of the main lines of the country. The capital is forthcoming, and it is quite likely that in a few years this mountain, which is of such great interest in geologic, topographic, and artistic respects, will have acquired an almost incalculable industrial importance.

NATURAL ENEMIES OF OYSTERS.

MAN in former times, and even at present in some localities, might be classed with the enemies of the oyster. But now, when he is introducing artificial means for their multiplication, instead of an enemy he becomes their protector. There are animals, harmless-looking and small, which do far more damage to this delicious shell-fish than man, and that, too, without giving anything in return. The many which are destroyed by human agency become few when compared to those killed by their smaller foes.

The oyster, although protected by a very hard shell that can be closed almost hermetically, is, on the whole, rather poorly defended, for there he lies right on the open bottom, exposed to everything that may chance to come along, without any power to move away and crawl into some crevice, but destined to remain motionless while attacked. Two kinds of animals do the most damage: one the common star-fish (Asterias Forbesii), the other a univalve spiral shell-fish, called by oystermen the 'drill' (Eurosalpinx cinerea).

A star-fish approaches its victim, slowly crawls upon it, and then bends its five arms around the shell. The mouth of a star fish is so small that an oyster a quarter of an inch long could not be taken into it. So what does it do, when its arms are encircled around the large oyster, but begin to project its stomach out of its mouth and surround the oyster with its stomach entirely outside of the body. Then the oyster gradually opens its shell, leaving the star-fish to do as it pleases. After a while the star-fish moves off, and we see that a large part of the oyster is gone. When the stomach is first protruded a liquid is excreted which seems to have the power of either killing or weakening the oyster. Just as soon as the shells are open digestion is begun by the star-fish, and after a short time the hunger of the star-fish is satisfied and the oyster is dead. Before long the star-fish feels like another meal, and he attacks another oyster, leaving the old one as prey to small crabs and shrimp. And so it goes on day after day, thousands operating in the same manner. At times they come in immense swarms from deeper water, in a single night entirely destroying a large bed. In brackish water they do not flourish, but in the almost pure ocean water found in some oyster-raising districts the destruction is immense, and there is no remedy.

If some shell-fish for which the star-fish have a preference could be introduced among the oysters, perhaps the devastation might be partially checked. Oystermen formerly had the stupid habit of tearing every star-fish that happened to come in their way into pieces, throwing the fragments overboard. They were not aware that each arm had the power of reproducing the remaining four arms and becoming a perfect star, so that each time one was torn into two or three pieces, two or three new individuals were formed.

The other enemy, the so-called 'drill,' is well named, for its peculiar operations are based upon its boring or drilling powers. Although seldom an inch long, it can bore a hole through the hard shell of an oyster with surprising speed. The hole is always smooth and about in the same place, a spot covering a vital part being the point attacked. Similar 'drills' operate on other species of shell-fish, and their deadly marks can be seen on the valves of the shells which are washed upon our beaches. In any collection of shells, and on any beach, numerous examples of the neatly-drilled hole can be found.

In the soft animal part of the 'drill' there is a little tube-like proboscis which encloses another proboscis. Over the end of the latter there runs a little ribbon which is covered with teeth. This ribbon, or odontophore, is attached at each end on the two opposite sides of the inner proboscis. By means of muscles at the base of each end of the ribbon it may be pulled back and forth over the end of the snout, with the teeth projecting outward. When the oyster is to be attacked, the end of the snout is pressed against that part of the shell to be bored, and the muscles begin to work the toothed strap. The teeth rasp away at the shell, each time removing particles of calcareous matter until a hole is bored. Then the rasp acts upon the flesh inside, and as the meat is removed it is drawn to the mouth and eaten.

The 'drill,' after eating a meal, leaves its victim, and later attacks another. By the time it has finished its meal the oyster is dead, and its shell flies open, leaving the rest to crabs and shrimp. Filing away upon the hard shell wears the teeth away rapidly, but this is remedied by nature, for one end of the strap is gradually absorbed, while from the other end a new supply of toothed ribbon is being formed. So, on one side of the proboscis, there are fresh unused teeth; on the other side, old worn ones; and on the end, teeth just being worn; and the whole gradually moving away to one end, to be absorbed while other fresh ones are being formed.

RALPH S. TARR.