

The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE
DOMINION.

Published weekly by
THE WILLIAM WELD COMPANY (Limited).

JOHN WELD, Manager.

Agents for "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal,"
Winnipeg, Man.

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egg circle work seems gradually to be getting on a firmer footing, and that in Ontario the United Farmers' Co-operative Company have been signally successful in establishing an egg and poultry branch of their business. This has been the one thing needed to create a more general interest in the product of the homely hen. Already the U. F. O. Co-operative have won both sweepstakes for commercial and producers' exhibits of eggs at the Canadian National Exhibition, which would seem to indicate a high-quality ideal on the part of that organization. There is room, however, for much more education among producers as to what really constitutes an egg of stated grade, to say nothing of what a really good egg is and must show before the candle. The chain of factors leading to a stronger interest in poultry and eggs is rapidly developing and it should not be long before the hen, neglected for so long, can take her proud place as the central figure in a national business of steadily increasing size. Good hens, intelligent feeding, strict grading and quick handling will do the trick.

The Alleged World Food Shortage.

By A. LAN MCDIARMID.

As far back as the records of human history go mankind seems always to have been in fear of something. Even when he had become somewhat accustomed to the lightning and the thunder and the wind, and after he had secured himself against the attacks of the wild animals that surrounded him, he began to set up gods, either in his imagination or in the form of images of things with which he had come in contact, and these gods became to him an object of fear as well as adoration. Fear isn't supposed to be a pleasant sensation but, apparently, humanity must rather enjoy it, judging from the facts we have before us.

Fear may be a good thing up to a certain point. It is likely to have the effect of inducing us to provide for future wants, in the way of homes, clothing, food and the thousand and one things that we have come to look upon as the "necessities of life." The actual pain of hunger and cold compel us to think about our present requirements, but fear goes further than this, with the

result that we are not likely to experience hunger or cold to a degree that will do us any harm.

In the long ages that have elapsed since man became a thinking, reasoning being, it is probable that more of his thought and labor has been given to the matter of food than to any other one thing. After air, which is free and always on hand, it is the first great necessity. So, in the nature of things, it became man's great concern, and the danger of not being able to get it became his greatest fear.

At this very time we have a class of men who seem to be making it their business to prophesy famine for the world in the near future. They tell us that mankind is always within a week of catching up to its visible supply of food and if the production machine was to be thrown out of gear some way or other, for a short time, the end of all things would be at hand. In 1914, when Belgium became tangled up in the gear-wheels over in Europe, a whole bunch of these Jeremiahs came into existence, and, if we could believe them, starvation and bankruptcy was going to end the war long before the bayonets and bullets would have a chance to become a deciding factor.

It didn't turn out that way, however, and, if the war had kept on, the indications are that those at home would have continued to supply their soldiers with the means of existence, indefinitely.

The point is that the world is only playing at this food production business, and if the need arises we could probably double the amount of grain raised, as well as the amount of butter, cheese, meat and so on, that man thinks he needs to vary his bill-of-fare.

It appears that way anyway. As soon as the "crisis" comes, of which we have experienced so many in the past few years, somebody gets busy and the danger-point is soon passed. Whether it be a shortage in the coal supply or a scarcity of wheat it is all the same. The trouble is soon overcome.

But some tell us that, while this point of view may be all right for the present generation, yet, we ought to give a thought to those that are coming after us, for whom the outlook is dark indeed, if the world's population keeps on increasing, as it is supposed to be doing.

Personally, I would be inclined to let every generation shift for itself. If the struggle for existence proves too much for it the chances are that it wouldn't have been worth a great deal even if things had been made easy enough for them by their ancestors to enable them to pull through. The rule for progress that makes the overcoming of difficulties necessary, is going to apply to all future generations in no less a degree than it did to those of the past.

But even if posterity doesn't invent some way to get its food supply from the air, of which we hear rumors occasionally, and has to stick to the old methods for a few thousand years yet, the chances are that starvation will not become general enough to affect those who are willing to earn their bread according to the style adopted by old father Adam. On the Yankees and other gamblers, who go on trying to live by their wits, we don't need to waste our sympathy.

The security of the food supply for the future is to be seen all about us and in almost every country of the earth. Talk about intensive farming! Where is it practiced? Perhaps in Japan, parts of India and in some of the countries of Europe. The rest of the world is just being skimmed over. Not one quarter of the crop is being taken off that might be. Our own Canadian West is as good an example of this as any I know of. One has just to see the proportion of uncultivated land in the Prairie Provinces to enable them to imagine the possibilities in the line of increased food supplies. An increase in our population shouldn't mean any less food for each individual. If the right proportion go to live on the land it will mean more for each, rather than less. A good farmer should raise enough food to supply his own family and also that of his brother who is employed in the city. On this basis, with the town and country population evenly divided, there should be no difficulty in feeding the world. For years to come all that will be needed will be men and women who are willing to work on the land, and to work with mind as well as muscle. The earth can give them the raw material. It's for them to come over with the finished product.

In the United States there are about one hundred million acres of swamp land that needs nothing more than draining to fit it for the plow and the seeder. On a part of this and on a great deal of the rest of the land in the South, double cropping could be practiced. And almost none of the land in the States is cultivated as it is in the thickly populated parts of Europe.

