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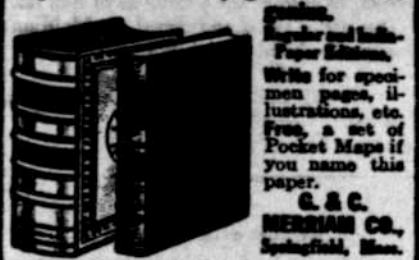
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ONLY THE HERRING BEATS IT

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 supply in 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 in habits, 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 40,000,000 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 their 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 become attached 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 "spat," as the young oysters are called, can attach themselves.

Oysters have been under culture longer than any other shellfish. A simple type of cultivation flourished in China at a very remote period and probably antedated by some centuries the beginning of oyster culture in Italy, which was 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 attaches itself to the lips of the oyster shell 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.

TOOK AWAY HIS BREATH

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 vice president of a New York bank.

He hadn't the slightest idea what the veteran financier could want with him. He had met Mr. Morgan, as most other financiers had, during the perilous days when the master mind of them 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 at the entrance to his private room.

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

"Do you realize it is pretty 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?" queried the astonished visitor.

"For what?" echoed 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."

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

"Mr. Morgan, have you ever fallen 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 a minute or two to catch my breath."

Mr. Morgan laughed.

And that was how Henry P. 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 Leslie's.

TASTE AND MANNERS.

Sometimes They Are Linked and Are Also Both Bad.

What is the difference between taste and manners?

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 invitation cards upon which were engraved his picture. This was not bad manners. It was certainly bad taste.

A large, handsome woman once broke into a meeting of President Lincoln's cabinet, interrupting the proceedings.

The homely Lincoln arose and, addressing her, said:

"Madam, what do you wish?"

She replied:

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

Lincoln smiled.

"Well, madam," he replied, "in the matter of looking I have a distinct advantage of 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 in strict justice he should have done.

Good taste is largely a matter of experience united to natural abilities.

To go up to your father-in-law at your wedding breakfast with a bottle of champagne in your hand and slapping him on the back, calling him "old sport," is not only bad taste and bad manners, but wretched sense, especially if the old gentleman is worth a million.

To be told that your friend is too busy to see you in his office and then to call him up over the nearest telephone is not necessarily bad taste, but bad manners. The two may go together, but this is not an invariable rule.—Life.

Tart Retort.

Every small town has its prominent citizen who appears before the city fathers and "talks right out in meethin'." 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 hurled this thunderbolt at the board, "I'd sooner put up as a candidate for a lunatic asylum than put up for the town council."

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

Why Worry?

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

Word From Br'er Williams.

Dar's lots o' troubles what you kin git round; an' ef you can't git round 'em you kin climb over; an' ef you can't climb over you kin crawl under; ef you takes de right time. So, dar you is, an' whar 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 full of it. Fourth of July, of course, made itself. The 22d of February became one 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 unsteadily home they swore to meet again on future anniversaries. Regarded at first as a purely party custom, it broadened beyond Federal circles to take in all Americans. Jefferson's followers attempted a similar observance in his honor, but he countered with another bit of sentiment, refusing to divulge 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 sentiment graced it in plenty. One of the customs that lingered in good old New England households 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.—Helen Nicolay in Century.

KAFFIRS AND HEADGEAR.

How the Natives of South Africa First Came to Wear Hats.

It was a Boer, Andries de Villiers by name, who introduced head coverings to the South African natives.

Andries was a man of ideas, and when one morning many years ago he saw in Port Elizabeth a consignment of damaged hats offered for sale for a mere song he bought them on speculation.

The hats were principally of the straw and derby variety. Andries loaded them into his wagon and started for Kaffrland, where hats were totally unknown. When he arrived in Tembuland he unloaded the stock, opened the kegs of liquor, without which no trade could be done in those days, and started business.

The natives did not take kindly to the headgear. They wanted blankets and beads and looking glasses and grog. They refused to have anything to do with hats and would not buy them no matter how low the price.

Then another of the bright ideas for which he was famous occurred to Andries. He refused to sell anything unless a hat was purchased also.

When a Kaffir buys anything he is going to make use of it, and the unfortunate Kaffir therefore donned the headgear and returned to their kraals. Fashion rules the world. It is the same in Africa as elsewhere, and when the stay at home saw their relatives and friends wearing this strange covering their desire to do the same was excited, and they paid Andries a visit, and he unloaded the remainder of his stock on them at a price which brought him a large profit on the original investment.

Get In Debt.

Louis F. Swift, president of Swift & Co., the great Chicago meat packing company, has the idea that being in debt is the surest way to succeed. He urges every one of his 25,000 employees to get into debt and to keep in debt, and he has organized a system to encourage them in this and to show them how to do it profitably.

"Get in debt for something of intrinsic value and stay in debt," he says. "As soon as you get one thing paid up, buy something else and get in debt again. Stay in debt—never get out."—American Magazine.

Beauty.

Beauty is as real a need to the civilized man as anything else. Any one who doubts this should reflect what money and thought he and his expend on beauty as he sees it in one form or another, in their houses, furniture, clothes, gardens and what not; how every one, rich and poor, spends according to his means for these things and insists on having them as good and handsome as he can afford and understand.—New York Times.

Bracelets and Lunatic.

Bracelets have been worn from time immemorial, but few wearers of the golden bands of the present day know that they were once used to distinguish the insane. Before lunatics were confined to asylums they were an armlet for distinction.

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Mrs. Newlywed—I want a cook, but she must be capable. Head of Employment Agency—Madam, I have several on my books capable of anything.

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