



# NEW STYLES in FOOD

*A LITTLE touch of the Eskimo in a lot of Canadians might make a big difference to our Available Sources of Food in a land of so many lakes, oceans and rivers. Much depends upon the cook.*

By REV. N. MacGILLIVRAY

**Q**UITE lately we read in the newspapers of a small company of men in New York, interested in new foods,

dining off whale steak, and pronouncing it very good. Still more recently a newspaper item announced that a certain well-known club in one of our large cities would dine upon whale to-morrow. The breed of whale was not mentioned, but any one of the large Cetacean family would do, although there is likely a difference in quality and flavor according to the species. There is, besides, much in the art of the cook, and in the flavoring condiments.

In these unwonted days we are being shaken out of many of our wonted conventions and prejudices, touching many aspects and ways of life. The unusual has already become common in many things, and is likely to become so in many more in the near days ahead. And we are falling in, not ungracefully, with the new order.

We are learning to eliminate waste in the use of food. We Canadian people, so long rolling in plenty, have been great sinners. The products of nature and human husbandry are not inexhaustible. Not only have we been self-indulgent and wasteful of food, but of the very ground also, and of its natural gifts, destroying our incomparable forests, and depopulating our ocean coasts and inland waters. Nowhere do we find waste in God's husbandry, or use of material. Whatever is left over in any process is at once turned to new account.

Oleomargarine is coming in to eke out the butter supply; and except in a minor particular or two, it is said to be quite as good a food. Few essences or flavors from the vegetable world now reach our kitchens or tables. Synthetic chemistry provides them from that apparently inexhaustible mine of valuable products in the practical arts—Coal Tar. The Prussians were not unacquainted with the food value and palatability of whale steak, long before the experiment of the New York savants, and before our tight blockade compelled them to have much freer recourse to it. Whalers have always noted the beefy appearance of the fleshy layer beneath the blubber, and nothing but the common seaman's superstition prevented them from using it, and finding out its anti-scorbutic effect against the salt junk which is so large an element in the ocean sailor's fare. Properly cooked, whale flesh has always been pronounced "good eating."

Down the widening St. Lawrence, and through the Gulf, how often one sees the porpoises in shoals, feeding and playing, and the larger grampus also. These lesser members of the extensive whale race furnish valuable oil, if not in large quantities, and could also furnish a considerable amount of flesh food when carefully separated from the fat and suitably cured. On the north shore of the river, a French fisherman once offered me a piece of roasted porpoise meat, which was quite pleasant to the palate, and free from any disagreeable consequence. Our explorers in the far North have eaten walrus and seal with no ill effects. And once they got over their prejudice, they could freely indulge. Of course, the supply in these lines of food may never be large enough to appreciably affect the market; but it is quite worth considering at a time when the words "food famine" are heard in men's mouths. In addition, the shark, dogfish and the horse-mackerel have all, on

trial, been declared suitable for human food. In the light of these well-established facts, let us promptly get quit of our prejudices against new kinds of food, and be thankful for our abundant mercies.

John the Baptist dined off locusts and wild honey, and he was the biggest man of his time. The insect is either used fresh, fried in a little butter, or pickled for future use. The ancient Greeks could make a meal of black bread, and a few olives, with a relish of cicada paste, and a drink from the brook; and the world has been thrilled by their art and eloquence ever since.

Then there is the wide range of the Reptilia from which to draw in certain countries of our British Commonwealth. On good authority we are told that the crocodile of Africa, the gavial of Asia, and the alligator and cayman of the Americas can be utilized for food, when due care is taken in killing the animal and in cutting and curing the flesh. There are ways of removing any musky or fishy flavor or odor, that may be naturally present. Probably the whole turtle tribe also, marine fresh water and terrene have considerable food value. The smaller species and varieties might not yield much, but in any event, do not the little make up, in one way and another, the complement of the larder?

And the smaller lizards, aquatic and terrene, must not be left out of account. Even the most repulsive-looking among them is said to have tender and juicy

flesh. In the Mexican lakes, the axolotl is fished for regularly as an article of food. This is a curious amphibian—really that—

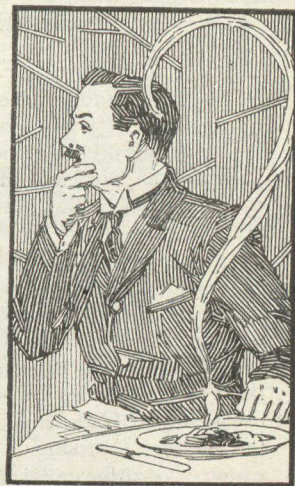
with the lungs and gills, and four slender legs; from six to nine inches long; quite fleshy and much prized for the table. In our Canadian lakes and larger rivers, we have its cousin, the menobranchus, somewhat larger than the axolotl, and well covered with flesh. Those who have eaten it pronounce the quality excellent; with coffee and buttered toast making a capital breakfast. It is not an abundant denizen of our waters, but in April, when it approaches the shores to spawn, numbers can be caught. I have found it in that season in the Kingston drydock, and I have kept it by me for weeks to observe its ways of life.

