

GRAND MANAN—AN ISLAND GEM OF THE MARITIMES

By MARIANNE GREY OTTY

*"I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;*

*And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray, and the brown spume, and the seagulls crying." . . .*

JOHN MASEFIELD

STAND on the observation platform of a transcontinental train speeding across Sackatchewan, and tell a fellow-passenger that you usually spend your Summers in Grand Manan, and he will probably turn from a contemplation of billowing golden wheat to remark that he does not know much about Quebec. Observe to the desk clerk as you check out of a hotel in Toronto that you are going down to Grand Manan and he will, as like as not, jerk out: "Grand Manan? Oh, yes, that's a bunch of rocks down in Maine!"

But, drop into a showing of some new artist's work in Boston or Philadelphia, and exclaim at the familiar sight of towering brown rock and gleaming green water imprisoned within a gilded frame, and someone nearby is sure to ask: "Do you know Grand Manan, too? . . . Isn't that perfect of Southern Head? . . . Do you remember the old tree leaning out from the rock at Whale Cove? . . . And here's one of the Hole in the Wall, and there's that bit of sandy beach at Pettes' Cove!"

Canadians do not know this gem of their own treasure chest nearly well enough. Situated as it is off the coast of Maine, tradition has it that this group of islands was overlooked by our

neighbours to the South on the foggy day in which the boundary between New Brunswick and Maine was laid out. It lies in the Bay of Fundy, anciently called

"Frenchman's Bay," 40 miles from Saint John, New Brunswick, and about 20 miles from either Eastport, Maine, or St. Andrews-by-the-Sea, New Brunswick's beautiful tourist resort, where the Biological Station is also located. On a bright day of blue sky and sparkling water, there is nothing more delightful than the "trip across." A new and more up-to-date steamer has just been put on the route this spring, replacing the staunch little "Grand Manan," which, her admirers declared, "rode the waters like a cork."

The total length of Grand Manan is 22 miles, and its width from three to six miles, while about it lies an attendant group of smaller islands, . . . Long Island, High Duck, Low Duck, Big Duck, Ross Island, White Head, Cheyne Island, Big Wood Island, Little Wood Island, Three Islands, and many

more of equally picturesque names.

The Indians, who originally inhabited the Island, called it "Mun-aa-nook," meaning "an island," the soft, liquid sound of the Passamaquoddy word later becoming contracted to "Menan."



MARIANNE GREY OTTY

was born at the little Loyalist village of Gagetown, on the St. John River, in one of the most historic parts of New Brunswick. Honours graduate of the University of New Brunswick, where she was a Science pupil of Dr. Philip Cox, Lord Beaverbrook's old school teacher; M.A., University of Chicago; has recently been visiting courses at the University of Toronto; taught High School in New Brunswick; was in the service of the Bank of Nova Scotia for a number of years; won a Maritime Library Association prize for New Brunswick local history.



Swallow-tail Lighthouse near North Head, Grand Manan.

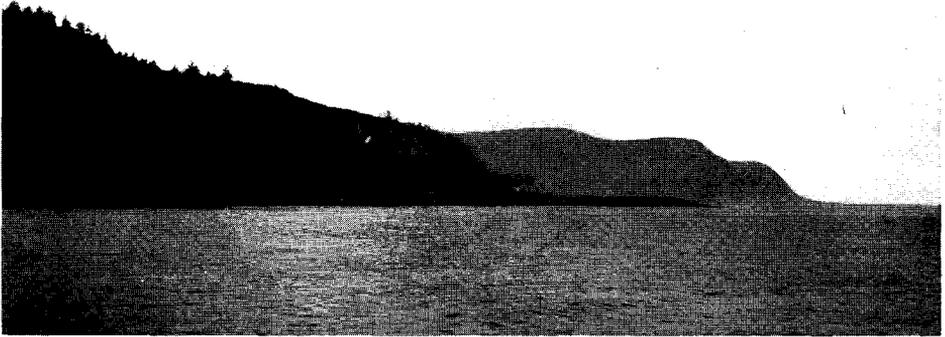
Champlain, with his rather casual spelling, called it "Manthane" and "Mananse." Champlain, too, is said to be responsible for the "Grand," or "big," which he tacked on to distinguish the Island from Petit Manan, or little Manan, which is nearer the coast of Maine.

