

REMARKS

ON THE

FISHERIES AND THEIR PRODUCE THIS SEASON.

FIRST DIVISION.

MAGDALEN ISLANDS.

SEAL-HUNTING ON THE ICE FROM SCHOONERS.

On the 21st of March, 12 schooners, 15 of which belonged to House Harbor and six to Amherst Harbor, manned by 180 sailors, left the Islands to hunt for seals on the ice in the Gulph. There were, therefore, 4 Schooners less than in 1860, but for all that they brought back more seals, for the Report shows that only 2,434 were taken in 1866, and this year the crews of those 18 Schooners killed 3,210, so that there is an increase of 776 over 1866,—but there is a decrease as compared with 1865. In short, the results of this hunt can only be considered as middling.

It was not because seal were scarce on the ice in the Gulf that this hunt was not more remunerative; but it was the prevalence of unfavorable winds and the difficulty of forcing a passage through the ice and getting to the herds of seals that prevented our fishermen from killing a greater number of them.

SEAL HUNTING ON THE ICE AROUND THE MAGDALEN ISLANDS.

If the crews of the schooners did not succeed very well among the fields of ice in the Gulf, the inhabitants of the Islands, particularly those residing near South-west Cape, Amherst Island, had a rich harvest to gather, for fields of ice covered with herds of young seals grounded near the Islands, and they killed 7,200 with sticks in a few days. This was a great God-send for them, for want was beginning to be felt, and the traders, fearing a bad season, were not willing to advance much to the fishermen, so that nothing short of such a good stroke of fortune was required to restore the credit of the inhabitants of the Magdalen Islands.

These 7,200 seals, added to the 3,210 killed from the schooner, gives a total of 10,410 of these amphibious animals taken this year in the first division. So good a hunt had not been made for a long time, as will be seen by the following table:—

In 1861.....	2,750	seals taken.
“ 1862.....	9,194	“ “
“ 1863.....	3,959	“ “
“ 1864.....	1,622	“ “
“ 1865.....	4,396	“ “
“ 1866.....	2,434	“ “
“ 1867.....	10,410	“ “

As this fishery varies in this way every year, it is easy to understand that its produce is always uncertain, and that everything depends upon the currents and winds that prevail during the hunting season, and their causing, or not causing, ice fields to ground near these Islands.