

**THE SALMON FISHERIES
OF THE ST.
LAWRENCE AND ITS
TRIBUTARIES, PP. 1-141**

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The Salmon Fisheries of the St. Lawrence and Its Tributaries, pp. 1-141 by Richard Nettle

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RICHARD NETTLE

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SALMON FISHERIES

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ST. LAWRENCE

AND ITS TRIBUTARIES.



BY RICHARD NETTLE.

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1857.

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DEDICATION.



TO HIS EXCELLENCY

SIR EDMUND W. HEAD, BARONET,

Governor General,

&c. &c. &c.

In the compilation of this work I have been sustained by the reflection of the honor conferred, in the permission accorded me to dedicate to Your Excellency this little volume.

There are few phases in which to view the question of the protection of the Salmon Fisheries of which Your Excellency is not already cognizant.

Your Excellency's practical knowledge of the habits of the Salmon tribe, and of the laws that are necessary for their preservation, will justify the hope, that the Salmon Fisheries of this Province will receive that attention at Your Excellency's hands which the importance of the subject merits.

I would desire to express my sense of Your Excellency's kindness,

And beg to subscribe myself

Your Excellency's

Most obedient

Humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

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INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

"Laws are made for evil-doers."

I make no apology for throwing this little volume on the public. The absolute necessity that attention should be directed to the subject of the Salmon Fisheries of the St. Lawrence, is being evidenced every day. That element of food, which was once so abundant, is now becoming very scarce: that, which a beneficent Creator has provided for the many, is being destroyed by the few. Every year sees our markets supplied with Salmon pierced with the spear or "negog," the spawn literally protruding, and even covering the bottom of the vessels which convey the fish to our markets.

Reader! If thou art a lover of fair play, thou wilt aid by thy influence to bring about a better state of things.

I write for the poor who have been deprived of that support which a good Providence had provided for them. I write to the rich, who have influence, and I beseech them to exert it in a good cause. I write to the Legislature, who are as stewards, and to whose care is

committed the welfare of the people at large; and who, as lawgivers, are required to make good laws for the guidance of the community. I ask that the executive authorities see that good laws are framed and enforced. I pray for that which has been so loudly called for,—

PROTECTION FOR OUR SALMON FISHERIES.

CHAPTER II.

"Prevention is better than cure."

Let us take a brief glance of the Salmon Fisheries of the Mother Country.

In former years, Salmon was so abundant that its usual price was from one penny to two pence per lb.

In the indentures of Apprentices, a clause was sometimes inserted to the effect, that they should not be compelled to eat Salmon oftener than twice a week. Alas ! the change. Seldom can either master or man get a nibble, much less a bite ! The vile practice of fishing at all seasons and by all appliances, has driven the noble, tho' dogged fish from the shores, and the result has been, the destruction of a greater portion of the fisheries, and a rise in the price of Salmon, of at least one thousand per cent.

What shall we do ! Protect the fisheries ! Effect a cure, when the disease could have been prevented. The Legislature enact laws, (but do not enforce them), and that at the eleventh hour. The evil has been consummated, the fish

will not return, and could they speak, methinks they'd say, destroying us brings injury to yourselves. Reader! dost thou know the habits of the Salmon? Dost thou know that the river wherein they are spawned, is to them a homestead; that even as a school-boy returns joyously to his home at the holiday season, so do these fish return from the briny deep,—the young to frolic, and the old to seek the soft sandy-gravelly bed, wherein to deposit their ova or spawn, and from whence they themselves were brought into existence.

Man, the destroyer man—commenced a war of extermination, hunted them with nets of all description,—with spear, with hook, with lister, poisoned them with lime, spearing them by torch-light—mangling and wounding as many as he killed—and to crown all—denied them a right of way, by building Dams—and thus destroyed their fisheries indeed.

I have said that the fish are dogged, and sullen. All sportsmen know what I mean. Prevent them from reaching their old haunts—their spawning beds, and experience proves, that it is with difficulty they are enticed back. Good laws, time, and a right of way, may induce them to return. The mother country killed the "Golden Goose," and now has to pay dear for her eggs, and as Ephemeris—of London "*Bell's Life*" says, "it is only the wealthy that can make the purchase."

"We have frequently seen a band of men come down the celebrated Salmon rivers in the North of England and in Scotland, with a horse and cart, and in a short space of time, catch as many as the animal could draw, in fact, the destruction of Salmon at this season of the year (October