The first tourist to visit Grand Manan was, in fact, Samuel de Champlain, who took a little run across from France in 1606, or thereabouts. Hotel accommodation on the Island was not as good then as it is now, and his landing was a rather forced one in any case, as he relates in the records of his voyages. "The South wind," he says, "increased during

the night to such impetuosity that we could not stand by our anchor, and were compelled without choice to go ashore, at the mercy of God and the waves. The latter were so heavy and furious that while we were attaching the buoy to the anchor, so as to cut the cable, at the hawsehole, it did not give us time; but broke straight away of itself. The wind and the sea cast us, as the wave receded, upon a little rock, and we waited only the moment to see our bark break up and to save ourselves, if possible, upon its fragments. In these desperate straights, after we had received several waves, came one so large and fortunate for us, that it carried us over the rock, and



Another view of Swallow-tail lighthouse.



Fog Alarm Station, North Head, Grand Manan.

threw us on a sandy beach, which insured us this time from shipwreck."

"This "sandy beach" upon which Champlain was thrown, is supposed to have been at Deep Cove. Here, in 1842, W. B. McLaughlin, Deputy Keeper of Gannet Rock Light, found the remains of a curious old anchor, with a shank 11 feet long, and a diameter in one place of seven inches. From its proportions, the original anchor must have weighed close to 1,500 pounds; but the action of the salty waves through the years had reduced it to a corroded relic barely one-third of this. Whether this was the anchor which Champlain and his crew could not "stand by" is still a matter of conjecture.

Pirates, in the days of dashing buccaneers, are said to have found in this rocky Island a glorious retreat. Even yet, climbing down into the dark recesses of some of the caves which line its shores, one would not be surprised to be confronted by some swarthy, villainous rascal with hoops of gold in his ears and a knife in his teeth; or to hear from below the roaring chorus of "Yo! Ho! And a bottle of rum!" In fact, on the Western coast of the Island, by a path which leads through the woods, one comes upon Money Cove, which tradition associates with the ubiquitous Captain Kidd. Here, he is believed to have buried some of his treasure, slaying one of his crew, and with grim humour bidding him stay there to guard the gold.



The Hole in the Wall at Grand Manan.

The early French explorers told a wondrous tale of a ledge of rare blue lapis lazuli, three-quarters of a league off the coast of Grand Manan. De Razilly is said to have sent home to France a huge lump of this precious stone, which Sieur Denys, who claimed to have seen it, says was valued at ten crowns an ounce. Champlain chronicles the fact of running on this ledge, and getting a piece of it embedded in his keel; but later explorers have seen no signs of lapis lazuli.

But there are things at Grand Manan quite as valuable as pirate gold and lapis



On the rocky shores and hidden ledges of Grand Manan, many a good ship has come to grief, but none with greater tragedy than the Lord Ashburton, which dashed on the high ice-coated cliff, now known as Ashburton Head, in a blinding snowstorm, Jan. 19th, 1857. Every visitor to Grand Manan goes to the cemetery at North Head to view the monument to the 21 sailors who lost their lives in that tragedy.

lazuli, and not nearly as hard to find. If you have been living all year where traffic roars and rattles, crowds push and surge, and business goads and drives, you will find a wealth of peace and good health on Grand Manan.

