GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

SEASIDE STORIES
****

PART III
****

Continuing extracts from "CHRONICLES OF THE ST. LAWRENCE" by James McPherson Le Moine, published in 1878.

KEN ANNETT

SEASIDE STORIES-PART III

FOREWORD

In the three parts of SEASIDE STORIES presented to date in "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" the author, James McPherson Le Moine, has referred to a number of members of families known to Gaspesians. It may be helpful to recall these family names and provide some references and/or notes on them.

LOWNDES	The ship, "GASPÉ", on which the author had sailed down the St.Lawrence from Québec, had moored at Lowndes Wharf, Gaspé Basin. Members of the Lowndes family of Québec City, including John, James and Henry, had moved to Gaspé Basin to become merchants, millowners and wharfingers. Their wharf and stores were located just seaward of the original lift bridge (the Ross Bridge) that spanned the narrow entrance to Gaspé Basin in later years.
O'HARA	Ref. "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" #20. "THE O'HARA FAMILY".
PERCHARD	Family of Jersey origin. Ref. "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" #119. "GASPÉ BASIN WATER LOTS."
ARNOLD	Ref. "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" #27. "SPRING GROVE"
LE BOUTILLIER	Ref. "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" #113 "FORT RAMSAY"
BELLEAU	J.C.Belleau, Esq., Collector of Customs for the Port of Gaspé.
EDEN	Joseph and John Eden had stores and wharves on the Point of Gaspé Basin.
COFFIN	Ref. "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" #79. "THE COFFIN FAMILY." The Coffin Hotel in Gaspé burned in 1878.
KENNEDY	Ref. to SPEC - "DOUGLASTOWN BEFORE 1800" by Doris and David McDougall.
THOMPSON	Ref. "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" #19. "LAND CLAIMS-GASPÉ BAY"
HAMILTON	Ref. "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" #53 "JOHN ROBINSON HAMILTON"
ROBITAILLE	Ref. "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" #35 "ROBITAILLE BROTHERS"

ROBIN — Ref. to founding of CHARLES ROBIN CO., "GASPE OF YESTERDAY" #154 "CHARLES ROBIN".
In 1877, more than 100 years after the founding, Raulin Robin of Jersey was a Director.

PYE — Ref. "GASPE OF YESTERDAY" #25. "GASPE SCENERY"

MacPHERSON — A native of Scotland's Isle of Arran moved to Port Daniel from Restigouche in 1836. He was Mayor of Port Daniel for some 26 years and widely known in Gaspesia.

FRASER — John Fraser, born 1799 at Fort Augustus, Inverness-shire, Scotland, came out to Nova Scotia in 1820, studied Law in Fredericton, N.B., and was a Miramichi businessman until the Great Fire. He moved to Bathurst and in 1843 bought the extensive Cross Point estate of Robert Christie.(U.E.L.Grant to Col. Mann and his sons) Widely and well known as Postmaster, Collector of Customs, Colonel of Bonaventure Militia and Warden of Bonaventure County. He and his wife, Elizabeth Ferguson,had a family of ten children.

ACTESON — "Squire" Acteson, J.P. of L'Anse aux Gascons. Survivor of the Wreck of the "COLBORNE".

CARTER — William Carter, Esq., prominent Port Daniel land-owner, lumberman and merchant. He acquired his lands from Neil McKinnon of Cox.

DEAN — Capt. Philip of Jersey had a fishing room at Newport Island.

CARBERY — Thomas Carbery, J.O.Sirois and Thomas Tremblay were all fishery merchants at Grand River.

