

inclosures, and those collected within the spaces, surrounded by these walls, disappeared beneath vast beds of oysters, very soon to be ready for market, just as the soil of our pastures beneath the herbage that covers it. Any one, at pleasure, may verify this fact for himself, when the tide recedes from these collecting grounds, where the shell fish may be gathered dry-shod with as much ease as vines in a vineyard, or vegetables in a garden.

The agents of the local authorities have counted there, on an average, six hundred oysters per square metre, which gives for all the enclosures now in work a total of 378 millions, representing a sum of from six to eight millions of francs.

These honest but unpretending labourers, enlightened by a ray of abstract science, have thus succeeded in raising on some kilometres of unproductive beach, a more abundant harvest than is gathered annually from the whole sea-coast of France.

What will be the result when the whole circumference of the island is placed under cultivation?

But it is not so much the magnitude of the material result, as the moral end to which this result leads, which is most striking in looking at the success of this bold undertaking.

This industrious colony in fact, has not confined its operations to the individual efforts of each of its members; but it has raised the dignity of its labours to a higher standard by the formation of a company, the members of which are all jointly liable, as far as the general interests are concerned, whilst individual property is not in the slightest degree affected by the partnership.

The Company is divided by the deed of partnership into four communities, called after their respective localities, Vert-clos, Préau, Saint Laurent, and Rivedoux.

Each community elects three delegates for purposes of internal management, and to act as representatives in their relations with the naval authorities.

Each community swears in a guard to look after its own stock, and provides for their pay in its special Budget.

All the communities, lastly, meet in a general assembly at the theatre of the island to discuss the requirements of their branch of industry, new improvements in the method of conducting it, and experiments to be tried, just as questions of abstract science are brought under discussion in an academy.

In all this, Sire, the principle of a beneficial organization may clearly be traced, which applied to all the branches of Fishery, will be the means of reconstituting our maritime population on a new footing, making their firesides, at the same time, the seat of their wealth, and the centre of a system for the defence of our coasts.

But to realise this reconstitution, which has been initiated by the organization of the oyster trade, two things are urgently needed: firstly, to place the maritime population in possession of reservoirs upon the sea-coast, where they can deposit those descriptions of fish which admit of being reared. Secondly, to furnish them with the means of providing themselves with vessels capable of standing the dangers attending open sea fishing, and in all weathers; of carrying the produce of their fishing to the reservoirs or market in their holds, converted into tanks. The sole, turbot, brill, lobster, crab, ray, &c., adapt themselves perfectly to this system of domestication. They fatten on the dirt, as animals in a farm-yard. The truth of this has been proved by experiments in my own trial ponds at Concarneau.

When our fishermen have thus at their disposal marine folds, so to speak, they will not be obliged to carry their fish to market till they can meet with a lucrative sale, whilst under the present state of affairs they are under the necessity of selling at any price offered, or of losing the produce of their labour, as their commodity is one which loses its value if not not consumed at once.

Customers, on their part, will be able to order beforehand for their own tables, or to meet the demands of their trade, the number, description, and weight of fish they wish to be forwarded to them, which the owners of these reservoirs will supply them at the appointed day and hour. Thanks to this facility of despatch, no loss or waste will be incurred. Trade in the produce of the sea will be carried on with as great security and precision as that in the produce of the earth.

On the coast of England I have seen pools where ship loads of crabs and lobsters are kept in store, brought from Norway, Ireland, and oftener still from Brittany, in vessels provided with tanks. These large shell fish, enclosed by thirty, forty, or fifty thousand at a time in these pools, the water of which is renewed by the tide, are fed and kept in reserve for the London market, where, on an average, the very fish supplied by our fishermen at the low price of from four to five francs the dozen to the foreign speculator, find purchasers at from thirty to forty francs the dozen.

When the owner has brought his stock to market, he will not let it go except he is satisfied with his profit. If not satisfied he has only to replace his fish in his baskets, carry them back to the reservoir, and wait for a better opportunity. A good stock in hand enables him to meet any demand, however unexpected.

Now, if foreign energy can supply distant markets with the produce of our coasts, and, after defraying the enormous expenses of exportation, turn it into a source of wealth, what profits would not our maritime population derive by organising this trade to meet home consumption!

I am superintending at this moment, thanks to the means your Majesty has placed at my disposal, the construction of a tank, covering an area of 1500 metres, which will serve as a model to those fishermen who are disposed to enter the path of progress. They will see on what scientific principles the natural agencies of the open sea can be developed in a confined space, and how the large numbers of fish enclosed in it live and thrive. The assistance lent me by the pilot Guilloire in this undertaking will enable me to show, by a striking example, the importance, in a commercial point of view, of similar establishments. Salt-water tanks of a like character can easily be constructed in the interior of the country, provided that a free circulation and change of water is properly attended to.

When, in consequence of the establishment of these marine pens, and these fields of shell fish, the maritime population is established in farms of cultivation, they will raise by degrees their branch of industry from the narrow bounds within which their actual condition confines it, and their homes will become at the same time the depôts for preserving fish and the manufacture of fertilizing manures.

They will salt or smoke all the fish they cannot bring to market fresh or alive, that none of the produce of their fishing may be lost: all that is not fit for man's food, or is detrimental to the breeding of the edible species, will form a source of concentrated manure; and the labourer who makes use of it will be astonished at the fertility of his land,