

KITCHEN CURIOSITIES.

QUAINT DISHES THAT APPREASE EPICUREAN APPETITES.

The Savages' Bill of Fare—Birds, Beasts, Reptiles and Insects That Fail a Fry to Man's Appetite.

(St. Louis Post.)

Man is all but omnivorous, and yet it is the most difficult thing to induce a man, civilized or barbarous, to taste and like a new dish. When Capt. Cook first visited the Sandwich Islands, he invited the King of Owyhee to dine with him, and his Majesty was induced to inaugurate the repast with a mouthful of bread, a viand entirely novel to him. No sooner had he got a taste than he spat it out with every symptom of disgust, and, declining further prandial ventures, returned home to his customary roast dog and decayed fish. The Japanese refuse beef and milk, but eat rats. The New Hollanders surfeit themselves with stale shark, rancid whale blubber and earth worm, but regard with horror the white man's simple breakfast of bread and butter. The negroes of the West Indies revel in the luxuries of baked snakes and finger-long palm worms fried in their own fat, but their delicate stomachs revolt at the thought of a rabbit stew. The Russians eat tallow candles; the Greenlanders drink train oil. Dr. Livingstone's favorite, the Barotse, affects crocodile steaks, and one of his African friends, so the doctor states, made a contented supper one evening from a BLUE MOLE AND TWO MICE.

A Frenchman prefers a lively frog, a few snails, and—when he can afford it—a tart of the diseased livers of geese, which favorite essences John Bull dislikes, preferring solid beef and mutton. Sir John Ross states that an Esquimaux will eat twenty pounds of meat and oil a day. A Tongouse allowance is forty pounds of reindeer meat, and a Russian admiral saw three Yakuts eat a reindeer at a sitting. A visitor to New Zealand relates that two natives of that cannibal island went out to the shore, after a hearty supper, and finished the half-putrid carcass of a shark at one moonlight sitting; and Capt. Stuart, the Australian explorer, saw a New Hollander eat over 100 jerboas, or vaulting rats, at a sitting. He placed a number for a few seconds under the ashes; then, with the hair only partially burned off, took them by the tail and bit off the bodies one after another. When he had eaten a dozen bodies, he stuffed the dozen tails into his mouth to chew up leisurely.

It is a notable fact that the most civilized nations are the most liberal in their gastronomic tastes. Next to the Chinese, whose ultra-civilization betrays them into the toleration of half-hatched eggs, sharks' fins, and bird's-nest soup, comes the Frenchman, and next to him follows the American. Modern travelers have exploded some most unwarrantable prejudices. Dr. Shaw enjoyed lion, which he found to taste like veal; Dr. Darwin had a passion for puma, the South American lion; Dr. Brooke found melted bear's grease not only

PALATABLE BUT DELICIOUS; Hippocrates and Capt. Cook vouch for the excellence of the dog.

Mr. Buckland tasted box constrictor and found the flesh exceedingly white and firm, and much like veal in taste; Sir Robert Schomburgk found monkey very palatable, though before dissection it looked disagreeable like roast child; and Gordon Cumming is loud in praise of baked elephant's trunk and foot.

Of course a line must be drawn somewhere. The baked missionary of the New Zealand cuisine, the underdone human thigh of the Feejee Islander and the broiled fingers which are thought "a dainty dish to set before the King" of Sumatra, are not to be recommended. Nor would a man be thought libelous who should fall to appreciate a stew of red ants in Burmah (although ants are said to have an agreeable acidity when properly prepared), parrot pie in Rio Janeiro, roset bat in Malabar, or a cuttle-fish fry in the Mauritius.

Soyer asserted that civilization and cookery advanced hand in hand. Dean Swift said: "A nice man is a man with nasty ideas," and though, as Montaigne asserts, there may be valid reasons for not eating pork, there may be reasons

QUITE AS UNIMPEACHABLE

for eating giraffe, buzzard, anaconda or horse.

Man has no consistency. The French of the Antilles delight in the guana, a hideous lizard, but they refuse the delicate and pork-like meat of the young alligator. Eels are a favorite dish with epicures; but rattlesnake would not go down. During the famine the Irish would not eat corn meal. All civilized nations reject dog and cat as culinary articles, though those animals are clean feeders, but make a staple of eels, the moose, four feeding rats. Chickens and pigeons are table luxuries, but nobody bankers after crow, which is a cleaner bird than either. John Bull will not taste squirrel, though every American mouth waters at the mention of the savory squirrel stew. But such inconsistencies are endless.

