

THE OYSTER CROP

TOOK AWAY HIS BREATH.

One of the Most Valuable of Those Gathered From the Sea.

ONLY THE HERRING BEATS IT

Of the More Than Forty Million Bushels of These Nutritious Bivalves Gathered Yearly This Country Supplies Over 90 Per Cent.

Of all the products of the water, oysters are, with the single exception of the sea herring, the most valuable and most important to the human race. They owe that economic pre-eminence to the fact that they have high food value and that they are palatable, cheap, widely distributed and easy to cultivate.

Oysters occur in greater or less abundance on the shores of all temperate and tropical seas, but the bulk of the arms of the North Atlantic ocean exceeds that in all other waters combined. There are at least a hundred different kinds or species of oysters with a wide range of habit, flavor, shape and size. All the oysters on the eastern and southern coasts of the United States belong to one species which has, however, many local varieties; the native oyster of the Pacific states of a wholly different species.

In about thirty-five countries oyster farming is a special industry. The annual oyster crop of the world now amounts to more than 10,000,000 bushels, for which the fishermen and planters receive about \$25,000,000. The United States furnishes nearly 90 per cent of the crop.

Few animals are more prolific than oysters, but of the millions of microscopic young that a single full grown oyster produces only a very small percentage survive infancy. The heavy natural mortality among oysters at all times is particularly marked in the early months. The newly born young are for a few hours free swimming creatures, wafted about by tides and currents, and unless they settle down on a suitable surface they quickly perish. After attaining the size that is visible to the naked eye they are not able to change their position. When the temperature, density, tides and currents are favorable the floating young go to the bottom and there attach themselves to the shells of old oysters or to any other hard surfaces that may be present, but all that fall on a muddy or soft, sandy bottom or on slimy surfaces soon perish. Modern oyster culture aims primarily to save the free swimming young and oyster planters therefore provide clean shells, tiles and other hard objects to which the "spit" of the young oysters are called, can attach themselves.

Oysters have a peculiar nature long or thin and other shellfish. A simple type of cultivation flourishes in Utah. It is a very remote part and probably antedated by some centuries the beginning of oyster culture in the western world about the year 100 B. C. With the increasing demand for oysters they came to be cultivated in all the important maritime countries of Europe. In other parts of the old world and in the western hemisphere the growing of oysters by artificial means has become an important industry so that today oysters are the most extensively cultivated of all aquatic animals.

The human animal is not the only one that looks with favor upon the edible qualities of the oyster. At every stage in its career it is attacked by a horde of dangerous enemies, some of which are most destructive after the oyster has put on its stoutest armor. Before the young oyster attaches itself it is extensively consumed by adult oysters and various other shellfish as well as by fishes that strain their food from the water. When the oyster attains its shell a new set of shellfish enemies provided with drills begin their attacks and extract the soft parts through minute holes that they make in the valves.

The oyster growers of Long Island sound and adjacent waters suffer heavy losses from the inroads of starfishes, which, moving in waves over the bottom, devour every oyster in their path. In a single season they have been known to destroy in one state several hundred thousand bushels of marketable oysters. It seems strange at first that a weak creature like the starfish should be able to prey on an animal so strongly fortified as an oyster. The starfish attacks it with its arms and exerts a steady and long sustained suction with each of its numerous small suckers. After a time the powerful adductor muscle of the oyster becomes fatigued the valves open and the starfish inserts its stomach and devours the helpless oyster at leisure.

Other enemies of the grown oyster are fishes with powerful jaws armed with crushing teeth. On the Atlantic coast the most destructive fish is the black drum, a school of which may virtually clean out an oyster bed in one night. On the Pacific coast a species of sting ray is the chief offender. The United States is particularly fortunate in its oyster supply. The output here is larger and more valuable than elsewhere. Moreover, on account of the relative low cost of oysters to the consumer in the United States, the consumption in proportion to the total population is greater than in any of the other leading oyster producing countries.

Our annual oyster output is worth about \$17,000,000 to the producers. The yield has increased 70 per cent in quantity since 1890, and under the favorable conditions that now prevail is becoming larger every year.—Hugh M. Smith, Commissioner of Fisheries, in Youth's Companion.

SCHOOL FROCK.

Simple Costume For the High School Girl.

When Davison Heard Morgan Wanted Him For a Partner.

"Mr. Morgan wants to see you in his library at 3 o'clock," was the message received one day by the president of a New York bank.

He didn't see the slightest idea what the veteran financier could want with him. He had met Mr. Morgan as most other financiers had during the previous days when the matter of their all was trying to stem the 1907 panic, but had not seen anything of Mr. Morgan until the spring of the following year when with Senator Aldrich and other members of the monetary commission, he had spent a Sunday at Mr. Morgan's London home. Between then and the receipt of the above message in the fall of 1908 he had seldom spoken to Mr. Morgan.

Promptly at 3 o'clock the young banker, wondering what the matter could be, rang the bell of the famous Morgan library. On being ushered in he almost collided with Mr. Morgan as the entrance to his private room.

