

IV.

The department of the Vosges is traversed by the Moselle, possesses many of the tributaries of that beautiful river, together with several streams and some lakes. The fine clear waters of all these, made them the most famous resort of trout in all France; and the production of that fish was so considerable that it formed a large portion of the food of the population.

Several years ago, however, the yield was observed to decline, and it continued year after year to diminish. Messrs. Gehin and Remy made it their business to attempt to discover if any, and if so, what means could be devised for checking the evil. After studying night and day for a long time the habits of the trout, they came to the conclusion that it would be easy to preserve the eggs and to fecundate them by the aid of the milt of the male. Having watched the proceedings of the male and female at spawning time (it is in the month of November in the Vosges,) they soon saw how they were to act. Their first experiment was crowned with extraordinary success; this was in 1841. In 1842, 1843, and 1844, they again repeated their experiments, and in each case in the most triumphant manner. In the latter year, to encourage them, the Societe d'Emulation des Vosges gave them a bronze medal, and granted them a sum of money. They were subsequently employed to exercise their system in the different rivers and streams of the department, and in those of the adjacent departments. In the course of a short time, they succeeded in stocking these waters with *millions* of trout.

It is to be observed, that although the fecundation of the eggs of fish by the means employed by Gehin and Remy was, as we have seen, known to scientific ichthyologists, it was perfectly unknown to them. These poor men had never heard of Golstein or Jacobi, of Lacepede or Sannoni; they had probably never in their lives opened a book on the natural history of fish; consequently it was by their own unaided intelligence and patient investigation that they arrived at the discovery of the "great fact;" and surely the same credit is due to them for it as if it had been quite original. Though they came after Golstein, they rank as high—nay higher, for they had none of his instruction or means of observation.

Though bad news proverbially flies fast, information really useful to the public not unfrequently travels very slowly. It was so in this case. Until the beginning of 1849, nothing was heard of the discovery and its great results beyond the department of the Vosges and its immediate vicinity; and perhaps nothing would have been heard of it until this day, if an eminent and learned physician residing in the department, who had taken much interest in the matter, had not called attention to it. For thus taking the light from under the bushel, a very deep debt of gratitude is due to him, not only from his own countrymen, but from foreign nations.

This gentleman, Dr. Haxo of Epinal, perpetual Secretary of the Societe d'Emulation, and member of the Conseil Academique of the Department of the Vosges, addressed in the month of March, 1849, an admirably written communication to the Academy of Sciences at Paris,