

ladylike, nice creature. This is just a line to tell you that Clarissa and I, and Mark and Sybil are all coming down to dine with you this evening. We shall arrive by the 5.40 train.

"Your affectionate brother,
"GEORGE MARMADUKE."

"My dear Philippa!" exclaimed Lady Jane, "there isn't a thing in the house for dinner!"

"My dear mamsey, for goodness' sake, don't lose your head. I'll fly round to the butcher's, and the fishmonger's, and the greengrocer's, and to Johnson the grocer, and order in supplies."

"Yes, oh, yes—but Philippa—"

"Yes, yes, mamsey, but hadn't you better see the cook?"

"I will, I will, but Philippa, one moment—"

"What is it? I really must fly round to—"

"Oh, *won't* you let me speak? How are we to receive her?"

"Who? There are four people coming."

"Philippa, you are enough to distract anyone. How am I to receive Sybil—my new daughter that is to be?"

"Put your arms round her, and call her *that*, motherie, and all will be well. As to me, I'll just say: 'Here you are, darling little Sybil!' Oh, of course we must make the best of it. Now, if there's going to be any dinner, I must fly!"

THE END.

HOW WE FARED IN MANX-LAND.

A HINT FROM 1891.



So long ago as the previous Christmas when we "broke up," for that festive season, Elsie and I determined that, when the next long vacation came, we would spend it together. Staunch friends as we had been during the three years we had lived in London as art-

students, we had never yet put

our friendship to the test of constant holiday companionship, but now that circumstances enabled us to do so we gladly availed ourselves of the chance. And when the last Friday in July arrived, gleefully we wended our way to our lodgings, put the finishing touches to our packing, and then sat down with sighs of relief to discuss our plans for the hundredth time, and talk of all the work we should do in the happy nine weeks that lay before us.

Many and long had been our deliberations as to the place we should visit, first one and then another being weighed in the balance and found wanting, or, if the place was not, our purses were: strict economy being an essential factor for both of us. Finally, we had decided upon Port—a quiet fishing-village in the Isle of Man, it having been recommended to us by an artist friend, who painted there a couple of years ago, as a distinctly picturesque place, where we should be lodged reasonably, and not be annoyed by the "trippers" who yearly crowd Douglas and Ramsey.

Arrived in the island, we were borne along to Port—in the narrowest, slowest, most erratic, and good-natured little train that ever puffed its way along. Whichever way we turned, fresh pictures met the eye; woodland scenery only seemed scantily represented on the island, save for an occasional spinney, the fresh green of which served to heighten the surrounding colours. Long before we reached our destination we were busy in fancy with pencil and brush, painting pictures which kept us occupied until we woke with a start to find ourselves at Port—

Tired as we were, we did not hurry down the straggling village street, but noted its features with interested eyes, as one gazes on a fresh acquaintance with whom one is to spend some weeks in close companionship. Then we found Miss Kelly's house (where our friend had stayed, and we had secured rooms), and its mistress waiting to receive us. We were soon quite at home with her; she is a genuine Manx woman, kind-hearted, good-tempered, and most obliging. Throughout our stay she invariably responded "Yes, sure!" to anything we asked, and assented to every remark—no matter of how positive a nature—by saying "I believe so."

Tea over, we sallied forth to inspect the place, and do the necessary shopping. We had not known exactly how we should fare at Port—from a gastronomical point of view, so brought with us a few tinned articles, dried fruits of various kinds, tea, coffee, etc. We might have spared ourselves the trouble, as we found on inspecting "The Public Stores," where Port—visitors may find groceries and provisions, boots and stationery, photographs and fishing tackle, a circulating library, perfumes, and oil lamps, all mixed up in the most delightful jumble.

Although we should not have welcomed an exclusive fish diet, we intended it to occupy an important place in our daily fare, congratulating ourselves upon the amount of brain power we should acquire thereby. So Miss Kelly was early consulted as to the kind of fish we could obtain. She told us that most of that caught by the Port—fleet was sent straight to Douglas, and that visitors were dependent upon surplus supplies, which were hawked round the village. These supplies consisted chiefly of herrings, mackerel, and carp.

We found the herring more appetising than any herrings we had tasted; they were either cooked in the frying-pan or on the gridiron, having been scored across with a knife several times, and as they were always served quite brown and crisp, the flesh came from the bones very readily.



WHERE WE STAYED IN MANX-LAND.

(From a photograph by Messrs. Poulton & Son, Ltd, S.E.)

With fear and trembling we ventured upon the notoriously indigestible mackerel, and found it—probably from its perfect freshness—as easily assimilated as the herring itself. We tried it plainly steamed (a most digestible way), with parsley sauce, and also cooked by the following method, which was quite new to me, and gives a delicious dish. Elsie suggested it, and asked permission to prepare it.

Having cut open and cleaned two mackerel, Elsie dried them well, and pulled out the back-bones, then laid one skin downwards on a greased baking-tin, and sprinkled it with a handful of bread-crumbs, then with salt and pepper, a teaspoonful of chopped parsley, and half as much thyme rubbed into fine powder, next a *hint* of onion chopped as small as the parsley. On this went the second fish, sandwich fashion; and as Elsie pressed them together Miss Kelly (who, with me, was watching operations) exclaimed:

“Well, miss, I’ve *never* seen stuffing made without fat in before!”

