



ISLE OF SHOALS

Excerpt of poem by Celia Loughton, whose father Thomas B. Loughton, was keeper of the White Island Light, Isles of Shoals, New Hampshire. This was written after the wreck of the brig *Pocohantas* on the sand bar off Plum Island during the storm of Dec. 22, 1839. All aboard perished. Celia herself lit the lamps that night; the doomed vessel was swept so close to White Island that the signal gun could be heard as it was destroyed.

I lit the lamps in the lighthouse tower
For the sun dropped down and the day was dead.
They shone like a glorious clustered flower, —
Ten golden and five red.

The sails that flecked the ocean floor
From east to west leaned low and fled;
They knew what came in the distant roar
That filled the air with dread!

Flung by a fitful gust, there beat
Against the window a dash of rain;
Steady as tramp of marching feet
Strode on the hurricane.

It smote the waves for a moment still,
Level and deadly white for fear;
The bare rock shuddered, — an awful thrill
Shook even my tower of cheer.

When morning dawned, above the din
Of gale and breaker boomed a gun!
Another! We who sat within
Answered with cries each one.

The thick storm seemed to break apart
To show us, staggering to her grave,
The fated brig. We had no heart
To look, for naught could save.

One glimpse of black hull heaving slow
Then closed the mists o'er canvas torn
And tangled ropes swept to and fro
From masts that ranked forlorn.

And when at last from the distant shore
A little boat stole out, to reach
Our loneliness, and bring once more
Fresh human thought and speech,

We told our tale, and the boatman cried;
"Twas the '*Pocohantas*,' — all were lost!
For miles along the coast the tide
Her shattered timbers tossed."

Sighing I climbed the lighthouse stair,
Half forgetting my grief and pain;
And while the day died, sweet and fair,
I lit the lamps again.