

48.—NOTES ON THE FISHERIES OF GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS.

By S. J. MARTIN.

[From letters to Prof. S. F. Baird.]

THE MACKEREL FISHERY.—There have been ten arrivals from the Gulf of Saint Lawrence bringing 3,490 barrels of salt mackerel. All report mackerel to be plenty in the vicinity of Prince Edward Island, and some of the mackerel catchers are going back to the bay. The large mackerel are scarce on this shore. I do not think mackerel come to the surface much, for the following reason :

Capt. George H. Martin came in last Monday with 130 barrels of mackerel, 120 barrels of which he caught in one day, August 16, on the western part of the Seal Island grounds. At sunrise the mackerel came to the surface as far as the eye could see. He set a small seine and a large one. In one hour after he had taken the 120 barrels, there was not a fish to be seen. He staid on the same ground eleven weeks, when the mackerel again came to the surface and staid half an hour. Some of the vessels got good hauls. This has been the case off Mount Desert, Matinicus, and Isle au Haut. The mackerel are full of red-seed, called by the fishermen "cayenne." When the mackerel are plenty there are also many birds hovering over the water.

PORGIES.—Porgies are plenty now. Nine vessels baited in Salem Harbor. There are two vessels at Salem seining porgies. The weirs at Portsmouth are full of porgies. There are also plenty at Newburyport and Hyannis.

The cod fishermen on the Grand Banks are all coming home with full fares, and they report a plenty of squid at the Grand Banks.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *August 22, 1883.*

MONTHLY SUMMARY.—The amount of fish landed at Gloucester during the month of August was as follows: Eighteen vessels from the Gulf of Saint Lawrence brought 6,184 barrels of salt mackerel; one hundred vessels from the Eastern Shore landed 13,404 barrels of salt mackerel; 305 barrels were caught in traps in the vicinity of Cape Ann; one hundred and eight vessels arrived from Georges Bank with 1,808,000 pounds of salt cod, and 57,000 pounds of fresh halibut; twenty vessels arrived from the Western Bank with 122,000 pounds of salt codfish, and 10,500 pounds of salt halibut; one vessel arrived from Banquereau with 280,000 pounds of salt codfish, and 3,000 pounds of salt halibut; forty-two vessels from the Grand Banks brought 5,665,000 pounds of salt codfish and 61,600 pounds of salt halibut; nineteen vessels from Grand Bank also brought 768,000 pounds of fresh halibut. The shore vessels landed 19,000 pounds of salt pollock, 24,000 pounds

of salt codfish, 100,000 pounds of salt hake, and 1,000 pounds of salt cusk. The small boats landed 20,000 pounds of fresh fish (mixed), 2,000 pounds of fresh codfish, 200,000 pounds of hake, which was sold to split on the wharf. There were landed by the mackerel catchers 2,000 pounds of fresh swordfish, 62 barrels of salt swordfish, and 200 barrels of salt herring. There were caught with seines in the vicinity of Cape Ann 93 barrels of porgies, which were sold fresh for bait. Forty barrels of porgy slivers were sold for mackerel bait to use in the bay. Seventeen thousand quintals of dried hake arrived by freight from Maine. Two hundred and forty barrels of small mackerel were sold to the canning factories.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *August 31, 1883.*

THE MACKEREL FISHERY.—The prospect for this fall looks better. No mackerel are seen in the day-time; they are all taken by night, and on the dark of the moon. Though mackerel can be seen 7 fathoms below the surface, none have been seen in the day-time. They can be seen plainly at night. When the water "fires," the mackerelers say they are easier to catch. On the mackerel grounds there are plenty of squid, which go in large schools. One vessel took 150 barrels at one haul of the seine, and salted 40 barrels of them to bring home. Mackerel are very fat now. Captain McLean told me this morning that he had not seen a school of large mackerel on the surface of the water near the Eastern Shore since the 1st of July, nor has he seen them feeding at the surface this summer. Those taken are full of "red feed." The mackerel lay in large schools 7 to 8 fathoms below the surface. Last Saturday night eight vessels got 150 barrels each, while other vessels near by took none. If the mackerel come to the surface the vessels will do well. Mackerel sold to-day at the high price of 15.50 dollars per barrel.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *September 13, 1883.*

THE MACKEREL FISHERY.—This is improving. Three vessels arrived this morning with 250 barrels each, and they report mackerel plenty. These were taken 30 miles southeast from Isle au Haut. At that point the mackerel came to the surface as far as the eye could see on September 11. They are mixed—one-third large and two-thirds small. The school is working to the westward and some large mackerel have been caught off Boon Island. Some large shad are caught with the mackerel. The schooner W. H. Cross, Captain Foster, set a seine around what was supposed to be a school of mackerel and caught ten barrels of mackerel together with fourteen barrels of large shad. The shad were very large and sold for \$12 a barrel. These shad were taken off Seguin, near the mouth of the Kennebec River. The squid are plenty in the vicinity of the mackerel schools, and annoy the mackerel seiners, for when they catch mackerel in the night sometimes they set their seines around what they suppose to be mackerel and find their seine

full of squid. Small mackerel have been schooling in Boston Bay the past week in large numbers. The red feed is on the surface of the water in Boston Bay, and if the weather is good I think the catch of mackerel will be larger after September than it was last year. High prices rule as follows: extra No. 1, \$23 per barrel; common No. 1, \$19 per barrel; No. 2, \$14 per barrel; No. 3, \$10 per barrel; and No. 4, \$6.50 a barrel.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *September 16, 1883.*

