

Dickson, who was arrested for supposed complicity in the rebellion of 1798, we learn how little value was placed in Scotland on fish as food, and the Scots in Down doubtless esteemed it as little as did their friends of the Mother Country. Dickson, with other suspects, was carried in captivity of an easy kind to Scotland. He tells us—

1799 "Oct. 5. We had nice fresh Herrings for some days past, in addition to our other fare. The price to-day, as we are told, is two pence per Hundred,"

and a later entry gives the price ruling for cod. The rates on the Down Coast were probably no higher.

"Complaining to the contractor that fish was not appearing on the table,—she, the contractor, a Mrs. McGregor, said that fish was so plentiful and so cheap that only common soldiers used them and she feared offering it would be regarded as an insult. The largest cod were delivered by the fishermen at 2/- per dozen."

The outstanding feature of the hospitable table in Down, during the eighteenth century, was profusion, due in part, doubtless, to the cheapness of food, but, also, in great measure to old Scottish traditions of entertainment. The accounts are available for a supper at a funeral in Scotland in 1724, and the following shows what was the caterer's conception of requirement for thirty-four invited:—

"Besides soup and fish and some other unconsidered trifles, there was beef and mutton, roast and boiled, roast lamb, two large turkeys, four 'goss's' (geese) a dozen of ducks, and the same number of capons, eighteen hens, besides an indefinite number of chickens and rabbits, two large pigeon pies, two dishes of 'minsh't pays' (mince pies), two dishes of tarts, hams and 'tungs' (number unspecified), apricots, peaches, apples, pears and cheese."

The letters of Mrs. Delany are often records of food provision and consumption. Writing from Mount Panther, near Downpatrick, to her sister, on 28th July, 1750, and describing her new house, she tells that, in the garden, there are

"excellent gooseberries, currants, and potatoes—with fine salmon, lobster, trout, crabs, every day at the door. Monday evening went to Dundrum a mile off, a pleasant nest of cabins by the sea-side, where may be had kitchen chairs, French white wine, vinegar, Hungary water, and capers; mugs and pigs, of which we bought some. The French white wine is five pence per bottle—we have not yet tasted it."

In a dateless fragment of a letter addressed to the same person she sets out her table arrangements. The quantity and combination of viands for an ordinary dinner given by the wife of a Dean are extremely curious. She speaks of the dishes as being set out on one long table.

| <i>First course.</i>   | <i>Second course.</i> |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Turkeys endove         | Partridge             |
| Boyled neck of mutton  | Sweetbreads           |
| Greens &c              | Collared pig          |
| Soup                   | Creamed apple tart    |
| Plum pudding           | Crabs                 |
| Roast Loin of veal     | Fricassee of eggs     |
| Venison pasty          | Pigeons               |
| No dessert to be had." |                       |

A simple Sunday dinner of one course, for a table of twelve, between morning and afternoon church services, is described in a letter of 8th August, 1758.

"Sunday, we went to Downpatrick; D. D. preached as well as ever I heard him. We had a dinner, as usual, for as many as filled a table for twelve people. Our dinner was a boiled leg of mutton, a sirloin of roast beef, six boiled chickens, bacon and greens; apple pies, a dish of potatoes—all set on at once; time between church and church does not allow for two courses; tea after we came home, and talking over our company was refreshing to us."

In the same month the lady gave a little dance. Tea was served between seven and ten, when the dancers sat down to a cold supper.

1758 "Aug. 21. Tea from seven to ten; it was made in the hall and Smith presided. When any of the dancers had a mind