

**203.—THE SEA-FISHERIES OF FRANCE AND ALGIERS.****By BENJAMIN F. PEIXOTTO, U. S. Consul at Lyons.**

[From Reports of the Consuls of the United States on the Commerce, Manufactures, &c., of their Consular Districts, pp. 659-661, inclusive.]

**1.—FISHERIES OF FRANCE.**

In my dispatch No. 281, of December 9, 1882, I gave some account of the sea-fisheries of France for 1881.\* I have now the pleasure to report some additional facts relating to the fisheries of 1882.

**BOATS AND FISHERMEN.**—During the year 1882 the French fisheries employed 22,891 boats, of an aggregate tonnage of 156,287, while 136,799 persons were engaged in fishing.

**VALUE.**—The value of the product caught amounted to \$17,941,878, representing an increase over the product of 1881 of more than \$1,930,000. All the branches of fishing were not equally favored.

**HERRING.**—The catch of herring, for example, which furnishes no small part of the little ports of the Normandy coast from Dunkirk to Havre, suffered seriously from bad weather, a portion of the fishing fleet being dispersed by the tempests. The yield from the herring fisheries reached only 56,250,000 pounds, against 87,750,000 pounds, the capture of 1881, while the merchantable value fell from \$1,737,000 in 1881 to \$1,447,500 in 1882.

**COD.**—The cod fisheries were better; 156 boats left for Newfoundland at the commencement of the season, with an equipment of 5,165 men. They returned with over 40,000,000 pounds of fish, which brought \$1,679,679. In 1881 they captured 39,600,000 pounds, which sold for \$1,505,400.

To Iceland, where the cod is also found, 211 boats, with 3,698 fishermen, were sent. Their capture amounted to 27,000,000 pounds, against about 22,000,000 pounds during the previous year, which realized \$2,895,000.

**SARDINE-FISHERIES.**

Coasting fishing is followed by those who have but slight resources, and who are unable to form connections with commission and forwarding capitalists. These fishermen are aided by their wives and children. Sardines form the principal, if not exclusive, object of their search. For several years they have been compelled to abandon their usual fishing grounds and have recourse to the open sea. Their boats not being

\* Published in Consular Reports, No. 27.

equal to this enterprise, the Government has come to their assistance for the construction of the proper vessels. At several points, and notably at Croisie, a large number of fishermen have vessels of 20 to 25 tons, with which they explore the deeper sea. The past year, however, the fish again approached the shores, enabling the small boats to make considerable capture and of large size.

As a whole, the sardine-fisheries for 1882 were excellent; 512,000,000 sardines were caught, selling for \$3,088,000, an increase of considerably over a million dollars from 1881. It is said, however, that no dependence can be placed upon the continuance of such good luck, and boats of proper and sufficient capacity must be built to explore the open sea.

Coasting fishing was not less prosperous for other varieties. Over 119,000,000 pounds of varied sorts of fish, valued at \$7,500,000, were taken. In fact, it is this product which furnishes the general markets and supplies the popular demand.

#### ARTIFICIAL OYSTER BEDS.

Special mention must be made of oysters, the commerce in which, referred to in my report before mentioned, has continued to largely increase. In 1881, though the yield was greater (374,985,770 oysters), the price obtained was but \$397,918, whereas with the product last year of only 155,761,399 the sum of \$444,514 was realized.

The industry of artificial rearing of oysters continues prosperous. The parks produce largely and yield good profits. The quarter of Teste alone furnished for consumption from the 1st September, 1881, to the 15th June, 1882, upwards of 268,000,000 oysters reared in these beds.

The total shell-fish product of 1882 amounted to 372,841,830, bringing \$310,471. It will be seen that it is the artificial culture which almost exclusively supplies the market.

There are at present 45,464 oyster parks in France, established on public lands, and paying the Government a trifling rental. These parks, or beds, occupy over 46,000 persons, of whom 16,317 are seamen exempt from taxation. They cover an area of over 29,000 acres, and every year an average of 725 acres are developed. It is an industry which requires little capital, and, properly understood, yields regular and certain profit.

#### 2.—FISHERIES OF ALGERIA.

The foregoing remarks relate to France, properly speaking. Her colonies, and particularly Algeria, should not be overlooked in taking account of her fisheries. For the first time, this year the Government has made a report on the Algerian fisheries, from which I deem it of interest to present the following interesting features:

Of fishermen, 4,916, mounting 1,044 boats, were engaged in the Algerian fisheries in 1882. The value of the fish caught amounted to \$784,148, consisting principally of mackerel, thon, allaches, sardines,

and anchovies. Scarcely any mussels or oysters were taken, but shellfish abound plentifully. The total capture exceeded 11,000,000 pounds.

As a general rule, the coast of Algeria yields abundance of fish. Fishing is particularly good in the Gulf of Oran and Arzew, but from these points to Castiglione, a distance of over 1,200 miles, fishing is little followed, for the lack of a market along the sea-coast.

Algiers and its neighborhood is a very important center for fish; so is the Bay of Callo and the town of Phillippeville. At Bone and La Calle there is less animation, but sedentary species are here caught which are not found elsewhere. Coral-fishing is special to Algeria, 40,000 to 45,000 pounds of coral being the annual product. La Calle is the central point of this industry, occupying yearly 160 boats and from 1,200 to 1,300 men. The coral yield of 1882 represented a value of \$190,000.

Coral is obtained by means of a wooden apparatus in the shape of a cross, having in its center a leaden slug or stone for ballast. Nets, the meshes of which are loose, are hung on the bars of the cross and dragged at the bottom of the sea and among the nooks and crevices of the rocks. These nets, winding about the coralline plant, break up or off its branches, which adhere to the meshes. The apparatus is drawn up by the fisherman whenever he thinks it sufficiently laden. There is also a net provided with large iron nails, having thus great force, to break the coral, but this apparatus is prohibited. The *scaphandre*, or cork jacket, is used only in exceptional cases. Algerian fisheries would no doubt become more productive if greater facilities were afforded for communication with the interior.

I cannot close without again urging the importance of encouraging our home fisheries. It is an industry of twofold importance. It is followed by a class of brave and hardy men, from which, as in other countries, may be recruited our best sailors. In the near future, when our merchant marine will once more assume the importance it possessed before the late war, this class may give us the force we shall then require, and American sailors sail American ships once more.

UNITED STATES CONSULATE, LYONS, *October 24, 1883.*

**204.—DISCUSSION AT THE DRESDEN CONFERENCE IN 1883, OF THE KINDS OF FISH EGGS TO BE OBTAINED FROM THE UNITED STATES.**

In general the conference agreed that the experiments in acclimatizing American fish have been accompanied by many valuable results.

Mr. Haaek and Mr. Schuster did not strongly favor the California salmon (*Salmo quinnat*), because experience had taught them that at

\* *Die Fischereiconferenz in Dresden 1883. E. Einführung ausländischer Fischarten.* From the *Bayerische Fischerei-Zeitung*, vol. ix, No. 13, Munich, May 16, 1884. Translated from the German by HERMAN JACOBSON.