

*Report on the French Fisheries on the Great Bank of Newfoundland and off Iceland, by Mr. Walter R. Hearn, Her Majesty's Consul at Bordeaux.*

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About the month of June, as one walks along the Bordeaux quays, if the breeze is from across the river, one becomes painfully aware of an odour, not fragrant nor positively offensive, which possibly carries one's thoughts away at once to former scenes among the Lofoten Islands, the coast of Iceland or the banks of Newfoundland. There is no doubt about the smell of salt cod, and on looking to the river, a double row of vessels, some barque, others schooner rigged, is seen moored down the middle of the stream, and from them the city air is filled with the foreign scent. Descriptive

The fishing vessels begin to arrive in June and continue to come until Christmas time. They are not clean, trim looking vessels, but craft that look as if they could stand a great deal of wear and tear, permeated with cold blasts and damp fogs, salt without and salt within, even the sails sodden with salt and sounds. On the deck are piles of dories five or six in each pile, each boat fitting into the other like Indian boxes. There is as a rule one boat for every two men of the crews, which number from twenty to twenty-five on the larger vessels, measuring up to 300 tons. These are the boats which, when on the banks, go away each morning, like ducklings paddling from the mother duck, and, after see-sawing all day on the ocean swell, probably hidden from view of everything by a dismal fog, in imminent danger of being cut in two and sent to the bottom by some unconscious ocean tramp steamer rushing through foggy space, without any vestige remaining afloat or drowning cry heard to tell the tale, return in the evening laden to the thwarts with their hard-earned spoils. Fishing vessels.

The system of fishing employed in these boats is that of bottom lines, with fifteen to twenty hooks on each, so that a single haul if a good one may bring up a dozen good fish. The codfish have, of late years, fallen off in size, and large fish of 12 to 15 lbs. have become scarce, but, on the other hand, the number of fish has increased enormously, but they are of poor size, averaging some 4 to 6 lbs. When the boats have brought back their harvest to their big parent, the fish are beheaded, cut open and gutted, and the major part of the spine extracted. The head is about the only part thrown overboard, but not before the Fishing and preparation on board.