

middling-sized pikes being, by the most and choicest palates, observed to be the best meat."

In warm and sunny weather, the pike mostly swims near the surface, and may be often seen luxuriating in the sun-beams, lulled into a sort of slumber. It is not difficult at such times to draw a wire noose, fastened to the end of a rod or long staff, over its head or body, and land it by a sudden jerk.

Pike are taken by spinning or by trolling; and in large sheets of water, in Norfolk, by liggers or trimmers, that is, a baited hook attached to a line, secured to and wound round a float of rushes, a due portion of the line only

being free, and sufficiently secured from alteration by being caught between the rushes, or in a notch of a wooden float, sometimes used instead of the rush float. This is put into the water, and when the bait is seized by the fish, the jerk disengages the line from its slight security, and the whole is unwound to the float, which latter indicates the occurrence.

The jaws and palate of the pike are most formidably armed with sharp teeth of various sizes, the form of the body is elongated, and the dorsal fin is placed far back. The pike has various names in our language, as pickerel, luce or lucie, and, in Scotland, gedd. Pike, of small size, are often called jack.



THE MALAGASY.

MADAGASCAR lies to the south-east of the African continent, and is as large as England, Scotland, and Ireland united. From north to south it is about 950 miles, and an average of 300 miles from east to west. It was first visited by Europeans about 360 years ago, though it had been known for centuries before to the Moors and Arabs, which people carried on with it a considerable trade.

The Malagasy consist of several tribes, but are now blended into one nation. There are two principal races—one of a black colour, with almost negro features; the other of a brown tint, with a Malay cast of visage. Of the latter are the Hovahs, who are a superior class, and the rulers of the land.

A civilised race are the Malagasy: their natural politeness is much commended by travellers. "They are a most courteous people," says one who lived among them, "and have often a

marked dignity and ease of manner not at all common in other lands. In journeying, as a passer-by sees an acquaintance at the door of his house, it would be rude to proceed without saying, 'Allow me to pass, sir;' to which the reply is given, 'Pray proceed, sir.' Then generally follow, 'How are you?' 'How is it with you?' 'May you live, and reach old age!' If it be a person of rank who is at his door, the address is, 'Is it well, sir?' and the common reply is, 'Well indeed.'" Travelling to distant parts is commonly performed in a sort of palanquin.

The Malagasy are generally temperate in their habits, and do not indulge in a great variety of food. A meal in the forenoon, and another at sunset—rice being the chief article on the table—are the usual daily allowance.

The dress of the Malagasy is very simple. The general warmth of the climate makes a European style of clothing, with its tight and close fit, very unsuitable, and the native dress is scanty, loose, and flowing. In the army or

government service a straw hat is worn, but in the case of others no head-covering is allowed; and the hair is kept long and plaited, or curled all over the head.

Shoes and stockings are not much worn, except by the higher and more wealthy people, and even they frequently go without them, preferring the freedom of an unconfined foot. Those above the lowest class generally wear a shirt, and sometimes trousers of calico or printed stuff, and a sort of cloak or *lamba* of fine calico. This is occasionally edged with a border of five stripes of coloured cloth; a distinction which seems to be confined to the Hovah tribes.

Women of the poorer class wear a long piece of cloth round the waist, often reaching to their heels. All, except the very poor, wear in addition a long dress of light print of small neat pattern. Malagasy women do not wear a bonnet or any protection for the head, nor do they seem to feel the need of anything of the sort, except that in the hottest part of the year they carry a parasol or sunshade.

Children are carried sometimes upon the hip, but more frequently on the back. When young people have grown up, they occasionally present a piece of money to their mother, called "fragrance of the back," as a grateful remembrance of the time when they were carefully nursed and carried in the folds of their parent's cloak.

Malagasy children are very fond of a game which consists in throwing up several pebbles, receiving them alternately on the back and the palm of the hands, without dropping, for a number of times. Kites are used to some extent, and *battledore-and-shuttlecock*. Games with a ball, either for throwing or kicking, are also much enjoyed. A kind of game resembling draughts is played with pebbles or beans on a board or piece of smooth stone or earth, having thirty-two divisions or holes, much in the same way as the game of fox-and-geese.

Almost all the women, from the queen downwards, can spin and weave. They make cloth of hemp and banana fibre, also cotton and silk, and are very expert in producing both strong and neat fabrics. It is an important part of the labour of female servants to bring water from the tank, which they carry in large hollow bamboos.

These people are skilful workers in metal; and in weaving cloths of silk and cotton they show much taste; also in making fine silver chains, and goldwork and articles of jewellery. In straw basket-work they are very clever and ingenious. Houses, canoes, clubs, and other implements are carved in a very superior manner; and such is their power of imitation, that of late they have manufactured harmoniums of good quality, and have learned to play the violin, accordion, and the different instruments used by a brass band, which they handle with ease and correctness. Taken altogether, they are a most interesting race of people.

The typical form of a Malagasy house of the ancient fashion is a simple oblong, from twelve or fourteen feet to thirty or forty feet long, the breadth being about two-thirds of the length. The walls are sometimes as high as the house is long, and are constructed of thick planks set upright, and kept in their places by a framework of massive corner-posts and wall-plates, which are, of course, set up first. The planks are grooved at the edges, and between each is inserted a piece of the tough fibrous bark of the tree-fern. The timbers are placed as closely together as possible, so that if the wood shrinks, the outer air may still be excluded by the tenon of bark. Besides this, the top of each plank is mortised into a groove in the under side of the wall-plate, and the foot is let into the ground for a few inches. The walls are further stiffened by each plank being pierced transversely, and a long piece of tree-fern bark passed through them,



NATIVES OF MADAGASCAR.

so that the outside faces of the planking are all kept evenly together. The doors used frequently to be made of one piece of wood, requiring, of course, a very large tree. These old doors are now

becoming very scarce, for, being generally made of hard wood, and being well seasoned by exposure, they have been in great request for making furniture.