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REDEMPTION OF POCOMOKE

Capt. Ben Johnson, a big merchant of Masongo, in the heart of Accomac's oyster industry, was a visitor here last Saturday and Sunday. In the course of conversation with him we found him enthusiastic on the oyster outlook for his section. Five years ago his sound (Pocomoke) was virtually barren of oysters, having been denuded, even as Tangier Sound in Maryland, by constant depredation and official inattention. In consequence, Virginians in Pocomoke Sound (and it is almost wholly within Virginia) had to go elsewhere for a living in the oyster business. It is not too long ago to be recalled by nearly all on the James river that the oystermen of Saxis and other localities in Accomac went in fleets to the James' beds for their winter's work. This was a hardship on the emigrants and a double hardship on the residents along the James. Within the few years past this has ceased entirely; the people of Saxis, Masongo and thereabouts are staying home, and making more money off the oyster rocks than they ever did there before, or in the James. The people of the James are now free of this class of our citizens. Only from the York do they still migrate to the James—because the York has been for years in the depleted class along with Pocomoke Sound. While improving by good policing, the York needs legislation, which politics and misrepresentation of officials' purposes will not permit; so that river is still not what it ought to be or could be made. The same holds good as to Mobjack bay, a valuable territory that is almost barren of oysters. It could be made a mine of wealth, but is kept down because of misunderstood purposes.

But to get back to the Pocomoke. Capt. Johnson, supported by other authorities, states that this season three men tonging, with two cull boys, have been catching 150 bushels of oysters any good day from the rocks in Pocomoke Sound. These oysters are of the first quality, and have been selling from forty to sixty cents a bushel. In other parts of the Sound the average for two men and a boy has been sales of \$100 per week.

Fortunately, along the water-course there, labor other than for the oyster business is not required to any great extent. Otherwise there would be suffering of industries, for no one will hire out for shore work when they can make such independent money as this.

The James has felt the good of withdrawing this annual drain of workers from her beds; Pocomoke and the James are now breaking their records as to catch and remuneration to citizens—and indirectly to the State—and a happier condition exists for all around.

Providence has had a hand in this good result, but Providence has always been willing to do its part when man would come up with his. The lesson is not hard to learn, and if the York and Mobjack would but join hands in the good work, stop listening to disgruntled ones and desist from personal enmities two more glorious sections of our old Commonwealth could be reclaimed.