MACKEREL.—During the past week twenty-eight mackerel vessels have landed 6,800 barrels. Most of these were caught off Matinicus, SE. 30 miles. The mackerel are mixed, some schools being all large and some all small. One vessel caught 300 barrels of mackerel four miles from Monhegan. Last year, at this time, most of the mackerel were caught to the westward of Portland. Last Wednesday they were seen schooling as far east as Mount Desert and Grand Manan Bank. They were also plenty in the Bay of Saint Lawrence. The twenty vessels that were at the Bay of Saint Lawrence averaged 200 barrels each. The schooner Edward Webster, Capt. Solomon Jacobs, is bound home with 500 barrels, having been absent five weeks. This is his second fare from the Bay of Saint Lawrence. On the previous trip he brought home 500 barrels, having been gone six weeks. The indications now are that the fall catch will be large. One schooner arrived to-day with 210 barrels of salt mackerel caught 20 miles southeast from Matinicus, having been gone from home eight days. They were large mackerel.

When mackerel come to the surface they come up in different places on the same day. On last Wednesday they came up schooling off Mount Desert, off Matinicus, off Monhegan, on Cashe's Bank, and on Grand Manan Bank—on the same day! The water is quite warm. It was 52° to day, while last year at this time it was 42°.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *September 23, 1883.*

HERRING.—Last Saturday night there were 75 barrels of large spawning herring caught, and last night 60 barrels more. This is ten days earlier than last year. There was none of any amount caught last year until the first week in October. Last year when they came the temperature of the water was 42°. This year it is 52°, and those of this year are larger than last year.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *September 24, 1883.*

MONTHLY SUMMARY.—The amount of fish landed at Gloucester during the month of September, 1883, was as follows: Cod brought from George's Bank, 1,259,000 pounds; halibut from George's Bank, 16,335 pounds; cod from Grand Banks, 640,000 pounds; salt halibut from Grand Bank, 59,200 pounds; cod from Western Bank, 520,000 pounds; salt halibut from Western Bank, 4,750 pounds; fresh halibut from the banks, 507,000 pounds; salt mackerel caught on the Eastern Shore, 20,534 barrels; mackerel from the bay of St. Lawrence, 1,165

barrels; herring, 527 barrels; porgie slivers, 231 barrels; pollock, 67,000 pounds; hake, 260,000 pounds; haddock, 40,000 pounds; swordfish, 11,350 pounds; shad caught in the mackerel seines, 104 barrels; hake, 1,600 quintals; clams, 10 barrels; cod brought from Maine, 400 quintals; mackerel from Canso, Nova Scotia, 80 barrels; salt halibut from Greenland, 390,000 pounds.

MACKEREL MOVEMENTS.—Mackerel are working to the westward. Some vessels have obtained good hauls of mackerel in Ipswich Bay. Last Saturday night a vessel caught 120 barrels of mackerel in Ipswich Bay. They were large mackerel. Mackerel, herring, porgies, and squid are found all in the same locality. One vessel will get 50 barrels of mackerel in a seine, while another alongside will get 50 barrels of herring. Shad are mixed with the mackerel and herring. The porgies school separately. Squid are plenty from Mount Desert to Thatcher's Island.

GLoucester, MASS., *October 3, 1883.*

HERRING.—Herring were plenty in the Gloucester harbor last night. This morning 1,500 barrels of herring were picked out of the nets. There were 65 boats, with 665 nets out for them. Some of the nets touched the bottom, others sank, having so many herring in them. One boat with 8 nets caught 100 barrels. The herring are full of spawn, and are very large. The catch of herring to the eastward has been small, and 25 vessels of the eastern fleet came up and set their nets in our harbor.

MACKEREL.—The mackerel fishermen are doing well. Four came into the harbor yesterday with fresh mackerel. There are four in to-day dressing mackerel. They are anchored 12 miles south of Thatcher's Island, and you can see them from the hill. I saw 25 vessels with jibs down dressing mackerel this morning. Those that have been brought in are one-third large. If the weather holds good I think the mackerel fleet will do well. Mackerel were schooling off Seguin last Thursday. Last year there were not many mackerel caught in the month of October. But the prospect is good now.

COD AND HADDOCK.—The Grand Bank cod fleet has most all returned. The vessels that went to Greenland are all back but one. They only caught half fares, and report rough weather on the Greenland coast this summer. As fast as the Grand Bank fleet comes home they fit out for haddock fishing. There will be a large haddock fleet this winter.

GLoucester, MASS., *October 7, 1883.*