

seen by people now living basking upon the sands, long after more northern localities were deserted by their kind. Their huge, long-tusked skulls are frequently found half hidden in the sand, not less the objects of curiosity to the naturalist than of wonder to the ignorant. Not long ago a stupid fisherman collected his gaping comrades and exhibited one of these with tusks inverted, which he averred was the skull of a gigantic *gout*.

Subsequently, and up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Island was much resorted to by fishermen; and as wrecks multiplied with the increase of commerce, the cupidity of bad men was excited, and the Island became the abode of wreckers and pirates and vagabonds of infamous character. Few who survived shipwreck, to reach its then inhospitable shores, ever lived to bear their story to the main land, but jewels and articles of rare value were often exhibited confidentially as having come from there, and many an adventurer, who left his home for clandestine voyage, returned not long after with "galore" of wealth. Then, by-and-by, horrid tales of blood began to be whispered about, and the Isle of Sable became an ill-omened name, at which people shuddered and turned pale, less because the winds and waves were merciless than on account of man's horrid inhumanity to man. Here, secure from reach of the law, and protected by the very dangers which multiplied his victims, the wrecker plied his murderous calling. This dark and bloody ground could furnish materials for a hundred romances, whose recital would make the blood run cold, but such volume of the Island's history must ever remain sealed to mortal ken.

It is a relief to turn from this tragic period to the opening of the present century, when humanity prompted the philanthropists of Nova Scotia, headed by the Executive, to lay the foundation of the present relief Establishment, whose usefulness every commercial country has had mournful occasion to acknowledge. That which brought the project under immediate consideration was the wreck of the transport *Princess Amelia*, having on board the furniture of Prince Edward, the present good Queen's father, with recruits, officers, and servants to the number of two hundred, all of whom perished—though it is supposed that some reached the shore and were murdered by the pirates. A vessel was sent from Halifax to inquire after them, and she also was wrecked. The Provincial Legislature at once took action. By recommendation of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Wentworth, a sum was appropriated for the construction of suitable buildings, the vagabonds that infested the Island were driven off, and in 1802 the present Establishment was founded. In 1804 an annual allowance of \$1600 was voted for its support, and Edward Hudgson was appointed Superintendent, who, with a crew of four men, volunteered their services. His salary was \$400 and "found." This was the beginning; and the satisfactory result a saving of forty-one lives, and property to the value of \$9200, up to July of 1804. In 1808 sixteen persons were employed on the island. In 1812 the Commissioners reported that the Establishment was inadequate to effect the humane purposes for which it was designed, so frequent were the wrecks and so insufficient the apparatus for rescuing life and property.

But it seems that little improvement was effected for several years, for in 1825 came a second appeal—this time from the philanthropic Sir James Kempt, and addressed to the British Government. It proved effectual. During all this previous period the Establishment had been solely supported by the poor province of Nova Scotia, although the commerce of almost every nation reaped its benefits more than she. It is true that correspondence was opened with some Boston merchants soliciting their co-operation, but the parties differed as to terms, and nothing resulted. But in 1826, answering Sir James Kempt's appeal, the British Government appropriated \$2000, which increased the annual fund to \$3600. Henceforward improvement was steadily visible. The old Superintendent died, and Captain Joseph Darby succeeded him, under an able Board of Commissioners, composed of Sir Samuel Cunard, Captain Maynard (both now dead), and Jacob Miller. New apparatus was added, and in

1833 the staunch buildings now standing were erected. They are fitted up with all the modern life-saving appliances and conveniences for wrecked seamen, with ample provisions for months. As many as 300 wrecked people have been provided for together. In 1833 the Establishment was also out of debt for the first time. Its annual expenses often exceed the appropriation, but the deficit is made up by salvages and the produce of the Island. Wrecked materials are always sold for the benefit of the owners, and the salvages come out of the proceeds. The credits have sometimes amounted to nearly \$3000 in a single year. It is a natural question why great gains do not accrue where so large an amount of treasure lies buried, and why the Island people do not employ their leisure time in digging for hidden wealth? Echo answers, "Why?" One thing is certain, the Government will not permit a search, probably from fear of exciting the cupidity of the men. It is said that a certain vessel now lies buried in the sand which is positively known to contain a large amount of silver-plate; but it is doomed to remain unearthened forever, unless a gale of wind shall some day lay it bare.

No person is permitted to reside upon the Island without a license. Nevertheless, applications for this humane but dangerous service are numerous. It is a life of isolation and dull monotony, whose daily routine is varied only by a wreck, a chase after wild ponies, a scrimmage with the great Greenland seals that bask upon the bars, or the welcome arrival of the Government cutter, which periodically visits the Island to carry supplies and bring off wrecked persons. Here is a specimen leaf from Captain Darby's diary:

"June 6; morning. Wind S. S. W.; cloudy. No reports from the look-outs. Sent the men and horses to the wrecks to haul wood. Empty barrel came ashore at noon. Wind, evening, S. E."

A whole day's existence embraced in a meagre record of twice a dozen words—a waif upon the tide of life as empty and insignificant as the barrel that drifted ashore! So pass the long days or months, varying little. The live-stock have to be fed and cared for. There is the little garden to be tilled, with its patches of potatoes, cabbages, and turnips. The needed supply of wood must be gathered, hay is to be made in its season, and buildings to be repaired. Sometimes there is a fishing excursion, a search for cranberries, or a hunt for wild rabbits.

But at length an eventful era dawns. It is a calm day in June; a light breeze scarcely ripples the sea, which now wears its fairest guise. The long belt of surf that fringes the Island glitters dazzlingly in the sunshine, and the gulls and wild fowls are feeding far out to sea. Seldom has the picture so brilliant a setting. In the hour of this repose a signal flag is seen to mount the tall flag-staff of the Look out Station at the West End, and before it has fairly shaken itself to the breeze a responsive signal rises to the mast-head on the high hill at Head-quarters, nine miles away. There is a speck in the offing, and with a good glass the long-expected cutter is plainly seen standing in, with her red ensign flying at the peak. There is joy on the Island: and if one on board the vessel were near enough to distinguish objects, he would observe a commotion in the little hive on shore. Over the sandy hills and along the beach the outpost men are galloping their shaggy ponies in hot haste to Head-quarters, recalled by the signal-flag. There is bustle and preparation at the barn and boat-house and the whole community of men and animals seem to have turned out of doors at some unwonted cause of excitement. The dogs bark in chorus, and frisk and tumble in the sand, barefooted urchins halloo and scream; and a patriarch rooster even mounts a post and crows at an unusual hour.

To the stranger on board the cutter the landscape that gradually rises to view is one of singular novelty, and not without its beauties, while the whole situation possesses an absorbing interest. Petrels flit and hover in his wake, and dip into the surface of the fatal current that now flows peacefully in such well-dissembled mien. There is a sense of exhilaration in thus daring the dangers of the treacherous deep and braving its angry passions—an excite-