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mind. One of my brothers reported the catching of a dog fish on the shore by a neighbor, Danny MacMullin. "He was afraid to take the hook out of its mouth, and so he beat it over the head again and again with the handle of the rod until it was dead." I was thrilled at his relation of the event and trotted down the hill to have a look. The beach was deserted and I walked along the water to where the fish lay. I had expected a fish with a dog's head, and I saw a fish's body, black and shiny, and a splatter where the head was. I trotted back up the hill to the farm house. My five-year-old brain could not assimilate the experience and I said nothing to the others. A few days later the same Danny MacMullin shot a crow as it THE CAPE BRETON "Irresistible" The Kingston Whig-Standard "A boatload of Maritime fun" AUGUST: Aug. 2 - 4 Centre 200 SYDNEY Aug. 7 - 9 St. F. X. Auditorium ANTIGONISH Aug. 5 - 6 S.A.E.R.C. PORT HAWKESBURY Aug. 10 -11 Centre Bras d'Or BADDECK (11th: 2 performances) Aug. 21 - 23 Rebecca Cohn HAUFAX Aug. 19 - 20 DeCoste Centre PICTOU Aug. 25 - 27 Savoy Theatre GLACE BAY Capebreton ISLAND I CANADA/ NOVA SCOTIA COOPERATION AGREEMENT ON CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT Canada >C Canadian BACK HOME FROIVI THEIR TRIUMPHANT NATIONAL TOUR '94 flew over his head. This was a very unusual event as the crows were almost impossible to come. The sight of a gun was enough to send them into hiding. Danny the Redoubtable, how? ever, had conquered. Again I was too far off to have witnessed the crow's fall. Once more, all alone, I crossed into the field behind the farm house, and found the crow, a mess of splayed feathers, upon the grass. It was no longer loud and raucous, no longer saucy and defiant. It was only feathers, and the blood upon the feathers looked black also. I SOMETIMES THINK THAT MY PARENTS LIVED in a foreign land because their hearts were so firmly set in the Gaelic culture of their childhood. My mother would often turn to us after singing some Gaelic air and recite in bland ordinary English the contents of her magic song. It never seemed so wonderful to me but the air that clung to it was fine to the ear.... My father seldom sang at all. Once in a while he would feel the urge and sing a long ballad about a dog named "Pilate." But he loved to listen to the old airs and then would express his appreciation. Once, after he listened to some recordings of Gaelic songs, he said, "I don't want to listen to English airs again." His statement was delivered with a quiet decision, but after we moved to town and the radio arrived, he was swamped, as we all were, in modern English or American music. His mother, my grandmother, lived for many years in Glace Bay, with her daughter Mary Ann, a widow, and her two boys. The grandmother never learned to speak English and was therefore cut off from us, who had no command of Gaelic. Her world became her house, and generally she spoke only to her three companions. My father visited her unfailingly on Sunday evenings. Sometimes she would want to sing, and he would sit without moving while she went through long ballads and hymns. Some of these were very long and he said that he could have walked two miles while she sang a single number. However it happened we do not know, but these songs had slumbered deep in her memory for many years. She had



not taught them to her children, but now they surged up from within her and demanded expression. One time, at my father's insistence, I got Dr. Nicholson to visit her to learn some of her repertoire. She sang to him for about two hours while he wrote rapidly in a notebook. He was pleased with what she gave him, but she was very old and was exhausted after the visit. She was very happy to think that her beloved songs were worthy of being recorded. She died a short time later and most of her songs were buried with her. My father showed no desire to teach us Gaelic. He himself had gone to school for only about three years. At that time the children all spoke Gaelic. The classes were in English and he learned very little. Then eventually he got work in a mine in Glace Bay. I've been told that he was only twelve years of age at the time. With his poor command of English and strong Scottish accent, he was often an object of mockery for the older men. Hence he regarded Gaelic as a drawback and a hindrance. His English improved gradually all through his life. He read papers and magazines with facility, and the strong accent gradual-

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