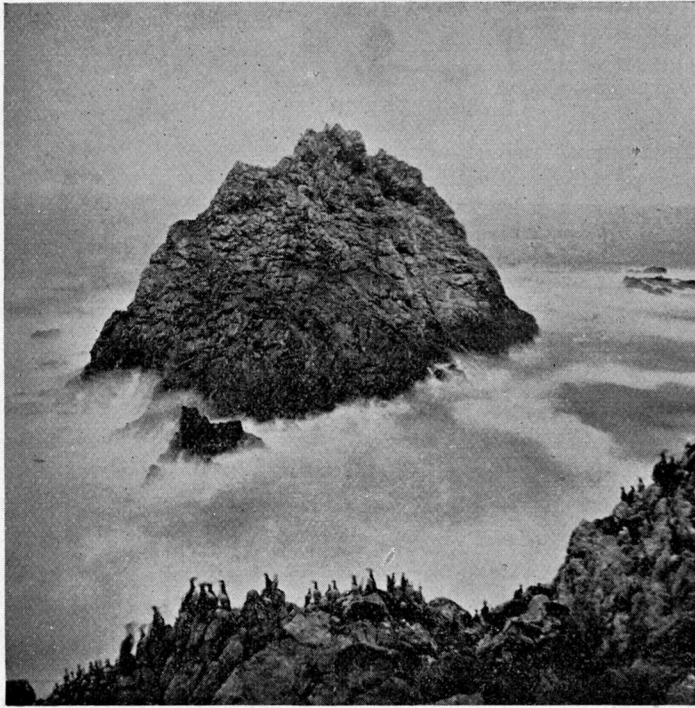


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SUGAR LOAF ROCK—FARALLON ISLANDS

THE STORMY PETREL.

A thousand miles from land are we,
Tossing about on the stormy sea—
From billow to bounding billow cast,
Like fleecy snow on the stormy blast.
The sails are scattered abroad like weeds,
The strong masts shake like quivering reeds;
The mighty cables and iron chains,
The hull—which all earthly strength disdains—
They strain and they crack, and hearts like stone
Their natural, hard, proud strength disown.

Up and down!—up and down!
For them base of the wave to the billow's crown,
And amidst the flashing and feathery foam
The Stormy Petrel finds a home,—
A home, if such a place may be
For her who lives on the wide, wide sea.
On the craggy ice, in the frozen air,
And only seeketh her rocky lair
To warn her young and teach them to spring
At once o'er the waves on their stormy wing!

O'er the deep!—o'er the deep!
Where the whale and the shark and the sword fish
sleep—
Out-flying the blast and the driving rain,
The petrel telleth her tale—in vain;
For the mariner curseth the warning bird
Which bringeth him news of the storm unheard!
Ah! thus does the prophet of good or ill
Meet hate from the creatures he serveth still;
Yet he ne'er falters—so, petrel spring
Once more o'er the waves on thy stormy wing!

BARRY CORNWALL, in *Old Magazine*.

 The Farallons in 1856.

THE Ornithologist who has visited the Farallon Islands never tires of telling of the wonders of its bird-life in the breeding season, glimpses of memories' pictures which are startlingly vivid and never to be forgotten. Although much has been written from the Ornithologists' and collectors' standpoints of this interesting group of picturesque rocks in the sea, (for there is nothing there but rock, piled up by volcanic action into forms grotesque) still the subject is not stale, nor is it likely to prove unprofitable.

The half-tone illustrations, from photographs, which embellish this article, are probably superior in their way to any that have yet appeared in descriptions of the Farallons and their bird-life. The photograph of the Murre rookery is one of striking interest, and reveals more than could be told in many words, of this great

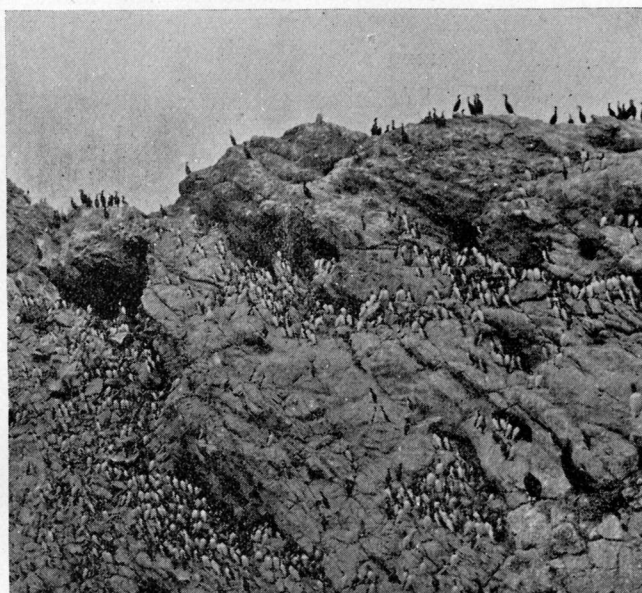
summer home of myriads of sea fowl. In this small picture the reader may count over 600 California Murres and Cormorants with the unaided eye. An admirable photograph is shown of a group of monster sea lions, illustrating also the topography of the lower portions of South Farallon; while in another view the reader is introduced to "Sugar Loaf," on whose steep crags and rounded top thousands of Murres, Gulls and Cormorants congregate to lay their eggs. The casual egg collector who visits the island never attempts to disturb the birds on this great foam washed rock. They are never molested save, occasionally, by the intrepid "egg pickers," who scale Sugar Loaf with ropes to collect the Murres' eggs for the San Francisco market. Here one of their number, a few years ago, fell into the sea and lost his life in a daring climb.

