

spontaneously opens, it is a sign that it is dead. But here several questions may be asked; for instance how does the Oyster know that a starfish is coming? And if it is able to know and to shut up, how do starfish live?

Oysters are apparently devoid of sense organs; nevertheless if the edge of the mantle be examined it will be found to be fringed with innumerable little tentacles in which there is deposited a certain amount of pigment. If now a healthy Oyster be observed whilst it is feeding with open valves in a tank, it will be seen that when the slightest shadow falls on these tentacles the valves are instantly closed. The tentacles enable their possessor to distinguish between light and shade, and it, is by means of its sensitiveness to slight shadows, that the Oyster learns to close in time.

The starfish, however, manages to destroy quite a large number of Oysters. Armed as this creature is with thousands of minute suckers, it is able whilst holding firmly on to the ground with some of these to forcibly raise the upper valve of its victim by means of the remainder which adhere firmly to the ground in the neighbourhood. It seems incredible, when one reflects what force is necessary to insert a knife between the valves of a closed oyster, that a starfish should be strong enough to forcibly pull them apart. But it is nevertheless true, for the starfish has staying power, and the long steady pull lasting for a quarter of an hour or more, effectively overcomes the resistance of the oyster, although the latter is able to withstand a much greater force if exerted for a shorter time. Nevertheless, the bigger the Oyster the bigger must the starfish be which opens it, and from the size of the starfish found on the Malpeque beds it is not probable that they can do much damage to the larger Oysters, and we may perhaps conclude that the Oysters are safe from their attack once they have passed their third or fourth year.

The Oyster possesses a simple alimentary canal. A short gullet leads into the stomach into which two groups of branched tubes, termed the *liver*