

# THE GLEANER:

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

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## THE FISHERIES.

MR. PERLEY'S REPORT.

[Continued.]

After the Fish are sufficiently cured, they are collected and laid in small circles, with the tails outwards; these circles are continually built upon, each row being larger than the one below it, until the pile is about three feet high, when the circles begin to diminish, so as to form a conical roof; this is covered with larch bark, and stones are placed upon it. The piles are thus rendered impervious to the heaviest rains; and in this position, the Fish are left to season before being packed for exportation.

The Bay of Chaleur Cod are more prized in South America, and will at all times sell there more readily, and at higher prices than any other. They are beautifully white; and being very dry, can better withstand the effects of a hot climate and long voyage, than a more moist Fish. The peculiarity of their being smaller than Cod caught elsewhere, is also of greater importance as regards the South American market, for which they are packed in tubs of a peculiar shape called "drums," and into which they are closely pressed by means of a powerful screw.

The usual baits for Cod on the New Brunswick Coast, and in the Bay of Chaleur, are—Capelin, in the early part of the season—and afterwards, Herrings and Mackerel—when no other bait can be had, Clams are used.

The Capelin (*salmo groenlandicus*) is a beautiful little fish from 4 to 7 inches in length, the under jaw longer than the upper, the color of the back greenish, the under surface of the body silvery. They usually appear about Miscou, and in the Bay of Chaleur, early in May; but sometimes not until near the end of that month. The Cod Fishery does not fairly commence until the arrival of the Capelin which continue near the shores until the end of July.

There has been great complaints of late years, in the upper part of the Bay of Chaleur, of the falling off in the Cod fishery, which is said to be every year decreasing. At Carleton, Maria, New Richmond, and other places on the Gaspé Shore, the fishing establishments are deserted, and going to ruin. At these places there was formerly an abundant supply of fish: but the inhabitants now barely catch enough for their own winter store.

This decrease is also felt on the New Brunswick shore. The settlement of Petit Rocher sends out about 50 boats only, which average a catch of 50 quintals each, during the season. The Poché coast sends out a few boats but they only fish occasionally. The Caraquet and Shippegan boats, further down the Bay, take more than a hundred quintals each during the season, which are of better quality than those taken off Petit Rocher. The decline of Cod fishery in the upper part of the Bay is attributed to the wanton destruction of the proper and natural food of the Cod—Herring and Capelin—which are taken in immense quantities; not for immediate eating, or for curing, or for bait—but for manuring the land!

In a representation made to the Canadian Legislature by a fisherman of Gaspé, it is stated, that this fisherman has seen 500 barrels of Capelin taken in one tide, expressly for manure; and that he has also seen 1000 barrels of Herring caught at one time and not taken away, but left to rot upon the beach!

It has been remarked in the Bay of Chaleur, that owing to this waste of the smaller fish, the Cod fishery recedes as Agriculture advances. The lazy farmer, who thinks he can increase the fertility of his land by a single sweep of his seine, does so at the expense of the fisheries, although a bountiful Providence has furnished the shores with inexhaustible quantities of kelp, and sea-weed, and other valuable manures, which really enrich the soil, while it is admitted that the use of fish greatly deteriorates it.

The Legislature of Canada has been

strongly urged to make it a misdemeanor punishable by fine and imprisonment, for any person to use either Herring or Capelin as manure, and such a measure would seem to be highly desirable in New Brunswick. To be effective, there should be similar regulations on both sides of the Bay of Chaleur.

The deep-sea fishery for Cod is not prosecuted to any great extent in the Gulf by the people of New Brunswick. A few schooners proceed from the fishing stations in the county of Gloucester, already mentioned, to the Bradelle Bank, about 50 miles from Miscou. In the Summer of 1839, H. M. S. Champion, in sailing from the east Cape of Prince Edward Island to the Bay of Chaleur, (crossing the Bradelle Bank) passed through a fleet of 600 to 700 sail of American fishing schooners all engaged in Cod-fishing.

The vessels of Gaspé frequently resort to Anticosti, off the eastern end of which Island Cod are often taken in great abundance and of good quality.

The excellent fishery on the Labrador Coast is prosecuted almost wholly by the Americans, and by vessels from Newfoundland, Canada and Nova Scotia.—The vessels usually employed are schooners of 70 or 80 tons burthen, and they arrive on the coast about the end of May. Every part of the coast is frequented by fishing vessels during the season, from Mount Joli, at the southern boundary of Labrador, to the northern extremity of the Straits of Belleisle. On reaching the coast, the vessel enters some snug harbor, where she is moored, and there remains quietly at anchor, until a full fare, or the departure of the Fish require the Master to seek another inlet, or return home.

