

14.—NEW ENGLAND FISHERIES IN JANUARY, 1886.**By W. A. WILCOX.**

With the New England fishermen January may be called the vacation month of the year. Of the fifteen hundred and odd vessels that during the past year were engaged on the fishing grounds, extending from the Gulf of Mexico along the American coast to distant Greenland and Iceland, only a comparatively small number are engaged during midwinter. The crews can then rest, travel, or engage in such work ashore as can be found. Many of them may be met at the country store or at the fishing station talking about and comparing notes of the previous year and of former years. Or he may be found with pencil and tools drafting and modeling what he expects will be an improvement on that which is now generally known as the finest fishing vessel of the world. Others are away in the far West, sometimes on the Pacific coast, often settling down in new homes and helping to develop the resources of the nation. In some cases he may be found as the country school-teacher or as a village pastor. He easily adapts himself to time and circumstances. Gloucester alone, of all New England ports, actively follows the winter fisheries. During most of the month the weather has been rough and unfavorable for fishing, arrivals few and receipts light, yet in excess of the corresponding month in 1885. On January 8 and 9 another severe storm, although not so long, was nearly, if not quite, as severe as the one of two weeks previous. The following vessels were lost from the fishing fleets: From Gloucester, schooner I. H. Higgins, vessel lost, crew saved; schooner Hyperion, with a crew of 12 men, sailed December 7; schooner Mabel Dillaway, with a crew of 16 men, sailed on December 20, was not seen after December 25. The last two mentioned vessels, with all hands, have been given up, and are supposed to have been lost in the gale of December 25 to 27.

The schooner Gertie Freeman, of Newburyport, was wrecked off New Castle, N. H.; crew saved. Schooner Nimble, of Boston, was lost on the Graves just outside of Boston Harbor.

The schooner Alice M. Gould, of Portland, Me., was wrecked off Jordan's Point, Me.

In addition to the above-mentioned losses to the fishing fleet, many coasting vessels were lost, and nearly all vessels that were exposed received more or less damage.

Probably no other industry carried on in this country shows yearly such a large loss in life and property as the New England fisheries.

Gloucester alone has the sad record, from 1830 to 1882, fifty-two years, of 419 vessels and 2,249 lives, an annual average of 8 vessels and 43 lives.

Fortune Bay, Newfoundland, herring fishery.—The schooner Cecil H. Low, of Gloucester, was the first arrival with a cargo of frozen herring, having sailed from Newfoundland January 15, arrived the 22d, with 400,000 herring. She reports the weather very mild, herring abundant; a large amount taken, but for want of freezing weather thrown away. Other arrivals from there during the month: Schooner Commonwealth, 380,000; Henri N. Wood, 300,000; Electric Light, 400,000; and one British vessel, schooner Annie Robinson, 350,000. The last two proceeded on to New York for a market.

Bay of Fundy herring.—The fleet for frozen herring remained idle during December, waiting for freezing weather and more fish. During the past month the catch has improved, and suitable weather for freezing has enabled the following vessels to load and arrive at Gloucester:

Name of vessel.	Date of arrival.	Number of herring.
Joseph Story	January 5	140,000
Argonaut	January 13	218,000
William H. Foye	January 14	240,000
Goldsmith Maid	January 14	180,000

The arrivals from Fortune Bay and the Bay of Fundy find a ready market for cargoes, which are largely used for fresh bait as well as for food. The price is the same for fish from either place, ranging from 75 cents to \$1.25 per 100 by actual count.

The Ipswich Bay cod fleet have found fish quite plentiful, but have had only a few days of suitable weather for fishing. Vessels engaged during the month: 20 sail with gill-nets, and 25 with trawls. The former have suffered severe losses in the numerous gales, many nets being lost and others being badly damaged. The catch is nearly all sent to the Boston market fresh, being landed at the nearest ports accessible to the railroad. The amount of codfish landed by this fleet of netters during the month at Portsmouth, N. H., was 99,000 pounds, and at Rockport, Mass., was 45,000 pounds.

The Grand Banks halibut vessels arrive with light fares, that find quick sale at good prices. They report much rough weather and high seas, but no gales or severe storms like those off the New England coast and George's Bank.

The new year opened with a dark cloud over the fishing industry. One storm was scarcely over before it was followed by another. The coast was strewed with wrecks, and many lives were lost. In addition to which the agitation of the fisheries question by Congress, and doubts and uncertainty for the future, all had a depressing effect, and little courage was felt to engage in the business for the new year.

With the close of the month a much better feeling is shown; disasters and losses of the past are not thought so irreparable, as long as there is a prospect of some protection being giving the industry by the General Government.

Receipts of fish at Gloucester, Mass., January, 1886.

From--	Fares.	Codfish.	Halibut.	Haddock.	Frozen herring.	Pickled herring.	Oil.
		<i>Pounds.</i>	<i>Pounds.</i>	<i>Pounds.</i>	<i>Count.</i>	<i>Barrels.</i>	<i>Barrels</i>
La Have Bank	5	210,000	2,000				
Grand Banks	14		463,700				
Brown's Bank	3	111,000	11,000				
Banquereau	1		25,000				
Western Bank	1	30,000	6,000				
George's Bank	7	112,000	10,100	5,000			
Eastport, Me.	11				2,531,000		
Fortune Bay, Newfoundland ..	4				1,480,000		
Fortune Bay, English	1				350,000		
New England shore, netters ..	11	40,000					
New England shore, trawlers ..	4	7,000		10,000			
Maine	1					220	
Tiverton, R. I.	1						225
Total	64	510,000	517,800	15,000	4,361,000	220	225

15.—THE FISHERIES OF CANADA IN 1884.*

GENERAL REMARKS ON THE PROVINCES.

Nova Scotia.—The returns show that the fisheries of this Province do not only maintain the improvement of the last few years, but they show a large increase over any former year. While this improvement embraces nearly all kinds of fish, it is most marked in cod, mackerel, herring, salmon, and lobsters.

The encouragement offered by the bounty has largely increased the number of vessels and boats engaged in the deep-sea and shore fisheries.

New Brunswick.—From this Province the returns show a large increase in the yield of its fisheries. A most gratifying feature is the general improvement in the salmon fishery, which extends to almost every district in which this fishery is pursued. Smelt, herring, and lobsters show increased catches. Shad and alewives also share in the general improvement, but the sturgeon fishery shows a large falling off from former years. In some districts the herring fishery was not so productive, while in others it shows a largely increased catch. This is no doubt due to the erratic movements of the schools of this fish, which, while never leaving our coast, change their habitat according to temperature, weather, and the location of their favorite food.

Quebec.—The late date at which the ice left in the spring, and the stormy weather which almost constantly prevailed in the Gulf during

* Extracts from the Annual Report of the Department of Fisheries, Dominion of Canada, for the year 1884.