

19.—OPENING REMARKS OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FISH-CULTURAL SECTION OF THE FISHERIES CONGRESS.

BY EUGENE G. BLACKFORD.

There is very little that I can say on the subject of fish-culture that the gentlemen here are not already familiar with. I have not prepared any paper from lack of time. I can say from practical experience, and from my own observation, that we, the citizens of the United States, have good reason to be proud of the position that we hold to-day in the science of fish-culture. We have been honored by the different governments of the world in their sending ambassadors and commissioners here to study our methods, that they might carry out the same system and plans for the increase of fish food in their own countries.

In the early history of fish-culture, and up to within twenty years, nearly all of the efforts have been bestowed on the artificial propagation of brook trout. Trout-hatching was the commencement of fish-culture, so to speak. After that had been started in this country by Dr. Garlick, followed by Mr. Ainsworth and Seth Green, attention was directed to the artificial propagation of other varieties of fish, and through the efforts of the American Fishery Society public interest has been stimulated and the fields broadened, so that what was in its first organization a "trout-culturist exchange" became the American Fish-Culturists' Association, and that expanded once more so as to take cognizance of everything in connection with the fisheries. That organization now stands under the title of the American Fisheries Society.

What I particularly desire to call your attention to are certain indisputable successes in the art of fish-culture—notably, the planting of young shad in the waters of the Sacramento, through the efforts of the U. S. Fish Commission, from which the waters of the entire Pacific coast are now abundantly stocked with this choice fish. A little over a year ago, while visiting the markets at San Francisco, I found shad there so abundant that they sold for 5 cents each. Many of these shad weighed as much as 12 pounds each. One of the marketmen told me that they had had several specimens during the season that weighed 15 pounds each. This, as you are aware, is a remarkable growth. I also saw striped bass weighing from 10 to 15 pounds each that had been caught in those waters. These fish a few years ago, and until the waters had been stocked by the U. S. Fish Commission, were not known in that region. Another item of interest in this connection is that the shad have gradually spread out, so that they are found on that coast as far north as the Columbia River.

These facts prove that fish-culture is an absolute and exact science, from which undoubted results can always be counted on, if it is carried out intelligently.