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THE FISHERIES.

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The whole of the Fish should be carefully shaken out from each successive part of the Net, as it is taken into the boat. If this is not done, the Herrings are liable to be much jerked about with every pull the net receives whilst in the boat, and so they are stripped, bruised, torn and broken, and become soft and more or less tainted; and consequently they are thus, even before cured, rendered to a great extent unmarketable, whilst Herrings immediately shaken from the net, in the manner enjoined in this Report—being alive at the time, fall easily from the Meshes, into the bottom of the boat, where they remain in a beautiful state, with every scale adhering to them, and continue firm and uninjured until the boat reaches the beach; where they should be immediately and promptly landed. Another precaution would be highly valuable in a hot climate like this, if it could be adopted. If a piece of an old sail were fitted so as to cover the space from the main mast of the boat to the pump, the moment after the Herrings were shaken into it from the nets, and made fast over each gunnel, so as not to interfere with the management of the boat, either in sailing or rowing, the fish would be kept from all risk of suffering from the sun, and if a boat-hook or boom were placed fore and aft under it, they would be protected both from rain and sea-water, until ready for delivery. These precautions would not only preserve the fish in prime condition till the curing process commenced, but the boats crew would find their account, in attending to them from the great saving of time and labour, which would thus be secured to them on their landing.

FISH CURERS.

It is the Fish Curers' business, to see that the receiving Boxes and Tubs have proper awnings over them, and likewise that the Barrels when packed are properly covered and protected from the sun and rain; as much of the good or bad character of cured Herrings will depend upon the attention which may be paid by Curers to the injunctions now submitted; for the neglect of them may, and probably will, give an incurable taint to the Fish. The sooner salt is applied the better, as it secures the adhesion of the scales, so important to the after appearance of the Fish. For this purpose salt should be sprinkled over them as they are emptied in successive portions into the receiving or gutting box. All Herrings to be properly saved and fitted for market, should be gutted, cured and packed, on the day they are caught. If this really cannot be accomplished, they ought to be cured as gutted Herrings. They may however be cured as ungutted Herrings, or made into Red Herrings.

GUTTERS.

Gutting and Packing also, should commence immediately after the first Fish are delivered. A most important matter is to see that the Herrings are properly picked, and assorted into Maties, Full Fish, and Spent Fish; and this should be done as the gutting goes on, by having baskets or tubs for each particular sort, and to prevent all after mistake, the barrels into which these several sorts of fish are separately packed, should be immediately and severally marked M. F. or S.

Great care should be taken by Gutters and Packers to remove all fish which have lost their heads, or which have been broken, bruised, or torn in the bellies, so that they may be packed separately. Bad gutting, and tearing the bellies of the fish often happen from the knives being too blunt. To prevent this the gutting knives should be collected and delivered to a Cooper every evening, who should have the particular duty of seeing them all carefully sharpened on a smooth stone, and returned to the gutters in the morning. Due attention to this will be likely to produce neater gutting, the bones will be cut and not left exposed, and the fish will not present that rugged appearance which so often disfigures them. The orifice left at the top of the belly of the fish should be as small as possible, and particular attention should be paid that the breast be not lacerated or torn down, so as to leave the bones exposed. The incision with the knife should be made in the throat quite down to the back bone, and the knife turned round with the hand, and drawn upwards under the breast-fins, and not downwards, along the belly of the fish, otherwise the orifice will be made too large, and the Roe or melt will be exposed. The fish must be cleaned not only of the gut, but of the liver stomach and gills, which last being full of blood is known to taint the fish in a short time after it is killed, and the incision of the knife should be made down to the back bone, so as to allow the blood to flow pretty freely from the great blood vessel of the fish, which will tend much to the after preservation of the Herring.

In order to understand the most improved manner of gutting Herrings, or that mode which is now practised in Holland. Let us suppose that the fish is held in the hollow of the left hand, with its belly uppermost, and the head and shoulders projecting about an inch before the fore-finger and thumb. That the gutting knife is held in the right hand, with the forefinger and thumb grasping the blade, to within an inch or so of the point. Let the knife then be plunged into the throat of the Fish, at the side next the right hand, and thrust down so as to touch the back bone, and so forced through to the other side, with the point a little projecting therefrom; and let the forefinger then be turned over the head of the fish, and placed under the point of the knife, and the flat part of the thumb laid on the breast fins or gill