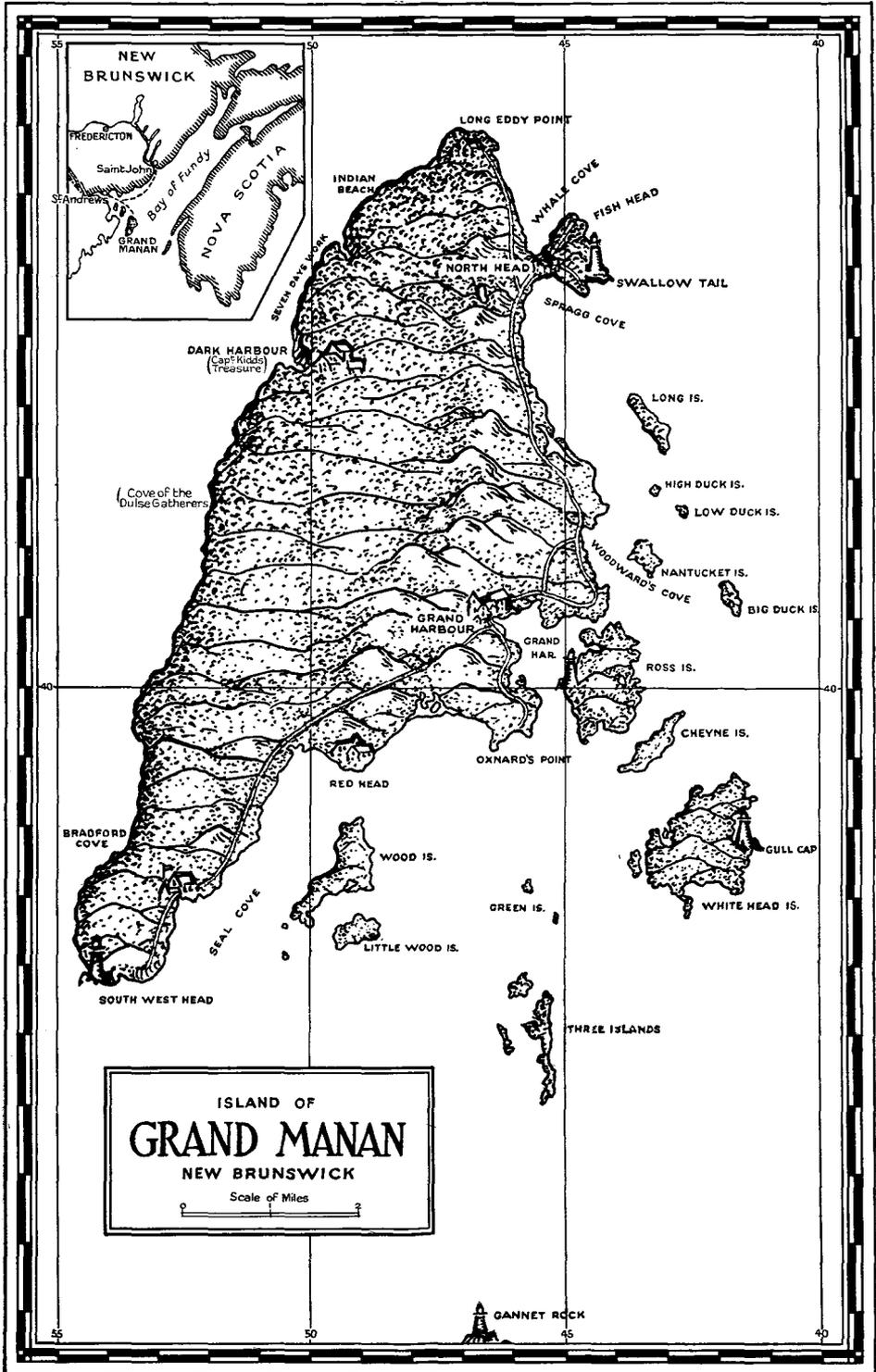
The Island has a magic appeal for a great many kinds of people. Some of its

admirers make a pilgrimage there every year. One civic official from Boston was leading a few seasons ago with 19 successive summers to his credit. However, if you are one of those people who feel uncomfortable in anything but georgette, to whom "dinner" means "cocktails," and "dog" means "Pekinese;" or to whom "dance" means a smothering riot in a crowded hotel, shun Grand Manan! It is only for those who love quaint nooks, long hikes in the fresh, clean air; glorious views from wild headlands; the friendship of simple, honest folk; the silver track of moonlight across the sea; jolly "socials" of an evening; a hand of bridge or a quiet talk by the open fire; and unexpected meetings with worth-while people who carry on the world's work.

