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Nec aranearum sane textus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt, nec noster vilior quia ex alienis libamus ut apes.

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THE FISHERIES.

[A short time since we obtained a copy of Mr PERLEY'S Report on the Fisheries, which was laid before the Legislature during its recent sitting. We have carefully perused it, and as it contains much valuable information, and we have marked numerous passages for extracts, which we shall publish from time to time, as circumstances will permit.]

There is probably no part of the world in which such extensive and valuable Fisheries are to be found, as within the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Nature has bountifully provided within its waters, the most abundance of those Fishes which are of the greatest importance to man, as affording not only nutritious and wholesome food, but also the means of profitable employment.

Those Fisheries may be prosecuted as well in the open waters of the Gulf, as within every Bay, Harbor, Creek, Cove and Inlet in connection with it. Whether on the bleak and sterile coast of Labrador, or on the Western coasts of Newfoundland and Cape Breton; or along the Eastern shores of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; or within the Bay of Chaleur; or around Prince Edward Island, Anticosti, or the Magdalen Islands, the Fisherman may pursue his labors with nearly equal chances of success, and the full prospect of securing an ample reward for his toil.

With such valuable and unlimited Fisheries in close proximity to these Colonies, and as it may be said at the very doors of the inhabitants, it is no less strange than true, that they are prosecuted to the greatest extent, and with most profit, by citizens of France and of the United States.

The French exercise an almost exclusive right of fishing upon the western coast of Newfoundland, the fertility and great mineral wealth of which have only recently become known, and are not yet fully appreciated.

From seven hundred to eight hundred sail of American Fishing Vessels enter the Gulf of Saint Lawrence annually; and scattering over the whole of its wide extent, with little heed of the limits to which they are restricted by Treaty, pursue their business unmolested, and but rarely leave their stations without full and valuable fares.

The Jersey Merchants also prosecute these Fisheries with great zeal and assiduity, and, as it is believed, with much profit. They have permanent establishments and Fishing stations in Gaspé, Labrador, and Newfoundland, and two or more establishments in New Brunswick; but they by no means confine themselves to any particular locality. They employ upwards of one hundred vessels almost exclusively in carrying the rich products of the deep to various Foreign markets, besides the smaller craft required upon the coast. Two of the leading Jersey firms, Messrs. Robin and Company, and Nicolle Brothers, are supposed respectively to afford employment, directly or indirectly, to nearly 1000 persons.

The inhabitants of those shores of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia which are within the Gulf, pursue the Fisheries in their immediate neighborhood to a moderate extent; and a few of their Vessels visit the Magdalen Islands and the Labrador coast during the season. The people of Prince Edward Island who are favorably placed for securing a goodly portion of the riches of the sea, make still more limited efforts; but their efforts can scarcely be described as more limited or more feeble than those of the people of New Brunswick who dwell upon its shores from Bay Verte to the western extremity of Bay Chaleur—those shores commanding as great an extent and variety of Fishing ground, and as abundant supplies of valuable Fish of every description, as can be found in any other part of the unrivalled Gulf of Saint Lawrence, while they possess equal and perhaps superior facilities for prosecuting its Fisheries extensively and profitably.

The most valuable Fisheries of the Gulf are those for Herring, Cod, and

Mackarel. But before entering upon the question of their encouragement, and extension, by increased facilities of communication, it will be proper to give some description of each. With this view they will be taken up in order of the fishing season; after which, the secondary fisheries of the Gulf will be briefly noticed.

THE HERRING.

The common Herring (*Clupea harengus*) appears in the Gulf of St. Lawrence at the end of April, or early in May, and the fishing continues until about 10th of June, when they retire to deep water, having deposited their spawn. These "Spring Herring," as they are termed, are taken in "set nets" along the whole eastern shore of New Brunswick, around Miscou Island, and within the Bay of Chaleur. Being caught while in the very act of spawning, they are then thin and poor, of little value as an article of food, whether fresh or salted. They generally re-appear about the 20th August, and remain in shore for a month; they are then fat and in good condition, furnishing excellent food, and a valuable commodity for export. It is admitted that when first caught, these "Fall Herrings" are fully equal in every respect to the best Scotch Herrings; and if they were cured in the Dutch manner, this fishery, from the increased price and demand would become one of the most important and valuable Fisheries of the Gulf.

