

The rails run east to west, so that the sun may be the whole day on the interior of the fish, which is exposed towards the south. The tail of the fish fits into the double lath, and can be turned to right or left, so as to regulate the amount of sunshine on the fish. A moderate sun, with a gentle, dry, northerly breeze, is the best suited for drying fish, with a temperature of from 22° to 25° Centigrade (72° to 77° Fahr.), and under these conditions the fish require three days to be dry enough for the market. A higher temperature is bad for the fish, and it is not possible to dry them in full sunshine in summer, or they melt and rot and fall from their tails. In summer, therefore, it is necessary to shade the fish with straw mats placed across the tops of the poles so as to form a roof. In rainy, foggy weather, which is by no means rare in this part of France, outdoor drying is out of the question, and drying houses have been erected on three or four of the drying grounds, heated by means of hot air or steam, conveyed in pipes round the room, with electric fan ventilators to carry off the damp steamy atmosphere. They have, however, not found much favour, as they do not perform the work nearly so effectively as the sun and fresh air.

The fish cured here are not dried so much as the fish cured in Norway or Newfoundland, as they are not sent such long distances, and it is, of course, of advantage for the fish to lose as little in weight as possible. As it is the fish dried at Bègles lose about 25 per cent. of their weight.

The system of hanging out and taking in the fish is very slow and laborious, but the cod fish drier is very averse to progress, and dislikes any innovation in the mode of preparation carried down from his ancestors. A system of Décauville rails and trucks would economise half the labour and a great deal of time in drying. On the ground I am describing 30 permanent labourers and several women are employed, and extra hands are taken on in busy times.

When dried the fish are packed in casks of 300 kilos. (6 cwts.) for the French West Indies, and in bales of 50 kilos. (1 cwt.) for European markets, and in smaller quantities for home consumption. With regard to sizes of fish, it appears that the demand for size varies, and that sometimes the demand is for small fish, and at others for large, so that the prices vary not with the size, but with the demand for size. The average price for some years for all sizes of fish has been from 55 to 60 fr. (2*l.* 4*s.* to 2*l.* 8*s.*) per metric quintal of about 2 cwts. The system of treating the fish with sulphur or other drugs to make the flesh whiter is little used by the Bordeaux driers, who say that it spoils the fish.

Packing and prices.

As I have shown by the foregoing description, the port of Bordeaux is largely interested in and occupied with the French codfish trade, which the bounties and drawbacks accorded by the French Government exclusively to French vessels, and to the produce of French fisheries transported in French vessels, constitute a monopoly in France and her colonies.

The main object, however, of these bounties, unlike the sugar Bounties.