

# Eat Fish!---And Plenty of Fish!

The Following Article which we have Quoted from a British Magazine, will be Found Interesting both from an Educational and Economic Point of View, in the Matter of the Various kinds of Fish Suitable for Food our People are Notoriously Ignorant—Many of the Fish Mentioned are to be Found Around our Shores, Although Under Different Names, and if Properly Cooked will add New Interest and Variety to our Piscatorial Menu

By CLIFFORD CORDLEY.

Medical men and other experts on diet land the herring, either fresh or in the bloater stage, as ideal food, whether regarded from the edible or the nutritive standpoint. But the common herring, seasonable in autumn, winter, and spring, is a somewhat scarce fish in war-time, when fish food is a subject so important to the nation at large.

By way of introducing our subject, let us glance cursorily at the past, there is a quaint old book treating of fish in the medieval kitchen. This work is styled "The Forme of Cury," a Roll of Ancient English Cookery." It was compiled about 1390 by the master-cook of Richard the Second. This roll shows that certain species of fish were not much eaten in the fourteenth century, whilst others, now largely neglected, were valued. However, we find that this royal chef prepared haddocks, and also sent to table roach, tench, ruffe, and pike. There is no reference to most palatable fish, but it is stated that porpoise was highly esteemed, and deemed altogether a dish to set before a king. As roach food, also, were regarded the mackerel, turbot, gunnards, sole, burch, lampreys, lampurns, and tench, of which last-mentioned more anon. In those bygone, jolly medieval days, sellers of fresh-water fish were dubbed "pickemongers"—the other proof of the old-time value of the line or pike as a fish food.

Whether by experience or by report we all know the toothsome quality of the same varieties of British fresh-water

fishes: of salmon, of sea-trout, under its various names of sewin, salmon-trout, peel, mort, and, in the grilse stage, herling, whiting, flinck, etc.; of brown or brook trout; and of grayling: all of which are costly to buy, and still more so to kill with the angle-rod even in times of peace. Pretty generally, however, the culinary value of so-called "coarse" or "rough" fishes is alike misunderstood and neglected: and yet these are so valuable, and are, or might be, and should be, so plentiful in these islands. It was not always thus in Britain.

According to Chaucer, the average country gentleman five hundred years ago kept bream and pike in stew, and mark this, for it is important—fed them. Then, and later, every lord, squire, yeoman, bishop, abbot, prior, and every other owner and even occupier of land and water, kept, cultivated, and preserved "coarse" fish in moat, stew, pond, pool, or dike: and these old-fashioned folk were well aware that cultured fishes were more palatable than excessive ones, contrary to Johnson's dictum with regard to feathered and furred game. They cooked and ate, with relish and nourishment, pike, perch, dace, carp, tench, zudgeon, leaches, and eels, most of which, save luscious eels, are too little eaten in these up-to-date times, when we are up to the eyes in war and up to the neck in debt.

There are in British waters over forty varieties of fresh-water fishes, all of which are edible. Indeed, Sir Herbert Maxwell specifies some fifty or more, of which some, as they ascend rivers to spawn, pertain alike to marine and fluviatile orders, and others are merely variants of better-known species. Even the zudgeon, (which some anglers regard merely as bait), the minnow, the bleak, and the loach may be made as pleasing to the palate as the overrated whitebait; while eels, lampreys, and lampurns are esteemed as delicacies by those who have eaten of them—properly cooked. It is the cook who wins or loses the trick. On the Continent carp and tench are served and eaten as dainties, owing largely, but not entire-

ly to the accompanying sauces. We need not follow Walton's tip, and disguise the flavour of our fish with anchovy, wine, herbs, and other foreign matter: but we might take a hint from an enemy land, where coarse fish are largely provided and eaten. Nor must we forget the exquisite smelt, swarming in estuarine waters, and seasonable in autumn and winter. Most dainty food, it is, alas! very perishable. Also, the toothsome gray mullet, strictly a marine variety of fish, is largely prevalent in the lower waters of certain of our rivers in August and succeeding months. Especially in these times, the cook is too apt to be prejudiced in favour of costly flesh food, and to despise the far more economically valuable qualities of fish, including some of the roughest of "coarse" varieties.

