IN HIS LIBRARY.

By ANNE BEALE.

I LINGER in his library, and think of former days,
Of all his kindly deeds and words, his wise and serious ways.
And as before me seem to rise his noble face and brow,
I weep because what once was life is only memory now.

I glance around the room he stored with works of every age;
I gently open books he loved, and softly turn the page;
But, oh! I cannot read the lines, they make my eyes so dim,
For every word on every leaf speaks to my soul of him.

I draw his own portfolio forth, and turn the sketches o'er;
I see him in this leafy glade and on that rocky shore;
I see him by that lonely pool, and near this gliding stream;
But now I weep again because I see him in a dream.

But wherefore should I weep for one now happier far than I?
What though the Poet's voice be mute, the Painter's brush be dry?
Are not the scenes of Heaven more fair, the songs of Heaven more clear,
Than all the purest sights and sounds that thrilled his senses here?

Does not his mind, that toiled for truth, in this world's broken light,
Expand in that sublimer sphere where faith is lost in sight?
And what he gained but glimpses of, when groping slowly on,
Become at once a problem solved now Earth's dark veil is gone

CHEAP FISH.

By the Author of "Vegetarian Cookery," etc.

ALTHOUGH we are not all vegetarians, there are many of us who will freely confess that we are in the habit of eating daily too much meat. During the past few years there has been considerable change in the mode of living of a great number of persons who may roughly be described as the well-to-do classes. Economy is now regarded as a duty equally incumbent on the rich as on the poor. By economy it must be borne in mind that we do not mean so much that we live cheaply as that we avoid *waste* of every description. Probably of all articles of food there is more waste in fish than in any other form of diet. Unfortunately, much of this waste is unavoidable. From time to time we hear of catches of fish in one day amounting to several hundreds of tons, and the same paper that announces this glut of food gives us the awful intelligence, that in this rich and prosperous city a coroner's jury have brought in the verdict, "Death from starvation," and an amendment is appended, in the words of the coroner, "It is shameful." The subject is fraught with difficulty, and when we are told that our poor law is on its trial, let us trust that some Joseph will arise and teach us how, metaphorically speaking, to utilise our seven years of plenty to supply the wants of those who never appear to be able to escape from living during the seven years of famine.

One great difficulty which we have to face is the unreasonable prejudice that the poor have against eating fish; and only those who know how the poor really live can enter into and sympathise with them in these difficulties. When the poor eat fish they are very dependent on that poor man's friend, the fried fish shop. Fish, to be palatable, requires a certain amount of skill in cooking, especially when it is fried. Even boiled fish, as a rule, requires some kind of sauce, without which it would be very insipid. Under-boiled fish is unwholesome, while over-boiled fish is devoid of nourishment, and is apt to eat what is called "woolly." Consequently, the poor have to confine themselves almost entirely for home-cooked fish to bloaters and kippered herrings; and even these require firing. It is to be regretted that in very poor neighbourhoods there are not public kitchens established where the poor can go and cook their dinner in the same way that there are public wash-houses where they can wash their clothes. One of the evils of our present system of civilisation is, that in every street, containing, say, a hundred small houses, each house containing one family, each day these hundred families require a hundred kitchens, a hundred cooks, a hundred kitchen fires, and a hundred saucepans to boil their daily supply of potatoes. Among a certain class of the poor, in large towns, a certain amount of co-operation has already been achieved by means of the bakers' oven; but this is generally confined to the Sunday dinner only; and we fear that the great bulk of the destitute poor are never sufficiently well off to obtain a joint worthy of being sent to this establishment, which to them is as luxurious as a Pall Mall club would be to the class above them. Let us hope that some means may be found to provide the poor with cheap fish dinners at cost price, and that we shall no longer hear of cart-loads of fish being taken to manure the ground in one part of the country while thousands are starving in another part. The chief difficulty in supplying cheap fish is the cost of carriage. Fish is a perishable article, and unless the mode of transit is quick, the whole supply is lost. Again, the difficulty arises, suppose the London market is what is termed glutted with cheap fish—is there sufficient demand to warrant the dealers in allowing the market to be glutted? At times the supply is almost unlimited. One cure, or partial cure, of the difficulty would be to increase the demand, as demand and supply will always balance one another. If, therefore, the fairly well-to-do classes would gradually acquire the habit of eating more fish and less meat, they would not only live more cheaply themselves, but absolutely help to increase the food supply of the nation. It will also generally be found that example is better than precept. There is a tendency in all classes of society to imitate as far as possible the mode of living of the rank immediately above them, and it is probably due to this that gradually and slowly the civilisation of the world advances.

We will now run through a list of the cheaper kinds of fish, and discuss the best methods of cooking them, not as an additional luxury, to be served on special occasions between the soup and entrées at a dinner-party, but as a wholesome everyday meal, which will have the desirable effect of considerably lightening our weekly bill at the butcher's.

By the cheaper kinds of fish we refer to such as hake, ling, halibut, mackerel, plaice, and herrings, though of course in some parts of the country, fish that in London is considered a luxury can often be had at a very small cost. For instance, off the west coast of Ireland we have seen turbots fit to be served at an alderman's table or at the feast of a City company sold at a shilling each; and we can all remember the old story of a clause being inserted in the indentures of Scotch apprentices to the effect that they were not to be made to dine off salmon more than three times a week.

We will commence with that much-neglected fish, hake. At times hake is caught in large quantities, especially in the West of England, when it is sold at a very cheap rate indeed. Hake can be boiled, but, like most boiled fish, it is very insipid without some sauce to accompany it. As a rule it will be found that nearly every kind of fish, when it is simply boiled, is in reality a medium to convey a sauce. A great *gourmet* once observed that roast mutton was a medium to convey red-

currant jelly. Boiled hake, boiled cod, with oyster sauce, really lose their identity. What we enjoy in the way of flavour is the oyster. Unfortunately, in the present day good oyster sauce, made from fresh oysters, is an expensive luxury. When we can buy fish very cheaply we can well afford to spend a little extra money in making a good sauce which will render it palatable. We will suppose we are going to boil a piece of hake weighing, say, three pounds.

Place the fish in sufficient cold water that has been salted to thoroughly cover the fish. We place the fish-kettle on the fire; bring the water to a boil, and then let it boil gently for about ten minutes, more or less, *not* according to the weight of the fish, but the thickness. The thicker the fish the longer it must boil. Hake is generally split open. A thick piece of fish, like salmon, would have to boil far longer. Experience only will teach you the exact time to boil fish. It is far better to have it underdone than overdone. When you think it is done, lift the fish out of the kettle on the strainer; take a knife and fork and open the thick part. If the middle piece is transparent and the outside white, you must boil it a little longer. Fish resembles somewhat the white of an egg—when uncooked it is transparent, when cooked it is white and opaque.