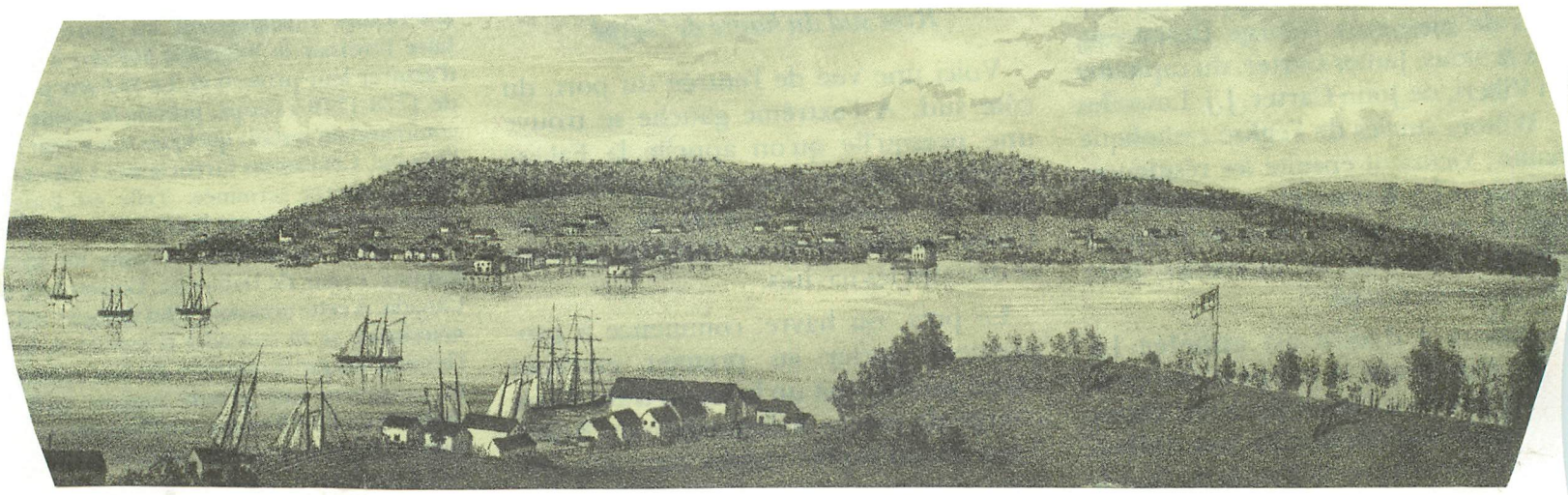
PERELLE, De La — The fishery firm of brothers Elias, George, Francis and Edward De La Perelle had bases at Cape Cove, Percé, and Gaspé.

SAVAGE — Thomas Savage was born in Jersey in 1808 and settled at Cape Cove. He was a Merchant, Shipowner, and M.L.A. for Gaspé in the Quebec Legislature. He was one of a number of prominent men of the SAVAGE family on the Coast.

PAYNE — Amice Payne, born in Jersey in 1812, operated his fishery business in Cape Cove and Percé.

JANVRIN — Ref. "GASPE OF YESTERDAY" #211. "FORILLON DEED SERIES".

LE FEUVRE — Ref. "THE QUIET ADVENTURERS IN CANADA". Mrs.Turk.



GASPÉ BASIN IN THE 1860's

A VIEW FROM THE HOME OF THE HON. JOHN LE BOUTILLIER ON THE GASPÉ HARBOUR SIDE OF THE BASIN.(From Pye's "Gaspé Scenery")

CHAPTER VI.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF PERCÉ—THE ROCK AS VIEWED BY NATURALISTS—TWO RIVAL REPUBLICS—WHAT MAY LEAD TO WAR.

A SHORT drive over tolerable roads and rather dangerous bridges brought me from Cape Cove to Percé—the shire town, or *chef-lieu*, of the Gaspé district, a very old settlement.

In 1534, Jacques Cartier visited Percé, and gave the name of "Cap de Pres," either to Percé Rock or to Mont Joli. Ever since the end of the sixteenth century this spot continued to be frequented by the French—most successful fishermen, who there found every species of facility to cure and dry codfish. Probably they followed in the wake of Cartier. Subsequently to the foundation of Quebec, Champlain, on different occasions, sent boats to Percé, either to procure stores and provisions, or to take advantage of the vessels on their return to France each fall, to convey letters.

