

# Nova Scotia Magazine.

Vol. I.

Halifax, N. S., January, 1894.

No. 1.

## A SKETCH OF CANSO, NOVA SCOTIA.

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It matters not how obscure a place is in itself, if it becomes identified with any question involving public interests more especially if international issues surround the subject the public pulse calls for information. The Atlantic fishery question, which drags its spasmodic length through the years and involves grave international periodic deliberations, brings into the arena of public inquiry the hitherto comparatively obscure fishing town of Canso, Nova Scotia. In the seventeenth century it was visited annually by fishermen from the west coast of England, and also by the Portuguese and French. While all the surrounding lands have been granted, the old watering place which supplied the fleets, and where hostiles met to trade scalps at sixteen shillings each, still remains a government reserve. The Cape of Canso is the eastern extremity of the mainland of the Dominion of Canada and the nearest point on this continent to Great Britain. The town as originally laid out and partially settled was named Wilmot, after the earl of that name. Early in the present century the late Abraham Whitman planned a new town adjoining it on the north, under the supervision of the government, on land he had obtained by grant and purchase, and it is on this land that the modern, bustling town of Canso is principally built. The old name of Wilmot has been given to the

municipal district and is spoken in connection with the town no more. Canso is built on a ledge of granite which slopes gently to the ocean and rises suddenly again in several islands which, grouped around the cape, form the harbor, which is about three miles long and three quarters of a mile wide, and is accessible at all seasons. The conformation of the coast prevents the drift ice from packing so as to close both the north and south entrances at the same time, therefore ships are always sure of anchorage at one or the other. The inner harbor is capacious enough to shelter five hundred sail of ordinary fishing schooners. Burying Island, so called from having been used by the French army and navy for that purpose, is the principal protection from southern gales, and was gradually disappearing under their action, but a revetment wall around its surface has rescued it and saved the harbor's shelter. Here commander (afterwards Sir William) Pepperel rendezvoused while gathering his fleet preparatory to the attack of Louisburg. Since 1820 it has been almost exclusively appropriated by the Atlantic fishing fleets of Canada and the United States as a sort of refuge where, according to the treaty of 1783, the latter were only permitted to "obtain wood and water, and for no other purpose whatever." Under the reciprocity treaty of 1854, and now under the *modus vivendi*, they have equal privileges with the Canadians, and sell and tranship whole catches, as