"In a restaurant, when a waiter offers you turbot, ask for salmon, and when he offers you a sole, order a mackerel; as language to man, so fish has been given to the waiter to disguise his thoughts."—P. Z. Didsbury.

The fish of Great Britain is, beyond all manner of doubt, the very best in the world. It is, therefore, only right and proper that its original flavour should be preserved by simply boiling or frying it, and eating it with what some of the old cook-books call its "Analogies," which presumably means its traditional accompaniments: lemon, brown bread and butter, and so much as may be of its own liquor, or a Court Bouillon of the simplest. There are so many ways of spoiling fish that the Chafer can never go

far wrong if he rejects all but the most primitive, although it is not necessary to revert to the aboriginal braising upon the hot ashes of a nearly extinct wood fire, without the intervention of any implement of stone or earthenware whatever. This method is, however, still in practice to-day in many parts of Portugal (and possibly elsewhere) before the doors of the houses of the wage-earners, and in the taverns of the commoner folks.

Without going to extremes, there is a decent self-respecting kind of cookery, to the value and charm of which the great Carême refers in his "Cuisinier Français" (1828), and which he calls, appropriately enough, *le genre mâle et élégant.*

The genius of Carême, however, occasionally led him to a state of self-appreciation which is supreme in its bathos. He says, for instance, in a kind of retrospect of his contributions to the culinary art: "I contemplated from behind my ovens the kitchens of India, China, Egypt, Greece, Turkey, Italy, Germany and Switzerland, and I felt their ignoble fabric of routine crumbling

under my critical blows." These are, indeed, "prave 'orts!"

Herrings are extraordinarily healthy—and cheap. They are caught by the million—who also eat them; and whether fresh or dried, raw or salted, they are one of Nature's delicacies. Fresh herrings offer the largest amount of nutriment for one penny of any kind of animal food. A fresh herring weighing 4½ ozs. contains 240 grains of carbon and 36 grains of nitrogen; and a dried herring weighing 3 oz. contains 269 grains of carbon and 41 grains of nitrogen. It is obvious by this what smoking will do by decreasing weight and increasing nutriment.

Red herrings are by no means to be despised, though it is a mistake to imagine that they are caught in a state of redness. In that fine old book, "The Yarmouth Fisherman," which is not much read nowadays, piscator says to the tourist: "Sir, we lay ourselves out to oblige all the gents that come from London, but we cannot make a red herring swim."

Thereanent is a quaint signboard outside

the Schifferhaus in the old Hanseatic town of Lübeck, one of the most beautiful taverns in the world, and the haunt of old sea-dogs since the sixteenth century. The signboard represents a fisherman and two amateurs angling from a boat; the former has caught a fine kipper and the latter are looking supremely disgusted. The legend under the picture runs: "One Cannot Please Everybody."

Kippers and their kin have never lacked admirers, and it is on record that the Emperor Charles V. made a pilgrimage to the tomb of the venerable Dutchman who is supposed to have invented pickled herrings.

Fried Herrings.

To come from herrings in the abstract to herrings in the concrete, try this in Chaffinda: Two very fresh herrings, very clean and dry. Fry them in three tablespoons of oil or two of butter, with a squeeze of lemon, salt, pepper, six peppercorns and a tablespoon of vinegar. After they have cooked for eight minutes put the fish aside in a hot dish.

Then cut a good-sized Spanish onion into rings, fry these in the oil left by the herrings till they are of a dark brown colour, taking great care not to burn them. When ready, which should be in about six minutes, heap them round the herrings and serve with quarters of lemon. This is a lordly dish, and if properly concocted it leaves you in that state that you will love all mankind—and even tolerate the Chinese.

Dean Nowell, or Noel, a clerical Izaak Walton, and Dean of St. Paul's (1507–1602) said that the only thing wrong with the herring was that it preferred the sea to the river. The Dean angled much in the Ash at Hadham ; he wrote the Church Catechism, invented bottled beer (by accident), and fished for perch and souls. Peace be to his !

There are as many ways of cooking the herring as there are days in the year ; even Bismarck invented one, but there are other fish in the sea which demand Chaffinda's attention, and however enticing the subject may be, it will not do to linger over it.