The fishery is carried on entirely in boats, and the number found most useful is one for every 30 tons of the vessel; there are two men to each boat. If fish are in plenty and not too distant from the vessel, they are expected in good weather to get two loads in each day. The return of the boats with fish is the signal for the dressing crew, who remain on board, to commence their operations. If it is intended that the vessel shall remain on the Coast until the Fish are ready for market, they are taken on shore as caught, and there dressed, salted and dried, before putting on board the vessel. But it is the more common practice, especially with vessels from the United States to salt the Fish on board, and take their cargoes home in a green state, drying them after their arrival.

The vessels from Nova Scotia and Canada, in general, carry their cargoes home in a green state.

About 300 schooners from Newfoundland resort to the Labrador coast every season, during which they usually make two voyages. When they first return from the coast, they take home a cargo of dry fish: but on the second return voyage, a considerable portion of the fish is in a "green" or pickled state, and is dried at Newfoundland.

The Labrador coast is indented every where with excellent Harbors, which have been frequented for a very long period. From the security of these Harbors, and the general certainty of an ample supply of fish, this coast is preferred by many Fishermen to any other fishing Station within the Gulf.

The average produce of this fishery may be estimated at ten quintals of dry Fish to every ton of the vessels employed; but the Masters of the American schooners are dissatisfied when they fail to catch 12 or 13 quintals per ton. The baits are principally the Capelin and the Herring, both of which abound on that coast. The Herrings taken at Labrador, in the latter part of the season, are considered very fine; yet they are not caught as a chief object of pursuit, but merely as an adjunct to the Cod Fishery.

The export of dried Cod from the Northern Ports of New Brunswick, is chiefly from Caraquet. This export is made almost wholly by the Jersey House of Robin & Co., and Le Boutillier, Brothers, of Paspébiac in Gaspé, and Alexandre & Co., of Shippegan, to Brazil, Spain, Portugal, Sicily, and the Ital-

ian States. The export of Cod from the Gulf of Saint Lawrence to Foreign Markets, is a branch of business which the Merchants of New Brunswick have yet to learn.

The quantity of dried Cod exported to Foreign Countries from the District of Gaspé during the past year (1848), is thus stated from Official Returns:—

	Quintals.
Gaspé Basin,	41,269
New Carlisle,	46,523
<b>Total,</b>	<b>87,792</b>

The whole quantity of dried Cod exported from New Brunswick during the last 8 years, is exceeded by the quantity exported from Gaspé during the year 1848 only, by 5,444 quintals.

There is reason to believe, that a considerable proportion of the Cod exported from New Carlisle, is caught on the south side of the Bay of Chaleur, and about Miscou, the fishing grounds being better near the New Brunswick shores than on the Gaspé side of the Bay.

The quantity of dried Cod exported from Newfoundland in 1845 was 1000,333 quintals, of which one-sixth was the produce of the Fishery on the Labrador Coast.

The whole line of the New Brunswick coast from Bay Verte to Escuminac, around the Bay of Miramichi, and thence along the shores from Tabusintac to Shippegan and Miscou, offers the greatest facility for prosecuting either the in-shore, deep-sea, or Labrador Cod Fishery.—There are numerous Harbors, Creeks, Coves, Lagoons and Inlets on this line of coast, well sheltered, with sufficient water for boats and vessels of every size and description; the Beaches are admirable for drying Fish, and there is abundance of wood for the construction of stages and "fish flakes." The soil too, is generally excellent, and owing to the flatness of the coast, the Shore is every where easy of approach. For the establishment of Fishing Stations by Merchants of capital and skill, or the organization of Fishing Colonies on an extensive scale, this coast offers rare advantages.

The Bay of Chaleur likewise possesses many advantages for the prosecution of the fisheries. The whole Bay may be considered one great harbor, as throughout its entire breadth and extent, there is not a single Rock, Reef or Shoal. During the summer, it literally swarms with fish of every description known on the shores of British North America; and its ancient Indian name of Eketuan Nemachi—the sea of Fish—well denotes its character.