Whether you take a car and motor the 18-mile road from one end of the Island to the other, visiting the villages of Castalia, Woodward's Cove, Grand Harbour, and Seal Cove, each with its many points of interest; or fish the lakes for trout; or follow the "Blue Trail", or the "Red", or the "Yellow", through the woods and along the cliffs, there is joy for every minute. Flowers grow in abundance. There are many unusual species of wildflowers, and prodigal displays of pink wild roses, misty mauve asters, and regal goldenrod run riot along the roadsides and through the fields. Nearly every home has its festoons of honeysuckle, rambler roses and sweet peas. Even the little cemetery at North Head is like a flower garden.

Motoring and hiking are well enough in their way; but there is no better way to see Grand Manan than to compass it about by motor boat, marking well its bulwarks of massive cliff, and towers of sea-wrought rock. There were 25 of us on one such trip, when we spent a whole day exploring the 50-mile coast of Grand Manan, in the good ship "Rose Ann," an auxiliary fishing sloop of happy memory.

Our Argosy embarked gayly, sure of a Golden Fleece of sunshine and matchless air. Flagg's Cove, on the Eastern side, was our starting-point, and as we chugged out toward Long Island, our eyes could follow the curve of beach along the Grand Manan shore, lined with the pretty homes which people who love the Island have put up so close to the beach that the last bit of tide can make a lazy



threat of entering their gardens. Down the shore are the white walls of Castalia, where the bronzed fishermen live and watch the weirs for herring.

The weirs are made in a great circle from slender young hardwoods stuck down in the sand, where the water is fifteen or more feet in depth. A long "leader," also made of small trees, stretches up to the weir, and points the way to an inlet about ten feet in width. The shoals of herring race along the



Jaws of whale form arch over door of Bird Museum.

leader, and find themselves in the weir. By and by, the fishermen run out with their fishing fleet and "seine the weirs," scooping up hogsheads of fish, and pouring them into the holds of their vessels, until before our eyes we see the waterline creeping gradually nearer the deck.

The population of Grand Manan is in the vicinity of 3,000, and the fisheries still continue to be the mainstay of the people. Immense quantities of cod, haddock, and herring are caught, cured,

packed and shipped to all parts of the world. The lobster catch is important, cod liver oil is manufactured; and among the most interesting by-products of the fisheries is the making of pearl essence from fish scales, the returns from this being between \$20,000 and \$25,000 a year. Some of the lovely imitation pearls which are worn by visitors to Grand Manan may once have frisked in its waters on the back of the humble herring.

It is a hard life, oftentimes, this fishing, "big hauls" alternating with lean days when the fish all seem to have disappeared from the sea. Hands reddened with cold "set the trawls" for deep-sea fishing; and on shore, women and children assist in preparing the fish for market. "It's dirty work, but the money's clean," a woman snapped at us one day as we stood watching her, tacitly complimenting us, we presume, on an acquaintance with "filthy lucre" quite out of keeping with our real character.