The late Professor Shaler of Harvard tells us in his autobiography of some intensely interesting and amusing incidents of a four-months' cruise, planned and financed by himself and two college chums, in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, around Anticosti, and along the Labrador coast. The schooner, Skipper Small (who weighed 300 pounds), one able-bodied seaman, and the cabin boys under their authority and direction. The adventures were themselves to work, and the need might be, and to fall by the watch. Their object, which was a holiday outing, but a serious one, was to see a better world of plants and animals, and of life.

**A**T sea for some weeks they claved for fresh meat. They shot the sea-pigeon (guillemot, a species of gull) and found it "excellent eating," says Shaler. After that they ventured on other gulls, and found them also "very palatable," only taking the precaution to parboil them before they went into the stew-pot. The skipper had the repugnance of the sailor to eating sea-fowl, believing that such sacrilege would surely bring bad weather and disaster. And when he saw the whole crew "eating gulls" his disgust was only equalled by his "volcanic and complicated profanity." But the boys watched their opportunity and retorted cleverly on the skipper. One day ashore he shot two ducks, and intended to eat them himself, he said. They could stick to their nasty gulls. When dinner was served, there were two dishes exactly alike, with two birds in each, also exactly alike: but the skipper ate the gulls, and the boys got the ducks and the skipper didn't know it.

My point in summarizing this story is to show that along our coastal and inland waters, there may be a good deal of bird life, apart from ducks, quite fit for food.

I have myself eaten bear, raccoon, porcupine, woodchuck, black squirrel and frog, and, like Shaler, could say that they were "excellent eating." A few years ago, visiting one of the larger market places of Paris, some strange foods were to be seen. In one section there were cray fish all the way from Russia and Sweden, kept alive in running water, and regularly fed; and the demand for it was active. Now this crustacean is very passable food, and in eatable size—quite as big as the Parisian importation—once existed in the streams of Ontario before they dwindled under summer heat. As a boy I caught them five and six inches long. Where the country is still largely uncleared, and the water fairly steady and unfouled, cray-fishing might be worth while.



## IMAGINATION'S THE THING

**D**R. GEORGE LOCKE, Chief Librarian of Toronto, speaking wisely at the memorial service to an eminent if not great educator, said that present systems of education produce a high average of mediocrity, but few leaders. The late Nathaniel Burwash, so many years venerable head of Victoria University and College, was a leader. And he belonged to a golden age in Canadian schooling. There is always a golden age. Those of the future will continue to be of the past unless we take more stock in the life work of such men as Burwash and carry further the admonition of such men as Locke.

Mediocrity; fair to middling; dead level; why these after centuries of enlightenment since the mediaeval schoolmen in the dark ages? Because in reforming education we have left out Imagination and have therefore lost Interest. Nobody was ever interested in being educated by the belt-drive method. The boy who hates the nine o'clock bell afterwards hates the time clock and aims to be head of a union; and the teacher who made him hate the bell is no better than the factory manager who makes him despise the time clock. Both are one and the same thing.

No leaders—why? Because we have made the school kill Imagination, mother of Interest. No leader ever led without great imagination. And there are mediocrities in Canada today who might have been somewhere near leaders if some school had not drilled out of them the last hopeful spark of constructive imagination they had. No leaders? Because we believe a school is a Prussian knowledge factory not operated on lines of interest but of utility, of which there is never any end of invention that as a rule gets nowhere. The Prussian idea admits of no leaders, because it requires none to be led. It drives; cracks the whip; drives Prussian youths to commit suicide because they hate the school and the system of which it is a part. Canadian youths don't commit suicide to escape exams. We are not as bad as the Prussians. But in eliminating interest based upon imagination we are on the road to killing the love of school except as a means of making a boy or a girl useful in gaining what is called a livelihood. The youngest great country in the world is making the art of teaching one of the lost arts, and the joy of learning for its own sake almost as rare as snowballs in dog days. All vitalizing education proceeds upon lines of interest; and interest in studies is fed wholly upon the imagination. Kill that, stultify that, and the goose that lays the golden egg is dead forever.—Written by an ex-"Educator."