It is of very great importance not to over-boil fish, for the reason we have already stated—viz., that when over-boiled it loses a great part of its nourishment, becomes indigestible, and unpalatable. I daresay there are many of you who well remember eating boiled fish that has been over-boiled—which is generally the case at all dinner-parties—and getting a piece in your mouth which feels like a lump of chewed cotton wool, and you have been obliged to scrape some sauce on to a piece of potato in order to put into your mouth to drive the lump down. Perhaps the better plan is to take a sip of water, and swallow it like a pill. Properly-boiled fish should be moist and flaky. Should by chance dinner be unavoidably delayed, the cook should take the boiled fish out of the fish-kettle *directly* it is done, strain it off, and wrap it in a cloth dipped in hot water. By this means it can be kept hot for half an hour or more without being spoilt, whereas if it had been allowed to remain in the fish-kettle it would have become utterly uneatable.

This "over-boiling" applies to every kind of fish, especially salmon. But we must now turn our attention to a cheap sauce to accompany a cheap fish, or we shall be as foolish as the traveller who lunched off bread and cheese instead of meat, to save money, and ordered a cucumber, forgetting that they were out of season, and was charged sixpence for the bread and cheese, and five shillings for the cucumber!

Oyster sauce of course is out of the qnestion, and so too is lobster sauce, as we do not believe in lobster sauce made from tinned lobster. A very nice and cheap sauce can, however, be made, called sauce Hollandaise, or, what sounds more simple, Dutch sauce. To make this, the only out-of-the-way ingredient we shall require is a sixpenny bottle of tarragon vinegar or a small bottle of dried tarragon leaves. For the rest of the sauce we depend upon a little butter and a few eggs, according to the quantity of sauce we want. If the fish is cheap, and we are going to dine off it, it is not very extravagant to allow one egg for every two persons. We must first make some butter sauce with water, not milk, by thickening, say, half a pint of water with a little butter and flour till the water is of the consistency of thin custard. Next add some more butter—a little piece at a time—to this butter sauce, till it becomes rich and oily. Next make the sauce tureen hot, and place three yolks of eggs in it. Take a tablespoonful of the hot butter sauce, and mix it with the yolks of eggs, beating them up, and gradually add the whole of the hot butter sauce. By acting in this manner we avoid curdling the sauce, which spoils it. We now add about a teaspoonful of tarragon vinegar. If we have no tarragon vinegar, put a pinch of dried tarragon in the butter sauce while it is on the fire; also add to the sauce, when finished, what is called a suspicion of nutmeg, *i.e.*, two or three scrapes of the nutmeg across the grater. In this case, as there is no acid, add the juice of half a lemon. The sauce must be finished quickly, or else it will get cold, so you must have everything ready around you before you begin. Drain the fish quite free from the water in which it has been boiled, place it on a clean white napkin at the bottom of the dish; throw a few sprigs of fresh green parsley over the fish, cover it over with a hot dish-cover, and send some nice floury potatoes to the table with the fish. Boiled hake, ling, halibut, and plaice can all be served with this sauce, which of course is far cheaper than oyster, lobster, or shrimp sauce; and if we are dining off fish instead of meat, we can well afford a little extra butter in the preparation of the sauce.

Perhaps a nicer way of cooking hake and ling—for they are very similar—is to bake them in the oven, as, cooked this way, they taste much richer. In baking fish, we must not have it too thick, as otherwise the outside of the fish will get dried up before the middle part is cooked. To make baked fish taste nice we shall require some chopped parsley and lemon juice in addition to butter. Supposing the quantity of fish to be baked is about three pounds, we should require about a tablespoonful of chopped parsley, a whole lemon, and nearly a quarter of a pound of butter. Supposing cooking butter is one shilling a pound, three pennyworth of butter will enable us to dine off the fish without wishing for meat afterwards; and it is the butter that supplies the fatty element that the fish lacks, and so far from being an extravagant quantity, it is real economy to use it. You place the fish in a baking-tin, place the butter on the top, having mixed the parsley with the butter at starting. After the butter has melted and run into the baking-dish, you must baste the fish with the melted butter from time to time. The fish will also want turning over in the middle of cooking, so it is best to put it into the oven originally with the best side downwards. This quantity of fish would probably take about five and twenty minutes to bake, and you should squeeze the juice of the lemon over the fish about five minutes before you finally take it out of the oven. Of course when you send the fish to table you must pour the contents of the baking-dish over the fish; and during the cooking it is a good plan to shake the flour dredger over the fish once or twice, as this prevents the butter looking too oily, only be careful not to add too much flour, and make the melted butter thick. If you have an oval baking-dish, it is best to send the fish to table in the dish in which it is baked, of course placing the oval dish in an ordinary dish for the purpose; and if you make the ordinary china dish hot first, it prevents the fish getting cold too quickly.

One very nice fish, which varies very much in price according to the part of the country, is John Dory as it is called in England, or Jaune Doré as it is called abroad, owing to the yellow appearance of the skin. John Dory very much resembles turbot in flavour, and can be boiled plain and served with Dutch sauce, such as we have described above; but it is exceedingly nice baked in a tin with parsley, butter, and lemon juice, similar to the hake.

Perhaps the best method of cooking hake, ling, and plaice is frying. Of course in this case the plaice must be fillited, and the hake and ling cut into slices not much more than half an inch thick. We can fry the fish plain, with egg and breadcrumbs, or in batter; but in each case we shall require a sufficient quantity of fat or oil to completely cover the fish; and it is well worth while, on the grounds of economy, where fish is cheap and plentiful, to buy a coarse kind of oil far cheaper than the best Lucca oil for the purpose.

There is a great art in frying. The two chief points required are a good colour outside and the fish not over-cooked in the middle. The outside of the fish should be as dry as possible before it is plunged into the smoking hot fat; consequently, if you are going to fry the fish quite plain, flour the fish only the very instant before you plunge it into the fat. In this case it turns a good colour almost immediately, as of course the surface of the fish is dry; and if you floured it half an hour before you wanted it, it would be clammy. On the other hand, if you are going to fry the fish after it has been egged and breadcrumbed, it is best to egg and breadcrumb the fish early, and to leave it with some loose dry breadcrumbs sprinkled over and under it. Breadcrumbs should be made from stale bread, and are none the worse for being made a day or two before they are used, as long as they are kept in a dry place. Remember, good breadcrumbs for fried fish should be dry and fine. These slices and fillets of fish are best cooked a few at the time. If you put too many into the hot fat at once you chill the fat. It is for this reason that fish fried in large establishments, like an hotel, or even in a fried fish shop, is generally so good in appearance. There is such a large quantity of fat that, comparatively speaking, it loses but little heat on plunging the fish into it. Half a minute or a minute—according to the thickness of the fish—is sufficient to fry it, and a frying basket is almost an essential. Throw the fish on to a cloth for the oil to drain off. Pile the fish up on a sheet of ornamental paper placed at the bottom of the dish, and serve plenty of fried parsley with it. Many cooks do not know how to fry parsley. The secret is very simple. First, the parsley must be dry; secondly, the fat must be smoking hot; thirdly, you must have a frying-basket; fourthly—and perhaps this is the real secret—the proper time for frying parsley is about two *seconds*.