It is curious to note the different parts of animals that are eaten. Sheep's head, pig's head, calf's head and brains, ox head; in England the heads of duck and geese, ox tongue, reindeer tongue, walrus tongue, crane's tongue, and in America sheep and pig's tongues. In China the tongues of fowls and ducks are a high priced dainty. John Chinaman relishes also the maw and fins of the shark, while in Siam the dried livers of various animals are a prime luxury. Feet are generally liked from the web of ducks and geese in Europe, the trotters of sheep and pettiottes of dogs, which are a popular edible in London, and

THE BEAR'S PAW.

loved of North American hunters, down to the elephant's feet, much desiderated by the Caffre and Bushmen. Ox tail, sheep's tail and pig's tail are in common use. The Australian rejoices in kangaroo tail, the North American trapper in beaver tail, the South African boer in the fat tails of his sheep, which, during life, are dragged about in a hand cart and after death are melted into butter or make a delicious stew. In Honduras the tail of the manatee or sea cow is a staple dish for the table. In Juan Fernandez many thousand lobsters are annually taken, whose tails are dried and served on the dinner table of Valparaiso. The tongue of the sea lion has been found palatable by navigators. Shark fins are in such demand for soups in China that from

10,000 to 15,000 cwt. are annually imported from various parts of India. Forty thousand sharks are taken annually off Kurrachee near Bombay, for their back fins, which are the only ones used.

In Arctic regions the yielding tallow candle is grateful to the palate of the Esquimaux, which having eaten he carefully draws the wick between his teeth to save the remaining morsels of fat.

The greatest luxury of the Greenlanders is half putrid whale's tail, and next to this comes the gum of the whale, which the Tuski call their sugar and which a British officer reports to be delicious, tasting as much as possible like cream cheese.

In more temperate regions the dog is a favorite dish, not only among the Sandwich Islanders but with the Chinese, who regularly fatten it for the table.

A STEW OF PUPPIES

is a dainty meal to an African of Zanzibar. In Canton, the hind quarters of a dog are hung up in the butchers' shops next to the hind quarters of lamb, but bear a higher price. As for rats, the negroes of the West Indies and Brazil, the New Hollanders, the Esquimaux and many other people esteem them most fit food. In Canton rat soup is thought equal to ox tail soup, and a dozen rats are worth two dollars.

The nest of the *Hirundo esculenta*, which is thought so delicious a morsel by the Chinese and Cambodians that the finest white nests are worth in Canton nearly twice their own weight in silver, is found chiefly in caves on the shores of Java and the neighboring isles. It resembles externally ill-cooked, brown singamas and should be white in color with a red tinge. It is nearly the size of a goose egg, about the thickness of a silver tablespoon and weighs from a quarter to half an ounce. Those that are dry, white and clean are the most valuable. They are packed in bundles, with split rattans run through them to preserve the shape. They are procured from caves, at much peril to the takers, twice a year, and the opening of the caves on these occasions is performed with many singular superstitious ceremonies. The best are sent to Pekin for the use of the celestial court and bring in Canton no less than \$4000 per picul of 133½ pounds; about 250,000 pounds are brought to Canton every year. To prepare them for the table is a most tedious and

LABORIOUS PERFORMANCE.

Every feather, stick and other impurity is first carefully removed, and then, after undergoing countless washings, the nest is made into a jelly, which serves to thicken soup.

Eggs form an important article of food among all known races. The English are great egg eaters, and receive from France annually 150,000,000 and from Ireland 180,000,000 of eggs.

In China duck eggs are a great article of consumption. The ostrich egg is equal in contents to twenty-four common hen's eggs, and is a great prize to African sportsmen. In some of the Pacific Islands the eggs of lizards are highly esteemed, and in the West Indies the eggs of the guana, which is after all but a lizard, are thought a delicacy. The eggs of the alligator are eaten in the Antilles. Turtles' eggs are in great esteem wherever found, as well by Europeans as others. The turtle, that beast so intimately connected with the welfare of city governments, is a delicacy of quite modern repute. At the beginning of the last century it was only eaten by the poor in Jamaica. Lobster is a favorite dainty with Americans and Englishmen, but no one thinks of eating locusts. Yet these last form a welcome meal to many tribes and nations, and all travelers who have tasted them bear witness that they make a toothsome dish.