“That is odd,” replied Elsie, “considering that it was during a short stay in Ramsey that I was shown this very method. The stuffing is not of the ordinary kind; it is made dry, because a mackerel contains so much oil that it would be too rich if fat were added. I shall just cover it with a paper spread with a little butter to keep it from burning, and if your erratic little oven will behave itself, and keep at this nice

moderate heat, in half-an-hour, or rather more, we can ‘dish up.’ I know you’ll make the gravy for us, for there’s nothing to do but to rinse out the tin with about half a cup of vinegar mixed with a teaspoonful of flour, and give it a boil up for five minutes: that is to cook the flour, and take away the sharpness from the vinegar.”

For mackerel we generally paid twopence each, but on one occasion they were sold at thirty a shilling!

Carp was a fish with which we were previously unacquainted, rather dark in flesh and very strong in flavour. We did not appreciate it as cooked in the native way, which is to stuff it with bread-crumbs, parsley, onion, cloves, and a little fat, bake, and serve with brown gravy. Elsie, who prides herself on her culinary knowledge, suggested to Miss Kelly that it would be better gently boiled and served with sauce, and certainly the strong flavour was minimised by that method. But later on we found that an onion, a bunch of herbs, some grated horse-radish, and a bay-leaf were the things to add to the water for boiled carp, and we asked Miss Kelly to rub the back-bone of the fish with salt, and to wash it with vinegar and water, rinsing most thoroughly with clean water again and again; and a sauce of ordinary plain melted butter, flavoured with anchovy essence and lemon-juice proved a very enjoyable one.

Can I ever forget the first day we had soles? The Port — man had brought them before we left in the morning, and we impressed it on Miss Kelly that she must use plenty of egg and bread-crumbs for the frying, as we liked them crisp. The thought of those soles cheered us down a steep and rough descent, and helped us to bear the jolting, the burning sun, and strong wind with equanimity, as golden-brown visions rose before us. But when we sat down, too hungry for words, and the dish was placed on the table, what did we see? Was that sodden-looking fish, mottled all over with black dabs on a greasy-white ground, the sole of our fond imaginations? Never! We were hungry enough to eat it, and we criticised as we ate, magnanimously resolving that as it was Miss Kelly's first offence, we would forgive her.

After dinner Miss Kelly herself gave Elsie the opportunity of giving her a hint or two which she sought by remarking that she feared she hadn't fried the sole very nicely, it was so long since she had cooked one. A little skilful questioning from Elsie soon elicited the method employed. After washing the sole, our landlady had evidently just dabbled it in the egg—beaten up on a plate—sprinkled it with bread-crumbs, and straightway put it in the pan, which doubtless contained an insufficient quantity of scarcely melted fat. No wonder that most of our bread-crumbs were left in the pan, and only a small quantity clung gallantly to the fish!

Elsie suggested that it was well to prepare the fish at least two hours before the time for frying arrived; that, after washing, it should be thoroughly dried and dredged with flour; that the egg should be carefully brushed all over it, the sole being held on a skewer during the process; that the bread should be grated (for the house did not boast a sieve), and spread on a large sheet of paper; that the fish should be laid gently on this bed of crumbs, and the paper taken up by the four corners, and shaken until the upper surface of the sole was well covered; that the skewer

should again be brought into requisition, the sole being poised upon it while any loose crumbs were shaken off, and then laid aside on a dish until frying time, when sufficient fat should be heated to cover the fish, and the sole immersed in it just when a blue vapour rising from the pan said, "Now is your time!" No frying-kettle was available, but fortunately the frying-pan was a deep one, so complete immersion without turning the fish was assured, and we knew that our stock of dripping would cover it.

Miss Kelly's next effort showed how well she had profited by Elsie's hints, for, with a beaming face, she placed before us a dish of soles crisply fried, evenly coated, and golden brown in colour, saying as she set it on the table, "It was just as you said, miss: they did turn brown directly, and they were not in the pan many minutes; but they are rather small to-day."

"Yes; but you need not keep a thick one in long; large soles are better filleted, I think: they are cooked in next to no time."

During our numerous rambles through the tiny villages round Port —, we noticed with interest a novel house decoration. On the walls of the whitewashed cottages most exposed to the sun hung large fish, which we found were drying for winter use; afterwards, on the beach at night, we saw fishermen cleaning freshly-caught fish for this purpose; they scrubbed it vigorously with seaweed, washed it in the sea, and then took it home, where it was put in salt for twelve or eighteen hours, then skewered open to keep it flat, and hung up to dry, to serve in lieu of bacon during the winter. The fish chiefly cured in this way are large haddock, ling, cod, and conger eel. Pieces are cut out of them as required, soaked for an hour or two if too salt, and then broiled, grilled, or fried. When the supply of herrings is too plentiful for consumption while fresh, they are also cleaned—but not opened flat—and salted down in a tub for future use.

DEBORAH PLATTER.

THE YEAR'S JEWELS.

BY M. C. GILLINGTON.

EMERALD: MAY.

Discovers false witnesses.

WHEN sycamore blossoms grew long in the lane,
And boughs were white with May,
I heard a song of a soul in pain,
That pierced through the dawning day.
"O, green wood-world! green leaf! green tree!
Yours is never a home for me;
My heart is sad as a heart can be,
Sorely, sorely."

The young leaves laugh as the wind runs by,
The cowslips curtsy and bend;
The cool boughs echo the passionate cry
That tells of a love at end.

"O, green wood-world! green leaf! green tree!
What should sever us, I and he?
What were the words that were told of me,
Falsely, falsely?"

The daffodil swords prick forth full strong,
The arrowhead ivies peer,
The wild birds come with a welcome song
To greet the sweet of the year.

"O, green wood-world! green leaf! green tree!
Whisper now of a place to flee,
Where I may bury my woe with me,
Surely, surely!"