bedeque district.

In the course of the following summer, a settler found his way to the hut, but the door was locked, and nobody appeared about the place. This circumstance, however, caused no surprise, for the inmates had

probably gone for supplies to one of the settlements; but the same person also mentioned to his friends, on his return home, that he had seen, on the margin of the river, and close to the clearing in question, a large limestone rock, curiously marked with an anchor. No doubt it had been the work of one of the sailors in an idle hour.

A year passed by, and some Indians, on their way from Whyecomagh to Niganiche, reported to the settlers on the upper part of the Wagamatkook that the strangers had returned, and were busy digging about the hut, as usual. Still, the inmates never ascended the river, or visited their nearest neighbours, who were some ten miles distant, but continued to show every disposition to live as much as possible by themselves. At the close of the summer of 1804, a party of new settlers, on their way to the district between the Wagamatkook and the Bedeque, landed at the entrance of the former river and went to the hut, with the hope of finding some of their countrymen who could give them information respecting the country which was thenceforth to be their home. As they approached the building, however, they noticed that no smoke was proceeding from the roof, that the door was off its hinges, and that there was no appearance of life about the premises. What surprised the visitors especially was the fact, that the ground, for a considerable distance around the hut, was dug up in a most fantastic manner, just as if the former occupants had been in search of water. Pushing the rude door aside, they entered a room, with a rough fire-place at one end and a bunk at another place, and a table, a couple of chairs, roughly made from deals. Not a creature, living or dead, was found inside—to all appearances, the hut had been deserted for some weeks.

As one of the visitors turned to go out, he noticed something white lying on the floor, close to the bunk, and on picking it up he saw that it was a piece of coarse paper, like what is generally used for keeping a ship's log. Smoothing it out with some difficulty, he was able to decipher the following words:

Henry Martine told William
a limestone rock
Wagamatkooke, falling into the Brass d—
Marked by him, Henry Martine
Treasure, with [anchor]
Yards, in a
From the said rock.

These are all the words that could be made out, for there was only a very small fragment left of the original document, which had been evidently set on fire by the occupants of the hut before their departure. The discovery of the paper, taken in connection with the holes and anchor-mark in the vicinity, will be conclusive evidence, of course, to most persons that the mysterious strangers had been engaged in searching for hidden treasure. But here the reader will naturally ask—Did they find any? It would be exceedingly gratifying to the writer if he were able to satisfy the enquirer; but, unfortunately, he has only been able, after much patient investigation, to ascertain the foregoing details. If there was any treasure really discovered at the

margin of the Wagatekook, who buried it? It is, of course, equally impossible to gratify any one's curiosity on this point. Perhaps a defaulting cashier of a Louisburg Bank disappeared one morning and carried away any quantity of louis d'or and bullion from the vaults. Or, perhaps, it was Captain Kidd, or some other of his illustrious fraternity, recognizing the value of the passages and coves of the Golden Arm as hiding places, hid their treasure on the Wagatekook sometime in the shadowy past. Others again will have it—and these form the majority—that an American privateer, which had been committing sad havoc on British shipping bound for Nova Scotia and Canada, had been chased by a British man-of-war in the Gulf, and at last eluded her by finding shelter in the admirable hiding place afforded by the little bay into which the Wagatekook and Bedeque rivers fall. Fearful, however, of falling into the hands of the British, the captain buried a quantity of valuable articles, chiefly specie, with the intention of returning and recovering it in peaceful times. As the Spanish would say, *Quien Sabe?* We know that pirates and privateers have been wont to do such things, and why should they not have done it on the Bras D'Or as in other parts of the world? Is not the very name suggestive of buried treasures?*

Such stories of the freebooters of old times are very common throughout Cape Breton, and from Cape North to Louisburg, hardly a bay or harbour but can show spots where some adventurer, gifted with a fertile imagination, has dug for hidden treasure. Only a few weeks previous to my writing these words, a party set out at night to search for a spot on Spanish River, where one of them had dreamed three times running he would find old doubloons and pistareens, as the Scotch say, *galtore*. One of the seekers had a "divining rod," but it performed so many remarkable antics that no one could tell where was the proper place for digging, and the party left with the opinion that the energetic imps who guard such treasures were too much on the alert. Some credulous people would have it that the spirits in the pockets of the treasure-seekers and not "the disembodied spirits of the dead," led to the failure of the expedition.