"Mr. Morgan shook hands and bade the puzzled visitor be seated.

"Do not trouble it is a party near the 1st of January," he asked.

"The young banker very much at sea agreed that it was. "This was about the middle of November.

"Are you ready," asked Mr. Morgan, "ready for what?"

"For what?" asked Mr. Morgan. "You know I want you to come and join my firm on the 1st of January."

"You never said anything about it," Mr. Morgan said.

"I thought you knew by my expression what I thought of you," said Mr. Morgan.

"Mr. Morgan have you ever taken from an eighteen-story building?"

It was Mr. Morgan's turn to be astonished.

"No," he replied, scrutinizing his visitor.

"Well I never have before and it will take me half an hour or two to catch my breath."

Mr. Morgan laughed.

And that was how Henry F. Davison, then only forty, was notified of his selection as a partner in the greatest international banking firm in the United States. B. C. Forbes in Forbes.

Also Both Bad.

What is the difference between last and money?

It may be bad manners to knock a man down, but it is not necessarily bad taste.

A rich man in Philadelphia gave a reception and issued invitations upon which were engraved his name. This was not bad manners. It was certainly bad taste.

A large, handsome woman once took into a meeting of President Lincoln's cabinet, interrupting the proceedings. The formerly Lincoln dress and addressing her, said:

"Madame, what do you want?"

"I came in here to take a look at you, Lincoln smiled.

"Well, madame, be seated. In the matter of looking I have a distinct advantage over you."

That was both bad taste and bad manners on her part, and on the part of Lincoln it was good manners and good taste to refrain from throwing her out of the window as he might have done.

Every small town has its prominent citizen who appears before the city fathers and "talks right out in meeting."

Not every town, however, has among its councilors a member with sufficient moral backbone to answer back, as did John Hammer of a western town whose name is of no consequence. Concluding his arraignment, the prominent citizen buried this thunderbolt at the board of health, as they put up as a candidate for the town council.

"Well, you'd stand a much better chance of getting in," he replied. Mr. Hammer—Argonaut.

Why Worry?

If you're afflicted with the worry habit, consider this old Chinese proverb. The legs of the stick are long; the legs of the duck are short; you cannot make the legs of the stick short; neither can you make the legs of the duck long. Why worry?

Word From Old Williams.

Bar's lot of troubles what you kin get round an' of you can't sit round on you kin climb over an' of you can't climb over you kin crawl under an' of you takes de right time. So, dar you is, an' what is you? Atlanta Constitution.

Good Scheme.

"How do Jack and Jeanne ever manage to scrape a living?"

"Why, he makes the money first, and she makes it last."

A man who dares waste an hour of time has not learned the value of life.—Darwin.

ORIGIN OF OUR HOLIDAYS.

A Woman's Influence in Nationalizing Thanksgiving.

First and last enough sentiment has been expended upon American politics to equip a regiment of poets laureate. Distinctly American holidays are few. It is Fourth of July, of course, and itself. The 22d of February became known by common consent. It had its origin in a convivial supper in a New York tavern in 1793, when a company met to listen to an original ode and drink innumerable toasts. Enthusiasm survived the wine, and as the gentlemen went gayly, and unostentatiously swore to meet again on future anniversaries. Regarded at first as a purely party custom, it broadened beyond Federal circles to take in all American Jefferson's followers at a similar observance in his honor but he countered with another bit of sentiment refusing to allow the date, on the ground that only the birthday of the nation should be so treated.

Thanksgiving was sectional and religious as well as political, and sentimentality was in plenty. One of the English householders until the middle of the last century was to lay five grains of corn upon the plate of every person at table in memory of a day in early colonial history when five ships came sailing into harbor just in time to chase away the specter of famine.

It was Washington who appointed the first national day of thanksgiving at the instance of congress, after the adoption of the constitution. For many years, however, annual observance of the day remained a matter of state action, virtually confined to New England. Like the 22d of February, it became a national custom only gradually, unlike the 22d of February, it spread largely through the influence of a woman, Mrs. Sarah Josepha Hale, who advocated it for twenty years in the editorial columns of Godey's Lady Book. Heled Nicolay in Century.

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To promote Agriculture and Protect Morals.

Was proposed and failed all farmers from promoting it to this town, Quebec, under any pretext whatever, without our permission in writing, on pain of being expelled and sent back to their farms, furniture and goods being confiscated and a fine of 20 francs for the benefit of hospitals. And furthermore we forbid the inhabitants of this town, Quebec, letting houses or rooms to persons coming from the country on pain of a fine of 20 francs, also for hospitals.

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SOME QUEER LAWS.

When New France, in This Country, Was Ruled From Quebec.

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For instance, while they did not attempt to regulate the length of sheets on hotel beds, they did declare that fresh white bread and light blown bread all bakers shall make dark brown bread whenever the same shall be required." Another of the old French laws, probably handed through by some long dead, at the baron, was:

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