

## Holiday Papers.

### THE ISLANDS OF SCILLY.

"Will you take holiday duty for a few weeks at the Scillies?"

"The Scillies? Where the flowers come from? Oh, yes, I should like to!" And here I am.

I came down from Paddington by night, and slept till we reached Exeter, breakfasting at Penzance Railway Station about 8 a.m. Such a grey county is Cornwall (grey stone and granite rocks), especially after the bright reds and greens of Devon. The three or four hours of waiting for the boat to leave I spent in seeing something of the quaint little town of Penzance, with its pretty public gardens and esplanade; from the latter you get a charming view of St. Michael's Mount.

The little steamer, "The Lyonesse," of 50 tons or so, is said to be a good sea boat, but usually there is a rough passage, often a "heavy ground swell," which means much rolling of the boat and consequent misery to the passengers on their forty mile voyage. "The Wolf" Lighthouse is passed about half way, standing a lonely sentinel on its rock, which is just large enough to form the base of the structure.

Arriving at St. Mary's, the largest island of the group, I transhipped to a little sailing boat (there is usually a launch running), and in half an hour arrived at Tres-co, a beautiful little island, only six miles in circumference, where my work lay. Only five out of the 300 islands are inhabited, but each little rock has its name and history, the latter often being the sad tale of shipwreck, for the coast is the most terrible I have even seen, such huge, jagged rocks standing out of the sea, not only outlining the islands but dotted about in the channels of water between them—in fact, an archipelago. At low tide, when so many more are visible, one marvels at the knowledge the boatmen and pilots must have of these rocks to avoid the sharp points, many of which, even then, do not reach the surface of the water. An added danger comes from the strong and varied currents. Just at first I was a little disappointed at the islands, but their quiet beauty grows on one, and if there be no fog, the atmosphere is very clear, and the outlines consequently sharp and distances near, and the colouring of sea, islet, and sky is very lovely. The hills are quite low—none over 160 feet; on the highest in each island is a flagstaff (in charge of a Coastguard), from which floats the ensign we English love so well. Yesterday I went for a stroll along a

tiny path on the cliffs, young, green bracken brushing me on either side, tall foxgloves, yellow gorse, purple heather, and many low growing flowers, and constantly great rugged grey rocks. Above, the bluest of skies, and on, beyond the edge of the cliffs, the beautiful moving sea and the coastline—about half a mile away—of the opposite Island of Bregher, with very fine white sand in the tiny bays. Awful looking rocks everywhere along the shore, and the white line of breakers. Turn where you will, you get pretty views, peeps of sea and rocks and breakers, with sea birds and sailing boats to give life to the scene, and in rough weather the spray is magnificent. After one storm I climbed up a cliff to watch the waves below break over a great bar of rocks and become a mass of foam, and the brilliant sun threw prismatic colours over the white spray. Can't you imagine how fine it was! I should like to see a place in Bryher they call "Hell Bay"; it must be wonderful in a storm.

Behind this cottage rises a hill, just now covered with gorse and heather, and in the late evening seven lighthouses or lightships can be counted from the flagstaff, and the reflection in the sky of the eighth. "The Bishop" stands on a lonely rock, like "The Wolf," and in thick weather an explosion of tonite is given every minute to warn ships of their dangerous neighbourhood. The old legend runs that after the defeat and death of King Arthur, the remnant of his followers fled to Lyonesse, then part of Cornwall. Merlin, the enchanter, caused a fog to hide them from the rebel Mordred, who came hot in pursuit. When utterly exhausted, they turned to look back at their following foe; behind them stretched only a wild waste of angry waters which had overwhelmed their enemies. Lyonesse, of course, is now Scilly.

One evening last week the French fishing fleet put in for shelter near St. Mary's, and now and again a cruiser anchors in the roads. In July I saw some most beautiful butterflies, brilliant blue, and some brown ones, with bright cherry-coloured bodies and outlines to their wings of the same colour. This month the colours are mostly white and brown. The sunsets at the Scilly Isles are truly soul-satisfying. Last night the round red sun sank slowly behind a wonderful purple cloud, outlined with absolutely living, glowing gold; above was the palest azure, and beyond again a soft green, fading into apricot, with fluffy purple-tinted and flame-coloured baby clouds, floating happily on and away—whither? The sharply-defined cliffs and rocks stood out

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