

oyster-larva can be conveniently obtained by a plankton-net carries with it the possibility of a practical application of inestimable value in the culture of oysters. From the time of the early Roman Empire it has been known that oyster-spat can sometimes be obtained on ropes, anchors, piles of wharves, stones, shells or other natural or artificial objects in the sea, and some sort of method of culture has long been in use in many countries. At times men have risen to exalted conceptions of the possibility of finding a practicable, safe and sure method of catching, retaining, and rearing the young spat. I quote Winslow to the effect that "Thousands of dollars would be annually saved by the Connecticut oystermen if they could determine, with even approximate accuracy, the date when the attachment of the young oyster would occur. Hundreds of thousands would be saved if they had any reliable method of determining the probabilities of the season." This is now possible.

It is well known that oyster or other shells dried and whitened in the sun form the very best oyster-collectors or cultch. To put these back into the water haphazard has often resulted solely in the loss of all the labor of preparation. In even a few days they may become covered with a slimy coating which reduces or largely destroys their efficiency. The point is to be able to determine with accuracy, for each season and for every locality, when oyster-larvæ are present in the water full-grown and ready to settle as spat, so as not to run the risk of losing adequate value for the laboriously prepared cultch. A man instructed and qualified in the method of taking plankton and in identifying oyster-larvæ can tell almost to a day when is the proper time to put out cultch so as to obtain an abundant and copious set of spat. It is not enough to know about the time, or to know the time for certain previous years, or to know the average time.

Three methods are open to the expert: (1) Examination of the genital organs of adult oysters to determine