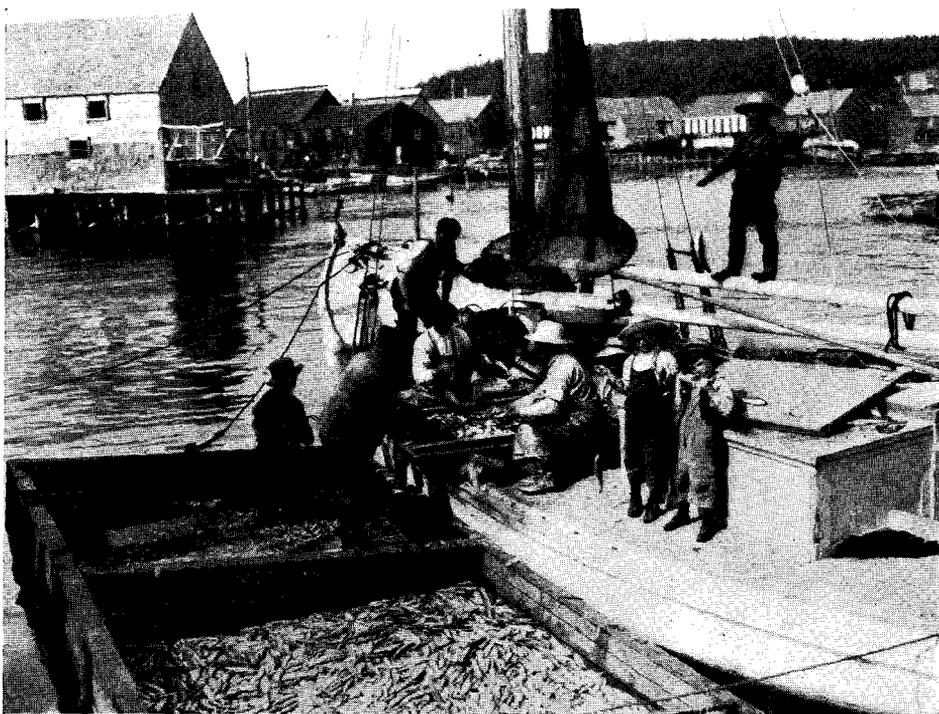
Veering off from Castalia towards the open sea, we pass brown rocks hung with sea-weed, and touched in the morning light, with fluffs of mist. Sleek, dripping heads of seals bob up and down around the little islands. Passing beyond these outward fringes on the garment of Grand Manan, one puts out into the open sea, . . . straight out into the world of blue, until everything back there in the city is forgotten in watching the light strike a silver gleam on the wing of a gull, or in counting the varying shades that sea-water can take. "The brine is in our blood from days of yore!" it would seem, as we luxuriate in the thrill of lying half-way out on the boom of the "Rose Ann," with the vessel swaying up and down to breast the light waves.

On we speed, the canvas aided by the six-horse-power engine which prevails along the Island. Morning has changed to noon, and the salty air has developed in us a surprising appetite. One wonders where in this wilderness of waters the promised camp-fire is to be built, when, lo! as if by magic, encircled by hundreds of clamorous sea-fowl, Gull Island, or Little Wood Island, to give it the proper "map" name, breaks through the fog which still lurks in the distance. Gull Island is apparently the gull metropolis

for the whole Atlantic Ocean. The spruces and firs which struggle out of its rocky soil are literally stunted and flattened to the ground by having had to serve as perching places for generations of gulls. Securely situated in the heights are the breeding places of these great white birds, which continually rise to wheel and circle in the blue.

It was fascinating to see how near one could come to a sentinel gull, as he sat viewing the landscape from the vantage

crew of men, husky and brown from seafaring, who go to the assistance of ships in distress among the rocks and shoals which abound on the South-Eastern approach to Grand Manan. The names of some of these danger spots are in themselves expressive, . . . Bull Rock, Cross Jack Ledge, Half-Tide Rock, the Old Proprietor, Black Rocks, and Bulk Head Rip. Plentifully sprinkled among them on the mariners' chart are such warnings as, "foul ground," "heavy rip



New Brunswick Fisheries scene. Three generations are shown in this picture of sorting herring at Seal Cove Harbour, Grand Manan.

point of a gaunt gray stump, and equally alluring to chase a fluffy yellow ball of a baby gull, until he was found hiding under a bit of brush, and was dragged forth, protesting vigorously, to sit for his portrait.

But, "We knew the merry world was round and we might sail forevermore." Leaving the heights of rock, where we seemed so near to that lovely blue overhead, we took a new path through the woods, past a solitary fisherman's cabin, with a lonely child in the doorway, to the Life-Saving Station, with its courteous

on the ebb," "rapid tide current from four to six knots per hour," "tide rip," and "breaks."

Out again we sailed, passing from the olive tints of shallow water to the rich blue of the deep. Off in the distance, among the Murre Ledges, we saw Gannet Rock Light. This boldly-striped light-tower, set on less than an acre of solid rock, eight miles out from Seal Cove, sent its first beam of light across the waters on Christmas Eve, 1831, when the lamp was lit by the first keeper, Captain Lamb.



Setting the weirs at Grand Manan.

