

INTERESTING FISH FROM THE ALABAMA COAST.
BY HUGH M. SMITH.

In November, 1898, the United States Fish Commission received from Col. D. E. Huger, a well known business man of Mobile, Ala., a specimen of fish that was not only strange to the local fishermen, but had never before been observed on the United States coast, so far as available records show. The fish had been taken on a line early in November on some snapper banks lying about 20 miles south of Mobile Harbor. The form of the species is so characteristic that its identity is readily discerned, although few students of fishes have ever had an opportunity to examine fresh specimens. It has no vernacular name except a Cuban one, *tiñosa*: it is, however, a species of crevallé or caval-ly, of which there are several com- mon representatives along our Atlantic seaboard, and it bears the technical name of *Caranx lugubris*.

The accompanying drawing, based on the specimen referred to, gives a good idea of the general form of the species. The broad body is much compressed, as in other members of the genus. The large deep head presents a swelling on the median line above and a projecting snout. The mouth is large, and the fish is evidently a voracious feeder. The teeth, while not prominent, are numerous and of varied shapes. In the upper jaw there are two distinct rows, the inner forming a villiform band, while the outer are large and conical; in the lower jaw there is a row of large conical teeth interspersed with smaller ones; furthermore, there are teeth on the tongue, the vomer and the palatine bones. The large eye is provided with a fatty eyelid. Both the second dorsal and the anal fins are falcate, and the pectorals are exceedingly long and sickle-shaped. As to color, the entire body of this fish is a uniform sooty black, the ventral, anal, and dorsal fins being intensely black. The usual length attained by the species is 1½ feet; the Alabama specimen was a little more than 2 feet.

This fish inhabits chiefly the shores of rocky, tropical islands, and is found on both the east and west coasts of the western hemisphere. In the Pacific Ocean it is recorded from one of the Revillagigedo Islands, lying off Mexico. On the Atlantic coast it has heretofore been observed only about Cuba, but it will probably in time be found near other West Indian islands. Specimens supposed to be this species have occasionally been taken at Ascension Island, in the South Atlantic, and also in the mid-Pacific. The fish taken off Mobile, nearly 500 miles north of Cuba, was evidently a straggler from that island.

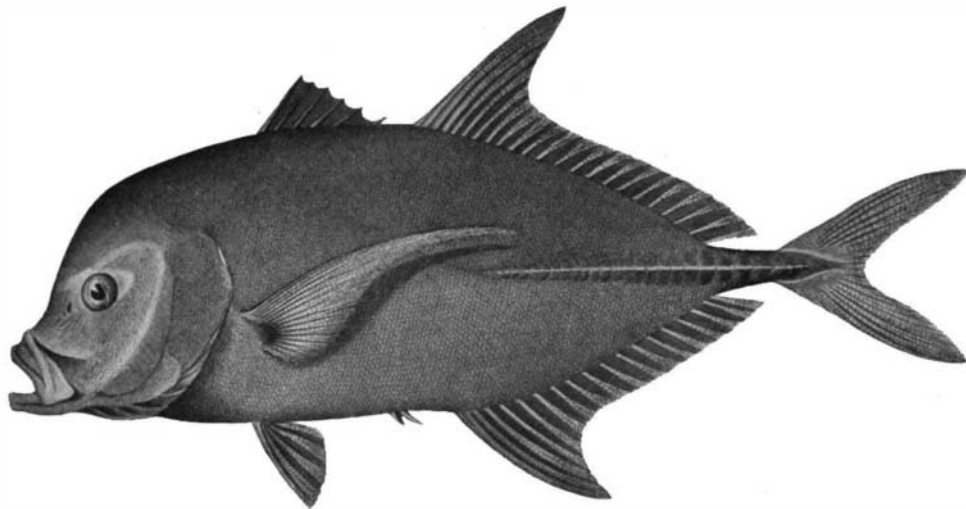
Aside from the scientific interest which attaches to the extension of the range of this species to the most northern part of the Gulf of Mexico and so near our own shores, the capture of this specimen has prompted a number of inquiries as to the history and nature of the fish.

It was first recognized as distinct by the late Prof. Felipe Poey, of Havana, and described by him from Cuba, in 1860, although it had been known to ichthy- ologists for a num- ber of years prior thereto. It is re- ported to be com- mon about Cuba, and may some time be brought into unpleasant prominence in our new West Indian possessions, on ac- count of the re- puted bad qual- ities of its flesh.

