

Mr. Vaughan, late superintendent of the Lighthouse at Belle-Isle, has kept a register of icebergs for several years. He states that for ten which enter the straits, fifty drift to the southward, and that most of those which enter pass inward on the north side of the island, drift toward the western end of the straits, and then pass out on the south side of the island, so that the straits seem to be merely a sort of eddy in the course of the bergs. The number in the straits varies much in different seasons of the year. The greatest number are seen in spring, especially in May and June; and toward autumn and in the winter very few remain. Those which remain until autumn are reduced to mere skeletons; but if they survive until winter, they again grow in dimensions, owing to the accumulations upon them of snow and new ice. Those that we saw early in July were large and massive in their proportions. The few that remained when we returned in September were smaller in size, and cut into fantastic and toppling pinnacles. Vaughan records that on the 30th of May, 1858, he counted in the Straits of Belle-Isle 496 bergs, the least of them sixty feet in height, some of them half a mile long and 200 feet high. Only one-eighth of the volume of floating ice appears above water, and many of these great bergs may thus touch the ground in a depth of thirty fathoms or more, so that if we imagine four hundred of them moving up and down under the influence of the current, oscillating slowly with the motion of the sea, and grinding on the rocks and stone-covered bottom at all depths from the centre of the channel, we may form some conception of the effects of these huge polishers of the sea floor.

Of the bergs which pass outside of the straits, many ground on the banks off Belle-Isle. Vaughan has seen a hundred large bergs aground at one time on the banks, and they ground on various parts of the banks of Newfoundland, and all along the coast of that island. As they are borne by the deep-seated cold current, and are scarcely at all affected by the wind, they