the valves resting on their edges.   To maintain this
position it is necessary that the bivalve should be par-
tially or completely buried in the sand or mud of the
bottom on which it lives.   Through this material it
slowly moves by means of a muscular projection of the
under surface of the body shaped somewhat like a
ploughshare, called the *Foot*.   The Lomellibranchiata
are sometimes termed Pelecypoda, literally axe-footed
Mollusca, on account of the shape of the foot.   The
exceptional character of the Oyster is at once seen
when we state the foot is entirely atrophied and the
animal lies on one side on the superfical layer of the
bottom.   The valve on which it lies is differently
shaped from the other, being usually flat or slightly
convex whilst the upper valve may be slightly concave.
To a certain extent the edible character of the Oyster is
due to the absence of a foot, for this organ with its
tough muscles is often found to be a somewhat indiges-
tible morsel in the case of other Mollusca which are
used for food.

However different in appearance, practically all
Lamellibranchiata have the same method of gaining
their food.   They all depend for a livelihood on the
small organisms which swim or float in the sea and
which are swept into their gaping mouths by the
currents produced by the cilia which cover the gills and
certain folds near the mouth termed the palps.   Feed-
ing and breathing are, one may say, performed at the
same time, for the inrushing water brings also the
oxygen, without which no animal can live.

It will, therefore, be seen that the Oyster is a
peculiarly helpless Mollusc, for if it be situated in a
place where the water is poor in food material, it is
unable to leave it and starves to death.   But a far
greater danger is that of suffocation.   If the water be
too muddy, the particles of silt swept in will clog the
interstices of the delicate gills;   and the deposition of
mud may soon bury the animal alive.   In the case of
other bivalves, no such catastrophe can occur, for they
can move so that the hinder part of the shell through
which the current enters, always protrudes into clean