Jean Nicholas Denys, having obtained from the Company of New France a grant of all the sea coast which skirts the Gulf of St. Lawrence, from Canseau, in Acadia, to Cap des Rosiers, paid a visit to his domains and attempted to turn them to advantage. He sent some vessels to Percé, but with indifferent success, as he could not personally superintend his ventures—in fact, matters turned out so bad that he was ruined. The French Government, in order to help him out of trouble, and also to meet the demands of several shipowners, re-annexed to the royal domain this immense extent of country, and by way of indemnity, granted to his son, Richard Denys de Fronsac, lands in the Bay and on the river of Miramichi. Later on, De Fronsac obtained the grant of Percé and of the adjoining territory, where he induced seven or eight families to establish themselves; but this small population of residents was scarcely noticeable amongst the five or six hundred fishermen who arrive there each summer for the annual catch of fish. The Bishop of Laval deemed it worth his while to look after the spiritual wants of this remote portion of his flock. In 1673 he entrusted this mission to the Recollet Fathers, who erected a chapel at Percé—another at Bonaventure Island, which chapel was called Sainte Claire. To the two first missionaries succeeded, in 1675, Father Chretien Le Clercq, who wrote on Canada two works now scarce: "*La Gaspésie—Le Prémier Etablissement de la Foi dans la Nouvelle-France.*" After William of Orange had assumed the sceptre of his father-in-law, James II., English ship-owners took advantage of the hostile feelings which sprang up between France and England to destroy the French settlements in America, and to attempt to seize on Canada. Percé was attacked without a moment's warning. Father Jumeau relates as follows this thrilling episode of the war, which took place in August, 1690:

"Two British men-of-war appeared under French colors in the roadstead of Bonaventure Island, and by this stratagem easily captured five fishing vessels, whose captains and crews,

entirely engaged with the fishery, had to make for Quebec, not being able to defend their ships. The enemy landed . . . pillaged, sacked and burnt the houses of the inhabitants—some eight or ten families, who, for the most part, had already taken refuge in the woods . . . . I am seized with horror at the bare memory of the impiety . . . . which those miscreants committed in our church, which they had converted into a guard-house. They broke and trampled under feet our images. The paintings representing the Holy Virgin and St. Peter were both pierced by more than one hundred and fifty gun shots . . . . Not a cross escaped their fury, with the exception of the one I had formerly planted on Rolland's Table, (*Table à Rolland*) which, from its height on a nearly inaccessible mountain, still subsists as a monument of our Christianity . . . . They set fire to the four corners of our church, which was soon consumed, as well as the church of our Bonaventure Island Mission."

The Abbé Ferland, to whom I am indebted for these interesting details, draws a lively sketch of the death-like stillness which pervades the settlement during the lonely winter months, and the awakening bustle, stir, and cheerfulness which the return of the ships brings with it in May. A poet's fancy might, indeed, revel in the sight, and find therein a congenial theme.

" At peep of day," says he, "you see the shore swarming with stalwart Jersey lads, in their blue smocks, or shirts, worn over their pants, busy launching their light boats for a long and sometimes a dangerous day's cruise; in a minute or two the sunlit ocean seems all studded with snowy specks—a whole fleet of swift fishing-smacks, with their white sails filling to the last breath of the land breeze, like a flock of vernal birds winging their flight over the glad waters towards some fairyland in the blue distance—the return of the venturesome crew from the dreaded Orphan's Bank*—some three or four hundred, with the last of the sea breeze, at eventide," each proclaiming his success with boisterous mirth, loud shouts, love ditties wafted—they would wish—to that bright isle, their native land, their Eden, far in the East, where more than one 'black-eyed Susan sighs for their return, they hope.'

But enough for Percé; as may be observed, it has its lights and shadows.

Let us again translate from our old friend's journal—the Abbé Ferland. Here is one of his delightful chromos of Percé

---

* The Orphan's Bank, which is far out at sea, is not visited by all. A violent wind from the land may blow out the boats to sea. The fate of many in the past—a watery grave—must be the result. Hence the name.

Rock and its airy inhabitants—the gulls and cormorants. More than once, have I myself watched their curious proceedings:—

"From the windows of the parish priest's residence one can see distinctly the green plateau of Percé Rock. It is strewed with conspicuous objects, which at times seem to move, at others are stationary—the winged denizens of this retreat; some are busy hatching their eggs, whilst others are on guard to protect the newly-born young. This airy city is divided into two wards: one is occupied by the Gulls (the Herring Gull) and the other by the Cormorants. If any member of one tribe presumes to wander beyond the boundary of those of his feather, such an encroachment is not silently borne. A formidable outcry, of one thousand voices, pervades the air, and is heard sometimes at a distance of several miles. A cloud like a heavy storm of snow hovers over the spot tainted by the presence of the stranger. If the invaders should be in numbers, a column detaches itself from the innumerable inhabitants of the threatened territory, and describing a half circle rushes to attack the rear of the enemy. As the defenders of the soil are always formidable and fierce on their native land, the strangers are compelled to withdraw and shrink from the blows and shrieks of their adversaries."