The trans-Siberian railway opened up a country as large as half of Canada, most of which is still lying unused. South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and the greater part of South America, are only in the early stages of their agricultural development, when the actual is compared with the possible. It is the same in almost every corner of the land surface of the earth. It is all just "half-worked."

And provided that man goes on working and inventing new and improved methods of supplying the world with its food, such as our Agricultural Colleges and Experimental Farms are supposed to be doing at the present time, where does the chance for this world calamity of a food shortage come in? If it comes we'll deserve it, for it will be through our own fault.

It seems to me that food should be so plentiful in the future that man can quit thinking about it and so give all his attention to what will have become the more important side of life; the side that has to do with the mental part of his make-up, and which is supposed to continue in existence long after he has finished worrying about where his next meal is coming from. Some say that our present relative valuation of things is all wrong.

Nature's Diary.

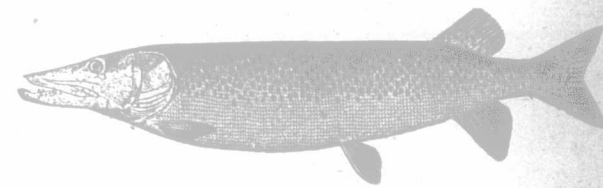
By A. BROOKER KLUGH, M. A.
THE MASKINONGE.

The Maskinonge is one of the most important game-fishes of eastern Canada and occurs in the upper St. Lawrence and the Great Lake region. It is commonest about the Thousand Islands, in Lake Scugog, Lake Simcoe, the Trent Valley, and in Lake Erie and Georgian Bay.

There is great diversity in the spelling and pronunciation of the common name of this species, such variations as Maskinonge, Maskinunge, Mascalonge, Muskellinge, and the abbreviations Lunge and Longe being in common usage. The Ojibwa name for this species is Maskinonge, a name derived from the words "Mash—big" and "Kinonje—fish," and is consequently the correct rendering of the name.

The Maskinonge is dark gray, greenish or brownish, always darker on the back, lighter on the sides, and whitish beneath. The fins usually have dusky spots or blotches and the lower fins and the tail-fin are sometimes reddish. In the young the upper half of the body is covered with small round black spots, which usually change their shape, or disappear, as the fish grows older. In mature fish the spots are more diffuse, sometimes enlarging to an inch or more in diameter, and sometimes joining to form vertical bands, while in some individuals no distinct black markings remain.

This fish sometimes attains a very large size, and specimens weighing a hundred pounds have been recorded. It rarely, however, reaches a weight of over eighty pounds and the average weight is about twenty five pounds.



The Muskinonge.

☛ The favorite haunt of the Maskinonge is among water plants at the edge of channels or along the shore. Here it lies concealed waiting, perfectly motionless, for prey to approach, when it darts forth with the speed of an arrow. Its chief food, in the adult stage, consists of fish of fair size which it seizes cross-wise, holds with its jaws till they desist from struggling and swallows. Its jaws, and tongue, are armed with long, sharp, conical teeth and these give it a grip from which there is no escape for the unlucky fish that is so unfortunate as to be seized by the Maskinonge.

This species spawns soon after the ice has gone, and the eggs are deposited in water less than fifteen feet in depth where logs, stumps and drifted wood are thickest. The fish is solitary except at spawning time when the male accompanies the female to the spawning-ground. The number of eggs produced by a single female varies with the age and size of the fish, a thirty-five pound fish depositing about 250,000 eggs. The eggs hatch in from fifteen to thirty days, depending on the temperature of the water. The fry at first are light in color, with a big yolk-sac, which is absorbed in about fifteen days, when the young begin to feed on the small fishes. At a month old they are about an inch and a half in length.

As is the case with all fish which produce a large number of eggs we find the mortality, both of eggs and young, very high. The spawn, being deposited in shallow water is eaten by turtles, frogs, ducks and coots, and the young fry are preyed upon by other fishes.

The great vitality, power and weight of the Maskinonge render it much esteemed as a game-fish, and in fact it is by some rated as high in gameness as the Salmon, Brook-trout and Black Bass. With proper tackle it affords good sport, as being a powerful fish it requires much skill and judgment on the part of the angler to keep it away from the water-weeds and snags of the bottom, and to successfully bring it within reach of the gaff in a reasonable time. The best bait is a large live minnow or a frog, either for casting or trolling, though in the latter kind of fishing a large trolling-spoon with a single hook may be used.

The flesh of the Maskinonge is firm, flaky and of good flavor, particularly when taken in the fall. As in the case of all fishes when taken in shallow, warm water in the summer the flesh is soft and is often of the flavor usually described as "weedy."

The popularity of this species as a game-fish has caused a serious depletion in some of our streams and lakes and in some bodies of water it has been almost exterminated. If the supply is to be maintained there is not much doubt but that artificial propagation will have to be resorted to. Culture of the Maskinonge has met with success in parts of the United States, and would undoubtedly be equally successful in Canada. Though it might be good policy to restock depleted waters in which this species was once common, it would not be advisable to introduce the Maskinonge into waters in which it is not indigenous, since it is too powerful and voracious a species and would in all probability have a serious effect on the abundance of the other fishes of these waters.