Lonely though it seems, Gannet Rock has its interests for those who like to hunt, fish, or study bird and marine life at close range, . . . hunting seals or ducks, codfishing in the fall, catching pollock on handlines from the rocks, and watching the wonderful variety of bird

life, which ranges from stormy petrels, Mother Carey's chickens, and sea geese, to bluebirds, flycatchers, wrens, sparrows, and even dainty warblers, who use the sea-girt Island as a half-way house in their migrations. Sometimes, in their nocturnal flights, the migrating birds are



Whale Cove Cottage, one of the serene, red grey homes flanked with honeysuckle, roses and delphiniums, where the weary, gazing on the blue waters of Whale Cove may sit and "dream and forget".

blinded by the gigantic light, and their tiny dead bodies are picked up in hundreds around the lighthouse.

Gannet Rock, we are told, gets its name from the fact that a lightkeeper, many years ago, subsisted for days on the rank flesh of gannets, when the Government supply boat was prevented from reaching him by tremendous storms.

As we neared Southern Head, everyone grew silent at the majestic beauty of the scene. A rampart of cliff, 250 feet in height, meets the eye, clothed in a riot of green, Nature's sublimest colour. Deep evergreens crown the summit, and down the sides of the rocks gleam the varying greens of summer trees, the

red, barren reaches of the Western shore. Every little while, however, we strike a beauty spot, and everyone exclaims. Now it is a tiny cabin, set in a nook in the rocks, just large enough to accommodate a lobster-fisher and the tools of his trade; again it is a wilderness of creamy boneset, spilling down the side of a cliff. Our pilot tells us how the Indians and early settlers used to administer a tea of boneset leaves to anyone who had suffered a broken bone, secure in the belief that it would effect a speedy cure.

Five miles or so from North Head, the beauty spots begin to jostle against each other. Dark Harbour runs, long, and dark, and mysterious, a mile inland, the



St. Paul's Anglican Church at Grand Manan, a picturesque building, the wall of which, thick as those of a fortress, are built of native stone.

gray-green of curious mosses, and the delicate greenery of close-clinging fern fronds. And in the water, all this beauty is reflected in deeper tones, which give it an added solemnity, . . . a solemnity which is intensified by the first sight of Southern Cross. This unusual rock formation stands like a giant monument on a ledge running out some yards from shore, and it seems as if it had been placed there by Providence, to be a sign to all those who traverse these dangerous waters.

Rounding Southern Head, with its lighthouse, towering 200 feet above our tiny ship, we start homeward along the

rocks which encircle it casting dark shadows in the lagoon.

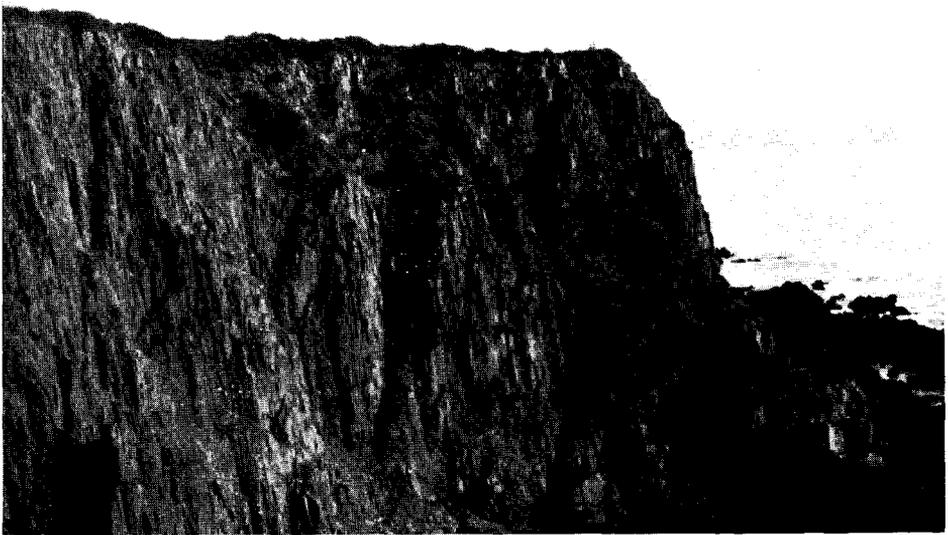
Farther along is Indian Beach, the last stronghold of the Passamaquoddys, to which they were gradually pushed by the encroachments of white settlers. Along here, the stupendous cliffs tower to a height of 400 feet. Skirting Long Eddy, where the "whistle" sounds its raucous warning, we pass Squally Point, and come upon "The Bishop" sitting, with tonsured head, on his rocky throne, gazing out to sea.

