

How to Prepare and Cook Fish and Other Animal Food.

BY E. T. COX.

While there is such a growing interest manifested in fish culture, it is deemed proper in this connection to add a few words on the subject of preparing and cooking the fish.

It is right and proper for people to know how to procure food material, and it is no less important after it is secured to know how to cook it. "The Angels send food and the Devil sends cooks."

To procure and prepare food are the first steps to be taken to promote animal growth and preserve health. "First catch the rabbit before you cook it," is an old and trite saying.

Dr. R. T. Brown, in his article given above on fish culture, has very truthfully called to our notice the fact that by paying a little attention to the arranging of a suitable pond that the German carp or our Indiana black bass can be raised with as much or greater profit than poultry, and will afford a healthy and pleasing variety of food for the home-table, and a profitable article for market.

The German carp *Cyprinus carpio*, can live in a very small quantity of water. They have been known to do well in ponds so low in water that their dorsal fins remained uncovered, but this is pushing their endurance a little too far. They prefer a warm temperature and a muddy bottom. Therefore, in this rigid climate precaution should be taken to have the pond deep enough to prevent its freezing solid to the bottom, as freezing will kill them. As the carp is largely a vegetarian, the pond should be supplied with aquatic plants, such as *chard* and fresh-water algæ. These can be had in any stagnant water, and readily introduced in the new pond.

These plants are of very rapid growth, and would soon overrun the pond if not kept in check by the feeding of the carp. This aquatic ichthyo-pasture may be advantageously diversified, and the pond rendered more beautiful by the introduction of the white pond lily (*Nymphia odorata*). I do not know that this lily will furnish any food for the fish, but

the beauty and delicious odor of the large white blossoms of this lily give them a ready sale in the market. It is not my object to add more than a passing remark on the able and interesting article of Dr. Brown on the carp and its habitat, but especially to call attention to the mode of preparing the fish for the table. Very few people know how to dress a fish, and fewer still know how to cook it after it has been properly dressed. One of the principal objections brought against the carp is, that it has an *earthy flavor*, derived from its habit of feeding on a muddy bottom. In cleaning a fish the scales should not only be removed, but the skin must be thoroughly scraped to remove the mucous matter. After removing the entrails the cavity should be thoroughly cleaned of all fatty matter and the white, bladder-colored skin, with which it is more or less coated. When thus cleaned place the fish in a moderately strong brine for six to twelve hours. When taken from the salt water, if it be intended to fry the fish, it should be cut into suitable sized pieces, wiped dry, salted, and rolled in corn meal, and then placed in a pan of hot boiling lard and cooked until thoroughly done. Thus cooked the fish will be nicely browned, free from all earthy or fishy flavor, and it forms a dish that the most fastidious epicure would envy.

These remarks are not only applicable to the carp, but to every edible fish.

When fish are to be boiled they need not be cut into pieces or dusted over with corn meal, but they should be wiped dry before being put into the pot. All fish should be served hot.

The State laws for the protection of fish in the streams within its borders are wise and meritorious, and it is to be regretted that they are not better observed, and that violators of the law are not more vigorously prosecuted and brought under its penalty. Part of the trouble may arise from the fact that streams like the Wabash and Ohio Rivers, where they form the boundary between two States, can not be protected from the seines and fish traps of market fishermen, and they are thus encouraged to extend their depredations to the interior waters. If the seines captured only large fish, suitable for the table, it would not be so bad, but they destroy in a wholesale manner small fish that are unfit for sale or use.

It appears, therefore, that in order to more fully protect our river-fish, it is absolutely necessary that Congress should make a law and fix a severe penalty against seining and trapping fish in rivers and lakes that form a boundary between two or more States. Such a law would, I believe, encourage sporting clubs to prosecute violators with a greater assurance of being able to protect and promote the increase of fish to the advantage of all.

While indicating the best manner of preparing and cooking fish, it may not be amiss to say a few words about the cooking of other meats.

There can hardly be a doubt that man in his primitive state was a sav-

age and cannibal of the lowest type, but in the progress of development has, by degrees, but with no great jump (*nihil per saltum*), reached his present high organization and state of civilization. Cannibalism at the present time is confined to a very few isolated savages, in out of the way places; tribes that have been brought into intercourse with the whites have gradually lost all taste for this horrible and revolting custom, but when possible, prefer all kinds of animal food well cooked. The effects of cooked animal diet is made apparent by the civilizing influence which it has exerted on our American Indians. The nomadic tribes eat partly cooked and partly raw meats, while the Pueblo or town Indians, who live a quiet life in communities and cultivate the soil, have their animal food well cooked, and exhibit a marked contrast to their raw flesh-eating relatives and congeners of the chase. The same comparison may be drawn between the wolf and his near cousin, if not immediate descendent, the domestic dog. The latter, carnivorous in his primitive state, was a raw flesh eater, but by domestication he has been brought to eat a mixed diet, and that well cooked. When one wishes to make his otherwise peaceable and well behaved dog exhibit a savage and ferocious disposition, he confines him for a few days to a diet of raw meat, and the desired object is most surely attained. Now, as it is with the dog, so it is with man, and I maintain that the growing habit of eating beef and other flesh nearly raw, or but partially cooked, is not only unhealthy, but that it is a pernicious habit—makes man more irritable and petulant and brings out his dormant savage passions, which lead to acts of violence and frequently to murder, and lessens his regard for civil life.

I say that such food is less wholesome than meat which is well cooked; by well cooked, I do not mean that all juices should be dried up and the solid matter cooked to a crisp, but I do maintain that the blood should be coagulated by the cooking, and the parasites which infest all animal food—not alone pork—should be subjected to a cooking process that will destroy their vitality. It is a well known fact that the Abyssinians, who eat raw beef, are the most afflicted with internal parasitic animals of any people on the globe. I am informed that it is an uncommon thing to find one of these people who is totally free from tape-worm—*Tenia solium* and *T. nana*.

It is no argument for one to say that he likes rare beef better than well cooked beef; it is a habit that comes from morbid imaginations and diseased stomachs.