The lake, soon after we left Bedeque, became quite narrow, and we passed at last into one of its picturesque bays, named Whycoomagh, and surrounded by considerable heights, assuming at times the shape of sugar loaves, and affording a fine prospect of water and woodland. Whycoomagh is an irregular collection of some twenty houses, scattered up the margin of a landlocked bay. A more delightful resort in summer could not be imagined, for the streams in the vicinity afford fine fishing, and there are many natural features of interest, especially Salt Mountain, from whose beds of laminated limestone rise copious springs perfectly saline, whilst from the top the eye can range over a vista of mountains, valleys and lakes.

The surrounding country is beautifully undulating and well wooded, and the lakes and streams abound in fish. Obtaining the services of

* Gold has actually been discovered in the vicinity of the river during the last two or three years.

two Indians and a canoe—this is the pleasantest way of enjoying the beauties of the country—I visited different parts of the lake and amused myself in different ways; but as the description of all I saw would occupy too much space, I must confine myself to a very few details. The greater part of the land in the vicinity of the Bras D'Or and its bays is settled by the Scotch, but at intervals the forest still remains in its pristine beauty. The banks slope for the most part to the water's edge, but at times they rise gradually till they reach the dignity of mountains. As the tourist passes—I suppose him to be in a canoe—he will catch glimpses of many pretty glens and nooks, through which brooks come sparkling amid the foliage to give their tribute waters to the lake. A number of islets—some of them well cultivated—are among the picturesque features of this magnificent sheet of water.

When I was at Malagawaachkt harbour, I walked to the top of the hill, for the sake of obtaining a view of the lake and surrounding country. The Indian who accompanied me led the way through the trees and rocks that impeded our progress, and at last we reached the summit of the hill. There was no breeze whatever, and the lake resembled an immense sheet of glass, assuming varied hues when touched by the sunlight. Away to the southward and south-east, the waters stretched to the very horizon. A dark mass, rising from the lake to the northward, told us where the waters found an outlet to the ocean. Directly to the east, on the opposite side, were the heights of Benacadie and Sunacadie, the headlands of Malagawaachkt were directly at our feet, and away behind us rose a range of hills. Not a human being was in sight except the Indian by my side; not a sail flapped nor our splashed—silence brooded over lake and land.

We had moved down the hill and reached the level once more, when we came to a place in the woods, which seemed at first sight to have been an old clearing. A few birches had grown up in spots, and there were any number of hillocks where the grass was quite high. I noticed some mounds of rocks, and presumed them to have been a part of the foundations of a house that had probably stood there in former years. But perceiving John Francis cross himself very devoutly and look extremely uneasy, I asked him what was the matter.

“Old Injin burial ground; more than a hundred years ago, the Micmaes had a large village close by at Malagawaachkt, and many Injins were buried here; some of them were great chiefs. Some Injins say that they've seen ghosts sitting round the graves on dark, stormy nights.”

“Nonsense, John, you've never seen any yourself.”

“No; but Injins say they've seen 'em at Skuda-Kumoochwa-Kadie, where many Micmaes are buried.”

“Where may be that place, with the impronounceable name, John?”

“The burying-ground on an island on the Big Lake.”

John said nothing more, but his looks were eloquent as we passed over the old burial-ground of his race, and seemed to say: Stranger, tread lightly over the bones of the chiefs of the tribe who once owned this island—its rivers, its mountains, its valleys, and great lakes—

until the white man came and took all to himself. So, for John's sake, I passed quickly and reverently over the spot; but subsequently I cross-examined him on the subject of Miemac ghosts, but, beyond some shrugs of the shoulder, he would give me no satisfaction.—Whatever were his ideas and opinions, he recognized the wisdom of the adage—"Speech is silver, but silence gold;" and, consequently, the reader must do without the ghost-story, which, of course, has been expected.

TO THE GULF SHORE.

A week after his departure from Sydney, the writer was on his way to the little village of Port Hood, on the Gulf shore, a distance of about thirty miles through an exceedingly picturesque country. The first ten miles ran through "Sky Glen," and by the side of mountains which stretched far to the northward, and were lost in the purple of the heavens. Now and then we would be perched at the very verge of a precipice, and overlooking a dark ravine, where a little stream rushed furiously amid the rocks that had tumbled there from above, and tried to impede its course to the valley far beyond. Again the road would take so sudden a decline down the mountain side, that it required no small amount of management on the part of the driver to keep the horses steady on their feet. Fortunately, the driver was so well accustomed to the road that his passenger soon ceased to speculate as to casualties, and was able to give his undivided attention to the landscape, where nature was still perfectly wild and untamed by cultivation. Just when he was admiring a charming little bit of scenery—a lake glimmering at the foot of some deeply-wooded hills—the driver observed:

"An ugly place for a fall," pointing to a deep gorge below us; "only a few days ago, a cart, with a woman and child, rolled off the road, and the child was killed and the mother fearfully bruised."

