

coast that a Philadelphia firm recently made a proposition to take all that may be caught along the coast this season, with the view of working much of it into mince-meat. The Cape May company, it is said, will reject the offer, as it already has offers from prominent Philadelphia and New York hotels and restaurants, and it is believed that there will be a demand for the meat which cannot be met. The meat is red and juicy, and resembles in appearance beef, but is more solid, finer-grained, and very tender; much more like venison, which it resembles in flavor. They are taken in seines about 1,000 feet long and very wide, and when captured, if not already drowned, are killed by stabbing with knives. It would seem that the outlook for the success of a new and valuable industry being established along our coast is most excellent.

137.—ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT FATTENING OYSTERS.*

By JOHN A. RYDER.

(1) Oysters are not usually "fed" for market; they are sometimes taken from their original bed and carried to the "floats," where fresher water is allowed access to them. Absolutely fresh water would kill them. The fresher water is absorbed in quantity, and gives them an appearance of plumpness.

(2) In such a case they are piled up in mass on the float, but this will not matter; they may be scattered thinly over the float or on a bottom where somewhat fresher water reaches them.

(3) Oysters can be "water-swollen" in this way in twenty-four hours. It is a trick of dealers, resorted to to make their oysters more salable.

(4) The natural food of the oyster is small or very minute animals and plants belonging to widely different orders and classes, plants mainly, however, known as *diatoms*.

(5) There is no ready-made preparation put up for the purpose of feeding oysters. If there is it may be pronounced a humbug. I have heard of corn-meal being used, and some of it would doubtless be digested by the animals, but the way in which I have always heard of its being used is exceedingly wasteful, and the amount actually ingested by the animals as food during the short time they are fed is quite insignificant.

These matters have been somewhat fully discussed in papers by the writer of this, and published in the reports of the Commission, Census, and Geological Survey.

WASHINGTON, D. C., December 24, 1884.

* Writing from Biloxi, Miss., December 17, 1884, Mr. John E. Morrison made the following inquiries:

- (1) Are oysters placed in fresh, salt, or brackish water preparatory to being fed?
- (2) Are they scattered singly in the water or piled up promiscuously?
- (3) What length of time does it generally take to fatten them?
- (4) What is the best food for oysters?
- (5) Is there any preparation put up for feeding oysters, or is corn-meal the best for them?