

1688. be employed there at once. He added in his letter that the fish there were very fine, and fit for Gibraltar, Spain, and the Levant; that having given orders to his men to be on the lookout for whales, especially near Matane, they had reported to him that there appeared on the surface, from time to time, as many as fifty at once, that allowed men to approach near enough to strike them with an oar; that this lasted for three consecutive months, during most of which time it is unnecessary to be much more than a quarter of a league out to find them.¹

I have remarked in my journal, that having anchored in the latter part of August, 1705, near Tadoussac, about fifteen leagues above Matane, I saw four whales at the same time sporting around our ship, and coming so near that they could be touched with the oars of the long boat;² but it was chiefly on the coast of Acadia that the fishery offered an inexhaustible basis for this trade. The misfortune is that the French, possessors of that great peninsula, were always those who profited least by it.

What prevents the French profiting by the Acadian fisheries.

The Sieur Paquine, whom the Court had sent there that year to make a visitation, attributed this to the fact of their having made the chief settlement at Port Royal, which is, he said, out of the reach of all trade, and too difficult of access, on account of the diversity of winds necessary to have in order to enter. This was a very old and well-founded complaint. The ports of la Héve and Camceaux were far more advantageous for a successful settlement. A person still better informed than the Commissary just mentioned, says, in a Memoir drawn up almost at this same time :

“ Acadia, so useful for the beauty and security of its ports, the fertility of its soil, the abundance of its fisheries, the facility for rendering them sedentary, as well as for its mines, has hitherto only languished ; first, from the dissen-

¹ See Canada Documents, II., v., p. 354.

² Charlevoix, Journal, p. 65. Ferland, Cotes de la Gaspésie, p. 352.