Just up from here, throwing a bright challenge to the eye, a line of gay nasturtiums runs along the top of a rocky

wall, and we catch a glimpse of a bronze Hermes poised for flight. Here, in a delightful retreat of garden bloom, wild flowers artistically domesticated, books, magazines and pictures, lives a New York artist and traveller, who loves his native Island, and returns to it year after year. There is nothing quite like this hidden garden, reached from the land side through a dark woodland path, out of which one emerges through a tall, rustic gateway into a striking contrast of colour harmony.

But there is tragedy hidden behind the serene face of the tall cliff just ahead, which basks so calmly in the afternoon sun, . . .

and on January, 19th 1857, in a blinding blizzard of snow and wind, ran head-on to the 200-foot cliff. Of the crew of 29, eight survived and three succeeded in scaling the cliff. Such a feat, little short of miraculous, would have been impossible had not the wind held the men against the rock, and practically lifted them from point to point. One of the survivors, William Lawson, more dead than alive, and with both feet frozen, sought help for his comrades. He spent the rest of his life on Grand Manan, and when he died some years ago, was buried at his own request in the cemetery of the Church of the Ascension, at North Head, with the 21 sailor com-



Southern Head, Grand Manan.

*"The shambling sea is a sexton old,
And well his work is done," . . .*

"Rocky," the mariners' chart warns here, and well it might; for amongst the many disasters of the sea, which have occurred around the shores of Grand Manan, none is more vividly remembered than the wreck of the "Lord Ashburton," off Eel Brook Point, now called Ashburton Head.

The good ship "Lord Ashburton," a merchantman of 1,000 tons, sailed out of Toulon, France, November 17th, 1856,

rades whose bodies were picked upon the coast after the storm. A cement monument, 10 feet high, stands over the spot, and bears the inscription:—

"In Memory of 21 Seamen Drowned
on the Northern Head of Grand
Manan, Jan. 19th, 1857.
Belonging to the Ship 'Lord
Ashburton'."

In Whale Cove, between Eel Brook Point—so called from the quantities of eels which the Indians used to catch there—and Fish Head, we come upon

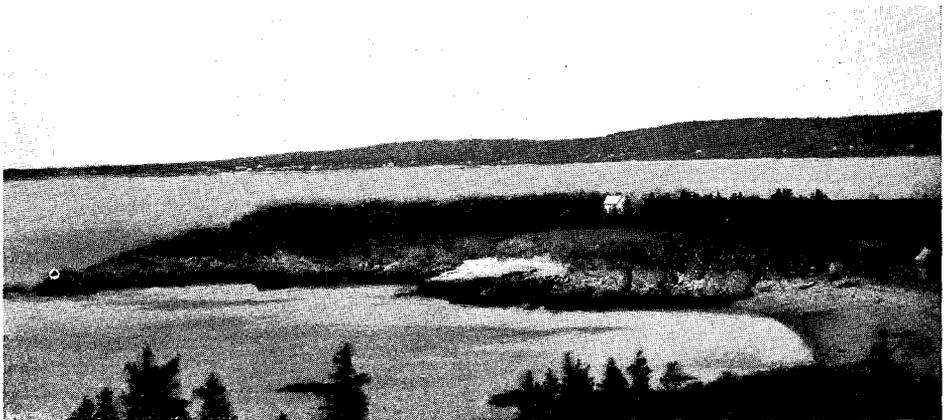


Surf rolling in at Deep Cove, Grand Manan. It was near here that Champlain was believed to have been thrown up by the waves. Straight out from Deep Cove, looking like an evening star on the horizon is Gannet Rock Light.

a place of interest, vividly recalling bygone physiography lectures, . . . a remarkable ledge, 200 feet high and a mile and a half in length, known as the "Six Days' Work," which displays to perfection the strata of six different periods. It "gives one pause" to think of the gigantic force which threw up this mighty arc of rock, now marked by the patient erosion of countless centuries. To the frivolous minds on board the "Rose Ann," however, it suggested nothing so much as a prize Washington pie, with luscious chocolate layers divided by creamy interlinings.