When fish is fried in batter, instead of egg and breadcrumbs, the most common mistake is, not to make the batter sufficiently thick. Thin batter has a tendency to run off the fish, and the result is a quantity of burnt batter at the bottom of the fat. In order that the batter should adhere to the fish, the fish should be perfectly dry before it is dipped in the batter. This can only be attained by flouring the fish immediately before you dip it in the batter. Remember you should never flour fish and then put it by. If this is ever done by mistake it would save time and trouble to wash the clammy flour off, dry the fish on a cloth, and re-flour it. As soon as the batter is a nice brown colour, remove it from the fat and throw it on to a cloth to drain. It is best to wait two or three minutes before serving, as owing to the great heat of the fat the fish inside the batter goes on cooking after it is taken out.

A very nice form of having hake and codfish is to have it smoked like haddock. By means of smoking fish it can be preserved for a considerable length of time, and it is much to be regretted that this process is not more often resorted to. In some remote parts of the country the cost of carriage and the necessary delay are the causes of an enormous amount of food being wasted. In the late Fisheries Exhibition a medal was awarded for curing fish to a Mr. Perry, who resides at that

very remote part of the United Kingdom, Penzance, which is only ten miles from Land's End. The amount of fish occasionally caught off the coast of Cornwall is at times prodigious. Perhaps in time, when this method of curing fish becomes better known, less food will be wasted than is, unfortunately, too often the case at present. To cook smoked hake or cod-fish, which are split open and resemble in colour and size gigantic haddocks, all you have to do is to place the fish in sufficient cold water to cover it, bring it slowly to the boiling point, and then let it simmer gently for five or ten minutes, according to the thickness of the fish. Smoked cod and haddock make capital breakfast dishes, and are exceedingly nice served with egg sauce, made as follows :—Place two or three eggs in cold water, bring the water to boiling point, and then let them boil for ten minutes; remove the shell while they are hot, and place them in a basin previously made very hot by being placed in the oven. Chop these hard-boiled eggs up as finely as possible with a knife and fork and about an ounce of butter. Of course the heat of the eggs and basin will melt the butter and make the minced egg moist. Add a little pepper and salt, and pour this mixture over the fish, or serve it separately in a tureen. Some persons will think it a great improvement to add a dessert-spoonful of anchovy sauce and a little cayenne pepper. This sort of sauce would be particularly suitable to a college breakfast at Oxford or Cambridge.

A very nice way of utilising the remains of any boiled fish that may be left is to have it curried. Hake, ling, halibut, or cod make excellent curry, and, like smoked hake and smoked cod, are particularly suitable for breakfast. In making curry sauce for fish, you must proceed somewhat differently from what you would were you making ordinary curry sauce. The first point to be borne in mind is that we do not wish the sauce to be too dark in colour; consequently, when you fry the onions, fry them very gently in a little butter until they are tender, but do not fry them brown; and if a few pieces of onion get burnt during the process it is best to remove them. It is also advisable to let the onions cook for a considerable time, though very slowly. By this means the rankness of the onions is entirely removed. These fried onions can either be chopped fine or rubbed through a wire sieve. They should then be moistened with a little stock, the best stock for the purpose being fish stock made from the bones of the fish. This stock, when cold, forms a very hard jelly. To half a pint of stock add a dessertspoonful of curry powder and a teaspoonful of curry paste. The re-remains of the fish are then shred with a couple of forks, and warmed up in the curry sauce. This fish curry can be served in the middle of a border of plain boiled rice. The orthodox way of serving curry is to have the curry in one dish and the boiled rice in another; and in handing it round, the rice should be handed before the curry. Persons who are in the habit of eating curry will take a spoonful of rice and make a little well in the centre with a spoon, then take some curry, and place it in the well.

DRESSMAKING AS A TRADE IN LIFE.

OF all businesses that a woman or girl can take up as a profession for life there are none more onerous, none more difficult, than dressmaking. And yet, if well done and thoroughly learned, no business is more profitable in the long run. But I should advise no one to start upon such an undertaking without a decided gift and liking, and, above all, an almost unlimited power for patient endurance.

Dressmaking is rougher than millinery, more irksome in its details, and there is necessarily far more opportunity for loss. This fact is at once made apparent if you consider for a few moments the wide difference there is between the amount of stock required for one business and that required for the other. But the profits are far larger, and the cost of production almost the same. By this I mean that the wages paid are about the same as those given in the millinery, and the comparative difference of the number of workers, or "hands," as they are technically termed, is not so great.

And again, rent is necessarily the same, and you can do four and five times the "turn-over"—that is, the amount of money paid into the "house"—in dressmaking that you can in millinery.

This last fact considerably decreases the cost of production, and materially augments the "profits." I shall deal with these facts again later on. I very strongly urge that the same amount of care, *if not more*, is required about the investigation of "houses" a girl proposes to enter. The class of ordinary trade girl who goes into the usual dressmaking business is very much more rough, more uneducated, than those who enter millinery. Dressmaking is divided into two branches, and a girl should carefully consider before entering for which of the two she has most taste.

These two branches may be roughly classified as "cutting" and "showroom." These departments are not interchangeable, as they may be in millinery. In dressmaking a "cutter" never by any chance goes into the "showroom"; and a "showroom" hand knows nothing whatever about cutting. They are totally distinct lines of life, and both are well paid when thoroughly known. I will now follow out a "cutter's" education, and then trace the "showroom" work.

One reason for this pronounced difference is, that the work is so very heavy that from the beginning the line is different.

The apprenticeship lasts two years; and here, again, if a girl will start as a "matcher," she will acquire practical knowledge not to be gained later on. Some houses require premiums and some do not. When first apprenticed to a workroom, a girl is set to make pockets, and is taught how to cut them out. Here again the work divides into two distinct branches—"bodice work" and "skirt work." Every girl will find that she has more taste for one or the other of these two branches. If a girl has a taste for cutting and fitting, she very rarely drapes well. If, on the other hand, she has a taste for draping, and is artistic about it, then again it is seldom that she cuts well.

In Paris these branches are kept quite distinct, and girls are allowed free choice as to which they prefer; hence we find that each department is thoroughly well done. But in England there is not the same keen perception as to the "fitness of things," and "skirt hands" are not so carefully trained;—the result is, that in England it is very seldom we find skirts so well hung or so carefully draped as in Paris.

I will now follow the career of a "bodice hand." When you are apprenticed you are first taught how to "fell" and cast-over the bodice seams, and it is exceedingly rare to find this work as well done in England as in Paris. The inside of a real "Parisian corsage" is as beautifully finished and as carefully worked as the outside; but very often in England this inside "casting" is roughly and clumsily done. It is a sad fact, but the truth, that English girls do not take the same trouble over their work as the French girls do. This is not only my own experience, but it has been told to me by many heads of dressmaking departments in the best West-end shops. This is the reason why so many French girls are employed in the best London houses instead of English girls. People have often said to me, "Why do you employ French girls instead of your own countrywomen." My answer has invariably been that "the work is better"; and this is the experience of every employer in dress-making. Therefore, I recommend every girl who wishes to be a good dressmaker, and to earn good wages, to be very careful over this early work.