Prof. Poey chose an appropriate name when he designated this species *lugubris*, meaning mourn- ful, which applies to its somber color, bad reputation, and supposed gas- tronomic effects. Like a number of other fishes of tropical waters, it is reported to be poisonous, and its sale in Cuba has long been pro- hibited. A relat- ed species, the jurel (*Caranx lat- us*), has from time

immemorial been excluded from the markets of Cuba, and many disastrous cases of illness have been attribut- ed to its use. Singularly enough, other species of this genus are regarded as excellent food fishes and are ex- tensively eaten in Florida and other Southern States, and one of them, the common crevallé (*Caranx hippos*), when not too large, is said to equal the pompano for edible purposes.

The local name, *tiñosa*, meaning scabby or scurvy, and hence anything that is repulsive or repugnant, ex- presses the prevailing idea regarding the fish; the dreaded disease, *ciguartera*, caused by eating poison- ous fish, is also associated with this species in the popu- lar mind. Poey himself, however, does not appear to have shared the current belief, for he writes that he



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has eaten the *tiñosa* and found it good. The prejudice against this species may thus be unjust, or it is possible that the toxic properties ascribed to it depend not on any inherent qualities of the flesh, but on ptomaines generated by a particular kind of food or by the rapid decomposition to which the tropical fishes are liable.

THE PAVEMENT OF THE CATHEDRAL OF SIENA.

It may, indeed, truly be said there are few of the works of man's hand which stand alone as examples of their kind, but art sometimes strikes an invention which is unique, which is brilliant, and which can be compared with no standard, but must be taken by itself. Such a work is the pavement of the cathedral of Siena. It is a marble floor wrought in every part with curious en- gravings or inlay or a mixture of the two. Day by day for hundreds of years men and women have worn the surface of this pavement with their feet and knees until at last the most valuable part of it is covered with waxed cloths and planking. In portions where generations of worshipers have left too rude a mark, the pavement has been restored. In some cases the restoration has been done in good taste, and in others in bad taste. Careful tracings have been made of the whole, so that we can form an excellent idea of its ap- pearance in its pristine condition.

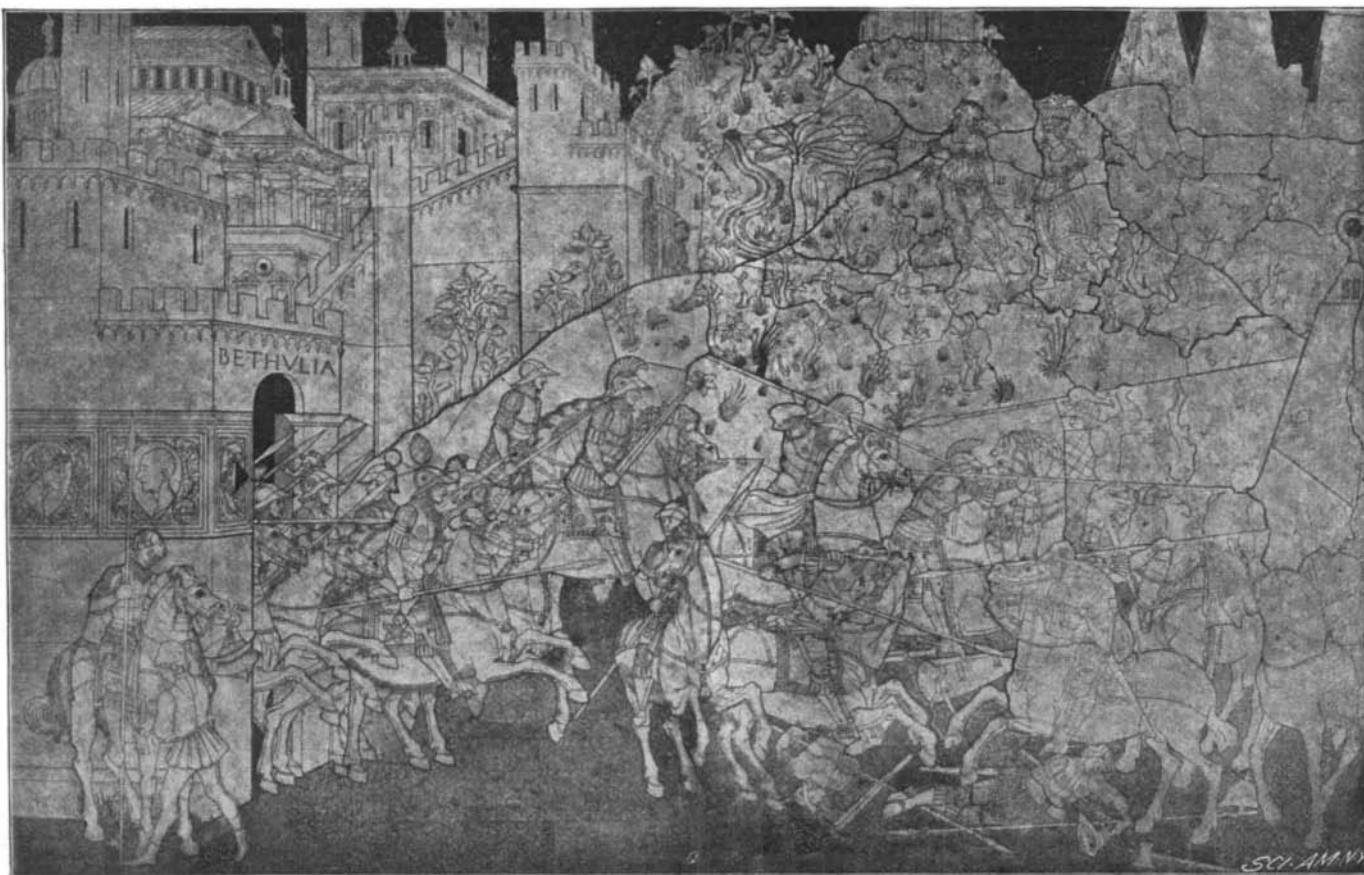
On August 15 of each year, the feast of the Annun- ciation of the Virgin, the patron saint of Siena, and for a short time thereafter, the wood covering is removed,

