

## 58.—NEW ENGLAND FISHERIES IN MAY, 1886.

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The month of May has been one of excitement and discouragement to the New England fishermen and all interested in the fishing industry. To those that for any reason desired or were obliged to visit British provincial ports threats of seizure and trouble, doubts, and anxiety, with a lack of knowledge as to just what rights they had, caused much bother and vexation, resulting in the seizure of two vessels.

Codfish had been very plentiful on the Western Bank, and vessels returned from short trips with full fares. On George's Bank a fair catch was made. A short distance off Cape Cod fish of good size and quality have been abundant. In Ipswich Bay the catch of codfish has been more than an average one; the gill-nets were taken up and the season ended on May 3, while last year it ended May 12. The total receipts of codfish at Gloucester from all the fishing grounds were slightly less than for the corresponding month of last year.

Halibut have been scarce. From the Grand and Western Banks vessels arrived with less than half fares. The catch on George's Bank was good, the fish being taken in deep water between George's and Brown's Banks. More vessels have been engaged in the catch of halibut than last season, and the receipts show a small increase over those of May, 1885.

The mackerel catch south of Sandy Hook has proved a failure. The demand for all kinds of fish has been very light, and prices lower than for years. Mackerel have not been seen in any abundance. The spring catch has been a failure and financial loss to nearly all engaged. During the month vessels have daily fitted away for the mackerel fishery, 230 sail being engaged at the close of the month. Most of the time the market has been bare of fresh mackerel, and very few have been cured. On May 1 and 2 a severe storm caused the loss of 17 seine-boats. At the close of the month vessels are widely scattered, a large number of them being off Block Island. Many are returning to home ports to re-fit, not having taken a single mackerel. The first few scattering mackerel caught in the weirs at Cape Cod were taken on May 6; last year it was on May 4. The first catch made in Gloucester Harbor this year was on May 18. On May 14 the first catch was made in the weirs on the Nova Scotia shore; last year it was on May 18. The first arrival at Gloucester with mackerel direct from the fishing grounds was on May 7, being a small lot of 40 barrels that sold for \$4.50 a barrel. The weir catch of mackerel at Monomoy and along Cape Cod has been a failure.

Pollock, averaging 10 to 12 pounds each, have been taken in purse-seines off Chatham, Mass.; but the receipts show a decrease from last year. The Taunton River catch of alewives and shad has been of extra large size and quality, with a large decrease in the amount taken as

compared with that of last year. Bait has not been in great abundance, yet the weirs along the Maine and Massachusetts coasts have been better able to supply the wants of the fishermen at all times than last spring, very little delay being experienced and there being no necessity for any American vessel going into any foreign port for bait.

During the month one vessel was lost, the schooner *Monitor*, of Gloucester, 95.32 tonnage, built in 1884, and, with fixtures, valued at \$10,000. While on a halibut trip she went ashore in the fog at Port May, Newfoundland, on May 6; the crew were saved, all else being a total loss.

The fishing treaty of 1818 with Great Britain and the seizure at obscure ports by the British Provinces of two vessels owned in the United States, the charges being violation of the customs laws, have occasioned much interest. Quite a contrast may be noticed between the action of the Canadian Government and that of the United States in a parallel case. The schooner *Sisters* of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, was seized at Portland, Me., on May 24 for violation of the customs laws; but as no intention of fraud or wrong-doing was shown, the Canadian vessel was soon released. The two vessels belonging to the United States still remain in the hands of the Provincial officials.

The following was the position of the New England fishing fleet during the last week of May :

Position.	Object.	No. of sail.
Grand Banks, lat. 44° to 46°, long. 52° to 54° .....	Codfish .....	160
Grand Banks, lat. 43° to 44°, long. 49° to 51° .....	Halibut .....	40
Western Bank, lat. 44° to 45°, long. 60° to 61° .....	do .....	28
George's and Brown's Banks, lat. 41° to 43°, long. 66° to 68° .....	Cod and halibut .....	225
Off the coast from New Jersey to Cape Cod .....	Mackerel .....	230
Off the eastern coast of New England .....	Ground fishing .....	250
On the way to Iceland or Greenland .....	Halibut .....	8
Total .....		941

*Receipts of fish at Gloucester, Mass., in May, 1886.*

From—	Fares.	Codfish.	Halibut.	Haddock.	Hake.	Pollock.	Mackerel.
		<i>Pounds.</i>	<i>Pounds.</i>	<i>Pounds.</i>	<i>Pounds.</i>	<i>Pounds.</i>	<i>Barrels.</i>
George's Bank .....	133	2, 700, 000	325, 410	6, 000			
Brown's Bank .....	13	285, 000	19, 680				
La Have Bank .....	4	150, 000	1, 800				
Western Bank .....	16	1, 128, 000	100, 100				
Grand Banks .....	34		623, 000				
Nova Scotia, Cape shore ..	1	30, 000					
New England shore .....	23	241, 000	11, 000	25, 000	5, 400	414, 000	
Ipawich Bay, nets .....	5	11, 500					
Off Newfoundland .....	1		8, 000				
Bay of Fundy .....	1	20, 000					
Mackerel trips, shore .....	4						480
Total, May, 1886 .....	235	4, 565, 500	1, 088, 090	31, 000	5, 400	414, 000	480
Total, May, 1885 .....	283	4, 623, 900	908, 050	1, 000	4, 000	693, 000	5, 570

Other receipts in May, 1886: 400 quintals of dried hake.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., June 21, 1886.