

a sign that the spring herring are rising from the depths of the ocean, and may soon be looked for near land. Their actual approach is heralded by the shrill cry of the immense flock of sea fowls, and the spouting of the numerous whales which eagerly pursue the shoals and prey upon them.

The best fishings now commence in the month of January, and end towards the close of the month of March. The fishermen, with some show of reason, affirm that they are best when the moon is on the increase. The fishings began, this year, early in January, but during nearly the whole of this month, the weather was so tempestuous that it was both difficult and dangerous for the boats and craft to put out to sea; the fishings, in consequence, were greatly impeded, and many accidents occurred, twenty men lost their lives by drowning. On the 17th of the month, the first large shoals appeared, but the weather continued so boisterous that the use of trawls or seines was, to a great extent, prevented, and the most fish were taken by drift-nets.

The most extensive fishings in the southern district (which, in the latter years, have been at Rovær) took place this year on the south side of Karmoen, on the north side they were insignificant. The chief resort of the fish, however, was at Kinn, in the northern district; they did not seek smooth water, nor enter the sounds and smaller Fjords in any quantity, but wherever any considerable fishings did take place, the men had a hard task to empty their overflowing nets and dispose of their produce in time for the next day's labours. The fishings at Kinn only lasted from the 11th to the 14th February, but 2,000 boats and 15,000 men engaged in them, and 200,000 barrels of fish, or more than one-fourth of the total catch of spring herring, were caught in this short time.

As a proof of how profitable the fishings can be at times, I will mention that, at Skudesnæs, several boats earned as much as \$700 each, and that six boat gangs from Lister netted about \$1000 a piece (£224.) At the Hviting Islands the shoals were so thick that a boat fished 183 cwt. in one day; and in another place so large a shoal appeared that after 1000 tons of fish had been taken, no sensible diminution in its extent could be perceived, and the impression is that the shoals were larger this year than usual, a fact which seems borne out by the unusually large number of whales and sea-birds that visited the coast.

The total quantity of herrings fished was fully 750,000 barrels, of which 600,000 were salted for exportation; the remainder represents the home consumption. The barrel contains about 224 lbs. English; the catch, therefore in weight is equal to 75,000 tons.

The proximity of the fishings to the principal salteries greatly facilitated the immediate curing of the fish, and it is expected that this year's produce will be of a superior quality. It is now, I believe, generally admitted that the cure of the Norwegian herring is excellent, and that careful sorting and packing have given it a better name on the foreign markets than it formerly had; but in many parts of the country the curing is still carelessly done; the fish are good enough in quality, but they are suffered to lie too long in heaps, and the full barrels are often left open, exposed to the action of the weather.

The Government inspectors have endeavored to replace the old system of counting the fish by measuring, and suitable appliances for the purpose were, this year, placed at the different stations. The herrings are now counted as they are taken out of the nets, and are sold to the buyers, (who follow the fishing boats,) at the rate of 480 fish to the barrel.

The average price paid at the fishing grounds was 10 to 11 marks per barrel of herrings, (9s. to 10s.,) for drift net fish; but in exposed situations, where the buyers' craft could not keep the sea for want of harbours, the price fell as low as 4 to 6 marks (3s. 5d. to 5s. 5d.) The increased competition and the use of the telegraph tended this year to equalize prices at all the stations.

The result of the fishery is unusually good; the catch was very nearly the largest ever taken, and the price obtained very remunerative. If we take the total quantity fished, viz. 750,000 barrels, at an average price of \$2, we obtain a sum of 1½ millions of dollars as the earnings of the fishermen. The profits of the speculators, who again sell the fish to the salters, and those of these latter and of the numerous hands employed on the shore in its further preparation, may be estimated at another half million, making two millions of dollars as the value of the herrings taken this year, before their appearance on the market as an article of export. Their value, a few months later, at the Baltic ports, has been between four and five dollars the barrel; therefore, if we take the quantity as likely to be