

It is traversed, it is claimed, by more keels than any other strait in the world, except that of Gibraltar. The steam whistle at its entrance, which is blown constantly in foggy weather, can be heard with the wind twenty miles, and in calm weather fifteen miles.

From Port Mulgrave, the railway terminus, small steamers convey tourists to Port Hood, in Cape Breton, and to the flourishing town of Guysborough, on the mainland.

Before we visit Cape Breton let us glance for a moment at its general characteristics. The island is so named from its early discovery by the mariners of Breton, in France. It is about one hundred miles long by eighty wide. The Sydney coal fields are of peculiar richness, and cover 250 square miles. The magnificent Bras d'Or Lakes are a great inlet of the sea, ramifying through the centre of the island and bordered by bold and majestic hills, rising to, in places, a height of over 1,000 feet. The scenery is of surpassing loveliness. To thread the intricate navigation by steamer is a delightful experience. The Great Bras d'Or is a channel from the sea of nearly thirty miles—a continuous panorama of bold and majestic scenery. The Little Bras d'Or is a narrow and river-like passage through which the tides sweep rapidly, and where the water-view is sometimes limited to a few score feet, so tortuous is the channel. The surrounding hills are not more than five or six hundred feet in height, but their pleasing lines, and purple shadows, and reposeful beauty delight the eye and rest the mind. Many of the inhabitants of the island are descendants of the original Acadian settlers, and retain the French language and the Roman Catholic religion. A larger proportion of the population are of Highland Scottish origin, and many of them still speak the Gaelic tongue.

The pleasure of visiting this delightful, but comparatively little known, part of Canada we enjoyed under especially favourable circumstances. Taking the good steamer *Marion*, at Port Mulgrave, we sailed down the strait in the brilliant afternoon sunlight which made the grassy shores gleam like living emerald. We passed through a winding channel, dividing Cape Breton and Isle Madame. The latter was settled a century ago by Acadian exiles, whose descendants now number 5,000. They are mostly bold and skilful fishermen. It is a pleasant sight to see these sturdy fellows haul their boats ashore, as shown in our engraving. The fishing villages, of which the stables and out-houses—roofs and all—were white-