

ing of oyster-culture simultaneously with Professor Coste, and wondering if it could be carried out on those portions of the public foreshore that were left dry by the ebbs of the tide. He determined to try the experiment on a small scale, so as to obtain a practical solution of his "idea," and with this view he enclosed a small portion of the foreshore of the island by building a rough dyke about 18in. in height. In this park he laid down a few bushels of growing oysters, placing amongst them a quantity of large stones, which he gathered out of the surrounding mud. This initiatory experiment was so successful that in the course of the year he was able to sell a considerable number of oysters from his stock. The result was, of course, very encouraging to the enterprising mason, and the money was in a sense found money, for the oysters went on growing while he was at work at his own proper trade as a mason. Elated by the profit of his experiment, he proceeded to enlarge the proportions of his park, and in the second year was able to dispose of forty pounds' worth more without impoverishing in the least degree his breeding-stock.

After Beuf had demonstrated the practicability of oyster-farming, the extension of the system over the foreshore of the island between Point de Risedoux and Point de Lorme was rapid and effective—so much so that two hundred beds were conceded by the Government previous to 1868, while an additional five hundred beds were speedily laid down. So rapid, indeed, has been the progress of oyster-culture at the Île de Ré that what was formerly a series of enormous and unproductive mud-banks, occupying a stretch of shore about four leagues in length, is now so transformed, and the whole place so changed, that it seems the work of a miracle.

Mr. Ashworth, so well known as a salmon-breeder in Ireland, says that oyster-farming on the shores of the French coast is one of the greatest industrial facts of the present age, and thinks that it will in the end be more profitable than salmon-breeding. It is calculated that, in spite of the bad spitting of the last three years, there is a stock of oysters in the beds on the Île de Ré, accumulated in only six years, of the value of £100,000. No charge is made for the oyster-parks by Government, but each plot is marked and defined on a map, and the produce is considered to be the private property of the person who establishes it. They vary in size, 20 or 30 yards square. The stones or tiles are placed in rows about 5ft. apart, with the ends open so as to admit of the wash of the tide in and out. To construct an oyster-bed 30 yards square costs about £12, and it has been calculated that the return from some of the beds has been as high as 1,000 per cent. If the limits of this paper would permit I could give many more particulars about this industry, such as the proper mode of constructing oyster-parks on a large scale; but I think I have said enough to prove that it could easily be commenced and profitably carried on in New Zealand.

Our transatlantic cousins, ever ready and to the front when a profit is to be made, carry on the trade to a great extent. The great market there is the City of Baltimore, where it is not uncommon for one or two firms to "can" a million bushels in one year. Immense numbers of these canned oysters are despatched all over the States, to the prairies of the far West, to the cities of New Mexico, to the military forts of the Great American Desert, to the restaurants of Honolulu, and to the miners searching for gold in the Rocky Mountains; whilst fresh oysters packed in ice have been sent to great distances. In the oyster-fisheries of Maryland alone as many as six hundred vessels of about 23 tons each are engaged, in addition to two thousand boats or canoes. These employ about seven thousand men, and if we add those engaged in the carrying trade it would give the number of persons employed in the oyster trade of the State of Maryland as at least ten thousand, all obtaining remunerative employment.

In concluding this article on oyster-culture it may not be out of place to say a few words on acclimatisation at the antipodes. It seems strange that in the generally complete furnishing of the earth so much was left undone in New Zealand. In the earlier days there were no edible fish of any size in the streams of the colony if we except the bright little upokororo (*Prototroctes oxyrhynchus*) and the wretched kokopu (*Galaxias fasciatus*). It depends upon acclimatisation societies and private individuals to remedy this defect. How successfully this has been done is shown by the number of tourists who annually come from Australia and other places to our southern streams for the sole purpose of trout-fishing. The North Island has been a little later in its development, but the splendid streams in the Wairarapa, Hawke's Bay, Wanganui, and Taranaki districts are now being plentifully stocked with the best breeds of fish obtainable. I have no hesitation in saying that in a few years these districts will be an angler's paradise, and second to none in the world. The efforts of such men as Mr. W. H. Beetham, of the Wairarapa; Mr. Alexander J. Rutherford, of Wellington; Mr. S. C. Farr, of Christchurch; the late Mr. Arthur, of Dunedin; and others, are not, perhaps, at the present time appreciated at their true value, but they will be in years to come. An enterprise which will not only largely increase our food-supply, but will also make the colony attractive to the moneyed classes of other countries, must prove an inestimable benefit.

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

- 1, Lake Fusaro. 2, Oyster Pyramids. 3, Oyster Fascines.
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