

to the back bone, so as to allow the blood to flow freely from the great blood-vessel of the fish, which tend much to the after preservation of the herring.

In order to understand the Dutch manner of gutting herrings, we must suppose that the fish is held in the hollow of the left hand, with its belly uppermost, and the head and shoulders projecting about an inch before the fore-finger and thumb; that the gutting-knife is held in the right hand, with the fore-finger and thumb grasping the blade to within an inch or so of the point; let the knife then be plunged into the throat of the fish at the side next the right hand, and thrust down so as to touch the back bone, and so forced through the other side, with the point a little projecting therefrom, and let the fore-finger then be turned over the head of the fish, and placed under the point of the knife, and the flat part of the thumb laid on the breast fins or grip of the fish, and pressed on the broad part of the knife; the entrails are then to be gently started, the gut and gio seized between the knuckles of the fore and middle-fingers, and a sudden pull given, by which means the crown-gut, anatomically called the pyloric appendages, will be left hanging from the body of the fish, while the gills, fore-fins, heart, liver, &c., will fall into the hollow of the hand. This is what is understood to be the mode of gutting practised by the Dutch, in which it is necessary to observe, that only one pull is required to bring away every thing that they consider to be necessary, when the operation has been performed in a proper manner. In the British method, the only difference is, that a second, and sometimes even a third and fourth pull are necessary, because the whole of the intestines, including the crown-gut, are extracted. It will thus be found, that the breast or belly of the fish is most frequently lacerated in the act of removing those parts of the entrails, owing to the gutters making the pull downwards towards the tail of the fish, instead of making it upwards towards the head. Curers should therefore give the most particular instructions to their gutters to make the pull upwards and not downwards, so as to leave the orifice as small as possible, and to prevent the breast of the fish from being torn. That mode of gutting by which the crown-gut is left attached is peculiarly well adapted for the continental market, where it is believed that the crown-gut has a powerful influence in improving the flavor of the fish, and where the appearance of the herring is held to be greatly injured when it has been by chance removed.

PACKERS.

The packing of the fish should be proceeded with as expeditiously as the gutting, and in fact, both operations should be carried on at the same time, the usual proportion of persons employed being two in gutting to one in packing. The moment the first herrings are gutted, the curing process should begin. The proportion of salt to be used must vary according to the season of the year and the nature of the fish, as well as the market for which it may be destined. The Dutch use one barrel of small Spanish or Portuguese salt for sprinkling eleven barrels of herrings, in order that they may be more conveniently handled, and one barrel of great salt for packing seven and a half or eight barrels of herrings for the European market; and if this quantity should be found rather small, an additional plateful of salt is introduced into the middle of the cask to supply the deficiency. The calculation for each barrel of herrings may be about five-sixteenths of a barrel of coarse Spanish salt. It must be observed, however, that whilst