

ALEWIVES.—The same remark applies to these as to Herrings. In cargoes with Pickled Fish there cannot be too much care taken in seeing that the barrels are filled with pickle and properly coopered before shipment, as in this climate they soon rust and spoil.

(No. 9.)

ACCOUNT OF A REMARKABLE OYSTER FISHERY IN THE
RIVER THAMES.

Of the private fisheries in the estuary of the Thames the most important is that of the Whitstable Company. It is probably the most productive oyster bed in the world, though its extent is but small. It lies immediately off Whitstable, and is protected from the easterly winds by a spit of sand which runs out from the shore for a distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Inside of this the ground which belongs to the company is about two miles in extent each way, but at present not more than two square miles are cultivated. Except during very extraordinary tides the beds are never uncovered at low water, the depth not falling below from four to six feet. From this comparatively small piece of ground the produce of oysters is very considerable.

The company is an ancient corporation of fishermen in the nature of a guild, and is probably an example of the ancient guilds which were formerly so common in this country. They had from time immemorial been working on their present ground, but in the year 1793 they were empowered by Parliament to purchase the exclusive right of fishing from the lord of the manor on the ground where previously they appear to have been only customary tenants. At that time they were only 36 in number and they had to borrow a sum of £20,000, which was subsequently increased to £30,000, for the purchase of the ground and for stocking it with brood. Their numbers are now increased to 408, including widows, and of these about 300 are working members. They have succeeded in paying off their debts; their annual receipts are now sufficient to enable them to lay out a great amount of money in the purchase of brood, and they have a stock of oysters in hand which is valued at a very large sum. At the commencement of the season of 1862-3 their stock was valued at £400,000, and during the season they sold oysters of the value of £90,000. The company is governed by a foreman, deputy-foreman, treasurer, and a jury of twelve; the officers are elected by the whole body, and the jury is nominated by the officers. The only persons who have a right to become members of the company are the sons of dredgemen. The officers and jury decide what shall be the quantity of oysters dredged up and sold in the market, and what amount of brood shall be bought, and how much shall be paid to the members for work done for the company. The rate of wages varies according to the quantity sold and the price of oysters; on the average of the last eighteen years the rate of pay to the members has been 23s. per week; the last few years it has