

largest man-of-war—one of the old style of battle-ship—was the *Jean Bart*, a training vessel, which makes a trip every year to the principal ports of North and South America, and was at that time on her return to France. The other vessel belonged to the French squadron stationed on the coast of Newfoundland for the protection of the twelve or fifteen thousand men who are annually engaged in the deep sea fisheries. The fleet has been in the habit, for many years, of making Sydney their principal rendezvous, as St. Pierre and Miquelon—two barren and insignificant islands to the southward of Newfoundland—are not the most attractive places of resort, even in the summer season.

Sydney clearly has seen better days, for it was the seat of government in those times when Cape Breton was separate from the jurisdiction of Nova Scotia. Then it had a Lieutenant-Governor and other public functionaries all to itself, besides a number of regular troops. Those were the halcyon days of which the old folks love dearly to talk. Then the ladies never sighed for beaux; ambitious mammas had their time well occupied in manœuvring how best to snare the red-coated gentlemen whom propitious fortune had brought into that little community of loyal subjects. Sydney then was a town of large pretensions: there was no end to the squabbling among the public officials, who made up at least one half of the population; the *duello* was of almost weekly occurrence. The Governors were generally military men, choleric and fond of having their own way (well, we all like that), and as there was no legislature, nor anybody in particular to control them, and as the General Government "at home" cared little about what was done in so unimportant a dependency of the Crown, these men did pretty much as they chose during their tenure of office. One sad day, however, the startling news came to Sydney that Cape Breton was no longer to enjoy a government of its own, but that it was annexed to the peninsula of Nova Scotia. Much indignation was displayed at the intelligence, but the *fiat* was irrevocable, for fifteen thousand people in Cape Breton could hardly defy the power of Great Britain. From that hour the glory of Sydney departed, but her people still fondly cherish the memories of that golden past. The fine harbour opposite the town is too often deserted—its streets are grass-grown—many of its houses are tumbling down, and few of them are freshly painted—and its total population cannot exceed a thousand souls. Sydney, however, may have a future yet, for the enterprising Americans engaged in developing the coal trade are about building a railway to connect the new mines with the harbour.

Sydney is in the very centre almost of the carboniferous district of the island, which covers an area of at least two hundred and fifty square miles. Some years ago the mines and minerals were in the hands of a single English Company, who alone had the right to work them. An extravagant English nobleman, the Duke of York, fifty years ago, obtained a monopoly of the minerals of the province from the Crown, and he subsequently made over all his rights to a celebrated firm of London jewellers, to whom he was largely indebted. The "Blue-noses," however, soon got tired of so monstrous an arrange-