

The Rockwood Review.

THE MAGDALENE ISLANDS.

(CONCLUDED.)

The female rose from the wiry grass a little above tide mark in a dry place, and soon showed me by her restless movements that she had either eggs or young ones. I watched behind a low sandhill for some time, and after two or three failures, at length found the nest with its four beautiful eggs, the pointed ends being placed together, as is usual with this class of birds. They were about half incubated, the bird betraying her home by fluttering along the grass as though wounded. We spent the remainder of the day about the East Cape, among the boggy pools and fresh water ponds, where I found the nests of the horned Grebe and "Sora." A heavy shower set in during the afternoon, and before reaching our lodging I was wet through. Mosquitoes were a terrible annoyance.

On the following day I started for Bryon Island—some nine miles north from Grosse Isle—in a whale boat, along with the proprietor of that Island, who very kindly entertained us upon our arrival, at his comfortable house.

This Island, though small—four miles long and a mile wide—is quite fertile, and better stock are raised than elsewhere on the Magdalenes. Where cleared of spruce there are almost luxuriant fields of grass, and oats looked promising. Mr. Dingwall, the owner, has two canning factories, and numbers of fine lobsters are caught here. During my short stay I found several nests of the black Guillemot, the Puffin and Leache's Petrel. This latter is a peculiar bird; it lays a single egg in a burrow excavated by itself; commonly on this island among the roots of scrubby spruce, and forty or fifty feet from the edge of the cliffs. A rank smell of oil pervades the nest and ground where they frequent, and by this smell the eggs are located. Each bird lays one egg,

and the nest consists of roots, chips, feathers or any loose material at hand. I caught two of the birds in their burrows.

On the 25th I in company with the Rev. Mr. Dixon, two French boatmen, and my acquaintance from Grosse Isle made an attempt to reach the Bird Rocks in a whale boat. They are twelve miles distant from Bryon Island, but the sea between the two is often very rough. The morning was fine, but towards noon a dense fog settled on the sea, and losing our reckoning we beat about all day without seeing land. Towards evening we fortunately heard the surf breaking on what turned out to be the east point of Grosse Isle, and a little later landed at the settlement, after a very hazardous experience.

A day or two later I returned to Grindstone Island, and spent the remaining days of my stay very pleasantly, observing a few more birds, and fishing for brook trout in the small creek, that at first sight seemed hardly large enough for minnows. One day I caught twenty, three of them together weighing a pound.

I met with a few more nests on the 30th June, one of the Hudsonian Titmouse, in a stump about two feet high. It contained seven young birds, that could just fly, and the nest, a scanty affair, was entered from the top, not from a hole in the side.

A day or two later, on a promontory jutting out into the sea, I took a nest of four large sized sparrow's eggs, and after watching the bird, decided them to belong to that rare species the Ipswich Sparrow, known to breed chiefly on Sable Island, off the coast of Nova Scotia.

July 6th brought my visit at the Islands to a close. I took the steamer in the morning and sailed to Grand Entry; in the afternoon we returned to Grindstone Island, and left Amherst in the eve, for Pictou, N. S., which we reached