

NEWFOUNDLAND CORRESPONDENCE.

ST. JOHN'S, Nfld., August 31, 1871.

HOW THE COD IS UTILISED.

Of all the fishes that swim in the great deep, the cod is the most valuable as a food-producer. Whether we consider the excellence of its flesh, or the immense quantities in which it is procured, the cod is pre-eminent in its usefulness to man. But for its abundance in its encompassing seas, Newfoundland would be almost an uninhabited waste. What the reindeer is to the Laplander, the codfish is to the Newfoundlanders—the main source of subsistence—or as the Irishman said of his whiskey—"mate, drink, washin' and lodgin'." As the Laplander turns to account every particle of the reindeer, so does the Newfoundlanders utilise every "jot and tittle" of the cod. Its fine, flakey flesh, so nutritive and digestible, he salts, bleaches on the "flakes" till the "bloom" or whitish appearance comes out on the dried fish, when it is ready for market. Then he ships it for Britain, Spain, Italy, the West Indies or Brazil; his best customers being Roman Catholic countries, where, on the fast-days appointed by the church, it is largely consumed. In most warm countries, the dried cod enters largely into the food of the people and forms an agreeable and wholesome portion of their diet, where it can be procured. The flesh being thus disposed of, nearly half the fish still remains to be turned to account. The tongues of codfish, when fresh, are fried and esteemed a delicacy at the breakfast-table. They are also salted, and in that state are scarcely inferior when properly cooked. The swimming-bladder or "sounds" are also salted, usually along with the tongues, and are considered a rare treat by a true Newfoundlanders. When a native of Codland removes to Canada or the States, and feels home-longings coming over him at times, he despatches an order for a keg of salted "sounds and tongues" to some friend in Fatherland; and when the precious package arrives, the news is transmitted quickly to all Newfoundlanders within reach: a supper is announced at which the luxury referred to forms the chief dish, and a "feast fit for the gods" is the result. If, along with said keg, a quintal of the best codfish should be sent for winter use, and half a dozen bottles of Newfoundland port-wine, the happiness of the recipient is complete. Visions of the dear old isle fill his soul as the grateful odour of "sounds and tongues" float around his supper-table; and tender memories of home soften his heart after a fish-dinner, washed down with a few glasses of port, such as can be had only in Newfoundland. I may explain that though we do not grow the grape here, we import return-cargoes of genuine port from Lisbon and Oporto; the sea-voyage improves the wine immensely, and when bottled and kept a few winters here the quality is pronounced unequalled. Large quantities of it go to the States and Canada, where it is eagerly sought for by those who are in the secret. From the "sounds" an isinglass may be extracted, not inferior to that yielded by the sturgeon. The gills of the cod are carefully preserved to be employed as bait in fishing. The liver is treated in the manner I described in my last letter, and furnishes an enormous quantity of common oil, which is an excellent substitute for that of the whale, and applicable to all the same purposes. When refined, the cod-liver oil is well known in *materia medica* under the name of *oleum jecoris selli*. It was first used medicinally by Dr. Percival in 1782, for the cure of chronic rheumatism; afterwards by Dr. Bardeley in 1807. It has now become a popular remedy in all the slow-wasting diseases, particularly in scrofulous affections of the joints and bones, and in consumption of the lungs. The roe of the cod is salted and exported to France, where it is used as a ground-bait in the sardine fishery. It is also an article of luxury at the table. The head of the cod, when properly cooked, is an excellent article of food. Our fishermen, however, scorn it as food, but sell it to the farmer, along with the entrails of the fish and the vertebrae, which are taken out before salting. The farmer mixes it with earth and bog, and the result is a most powerful fertilising compost—almost equal to guano, which is spread as top-dressing on the hay-fields, and manures potato and turnip lands. Thus in etherialised and transmuted form, the Newfoundlanders eat cod's heads in his beef, turnips and potatoes, to say nothing of his eggs and pork, which have at times the unmistakable flavour of the cod, as the poultry and swine eagerly devour the offal when they get the opportunity. The essence of cod in this latter shape is the reverse of agreeable, though it is said, in the more distant settlements, the fishermen esteem most highly the pork that has a fishy flavour, an acquired taste, no doubt, like that for olives. Thus no part of the cod goes to waste. At times, we get more of it in these various forms than we care for. It is related of a shrewd Scotchman, in one of the mercantile establishments here, who thought he was fed too exclusively on a fish diet, that he one day gravely propounded to the head of the house the question—"Are we no telt in Scripture that we'll rise a' flesh at the general resurrection?" The reply indicated that the doctrine was unimpeachable, and undoubtedly Scriptural. "Weel, Sir," said Jock, "when it's fish ance, and twice and three times a day, I dinna see how that can be in our case. I fear we'll rise a codfish at the general risin'." The master grinned, took the hint, and less fish and more flesh came to table in consequence. The Norwegians surpass us in one respect, in utilizing the cod—they give the heads, with marine plants, to their cows, for the purpose of producing a greater proportion of milk. The vertebrae, the ribs and the bones in general are given to their cattle by the Icelanders, and by the Kamtschadales to their dogs. These same parts, properly dried, are also employed as fuel in the desolate steppes of the shores of the Icy Sea.

