

present century, an uninterrupted and extensive fishery has been regularly prosecuted on the coast of Norway.

It has been stated by many persons, whose arguments have been numerous and well-supported, that the herring caught on the Norway coast was identical with that fished in the Swedish waters; but facts appear to contradict this assertion. It is certain that the large fishings in Norway have always taken place in the months of January, February and March, while those of Sweden have as invariably been carried on in October, November and December. The induction, therefore, would be that the form of the fish was different, and that it had a different spawning time, and was quite local to the shores of the Cattegat.

It might be interesting to investigate more closely the history of the herring fisheries of this country; but fear of being led into too much detail impels me to curtail the subject, and to proceed to describe them as they are at present carried on, and give their practical results for the current year.

The coast between the Lindsnæs (the Naze) and Stat, lat 62° 10' is the chief home of the herring. To the east of the Naze it has only occasionally shown itself, in the year 1760 and 1833; on the other hand, a considerable fishery was formerly carried on to the north of Stat, in the years 1736 and 1756; but since the momentous appearance of the large shoals in 1808 these fishings have fallen off. In the present century the most extensive fishings have been and are still carried on to the south of Bergen, round the island of Karm (Karmoen) from Skudsnæs, on both sides of the island, to Osnægavlen and the adjacent islets Fæs and Rovær; and on the mainland, from Haugesund, past Sletten, to Tjernagel; and along the south-eastern and western sides of Boumel island, (*Bommeloen*.) from *Baarlandsvaag* to *Hiskeu*, which range includes *Espevær*, also one of the best fishing grounds.

Although the fishings on this long range of coast have been abundant during the greater part of the present century, the fish have been capricious in their appearance at the different points along the coast, appearing in some years in large shoals at one spot, and totally abandoning others, which, for years, had been regularly visited. This uncertainty in the wanderings of the fish doubtless renders the result of the year's take equally uncertain; but, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that, were their habits less erratic, too great a number of boats and nets might congregate at one spot, and not only render the fishings difficult and dangerous, but still worse, impede the spawning of the fish, and probably frighten them away, in search of quieter localities. The impression in this country is, that the future permanency of the fishings depends in some measure upon ignorance of their movements.

Explanations have not been wanting as to the capriciousness of their migrations, only one of which I will mention, as appearing to me less imaginative than the others—and that is, the herring shun the places where the year previously large fishings have taken place, because large quantities of dead fish fall to the bottom and infect the water.

Instances are given where, in great shoals, masses of dead herring have sunk to the bottom, and where for many years afterwards, no shoals have reappeared. One place in particular, near Gatten, south-west of Bergen, is pointed out, where, one year, between 20,000 and 30,000 herring died from want of room for the shoal, and at which spot no fish have since been seen.

The real cause however, has yet to be discovered, and more probably it will be found to be in close connection with occult submarine agencies, with the abundance or scarcity of food, and with the storms and currents affecting the ocean.

The fishing population on the coast of Norway have a belief in certain "sights" or "warnings," according to which they predict the good or bad results of the next year's fishery, as well as the places where the shoals may be expected; for instance, the appearance of the "autumn whale" in large numbers augurs an abundant fishery in the following spring, and that the fish may be looked for in the places where the whales have been seen; the appearance likewise along the coast of large floating masses of slimy microscopical animalcula are supposed to indicate a plentiful fishery.

The only reliable warning, however, of the near approach of the shoals, is the appearance of a small herring, called by the natives "*strasild*," (*straw-herring*.) which is fished off the coast all the year round; when this shows itself in more than usual quantity, it is