

Soon we pass out of the channel. The steamer stops first at North Sydney—a busy coal-shipping port with a marine railway, and the relay station of the American submarine cable, where all the news is transferred to the land-wires. About thirty or forty operators are employed.

Seven miles from North Sydney is old Sydney—one of the most delightfully quaint and curious, old-fashioned places to be found in America. On the high ridge are the remains of the old Government Building. For, be it known, Sydney was once an independent province with a parliament of its own. But its ancient grandeur is fading away. The shore is lined with decaying wharfs, and broken-backed and sagging houses—which seem as if they would slip into the water—with queer little windows, and very small panes of glass. I saw at Oxford, England, an old Saxon church, which looked less ancient than the Roman Catholic chapel of this town. On the dilapidated old court-house is the appropriate motto, *FIAT JUSTITIA*. But everything was not old. There were two new churches in course of erection—our own Methodist church being a very handsome structure—a large and imposing academy, elegant steam-heated houses, and a long and lofty coaling wharf, where they could load a ship with 300 tons of coal, or 70 cars, in an hour, and where ocean-going steamers have received cargoes of 3,700 tons. A splendid new hotel has been erected, offering all the modern comforts and elegancies.

We have in Cape Breton a fine example of social stratification, a Scottish overlying an earlier French civilization. Many of the older people speak only Gaelic, and the preaching is often in that language. Among the guests at the hotel were two brothers, both born on the island, one returning with his wife from New Zealand—shrewd, keen, enterprising men, yet betraying their ancestral Gaelic by an occasional “whateffer” and “moreoffer.” Speaking of the Sunday morning’s sermon, one remarked to the other, “Did you no think it the least bit short, you know?”—the first time I ever heard that complaint.” Yet out of the great route of travel as Sydney is, I found in the register the names of travellers from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Galt, Berlin, Nanaimo, B.C.—the later came to study coal-mining, I judge.

At a dinner recently given in Halifax a military authority declared that he could raise among the Gaelic population of Cape Breton a regiment of a thousand men all over six feet high, not one of whom could speak English.

The mansion of the late Senator Bourinot, who was for many