"Boning" is taught next, and this is almost an art. A really first-class "boner" is nearly always a good fitter, for good "boning" generally denotes that you have a "*good* hand on a bodice"—an all-important factor in the case. After this you pass on to elementary stitching and sewing; you must learn how to work a machine on a bodice, and how to "finish" neatly and carefully. At this point you become third in the workroom, and if you want to advance you should try your hand on as much *private work* as you can get, putting into practice all the theoretical knowledge that you can pick up from carefully watching the *première*, or "first hand." From this stage onwards all depends on your own talent and quickness. If the "second" is away you should be ready to fill her place. As "third hand" you are also taught how to cut and make sleeves. Here I must again digress to Paris, for sleeve-cutting and making is a very difficult art, and it is only our neighbours over the water who carry this detail out to perfection. It is there made a definite branch; and in first-class Parisian houses the "sleeve hand" fits on her own work just as the "skirt hand" does. It is this minute attention to small details which has made Paris renowned all over the world for dressmaking and fitting. Gladly would I see the same name growing up for English dressmakers; but unfortunately they do not perceive whence this difference arises. And I strongly desire our English women to recognise and understand the reason for this difference; therefore, I suggest to girls that no work, no detail, should be "scamped," and to practice "out of hours."

As "third hand" you also learn how to "trim" bodices, and how to sew embroidery on. Your work is generally given to you "pinned" and arranged by the "second," and you have to carry out and finish off the details. Here innate fineness of touch and delicacy of taste will give you a great advantage. The *première* will soon know who to turn to for carrying out difficult work; you will thus gain her confidence, and she will be ready and willing to show you her work, if she finds that a really appreciative interest is taken in it.

As "second hand" you will take all the more simple bodices and cut them yourself, being carefully watched by the "first hand"; but you must always bear in mind that everything depends on your own efforts—that if you have practised alone as "third" you will be able to profit by every opportunity that comes

CHOICE FISH, AND HOW TO COOK IT.

By the Author of "Vegetarian Cookery," etc.

THERE can be no doubt that there is an increasing interest taken lately in the fishing industries of the united kingdom. It is only recently that his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales forwarded a communication to the Grimsby Committee of the Royal Provident Fund for Sea Fishermen, expressing the interest he took in their welfare, and the satisfaction with which he had requested the Chairman of the Council of the Royal Provident Fund to attend the inauguration of a scheme recently started in their behalf. The subject is doubtless of national importance. On the one hand, we see thousands of brave Englishmen daily risking their lives in increasing the food supply of the whole nation. On the other, we find tens of thousands daily, through sheer apathy, failing to avail themselves of the benefits brought almost to their very doors; the results being thousands and thousands of tons of food annually wasted that might be turned to good account.

One very common complaint heard against a more frequent use of fish as an article of daily food is, "Oh, but we so soon get tired of it." One cause of this complaint is that too often our cook's stock of receipts is limited. There are many good plain cooks who never rise above the simple boiled and fried. For instance, take, say, that delicious and now, unfortunately, expensive fish, the sole. The majority of cooks can boil the sole, fry the sole, and perhaps even grill one, but their art fails them beyond these elementary stages. On the other hand, a Frenchman would instantly suggest a few dishes such as sole *au gratin*, sole à la Colbert, sole à la Normande, sole à la Parisienne, sole à la Maréchale, sole à la Plessy, sole au fin herbs, etc., on hearing which our good plain cook would with open mouth exclaim, "La, miss; what is the meaning of 'à la.'"

We will endeavour to give a few simple receipts, which will vary the daily monotony of fried or boiled, and in doing so try to avoid running into unnecessary expense—a charge somewhat unjustly brought against high-class French cooks, who are really most economical in the highest sense of the word, for as a rule they invariably use up *all* the material placed at their disposal.

To begin with, we will describe how to cook a sole à la Colbert, which requires some little skill in the manipulation.

Sole à la Colbert.—This will probably be a novelty to most ordinary women cooks. There is no reason, however, why you should not be successful at the first attempt. The chief difficulty you will experience will be in taking out the backbone of the fish. In a great many cases of what may be called choice fish dishes, it is necessary to take out the backbone of the fish and to fill in the space previously occupied by the bone with some kind of what is called fish forcemeat. If we have fish every day, the remains that are left one day can be utilised for making this forcemeat, to be used with some fresh fish the following day. We will first describe how to take the backbone out of a sole, and then cook the sole and send it to table looking, apparently, as if it had never been touched. The beauty of this is, that when the fish is carved it makes a sort of pleasant surprise, like a cold roast turkey at a ball supper or a wedding-breakfast, which when cut across discloses inside a red tongue and forcemeat instead of the ordinary bones.

First take a good-sized sole, and then with a pointed knife cut a long slice from the neck, or from where the head joins the body of the fish, right down the fish to within half an inch of the tail. This long cut must be through the flesh right down to the backbone and along the backbone itself. You must be careful not to cut the bone. Now with the knife separate the meat from the bone on both sides right down the fish, first one side and then the other. It is best not to have the knife too sharp, as it is apt to cut the bone. Now with the point of the knife cut right through the top of the backbone by the neck. Separate the flesh from the bone with the point of the knife underneath first one side and then the other, but do not cut right through the fish. You must separate the flesh from the bone down to where the backbone meets the two rows of little bones each side: these little bones have to be left in. You can now take the backbone out in two or three pieces, and by putting the flesh back into its original position, you will have boned the fish as required.

In order to make sole à la Colbert, we must first make what is called some maître d'hôtel butter. This is made by simply mixing some finely-chopped parsley with some ordinary butter. Take, say, an ounce of butter, and with a silver fork mix with it a teaspoonful of finely-chopped parsley. You must mix it very thoroughly till it resembles a green lump.

We will now return to the fish that is boned. Spread a thin layer of this maître d'hôtel butter on the flesh of the fish inside from where the backbone has been removed, just in the same way that you would butter a slice of bread. Now put the flesh back in its proper place, and make it look as much as possible as if it had never been cut open. Next flour the fish and make it quite dry all over, then dip it into some well-beaten-up egg, and cover it with some fine dry breadcrumbs. It now has to be fried in the ordinary way in some very hot fat, and then sent to table on a sheet of ornamental paper. You can send some melted butter, flavoured with anchovy sauce and lemon juice, to table with it in a tureen. When you carve the fish, it is cut across in slices right through. The flesh is moist, and the maître d'hôtel butter inside gives it a very delicious flavour. A sole cooked this way is always what may be called juicy, and we all know how insipid a sole is when it is dried up or over-cooked.