By and by we left the wild country and came to the open, where there were many large farms lying in deep valleys, through which the river Mabou wound like a silver ribbon. Graceful meadow-elms, singly or in clumps, drooped at intervals, whilst the luxuriant grass, ready for the scythe, waved to the western breeze that came down the hills. Flocks of sheep were browsing on the mountain side, and the tinkle of bells came continually from the meadows below, where herds of fine, clean-looking cows were cropping the rich pasture. The sides of the road were perfectly crimson with ripe strawberries, which mingled their fragrance with the tiny blue-bells and the pyrola, that umbrella-shaped flower.

Suddenly, as we were slowly descending a lofty hill, the notes of a sweet soprano voice came gently toward us from the level below. At first, the words were indistinct, but, by and by, we could recognize the old poem, "The Bridge," which, to the writer, will be always as fresh as when he heard it first, many years ago, beneath the shades of the elms of Harvard. The fair singer belonged to a party on a pleasure-trip from Halifax to the lake, and long after they had passed lingered in my ears the words:

"And forever and forever,
As long as the river flows,
As long as the heart has passions,
As long as life has woes ;

"The moon and its broken reflection
And its shadows shall appear,
As the symbol of love in heaven,
And its wavering image here."

We soon passed through Mabou, a neat village, not far from the sea-board, and exhibiting some of the characteristics of New England thrift and cleanliness, and, an hour later, came within sight of the blue waters of the Gulf. To the northward extended the cliffs, indented with many a picturesque cove where the fishermen dwell.—Landwards stretched a wide expanse of green fields. To the left, the waters of the Gulf, whitened by many a sail, sparkled in the sunshine, and far away at the verge of the horizon, what seemed a bank of fog indicated some headland of Nova Scotia.

Port Hood is a very insignificant place, and even its harbour is being rapidly destroyed by the shifting sands. Some days, at the approach and close of the mackerel season, the waters of the Gulf, as far as the eyes can reach, are alive with American schooners—low-lying, clipper-like craft—on their way to Chaleur, Gaspe, and other parts, where the fish are generally found in large quantities. These vessels come up the Strait of Canso, which they perfectly pack at times—perhaps as many as seven or eight hundred vessels pass this way in the course of a week.—The mackerel appear to have deserted the shores of New England, and to have found more congenial resorts on the southern coast of Nova Scotia, and especially in the Gulf. Probably 70,000 tons of American shipping are annually engaged in the fishery of this beautiful denizen of the waters, with its back of cerulean hue, and belly of pearly whiteness.

When I left Port Hood, I followed the coast line as far as the settlement of Margarie,* situated at the mouth of the river of that name. The whole coast as far as Cape North—the extreme northern point of the island—is exceedingly bold and precipitous—a coast to be avoided in stormy weather, as the ribs of many a wrecked vessel on the shore painfully attest. Some years ago, when there were no settlers whatever on the coast, the crews of vessels wrecked in the fall would often perish miserably in the thick and sombre forests that cover that rugged part of the island ; but the probability of such occurrences is now diminished by the erection of buildings and the settlement of fishermen at different points. The scene in winter must be grand in the extreme, for vast fields of ice come down the Gulf and choke up the Strait, so that it is sometimes impassable for days at a time. The ferrymen at Plaister Cove—where the headquarters of the American Telegraph Company on the island is now situated—have many a perilous escape ; but so great is their skill and knowledge of the currents, that accidents have not occurred for many years. The ice will be forced down by the northerly winds and block up the passage, but by watching the currents the ferryman will seize a favour-

* A corruption of Marguërite.

