

**119.—A MAN KILLED BY A SWORDFISH.\*****By W. A. WILCOX.**

[From a letter to Prof. S. F. Baird.]

The schooner *Venus* is a small vessel of about 12 tons, owned and commanded by Franklin D. Langsford, of Lanesville, Mass., with a crew of three men, engaged in the general fisheries off the coast of Massachusetts. On Monday morning, August 9, Captain Langsford sailed from home in pursuit of swordfish. About 11 a. m., when 8 miles northeast from Halibut Point, in Ipswich Bay, a fish was seen. The captain, with one man, taking a dory, gave chase, and soon harpooned the fish, throwing over a buoy with a line attached to the harpoon, after which the fish was left and they returned to the vessel for dinner. About an hour later the captain, with one man, again took his dory and went out to secure the fish. Picking up the buoy, Captain Langsford took hold of the line, pulling his boat toward the swordfish, which was quite large and not badly wounded. The line was taut as the boat slowly neared the fish, which the captain intended to lance and thus kill it. When near the fish, but too far away to reach it with the lance, it quickly turned and rushed at and under the boat, thrusting its sword up through the bottom of the boat 23 inches. As the fish turned and rushed toward the boat the line was suddenly slacked, causing the captain to fall over on his back; and while he was in the act of rising the sword came piercing through the boat and into his body. At this time another swordfish was in sight near by, and the captain, excited and anxious to secure both, raised himself up, not knowing that he was wounded. Seeing the sword, he seized it, exclaiming, "We've got *him*, any way!" He lay in the bottom of the dory, holding fast to the sword, until his vessel came alongside, while the fish, being under the boat, could not be reached. Soon the captain said, "I think I am hurt, and quite badly." When the vessel arrived he went on board, took a few steps, and fell, never rising again. The boat and fish were soon hoisted on board, when the sword was chopped off to free the boat, and the fish was killed on the deck of the vessel. The fish weighed 245 pounds after its head and tail were cut off and the viscera removed; when alive it weighed something over 300 pounds. Captain Langsford survived the injury about three days, dying on Thursday, August 12, of peritonitis. The certificate of Dr. Garland written on the 16th of August is appended, giving some further particulars, and the sword has been deposited in the U. S. National Museum.

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\*A preliminary notice of this appeared among the notes of this Bulletin at page 411.

## CERTIFICATE OF DR. JOSEPH GARLAND.

This may certify that I was called to visit Franklin D. Langsford, of Lanesville, in Gloucester, on August 12, in consultation with Dr. Levi Saunders, who was in attendance upon the said Langsford, on account of a wound inflicted upon his body by a swordfish on the 9th instant, said swordfish having driven its sword through the bottom of the fishing-dory he was in to the length of 23 inches, penetrating the body of Langsford at the right of the os coccyx and entering about 7 inches, by the side of the rectum, into the pelvic cavity; that said Langsford was dying, and did die, in my presence, of peritonitis, having survived the injury about three days; that the sword accompanying this certificate is the veritable sword that occasioned the accident, and is to be sent to the National Museum, at Washington.

GLOUCESTER, MASS., *October 14, 1886.*

**120.—NOTES ON THE NEW ENGLAND FISHERIES IN NOVEMBER, 1886.**

**By W. A. WILCOX.**

During the month the fishermen have used their best exertions to make up in a measure for an unprofitable season. The result has not been satisfactory, as the mackerel, pollock, and shore-herring catch all proved more or less a failure, while the codfish catch showed a slight gain over that of the corresponding month of last year.

The amount of mackerel landed by the New England fleet at the leading ports was the smallest of any November for years, namely :

Locality.	Fares.	Barrels.
From off provincial shores .....	17	2,547
From off the New England coast.....	51	2,809
Total, in sea-packed barrels .....	68	5,356

The total amount of the catch up to November 30 was about 80,000 sea-packed barrels. The arrivals from the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, with few exceptions, had a small amount of fish, some not a barrel, after having spent from two to three months on the fishing-grounds. Among the last arrivals from off provincial shores were the schooners Fannie W. Freeman, from a two months' cruise, with 40 barrels of mackerel; Spencer F. Baird, absent three months, 11 barrels of mackerel; Herman Babson, 3 barrels of mackerel; J. H. French, the last arrival, 11 barrels of mackerel. These vessels caught no other kind of fish on their voyages. The late or fall catch of mackerel off the provincial shores was disappointing and a failure to all engaged, native, shore, and