The lordly salmon was not always so

honoured in its exclusiveness as it is to-day. In our grandfathers' time it was still frequenting the Thames, and London servants, when engaged, used to stipulate that they were not to be fed on it more than twice a week.

Chafed Salmon.

This is as good a way as any of treating the salmon in the Chafing Dish:

Put two tablespoonsful of butter in the pan and when it is melting stir in gradually a tablespoon of flour, and keep on stirring till it is smooth; add a wineglass of water, the juice of a whole lemon, a small onion cut in rings, and the yolks of two eggs, hard-boiled and mashed up. When all these ingredients are well mixed, put in a thick slice of previously boiled cold salmon, simmer it for eight minutes. Tinned salmon, of the very best brands only, may also be used, and the result is fairly satisfactory, but tinned goods are of course only a *pis aller* at best.

They do say that the Devil never goes to

Cornwall because they put everything into a pie down there, and he is afraid he might be put into one too. I heard of Stargazer Pie in Cornwall, and imagined that it referred to the Riviera fish which is not succulent—indeed, barely edible. But I learned that Stargazer Pie is really Pilchard Pie, the heads of the fish popping up through the crust.

Cod Pudding.

A good Cornish way of cooking cod is to make a pudding of it, which is quite cnaffable. Use a thick slice of cold cooked cod. Remove skin and bones and flake it up smallish with a couple of forks. Put it in the Chafing Dish with two tablespoons of butter and one of chopped onions; hot it up, and whilst heating (lower the flame before actual boiling) add gradually enough milk to make the fish of the consistency of mashed potatoes; add pepper and salt, and serve it with sippets of toast. It will like you much.

Souchet of Sprats.

Now for sprats ; a good supper dish, and eke for breakfast too, because they are so fat that no butter or oil is required, but plenty of salt and pepper. Buy a pint of fresh sprats, soak and dry them very carefully, handling them as little as possible. Cook them as a water souchet or *Zootje*, an old Dutch method, formerly much honoured at Greenwich fish dinners, and originally made of flounders. But flounders are not convenient for a Chafing Dish, so you must perforce fall back on sprats. Don't slip !

Cut off the heads and tails of the sprats and put them into the pan with a cupful of thin bouillon, three sprigs of parsley, half a sliced carrot, and plenty of salt and pepper. Let this boil up for ten minutes. Take it off ; strain the liquor, return the fish to the pan with three more sprigs of parsley and another sliced half carrot. Boil up again for five minutes this time. A squeeze of lemon and a glass of sherry to be added just before serving, of course with the sauce round the fish.

It has always been said, although it is scarcely provable, that fish, owing to the phosphorus, is good as a brainmaker. A visitor at a Devonshire fishing village asked the parson what was the principal diet of the villagers. "Fish mostly," said the Vicar. "But I thought fish was a brain food, and these are the most unintelligent folk I ever saw," remarked the tourist. "Well," replied the parson, "just think what they would look like if they didn't eat fish!"

In America the lobster is a frequent victim of the Chafing Dish, and there are many and diverse ways of torturing his succulent flesh therein. I will give three recipes of a more simple nature, all of which have been tried and proven not guilty of indigestion. I should premise, however, that to my individual taste a lobster is only really good in two ways. First, plain boiled and eaten cold with a vinaigrette sauce; and, secondly, as a simple salad with lettuce and perchance a stray tomato. However, there may be others with different tastes, and to such I commend the following:

Buttered Lobster.

First, Buttered Lobster. Beat up two egg yolks with two tablespoons of butter until it makes a smooth cream ; add a wine-glass of milk or cream, a pinch of black pepper, and half a teaspoon of Paprika. Put it in the Chafing Dish with the meat of a lobster cut into inch pieces, add the coral. Let it simmer for ten minutes, keeping the flame well under control.

Polly Lobster.

The next recipe is called Polly Lobster, and it is toothsome. Cut up the lobster into inch lumps, put it in the dish with two or three tablespoons of salad oil, according to its size ; add three or four whole onions, a small bunch of chives, pepper and salt, a wineglass of sherry, and three quartered tomatoes. Let it boil up for a couple of minutes, squeeze a lemon over it, and serve.

Flattered Lobster.