This border warfare causes frequent encounters; scarcely a quarter of an hour elapses without one's being aware from the loud cries that Discord has let fly her shafts.

The two republics, whose territory combined covers about two acres in superficies, were of yore protected by the steepness of the rock, and lived secure far from the reach of man.

The paternal nest was bequeathed from one generation to the next. The Gulls and Cormorants educated their children at the identical spot where they themselves had sprung from the shell into this wicked world.

This world, however, was undergoing changes. It was, 'tis true, above, always the same sky; around, the same sea, roaring and lashing the solid foundations of their citadel, and covering with the foam of its mountainous waves, the beaches of the two adjoining coves. But, close by, a few hundred yards away, the world was not the same. The forest was cut down; smoke rose over roofs inhabited by the white man; the shore had ceased to be solitary; the surf bore on its crest, vessels with white sails and long masts. The republic was in danger; her fisheries were invaded by barbarians, who, on more occasions than one, had shed the blood of the ancient denizens of the rock. After all, if it did become prudent to go and catch fish at a greater distance, cormorants and gulls could equally eat it in safety from the inaccessible summit of their habitation. Fallacious hope! for gulls as well as for men, nothing on earth exists free from change. About the year 1805, that is some thousands of years after the establishment here of the descendant of the first gull, two foolhardy fishermen resolved to scale the fortress which, so far, had been considered impregnable. . . . A single point seemed to offer a chance of success. Near one of the arches, about forty feet above the base, the rock forms a point, and underneath the ascent, seems more practicable. But the fearless fishermen chose another, through bravado; it might have scared a chamois. With oars tied together, and leaning on the surface of the rock, they managed to climb the most steep portion, and then, by hanging on to projections and shrubs, they actually got to the top.

It was indeed a glorious feat, this ascent of the rock by Duguay and Moriarty—for the first time. It is true there was a vague tradition that on certain occasions a youth of herculean proportions and preternatural appearance had been seen on the top; but these superstitious tales merely served to exhibit in more vivid colors the venturesome spirit of the mortals who had dared to brave the *Genius* of Percé Rock, and beard him in his inaccessible den.

The feat suggested to these two men by the love of distinction was prompted in others by motives of interest and the rage of imitation; once the path was known, one-half of the difficulties

disappeared. Each year the eggs and young birds were robbed. At first the presence of man disturbed the old birds so little that they often remained on the nest until removed. Fortunately a by-law of the magistrates of Percé, prohibiting these practices, has restored the peaceable inhabitants of the Rock to their hearths and homes. The loud cries of these birds, heard from afar, have more than once been of great help to boats or ships caught in the fog near Percé; they were excellent fog whistles and beacons to the benighted mariner.

CHAPTER VII.

PERCÉ—THE PERCÉ ROCK—MONT JOLI—BONAVENTURE ISLAND—CAPTAIN DUVAL—THE CELEBRATED PRIVATEER, "VULTURE."

"THE Village of Percé, which derives its name from the Rock, is most advantageously situated for the cod fishery. It consists of two small coves, called North and South Beach. The principal part of the population reside at North Beach, which also contains the court-house, jail, and Roman Catholic church. South Beach is chiefly occupied by the important fishing establishment of Messrs. Charles Robin & Co., who own the principal part of the land on that side. The two coves are separated by a headland called Mont Joli, supposed by some to have been once united with the Rock. On this promontory formerly stood the Protestant Episcopal church, and the graveyard still marks the spot. The population of Percé does not exceed five hundred souls, except during the summer months, when it is more than doubled. It is the shire town of the County of Gaspé.

"Few spots, if any, on the sea-board of Canada possesses greater attraction for the artist and lover of wild and romantic scenery than Percé and its environs. Mont Ste. Anne, in rear of the village, rising almost abruptly to the height of 1300 feet, is the first land sighted by all vessels coming up the Gulf to the southward of the Island of Anticosti. In clear weather it may be seen at a distance of sixty to seventy miles, and it is even confidently asserted by shipmasters worthy of credit that it has been seen by them at a distance of seventy-five to eighty miles.

