

Curing the
halibut.

women, who, squatted on their haunches, rapidly clean the fish, removing the larger bones, head, fins and tail, and then cutting it into long flakes. These are next hung on the poles of a wooden framework, where, without salt—by the sun alone, or sometimes aided by a slow fire beneath the erection—they are dried, and eventually packed away in boxes for future use.

Salmon.

There are no rivers of great size on the islands, but many streams large enough to be known as 'salmon rivers' to the Indians. A run of small red-fleshed salmon occurs about the middle of July up some of the larger streams. These answer no doubt to the fish known on the Fraser River as the suckeye, and much prized. They are, however, in inconsiderable numbers, and not much sought after by the Haidas. About the middle of August a larger species begins to arrive in great numbers, and this run sometimes lasts till January. These fish when they first appear and are still in salt-water are fat and in good condition. They soon begin, however, to become hook-billed, lean and pale-fleshed. They ascend even very small streams when these are in flood with the autumn rains, and being easily caught and large, they constitute the great salmon harvest of the Haidas. They are generally either speared in the estuaries of the streams or trapped in fish-wiers made of split sticks, which are ranged across the brooks. The various 'rivers' are the property of the several families or subdivisions of the tribes, and at the salmon fishing season the inhabitants are scattered from the main villages; each little party camped or living in temporary houses of slight construction in the vicinity of the streams they own.

Other fishes.

It is scarcely necessary to particularize at length the other species of fish used as food, comprising all those abundant in the vicinity of the islands. Trout, herring, flounder, rock-cod, &c., constitute minor items in the dietary. The mackerel and cod are found, but not specially sought after by the Indians, and it is not yet known whether at certain seasons and localities they may be sufficiently abundant to attract commercial enterprise. The spawn of the herring is collected on spruce boughs placed at low water on the spawning grounds, dried and stored away in a manner exactly similar to that practised by most of the coast Indians. The pollock is found on the western coast. It is generally caught in deep water with hook and line, and owing to its fatness is much prized. The Haidas of Gold Harbour or Port Kuper make an annual business of catching these fish in the latter part of the summer. They extract the oil from them by boiling in large wooden boxes with hot stones, and then skimming it from the surface. The oil is carefully stored away, and used as a condiment to dried fish or berries, instead of the oolachen grease, which by this tribe of Haidas is not much in request.

Pollock.