The Daily

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LABRADOR COD FISHERIES.

A Toilsome Means of Livelihood

The time is the first day of June, and the men are arriving ready to begin work. Rough-looking fellows they are indeed. Tall and short, stout and broad, full-faced, fullfour-fifths or more of the men wear than they are usually given credit for being.

in Labrador on going anywhere is mething to eat. No matter if has at the house of some friend, he can always find room for more. I have beat about in a dense fog, as is often the case, lor six, eight, or ten beheld in my life while upon this coast. One man boasts of having eaten six ptarmigan—a bird about the size of our ruffled grouse or larger—off early and nave forgotten to take any food with them, housing soon to recording to the length or responding to the length of the huilding. at one time, while at another time I was offered a bet of two shillings six e by a fellow, who said he could eat four pounds of raisins at a sitting. The paradise of a Labrador man

While we are talking two boats with two fellows in each, who have been out all the morning looking for fish, approach the stage-head evidently deeply-loaded. An ordinarily constructed stage head consists of a platform raised upon piles driven into the mud or sunk with huge stones for course, should one of these boats be or one-half the quantity. The men way, to unload and return, often to find the fish gone or darkness approaching. Fish are uncertain creatures; the fishermen must take advantage of every possible chance to secure enough to procure him his winter's supply of food, as well as to pay up the old debts and what he is ing the gills—at least a simple a creature of any fah, exposing the pressure of any fah, exposing the gills—at least a simple a creature of any fah, exposing the gills—at least a simple a creature of any fah, exposing the gills—at least a simple a creature of any fah, exposing the gills—at least a simple a creature of any fah, exposing the gills—at least a simple a creature of any fah, exposing the gills—at least a simple a creature of any fah, exposing the gills—at least a simple a creature of any fah, exposing the gills—at least a simple a creature of any fah, exposing the gills—at least a simple a creature of any fah, exposing the gills—at least a simple a creature of any fah, exposing the gills—at least a simple a creature of the gills—at least

said prepare their hooks and lines for fishing. The hook is a large iron or steel affair, asually several inches in length and quite wide at the end; the across the area to be used as a more line is small for shallow and heavy for deep-sea fishing with a huge lead sinker attached. The bait for the cod are of two kinds. Early in the season the caperling, a fish of some six or eight inches long and about the size of our well known smelt or frost fish, and much later the "seruse," a species of about one-half the size of the caperling. Each species must be to the splitter. The splitter taking the caperling. Each species must be to the splitter. The splitter taking it, lays it against a small night before, either in a seine for the purpose, or in a dip net when the later the boats that we and with his knife, a long, broad and slightly concave blade, well shait, and the men having baited their

ASTORIA, OREGON, TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 1884

PRICE, FIVE CENTS.

they are indeed. Tall and short, state and broad, full-faced, full-bearded and correspondingly fleshy in proportion. They are dressed quite alike, with suits of good, thick cloth in the shape of jumper and trousers, over which are hauled the overalls and frock when in working trim on the shore, and oil jacket and pantaloons when an old "sou'wester," as it is called, or rubber hat with a huge rim that hangs over the body, allowing the rain from it to drip, at least on the oil garments if not completely over them to the ground. Four-fifths or more of the men wear catcher is obliged to fly from one to a thin belt and sheath-knife buckled the other with the speed of lightning. nice, they are thrown into a tub of around their body, which, however, is if the shoal fishing is bad, the boat water and washed carefully before more for appearance's sake than anything else. It has been reported that occasionally on board some ill-managed craft these knives are used for weapons of offense and defense, as the case may be, but I have not heard it proven here at least. Though the men look fierce and ill-tempered—they are generally of a better disposition than they are usually given redit for being.

to be drawn quickly, hand over hand, one the men are often obliged to keep the first thing that a man asks for the line small at best, cutting deep their own box filled, and afterward do into the fingers, and you begin to see the work of others. that cod-haning is no easy matter. just arisen from a table of plenty After all this hard exercise, let them at the house of some friend, he can row their boat home in a calm or row their boat home in a calm or down. Here, also, a regular

at a meal; another says that he could eat a dozen herring at a meal, a fish about the size of a medium-sized kept them out all day, until wet to take feet deep, and with a length corresponding to the length of the building. The next process is that of salting. The salt, purchased of the trading about the size of a medium-sized kept them out all day, until wet to mackerel. Still further, one fellow, upon testing some maple sugar, devery hungry and tired, they do not clared that he could eat ten pounds return until late into the night, it in the states usually for ice cream will be easy to see that these men freezers and other purposes. must possess an endurance almost beyond comprehension to live, thrive and grow hearty under such treatment from wind, tide and weather; when large quantities are purchased. It is deposited in large bins from whence it is wheeled in barrows to seems to be enough to eat and plenty of tobacco. The Newfoundland men, when coming to Labrador, do not differ much.

ment from wind, tide and wester, whence it is whence it i

sons, of summer and winter, with is begun in front of that, and so of three months of the former and nine until the fish or salt are exhausted mud or sunk with huge stones for more, in this exercise mud or sunk with huge stones for ballast to the bottom, where at high tide the water is from six to ten feet deep, der are preparing to cure the catch.