"If you ascend the high road towards the settlement called 'French Town,' and stand on the rising ground in rear of Belle-

vue, you have beneath you, and all around, one of the most magnificent panoramas the eye can wish to rest upon. Ste. Anne, rising in all its towering majesty on your left, and extending to the eastward, forms within Barry Head a portion of an amphitheatre, almost enclosing the village on two sides. The Roman Catholic church is a striking object at the foot of Barry Head. Over and beyond this, at a distance of six miles, is seen Point St. Peter and Plateau. To the right of this nothing is seen but the sea as far as the eye can reach. Then comes the Rock, which you overlook from this point. The birds (gulls and cormorants) on its summit can also be distinctly seen."

A romantic legend, alluded to by the Abbé Ferland, attaches to the Percé Rock—we regret we have not space for it.

I have myself seen the snow-white gulls sitting in myriads on their nests on this green summit in July. You might have imagined the froth of the sea or gigantic snow-flakes spread amidst verdant pastures—a most attractive spectacle to the eye of a naturalist.

"The Island of Bonaventure then forms the foreground. But to the westward of that again the sea meets the eye, until it rests on Cape Despair, and you get a bird's-eye view of Cape Cove and L'Anse a Beau-Fils. From this point you have a most extensive sea view down the Gulf and to the entrance of the Bay of Chaleurs, the light on the Island of Miscou, New Brunswick, distant about thirty-two miles, being often seen on a clear night.

"Leaving those lower regions, if you undertake to ascend Mont Ste. Anne—no very difficult task for those who are free from gout and asthma—a view presents itself to the astonished eye, grand beyond description. All that we have just described lies in one vast panorama at our feet. In rear, that is, from west to north, the variegated green of the primeval forest meets the eye, which seeks in vain some oasis, as it were, in the boundless green expanse on which to rest. Hill and dale, mountain and valley, all clad in the same verdant garb, extend as far as the human ken can range. Casting your eye gradually eastward, you see over the land into the Gaspé Bay, and beyond Ship Head into the mouth of the St. Lawrence; then, far away to seaward down the Gulf; to the right, up the Bay of Chaleurs. If the weather is clear, besides a number of large vessels, the white sails of a fleet of schooners, chiefly American, of from 40 to 150 tons, and amounting sometimes to some two or three hundred sail, may be seen engaged in the cod and mackerel fisheries. From this point nothing obstructs the view, which extends over Bonaventure Island and all the headlands on either side, and on a fine calm day two hundred open boats, spread over the bosom of the treacherous deep, look like small specks upon the surface of a mirror. Taken as a whole, we know of no scenery in the British Provinces to equal this.

"The drive or walk round the mountain to the corner of the beach is most romantic, as well as the sail round the Island of Bonaventure, and should on no account be omitted by the excursionist. The road through the mountain gorge, which is the highway connecting Percé with Gaspé Basin, must have some resemblance to many portions of Swiss scenery.

"Percé possesses two places of worship. That of the Church of England is situated on an eminence at the foot of the mountain

on the Irish Town road. It is built in the Gothic style, and though very small, being only capable of containing one hundred persons, yet it is one of the neatest and most complete village churches we have seen on this continent. The Protestant community are mainly indebted to Messrs. Charles Robin & Co. for its erection. The Roman Catholic Church is a large building, and when the interior is finished off, it will be a very handsome structure.

"Percé is strictly a large fishing-stand—the best in Canada—and it is here that the Messrs. Robin have their most extensive fishing establishment. We believe we are justified in stating that there is nothing to equal it, as a whole, in Canada, New Brunswick, or Nova Scotia. This establishment collects yearly from 14,000 to 15,000 quintals of codfish, fit for shipment, including what they receive from their planters and dealers throughout the township of Percé.

"Percé was for some time the residence of Lieut-Governor Cox, who was appointed Governor of Gaspé about 1785. The site of the Government House may still be seen."—Pye's *Gaspé Scenery.*

The foregoing is certainly a glowing, and so far as I know, a truthful picture of Percé, with the exception as to what relates to the date of appointment of Lieut.-Governor Cox. According to Colonel Caldwell's letter * to General James Murray, bearing date 15th June, 1776, Major Cox, formerly of the 47th, was at that time Lieut.-Governor of Gaspé.

