

The Inglenook

A Tiny Kingdom.

Did you ever hear of the Kingdom of Man? It is a little island, being about thirty miles long and thirteen across, and containing an area of some one hundred and forty-five thousand acres. Anciently it was called Mona. It is a very interesting place, both on account of its antiquity and the peculiar way of its inhabitants. Would you not like to learn something of its history?

In the first place, let us look up its geographical position. If you will turn to your map of Great Britain and Ireland, you will see the Isle of Man lying about midway between the ports of Belfast and Liverpool, its rocky coast continually washed by the restless waves of the Irish Sea. Imagine this island being a kingdom; yet for six hundred years it was so, and its sovereigns bore the title of kings of the Isle of Man.

It is said there is no other spot in the world where such diversity of scenery has been compressed into a small space as the Isle of Man. It is a Lilliputian kingdom, from its miniature constitution to its tiny rivers and waterfalls; from its pigmy mountains to its little villages. Everything is abridged. There are seventy thousand people upon the island.

The island has had a romantic history. The "Mona" of the ancient Romans, it passed from the imperial sway and fell under the dominion of the Welsh and Scottish kings, with whom it remained till the close of the ninth century, when it was conquered by the Norse sea kings, who held the island as an independent kingdom for over four hundred years. Several of these Norse kings of Man, notably Olave the Second and Reginald the First, were prominent characters of their time, made pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and conducted themselves generally after the fashion of well-behaved sovereigns.

In 1270, Alexander the Third, of Scotland, conquered the island and annexed it to his dominions. This monarch, in token of his conquest, established the quaint device of "the three legs," which still constitutes the national emblem for the ancient memorial ensign of the island—a ship in full sail, with the motto, "Rex Maninae et Insularum."

In 1344, William Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, a great English baron, who united in his person the rights of the old Norse kings, was crowned king of Man. Subsequently the title passed to the Stanleys, Earls of Derby, who held possession of the island till 1736. The Dukes

of Athole, in Scotland, were sovereigns of Man till 1826, when the island was purchased by the English crown.

Many ruins of the old time are found in Man. There is a ruined cathedral, roofless and dilapidated, which dates from the thirteenth century. In its crypt the Duchess Elinor, wife of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, uncle of Henry the Sixth, was imprisoned. Shakespeare, in "King Henry the Sixth," refers to her as living in banishment "with Sir John Stanley in the Isle of Man." The principal castles are Castle Rushmore, in Charlestown, the ancient residence of the kings of Man, dating probably from the twelfth century, and Peel Castle, an ancient stronghold of the Stanleys. The latter castle was the scene of Fenella's escape, described in Sir Walter Scott's "Peveril of the Peak."

Douglas, the principal town and port, was a simple fishing village not many years ago, but now it boasts of London shops, several large hotels, and three or four thousand inhabitants. It is situated on a beautiful bay and has delightful walks, notably one through the woods to the nunnery grounds and another to Kirke Braddan, where lie both Druid and Scandinavian in the graveyard consecrated by the associations of a thousand years.

One curiosity of the island we have not referred to is the Manx cat, which has no tail, or only the merest apology for one. In every house the traveller will see one or more of these tailless cats; no others live on the island. The tradition among the peasantry is that Manx cats once had tails like other felines, but it became fashionable to cut them off, and after a number of generations the tails disappeared altogether from the species. It is more likely, however, that they are a distinct race of felidae with marked characteristics. They do not acknowledge relationship to other cats, and if a cat with a full tail is brought among them they will attack it so savagely that it has to flee for its life. If, however, they are taken away as kittens, they soon become more cosmopolitan in their feelings and get along amicably enough with the more ornamental pussies.—Selected.

If possible, seal your lips in silence when the storm is rising; shut up your anger in your own bosom, and, like fire that wants air and vent, it will soon expire. Angry words often prove a fuel to the spark. The subjection of our temper to the control of religion is a thing that must be done.

Mrs. Brown's Way.

The woman who puts to wise and diligent use her eyes and ears, will find many a fragment which may prove a key to unlock here and there a door which opens an escape from perplexity and worry, to the best means and ways of meeting everyday problems.

Mrs. Brown is my next door neighbor. She is the most practical housekeeper that it has been my fortune to know. My own success in household economics I owe to her ready, helpful, unflinching experience. So much do I value the information I receive from her, that I have a blank book into which I record her valuable suggestions. On the outside broad cover, I have in bold lettering, which I have cut from periodicals, this title: "Mrs. Brown's Way."

It occurred to me the other day that the notes from my book were worth repeating. I trust that the following practical experimental household hints, by their very simplicity, may prove as valuable to young eager housekeepers, as they have done to me.

One morning I was lamenting the difficulty of cutting hot bread.

"Oh, I must initiate you to my secret," Mrs. Brown replied, cheerily, "Dip your knife into boiling water, and then the hot bread will yield gracefully." How simple. I found it even so.

"Your cookies never have the hard bake mine so often do," I said with a tinge of discouragement, as I ate one of her delicious soft ones.

"Yes, indeed they do," with emphasis, "but I always keep a few crusts of bread in my cookie jar, and that keeps them soft." I have never had hard cookies since.

I watched her one morning take her layers from the oven for chocolate cake. Previously she had prepared a wet towel spread upon her table, and upon this she laid her tins.

"Do you know," she inquired, "that laying a tin of cake upon a dampened cloth when taken out of the oven, will prevent the cake from sticking to the pan?" No, I did not. I have found it since an unflinching success.

"Another great thing to know," she added, "is to place a pan of water in the oven when baking, and danger of burning is obliterated.

"Meek souls there are who little dream
Their daily strife an angel's theme,
Or that the rod they take so calm
Shall prove in heaven a martyr's palm."

The moment that a young crocodile breaks its shell, it is to all intents and purposes as active as it is at any time during its life. It will make straight for the water, even if the water be out of sight and a good distance off; and it will pursue its prey with eagerness and agility during the first hour of its free existence.