The last variation on the lobster theme is somewhat elaborate. It is termed Flattered Lobster, the reason being, I opine, because of the many added attractions to the crustacean's native simplicity. It is not quite orthodox perhaps, but extraordinarily nice. Cut up the meat of a large lobster into cubes. Make a mixture of two tablespoons of Worcester sauce, the same of vinegar, a wineglass of claret, a dessertspoon of made mustard (French for choice), salt and Paprika to taste. Put the lobster in the Chafer and pour the mixture over it, adding a tablespoon of butter and the like of flour. Let it all heat up gently and slowly ; that is, begin with a full flame and reduce after five minutes. Then pour in a liqueur glass of brandy, and heat it up again with full flame for eight minutes, stirring it all the time. The result is surprising.

A fish story which is not without charm is told of a seaside village school of very rough fishing lads. The teacher gave them this sum to do : " If two herrings cost three halfpence, what would thirty cost ? " After ten

minutes' hard work he noticed one of the boys had filled his copy-book full of figures. "Well, Jim, what's your answer?" "Please, teacher, 'alf a crown." "Wrong, Jim, try again. If two herrings——" "Wait a bit, teacher," the lad interrupted, "'errings you said. 'Ow silly of me; I was a-reckoning of 'em like 'addocks."

Prawns lend themselves most kindly to Chafing-Dish cookery, and can be treated in sundry appetising ways. Fresh prawns are of course quite the best, but the Barataria canned article is not to be despised, if they be carefully washed before using; and there are one or two brands of bottled prawns which cook excellently.

Digestive Prawns.

Shell two dozen prawns, put them in the Chafing Dish with half a pint of milk, half a teaspoon of Paprika, a pinch of salt, and a sprinkling of nutmeg. Keep stirring till near boiling-point, then lower the flame; add a glass of sherry and two beaten eggs; simmer for eight minutes, and then serve on toast.

Prawn Wiggle.

The next is an American recipe and rejoices in the name of Prawn Wiggle. Melt three tablespoons of butter in the dish, and two tablespoons of flour mixed with a teaspoon of salt and a good pinch of pepper. Stir up and then pour in gradually half a pint of milk. As soon as the sauce thickens add a cupful of prawns and a cupful of cold cooked green peas. Mix up well and simmer for eight minutes. The pink and green form a delightsome colour blend, suggesting certain well-known racing colours, and the combined flavours are most delicate. But why "wiggle"? Well, why not?

Prawns on the Grass.

Prawns on the Grass is recommendable, easy, and decorative for the supper-table. Butter lightly the bottom of the Chafing Dish, half fill it with carefully prepared cooked cold spinach; on this put a dozen prawns, two eggs, hard-boiled and cut in quarters; arrange these symmetrically, add

pepper salt, and a cupful of milk. Cover up and let it simmer steadily for ten to twelve minutes. Serve in the Chafing Dish with sippets of toast.

It is impossible to treat here of the delectable crayfish, crawfish, and langouste ; they are all cookable and easily digested. Best of all, perhaps, are the Oder Krebse, and the Swedish Kräftor, with their delightful and unique flavour and sweetness, but they must be eaten near where they are born in order to be appreciated.

In the company of chaste Chaffinda it is easy to enjoy a *maigre* day, for she deals so delicately with fish that one is almost tempted to envy the days of "Cecil's Fast." It will be remembered that Lord Burleigh introduced a Bill to enjoin the eating of fish only on certain days, on all creeds alike, in order to restore the fish trade.

It would be highly improper to devote a chapter to fish without referring to Vatel committing suicide on his sword (or was it a skewer ?), but the story is as stale as the fish would be when it did arrive after all. A century ago his memory was rather painfully

honoured by roasted slices of cod on a spit, the dish being called *à la Vatel.*

To many worthy folk, painters in particular, the magic word trout immediately suggests Varnishing Day at the Paris Salon, and *déjeuner* at Ledoyen's. Trout with green sauce is the staple traditional dish of the day. A couple of years ago I had the curiosity to inquire how much was eaten, and the *maître d'hôtel* gave me the following figures: 250 lbs. of trout; 15 gallons of green sauce; 120 chickens; 80 ducks; 40 saddles of lamb; 170 bundles of asparagus; and 100 baskets of strawberries. Besides this, the usual thousand and one odds and ends of a miscellaneous *carte du jour.* Painters have proverbially good appetites.

Oysters.