Percé, notwithstanding its picturesque scenery, never had for me one-half of the attractions of Gaspé Basin. It must, however, have had some attractions, even in ancient days, since Monseigneur St. Vallier, who stopped there on his voyage from France to Quebec in 1685, was induced to revisit it in the spring of 1686. One is quite safe in considering it a large fishing-stand—in fact the grandest on the coast—the kingdom of cod, herring, and train oil—the Elysium of fishermen. During the busy months, codfish in every shape, in every stage of preservation or putrefaction, scents the air—especially in August. The pebbly beach is strewn and begemmed with codfish drying; the flakes glisten with it in the morning sun, whilst underneath plethoric maggots attain a wonderful size. The shore is studded with fish heads and fish offal in a lively state of decomposition. Cod heads and caplin are liberally used to manure the potato fields: the air is tainted with the effluvia; the land breeze wafts you odors which are not those of "Araby the Blest." Well-to-do houses in some localities have a fishy smell. The churches are not proof against it. Not many years back, the R. C. Bishop, visiting the chapel on a fishing station, on entering, exclaimed to the pastor, "Is the chapel used to dry and cure codfish? The smell here is positively dreadful!"

* This old letter, published in 1866, under the auspices of the "Literary and Historical Society of Quebec"—page 10—contains the following passage:—

"On my way I passed by the picket drawn up under the Field Officer of that day, who was Major Cox, formerly of the 47th, and now Lieut-Governor of Gaspé."

"No, my lord," the pastor replied; "but at the news of your approach my parishioners had the floor carefully washed with soap. Unfortunately, the soap was made from fish oil." The historian Ferland relates the anecdote.

Even potatoes chime in with the general homage to the finny tribe; some have been known to grow with bones in them. A lady friend of mine made this her principal grievance against Percé. She left it in high dudgeon. Being a judge's lady, I have often wondered why she did not apply to the Court for a writ of injunction against this intolerable nuisance.

The safest place to be out of the reach of the fishy aroma is out at sea. But though there be fish everywhere—in the sea—on the land—in the churches—in the air, you may feel like the Ancient Mariner,

"Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink."

It was my ill-fortune once to see fish everywhere, and still none to eat.

My landlady met my repeated enquiry for fresh fish for dinner, with some studied apologies about the weather. "The boats could not go out," "the wind was so high," and so on. I reluctantly came to the conclusion that at times it requires a deal of interest to get fresh codfish for dinner at Percé, unless you are an M. P. P.

It is, notwithstanding, a healthy location. Strong smells, though they may press hard on the olfactory nerves, don't kill. The citizens of Petrolia, 'tis said, are long livers.

Hon. John LeBoutillier,* M. S. C., and Mr. Frs. Lebrun have extensive fishery establishments here. Hon. J. LeBoutillier resides at Gaspé Basin.

---

* This worthy old Gaspesian closed his career in July, 1872.

Percé has latterly been selected in preference to Gaspé Basin as the shire-town (*chef-lieu*). A new court-house and jail are in process of erection. The most prosy highwayman or debased murderer once duly convicted, will enjoy the privilege of being duly hanged in view of all the magnificent scenery just mentioned by Mr. Pye. I am sorry for it, on account of the genial and educated sheriff (Vibert) of the district, whose acquaintance I had not the good fortune to make.

BONAVENTURE ISLAND.

"This island, in the depth of winter, has the appearance of a vast iceberg, and like the Percé Rock, is one of Nature's wonderful productions, forming a natural break-water between the South Cove, Percé and the Gulf. The whole is one vast mass of reddish conglomerate, from which the term Bonaventure Formation has been derived. It appears as though it had been upheaved from the bottom of the ocean, forming on the seaside, towards the Gulf, a stupendous wall 300 to 500 feet high, with no less than fifty fathoms of water at its base. It slopes gradually towards the mainland, and is well settled, there being a R. C. church, a school-house, and some twenty dwelling-houses. It is two and a half miles long, and three-quarters of a mile broad, and is distant two and a half miles from the mainland. The depth of water is sufficient for the largest ships afloat to beat through the channel. Messrs. LeBoutillier Brothers have

a large fishery establishment on the island, at which thirty-eight boats and about 120 men are employed. This was once the property of the late Captain Peter Duval, a native of the island of Jersey, and one whose deeds and prowess would not disgrace the annals of England's history. Yet, strange to say, there appears to be no record preserved by the family of a feat scarcely to be surpassed. The grandson of our hero, who still resides on the island, knows nothing of the leading facts, which are as follows :