The facilities for Ship Building are very great on the New Brunswick side of this Bay. The Timber is of excellent quality, and noted for its durability, more especially the Larch, which is accounted equal to any in the world. Mr MacGregor, M. P. for Glasgow, late Secretary to the Board of Trade, in one of his Official Reports to that Board says—"The Larch built vessels of the Bay of Chaleur are remarkably durable. A vessel belonging to Robin & Co., which I saw at Paspébiac in 1824, I went on board of again in 1839 in the Port of Messina, where she was then discharging a cargo of dry Cod-fish, to feed the Sicilians. This vessel, then more than thirty years old, was perfectly sound."

The "bultow" mode of fishing for Cod, introduced by the French at Newfoundland, and now being adopted by the English residents there, might very probably be followed with advantage by the Fishermen dwelling on the New Brunswick coast.

The "bultow" is described as a long line, with hooks fastened along its whole length at regular distances, by shorter and smaller cords called snoods, which are six feet long, and are placed on the long line 12 feet apart, to prevent the hooks becoming entangled. Near the hooks, these shorter lines or snoods, are formed of separate threads, loosely fastened together to guard against the teeth of the line; and the lines are always laid, or as it is termed "shot" across the tide;

for if the tide runs upon the end of the line, the hooks will become entangled, and the fishing will be lost. These "set lines" have been some time in use on the coast of Cornwall, in England, and the mode is there called "bultow" fishing. A Gentleman connected with the British Fishery Board, has suggested an improvement, in fixing a small piece of cork within about twelve inches of the hook, which will suspend and float the bait, when it will be seen more readily by the Fish. If a bait rests upon the ground, it is sometimes covered with sea weed, and often devoured by Star Fish, Crabs, and Echini.

In a petition from the inhabitants of Bryant's Cove in Newfoundland to the Legislature of that Colony, in 1846, it is stated, that the "bultow" mode of fishing had been introduced in that vicinity in the previous year, at first by a single line, or "fleet" as it is termed, of 100 hooks; and this proved so successful, that before the end of the season, 75 fleets were used, some of them 300 fathoms long. The Petitioners represent, that the set-line will last three years and with care even longer; that the total expense of fitting one out, with a gross of hooks, is only fifty shillings; and that it is not moved during the season, nor taken up, except for overhauling and baiting, until the fish move out into deep water in the Autumn. The Petitioners add that the Fish taken by the "bultow" were larger than those taken by the hand line as also superior in quality; and that it was a common thing during the preceding season for one and a half quintals of Fish to be taken off a gross of hooks in overhauling the line of a morning. It appears that the lines are overhauled and fresh baits placed on the hooks morning and evening; and it is set forth as an advantage of the "bultow," that if the fisherman leaves it properly baited in the morning, it is fishing for him while he is at work in his garden; whereas, by the other mode, if he was not on the ground, he could not expect fish. The Petition then proceeds thus: "Your Petitioners therefore pray your honorable House to cause the following rules, or something like them, to pass into law. As like all new inventions, the set-line, or 'bultow,' has to struggle against many hindrances, from ignorance and bigotry to the old method, yet, as your Petitioners have endeavored to show, the 'bultow' has proved itself, what may be fully termed, 'THE POOR MAN'S FRIEND.'"

Besides Cod, there are several species of Fish of the same genus, caught in the Gulf, in the prosecution of the Cod Fishery. These are—the Haddock (*gadus aeglefinus*)—The Pollack (*gadus pollachus*)—the Hake (*gadus merluccius*)—and the Torsk or Tusk (*gadus brosme*). These Fish are cured in the same manner as Cod, to which, however they are inferior. They are known commercially as "Scale Fish," and on the average they sell at about two thirds the price of Cod.

A larger description of Pollack is also taken in the Gulf known as *gadus carbo-narius*—the "Sey Fish" of Norway, or "Coal Fish," as it is frequently called, from its black color. This fish is said to yield elsewhere *ichthyocolla*, or isinglass; it is much more elegantly shaped than the common Pollack, and some times weighs twenty pounds, or even more. Sir Richard Bonnycastle, in his work on Newfoundland, says, the best specimens he ever saw of this Fish, were taken in the Bay of Chaleur.

The Cod-fishers in the Gulf often take the large flat-fish, known as the Halibut (*hippoglossus vulgurus*) or *stetan* of Coveer, which sometimes attains the weight of three hundred pounds. The flesh tho' white and firm, is dry, and the muscular fibre coarse. These fish are cut in slices and pickled in barrels, in which state they sell at half the price of the best herrings.

INSTRUCTION.—Wise men are instructed by reason; men of less understanding by experience; the most ignorant by necessity; and beasts by nature.—Cicero.