The Herring is the animal delicacy of Holland, and there enjoys a very different reputation from that of the common salt Herring of Britain or America; yet the Fish of both Holland and Britain are the same, being caught on the same Fishing grounds, and those of North America are in no respect inferior.

The Dutch mode of curing Herrings is thus described by Mr Chambers in his "Tour in Holland in 1838." "Immediately on being caught, the Herrings are bled, gutted, cleaned, salted, and barreled. The bleeding is effected by cutting them across the back of the neck, and then hanging them up for a few seconds by the tail. By being thus relieved of the blood, the Fish retain a certain sweetness of flavor, and delicacy of flesh, which unbled Herrings cannot possibly possess.—The rapidity of the process of curing, must likewise aid in preserving the native delicacy of the animal, for the herring lies salted in the barrel, in a very few minutes after it has been swimming in the water. I was assured that the superiority of the Dutch Herrings is solely ascribable to this mode of curing."

The great mercantile value of the Dutch Herrings on the Continent of Europe being found to arise solely from this mode of curing, the Commissioners of the British Fisheries (in Scotland) were induced to devote great attention to it, and to urge its general adoption by every means in their power. Their Officers and Inspectors were directed to brand every barrel of Herring cured according to the Dutch mode, with the figure of the Crown. In their official Report for 1844, the Commissioners state that—"the unprecedented demand from the continent for Crown brand Herrings, is a sufficient proof of the care with which the integrity of the brand is preserved, as well as of the high value which is set upon it, in all the continental markets. It was the strong conviction impressed upon the minds of the Commissioners of the vital importance of preserving the integrity of the brand, which compelled them to exercise the painful duty of dismissing from the service, one of the Board's oldest officers. As he had branded a cargo of Herrings, which afterwards went to Hamburg, where they were complained of as having been found unworthy of the brand, the Board despatched the General Inspector of the East Coast to that place, in order that he might rigidly examine the contents of all the barrels; and on receiving an unfavorable report as to the result of his investigation, the officer was immediately dismissed. The effect of this prompt measure has been to raise the character of the brand even higher in the estimation of the Foreign Fish Merchants, to whom the circumstances were generally known. It is by the preserva-

tion of the purity of the official brand, that the produce of the British Herring Fishery is to be upheld in character abroad, and the demand for it largely extended in Foreign Markets."

In Autumn when the herrings are in fine condition, they are taken during a few weeks only, because our fishermen are quite ignorant of the proper mode of curing to render them of value, and are not aware of the manner of using drift nets in deep water, which is so successfully practised by the Herring fishers of Loch Fyne, and other noted stations in Scotland. By a similar manner of fishing, our fishermen could continue to catch herrings until the latest period of the fishing season, and those taken last would be found of the finest quality. The mode of fishing by drift nets, is thus described by Mr Yarrell, in his admirable work on British Fishes:

"The net is suspended by its upper edge from the drift rope by various shorter and smaller ropes, called buoy ropes; and considerable practicable skill is required in the arrangement, that the net may hang with the meshes square, smooth and even in the water, and at the proper depth; for, according to the wind, tide, situation of their food, and other causes, the herrings swim at various distances below the surface."

"The size of the boat depends on the distance from the shore at which the fishery is carried on; but whether in deep or in shallow water, the nets are only in actual use during the night. It is found that the fish strike the nets in much greater numbers when it is dark, than while it is light: the darkest nights, therefore, and those in which the surface of the water is ruffled by a breeze, are considered the most favorable. It is supposed that nets stretched in the day time alarm the fish, and cause them to quit the place where that practice is followed; it is, therefore, strictly forbidden."

Many thousands of barrels of the inferior "Spring Herring," are taken at the Magdalen Islands every season, at the period when they approach the shores of those Islands to deposit their spawn.—They are then very poor, and as but little care is taken in curing them, they often prove unfit for human food. They are caught in large seines, which require 15 or 20, and sometimes 40 men to manage them; and they are capable of enclosing and bringing to the shore from 200 to 1000 barrels at a single haul. When taken from these seines, it is the common practice to put them in the holds of the vessels, without washing, bleeding, or divesting them of their offal. They are salted "in bulk," as it is termed, and so they remain until the vessel arrives at the Port whence she sailed, whether in the Colonies, or in the United States.—They are then taken out and packed in barrels, sweltering in all their impurity; but whole cargoes frequently prove worthless as food, and are then used for dressing grass land.

