LAND OF CONTRASTS

So sure hold but you often lose your fish, unless he have gorged it. Venator. I thank you, good master for this observation. But now what  
shall be done with my Chub or Cheven that I have caught Piscator. Marry, Sir, it shall be given away to some poor body; for I’ll  
warrant you I’ll give you a Trout for your supper: and it is a good beginning of your art to offer your first fruits to the poor, who will  
both thank you and God for it, which I see by your silence you seem to consent to. And for your willingness to part with it so charitably,  
I will also teach more concerning Chub fishing. You are to note, that in March and April he is usually taken with worms; in May, June,  
and July, he will bite at any fly, or at cherries, or at beetles with their legs and wings cut off, or at any kind of snail, or at the black bee  
that breeds in clay walls. And he never refuses a grasshopper, on the top of a swift stream, nor, at the bottom, the young humble bee  
that breeds in long grass, and is ordinarily found by the mower of it. In August, and in the cooler months, a yellow paste, made of the  
strongest cheese, and pounded in a mortar, with a little butter and saffron, so much of it as, being beaten small, will turn it to a lemon  
colour. And some make a paste for the winter months, at which time the Chub is accounted best, for then it is observed, that the forked  
bones are lost, or turned into a kind of gristle, especially if he be baked, of cheese and turpentine. He will bite also at a minnow, or peek,  
as a Trout will: of which I shall tell you more hereafter, and of divers other baits. But take this for a rule, that, in hot weather, he is to be  
fished for towards the mid water, or near the top; and in colder weather, nearer the bottom; and if you fish for him on the top, with a   
beetle, or any fly, then be sure to let your line be very long, and to keep out of sight. And having told you, that his spawn is excellent  
meat, and that the head of a large Cheven, the throat being well washed, is the best part of him, I will say no more of this fish at the  
present, but wish you may catch the next you fish for. But, lest you may judge me too nice in urging to have the Chub dressed so  
presently after he is taken, I will commend to your consideration how curious former times have been in the like kind. You shall read in  
seneca, his Natural Questions, that the ancients were so curious in the newness of their fish, that that semed not new enough that was  
not put alive into the guest’s hand; and he says, that to that end they did usually keep them living in glass bottles in their dining rooms,  
and they did glory much in their entertaining of friends, to have that fish taken from under their table alive that was instantly to be fed  
upon; and he says, they took great pleasure to see their Mullets change to several colours when they were dying. But enough of this; for  
I doubt I have staid too long from giving you some Observations of the Trout, and how to fish for him, which shall take up the next of   
my spare time. The third day continued On the Nature and Breeding of the Trout, and how to fish for him Piscator, Venator, Milk  
woman, Maudlin, Hostess Piscator. The Trout is a fish highly valued, both in this and foreign nations. He may be justly said, as the old  
poet said of wine, and we English say of vension, to be a generous fish: a fish that is so like the buck, that he also has his seasons; for it is  
observed, that he comes in and goes out of season with the stag and buck. Gesner says, his name is of a German offspring; and says he is   
a fish that feeds clean and purely, in the swiftest streams, and on the hardest gravel; and that he may justly contend with all fresh  
water fish, as the Mullet may with all sea fish, for precedency and daintiness of taste; and that being in right season, the most dainty  
palates have allowed precedency to him. And before I go farther in my discourse, let me tell you, that you are to observe, that as there  
be some barren does that are good in summer, so there be some barren Trouts that are good in winter; but there are not many that are  
so; for usually they be in their perfection in the month of May, and decline with the buck. Now you are to take notice, that in several  
countries, as in Germany, and in other parts, compared to ours, fish do differ much in their bigness, and shape and other ways; and so do  
Trouts. It is well known that in the Lake Leman, the Lake of Geneva, there are Trouts taken of three cubits long; as is affirmed by  
Gesner, a writer of good credit: and Mercator says, the Trouts that are taken in the Lake of Geneva are a great part of the  
merchandize of that famous city. And you are further to know, that there be certain waters that breed Trouts remarkable, both for their  
number and smallness. I known a little brook in Kent, that breeds them to a number incredible, and you may take them twenty or forty  
in an hour, but none greater than about the size of a Gudgeon. There are also, in divers rivers, especially that relate to, or be near to  
the sea, as Winchester, or the Thames about Windsor, a little Trout called a samlet, or skegger Trout, in both which places I have  
caught twenty or forty at a standing. That will bite as fast and freely as Minnows: these be by some taken to be young salmons; but  
in those waters they never grow to be bigger than a Herring. There is also in Kent, near to Canterbury, a Trout called there a Fordidge  
Trout, a Trout that bears the name of the town where it is usually caught, that is accounted the rarest of fish; many of them near the  
bigness of a salmon, but known by their different colour; and in their best season they cut very white: and none of these have been  
known to be caught with an angle, unless it were one that was caught by sir George Hasting, an excellent angler, and now with God:  
and he hath told me, he thought that Trout bit not for hunger but wantonness; and it is the rather to be believed, because both he, then,  
and many others before him, have been curious to search into their bellies, what the food was by which they lived; and have found out  
nothing by which they might satisfy their curiosity. Concerning which you to take notice, that it is reported by good authors, that  
grasshoppers and some fish have no mouths, but are nourished and take breath by the porousness of their gills, man knows not how: and  
this may be believed, if we consider that when the raven hath hatched her eggs, she takes no further care, but leaves her young ones to

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