Soles, as we have said before, are unfortunately, as a rule, very expensive, but lemon soles are much cheaper, and these can be boned in this way as easily as ordinary soles. We can also bone small brill, flounders, and moderate-sized plaice. Instead of putting maître d'hôtel butter inside, it is far nicer to stuff the fish with a layer of some kind of fish forcemeat, which can be made, as we have said, from the remains of some cold fish left from the previous day. The best fish for making fish forcemeat is whiting, but the remains of plaice will answer all practical purposes. First separate all the meat from the bones and avoid also all skin of the fish. Now pound the meat in a mortar, and it is best to rub it through a wire sieve. Mix this meat with a little butter, breadcrumbs, and one or two well-beaten-up raw eggs. You must also add a little pepper, salt, and nutmeg. This mixture can be used to fill in the space previously occupied by the bone of any of the fishes we have named. By this means we not only utilise what is left from the day previous, and which otherwise would probably have been thrown away, but make the fish we are cooking to-day much nicer, both in appearance and flavour. If the fish is small it can be egged and breadcrumbed and fried, but if the fish is large, after being egged and breadcrumbed it can be baked in the oven, being basted every now and then with a little butter.

As a rule we shall want a little melted butter to send to table with the fish. To make this we must use up the backbone of the fish we have taken out. Break up the backbone and put it in a small saucepan with a little water—rather more than half a pint—but do not put more water than you want sauce. Add to this a few parsley stalks and parsley roots, if you have them by you. Let this simmer, and then strain it off and use the liquor for making the melted butter. There is a lot of gelatine in fish bones; in fact, gelatine is made from fish bones, and this liquor when cold would form a firm hard jelly. Why throw all this nourishment away?

Another very delicious way of cooking fish is what is called *au gratin*. Lemon sole is very nice cooked this way, and sole *au gratin* is generally considered a very *récherché* dish; and as lemon sole is cheap, it is by no means expensive, but simply requires care in its preparation. Besides lemon sole, fresh haddock can be filleted and cooked in this way; so also can slices of hake, ling, and filleted brill be served *au gratin*.

The only expensive extra material we shall require will be a small tin of mushrooms, which will probably cost fivepence. Open the tin of mushrooms and chop up the contents with a small piece of onion as big as the top of the thumb down to the first joint, a small piece of yellow lemon peel the size and thickness of the thumb-nail, a brimming teaspoonful of finely-chopped parsley, and if you like you can add sufficient thyme to cover a sixpence, as well as a little pepper and salt. Put all these ingredients into a baking tin with about two ounces of butter. An oval

baking tin is best rather bigger than the fish itself. Put the tin in the oven till the butter melts, and you can mix all the ingredients together. In the meantime, first of all flour and then egg and breadcrumb the lemon sole or the fillets or slices of fish we are going to cook. Place the fish in the tin, and cover it over with the dissolved butter, chopped mushrooms, etc. Bake the fish in the oven. About half an hour would be sufficient for a good sized lemon sole. Filleted fish will not require so long. Send the fish to table in the oval dish in which it is baked. You can shake a few bread raspings over the top, and it is best to reserve three or four whole mushrooms out of the tin to ornament the dish. French cooks generally add a tablespoonful of white wine about five minutes before the tin is taken out of the oven. Italian cooks always shake a tablespoonful of Parmesan cheese over the fish before serving, allowing it to brown in the oven. This dish is always a favourite, and is exceedingly delicious.

A very nice, pretty way of sending lemon sole, plaice, or flounders to table, is to fillet them. Boil the fillets, and serve them in a white sauce made from the bones. The fillets should be rolled so that they stand upright on one end; and as in boiling them they have a tendency to unroll themselves, it is best to tie each little rolled fillet with a piece of cotton. These fillets should be placed in a small stewpan, in sufficient warm water to cover them. As soon as the water boils, or at any rate a minute afterwards, they will be done. They should be taken out of the water immediately and drained on a cloth, and then placed upright in a vegetable dish, and the sauce poured over them. The sauce is made as follows: Stew all the bones and *débris* of the fish in a little water, adding some parsley stalks and a slice of onion. After these have stewed some time, drain off the liquid and thicken it with some butter and flour; then add one or two well-beaten-up eggs, which give the sauce the appearance of custard, only take care you do not let the eggs curdle. Add a teaspoonful of tarragon vinegar to the sauce the last thing. This sauce must be poured over the little boiled fillets placed upright in the dish, but there is great art in making the dish look pretty. Supposing there are a dozen fillets, we must cut six little round pieces about as big as a threepenny piece out of the red skin of a chili, and we must cut six similar pieces out of a small pickled gherkin. Place these little red and green pieces alternately on the top of the fillets, and sprinkle a very little chopped parsley with the remainder of the red skin of the chili cut up as small as the chopped parsley, on the sauce round the base of the dish. This has a very pretty appearance, especially if served in a silver dish.

Of all fish, probably salmon is the most popular. Many years ago it was very cheap indeed, and consequently despised; but in the present day, notwithstanding a large importation of salmon from Holland, it is too often very dear. There are few dishes nicer than a fine piece of boiled salmon sent to table with a tureen of well-made lobster sauce and a thinly-cut cucumber reposing in plenty of oil and very little vinegar.

The secret of boiling salmon is to boil it sufficiently without over-boiling it. Salmon over-boiled is quite spoilt; and when a thick piece is being boiled, it is sometimes advisable to cut it open down to the bone to see if it is done sufficiently. Directly it is boiled through take it out of the water, and if there is a little unavoidable delay, wrap it in a hot cloth till you send it to table.

When salmon is rather dear, and we want to make a little piece go a long way, it is a very good plan to serve it as salmon cutlets cooked in paper, or what the French call *à la Maintenon*, and French cooks generally call *en papillôt*. A very small piece of salmon, like a very little piece of beef or mutton, is never nice boiled whole. We can boil a neck of mutton weighing three or four pounds, but we cannot boil one cutlet. Besides which, it does not look nice to send down an empty dish, and we must remember that to a great extent civilisation depends upon keeping up appearances. Suppose we have a small piece of salmon a little over a pound, and we cut it up into eight equal slices, or four slices, so that half a slice would go in each paper. We must next take eight sheets of paper of the size of letter paper, and we must oil these with a little salad oil. We must now place a slice or half a slice of salmon in each piece of paper, with a piece of butter about as big as the first two fingers down to the second joint, and add a little pepper and salt. We must now wrap up the paper, beginning at the two corners, and fold it over and over till the paper resembles in shape an apple turnover. In fact, it makes a semicircle, in which the fold of the paper is the diameter, and the two sheets folded together the semi-circumference. We now cook the salmon by putting these folded pieces of paper in a tin which should be greased to prevent the paper from sticking, and then place it in the oven. The time will be from ten to twenty minutes. By this means we keep in all the juice and all the flavour of the salmon. The cutlets should be sent to table in the paper, and of course one paper is sufficient for each person. The really correct way to cook a piece of salmon wrapped in oiled paper is to grill it on the gridiron over a very clear fire. This is easy over a charcoal fire, but over an English fire there is danger of the paper catching alight. French cooks in restaurants always cook it in the oven, and then with a hot poker make one or two burnt streaks on the paper to make it look as if it had been done on a gridiron, just as some artful cooks will cook a steak in a frying-pan, and score the steak across the top with a hot poker, to make it look as if it had been grilled the proper way.