of the fish, and pressed on the broad part of the knife. The entrails are then to be gently started; the gut and gill seized between the knuckles of the fore and middle finger, and a sudden pull given, by which means the crown gut will be left hanging from the body of the fish, while the gills, fore-fins, heart, liver &c. will fall into the hollow of the hand. This is the mode of gutting practised by the Dutch, in which only one pull is required, to bring away every thing that they consider to be necessary, when the operation has been performed in a proper manner. In the British method, the only difference is, that a second and sometimes a third and fourth pull are necessary; because the whole of the intestines including the crown gut, are extracted. It will thus be found that the breast or belly of the fish is most frequently lacerated in the act of removing these parts, and the entrails—owing to the gutters making the pull downwards towards the tail of the fish, instead of making it upwards towards the head; Curers should therefore give the most particular instructions to their gutters to make the pull upwards and not downwards, so as to leave the orifice or cut as small as possible, and to prevent the breast of the fish from being torn.

PACKERS.

The packing of the Fish should be proceeded with as expeditiously as the gutting, and in fact both operations should be carried on at the same time; the usual proportions of persons employed being, two in gutting to one in packing. The moment the first herrings are gutted, the curing process should begin. The proportion of salt to be used must vary according to the season of the year, and the nature of the fish, as well as the market for which it may be destined. The calculation of each Barrel of Herrings may be about five sixteenth of a Barrel of course Spanish Salt; but the parties employed in the cure, should be the best judges of the quantity to be used for the different Markets for which the Herrings may be intended.

The Herrings should then be carried to the Rensing Tub where they receive the first part of the cure, called rensing or roiling, that is working them well to and fro among salt. In performing this operation, the packers should mix a proper quantity of salt among the Fish as they are emptied in the rensing tub; and the Herrings should be turned over continually until a proper proportion shall have adhered to each. When this has been done, a small quantity of salt should be scattered in the bottom of each Barrel, and the Packer should begin by laying the Herrings into the Barrel in regular tiers, each tier being composed of rows laid across the Barrel, taking care to keep the heads of the Fish at each end of the Rows, close to the inside of the staves of the barrel, with their tails inwards, and making up the deficiency in the middle of each row, by laying herrings in the same line, care should be taken to scatter salt in the heads. The head of the herrings should then be placed—these are laid across the heads of the herrings forming the tier, and these Herrings should also receive a sprinkling of salt, which should likewise be thrown into the centre of the tier, the second tier must be packed in the same way, taking care that the Herrings be placed directly across those of the first, and so on alternately; the herrings of each successive tier crossing those of that below it. A proportion of salt should be distributed over each tier; when the barrel is completed a little additional salt should be put on the top tier. The fish in each Barrel should be all of the same kind and quality throughout. The barrels should be filled above the chime of the cask, in which state they are allowed to stand till the following day, or even longer, when by the pinning or shrinking of the herrings from the effect of salt they fall down so much in the barrel, that it requires to be filled up. The moment the barrels are packed, they should be properly covered over to prevent the sun's rays, or rain, from penetrating the fish.

COOPERS.

It is the duty of the Cooper to see that all his barrels, are properly made and of the legal size. It is of the greatest importance that he should ascertain whether they are sufficiently tight for containing the original pickle, because there is no after remedy for the evil effects produced in the fish by its escape.

As already stated, the Cooper in charge should see that the gutters are furnished every morning with sharp knives. He should be careful to strew salt among the Herrings as they are turned into the gutting tubs or boxes—give a general, but strict attention to the gutters, in order to ensure that they do their work properly—see that the herrings are properly sorted, and that all the broken and injured fish are removed, and take care that they are sufficiently and effectually rinsed.—Then he should see that every barrel is seasoned with water and the hoops properly driven before they are given to the Packers. He should likewise keep his eyes over the Packers to see that the tiers of Herrings are regularly laid and salted, and that a cover is placed over every barrel, immediately after it has been completely packed.

After the Herrings have been allowed one, two, or at most three days to pine, the barrels should be filled up with Herrings of the same date, as to capture and cure, and of the same description as those which they contain, care being taken not to pour off much pickle, or unduly to press the fish. The barrels should then be headed up and tightened in the hoops, and laid on their sides; and this always under cover, so as to be shaded from the sun's rays, which are seriously injurious to the fish; and they should be rolled half over every second or third day until they are being packed, which part of the process of cure should be performed within fifteen

days from the capture of the fish. When the pickle has been sufficiently poured off, a handful of salt, if required, should be thrown around the insides of the barrels, and the Herrings should be pressed close to the insides of the casks, and additional fish of the same description and date of cure, should be packed in until the barrel is properly filled, after which it should be flagged, headed and tightened, and the curing marks should be scratched on the side. The barrel may then have its pickle poured in, and be finally bunged up.