FISH-GUANO.

There is yet another economic purpose for which the codfish are available, but which is yet unthought of here. I refer to the manufacture of fish-guano from fish-offal. The French have invented a process by which the offal of all fish, as well as the coarse fish which are useless for food, can be converted into a fish-powder, nearly as rich as Peruvian guano. There

are several large factories for the manufacture of this fish-guano in France, the most extensive being at Concarneau, between Lorient and Brest, in the Department of Finistère, a fishing village, where the catching and preparation of sardines are carried on. The success of this branch of industry has been great and decisive, and is now placed beyond the possibility of doubt. In the locality in which it is manufactured in France, this fish-guano fetches eight shillings per cwt., and is eagerly sought by the farmers; while the oil, which constitutes about 24 per cent. of the raw fish, is worth three shillings and fourpence per gallon. These figures show that the manufacture must be highly profitable. The establishment at Concarneau, where only six men and ten boys are employed, produces 2,000 tons of manure annually; which, at the rate of three cwt. per statute acre, would suffice to manure 13,000 acres of land, and would represent, at 22 per cent. of dried manure, a fishing of 9,000 or 10,000 tons. The quantity of coal used in the manufacture is about two cwt. to one ton of manure. The French had, for a time, one of these factories in operation at Quirpon, near the Strait of Belle Isle, on the north-east coast of Newfoundland.

A NEW FIELD OF ENTERPRISE.

Were there persons possessed of skill and capital to embark in this manufacture, a new and vast field of enterprise might be opened up in this land of fish. In the smaller and more distant "outports," where there is little or no agriculture, and no one to make use of the fish-offal, hundreds of thousands of tons of it are thrown into the sea, or lost without any utility. All this might be turned to account, to say nothing of the immense quantities of common fish, unfit for food, which are taken and thrown back into the sea. The sources whence the supply of guano is obtained are becoming exhausted; so that, in the future, the manufacture of an artificial guano is likely to be highly remunerative. The worn-out soils of the densely-peopled countries of Europe may come to be renovated by such applications, from the inexhaustible wealth of the ocean. The caplin, which, at a certain season, cover the surface of the ocean around these shores for miles, and crowd the bays in such masses that two men with a small landing-net will fill a boat in a couple of hours, are turned to no account except for bait, and manuring fields and gardens. Enormous quantities of herrings are at times lost for want of proper appliances for curing. These two sources of supply for the material of fish guano might be added to those already named, so that the stock could never fall short.