"Towards the close of the last war between England and France, Captain Duval commanded a privateer, lugger-rigged, mounting four guns, with a crew of twenty-seven hands, himself included, and owned by the Messrs. Janvrin, of Jersey. She was a small vessel, under 100 tons, and appropriately named the 'Vulture,' having been the terror of the French coast from St. Malo to the Pyrenees. The 'Vulture' was almost as well known along the shores of the Bay of Biscay as in her port of registry, and like a bird of prey was continually hovering along the coast, capturing vessel after vessel. The port of Bayonne had suffered severely from the continued depredations of the Jersey privateer off its entrance, and the merchants of the place resolved to make an effort to capture their tormentor. A joint stock company was formed, and a suitable vessel obtained, a brig of about 180 tons, which being mounted with sixteen guns, and manned by a crew of eighty men, awaited the return of the 'Vulture.' That vessel having been seen off the port one fine afternoon, the brig slipped out during the night, disguised as much as possible, so as to be taken for a merchant-vessel, and being sighted early on the following morning by the lugger's look-out, the latter immediately gave chase and soon came up with what she supposed would be an easy prize. The reader, however, may conceive her astonishment when, on running alongside of the brig, the ports were opened and every preparation made for action. On seeing this the first lieutenant of the 'Vulture,' Captain LeFeuvre, told Captain Duval that having no chance against such perfect odds, their only alternative was to strike. 'Strike!' he exclaimed with an oath. 'So long as I have a leg to stand on we shall fight. If I am knocked off my pins, you take command, and do as you please.' The vessels immediately engaged, the 'Vulture' keeping so close to her antagonist that the shot from the latter could not take effect owing to her great length. Meantime the lugger continued to pour into the brig a well-directed fire of grape-shot, cutting her rigging, and killing and wounding half of the French crew. The captain of the brig, knowing the determined character of his opponent, and expecting that he would attempt to board, made for Bayonne. The lugger gave chase, but night coming on, the brig reached port in safety. Of the lugger's crew, only one was killed and two of them slightly wounded; Captain Duval stating that with ten hands he would have taken the brig by boarding, but he feared to attempt it against such fearful odds. The Protestant burial-ground on Mont Joli contains the remains of this brave man, who attained a ripe old age."—Pye's *Gaspé Scenery.*

CHAPTER VIII.

POINT ST. PETER—THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS—THE IRREPRESSIBLE MEMORIES OF THE PAST—BELLE ANSE—DOUGLASTOWN PORTAGE—THE BLACK POOL AND ITS LEGENDS.

THE preferable mode of travel from Percé to Gaspé Basin is decidedly by water in summer—the land route being of a peculiarly primitive order, trying alike to man and beast. On leaving the great shire-town, the highway winds round the hills in rear of the Ste. Anne range—a distance of several miles—until you reach a sand bank, which divides the sea from the lagoon. It is called the corner of the beach; *vulgo*, "Corny Beach."

The scenery through the mountain gorge is truly grand, and the contemplation of its beauties will more than compensate the tourist for the difficulties of the road. About a mile from the highest point, you pass immediately by the base of a stupendous wall of conglomerate, which appears as though it had been upheaved by another Atlas. There are indications all round Percé that, at some distant period, the mountains have been rent, and vast masses dislodged from their original position by some violent convulsion of nature.

A few miles out of Percé the country assumes a level appearance. The mountain ranges gradually disappear from the background. . . . . The roads in the Township of Percé are decidedly the worst in the County of Gaspé, and most of the bridges are in a very dangerous state, being without railings or guard of any kind to prevent the traveller from being precipitated into the abyss below.

The bay, at Mal Baie, is a splendid sheet of water, bounded by Percé on the one side, and Point St. Peter on the other. . . . . Before reaching it, one has to cross the Mal Baie stream—a good river for salmon and trout-fishery—by means of a scow.

At Belle Anse, in Mal Baie, the high road leads to the portage at right angles, branching off to Point St. Peter on the right and towards Douglastown on the left. The same drizzly weather followed me through this Avernian avenue, called the Portage—a dismal drive during the silent hours of night.