As the "Rose Ann" neared Whale Cove, speculation was rife as to whether we should see a whale. Even while the discussion waxed hot, Madam Whale, as if scheduled to appear by express command of a movie manager, popped up and spouted with abandon, thus saving the Cove's good name from scorn. The "Rose Ann" rocked with cameras, levelled at spots likely to be the whale's next point of appearance. "There she blows!" was our watchword for the rest of the trip.

Whale Cove, near Fish Head, contains a feature which must be approached from



Across entrance to North Head Harbour, Grand Manan.

the land side to be fully appreciated. This is the "Hole in the Wall," which makes one think of smugglers, and pirates, and of cannons levelled at ships coming around the point. It is almost the replica of the Natural Arch, at Point au Moulin, in far-away Sark, in the Channel Islands. It forms a rough picture frame for the pretty scene which lies across the Cove, and to the reposefully-inclined makes an inviting retreat where one may "lean and look on the waters." Furthermore, there are almost as many smears of painters' colours on the rocks here, as there are at Southern Head.

see here, . . . The coming and going of fishermen's boats about the "fish-houses," the white sails of a schooner up from Turk's Island with a cargo of salt, the "Grand Manan," in from Saint John or Eastport with more visitors and the mail; or perhaps a Government cruiser, standing out importantly among the smaller craft.

The people of Grand Manan are a fine, sturdy, intelligent, upstanding race, and mostly honest souls with the fear of God in their hearts, as becomes those who "occupy their business in great waters." "Old salty, swearing sea-dogs, who tell their thumping lies," are few among



Dark Harbour, Grand Manan.

Rounding the point at Swallowtail Light, where the bell rings out in salute to incoming and outgoing vessels, we chuckle to ourselves over the quaint wooden "swallow" perched on top of Swallowtail Light, and sail past snug, sandy, little Spragg's Cove, or Pettes' Cove, where lobster traps and beached dories scattered along the sand give the effect of an old picture, to find ourselves once more among the miniature bays and inlets, the outlying chain of islands, the smooth white beaches, and the attractive summer-homes from which we set sail so many hours before.

Our 50-mile cruise is over, and we are back in Flagg's Cove, at North Head once more. There is always something to

them. There is a deeply religious spirit among this sea-faring folk. "The heft of 'em are Baptists," one old gentleman explained, and there are also two Anglican churches, founded in Loyalist days, one of them a picturesque little structure of native stone.

Nearly fifty volunteers went from Grand Manan to serve in the Great War, and some of them returned no more from that welter of mud and blood to the clean, open spaces of their beloved Island.

Needless to say, there is dauntless sailor-blood in the men of the Island, . . .

"There is no sea that has not seen his bulging canvas spread,



This view of Swallow Tail Lighthouse affords an excellent idea of the quiet coves which are so much a part of the Island of Grand Manan.

*There is no sea that does not sleep some
of his hallowed dead;*

*From Baffin's Bay down to the Horn,
from 'Frisco to Brisbane,*

*He goes and comes in his day's work,
and some come not again."*

Not long ago, Jack Miner said he would sooner have his boys spend two weeks in the Maritimes than have them spend six weeks in Europe. Devotees of Grand Manan, indeed, would almost ask you, . . . "Why go to Europe at all, when a few hours out from Eastport, St. Andrews or Saint John, lies this beautiful isle of the sea, where one can enjoy all the sensations of an ocean voyage (a little too realistic at times, we admit!), and see

bits of scenery from a dozen different lands all combined in one?" Here, you can see misty isles such as fringe the western coast of Scotland; here are steep fords and hardy fishermen for all the world like Norway; here are bold, bleak coasts that might belong to Labrador; old rock formations such as are seen in the Channel Islands; the homelike charm of cottages overgrown with honeysuckle and roses, reminding one of England; rich, green slopes which hold more than a hint of the Emerald Isle,—all combined with that democratic, friendly spirit of village street and country road-side, most characteristic, perhaps, of this continent.