The ways in which fish is ordinarily introduced at many British tables are: firstly, boiled with water for the main ingredient, the flesh saturated for want of exactness on the part of the cook; secondly, fried, the skin either pale or colourless, or of dark, unpleasing hue, and limp and greasy, also the result of carelessness or ignorance of the cook; and, thirdly, broiled, which turns out well, provided always that the fire is bright and clear, and the operation executed with cleanliness and precision. The appetising souchet (a dish of Dutch origin), poisson au gratin, fricassee, stews, fish-pies, twice-laid, rissoles, and, above all, the bouillabaisse (lauded in verse by Thackeray) are largely strangers on many British tables.

From a gustatory point of view, fish has great value, and deserves, and demands, much more favour than it gets. From a sanitary point of view, there is no question as to the worth of fish. As a matter of national and individual economy, under existing abnormal circumstances and conditions little likely to relax for some time to come, fish food ought to be, and should be, largely used.

We hardly need to treat of the cooking of salmon, sewin, trout, and grayling. It will be more profitable to deal briefly with the preparation for the table of pike, perch, eels, tench, carp, dace, zudgeon, bream, and other common and fairly plentiful species. Eels may be boiled, stewed, fried, served as a pie, or potted; whilst soup is alike dainty and strengthening. Perch may be served up in many and excellent fashions: grilled like a haddock, floating in souchet (which is

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stock), fried in fillets with egg and bread-crumbs, stuffed and baked, stewed like a red mullet, or broiled, with inside intact, and head, gills, and scales remaining—for the time being. With this fish, as with all others, it is important that it should be fresh from the water, and be of medium rather than of abnormal size. A perch from running water is far preferable to one from reservoir, pool, or pond.

The tench and the carp, being collectively allied may be treated together, and somewhat similarly in the kitchen. Our dear Gallic friends and Allies stew and fry these fish, while the inhabitants of Germany, previously hinted at, greatly cherish the carp family. There is tench-pee, and there are boiled carp, laked carp, marinade (which is, roughly, pickle of carp, grilled carp, and matelote (a mixture of salmon and fish); preparations of tench, pickerel, and eels. Stewed barbel may (perhaps) be made toothsome to some mouths, while zudgeon should be fried like the exquisite smelt. Nor must we forget the flounders, which is a delicious fish. Pike may be baked, or cooked as a pie, or not; but, preferably, a jack should be boiled, mackerel fashion, with appropriate sauce—and parsley, caper, Hollandaise, or what not—according to that taste about which there is proverbially no disputing; and a pike should be stuffed, roasted, basted, and exhibited much as one would deal with a hare or a fillet of veal. By jack one means a fish of a few pounds weight; by pike, a specimen of at least ten pounds ponderosity. As for the vitellus chub, one fears that the cook must generally reject these "stilles"; while bream, beloved of our ancestors, cannot be recommended highly. Similarly with barbel, or more so.

But in order to have an abundance of fish food we must have an abundance of fish. There is no reason why the majorities of fish which are found in our rivers, meres, lochs, lakes, reservoirs, ponds, pools, moats, dikes, and watery areas generally should not be both plentiful and cheap, should not furnish desirable, delectable, and provident food for the million. Game fish—the salmonidae—should be preserved, protected, conserved, and cultivated. A good example is set by numerous corporations, which have stocked their reservoirs with trout, thus providing sport, revenue, and aliment. All manners of coarse fish should be bred, fed, and reared, as are sheep, cattle, and poultry. The harvest of the waters may be made as profitable as that of the land. Where streams are flowing, and where enclosed waters have ingress and egress trout may be cultivated. In one of his books Sir Herbert Maxwell says: "Were we, as a nation, more careful then we are to develop the natural resources of our waters, the barbot would undoubtedly repay care in its propagation, for it would thrive at the expense of less valuable fish in many ponds and lakes now exclusively inhabited by inferior varieties. It is equally at home in running and still waters, and would probably pick up a living wherever it can do so—that is wherever it is wet or damp."