REPACKING HERRINGS.

To the purpose of preserving the fish in warm climates, and in order to enable them to be exported, all Herrings should be repacked; and before the repacking commences, 15 days must intervene from the day of their capture and first salting. For this purpose the Herrings should be emptied out of each barrel in which they were originally packed into a large tub or box filled with clean fresh water, where they are washed and freed from all glut; after which they are placed in open baskets to allow the water to escape, and then weighed. The fish are then regularly repacked into the same barrel, and Liverpool great salt should be stewed on each tier as packed until the Barrel is full; the fish are then danted as it is called in Scotland, that is, the head is jumped upon by the Packer; and when the quantity of fish weighed does not fill the barrel, more is added. The barrels are then headed, and tightened, on the quarter of the head end, of the barrel hooped up, and iron binding hoop, one inch in breadth driven on each end, the chime hoops are then nailed, which complete the process of full binding. The barrels are then placed in tiers—each bored in the centre of the bulge—filled with strong pickle, made from clean salt, and bunged. They are then ready for inspection and shipment to any climate. It may be well to remark, that a cooper should be in constant attendance on board of the vessel, during the time Herrings are shipping, to replace hoops, chimes, or any other damage the barrels may have sustained, and to nail the chime hoops, if not previously done. The Masters of vessels should be bound to use slings, and not crane-hooks, for hoisting the barrels on board, and to stow every barrel bung upwards, without the use of a handspike or crowbar.

COD FISH.

The moment this fish is taken out of the water it should be bled, this may be done by the person who is employed in taking it off the Hook. The fish must then be headed, split up and gutted, in doing which the sound should be carefully preserved for cure. It should then have the bone removed, care being taken that it should be cut away to within twenty or twenty-two joints of the tail, not directly across, but by the splitter pointing the knife towards the tail, and cutting the bone through two joints at once, in a sloping direction, so as to leave the appearance of the figure 8. This looks best, and has the advantage, that the fish are not mangled, as they are apt to be when the bone is cut square through one joint. A slight incision should also be made along all the adhering part of the bone, to allow any remaining blood to escape; and the splitter should then drop his fish into clean water. The fish should then be thoroughly washed in the sea from all impurities; but when this cannot so immediately be accomplished, they should be dropped instantly into a large tub or vat full of sea water, where they should be carefully washed, and the water should be poured out of it when it gets foul, and fresh water supplied; care must be taken to remove the black skin that adheres to the caps of the fish. If these operations cannot all be performed on board the fishing craft, immediately after capture, the fish upon being taken off the hook, and immediately bled, which is absolutely essential—should be put into Boxes, or some convenience, to keep them from exposure to the air, and from being trampled on, which would be extremely hurtful to them; but it may be repeated, that the more of the above operations that can be performed immediately after capture, the better. If the salting can be done on board the vessel, it will be of the greatest advantage, as the sooner the fish are in salt, after they are taken out of their native element, the greater is the chance that their cure will be successful. But whether cured at sea or ashore, they ought in no case to be permitted to remain a longer period before being laid in salt, than forty-eight hours.

Some curers think that instead of laying the fish in salt immediately after they are washed, they ought to be left to soak in water for twelve hours, or allowed to remain in a heap for the same period without being salted; this has been done here by many under the impression that it will make the fish when cured in pickle appear thick and plumpy at market, and because the coating of slime found in the skin when the fish comes to be repacked or dried thus becomes thicker and easier removed than if the fish were salted from the washers hand; but the fact is that the swelling of the fish, and the thick coating of slime indicate tainting, and it is therefore obvious that when the fish remain without salt for twelve hours the pickle will just so much, the sooner become sour, so that the fish must thereby be injured. Herrings though a richer fish than Cod, are never soaked in water before salting, or allowed to remain for hours without salt after being gutted, the reverse is the universal practise. In the same manner therefore, the sooner the Cod can be salted after being thoroughly washed the better will the cure and the quality be, and the less salting will be required.

(To be Continued.)