

SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
SEAL FISHERY OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

THE seal fishery of Newfoundland has now become the most important part of the trade of that colony. Although not so extensive a staple, or so generally followed as the cod fishery, yet, when the capital and time employed, and the almost certain and immediate return for investment are taken into consideration, it is by far the most profitable part of the business of that colony, or perhaps any other part of the British Empire.

A quarter of a century ago, there were only about 50 vessels, varying from 30 to 60 tons burthen, engaged in this branch of trade; but within that period it has been gradually increasing. In the year 1850, the outfit for this fishery from Newfoundland consisted of 229 vessels, of 20,581 tons, employing 7919 men. The number of seals taken was 440,828. According to the Custom-House returns for that year, the total value of skins and oil produced from the seal amounted to L.298,796. In the present year, 1852, the outfit consisted of 367 vessels, of 35,760 tons, employing about 13,000 men. The returns and value of this year's fishery have not yet been ascertained. Although it was a disastrous season, in respect to loss of vessels, yet the catch of seals upon the whole was above an average one, there being from half to three-quarters of a million seals captured.

The vessels engaged in this business are from 75 to 200 tons