CHAPTER XI.

ORDER APODES.

FAMILY ANGUILLIDÆ.—GENUS ANGUILLA.—ANGUILLA TEN-UIROSTRIS.—(*Common Eel.*)—Body long, cylindrical, compressed on sides of the tail. Surface covered with thick mucous, concealing scales so minute as to be visible only under a lens. The head small and flattened above, pointed; lower jaw longest; eyes placed just above the angle of the mouth. The dorsal, caudal and anal fins are united; pectoral fins narrow, ventrals wanting. Colour, greenish olive above, yellow beneath; length one to two feet. When skinned and properly dressed, it is an excellent article of food, but many persons find it difficult to surmount the prejudice of its snake-like appearance; though certainly those fastidious people would doubtless prefer the serpentine form of the eel to the so-called *Bush Fish*, eaten by the early settlers in the valley of the Mohawk, on Fridays, which legendary lore tells us, in the absence of real fish, were nothing more or less *than snakes, cooked as eels!* In spring and summer the eel is taken in large wicker baskets, called eel-pots, which are baited with offal, and from which, when the eel has once entered, it is impossible for it to make its exit. Night-lines, laid with numerous hooks, are also a sure method of capture, and spearing by torchlight affords a favourite amusement. All dead animal substances are a great attraction for eels. Those taken from running water are the best flavored, since those which lie in deep holes, or about stagnant pools, taste strongly of the muddy bottom. The structure of the branchial organs of the eel, enables it to live for a long period out water, and as they can move along the ground, it is not uncommon to find them shifting their quarters from one creek to another, by crawling through the grass when wet. It lives equally well in salt, brackish, or fresh water. It is a powerful, muscular fish, and should one, having seized the angler's hook, contrive to entwine