and it is really the only time when an adequate idea of the pavement can be obtained. But even this damages the pavement, for the writer was fortunate enough to be present on the date indicated above, and his foot knocked against a small piece of the pavement which had been crushed by some passerby, and he now re- tains this piece in his possession as a valuable souvenir. In brief, it may be said that the pavement consists of three varieties. First, engraved marble; second, in- laid marble; and the third ordinary mosaic. In the case of the figure subjects, a slab of white marble was cut to the proper size of the destined compartment and then it was strongly engraved or incised and the lines were then filled in with black mastic, so that the sub- ject lies boldly outlined under the feet.

At the end of the thirteenth century Siena was the most illustrious of the Tuscan commonwealths and was master of a third of Etruria and a rival of Florence. The rais- ing of great public monuments was common and the cathedral was be- gun on an enormous scale. In 1369 we have the first record of a pave- ment laid down in figured marble, and from that date until 1547 we can trace entry by entry, in the old parchments, the continuation of the work. The method employed in the earlier pieces would be call- ed *intaglio* engraving, for the pieces of marble were treated in the way we have described. Borders, etc., were made of mosaic, and these borders were composed of variously colored marbles exquisitely cut ac- cording to the design. The success

of the pavement depends upon the combination of the incised marble and the mosaic border. At first the methods employed kept the work simple, but by de- grees it became more and more artificial. The general name "*compresso*" was given to the combined art. The earliest subjects are in the transept. They are not religious, but allegorical and political, the "*Wheel of Fortune*," which was particularly appropriate for Siena, beginning the series; then came emblems of cities, etc. The first regular figure subject dates from 1374 and is in simple outline, and fifty years later came great single figures of "*Justice*," "*Fortitude*," etc. The method now becomes even more complicated. Domenico di Niccolo, a wood inlayer, is called in from working on the choir stools and he does wonders for the pavement. Now come pictures of leaders of the Jewish faith, scenes from the Old Testament history, and at last contemporary subjects are reached. In four vast irregular compartments the artists of the city now designed inlaid scenes of carnage. The ad- vance of the Renaissance is clearly shown in the scene which tallies with Dante's Vision of the Death of Holo- fernes and the overthrow of his host, which is shown in our engraving. Here the artist of the Renaissance, having just broken the thralldom of the middle ages, has delighted his imagination by piling up an infinity of classical temples and catacombs with statues on col- umns. The frieze is adorned with great medallions copied from the antique. One is believed by Mr. Sid- ney Colvin to be a portrait of Scipio Africanus. The

artist has shown a great desire to ex- press the actions of men and horses in strong move- ment, and while he has succeeded in doing this the composition is not a very powerful one. Judith and Holofernes are minor personages up in the top of the composition and would hardly be noticed if spe- cial attention were not called to them. The part of the composition showing the act of ven- geance has been almost de- stroyed. Matteo di Giovanni's "*Slaughter of the Innocents*," in which consider- able cross hatch- ing is used, fol- lows. Many of the designs were fur- nished by masters whose profession was



INLAID AND INCISED FLOOR OF THE CATHEDRAL OF SIENA.