Purposely, and of *malice prepense*, I am carefully omitting all mention of the cooking of oysters in any shape or form. I consider it *néfaste*—almost sacrilegious. Our natives are so exquisitely succulent, so absolutely perfect in their delicacy, that to paint the lily

or to gild refined gold were pickaninny peccadilloes compared to the cooking of the oyster. It is different, I believe, in the United States of America, where there are various kinds of oysters, some requiring, almost demanding, cooking to render them palatable. Transatlantic cookery books are full of oyster recipes, in many of which the true oyster flavour must be entirely obliterated by the superadded condiments. This may be a question of gastronomic supply and demand. But my humble Chafing Dish shall not be defiled by the torture of the innocent bivalve. *Dixi!*

Trout in Small Broth.

To return to trout. The fresh-water fish, the darling product of the stream, cannot be too respectfully approached, whether from an angling or a culinary point of view. Izaac Walton, in his inimitable charm and wisdom, has much to say thereon. Unfortunately his methods are impracticable in a Chafing Dish. I find the best way to treat a trout is with a Court Bouillon. This is how to make it:

Mix a glass of sherry, a tablespoon of vinegar, a glass of water, two bay leaves, a dozen peppercorns, a bunch of parsley, a sliced onion, and a pinch of salt. Amalgamate these materials thoroughly. Have your trout well cleaned and dried. Pop him into the Chafing Dish and cover him with the Court Bouillon. Let it cook slowly but steadily for twenty minutes. Then eat it with thanks and praise.

Smothered Turbot.

Here is a good way of preparing the remains of turbot. It is called Smothered Turbot, and is founded on an old Hastings fishwife's recipe. Butter the inside of the Chafing Dish; spread thereon a layer of bread crumbs, chopped mushrooms, parsley, cut-up lemon peel, pepper and salt. Break up the cold cooked turbot small and make a second layer thereof. Add two tablespoons of butter, and then another layer the same as the first. Heat up and keep at a good heat for twelve minutes. Serve it in the Chafing Dish.

Sardines in a Hurry.

Sardines are one of the handiest of standbys for the Chafist. But get the best brands and smallish fish ; the large ones are apt to suggest pilchards, which, although good in their way, are not sardines.

Sardines in a Hurry are done thusly : Take the sardines out of the box carefully on to a plate, pour boiling water over them, and drain it off at once. Take off all the skin, bone them and cut off the tails. Prepare thin strips of hot buttered toast, put a sardine on each strip, pepper and salt it, pour over it a modicum of plain melted butter and a squeeze of lemon juice. Put them into the Chafing Dish and hot up for five minutes.

Waldorf Sardines.

Another very good if not quite as simple a way of preparing them is Waldorf Sardines. Pour boiling water over a dozen sardines, wiping off the skin with a clean fish-cloth and removing the tails. Put them in the Chafing Dish with one tablespoon of olive oil and heat thoroughly for eight minutes. Put

them aside on a dish and keep them hot. Now put another tablespoon of olive oil into the pan, and when sizzling add a cupful of water. Stir until it gets thick, then add a teaspoon of Worcester sauce, half a teaspoon of Paprika, and a pinch of salt. Take the dish off the flame. Add the beaten yolk of an egg, one teaspoon of vinegar and the same of French mustard. Stir the sauce. Heat up the sardines again, and pour the sauce over them. As a supper dish, say after a Royal Institution lecture, or something equally improving, this gives one what the late George du Maurier called "a sense of genial warmth about the midriff."

Creamed Smelts.

A rather more subtle but curiously refined concoction is Creamed Smelts.

Clean and dry a dozen smelts in a cloth. Dip them one by one in thick cream, or, wanting that, in milk thickened with flour; then dredge them with flour so as to make a paste coating all over them. Put two tablespoons of butter in the Chafing Dish, and

when sizzling put in the fish with a squeeze of lemon and a glass of sherry. They will be ready in eight minutes. Sprinkle fried parsley over them before serving.

The delicate faint perfume of the smelt has been likened to that of the cucumber, violets and verbena. It is quite unique among fish, and has a charm that is all its own. This method of cooking preserves this peculiarity. Some other methods do not. Avoid buying sand-smelts (Atherines). They are very similar to the real thing, but lack the characteristic perfume, and they are neither as delicate in flavour or taste.