Red mullet vary very much in price, and are generally considered very choice fish. When they are small, they are best cooked wrapped up in paper as we have just described. When large, they can be stewed gently in a stew-pan in a little butter with a pinch of savory herbs. It is also a great improvement to add a tablespoonful of white wine. When mullet are cooked in paper, you can add a pinch of savory herbs to the butter before you wrap them up.

It is a great mistake to think that fish is not choice because it is cheap. There are few things nicer than a well-boiled piece of cod, juicy and flaky, but not woolly, as it is when over-boiled. Cod-fish almost asks for oyster sauce, and if oysters are too dear to render real oyster sauce justifiable, why not have a nice large tureen of mussel sauce, which, when properly made, is quite as nice; and mussels can be bought at a penny a quart. We will describe how to make mussel sauce.

Take one or two quarts of mussels and wash them in cold water, using a hard brush to get rid of the sand. Next take a good-sized saucepan and put in it a wine-glass of water with a slice of onion, and a pinch of savory herbs. Put the mussels in the saucepan, and put the saucepan on the fire and heat them gently: as soon as the mussels open of their own accord, take the saucepan off the fire. Now open the mussels one by one, letting the liquor run back into the saucepan. Place the mussels in a small basin by themselves, and next strain off all the liquid that is left in the saucepan, the greater part of which has come out of the mussels themselves. Let this liquid settle in another basin, as it is sure to contain some sand. After it has settled, strain it once more through a piece of muslin into a little saucepan, and avoid pouring the dregs, which will contain the sand. Make the liquid hot, and then thicken it with a little butter and flour till it is as thick as custard. Add a little pepper and a teaspoonful of anchovy sauce; stir it over the fire till it is quite hot, then add the mussels, and stir them in over the fire for not longer than *half* a minute, and then serve in a sauce tureen previously made hot. Remember if the mussels *boil* the mussels spoil; in other words, they get hard, and would be as tough as the fingers of a yellow kid glove. This sauce is as delicious as it is cheap, and is well worth a trial. By adding a pint of boiling milk to the sauce you can make mussel soup, which many persons think quite equal in flavour to oyster soup.

There is one very delicious little fish, and very plentiful too at the present season of the year, which is rarely met with in private houses, for the simple reason that very few persons know how to cook it. We refer to whitebait. There is really no difficulty in cooking whitebait if cooks would only grasp the principles on which cookery depends. In order to cook whitebait properly, we must have a frying-basket that will reach right down to the bottom of the saucepan. The saucepan should hold four quarts, and should be half full of fat or oil. We should remember that this fat or oil will keep good for months in cold weather, and will do to cook fish over and over again. This two quarts of fat must be made very hot indeed. In fact, the fat must smoke, and should be so hot that a piece of dry bread thrown into it should turn brown directly. We next come to the whitebait. Suppose you have a pint—they should be kept in water in a little basin till they are wanted. If the weather is warm, if possible put a little piece of ice in the water. Next have a cloth on the kitchen table thickly strewed with flour. Take a small handful of whitebait and throw them on to the flour in the cloth. Roll them backwards and forwards in the flour for a second or two by lifting the cloth first one end and then the other, but avoid handling the whitebait. Now take the floured whitebait, put them in the frying-basket, give the basket a sharp tap to shake off the superfluous flour, and *instantly* plunge the basket into the smoking hot fat. The time to cook the whitebait is from five to ten seconds. Lift the basket out of the fat, and turn them on to a hot dish. The whitebait should be crisp, and you can tell when they are done by the sound as you shake the basket for a second when you first lift it out of the fat. After you have cooked two or three small handfuls, send them to table, and in the meanwhile go on cooking a few more. If there are ten persons at dinner, you would have to send up two or three dishes before every person is helped. Whitebait ought to burn the mouth. Have a few plates of thin brown bread and butter placed on the table beforehand, and on each plate of bread and butter have a lemon cut into four pieces. It is customary to send up a second supply of devilled whitebait to finish with. Sprinkle any whitebait that have been already cooked with either black or red pepper; replace them in the frying-basket, and replunge the basket in the smoking hot fat for three or four seconds: send to table as before.

When you have finished cooking the whitebait, let the hot fat cool a little, gradually, and then strain it into a large basin containing some water. If you were to do this directly you take the saucepan off the fire, the water might be converted into steam, cause the fat to splash, and the cook might severely burn her arms. When the fat is quite cold, scrape off the impurities that will be found collected at the bottom; by this means the fat is kept pure. If oil is used for frying, the oil must be skimmed off the water before it is used again.

NUTRITIOUS FISH.

LIGHT and nutritious food. How often is this recommended as the form of diet most suited to invalids; and, alas! how very often have these words been used of late owing to the recent terrible outbreak of influenza. Of all forms of light and nutritious food, perhaps none is more useful than well cooked and well selected fish.

We fear that even what may be termed high-class or professed cooks do not sufficiently grasp the fact that in cooking fish too often a great deal of the nourishment is thrown away.

In boiling a round of fresh beef, or a leg of mutton, no cook worthy of the name would throw away the water in which the joint had been boiled; but how few cooks realise the fact that the water in which a large turbot has been boiled contains almost, if not quite, as much nourishment as if a joint of meat had been boiled in it, and that when cold this water will often become a hard jelly.

We will, however, endeavour to give a few recipes for cooking fish in a way that entitles it to be called "light and nutritious food."

First of all, it is well to bear in mind the fact, that as a rule and speaking generally, that fish is most nutritious which is most gelatinous, and that of all gelatinous fish there are few to compare with eels.

First of all we will describe how to stew *Eels* to render them a light and nourishing dish fit for an invalid, and afterwards describe the ordinary stewed eels sent to table, which are, as a rule, a rather rich dish.

The first point for consideration, not only in stewing eels suitable for an invalid, but on all occasions when we cook eels for any purpose, is cleanliness. Eels are always best when bought alive, and should be killed by sticking a knife through the spine near the head. When this is not done, sometimes the pieces of eel when cut up have a tendency to wriggle about of their own accord; and although probably fish have no feeling, it is always best to avoid anything that has the slightest appearance even of cruelty.

In order to skin eels, we should detach the skin round the neck until there is sufficient to catch hold of, and then peel off the skin just as we take off a tight kid glove from the fingers—by turning the fingers of the glove inside out.

In stewing eels, if they are small they need not be skined at all, but it is very important to have them thoroughly *cleansed*. For this purpose they should be split open, and it is often a good plan to rub the bone with a lump of salt. The eel is not a clean feeding animal, and it does not do to think too much about its mode of dieting itself. Just in the same way we need not dwell on the breakfast, dinner, and supper of the innocent prawn, so clean when sent to table, and with its pure white flesh suggestive of a strictly vegetarian diet, but whose real mode of living is often too horrible to contemplate.

