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The Eyestone We have now seen two Eyestones on Cape Bre? ton • an item so rare and so long out of use it seems no longer to be remembered in Scot? land, the place from which both of these Eyestones came. John Tom Urquhart of Skir Dhu first told us of the Eyestone. Later, we met John A. Wilkie of Sugar Loaf. He showed us his Eyestone and told a story al? most identical to the story John Tom had told. The Eyestone was not originally found in Scotland. They seem all to have come there from the Far East. They are the color of flesh and about the size of half a pea. And they are said to be the tip of a conch shell. The Eyestone is alive, and has to eat • and both men keep their's in about an inch and a half of sugar (John Tom uses white sugar; John A. uses brown). John Tom sometimes feeds his a little rum, and he changes the sugar every two or three years. When the first Highland Settlers came to Cape Breton, they brought the Eyestone with them. It was used extensively here, and passed along from father to son. hE A. Wilkie is standing He holds his Eyestone above- John Tom Urquhart is holding his Eyestone in his hand. Jo with a shingle-maker near his small museum at Suiar~Loar7 John Tom said that the Eyestone would be used to get a splinter out of a man's eye. Years ago, when it was common for men to work with chisels and hammers and sledges, men often caught a speck of steel in the eye. John A. said that the Eyestone could retrieve other things as well. He said, "I was sawing wood at Bay St. Lawrence. I got sawdust in my eye, and in the evening it got to be sore • it got so bad the other eye was getting sore. And they said to me, 'You better go to where the Eyestone is tonight.' I went and they put me to bed with it. Put it in my eye. And you couldn't notice it. The size of it, you'd think it would bother you • but it didn't. I woke up and my eyes were clear. I was 22 or 24 years old." When there is someone to be helped, the Eyestone is taken out of sugar and carefully cleaned. John A. said that down North it would be put in a weak vinegar solution. Both Eyestones we've seen have a tiny dot • the center of a perfect whorl • and when in vinegar 2 or 3 bubbles would come out that hole. Then it would be put in the af? flicted eye. The patient must sit still or lie down while the Eyestone does its work. This is simply so that it will not be lost. This is also the reason you go to the Eyestone ajid it rarely travels. In the eye, the Eyestone would move round and round the eyeball, searching for the speck. When it came out it would have the speck, and the eye would be clear • and the Eyestone would be returned to the sugar. "Years ago," said John A., "there was a man who wanted to say just how awful a cer? tain woman was, so he said of her she was so mean she wouldn't feed the Eyestone." Cape Breton's Magazine/23