

Marvelous Life Is Led by the Oyster

Changes From Male to Female and Back Again.

London.—The curator of the aquarium at the London zoo is astonished to find how little people know about that luscious bivalve, the oyster. So with the aid of Doctor Orton, head of the British government survey at Plymouth, he writes a romantic biography in the Observer of London:

"The oyster starts its life as a free-swimming organism, keeping itself afloat and moving in the water for about a fortnight by means of the cilia, its fairy-like paddles, in energetic motion. Gradually its developing shell becomes heavier, the weight becomes too much even for its most tremendous efforts, and it sinks to the bottom or until it touches some solid object.

"On its luck, for one can describe it in no other fashion, at this stage depends its future existence. Landing on mud or soft sand, its doom is sealed and many millions of oysters in this fashion perish annually.

American Experts' Ways.

"For cheapness and for ease of detachment of the developing oysters the American experts have lately used the rectangular cardboard egg holders from egg boxes similarly coated with lime and sand.

"Once settled the oyster has literally nothing to do but eat and grow. Its one occupation in life is to strain gallon after gallon of water through its filtering mechanism, which retains the minute food organisms and passes them on into the mouth of the animal.

"Its one protection against its enemies is its hard shell and the ability to keep the two valves firmly closed by the adductor muscle. Crabs, however, can break it open. Starfish may either pull the shell apart, or by means of a convenient arrangement, when the oyster is too big and strong for this operation, and equally too big to swallow, they may evert the stomach and engulf the unfortunate oyster, until at last, compelled to open its shells for fresh supplies of oxygen, it is attacked, weakened, and finally destroyed by the digestive juices.

"In its second summer the oyster reaches maturity, and it is with the investigation of this period of its life that Doctor Orton has been chiefly associated. The oyster is not a hermaphrodite, nor is it propagated by division. It is bisexual; but any one oyster does not belong to one sex throughout its life.

Transformation of Sex.

"At first maturity the oyster functions as a male. Within six weeks of that time it may be a female carrying a full complement of developing embryos. When these last are ready for the free swimming stage they are discharged into the water, and the parent, its duty done, again becomes a male, and goes into a resting stage from which it will not emerge until the following summer, or, possibly, a year later than that, when the cycle is again repeated.

"Unlike the eggs of most fish,

the eggs of the oyster are fertilized within the body of the parent, where they are retained until the developing embryos, of which there may be a million or more, have actually reached the form of small oysters. They are not, however, immediately extruded into the water, but first spend an intermediate existence in the mantle cavity of the parent, where they may continue to develop actually in water, but under fully protected conditions.

"At first, unless examined under the microscope, they resemble a milky fluid, and to those in the trade the oyster is then known as 'white sick.' As the shell develops, the mass becomes gray, and then dark, when the parent oyster is described as 'black sick.' At the end of this stage the young oysters are literally blown into the water, thereafter to fend for themselves."

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Scientist Captures Free Electricity

New York.—A scientist's dream—harnessing sunlight as a source of electricity—has come true.

"Free electricity," drawn from sunlight, lit an electric bulb!

Dr. Collin G. Fink, professor of electro-chemistry at Columbia university, showed how his latest development, the "sun converter cell" had tripled the amount of electricity he could gather from the sun's rays.

Doctor Fink placed his cell on a window sill. Attached to a terminal of the apparatus was an ordinary bulb and a galvanometer — for measuring the strength of the current.

He pulled up a shade, allowing the light to strike the cell. The sensitive galvanometer immediately noted a flow of electricity. A moment or two passed. Then the filament wire in the bulb began to glow.

Doctor Fink said he can now collect only 1 per cent of the solar radiation, but hopes to do better.

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SEEN and HEARD around the NATIONAL CAPITAL

By Carter Field



FAMOUS WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

Washington.—Most of the talk about the possibility of defeating Franklin D. Roosevelt next year, which still seems a most unlikely event, but is being discussed wherever politicians congregate, seems to hinge on the possibility of either a conservative Democratic bolt, or of a fusion ticket—a combination of Republicans with conservative Democrats.

