

general, by increasing the Factories in Foreign Countries, and by promoting the Consumption of our Manufactures.

And forasmuch as the Fishing Ships required more Hands than were barely necessary to navigate them, the Masters and Owners constantly bred up many Servants and others unacquainted with the Sea, by which Method the Charge of the Voyage was lessened, and the Number of Seamen for the Service of the Crown and Kingdom was wonderfully increased; and to excite their Industry, as well as to reward their Labour, instead of allowing them Wages by the Month or Voyage, according to the present Practice of most of the Fishing Towns, every One had a certain Share or Shares in the Fish and Oil that was taken and made during the Voyage; and upon their Return the whole Cargo was sold, and the Proceed divided, Two Thirds to the Owners, and One Third to the Ship's Company, in such Proportions as were agreed on, which made it their Interest to attend diligently to their Employment, and raised an Emulation among them to outvie one another.

The First Account of this Fishery that we have met with is from Mr. Anthony Parkhurst; who relates, that in the Year 1574 Thirty English Ships were employed in fishing at Newfoundland, and that in 1578 their Number was augmented to Fifty Sail.

The succeeding War with Spain checked the Increase of the Fishery for some Years; but after the Peace was concluded in 1604 it flourished exceedingly. Afterwards, in the Year 1615, Captain Richard Whitburn, who was sent to Newfoundland with a Commission from the Court of Admiralty to enquire into the Disorders and Abuses committed on that Coast, reported, that 250 Ships belonging to this Kingdom were engaged in the Fishery, which he computed, One with another, at 60 Tons and 20 Mariners, and that each Ship had taken 120,000 Fish, and made Five Tons of Train Oil.

In all 15,000 Tons of Shipping,  
5,000 Seamen, and  
1,250 Fishing Boats.

Which encouraged the Merchants of London and Bristol, in 1610, to solicit a Grant, which they obtained from his Majesty King James the First, for a considerable Part of Newfoundland, in order to settle Colonies, that by their Assistance they might be enabled to share the Advantages of the Fishery with the Western Adventurers: But after they had expended large Sums to no Purpose, they quitted their Design, being convinced that the Country was not capable of subsisting English Colonies; and if it had, that the Charge of supporting and governing them was too great to be borne by a Fishery.

However, as some of the looser Sort, both of the Planters and Mariners, remained in the Country, because they vainly imagined that they could not be impeached there for such Injuries and Wrongs as they had committed, and were supplied with Rum, strong Liquors, and Tobacco from New England and other Parts, they retailed them, contrary to the Rules of the Fishery, among the Seamen; whereupon Idleness and Debauchery soon prevailed, and increased to that Degree, that at last the Masters and Owners of the Ships were