

has, from the earliest times, been the source of riches to the inhabitants of the Scandinavian sea board, and it is especially this spring herring fishery, (so called from the season at which the fish make their appearance off the coast) which has been the most abundant, and given employment to the greatest number of people, and it is therefore, justly considered the most important.

The two other fisheries are of minor importance, and figure but little in the commercial annals of the country as an article of export.

The peculiarities of the summer herring differ, in some respects, from those of the spring herring, both as regards size, appearance, spawning time, and even in the shape of the fins and bone formation; these differences, however, are ascribed to the influence of local circumstances under which they have been developed; and although naturalists have assigned to them different classifications as regards form, they have included them all in the genus "*Clupea harengus*," and consider them to be one and the same with the herring found throughout the North Sea.

I should probably be overstepping the limits of a succinct report of the nature of the present one, were I to endeavour to elucidate the questions as to the causes of the irregular appearance of the herring, and the unaccountable changes in the times and places of its apparition, or to dilate on the theories advanced as to where this fish sojourns during its long absence from the coast.

The solution of these queries is doubtless of importance, from their close connection with the question as to where the fish repair for spawning; but it must be left to science to solve satisfactorily these problems.

The belief was that the home of the fish was in the North Arctic Ocean, whence they issued at stated times to spawn on the shores of the Atlantic and North Sea; but it is now very generally accepted that their home is in the depth of the ocean, in near proximity to the coasts where they spawn, and that their food are the crustacea and small sand cels abounding there.

In common with others of the finny tribes, each kind of herring, impelled by a natural law, seeks, at the spawning time, the spots where it was bred; this operation ended, it returns to its former haunts, which fact explains the appearance near the land of the different kinds of herring, at different times and places. The fry remain for a while stationary near the places where they are hatched, but gradually return to the depths of the ocean, as they increase in size, remaining there until they are mature for procreation, when they again visit the spot where they themselves first came into existence.

Upon the working of this natural law depends the yearly yield of the fishery, and it is not easy to account for the occasional total absence of the fish from their wonted haunts, and their subsequent as sudden re-appearance. This has at times not only been the case on the Norwegian coast, but also on that of Sweden, where the herring suddenly disappeared in 1808, since which time they have never reappeared in any quantity. So large indeed, was the herring fishery in Sweden previous to that date, that in one year upwards of one million of fish were alone used for pressing train oil.

It is a circumstance worthy of note that the same year in which herring disappeared from the Swedish coast, the large fisheries commenced on that of Norway, and yet the Norwegian spring herring is of quite a different form from the fish taken in Sweden.

There have likewise been long periods in the last century during which no herrings were seen on either the Norwegian or Swedish coast.

It is an incontrovertible fact that the herring fishery, from the earliest times, has been a chief source of support and wealth to the inhabitants of Scandinavia. As early as the ninth century we have accounts of successful fishings; and again, about the year 1416, a description of the application of salt as a preservative; in the sixteenth century we are told that as much as 100,000 tons weight of fish were exported from Marstrand (near Gothenburg), and that the herring was so plentiful at Bergen about the middle of the same century that a barrel of the fish cost only about twopence English.

In 1567, the fish disappeared altogether, and it was not until the year 1700 that we have any authentic accounts of an abundant and regular fishery; from this date until 1808, it fluctuated, with longer and shorter interruptions; but since the total disappearance of the fish, as before mentioned, from the coast of Sweden, in the beginning of the