

Minas, in what are called the agricultural counties, there are few rocks except the soft gypsum or plaster of Paris—in some parts of those localities the inhabitants finding it difficult to get material for the foundations of their buildings. Nova Scotia may be roughly compared to a long ship which had shifted her ballast in a gale and thrown it all to one side—that side being the southern coast.

Still, as has been intimated, there are exceptions to universal sterility, even on the southern seaboard; and the dangers of navigating in these waters are not without some counterbalancing offsets. The sea is always open and free of ice; the tides and currents are regular and not violent; and as for the fisherman or mere coaster, he seldom ventures out in a fog or allows himself to be caught in a gale. Behind every headland, he knows full well, there is a harbor, or, at least, a friendly cove where his bark may ride securely in the fiercest storm,—some of these ports of refuge being, in fact, so broad and safe as to give them a claim to rank among the finest havens in the world.

In delightful contrast with the grim uniformity of the general coast line, the interior scenery of some of the larger bays is charmingly soft and picturesque. Nor is it always foggy on the coast of Nova Scotia even in winter—whatever geographers may have said to the contrary. Seas dreamily tranquil, skies of intense blue, an atmosphere balmy and invigorating, and of a luminous transparency, are physical phenomena in Nova Scotia, as certain, and quite as frequent, as her more celebrated fogs. Summer is the season, nevertheless, when tourists ought to visit the Acadian land.

Among the numerous inlets of the southern coast, it will be conceded that Mahone Bay, in the County of Lunenburg, is entitled to pre-eminence on the score of natural beauty. Commercially speaking, Chebucto or Halifax Bay is much more important, being bolder in the entrance, and terminating in that noble harbor of Halifax, which, taken in connection with Bedford Basin beyond, is not to be surpassed for convenience, spaciousness or security on the Continent of America. Those who have seen much of the earth's

surface say it cannot be surpassed anywhere the world over.

Then there is the next inlet, to the westward of Chebucto Bay, called St. Margaret's Bay, very beautiful also, and at one time celebrated for the excellence of its mackerel fishery,—a branch of business, which, for some reason or other, has died out entirely of late years, leaving many families destitute, who were formerly in most comfortable circumstances. A bold headland or two separates Margaret's Bay from Chebucto Bay on one side, and from Mahone Bay on the other; the highlands between Margaret's Bay and Mahone Bay, known as Mount Aspotogon and Crown Point, rising to an elevation of six hundred feet, and forming a landmark of great value to mariners.

Singular to say, the atmosphere is often bright and clear within these large bays, when outside of them, seaward, the fog is so dense that one cannot see a boat's length ahead. Such was the experience of the writer during a recent visit to the locality in question. Up to one or two o'clock, on a day in August, the little packet steamer groped her way through banks of fog, dreary and cheerless as can be imagined; but the Cape at the entrance to Mahone Bay once fairly turned, the fog soon began to lift, and the whole fairy scene burst at once into bright sunshine.

Popular arithmetic, always fond of coincidences, makes the number of islands in Mahone Bay three hundred and sixty-five—one for every day in the year—but whether this enumeration be exact or not, no doubt the islets count by hundreds. Many of them being small, are not considered worth the trouble of clearing and cultivation, and are, consequently, left to stand with their little forests of wood untouched. Those of any size are, for the most part, wholly or partially cultivated, being owned and occupied as separate farms by the descendants of the early settlers.

As in other parts of British America, the natives of this portion of the Dominion are a mixed race; but Lunenburg County, being settled chiefly by Germans, bears the impress of the fact very visibly. You see it in the visages both of men and women;