Anything can happen, but third tickets are very difficult to start, and fusions next to impossible to get going. Of the two, the fusion would seem to have the most promise of success, but by the same token is less likely to happen.

More effective than either is simply a wholesale but unofficial bolt of party leaders. That is what happened to the Democrats when Alfred E. Smith was nominated in 1928, and when prohibition and the religious issue resulted in a considerable fraction of the Democracy of many states either staying home on election day, or going all the way and voting the Republican ticket.

Contrasted with the La Follette third party four years earlier, this was tremendous in its effects. But for the present purposes it is interesting to look back at how the La Follette third party in 1924 worked inversely to any conceivable hopes of its backers.

It will be recalled that La Follette carried one state, Wisconsin. That is all his party figured, so far as the electoral vote tabulation showed. But the fact that the La Follette party was in the race changed a great many electoral votes. The point worth considering is that in every case the effect was to drive electoral votes to the Republican nominee, instead of to the Democratic nominee.

This was because the country was prosperous, and was afraid of any element of uncertainty being injected. Widespread polls taken by various independent agencies, particularly the Literary Digest, showed early in the campaign, that there was a possibility La Follette might carry a number of states. For example, this poll showed in September that La Follette was very close to Coolidge in California.

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Chinese Racial Traits Studied in California

San Francisco.—The big Chinese colony here, largest in the world outside of China, is being turned into a great experimental laboratory. Most of young China here is being measured and photographed to determine if America changes Chinese characteristics. Parents of 3,000 school children are to be examined later.

Already changes have been noted in physical stature and cranial features. Heads of American-born Chinese are found to be larger, but growth of their bodies slower than their China-born brothers and sisters.

The work is part of the most extensive anthropological tests ever made on the Chinese people. It is the idea of twenty-six-year old Samuel D. Lee, Chinese graduate of Pomona, and is being carried on as an emergency relief project.

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Octopus Influx Is New Menace for Fishermen

San Francisco.—An octopus wave from the coast of Mexico is giving northern California shallow water fishermen plenty of thrills and background for real "fish stories."

Several fishermen, particularly those seeking crabs under crevices and backwashers, have been seized and have been saved only by friends who chopped off the tentacles of the devil fish.

The visitation, said Dr. Alvin Seal, director of Steinhart aquarium here, is due to a sudden shift in current from the Mexican coast, the usual range of the fish.

Two species are in the migration—one small, not more than 14 inches across the arms, and the other large, measuring as long as 15 feet.

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Santa Claus in Politics

Seldom has the power of Santa Claus in politics been so forcibly demonstrated as by the recent senate vote on the AAA amendments, one of the chief purposes of which was to freeze the processing taxes beyond the probability of being upset by the Supreme court.

But this danger is not past, and for a most interesting reason. Expectancy here is that the present processing taxes will be held unconstitutional by the high court. Legal opinion here is divided as to whether the next taxes will pass the test or not. But legal opinion is virtually united that if it had not been for two factors, the high court would uphold the next taxes.

One of these points would have been met if congress, in fixing the taxes, had left out the formula for changing them. This formula has to do with prices paid the farmers for commodities. It provides for a change in the processing taxes if

partists, whom they fought so desperately a century ago.

Three years ago the hundredth anniversary of the death of the Eaglet was celebrated by France. Next year the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of his birth will be observed.

The Eaglet, who was made king of Rome when he was born in Paris, died as the duke of Reichstadt at the age of twenty-one in the Vienna castle of Schoenbrunn.

After the fall of Napoleon, his son was deprived of everything that might remind him of his father.

He died of consumption, according to the official announcements. It was popular belief, however, that the young prince was poisoned by Prince Metternich, Austrian chancellor.