

OYSTER EXPLAINED BY FRENCH DOCTOR

Absent from the Market in the
Hot Weather Because that
is Reproductive Season—
They Have Their Ail-
ments.

(New York Times.)
Dr. Llaguet, a French scientist, delivered a lecture on the oyster, which is reproduced in the Journal de Médecine de Bordeaux, which throws a great deal of light on the habits, diseases and uses of this mollusk. It appears that, contrary to popular opinion, oysters are just as fit to eat in the summer months as at any other time. The real reason they are withheld from the market in the summer in New York and other sections is that summer is their reproduction season. In some sections of the south, notably in New Orleans, they are eaten freely all the year.

The Medical Record comments on Dr. Llaguet's lecture from the medical point

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of view, inasmuch as various forms of life in the animal kingdom are known to be disease carriers and disseminators. "Medical zoology is one of the newer studies of the curriculum of the modern medical school," says the editor, "but thus far has been limited to medical entomology, with special reference to

disease-bearing insects and to the larger parasites, chiefly worms, which cause disease. That in time this branch of medicine will be studied along the broadest lines is apparent to any one who covers current medical literature. Here would most assuredly belong the part played by the domesticated animals in the causation of human disease, and one may think of the oyster as domesticated, and as an occasional cause of disease as well as an immune carrier."

The writer goes on to consider the French scientist's study of the oyster, in which the mollusk was dealt with from the biological, alimentary, medical and economical angles. He pointed out that there were two principal divisions of the oyster family of which one, known as the Portuguese, is non-edible. Attempts to make it edible by crossing with the edible oyster have failed.

One Oyster's Progeny.
Each oyster, the lecturer said, may give birth to not less than a million embryos. These swim about until the shell appear and the age of the oyster may always be told accurately by the thickness of the shell, as well as by its length. They reach complete maturity in ten years, but may live from twenty to twenty-five years. If left to itself the oyster bed forms, and before 1850 all beds, at least in France, were natural. Artificial beds are only intended to increase the supply for food purposes.

Of the numerous enemies of the oyster, says the writer, its cousin, the Portuguese, is the worst. It is far more fertile and noted for its voracity. The Portuguese variety breeds two or three times a year, while the edible oyster breeds once annually. The antagonism of the Portuguese oyster to the development of its edible oyster is due to the fact that the latter deprives the former of some of its natural food and this also true of the mussel and other shellfish.

Other mollusks, like the starfish, the lecturer said, prey directly on the oyster, perforating the shells of the young members, while the latter are also vulnerable to the attacks of crabs. Certain starfish make terrible havoc among oysters, destroying them by thousands in a single night.

The oyster is also subject to a number of diseases, says the scientist, being the object of attack by fungi and bacteria. Strange to say, however, these proper diseases of the oyster do not render it unfit for human consumption. The lecturer states that he has eaten technically diseased oysters without experiencing the least inconvenience, and has fed them repeatedly to cats, which also showed immunity. Yet the germ diseases are sufficient to have destroyed in certain years as high as 60 per cent of the crop. Authorities Disagree.

Not all biologists, however, says the writer, admit that a germ disease is involved in this mortality, and some have invoked meteorological conditions in explanation. High mortality has also been attributed to a recent tendency to spawn twice a year instead of once, which has

always been the rule of the edible oyster. Spawning thereby occurs in the late spring and early fall instead of in the summer, and this for one or another unexplained reason appears to be disastrous to the embryo.

Llaguet, says the writer, describes at length the artificial culture of the oyster, which must be passed over, coming to the problems of most interest to the medical man. The oyster, he says, does not appear in the market during the summer, not because it is inedible but because it is the reproductive season. It is true that they are less savory during the hot weather, but that they can be eaten to any extent during this period with perfect impunity is well known to all authorities. At rare intervals and in response to special demands they have been eaten freely by the public during the hot months, as in 1900 when there was a World's Exposition at Paris.

The oyster, says the writer, is a stimulant to the stomach, a true stomachic, which can increase the flow of pepsin and hydrochloric acid in those who are below par in this respect. It contains iodine, iron, phosphorus and lecithin and the medical practitioners near the great oyster industry of Archachon prescribe them in habitual dyspepsia and tuberculosis. Oyster shells is also given in affections characterised by decalcification. The two great practical subjects in connection with oyster consumption, ac-

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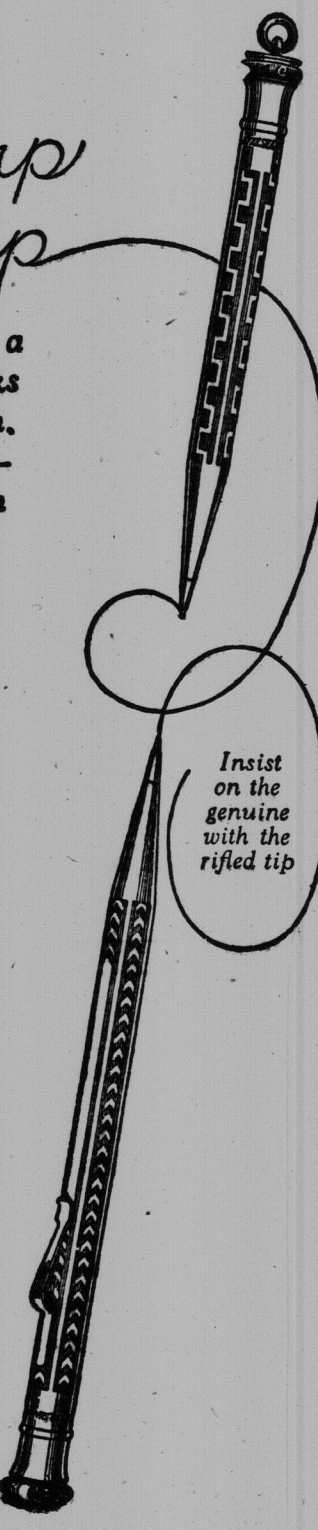
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According to the writer, are oyster poisoning and typhoid fever. In regard to the first named, there is no doubt that decomposed oysters can give rise to a form of ptomaine poisoning, he asserts. But fresh living oysters cannot possibly give rise to a form of ptomaine poisoning, he declares with equal positiveness.

Oyster typhoid is a well known fact and is combated either by flushing or lancing or by placing them in clean running water. The use of beds inaccessible to sewerage is of course the ideal preventive, the physician says, and in the

great French industry at the Basin of Archachon the conditions are said to be ideal in this respect.

The Ladies' Sewing Circle of the Tabernacle church served a bountiful Thanksgiving dinner last evening and had a very large patronage. Mrs. William Foster, the president, was the convener. After the dinner the regular meeting of the B. Y. P. U. was held and there was an unusually large attendance. Peter Murray, the president, was in the chair.

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