By this time the two boats at the for more, in this exercise mud of the nights, are employed by the Labrador fishermen. I say der are preparing to cure the catch.

shallow, and carrying no ballast, open shed, in the corner of which is a a long time, but it is rather a tedious which, should she overturn, it would long, wide table, large enough to be and troublesome operation and one be impossible to sink her, since she occupied by two sets of three men seldom employed unless the quantity would immediately right again even each. On the left of the first man is taken is far in excess of the workmen if full of water; and those called a deep box, one-half of which extends "Yankee barges," or boats brought outside of the shed on the platform where from the states, or made here where the fish are thrown from the but to a similar pattern; these are bost; the man stationed by this box very wide for their length and corre- is called the "throat-cutter," a truly spondingly deep. With the barges the terribly name were it applied to any seats are so arranged that they form but one who manipulates fish. Next five partitions, the center one being to this man and on the same side is heavily ballasted with rocks. Of the "header." Opposite stands the heavily ballasted with rocks. Of the "header." Opposite stands the course, should one of these boats be "splitter." The crew is now composet or fill with water it would in plete inside the shed; outside the stantly sink to the bottom. Strange men heaving the fish on to the wharf to say, the barges are in more demand with their long-handled and long-than the novies, from the fact that, tined pitch forks, while a small boy, or the former hold eight some one not otherwise occupied, fills quintal of fish freshly caught, the boxes which, as I have said, lay the latter hold not more than four, haif outside and half inside the shed. The box being full or partiy full the se to risk their li es rather than throat-cut er takes up one of the fish lose their fish—and principally for and lays it upon the table, placing his well they can load their boat without the foreinger in the eye and laying his well they can load their boat without thumb upon the cain or into the adstopping to run several miles home in low just beyond the cain and beneath a calm, pulling at the oars all the the tongue, he presses the head down-

Consuming during the summer. ment on any fis I will show it. With I have said that most of the fisher- a snarp kuife the fieshy rib of the men use the barge, but since many of tongue is cut through at a sing e them still prefer the novie from its stroke; another stroke severs the lightness and the ease with which it flesh down the belly; while a third is managed, as well as the expense, one lays open all the inside and ends that two parties, of two men each, go in a gash, about three inches long, out fishing together; the one in a beyond the intestines and beyond and novie the other in a barge. As no ballast is required for the latter the knife used for the purpose has a inside room is divided into four parshort, thick, round handle, while the titions with seats between, while the blade is about five inches long, generally less than an inch wide at base as five, the middle one con- erally less than an inch wide at base taining the ballast. Each end of and tapering to a rounded point and each boat contains a "cubby," or sort sharp as a razor on either edge. Thus of low shelf closet, boarded around cut the fish is passed to the header; at each end (at both bow and stern), As this work requires great strength, wherein are deposited the old clothes a proportionately strong man is taken and the dinner of bread and butter for the purpose. He wears woolen and salt pork, with a small keg of fresh water—since the men often hand, and seizing the fish with a start out at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morn-scopping motion of the right hand, and seizing the fish with a start out at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morn-scopping motion of the right hand, he senarates the liver from the rest ing not returning until about the same time in the afternoon; this is necording as the fish bite well or poorby. After reaching the fishing grounds the men "down sail," out grapline—a again with the same hand, he tears sort of five-barred iron with curved out all the remaining insides with the sort of five-barred iron with curved out all the remaining insides with the propers their books and lines for head against the edge of the table, ing. The hook is a large iron or which is hollowed or scooped beneath

books throw them overboard, and fish open from the end of the out man stands in the outer hollow of his boat, he tends a line on each side and sometimes two, while as soon as a fish is caught it is hauled in and, being forcibly thrown over a crane in the shape of a letter Y with an iron bar from the end of the tail; with another stroke he cuts through the field and ribs on the upper side of the bone to the end of the tail toward the catcher is obliged to fly from one to or trap, and are unusually large and seen these immense deep sea fish, all this is usually the case, but in a small The barrow being full of fish they are wheeled to the stage to be salted

comes in bags, barrels, or in bulk months in the summer season. All the rest of the year they do nothing but eat, smoke and sieep. One may safely call their year a period of sear is about four feet high, when another or the room, generally low, is too full By this time the two boats at the for more. In this exercise the days, tide the water is from six to ten feet and at low two to three feet deep. While the men are unloading their fish, by throwing them from the boats on to this wharf with huge pitchforks, it might be of interest to follow a party of fishermen just going out to the fishing grounds. and see what luck they have. The boats used in the ordinary fishing are of two kinds; those called "novies," or Nova Scotia boats, being long and narrow, stagehead. This cousists of a low, one shelf in the corner of which is a preparing to cure the catch. The Labrador fishermen. I say nights, and this is often strictly true; the fishermen sometimes do not return with their loads until late in the evening, when the work extends far into the night by candle and lamplication to the fishing street that can convenient the fishermen sometimes do not return with their loads until late in the evening, when the work extends far into the night by candle and lamplication to the fishermen sometimes do not return with their loads until late in the system of the street the fishermen sometimes do not return with their loads until late in the evening, when the work extends far into the night by candle and lamplication the propose of cleaning the fish as soft if left for so short a time even as over night out of the water. On rare occasions the fish are placed in bags, which are then moored out in bags, which are then moored out in bags, which are then moored out in begy and this is often strictly true; the fishermen sometimes do not return with their loads until late in the evening, when the work extends far into the night, since the fish much the fishermen. I say mights, and this is often strictly true; the fishermen sometimes do not return with their loads until late in the fishermen sometimes do not return with their loads until late in the fishermen sometimes do not return with their loads until late in the fishermen sometimes do not return with their loads until late in the fishermen sometimes do not return with their loads until late in the fisher



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