

remarkable chapter in the voluminous records of human folly.

It may be some consolation to the parties who have followed up this enterprise with so much of commendable, though of ill-bestowed patience and perseverance, to know that others have been similarly deluded.

About twenty-five years ago, a citizen of Halifax, well known at the time, produced some plans which were said to describe a locality in South America, where a large amount of money had been buried by his father-in-law some years previous. The locality named was Cumana—a town on the southern shore of the Caribbean Sea—and the story was to the effect that the party owning the money, and at one time living in Cumana, had for some cause or other been obliged to leave the country; but, being unable to carry his treasures with him, he had secreted them in his garden, taking the precaution afterwards to kill his black slave, who had assisted in the burying operation, and who, excepting himself, was the only person cognizant of the fact.

Living or dead, there always appears to be a black man mixed up with these money-digging adventures.

The Cumana story was improbable enough, one would think, to stagger even unusual powers of credulity. It found believers notwithstanding. No less a personage than the Naval Commander-in-Chief at that time on the North American station, actually provided a ship-of-war, and a resident gentleman of respectability was sent out as a sort of agent to superintend the proceedings. The ship arrived at the place named in due time; the spot indicated on the plan was found, or believed to have been found; the jolly tars—no doubt liking the fun—set to work with a will, and speedily dug up the whole neighborhood.

It is needless to add that nothing was discovered—not so much as the bones or the ghost of the black man. The ship returned to Halifax; but the parties interested felt the absurdity of the expedition so keenly that it was quietly hushed up, and very few at this day know anything about the story.

If treasure was ever buried at all on Oak

Island, the secret, we must suppose, would be entrusted to three or four, or at most to five or six persons only. How these five or six persons, therefore, in the course of a few hours or even days, could manage to dig a pit and construct works under ground which strong gangs of laborers could not re-open or remove in several months; or what possible motive pirates, or any other persons, could have in burying treasures at such a depth, or in such a manner, are questions which do not appear to have occurred to the Oak Island speculators.

On the other hand, the fact that certain underground works were discovered, being admitted, how is the origin or the object of these works to be rationally explained? To construct the drain so frequently alluded to, the ground must have been opened for a considerable distance between the shore and the old pit, and to the depth of one hundred or more feet,—an excavation, by the way, requiring both means and skill to accomplish it. The tropical grass and husks of cocoa-nut, though minor matters, yet, taken in connection with other circumstances, undoubtedly add to the mystery which at present hangs over the whole affair, and invest it with a strange interest. In older countries such matters would be referred to antiquarian societies, and historically accounted for in some way or other; but in the case of Oak Island, it must be remembered that the whole surrounding country, a century ago, was an unbroken wilderness of "forest primeval." Upon the whole, sufficient interest attaches to Oak Island*to make it one of the lions of Mahone Bay, which tourists must not fail to visit and examine.

There is no difficulty in reaching Mahone Bay from Halifax, either by land or by water. Should the day be fine and the sea smooth, you may run down by steamer in six or seven hours, enjoying the sea breeze and getting pretty views as you coast along of the fishing coves, with their white cottages nestling under the bold headlands which shelter them from the gales of the Atlantic.

Those who prefer land travel will find a well-appointed stage-coach, a good post-road, and a comfortable half-way inn, which is always a thing to be prized in