From time to time considerable replacements have been made of top boulders for the jetty work. The foundation has about settled permanently, having been welded into a solid mass by barnacles and other sea growth.

Suppose old Peter could come back now and sit on the rocks at the mouth of the river. His thoughts would be of the time when there were lamps to fill and wicks to trim, although his lighthouse home had been washed away. He would listen intently to the mellow cadence coming in from the bell-buoy out at sea—that rise and fall of sound which reminds you of Poe’s famous poem, “The Bells”. The line of inquiry in Peter’s mind would run: Whence came these rocks? Why such a rapid current? Where is Pelican Bank, and what has become of the sea birds that had to fight for standing room? Where are the schooners, anchored for an entrance tide; and where are the hulls of wrecks that used to line the shore? What makes those rowboats go so fast, and what is that popping noise? What great ship is that coming in, and why the wires between her masts? These things explained to him he would stare in bewilderment and fright, and fade away—into the Past.

Traditions handed down from a former generation of fisher-folk still cling to the mouth of the river—legends of romance, of pirates, and of buried gold. I have made an effort to trace some of them to a historical backing; but save those of hardship and danger, none seems to be verified by anything of record.

The south jetty, from end to end, is 2½ miles long, while the north jetty is half a mile longer or 3 miles in length. The distance between the outer or sea ends is 1600 feet. At the entrance the channel bears close to the north jetty, thence toward and along the south jetty, close to the shore. In a straight line, the mouth of the river is 15½ miles from the courthouse in Jacksonville and by channel, from the foot of Market Street, 27½ miles.

Channel Improvements

Long before the jetties were completed, it was evident that the depth of water at the entrance would be increased to approximately 20 feet, the estimate made by Capt. Eads. There were, however, some parts of the channel between