

**23.—THE FISHERIES OF GLOUCESTER, MASS., IN FEBRUARY, 1887,
WITH NOTES ON THOSE OF OTHER LOCALITIES.**

By W. A. WILCOX.

During February the work of another year has been actively entered upon, although a large number of the fishing vessels will not sail until later. The month has been more than usually stormy, and unfavorable for fishing, and on that account the receipts have been below the average. A good and steady demand has called for all fish arriving, and for much of the old stock that was on hand. Prices have been reasonably low, yet enough higher than of late to give much encouragement for the future. This feeling of confidence is indicated by the renewal of work at the formerly deserted ship-yards in Essex and Gloucester, where fifteen new fishing vessels and one whaler are now building. On George's cod and halibut have been scarce, the receipts being much below the average. In Ipswich Bay cod of large size and fine quality have been abundant, both the trawl and net fishermen obtaining good catches, although comparatively few nets were employed.

Herring have not been as abundant as usual in the Bay of Fundy. The catch has been short all the winter, and as a result fewer vessels have been engaged. At Fortune Bay, Newfoundland, and vicinity herring have been very plentiful. The only vessels from the United States that engaged in the Newfoundland herring trade were from Gloucester. One vessel is frozen in at one of the harbors, but the others have secured full fares and most of them have already returned.

With the close of the month the time is near for the early catch of mackerel to receive attention, and for vessels to begin preparation for their southern trips. The close season mackerel bill has been passed and signed. This bill goes into effect in 1888, and continues in force five years. This is, therefore, the last season for some time that any mackerel vessels can begin fishing before June, and no mackerel caught before that date by foreign vessels can be imported. The coasting schooner, S. M. Bird, at Philadelphia, from the South, reported having seen numerous schools of mackerel during the month, in latitude $33^{\circ} 49'$, longitude $76^{\circ} 50'$. As none were caught by the crew of the vessel, there is no positive proof that the schools seen were mackerel, and the Gloucester fishermen think they were some other species.

During the month three fine vessels from Gloucester have been reported lost. The schooner Carthage, 67.27 tons, sailed from the home port November 30, 1886, bound for George's Bank, and a fare of cod-fish. She has not been heard from since, and, with her crew of twelve men, has at last been given up. She was insured in home office for \$3,403 on vessel, and \$1,000 on outfits. The schooner Ocean King, 75.81 tons, sailed from Gloucester on a halibut trip January 18. A few days later, while at anchor on St. Peter's Bank, she encountered a

severe storm; everything on deck that was movable was washed overboard; the rudder was damaged, and soon the vessel became wholly unmanageable. From January 22 till February 9 the vessel drifted a floating wreck. When near Sable Island she was discovered by the fishing schooner C. B. Manning, and with much difficulty the crew was rescued, after which the vessel was set on fire. The schooner Phil Sheridan, 93.68 tons, sailed from Gloucester February 23, bound for George's Bank. Two days later, in latitude 42° 06', longitude 66° 50', she encountered a severe gale, and while hove to was struck by a heavy sea and thrown on her beam ends, and the masts and sails and the nine dories were carried away. The vessel soon righted, but was a complete wreck. Schooner Dido, of Gloucester, took it in tow for six hours, but was then obliged to turn it adrift, owing to the rough seas. On the 27th of the month the steamer Peconic, Captain Evans, master, from Messina, fell in with the wreck 120 miles from Boston Light, and took the crew off and carried them to Boston. The vessel was set on fire before leaving. The master and crew express heartfelt thanks to the officers of the steamer for their kindness. The schooner was insured for \$6,037, and her outfit for \$500.

Such, in brief, is the account of the loss of three fine fishing vessels, one with all hands. How and when it was lost will probably never be known. The crews of the other two vessels suffered severely from cold, hunger, and exposure, but after a few days of rest these same men could once more be found on other fishing vessels bound for the distant fishing-banks. No disasters or suffering appear to have a check on the men following the fisheries, or in any manner frighten them from the dangers of winter fishing on the distant banks in mid-ocean. Men are always ready to man the vessels, and seem much more anxious to go than the owners of the vessels are to send them during the winter.

Fish landed at Gloucester by the fishing fleet in February, 1887.

Fishing-grounds.	Number of fares.	Salt cod.	Fresh hall-but.	Frozen herring.	Pickled herring.
	Pounds.	Pounds.	Pounds.	Number.	Barrels.
By Gloucester vessels:					
George's Bank	56	1, 138, 000	186, 800	.....	.....
Western Bank	2	57, 000	18, 200	.....	.....
Grand Bank	16	.....	421, 000	.....	.....
La Have Bank	1	.....	18, 000	.....	.....
Banquereau	2	.....	50, 000	.....	.....
Off Sable Island	2	.....	110, 000	.....	.....
Fortune Bay, Newfoundland	18	.....	.....	6, 588, 000	915
Bay of Fundy	3	.....	.....	855, 000	.....
Ipswich Bay and off Cape Ann	60	340, 000	.....	.....	.....
Off Cape Ann (by small boats) .....	.....	18, 000	.....	.....	.....
Total	160	1, 560, 000	804, 000	7, 438, 000	915
By vessels belonging at other ports: *					
Ipswich Bay and off Cape Ann	11	97, 000	.....	.....	.....
Total in February, 1887	171	1, 657, 000	804, 000	7, 438, 000	915
Total in February, 1886	146	2, 143, 000	927, 800	7, 907, 000	.....

NOTE.—The miscellaneous receipts from other ports during the month consisted of 700 barrels of mackerel from Halifax, Nova Scotia.
 *These fish were landed by the following vessels: Schooner Flora Temple, of Portland, Me.; schooner Grace Choate, of Portsmouth, N. H.; schooner Eliza, of Marblehead, Mass., and schooners Clara Grimes, Edith Conley, and Estelle S. Nunan, of Rockport, Mass.