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Cruising Cape Breton, 1878 & 1884 This article is a compilation from two writings by S. G. W. Benjamin. He wrote a chapter called "Cape Breton Island" in a book he called *The Atlantic Islands As Resorts of Health and Pleasure*, published in 1878. He returned to Cape Breton, and wrote "Cruising around Cape Breton" for *Century Magazine* in 1884. We have used the dates (1878 and 1884) throughout to indicate the two articles. The illustrations are taken from both publications. The drawings are by Benjamin and by someone named Burns.

1878: It was late in October that I arrived on the coast of Cape Breton, in the good bark *Ethan Allen*, from Madeira. The exceptionally favorable winds we had enjoyed now left us, and it was only after battling with heavy squalls, and gales, and adverse currents for several days, at the entrance of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, that we succeeded in making the port for which we were bound, and we were quite able after that to realize why insurance premiums are doubled after October sets in on all vessels sailing for that inhospitable coast. It took all day to beat up the long, narrow entrance to Sydney harbor, and we passed a steamer which had gone on the bar in a storm which had forced us to stand out to sea two days before. The prospect was rendered somewhat dismal by a crowd of damaged vessels which had been wholly or partially wrecked in the appalling hurricane of the previous August.

1884: Sydney really consists of North and South Sydney, which are situated five miles apart on the same bay. The former, although the larger of the two places, has little to attract. But South Sydney, where our courteous consul, Mr. Lever, resides, is a charming village, with green, sloping banks gracefully meeting the placid waters of a beautiful cove. The water is so deep near the land that the largest vessels can moor within a few yards of the shore. This is a magnificent bay for boating, and South Sydney can be safely recommended as a summer resort. Two large French ships of war were lying there at the time of our visit. The house of the French consul comes close to the water; its ample veranda, overhanging willows, and smooth-shaven lawn aided to give a semi-tropical air to the town. Both here and at North Sydney churches abound, and the kirk and the papacy seem to be diligent in gathering flocks into the fold, the Catholics outnumbering the Protestants. The natural limits of each would appear, however, to have been reached for the present. The emigration from Cape Breton to the United States keeps pace with the natural growth of the population, which is very meager. It does not exceed seventy-five thousand, on an area larger than Massachusetts. North of the Bras d'Or, between St. Anne and Cape North, is an immense tract covered with primeval woods, which has never been fully explored. The axe has not touched the dense forests, nor has the rifle of the settler disturbed the bear, the deer, and the caribou, which still roam there at will. Judging from the character of the coast, which is broken and sublime, the interior must be rich in attractions to the artist, the sportsman, and the adventurer.

1878: Of Sydney little can be said that is inviting. The lay of the land is very much that of our own New England, but vegetation is more sparse, and the general appearance of the landscape more sad and serene. The bay is spacious and well protected, affording

several excel? lent hartx??rs for ordinary weather; but the town presents a singular blending of squalor and thrift, the former being the first feature to im? press the stranger on landing. Shanties and grogeries, disreputable to a degree, at)ound, and lead one to think he has fallen on some maritime Laramie or Cheyenne; while to the westward new houses, glorying in the tawdriness of white paint, green shutters, and flimsy - verandas, indicate that the place is not altogether going to the dogs. Coal is the chief stock in trade, and the supply is apparently inex? haustible; the whole island is, in fact, intersected by seams of the black mineral. The veins mn under the harix)r at Sydney, and are worthed to a considerable depth. The population is, consequently, mining, combined with a large floating class of fishermen and sea? men, ever ready to "splice the main-brace" and chuck the rosy girls of Cape Breton under the chin. It must be added that they do not al? ways stop there, and street brawls, as may be easily imagined are not uncommon. It is difficult to fancy any one lying awake o" nights sighing for Sydney. **STRUCK BY A SQUALL** This port has of late years become a great resort for our (American) mackerel fishermen. It is not far from Cape North, one of the fishing grounds, and the fish are also found toward the close ot the season off the harbor. Seventy of our schooners made Sydney a rendezvous during the previous summer, and it is indeed a stirring and beautiful spectacle to see the graceful little craft dodging up and down the long entrance to the hariaor, or darting hither and thither in white groups, like sea-fowl, in search of schools of mackerel. So fascinated was I by the sight of these schooners, that, on finding my bari' was not going to return to Boston, I at once decided to get passage in one of the schooners, if possible, in preference to the steamer. Fortune seemed to favor me. The skipper of the Anna Maria came aboard to bring us some fresh mackerel, and told us he was to start the following morn? ing for home, going, for the first time, by way of the Bras d'Or, which I had long wished to see. He kindly offered me a bunk, and a share of grub for myself and dog. I jumped at the proposal, and early the next day took my traps aboard; we peaked the mainsail, tripped the an? chor, and stood out to sea. The Anna Maria was twenty-four years old, forty-one tons burden, and had a small forecastle and a diminutive tnjnk-cabin aft; five men slept forward, and there were six of us, or seven, including a dog, in the cuddy. The deck was lumbered up with a quantity of fish-barrels and tubs, and the whole vessel was in an un? mentionable state of dirtiness, resulting from twelve weeks of fishing. There are two en? trances to the re? markable sea-lake called the Bras d'Or, which separ? ates Cape Breton Island into two nearly equal por? tions. Within a short time a canal, scarcely half a mile long, has been cut through the isthmus, per? mitting the pas? sage of vessels of small burden. It is about sixty miles **FISHERMEN CRUISING**