

These nets are ingeniously contrived, so that when a fish is in them his own struggles loosen a little stick which keeps the mouth of the net open while empty, but which, when the net is full, immediately draws it together like a purse with the weight of the salmon and effectually secures the prey.

The salmon taken during this period of the year is split open and dried in the sun for their winter's supply. I have never seen salt made use of by any tribe of Indians for the purpose of preserving food, and they all evince the greatest dislike to salt meat.

I may here mention a curious fact respecting the salmon of the Columbia river; they have never been known to rise to a fly, although it has been frequently tried by gentlemen of the Hudson's Bay Company, with the very best tackle. The salmon go up the river as far as they possibly can and into all its tributary streams in myriads; it is, however, a well known fact that after spawning they never return to the sea, but all die in the river; the Columbia is hardly ever free from gill nets, and no salmon has ever been taken returning, and in the fall, wherever still water occurs, the whole place is tainted by their putrid bodies floating in immense masses. I have been obliged to travel through a whole night trying to find an encampment which would be free from their disgusting effluvia.

The Chinooks also catch a considerable number of sturgeon, which here attain to an enormous size, weighing from four to six cwt.; this is done by means of a long-jointed spear handle 70 or 80 feet in length, fitted into but not actually fastened to a barbed spear-head, to which is attached a line, with this they feel along the bottom of the river, where the sturgeon are found lying at the spawning season; upon feeling the fish the barbed spear is driven in and the handle withdrawn. The fish is then gradually drawn in by the line, which being very long allows the sturgeon room to waste his great strength so that he can with safety be taken into the canoe or towed ashore.

At the mouth of the river a very small fish, about the size of our Sardines, is caught in immense numbers, it is called there Uhlékun, and is much prized on account of its delicacy and extraordinary fatness. When dried this fish will burn from one end to the other with a clear steady light like a candle. The Uhlékuns are caught with astonishing rapidity by means of an instrument about 7 feet long, the handle is about 3 feet, into which is fixed a curved wooden blade about 4 feet, something the shape of a sabre, with the edge at the back. In this edge, at the distance of an inch and a-half, are inserted sharp bone teeth about an inch long, the Indian standing in the canoe draws this edgeways with both hands, holding it like a paddle, rapidly through the dense schools of fish, which are so thick that almost every tooth will strike a fish. One knock across the thwarts safely deposits them in the bottom of the canoe. This is done with such rapidity that they will not use nets for this description of fishing.

There are few whales now caught on the coast, but the Indians are most enthusiastic in the hunt. Upon a whale being seen blowing in the offing they rush down to their large canoes and push off, with 10 or 12 men in each; each canoe is furnished with a number of strong seal skin bags filled with air, and made with great care and skill, capable of containing about 10 gallons each, to each bag is attached a barbed spear-head by a strong string about 8 or 9 feet long, and in the socket of the spear-head is fitted a handle 5 or 6 feet in length. Upon coming up with the whale the barbed heads with the bags attached are driven into the whale and the handles withdrawn. The attack is continually renewed until the whale is no longer able to sink from the buoyancy of the bags, when

he is despatched and towed ashore. The blubber of the whale is much prized amongst them, and is cut into stripes about 2 feet long and 4 inches wide and eaten generally by them with their dried fish.

Clams and oysters are very abundant, and seals, wild ducks and geese are taken in great plenty, but their fishing is so productive that they subsist with very little labour.

They are also very fond of herrings' roe, which they collect in the following manner:—They sink cedar branches to the bottom of the river, in shallow places, by placing upon them a few heavy stones, taking care not to cover the green foliage, as the fish prefer spawning on anything green, and they literally cover all the branches by next morning with spawn. The Indians wash this off in their water-proof baskets, to the bottom of which it sinks; this is squeezed by the hand into little balls and then dried, and is very palatable.

The only vegetables in use amongst them are the Camas and Wappattoo. The Camas is a bulbous root much resembling the onion in outward appearance but is more like the potato when cooked and is very good eating. The Wappattoo is somewhat similar but larger and not so dry or delicate in its flavour. They are found in immense quantities in the plains in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver, and in the spring of the year present a most curious and beautiful appearance, the whole surface presenting an uninterrupted sheet of bright ultramarine blue from the innumerable blossoms of these plants. They are cooked by digging a hole in the ground, then putting down a layer of hot stones, covering them with dry grass, on which the roots are placed; they are then covered with a layer of grass, and on the top of this they place earth, with a small hole perforated through the earth and grass down to the vegetables. Into this they pour water, which, reaching the hot stones, forms sufficient steam to completely cook the roots in a short time, the hole being immediately stopped up after the introduction of the water. They often adopt the same ingenious process for cooking their fish, meat, and game.

There is another article of food made use of amongst them, which from its disgusting nature I should have been tempted to omit were it not a peculiarly characteristic trait of the Chinook Indian, both from its extraordinary character, and its use being confined solely to this tribe; it is, however, regarded only as a luxury and not as a general article of food. The whites have given it the name of Chinook Olives, and it is prepared as follows:—About a bushel of acorns are placed in a hole dug for the purpose close to the entrance of the lodge or hut, and covered over with a thin layer of grass, on top of which is laid about half a foot of earth; every member of the family henceforth regards this hole as the special place of deposit for their urine, which is on no occasion to be diverted from its legitimate receptacle, even should a member of the family be sick and unable to reach it for this purpose the fluid is carefully collected and carried thither. However disgusting such an odoriferous preparation would be to people in civilized life the product is regarded by them as the greatest of all delicacies; so great indeed is the fondness they evince for this horrid preparation that even when brought amongst civilized society they still yearn after it and will go any length to obtain it. A gentleman in charge of Fort George had taken to himself a wife, a woman of this tribe, who of course partook with himself of the best food the Fort could furnish; notwithstanding which, when he returned home one day his nostrils were regaled with a stench so nauseating that he at once enquired where she had deposited the Chinook olives, as he knew that nothing else could poison the atmosphere in such a manner.