Having thoroughly cleansed the eels, we must cut them up into pieces about three inches in length, and place them in a small stewpan with sufficient water to cover them, and a little salt, and then bring this water slowly to the boiling point, and remove any scum that may arise. Now let the eels stew very gently till they are tender. Then throw in to, say, one pound of eels, a dessertspoonful of chopped blanched parsley, *i.e.*, parsley that has been plunged into boiling water for a few seconds. This renders it of a brighter green colour, and removes the slightly bitter flavour which it would otherwise have. Next thicken the liquor with a little butter and flour well mixed together, or better still, with some *white roux*, *i.e.*, butter and flour that have been baked long enough for the flour to lose its raw taste, but not sufficiently long for it to turn colour. We must, before serving, add a little lemon juice from a hard lemon. Whenever we use lemon juice, to add to fish or gravy, always try to have a hard and even green lemon. An old lemon that is soft and has a very thin skin is unsuitable; we want the juice—acid. A little pepper can be added, but in the case of the dish being prepared for an invalid, it is best added according to the patient's taste afterwards, on the plate. Some fried or toasted bread can be served with these stewed eels. Small silver eels are very nice cooked this way.

In making stewed eels for an ordinary dinner we can proceed in the same way till we put them in the stewpan, and should now add a few small onions similar to those used for making pickle, as well as a small tin of mushrooms, which will cost about fivepence. We should add, in addition to the parsley, to, say, two pounds of eels, a teaspoonful of mixed savory herbs. We should also thicken the liquor with *brown roux*, *i.e.*, flour and butter mixed together and fried or baked till it is a nice brown colour. We can also add a tablespoonful of mushroom ketchup, some lemon juice, and a little port wine or port wine dregs. It is a great improvement to the dish to stew the eels in stock at starting, instead of water. Some nicely-fried bread should be used to ornament the dish, and at the last moment a little chopped blanched parsley should be sprinkled over the pieces of eel by way of garnish. As a rule French cooks add a little anchovy sauce to stewed eels, and a little mace. This is purely a matter of taste, and whether it is an improvement or not can be regarded as an open question.

Probably the most ordinary method of serving eels in England is to have them fried. The best method is what is sometimes called "spitchcocked" eels. The proper way to fry eels, when they are fairly large, is to take out the backbone entirely and open the pieces, which should be about three inches in length, and cook them flat. It is a good plan to sprinkle the pieces with some finely-chopped onion and parsley, and pepper and salt. Then dip them into some well-beaten-up egg and cover them with fine breadcrumbs, and put them by till the pieces get dry. When you do this it is far easier to fry them a nice colour without over-cooking them. The beauty of fried eels is to have the flesh moist. Too often, when fried bones and all, the fish seems all backbone and egg and breadcrumbs. The pieces of eel should be plunged into sufficient smoking hot fat or oil to cover them, and fried parsley should be used to garnish the dish.

Ordinary butter sauce can be served with spitchcocked eels, or butter sauce flavoured with anchovy sauce and lemon juice; but the best sauce of all is tartar sauce, *i.e.*, mayonnaise sauce, to which has been added some chopped parsley, one or two fresh tarragon leaves finely chopped, a small piece of chopped onion, and a little anchovy sauce and French mustard.

A very nice way of serving eels, so as they form what may be called a light and nourishing food without being too rich for an invalid, is to have them broiled.

After boning and cutting up the eel—which should be a good-sized, thick one—squeeze a little lemon juice over the pieces and pepper and salt them, and then grill them on a gridiron over a clear fire. Having first dipped each piece into a little salad oil, they can be sent to table plain, or a little fried parsley or sauce can be served with them. For an invalid the best way is to serve them quite plain, with some thin brown bread and butter, and a little cut lemon, which can be squeezed over them on the plate. Many persons would add a little cayenne pepper as well when eaten this way.

One of the nicest ways of serving eels, and one often met with in France, is what is known as *Eels en Matelote*. This dish is made by stewing eels in wine, generally claret, which gives the dish the name of *à la Bordelaise*. It is a great mistake to think that using wine in cooking is extravagant or a waste. There is in the present day in this country such a quantity of positively bad claret sold that the extravagance and waste is to drink it as it is. It is not true hospitality to give your guests bad wine. We can all recollect the famous entertainment of Mr. Pecksnif, who observes: "Let us be merry"—here he took a captains biscuit; and we are afterwards told he sipped his red-currant wine, "and tried to look as if it didn't make his stomach ache." Of course when claret is used for cooking purposes, such as when we make *Bordelaise* sauce or *Eels en Matelote*, the cheapest claret is sufficient for the purpose so long as it is claret. Unfortunately, a great deal of fluid is sold under the name of claret that does not contain one single drop of grape juice at all.

To make *Eels en Matelote* we must stew the pieces in claret instead of water or stock. In this case we add the mushrooms, onions, and parsley as before, but also a few cloves. You can strain off the fish when stewed tender, and add a little brown gravy to the claret, and then let it boil away till it begins to get thick, or you can thicken it just as it is with a little cornflour. It does not do to have too much sauce. If the pieces of eel are placed close together at starting, and only just sufficient claret added to cover them, this will be avoided. *Eels en Matelote* should be served surrounded with plenty of fried bread, and some chopped parsley sprinkled over them at the finish.

A very cheap and at the same time nice way of serving fish when we want it in the form of light and nourishing food, is fish *souchet*. Those who have had a fish dinner at Greenwich will remember that the first dish was generally flounders *souchet*. This method of cooking fish is so simple that it is strange it is not more often met with in private houses. The flounders are boiled, and sent to table floating in the clear fish stock in which they were boiled, a sprig or two of parsley being generally thrown in with them.

We can also have *souchet* of salmon, and a few vegetables such as celery trimmings, carrots, and parsley may be boiled with the fish. The

slices of salmon are served like the flounders, in the clear fish stock, if such it may be called, in which the fish is boiled. Of course brown bread and butter should always be sent to table with every kind of fish *souchet*.

A very light and nourishing form of food is fish served up in Béchamel sauce. The more gelatinous the fish is the better. For instance, the fin part of a turbot or brill is very nutritious. Suppose we want to serve up for an invalid a piece of turbot or brill, or say a small sole with Béchamel sauce, all we have to do, so far as the fish is concerned, is to put it into cold, lukewarm, or hot salted water, according to its thickness, and then let it boil till it is done, and immediately it is done serve it with the sauce, which can be poured over the fish, or served separately in a tureen.

In order to make the sauce we shall want a little good clear stock, which, when cold, will make a jelly. We don't want much, and as there is probably some good beef tea in the house, we can use the clear part of this. We know that when beaf tea settles and gets cold, generally the upper part is a clear jelly. Take a few tablespoonfuls of this jelly and put it in a little saucepan with a slice of onion, a sprig or two of parsley, and a little celery if you have any. After you have boiled it up for, say, half an hour, strain it off and mix it with an equal quantity of cream, and thicken it with a little butter and flour.