In "Hutching's California Magazine," for August, 1856, appears a quaint account of a visit to the Farallon Islands, and as it has an added interest as being, perhaps, the first account of the bird-life on the Farallons, I quote liberally from the article.

"The Farallones is the name of the rocky islands lying in the Pacific Ocean, about twenty-seven miles west of the Golden Gate, and thirty miles from San Francisco. These islands have become of some importance, and of considerable interest on account of the vast quantity of eggs that are there annually gathered, for the California market; these eggs having become an almost indispensable article of spring and summer consumption to many persons.

"By courtesy of the Farollone Egg Company, through their president, Captain Richardson, the schooner Louise was placed at our service, and, in company with a small party of friends, we were soon upon the deep green brine, plowing our way to these 'Isles of the Ocean.'

"To the dwellers of an inland city there is music in the ever restless waves, as they



GREAT MURRE ROOKERY—FARALLONS

murmur and break upon the shore; but to sail upon the broad, heaving bosom of the ocean gives an impression of profoundness and majesty, that, by contrast, becomes a source of peaceful pleasure. There is a vastness, around, above, beneath you, as wave after wave, and swell after swell, lifts your tiny vessel upon its seething surface, as though it were a feather—a floating atom upon the broad expanse of waters. Then, to look into its shadowy depth, and feel the sublime language of the Psalmist: 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships. There is that leviathan, whom Thou has made to play therein. These wait all upon Thee; that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season. Thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled.' 'They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.'

'Bright and beautiful slept the morning, as a light breeze blowing gently from the mountains, sped us on our way. Object after object became indistinct and less, as we left them far behind us.

'At last we near the Farallones. Now the air is literally filled with birds—birds floating above us, and birds all around us, like bees that are swarming.

'The anchor is dropped in a mass of floating foam on the southeast, and sheltered side of the island, and, in a small boat we reach the shore.

'Looking at the wonders on every side, we were astonished that we had heard so little about them; and, that a group of islands like these, should lie within a few hours sail of San Francisco, yet not be the resort of nearly every seeker of pleasure and every lover of the wonderful.

'It is like a vast menagerie. Upon the rocks adjacent to the sea, repose in easy indifference thousands—yes, thousands—of *sea lions*, that weigh from *two to five thousand pounds each*. As these made the loudest noise and to us were the most curious, we paid them the first visit. When

we were within a few yards of them the majority took to the water, while two or three of the oldest and largest remained upon the rock 'standing guard' over the young calves. As we advanced these masses of 'blubber' moved slowly and clumsily towards us, with their mouths open, giving us to understand that we had better not disturb the repose of the juvenile 'lions;' but the moment we threw a stone at them they would scamper off and leave the young lions to the mercy of their enemies.

"The birds, which are by far the most numerous, and on account of their eggs, the most important, are the Murres, or Foolish Guillemots, which are found here in myriads, surmounting every rocky peak, and occupying every small and partially level spot upon the islands. Here it lays its egg, upon the bare rock, and never leaves it unless driven off, until it is hatched; the male taking its turn at incubation with the female. One reason why this may be the case, perhaps, is from the fact that the Gull is watching every opportunity to steal its egg and eat it.

"When the young are old enough to emigrate, the Murres take them away in the night, lest the Gulls should eat them, and as soon as the young reach the water they swim at once. Some idea may be formed of the number of these birds by the Farallone Egg Company having, since 1850, brought to the San Francisco market between three and four millions of eggs.

"It is a clumsy bird, almost helpless on land, but is at home on the sea, and is an excellent swimmer and diver, and is very strong in the wings. Their eggs are unaccountably large, for the size of the bird, and, 'afford excellent food, being highly nutritive and palatable—whether boiled, roasted, poached or in omelettes.' No two eggs are in color alike.

"The 'Big Rookery' lies on the northwest side of the island. This locality derives its name from the island here forming a hollow, and being well protected from the winds it is a favorite resort of myriads of

sea fowl, who make this their place of abode and where vast numbers of young are raised. If you walk amongst them, thousands immediately rise, and for a few moments darken the air as though a heavy cloud had just crossed and obscured the sunlight on your path. But few persons who have not seen them can realize the vast numbers that make this their home, and which are here, there and everywhere, flying, sitting and even swimming upon the boiling and white-topped surge among the seals.

"From this point we can get an excellent view of the lighthouse, 357 feet above the sea, and below, the residence of the light-keepers.

Everywhere there is beauty, wildness and sublimity. Here also we can get an excellent view of the North Farallones, that, in the dim and shadowy distance, are looming up their dull peaks just above the restless and swelling waves.

"Upon these islands, of three hundred and fifty acres, there is not a single tree or shrub to relieve the eye. A few weeds and sprigs of mustard are the only signs of vegetable life to be seen upon them."

As the California wild mustard sometimes actually grows high enough for birds to nest in the branches, I should, perhaps, add to the above account that whatever was the case in 1856 there is at the present day no mustard growing upon the Farallons.

H. R. TAYLOR.