The codfish is universally known in cold and temperate climates, but its head-quarters appear to be the Banks of Newfoundland. These are 600 miles in length and 200 in breadth, and swarm with Cod as well as multitudes of other fish. The range of the Cod is from Iceland nearly as far South as Gibraltar, but it does not enter the Mediterranean. It is a deep water fish, and rarely enters the shallows, feeding at or near the ground. Marine worms, crustacea, and shelled mollusca form its most usual supply; but it also preys upon the smaller kinds of fish and their fry. It is most voracious, and has been, not undeservedly, called the sea ostrich. Its voracious appetite is a favourable circumstance for the fisherman, who finds little difficulty in taking the fish with almost any bait.

SYNOPSIS OF NEWS—LOSS OF THE CHURCH SHIP "STAR."

For many years the Bishop of the Church of England in Newfoundland has been in the habit of visiting the churches of his widely scattered communion periodically in a yacht, which generous friends, in England, purchased and kept in repair. Many a stormy voyage this little craft has made, and many a hair-breadth escape she has had in beating in and out of the small harbours round over two thousand miles of coast, portions of which are so often enveloped in dense fog, or rendered dangerous by treacherous currents. No man could be more indefatigable in the discharge of the duties of his sacred office than Bishop Field, or more ready to brave all dangers when duty called. The Church Ship that had weathered so many storms has at length been wrecked. On the 18th inst., at Little River, near Burgeo, on the western shore, as the "Star" was beating out of the harbour, she was swept by the wind and current upon some dangerous rocks and sunk in a short time. All on board, including the Conductor Bishop Kelly, were saved, and are now on their way to St. John's. The vessel was insured.

A WRECK.

The Brig "Charles," the property of a Canadian firm, timber-laden, and bound from Quebec to Sligo, was lost at St. Shott's on the 14th inst. Crew saved.

NEW STEAMER.

The S.S. "Tiger" arrived on the 27th inst. from Greenock. She is a new boat built for W. Grieve & Co. and intended to supply the place of the "Wolf," lost last Spring at the Seal fishery.

THE FISHERIES.

The hook-and-line men are now doing well in the shore fishery. The latest news from Labrador continues favourable. Herring had struck in several places, and mackerel had appeared in considerable abundance. There can be little doubt that this will be a prosperous year in Newfoundland. The crops of all kinds are excellent. The value of the exports for 1870 is announced as £6,984,543. The quantity of Codfish exported was 1,164,535 quintals; value, £1,106,368. It is wonderful to think that a country numbering only 146,000 inhabitants can show such a table of exports.

THE "OTTAWA."

The S.S. "Ottawa," of the Allan line, arrived on the 24th inst., in 8 days from Greenock; landed 50 passengers and 250 tons goods, and sailed for Montreal after a stay of 12 hours.

THE WATERING-PLACES OF THE LOWER ST. LAWRENCE.

(Continued.)

It was midnight when the steamer left Tadoussac on her trip up the Saguenay. The boat was filled with passengers, and every available space, box or sofa, which might serve as a resting-place for the night, had been already secured. Some were sitting on chairs with their heads resting against the woodwork of the cabins, while others were in clover, stretched at full length upon a sofa or boxes placed end to end, and

others again were scattered over the floor rolled up like caterpillars. I was about giving up the idea of sleeping that night when an American gentleman kindly offered me the top berth in his stateroom, which was vacant, his wife having got off at Tadoussac. It is almost needless to state that this gentleman had my deepest regards, &c., &c., during the remainder of my trip.

The shrill whistle of the steamer, followed by the clanging of the engine bell and the rustling of the rudder chains, roused me next morning, bright and early. "Well, stranger," said my American friend as I got my two feet on the floor of the cabin, "how did you roost last night?" "Just as at home," I replied. "Well," said he, "I am thankful you were up there and not my wife. She used to insist on sleeping in the top berth. How she climbed up I don't know, but when she was up I could never sleep at night for fear of her coming through; I don't mean on this boat, but on the others, on the way from Toronto."