able moment and pilot his little skiff through little passages of the water, amid huge clumpers, until at last, after a hard tussle and a very circuitous mode of progression, he reaches his destination. At the point where the ferry crosses, the strait is not more than a mile across, and abounds in noble scenery. Cape Poreupine, with its back bristling with stunted firs, frowns down upon the strait which is bounded throughout by tall cliffs, and forms many a pretty landlocked bay and harbour. The ice that crowds into it during the winter is generally of small size; but off Port Hood, and the coast toward Cape North, many an ice-berg, with its pinnacles and turrets, glimmers in the sunlight amid the floating fields, and now and then some monstrous pile strands on the shore, where it remains until it slowly dissolves under the influence of the penetrating summer sun. In former times large quantities of seal were caught in the gulf, and the settlements of Margarie and Cheticamp contained many intrepid hunters of this animal; but now-a-days they are rarely caught on the western coast of the island. The grandest scenery of the island—indeed of the whole province of Nova Scotia—is to be seen in the northern section of Cape Breton, for there the mountains rise to the height of a thousand feet and more, forming deep gorges, flanked by almost vertical precipices. In the winter large glaciers are formed, and their debris are to be seen well into July. Cape North, “the Watch tower of the Gulf,” is a lofty promontory reaching far into the ocean, four miles in a northeasterly direction, and having on each side a crescent-shaped bay, partly settled by fishermen and farmers. A large district of this section is still a wilderness, where the moose range in small herds, finding rich pasture in the moose-wood and young ash that plentifully abound in the valleys and on the mountain side.

The river Margarie, which has long been famous for its salmon fishery, divides into two branches about eight miles from its mouth, one of which flows from the northern hills of the interior, through woodland, glade and intervalle, whilst the other descends from Lake Ainslie, the largest reservoir of fresh water in Nova Scotia, singularly placed at right angles with the course of the Gulf shore and the Bras D’Or, between which it lies. Many Acadian French are still living on the banks of the Marguérite, as well as on the coast as far as Cheticamp, where there are large fishing establishments. We met on the road women with red handkerchiefs bound round their heads and petticoats reaching to the knee, and turning towards us ruddy, smiling faces. The men wore red blouses and short corduroys or homespun, and courteously bid us “Good day, sir,” or “Bon jour, M’sien.” No doubt, in the course of time, the Acadian tongue and names will vanish. Still, those who remain cling to their customs with all the persistence of a race, slow to adopt improvements.—Wooden ploughs, driven by oxen, still turn up the soil; the women work hard in the field; they are never so happy as when the Curé is with them, or when they are attending mass in their pretty white Chapels. Simple in their habits, easily amused, fond of finery on holidays, the Acadians of Cape Breton, like the Acadians everywhere, represent the past rather than the present.

I have not attempted to go into any lengthy details of the resources of the island, for such information is easily obtained from ordinary books

of reference. I may mention, however, that in the vicinity of the Bras D'Or there is what is known as the "Marble Mountain." This valuable stone is found in many parts of the northern section of Cape Breton, but its value has never yet been thoroughly tested, and no quarries have been worked. A short time ago, a stranger accidentally discovered what he believed to be a very valuable accumulation of this stone, and has commenced operations for quarrying and sending it to market in large quantities. Cape Breton, in fact, abounds in minerals of every description, which will, no doubt, attract the attention of capital and enterprise when their value has been more fully shown by those geological surveys which the island has never yet received. Her coal deposits alone have been thoroughly examined by gentlemen of high scientific attainments, like Mr. R. Brown and Mr. Poole, who have long been connected with mining operations, and have given many valuable contributions to the world relative to the geology of the island. Gold has been discovered in some places, although not as yet in remunerative quantities. The land of the greater part of the country is also good for agricultural purposes, and one of the counties especially—Inverness—compares favorably with the best farming districts of the Lower Provinces. It is only necessary to look at the natural position of Cape Breton to see that the fisheries can be conducted on the largest scale. An island so rich in resources must have a noble future before it when capital has come in to develop its resources, and railways connect it with the larger countries of the continent. Louisburg is, above all others, that port in the New Dominion which seems destined by nature to be the Atlantic terminus of the British American system of railways. Perhaps, in the course of time, it will again become as famous as it was more than a century ago, and the argosies of commerce will once more anchor off the peninsula where France erected the fortifications which were to control the Gulf and River St. Lawrence.

A H M E !

BY ALEXANDER McLACHLAN.

Go seek the shore, and learn the lore
Of the great old mystic sea,
And with list'ning ear you'll surely hear
The great waves sigh "Ah me !"

There's a Harper good in the great old wood,
And a mighty ode sings he;
To his harp he sings with its thousand strings,
But the burden is "Ah me !"

A glorious sight are the orbs of light
In heaven's wide azure sea;
But to our cry they but reply,
With a long deep sigh, "Ah me !"

And Death, and Time, on their march sublime,
They will not questioned be;
And the hosts they bore to the dreamless shore
Return no more "Ah me !"