

The Aquarium World

**"For More Publicity To The Aquarium World's
Inhabitants"**

OUR AIM—To impart knowledge to those who desire a beautiful and scientific Hobby and to an exchange of views by both the professional and amateur.

Regular Contributor—S. Chichester Lloyd.

A New Aquarium Fish

By W. J. Richards, Vice-President San Francisco Aquarium Society

I have been requested by a number of friends, including the Secretary of the San Francisco Aquarium Society, to write an article on one of the many rare Exotic fish that are in my aquaria.

This particular fish was secured while on one of my many visits to the picturesque locality we call Chinatown, in search of rare specimens of salamanders and fish of which the Orient has such rich varieties, and of which our friends, the Chinese, are very fond; every Chinese has his own peculiar pet. This fish was the valued pet of one of our esteemed Chinese merchants, and was exhibited in a globe-setting in the window of his store.

I had to beg very earnestly before my friend would part with this fish, but he finally gave it up when I argued if he could procure one he could perhaps induce his friends, "the sailormen on the steamers running between here and China," to bring more of them from China, and in this way let us enjoy this interesting fish.

In describing this foreign beauty, my first impression is that it belongs to the Labyrinth family, as it frequently comes to the top of the water and takes a gulp of air. In shape it closely resembles the *Ophiocephalus Marmoratus* (Brind), but that it has no anus fins, the dorsal fin reaches from directly above the pectoral fins to the caudal fin, the anal fin is about two-thirds the length of the dorsal, the caudal fin, "or tail," is round and when spread is two-thirds the width of the combined height and depth of

the dorsal and anal fins. On the snout are two small barbules or moustaches held parallel. The eyes are large and cruel looking. The shape of the head and the deportment of the fish suggest the rattlesnake. As the habits are those of a reptile, especially is this true in the manner of eating; that of strangling its food by muscular motions while held in its mouth and throat. Curving its body down so that its stomach bumps the sand while the head and the tail are kept clear. It is now seven inches long—having grown an inch and a half since I procured it.

It is no easy task to describe the color. The ground color is of a light and dark drab, with dead black vertical lines or bars on the body, and two parallel black bars on the head. The stomach is a dirty yellow, and the whole body, including the fins, are covered with light and dark green and black dots.

All the fins have a tinge of purple towards the edges. Right at the base of the caudal fin is a round black spot completely surrounded by bright green dots, and looking just like the round spot in a peacock's feather. Many of my friends have mistaken this for its eye. The whole coloring of the fish seems to be under complete control at all times.

It eats live fish, worms and ground meat voraciously. I placed a four-inch Sculpin in with it, and it was attacked immediately. The manner of attack was similar to that of a grayhound—

a snap and a retire. But although rescued immediately, the poor Sculpin died in a few minutes. It has a habit of making large holes in the sand, thus giving to the whole tank a true marine garden effect, such as no human hand could produce. It also has the very interesting habit of resting on the plants for long periods, thus enabling one to study closely its beautiful markings. While the fish by rolling its eyes watches every movement one makes. There is a box of earth close to the tank where I dig worms for him while he watches me very closely taking the worms from my fingers, thus proving this specie is very easily tank broke. I am satisfied it is one of the easiest

fish to keep in a balanced aquarium, and my readers can rest assured that I will do my utmost to secure more of this exceptionally interesting fish. As regards to the temperature of the water, it is just as much at home in 80 degrees as in 50 degrees Fahrenheit.

In presenting this to my readers, I have avoided all scientific terms and have endeavored to make use of the plainest English, intelligible to the Amateur or professional aquarist, and if the information I have given proves instructive to students and lovers of aquatic life, I shall indeed feel my labors and studies will not have been in vain.

Arrangement of the Aquarium

By John H. Collier

In the interior arrangement of the tank and its conversion into an aquarium, taste and skill are requisite to guide us in our labors. Many minutia to be employed, which, however well the experience aquarist may be skilled in, yet in words he cannot convey to others. But the following is a brief sketch of the general *modus operandi* requisite.

The position being selected; see that your tank be thoroughly clean; then cover the bottom of the same to a depth of one to three inches (according to the size of your tank) with well-washed pebbles or river sand. Care should be taken not to use salt water sand. A few natural rocks, readily procured in the environs of the city, are requested for picturesque effect; these should be grouped so as to have a careless or accidental appearance, avoiding too much formality, as in this way they present a much more natural appearance. Rocks so placed that they represent one or more arches or bridges, under which the fishes can pass, have the most pleasing effect. The extent of rockwork should be governed by the dimensions of the tank.

But in all attempts of this kind towards ornamentation, avoid artificial representation of rocks manufactured of clay; let us follow nature as near as we can and not burlesque it. An excellent substitute for rockwork is pumice stone, this can be procured in large pieces and is readily cut into any desired form; it possesses in fact one great advantage over natural rocks, its lightness never endangering the breakage of your glass by accidental displacement. Persons not fancying this arrangement of the rocks can adopt another very good plan by leaving the center of the tank uninterrupted by them forming a ledge of rocks at the extreme end of the same; it can be arranged very tastefully this way. After you have arranged your rockwork, care should be taken that they set firmly together, as their falling would break the glass.

Your rocks being grouped to advantage and firmly placed, the next step is the introduction of the plants; if your tank is large, you will require several distinct species. These should be selected with a view to variety and color and form of foliage.