HA! HA! BAY.

We were at the wharf of Ha! Ha! Bay when I got on deck, which was already filled with passengers and importunate children, who were trying to sell stale strawberries to the tourists. They managed to take in a few passengers, but the others took warning and kept well shy of strawberries. After strolling about on the wharf for a time we were called to breakfast, after which a good number took *cafés* and drove down to the village. The little place appeared to be well built, and the houses neat and comfortable. There were the usual number of gaping rustics at the doors as we drove along—some in a state of semi-nudity, and others who had just risen from their breakfast-table to take a look at us as we swept by.

Ha! Ha! Bay is semicircular in form and the land rises from its margin at first in a gradual manner and then in one sudden elevation. All along the small tablelands, the ground appears to be well cultivated, indeed the land about here is exceedingly rich. The lumbering business is carried on here by Mr. Frie and others.

On our return from the village we stopped at the Parish Church in which service was being celebrated and the Holy Communion administered. All these churches which the traveller meets with in Lower Canada, are usually very well finished as to their exterior, but a great number of them are sadly deficient in either beauty or finish in the interior. It cannot be expected, of course, that they should be so well finished as those of the city, but it appears to me that the first object is to raise the building, and this they do with a view to the future—one generation putting up the walls and roof, while the next finishes it by ornamenting and decorating the inside.

We had scarcely got on board again when the gangways were moved and the steamer placed once more under way on her return trip.

THE SCENERY.

The River Saguenay has been celebrated from the earliest times of discovery for its romantic, wild and magnificent scenery. The truth is the depths of the Saguenay are too striking and grand to be described, and we get very indefinite ideas of its awful gloominess from mere naked details. Moreover, this is especially true of those objects that excite emotion. I may say in brief, however, that when the tourist has seen the first five miles of the Saguenay, he may be said to have seen the whole of it, Capes Eternity and Trinity excepted. I have never felt the need of stronger Saxon than when gazing on these lovely hills, rising one after the other as far as the eye can reach. My ideas of solitude are well realized on beholding the Saguenay.—yet Byron has written—

"To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fall,

To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,

Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,

And mortal foot hath never or rarely been;

To climb the trackless mountain all unseen

With the wild flock that never needs a fold

Alone o'er steep and foaming falls to lean.

This is no solitude; 'tis but to hold

Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores unroll'd."

BLIGHTED HOPES.

As we passed down the river the scene on either side was at first interesting, but as we still kept on the same dull and unchanging shore line presented itself one succession of hills, one ending only to be replaced by another. Tired of this sort of thing, I looked about me to find some one to speak to. I struck up an acquaintance with an elderly gentleman who informed me, after a little preliminary conversation, that he was a retired army officer, and lived some twenty miles out of Toronto. Upon asking him how he liked the Queen City, he replied with much quickness, "Don't speak to me of the place, it has been to me my rock of ruin." "In 18—," continued he, "I belonged to the — Regiment, which was at that time quartered there. There were a great number of young officers like myself in the regiment, unmarried. I, at that time, thought that Toronto was the most hospitable city I had ever been stationed in, and why? We were asked out to dine at this place and that place; we were waylaid on band days, and despite protestation as to dining at mess, we were dragged off to tea with this lady and that lady. Pic-nics and dinners there were no end of invitations to, till it finally became almost a nuisance. Dining at mess was the exception, not the rule. I was perfectly enchanted with the kindness of the inhabitants. When our regiment was ordered away I determined to sell out and settle in Toronto. It was a fatal mistake. From that moment I was no longer the welcome guest at dinners and balls and pic-nics, and from that day I never placed my legs under the table of my former hosts. In disgust I left the city, and now live a few miles out, glad to escape from sad remembrances of former pleasures. It makes me feel tired of life, for

"Non s' ver che sia la morte
Il peggior di tutti i mali;
E un sollievo pei mortali,
Che non stanchi di soffrir."