But in the preserving of fish and the provision of fish food we must not overlook the fact that the fish themselves must have a sufficiency of nutritious food. Certain plants, certain so-called "weeds" (often good matter in the wrong place), bushes, trees, shrubs, cresses, crustacea, and other piscine aliment, or that which is productive of aliment, must be provided especially, but not solely, in still and enclosed areas of water.

In planting fish—in fish-farming—the ground needs as careful preparation as the water. Also, particularly as regards the trout family, we need inlets and outlets and aeration. We should bear in mind the possible adaptation of brooks, burns, and tricklets. Absolutely barren waters, useless and unproductive, which, with a provision of aquatic plants and other fish food, may be rendered fishy and profitable, should be stocked. We should encourage the growth of trees, bushes, shrubs, and long grasses on the banks together with dahlias, artichokes, and so forth; whilst larvae of water-flies can be bought and introduced, together with suitable aquatic plants. For further and full information on this

**GERMAN DEAD PILED HIGH IN VAIN ATTACKS ON HILL 304**

Survivor of a Mitrailleuse Section Wiped Out at Verdun, Tells of Fierce Battle, Where Above the Artillery They Could Hear the Hoarse Orders of Hun Officers

PARIS, May 14.—I saw a member of the mitrailleuse section and his account shows what the mitrailleuse corps had to endure at Verdun. It was warm work, he said, it was warm work. We had to fight one against five and one against ten and sometimes more. We were well in reserve behind the first line east of Hill 304. Eight sections—sixteen mitrailleuses—held the head of the ravine. For 48 hours we had been enduring a terrific bombardment and when the big guns ceased the attack commenced. We took a little sleep while one of our number stood guard.

Not until the struggle for the first line was over and the Germans got a foot in the trenches did our sentry wake us. HE SHOUTED GAS. And we groaned and grumbled as we woke up to adjust our goggles and masks.

Then without orders, and by instinct, we took our places at the guns. Our lieutenant stood with his glasses to his eyes watching the Germans, hardly concealing himself. The gas passed us by. We saw no Germans but the shells began to throw up small volcanoes on the ridge before us and we knew the Boches were coming through hell. The German line showed on the ridge and we began.

They advanced steadily but the fire made them recoil only to come on again and recoil a second time. Occasionally we could hear the hoarse command of the German officer despite the noise of our guns.

At last they got too near us. Our artillery was no longer able to help for fear of firing into us. The Boches were within fifty yards of our position when the captain ordered us to fire all pieces at top speed. Three hundred bullets a minute we fired from sixteen mitrailleuses. The Boches fled full speed, leaping over the bodies of their own dead comrades while our bullets chased them.

At break of day, a few hours later, for a night of constant calls to positions, a sentry arrived breathless with a message for the captain. We were almost surrounded and the Germans were coming again. "WE HAVE GOT TO BEGIN AGAIN," said my corporal. There remained for each gun ten boxes of cartridge belts—three thousand shots—and besides each man had a hundred and fifty cartridges for his rifle. The Boches artillery let up for a few minutes and then redoubled in fury. Four of our mitrailleuses were put out of action. Near us our lieutenant went in impotent rage. At last grace adieu. The artillery ceased. Back to our pieces we went and we had the faces of demons so happy were we to see the enemy fall. We heaped their dead in piles and at the same time four of our aviators flew over us dropping bombs on the Germans while we fired and fired unceasingly and tirelessly.

Our captain, lieutenant and many others were killed, but how many Germans paid for that vain attempt.

most important subject, see "Fish Farming for Pleasure and Profit" by "Practical" (the Burlington Publishing Company.)

How rarely does one see pike or perch exposed on the slabs of fish-mongers! And yet, in the matter of distribution, it must be remembered that fresh-water fishes are no more perishable than are herrings and mackerel; and they should be bought and sold by all dealers in the vicinity of the waters providing the fishes in question.

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