



MAHONE BAY.

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The peninsula of Nova Scotia—very nearly an island—is remarkable, among other things, for the number of bays and harbors with which its coast line is indented. Perhaps, on the map of the globe, there is not to be found another strip of sea-side territory with so irregular a coast line, particularly on the southern and south-eastern shores. The entire length of the district referred to, including Cape Breton, is about three hundred and seventy miles, the whole lying in a direction nearly east and west, with an average breadth of seventy or eighty miles.

As a general rule, the aspect of the southern sea-board of Nova Scotia is hard and forbidding. Frowning walls of rock, bleak and bare, guard the entrance of every inlet,—the dangers of navigation being immensely increased by the numerous reefs and ledges, which, all along the coast, extend far out into the ocean, and, treacherously hiding their heads beneath the water, seem to lie in wait for prey.

The fogs which prevail on these coasts make them hazardous almost at all seasons; but in the dark nights of winter, and when the ocean is roused to fury by a southerly or south-easterly gale, hapless, indeed, is the lot of the mariner caught among the breakers upon the fearful reefs. Destruction, under such circumstances, is all but certain, and escape to be regarded as something miraculous. Vessels from abroad, if not fortunate enough to pick up a good pilot, are, of course, the most exposed to peril; but the annual loss of our own vessels, manned by our own countrymen, though by comparison less than in former years, is still very considerable. Good charts and accurate soundings, aided by a thorough and systematic lighting of the coast, will have a tendency, it is to be hoped, to make the hazard less every succeeding year; yet the seaboard of Nova Sco-

tia will ever continue to be a rough one for navigators,—just as the coasts of Britain still remain dangerous, in spite of all that experience and science have done to make them otherwise.

It is scarcely a matter of surprise, consequently, that in all the older geographical books, Nova Scotia should be described, invariably, as a land of sterility and perpetual fogs, or that, being so described, it should have failed, hitherto, to attract the notice to any considerable extent, either of emigrants or tourists. Never, at the same time, it must be asserted, was a country more maligned and misrepresented. Fortunately, it is not now necessary to meet past misrepresentations by counter statements. Events are doing more for the Province than could possibly be done for it by books, and it will not be long before its great resources and varied natural beauties will be known and appreciated.

Setting aside the rich valleys of the western and eastern counties, some of which are not surpassed in loveliness or fertility in any part of America, there are spots here and there on the iron-bound southern coast, which pleasingly relieve the monotony of crag and cliff—the haunts of the sea-mew and the gull. Those who are versed in geological science will find the rocks of Acadia made the subject of exhaustive description in one or more bulky volumes by our learned countryman, Professor Dawson; but the present sketch does not pretend to speak upon such matters with scientific discrimination or accuracy, nor is it necessary.

For all practical purposes of description it is sufficient to say—and a very remarkable fact it is—that while the southern coast of Nova Scotia is, for the most part, a continuous belt of rock, the northern side of the Province is, to a large extent, the reverse. On the shores of the Basin of