If only a very little is required, you can let the milk stand early in the morning and skim off the top. In case of sickness in the house these little things are worth bearing in mind. It is an improvement to boil the cream or rich milk separately, and to place a bay leaf in it. The sauce, when the stock and cream have been mixed, can be thickened with butter and flour, or if it be desirable for us to have as much nourishment as possible in a small space, we can thicken the sauce with the yolk of an egg.

Stewed Oysters are very nutritious, and for cooking purposes the American blue-points are almost as good as our expensive natives.

The chief point to be borne in mind in cooking oysters in any way is to save their liquor, and to know how to scald them without making them hard. The oysters, whether opened at home or out, should be opened over a basin, so that all the liquor in the oysters is preserved. Place the oysters in a small stewpan with their liquor, and if the liquor is not sufficient in quantity to cover them, add a little milk. Then place the stew-pan on the fire, and directly the liquor begins to boil remove them from the fire. Now strain off the oysters and thicken the liquor and milk, adding a little more milk, or, still better, cream if necessary, with some butter and flour, till it becomes of the consistency of rich cream; add a very little nutmeg, a teaspoonful of anchovy sauce to, say, every dozen oysters, make the liquid part hot, and then add the oysters. You must never let the liquor *boil* after the oysters are added, as this would make them hard and indigestible.

In making *Scalloped Oysters*, all you have to do is to proceed as directed for making stewed oysters and then add sufficient bread-crumbs to soak up the liquid. Be careful not to add too many breadcrumbs, as you will in this case make it too dry. Always bear in mind that in making bread sauce, the sauce which is very liquid at starting soon gets thick owing to the breadcrumbs soaking up the liquid and gradually swelling. You must allow for the breadcrumbs to swell. You can then put the mixture in scallop shells, or silver imitation scallop shells, trying as much as possible to put an equal number of oysters in each shell. Shake some bread raspings over the top, and then place very tiny pieces of butter in these, to keep the whole moist, and make the scalloped oysters hot in the oven, taking care not to leave them in too long so that they dry up.

Fried Oysters are scalded oysters, dried, floured, and then egged and breadcrumbed, or dipped in batter, and plunged into smoking hot fat. They are generally served with fried parsley on a folded dinner napkin. A little cut lemon can be served round the dish. The lemon should be cut in halves or quarters so that it can be squeezed over the oysters. Thin brown bread and butter should also be served with them.

THE LADY ERSKINE OF GRANGE.

THE Shetland Isles, as every schoolboy and schoolgirl knows, are sufficiently cut off from the rest of the civilised northern world. But as "in the lowest depths there is a lower still," so among this group of distant islands there are one or two more distant still—so remote, indeed, as to be almost inaccessible during the winter months, and peopled by crofters who would consequently be in danger of starvation if it were not for the occasional visit of a friendly steamer sent out with supplies of corn, seed, and vegetables, from Lerwick or Kirkwall. These islands are called Foula and St. Kilda. They are the haunt of gulls and of other sea birds; and the former is now the only known home of the great skua, a rival of the kingly eagle in size and fierceness. St. Kilda has, however, a population which is counted by the hundred, instead of by the score, as is the case with its rocky neighbour; and sometimes it has been known to be strangely tenanted.

At all events, as lately as the reigns of our first and second Georges, St. Kilda reckoned among its inhabitants one mysterious lady, who was known to the rest of the simple islanders as "The Lady of Grange." To most, if not to all of them, her history was a mystery; and even the venerable pastor of St. Kilda could extract from her but few of her antecedents, except that her maiden name was Rachel Chiesley, that she was the wife of Erskine of Grange, and that she had been brought forcibly to the shores of the island by relations, who desired that she should be kept there in durance vile, for family reasons which nobody could induce her to explain.

This lady, it would seem, was born under an unlucky star. Her father, John Chiesley of Dalry, had been cursed with a fierce and uncontrollable temper, and had been executed at the Tolbooth, in Edinburgh, for having slain the Lord President of the Scottish Courts, one of the Lockharts of Lee, as he was walking home from kirk along the high street in Edinburgh in 1669. Her childhood, in consequence, was passed under a cloud; but on reaching womanhood her hand was sought in marriage by many Scottish gentlemen of high rank and good fortune, among whom she chose, most unhappily as it turned out, James Erskine, next brother of the Earl of Mar, and himself a Scottish judge with the title of Lord Grange. The earl himself was attainted for his share in the unfortunate "rising" of the Stuarts in 1715, and had to live in exile abroad in order to save his head from the block. His brother James had purchased some of his forfeited lands, and in spite of this fact, and of his seat on the bench, had allowed suspicion to be thrown on the purity of his ermine in more ways than one. His wife, he felt, disapproved his conduct, and he feared that, as she knew all of his most secret affairs, his enemies might extort from her some admissions of his guilt, and so might bring about his ruin.

It is only on such grounds as these that we can account for the strong measures that he took to deprive his wife of her liberty, and to force her to spend her declining years on a barren rock in the midst of the wild Atlantic waves. If there be any truth in the story which late in life she committed to writing, and which leaked out after her death, she had lived a happy wife for five-and-twenty years in Edinburgh, when her husband tried to persuade her to abdicate her position and to sign a deed of separation. On her refusal, he turned her out of his doors, and she took refuge with an old crone who had been her servant in happier days; and some armed Highlanders being sent to seize her and carry her off forcibly, she found herself betrayed and abandoned. They were Frasers, of the Lovat clan, and had a grudge against herself and her people. They carried her first to a cottage on the hills about Linlithgow and Falkirk; but those hills being not remote enough, she was again removed by force a few weeks later into a fastness in the Highlands of Ross-shire and Inverness-shire. Even here, however, it was feared that her retreat would be found out; she was forced, by her husband's orders, to travel to the western coast, where she was made to go on board a fishing vessel, which deposited her on an island where, for a year or two, she lived as a guest, or rather as a captive, with a member of the Clan Macdonald. But even here she was not allowed to find a resting-place, being put, one summer night, on board a vessel bound for the Shetland Islands, where she was told that her husband had given orders that she should be kept as a prisoner on the lonely shores of St. Kilda.

Here she spent ten summers and winters, her only companion being the venerable pastor of the island, who doubtless would gladly have helped to restore her to her friends, but that all or most of them were dead or in exile, and that he had good reason to fear the vengeance of a man so unprincipled, so powerful, and such a master of intrigue, and so unscrupulous as Erskine of Grange was known to be.

It is said that after her long detention in St. Kilda's she was suddenly seized once more and removed to the more hospitable shores of the Isle of Skye; but her actual departure was to the last a mystery, and there is little doubt that it was effected by force and in the night. She is supposed to have died in Skye, her husband's political influence defeating all attempts to throw light upon her latter years. She left two sons; Charles, who died young, or at all events unmarried; and James, who married in 1740 his cousin, Lady Frances Erskine, who, but for the attainder, would have become in her own right Countess of Mar, and whose son was restored in blood to that ancient honour and dignity by King George IV. soon after his royal visit to Edinburgh.

E. WALFORD.