Ants are eaten in many countries. In Brazil the largest species are prepared with a sauce of resin. In Africa they stew them with butter. In the East Indies they are caught in pits, carefully washed like coffee, and eaten in mouthful afterwards, as children eat candies or raisins. A curry of ants' eggs is a very costly luxury in Siam; and in Mexico the people have, from time immemorial, eaten the eggs of a water insect which prevails in the lagoons of that city.

The Ceylonese eat the bees, after robbing them of their honey. The African Bushmen

EAT ALL THE CATERPILLARS

they find. The Australians are notorious maggot-eaters; and the Chinese eat the chrysalis of the silk worm after they have woven the silk from its cocoons. The diggers of California fatten themselves on grasshoppers.

The African Bushmen and the savages of New Caledonia are very fond of spiders roasted. This singular taste is not unknown even in Europe. Reamur tells of a young lady who, when walking in her garden, used to eat all the spiders she could catch; and the celebrated Anna Maria Schurmann, ate them like nuts, which she powdered they much resembled in taste. Lalande, the French astronomer, was equally fond of them; and a German immortalized by Rosset used to spread them on his bread instead of butter.

Among oyster-eating people the Americans take the head, and New York is the greatest oyster market in the world. Snails are a prime luxury in Europe. The French are large consumers, but the Viennese are the principal small-eaters of the world. At the town of Ulm, on the Danube, great quantities of snails are fed for the Vienna market, those which have been fattened upon strawberries bringing the highest prices. Sixty thousand pounds of snails are annually exported from the Isle of Crete. At Cape Coast Castle the great African snail which attains a length of eight inches, is made into soup. In England snail soup is prescribed for consumption.

A Cat and Rabbit story.

The Fresno (Cal.) *Expositor* tells the following cat and rabbit story: A few days ago a boy found a nest containing five young jackass rabbits, which had not yet opened their eyes, and took them to the house. His parents made him put them in the bed of an old cat that had just given birth to a litter of kittens, expecting the old cat to eat them up. A short time afterwards it was discovered that the young rabbits had been adopted in the feline family, the old cat having killed and eaten three of her kittens to make room for them. Subsequently two of her kittens were killed, and their places are now quietly filled by the young rabbits. They eat their regular rations from the lactal fountains of old puss, and they may now be considered full-fledged step-kittens.

The London school board has resolved to teach girls how to cook. One of the teachers is to give lessons in every board school on food and its preparation, and the girls will be required to attend. Twenty-one kitchens are to be opened in London, and each is to be conducted by a practical cook, with a salary of \$300 a year. Small wages, certainly, if she is to be a good teacher as well as a good cook.

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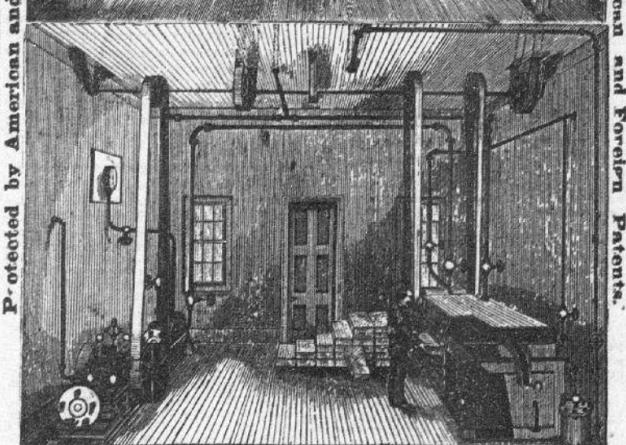
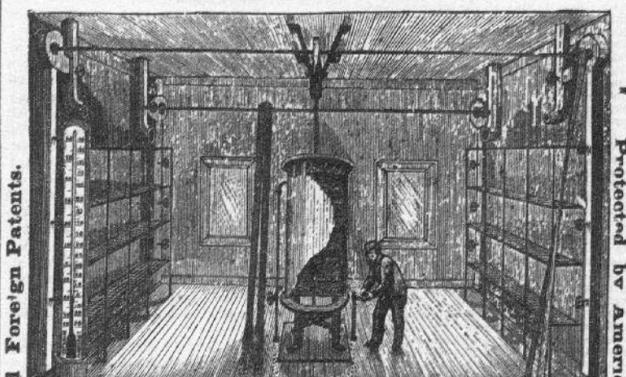
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