

great power of flight. They are round us now miles from their home, and it is interesting to watch them as they soar aloft and then dart down with unerring aim and seize their finny prey beneath the waters, and then with a few flaps of their wings on the water, quickly rise again. When a school of herring approach the shore, the scene is said to be very animated, thousands of these birds gathering like a white cloud over the spot and seem like a stream pouring into the sea as they plunge into the waters and rise with their prey glistening in their beaks. On these islands their nests are so thick, that in appearance the surface is compared to a field of potato hills.

These islands rise abruptly to the height of 140 feet, their sides having a shelving or terraced form. It is only in a calm state of wind and sea that a landing can be effected. In size they are too small to be of any importance, the largest containing an area of only four acres. They are about a mile apart and the water between them is shallow, while from the North Bird a rocky shoal extends about a mile farther. So that this too has been the scene of shipwrecks, of which often neither person nor thing has been left to tell the tale.

About 25 years ago a magnificent iron ship of the Allan line was cast away here and soon went to pieces. There is now a lighthouse, however, upon the North Bird, with fog gun, and also connection by telegraph with the other islands and the main land. The keeper, his wife, and two assistants, all Magdalene Island French, are the only inhabitants of the islands, and a lonely position they must have.

But this has been the scene of some tragic events. The last keeper

#### LOST HIS LIFE

under very melancholy circumstances. He with his son and his assistant, a French Canadian, at the end of winter had gone out on the ice killing seals. It came on to blow with squalls of snow. They set off to return to the island, but they could not see it and the light was not lit. Then with wind and current the ice moved away so rapidly that it was calculated that it went as fast in one direction as they walked in the other. At last both the keeper and his son gave out. The assistant staid by them till they both died. He then set out again to try to reach the island. They, as was usual, had taken a

flat with them, but had abandoned it. He found it and in it some provisions, by which he was refreshed; and now the tide turned and the ice moved back. At length he reached the island, climbed its side and approached the lighthouse. Silence and solitude seemed to reign. To repeated knocks he could for a time obtain no answer. At length the woman opened the door to him, but alas, during these hours of suspense she had become insane. He told her that her husband and son were dead. She denied it, saying that she knew they were alive, and when he persisted in his affirmation, she accused him of killing them. Imagine his position, alone with a crazy woman so far shut out from all human aid.

It is customary in winter time to light the lights only on Sabbath evenings, which is a signal to the people on the neighboring islands that all is well. But now the people on Bryon were surprised to see them lit every evening, and concluded that some sad catastrophe had happened. As soon, therefore, as circumstances would permit, two men put off to enquire into the condition of things there. Arriving at the lighthouse, when they presented themselves the man clasped them in his arms, overcome with joy. One of them volunteered to remain, and continued to aid him till the government cutter arrived in summer.

Other tales of sorrow might be told but we must return to Bryon. The appearance of the island from the water, with its dark brown cliffs, its sloping hills rising to the height of 200 feet, with occasional farm steadings, but the greater part dark green with spruce and fir woods is quite picturesque. One thing that struck me was the peculiarly stunted appearance of the trees. On all the islands the wood is stunted, owing, no doubt, to the ocean winds. But this island is very narrow, not more than three-quarters of a mile at its greatest breadth, and it appeared to me in some places not more than one, and having no other land near it, is particularly exposed. So that the trees appear along the shore often as dead or dying, or as thick bunches, so close that no bird could penetrate them, and in the interior as if the tops were cut off, about twenty or twenty-five feet from the ground, and the branches extending horizontally, as we have seen the cedars of Lebanon represented.