

just to store the flavor there; for cooks are so forgetful, and always put the blame on me when they fail of producing a fine fresh smell.

Also knowing, to my sorrow, how suspicious people are, and narrow-minded to a degree none would give them credit for, I was forced to do a thing which always makes me to myself seem almost uncharitable.

But I felt that I could trust nobody to have proper faith in me, especially when they might behold the eyes of the fishes retire a little, as they are very apt to do when too many cooks have looked at them. And knowing how strong the prejudice of the public is in this respect, I felt myself bound to gratify it, though at some cost of time and trouble. This method I do not mind describing (as I am now pretty clear of the trade) for the good of my brother fishermen.

When the eyes of a fish begin to fail him through long retirement from the water, you may strengthen his mode of regarding the world (and therefore the world's regard for him) by a delicate piece of handling. Keep a ray-fish always ready—it does not matter how stale he is—and on the same day on which you are going to sell your bass, or mullet, or cod, or whatever it may be, pull a few sharp spines, as clear as you can, out of this good ray. Then open the mouth of your languid fish and embolden the aspect of either eye by fetching it up from despondency with a skewer of proper length extended from one ball to the other. It is almost sure to drop out in the cooking; and even if it fails to do so none will be the wiser, but take it for a provision of nature; as indeed it ought to be.

Now, if anybody is rude enough to gainsay your fish in the market, you have the evidence of the eyes and hands against that of the nose alone. "Why, bless me, madam," I used to say, "a lady like you, that understands fish a great deal better than I do! His eyes are coming out of his head, ma'am, to hear you say such things of him. Afloat he was at four this morning, and his eyes will speak to it." And so he was, well afloat in my tub, before I began to prepare him for a last appeal to the public. Only they must not float too long, or the scales will not be stiff enough.

Being up to a few of these things, and feeling very keenly how hard the public always tries to get the upper hand of me, and would beat me down to half nothing a pound (if allowed altogether its own way), I fought very bravely the whole of that Monday to turn a few honest shillings. "Good old Davy, fine old Davy, brave old Davy!" they said I was every time I abated a halfpenny; and I called them generous gentlemen and Christian-minded ladies every time they wanted to smell my fish, which is not right before payment. What right has any man to disparage the property of another? When you have bought him, he is your own, and you have the title to canvass him; but when he is put in the scales, remember "nothing but good of the dead," if you remember anything.

As I sate by the cross-roads in Bridgend on the bottom of a bucket, and with a four-legged dressing-table (hired for twopence) in front of me, who should come up but the well-known Brother Hezekiah? Truly tired I was getting, after plodding through Merthyr, Mawr, Ogmore, and Ewenny, Llaleston, and Newcastle, and driven at last to the town of Bridgend. For some of my fish had a gamesome odour, when first I set off in the morning; and although the rain had cooled down the air, it was now become an unwise thing to recommend what still remained to any man of unchristian spirit, or possessing the ear of the magistrates.

Now perhaps I should not say this thing, and many may think me inclined to vaunt, and call me an old coxcomb; but if any man could sell stinking fish in the times of which I am writing,—and then it was ten times harder than now, because women looked after marketing—that man I verily believe was this old Davy Llewellyn; and right he has to be proud of it. But what were left on my hands that evening were beginning to get so strong, that I feared they must go over Bridgend bridge into the river Ogmore.

The big coach with the London letters, which came then almost twice a-week, was just gone on, after stopping three hours to rest the horses and feed the people; and I had done some business with them, for London folk for the most part have a kind and pleasing ignorance. They paid me well, and I served them well with