

A great proportion of the herrings imported from Scotland is consumed in the country, being preferred on account of their superior curing; the rest are repacked in Irish barrels of 28 gallons for exportation. Those from the East country, which used to be sold in Ireland so low as 14/ a barrel, are also repacked for exportation to the West-Indies in Irish barrels*.

The Irish have great advantages in the herring fishery. The arrival of the herrings, so precarious upon the extensive west coast of Scotland, is certain on the north-west coast of Ireland; and they swim close to the shore. The fishery is free from restrictions, and the adventurers either fish themselves, or purchase from the fishers, as they find most convenient, whereby they are often enabled to complete their loading in two or three days, and to make several trips during one fishing season, which generally lasts six weeks, or two months. And thus they can obtain a much greater quantity of fish in the same space of time, and also run their cargoes much earlier to a market, than the British fisherman, who is tied down by restrictive laws to lose a great deal of time, and support a very heavy expense, that he may be entitled to the bounty.

The certainty, and great abundance, of herrings have induced many of the fishermen of England and Scotland to prefer the Irish fishing grounds to those of their own coasts. But there is an unneighbourly jealousy upon the subject of the fisheries between the Irish and the Scots, greatly against the true interests of both. There are surely herrings enough in the sea for both: and, if the fishery is wisely and harmoniously conducted, markets may be found, notwithstanding the decline of popery, sufficient to employ the industry of both to great advantage.

Upon the whole, the Irish fishery may be considered now as but in its infancy. But if Nature and the legislature shall continue to favour it, as they have hitherto done, it must undoubtedly in a few years surmount all rivalry, at least in Great Britain, unless an entire new system of fishery laws shall be adopted.

As the fish trade of Ireland was formerly so much connected with that of Sweden, it may be proper here to give some account of the latter. For above twenty years past about 200,000 barrels had been annually cured on the Swedish coast in the neighbourhood of Gottenburgh. The exports from thence to Ireland, which used to be very considerable, were now, as we have just seen, greatly reduced by the improved state of the Irish fishery. Several cargoes of Swedish herrings were sent to St. Eustathius in the years 1779 and 1780, whence they found their way into the various sugar islands. In the French West-

* The legal measure of herring barrels in Britain is 32 gallons; and it appears to be the same in Sweden; but the information respecting their measure varies.