Kedgeree.

All Anglo-Indians, and many who have never been nearer India than South Kensington, know the virtues of kedgeree, kadgiori, kitchri, kegeree, kitcharee, kitchery, or even quitheri. It is spelt and made in forty-seven different ways, every one of which is strictly authentic, and, according to different authorities, the One and Only way. This is Martin Harvey Kedgeree.

Boil two cupfuls of rice, and strain it well. Mix in it two chopped cold hard-boiled eggs, any cold remains of cooked fish, flaked and salted ; add a tablespoon of butter, the same of milk, a teaspoon of Paprika, and half a teaspoon of salt. Toss it all about in the Chafing Dish thoroughly, and then hot it up for ten minutes. Squeeze a lemon over it just before serving. Kedgeree is by no means solely a breakfast dish. It comes in handily at all times, but never argue about kedgeree with an Anglo-Indian. It is fatal to the kedgeree. It gets cold—and then *vois que c'est triste pour vous*, as Mephistopheles sings when he looks at Siebel's hand.

Next to the Indian, the Chinese is one of the most inventive cooks in the world. I had one once who had been, amongst other things, a pirate, a prison-warder, an actor, and a judge. He had sudden inspirations, and therein lay his weakness. He knew that English folk ate jelly with mutton, so he tried strawberry jam with eggs and bacon, and following the principle of apple sauce with goose, he gave me hot cherry brandy with

roast fowl. He was a bad cook, but a most fluent and ingenious liar.

The best-flavoured eels are those that come from the Thames; they are much better than the Dutch. There are four kinds: the Snig, the Grig, the Broadnosed, and the Sharp-nosed. The last are the best. Izaak Walton says: "It is agreed that the eel is a most dainty dish"—and who shall say him nay? The Greeks went further and called it "the Helen of the dinner-table," because every guest strove, like Paris, to keep it for himself.

Souchet of Eels.

To make a water souchet of eels follow the directions for sprats, but cut the eels into inch chunks, and boil for half as long again in each case. Some folks think that eels are at their best in a souchet, which has the tendency of bringing out the best flavour of the fish.

Jellied eels and stewed eels, both East End and racecourse prime favourites, are somewhat too rich and coarse for any save the

very ravenous, but it is certain that there is a deal of rich, if perhaps somewhat heavy, nourishment in the eel, and its meat is a great delicacy in any form.

Nettled Eels.

Nettled Eels are much esteemed in Normandy. They may be prepared in the same fashion as water souchet, with the addition of a handful of clean washed young nettles, which should be cooked with the fish but taken out before serving. They give a peculiar zest to the dish, which is quite pleasant.

Matelote of Eels.

The classic form of the eel is as a Matelote, originally a marine dish, and quite within Chaffinda's compass. Have your eel cut into inch-and-a-half lengths, about one pound in all ; put a large walnut of butter, or two tablespoons of oil in the Chafing Dish, also a dozen small peeled onions ; let them brown thoroughly and frizzle well ; add a tablespoon

of flour, a teaspoon of Paprika, and half as much salt. Heat up and stir well until it is all thoroughly amalgamated, then put in six small mushrooms, flat or button (fresh of course), add a good squeeze of lemon, and if the mixture is thicker than cream, pour in a little water. Now put in a tumbler (half-pint) of good claret, a couple of cloves, a bay leaf, and a teacup of bouillon. Let the mixture simmer for eight minutes, after which put in the eel and a liqueur glass of brandy, and cook for another ten minutes; then serve very hot. An orthodox variation is to set light to the brandy before pouring it in and if the boiling wine catches fire it gives a peculiar savour. A well-made Matelote is a thing of joy, a combination of harmonies, culminating in one grand Amen. Izaak Walton designates such a dish a "Hogoo."

Grandfather's Bloaters.

Finally, here is a dish which is superlative in its simplicity. It is not a Chafing-Dish recipe, but is yet not altogether out of place. It is called Grandfather's Bloaters. Put two

fine bloaters into a soup-plate, pour over them enough whisky just to cover them. Set light to the whisky, and let it burn itself out. The bloaters will then be done—and done exquisitely. The dish is attributed to Charles Sala, the father of the late George Augustus Sala. It reads much more bibulous than it really is. As a matter of fact, it is almost a temperance dish.