A large proportion of the herrings exported from Miramichi, are of the description known as the Gaspereaux or Alewife, (*Clupea vernalis*) which leave the Sea, and ascend most of the Rivers of the Gulf to spawn. They are a thin, dry Fish, much inferior to the Sea Herring when salted; they find a market in the West Indies, as from their leanness they are less liable to spoil in a hot climate than the fat herring.

From the preceding Table it appears clearly, that beyond furnishing some portion of the food of the inhabitants of the Northern Counties of New Brunswick, the magnificent and unlimited herring Fishery of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Bay of Chaleur, barely furnishes a sufficient quantity for export, to prevent herrings being altogether omitted from the Returns.

Of all the fisheries of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, none could be increased to a greater extent, or would furnish a more valuable export, than the herring fishery if placed under judicious regulations, and conducted with greater skill or care. The manner of taking herrings by drift-nets in deep water, requires to be generally known and adopted. At pre-

sent, these excellent and truly valuable Fish, which exist in the Gulf in myriads, during the latter part of the season, when they are in the finest condition, are only caught in sufficient quantities to furnish bait for Cod.

The Dutch mode of curing also requires to be introduced, in order that the full flavor and fine quality of the Fish may be preserved. If cured according to this approved mode, and properly packed in barrels of hard wood, bearing an official brand (on which full reliance could be placed,) to denote the quality of the Fish within, the herrings of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence would find a ready market throughout the whole extent of Canada, and would find their way by inland navigation, and the Great Lakes, to the most western States of the Union, where there exists a large and constantly increasing demand. To other parts of the United States, and to Foreign Ports elsewhere, they might be profitably exported, if they could reach St. John, at all seasons, at a moderate charge.

The Herring Fishery of the Gulf would be more benefitted than any other, by the construction of Railways, and the increased facilities for communication which they would afford. No other description of Fish would probably furnish so large an amount of Railway traffic, as, if once properly established, this Fishery which can now be scarcely said to exist, might be prosecuted to an almost unlimited extent.

THE COD.

This Fishery commences from the 1st to the 10th June, and continues until the end of November; it may be prosecuted in every part of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence to a greater or less extent. The principal Fish caught, differs but little from the *gadus morrhua*, of Linnaeus, or ash-colored Cod. There are besides, two varieties, known as *gadus rupestris*, the Rock Cod, and *gadus arenosus*, the Shoal Cod.

Near the shores of New Brunswick, the best Fishing Grounds, or rather those most frequented, are from Point Escuminac to Miscou, and thence along the Bay of Chaleur to the Restigouche.

The inhabitants of the County of Gloucester prosecute the Shore Fishery to a greater extent than any others on the New Brunswick coast. Their principal stations are Miscou, Shippegan, Caraqueet and Grand Ance. They go out in boats, from one to 15 miles from the land, in the morning, and when at the longer distance, do not return until the evening of the following day. The boats are undecked, and measure from 20 to 26 feet keel. They have two fore-and-aft sails, and a jib; each boat is managed by two men, and frequently there is with them a boy. Each man has two lines, from 30 to 48 fathoms in length, and they are also furnished with Mackeral lines, spare leads, and hooks. The boat has oars, an anchor and rope, compass, and small oven for cooking; the cost is about £18 for each boat, with complete outfit. The Fishermen generally build their own boats during the Winter; the keel is of birch; the timbers of cedar, and the planks of Pine or cedar. A boat will last from 6 to 8 years, and so will the sails also, with care.

The quintal, by which Cod are always sold, is 112 lb of dry Fish. It is considered a good day's fishing, at Miscou, for one of these boats to take ten quintals of Fish, which they frequently do. When first caught, 112 of the small Fish, and 30 of the large size are reckoned to the quintal.

Nearly all the fishermen of Shippegan and the Bay of Chaleur, split, salt and cure their own Fish. When they do not, 282 lbs. of green Fish, salted and drained are given to a curer, to return 112 lb of merchantable dry Fish.

The boats, as they return from the fishing banks, run alongside a stage built over the water, upon which the fish are thrown out. The first man that handles the Fish cuts its throat with a single stroke of his knife, and slides it along a sort of table to another, who whips off the head, and drops it, with the entrails, through a hole in the table, into the wa-