

## 4.—CARP IN ENGLAND IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

By THOMAS FULLER.

[From Worthies of England, 1662.]

It is a stately fish, but not long naturalized in England, and of all fresh-water fishes (the eel only excepted) lives longest out of his proper element. They breed (which most other fishes do not) several months in one year; though in cold ponds they take no comfort to increase. A learned writer [Sir Francis Bacon, in his *History of Life and Death*] observeth, they live but ten years; though others assign them a far longer life.

They are the better for their age and bigness [Gesnar and Janus Durbanius] (a rule which holds not in other fishes); and their tongues by ancient Roman palate-men were counted most delicious meat; though, to speak properly, they have either no tongues in their mouths, or all their mouths are tongues, as filled with a carneous substance, whilst their teeth are found in their throats. There is a kind of frog which is a professed foe unto them; insomuch, that of a hundred carps put into a pond, not five of them have been found therein a year after. And though some may say perchance two-legged frogs stole them away, yet the strict care of their owners in watching them disproved all suspicion thereof.

Now as this [Sussex] county is eminent for both sea and river fish, namely, an Arundel mullet, a Chichester lobster, a Shelsey cockle, and an Amerly trout; so Sussex aboundeth with more carps than any other of this nation. And though not so great as Jovius reporteth to be found in the Lurian Lake in Italy, weighing more than 50 pounds,\* yet those generally of great and goodly proportion. I need not add, that physicians account the galls of carps, as also a stone in their heads, to be medicinable; only I will observe that, because Jews will not eat caviare made of sturgeon (because coming from a fish wanting scales, and therefore forbidden in the Levitical law), therefore the Italians make greater profit of the spawn of carps, whereof they make a red caviare, well pleasing the Jews both in palate and conscience.

All I will add of carps is this, that Ramus himself doth not so much redound in dichotomics as they do; seeing no one bone is to be found in their body, which is not forked or divided into two parts at the end thereof.

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\*Mr. Pennant notices from Jovius, that they were sometimes taken in the Lacus Lurius, of 200 pounds weight, but of his own knowledge could speak of none that exceeded 20. Others are reported to have been taken in the Dneister that were 5 feet in length.—Nuttall.