

being as fine eating as any lady in the land could long for.

And here for a moment I stood in some doubt, whether first to be down on the prawns or the mullet; but soon I remembered the tide would come first into the pools that held the prawns. Now it did not take me very long to fill a great Holland bag with these noble fellows, rustling their whiskers, and rasping their long saws at one another. Four gallons I found, and a little over; and sixteen shillings I made of them, besides a good many which Bunny ate raw.

Neither was my luck over yet, for being now in great heart and good feather, what did I do but fall very briskly upon the grey mullet in the pools; and fast as they scoured away down the shallows, fluting the surface with lines of light, and huddling the ripples all up in a curve, as they swung themselves round on their tails with a sweep, when they could swim no further—nevertheless it was all in vain, for I blocked them in with a mole of kelp, weighted with heavy pebbles, and then baled them out at my pleasure.

Now the afternoon was wearing away, and the flood making strongly up channel by the time I came back from Funnon Gwyn—whither the mullet had led me—to my headquarters opposite Sker farmhouse, at the basin of Pool Tavan. This pool is made by a ring of rocks sloping inward from the sea, and is dry altogether for two hours' ebb, and two hours' flow of a good spring-tide, excepting so much as a little land-spring, sliding down the slippery sea-weed, may have power to keep it moist.

A wonderful place is here for wild-fowl, the very choicest of all I know, both when the sluice of the tide runs out and when it comes swelling back again; for as the water ebbs away with a sulky wash in the hollow places, and the sand runs down in little crannies, and the bladder-weeds hang, trickling, and the limpets close their valves, and the beautiful jelly-flowers look no better than chilblains—all this void and glistening basin is at once alive with birds.

First the seapie runs and chatters, and the turnstone pries about with his head

laid sideways in a most sagacious manner, and the sanderlings glide in file, and the green shanks separately. Then the shy curlews over the point warily come, and leave one to watch; while the brave little mallard teal, with his green triangles glistening, stands on one foot in the freshwater runnel, and shakes with his quacks of enjoyment.

Again, at the freshening of the flood, when the round pool fills with sea (pouring in through the gate of rock), and the waves push merrily onward, then a mighty stir arises, and a different race of birds—those which love a swimming dinner—swoop upon Pool Tavan. Here is the giant grey gull, breasting (like a cherub in church) before he dowses down his head, and here the elegant kittywake, and the sullen cormorant in the shadow swimming; and the swiftest of swift wings, the silver-grey sea-swallow, dips like a butterfly and is gone; while from slumber out at sea, or on the pool of Kenfig, in a long wedge, cleaves the air the whistling flight of wild-ducks.

Standing upright for a moment, with their red toes on the water, and their strong wings flapping, in they souse with one accord and a strenuous delight. Then ensues a mighty quacking of unanimous content, a courteous nodding of quick heads, and a sluicing and a shovelling of water over shoulder-blades, in all the glorious revelry of insatiable washing.

Recovering thence, they dress themselves in a sober-minded manner, paddling very quietly, proudly puffing out their breasts, arching their necks, and preening themselves, titivating (as we call it) with their bills in and out the down, and shoulders up to run the wet off; then turning their heads, as if on a swivel, they fettle their backs and their scapular plume. Then, being as clean as clean can be, they begin to think on their dinners, and with stretched necks down they dive to secure a luscious morsel, and all you can see is a little sharp tail and a pair of red feet kicking.

Bless all their innocent souls, how often I longed to have a good shot at them, and might have killed eight or ten at a time with a long gun heavily loaded! But all these birds knew, as well as I did, that I had no gun with me; and