Reluctantly had I to forego the sweet, though at times melancholy, satisfaction, of revisiting old, familiar places: Point St. Peter and its hospitable shores. The irrepressible memories of other days still persisted in enshrining it in a bright halo. Right well can I recall Point St. Peter; its pebbly beaches; its symmetric long rows of boats, anchored, at night-fall, in straight line—in view of each fishing-station—all dancing merrily on the crest of the curling billows; its fearless, song-loving, blue-smocked Jersey fishermen. Can I ever forget its storm-lashed reef; its crumbling cliffs; its dark caves, made vocal at each easterly blow with the wild discord of the sea? Plateau, its foam-crowned ledges, surrounded by noisy sea fowl! Where now the leading men of Point St. Peter I knew of yore? Where the Johnstons, Creightons, Packwoods, Collas, Alexanders of thirty years ago? Gone, one and all, or nearly so, to their long home.

Some reposing in yonder lone churchyard, on the brow of the hill in rear; others, placed by loving hands, in their marble tombs under the shade of their own fairy island of Jersey, sleeping the long sleep. Of some, scarcely a trace left amongst men; of others, stalwart sons worthily perpetuating the names of their respected sires. Possibly, some yet forgotten behind on this green earth of ours—a few, a very few.

Point St. Peter brought back vividly to my mind a most harrowing memory of my youth—the untimely death, under peculiarly painful circumstances, of an early friend; it reads thus in my boyish diary:

"It is the hour of noon on a dreamy August day, 1843. A loving father is detailing to me long-pondered domestic arrangements, cherished hopes, carefully laid-out plans of family advancement. One above others, in the happy family group, he seems to doat on—though he named him not—a bright boy of eleven summers, venturesome, full of spirit and intelligence, my daily companion in the boat or with the gun, though by several years, my junior. Of the five blooming children, the lights of his home, on this one seemed to centre all the hopes of the fond parent.

The light-hearted youth, humming a song, shot past me—whilst I remained conversing with his father—on his way to our oft-frequented fishing-ground, near the wharf, beckoning to me not to delay; but I did delay. I tarried, as I was wont, listening to the frank discourse of his excellent, true-hearted father. I tarried behind. . . . Alas! why had I not followed on. An hour later and I am re-entering the portals of this once happy home, helping to carry a livid corpse—that of my late companion.

It was I who discovered him—dead, quite dead, reclining on his side—softly sleeping beneath the green, transparent waves, at the spot where he and I, had so oft enjoyed our favorite pastime: angling for cod and halibut. A trusty servant and myself, in silence, are laying on a little bed, in full view of the horror-stricken but not unsubmissive father, what now remaines of so much bright promise, youth and hope. All this is now happening at this very spot."

The sorrowing father (he died in 1846) was the late Henry Bissett Johnston, a highly-educated Scotch gentleman of Point St. Peter. I can recall it all as a scene of yesterday, though it occurred close on thirty years ago; but let us hie away. . . .

The portage road from Mal Baie to Douglastown, on a murky September night, reminds one of the Cimmerian gloom with which Virgil surrounds the abodes of souls in Hades. If you are of an enquiring turn of mind, kind reader, gifted with a robust constitution, unappalled by jolting, it will be worth your while to go and see for yourself. At midway, a dark bridge spans a brawling brook still darker in aspect. White foam floats about the black pool at your feet, at the sight of which your horse snorts and draws back. More than one goblin story is told of this dreary spot. On my asking my companion whether he could discover the bridge through the gloom which the shadows of the tall surrounding trees deepened into absolute darkness,—

"No," said he, "but I can hear the roar of the brook, and my horse knows the way, though horses have been more than once scared by some awful screams heard here at night."

"You have," I replied, "been the mail-carrier for some time. Have you ever heard these noises?"

"Never," said he, "but my uncle's horse did, some years ago. A murder, 'tis related, occurred at this bridge many years since; and you know," he added, with emphasis, "horses at night can see things which are hidden from men."

"I cannot," I replied, "charge my memory with an instance of the kind happening to me during my travels." I found that Superstition could assert her sway at the Douglastown Portage as well as on Hounslow Heath, near London—wherever a deed of blood in fact dwells in the memory of man.