

GUTTERS.

Gutting, and packing also, should commence immediately after the first cran is delivered; but this practice is too much neglected, particularly on days when the fishing has been partial, or when the state of the tide may have occasioned an irregular delivery. Although a number of Gutters are in attendance, they do not begin until such a quantity of fish is delivered as will give constant employment to all. Thus unnecessary delay, exposure, and deterioration of the fish take place; all which might be obviated on such days, and the parties satisfied, by dividing the payment, for the whole number of barrels gutted and packed, equally among all. A most important matter is, to see that the Herrings are properly picked and assorted into Maties, Full-Fish, and Spent-Fish; and this should be done as the gutting goes on, by having baskets or tubs for each particular sort; and to prevent all after mistake, the barrels into which these several sorts of fish are separately packed, should be immediately, and severally, marked by means of a marking iron, with respective letters, M ———. F ———, or S ———.

Great care should be taken by Gutters and Packers to remove all fish which have lost their heads, or which have been broken, bruised, or torn, in the bellies, so that they may be packed separately.

Bad gutting, and tearing the bellies of the fish, often arises from the knives being blunt. To prevent this, the gutting knives should be collected, and delivered to one of the Coopers every evening, who should have the particular duty of seeing them all carefully sharpened on a smooth stone, and returned to the Gutters in the morning. Due attention to this will be likely to produce neater gutting; the bones will be cut and not left exposed; and the fish will not present that ragged appearance which so often disfigures them. Whether the fish are gutted for continental sale or for exportation out of Europe, the orifice left at the top of the belly of the fish should be as small as possible, and particular attention should be paid that the breast be not lacerated or torn down, so as to leave the bones exposed. The incision with the knife should be made in the throat quite down to the back bone, and the knife turned round with the hand, and drawn upwards under the breast-fins, and not