

"Natives," as they are termed in England, are a delicacy confined to the table of the rich, here they are within the reach of all.

Like so many of the magnificent natural resources of this country, the Oyster Fishery is being most wastefully carried out, and we may before long regret in vain the time when Malpeque oysters sold for 25 cents a dozen.

Richmond Bay or Malpeque Bay, as it is sometimes called, is a somewhat quadrangular inlet of the Gulf of St. Lawrence on the North Coast of Prince Edward Island. It is roughly about ten or twelve miles long by about nine in width, and is throughout comparatively shallow, never more than about 7 or 8 fathoms in depth, for the most part 2—4 fathoms. The bay is studded with islands, of which Curtain Island, which has given its name to the best variety of the Malpeque Oyster, is one. To the north, where it opens into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the entrance is obstructed by islands, and navigable channels are very few in number, for great sand flats and shoals connect up the islands with one another.

The whole North Coast of Prince Edward Island is fringed by a series of parallel sand-bars, and it is owing to this circumstance that the oyster is able to flourish there. All who know the coast of the Gulf of St. Lawrence are aware that the water even in summer is very cold; so cold indeed that though the adult Oyster could live in it, it could not reproduce itself, for the larvae would perish. But as the Gulf water flows over the sand-bars and shoals alluded to, it becomes heated up by the summer sun, and reaches a temperature which permits, in favourable years at least, of successful spawning. Oysters are accordingly confined to such places on the coast of Canada, as present conditions similar to those mentioned above. They exist in the Baie de Chaleur, in some of the shallower inlets on the New Brunswick Coast, at a few points on both shores of Prince Edward Island, and on the Northern Coast of Nova Scotia. In every case, however, we have to do with isolated colonies inhabiting warm spots surrounded by a great