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GLIMPSSES OF WELSH LIFE & CHARACTER



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GLIMPSES OF WELSH LIFE AND CHARACTER

BY

MARIE TREVELYAN

AUTHOR OF

"BRAVE LITTLE WOMEN," "GWENLLIAN-WEN: A STORY OF CHARTIST TIMES"

"LADY STRADLING'S GHOST," "STORM-BOUND AT PRITCHARD'S"

ETC. ETC.

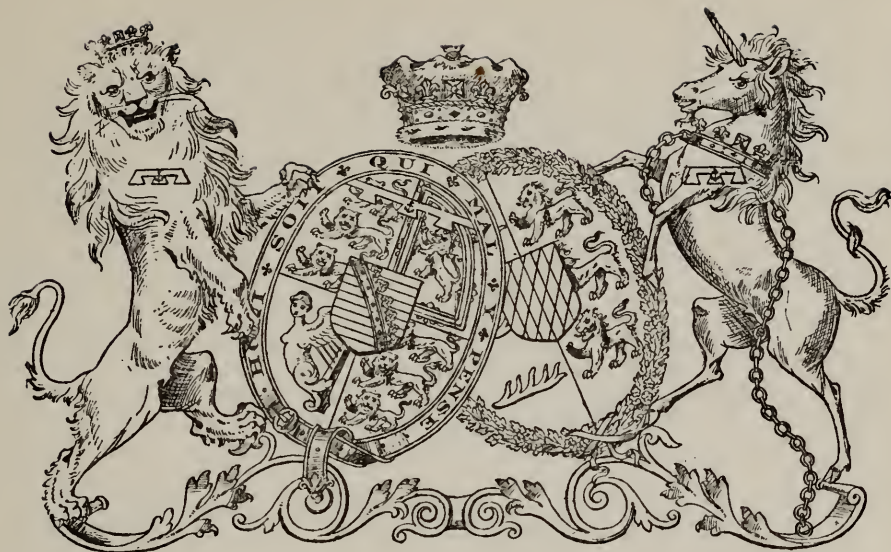


LONDON

JOHN HOGG, 13 PATERNOSTER ROW

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TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE DUCHESS OF YORK.





P R E F A C E.

WRITING in the spirit, though not in the letter of the Welsh language, I have endeavoured to give glimpses, or faithful sketches, rather than studies of life and character in Wales. My object has been to awaken English interest in the land and life of the Cymru.

Travellers and tourists are acquainted with the popular resorts, the mountains, the cities, and important towns of the Principality, but the remote districts of Wales are unknown to them.

The population, the customs and habits of the peasantry in South Wales are familiar only to the few pedestrians or others who leave the beaten tracks and railway routes for the byways, lanes, and bridle-paths of unfrequented neighbourhoods.

There the old British character, though modified by the influence of ages, still retains much of its ancient individuality, and the Welsh language, together with a quaint and peculiar Anglo-Cymric *patois*, survives the great changes that affect the world.

Mr. Hall Caine has made us familiar with Cumbrian life—Mr. Rudyard Kipling brings us nearer the native Indians—Mr. Barrie has forged a new link between us and our Scottish brethren—Mr. Hardy takes us among the agricultural population of England—Miss Jane Barlow has recently brought us into closer communion with the Irish peasantry,—and, if by means of this small volume the English will take more than a passing glance at the Welsh, I shall have attained one of my dearest desires.

It may be added that my publisher, Mr. John Hogg, entering into the spirit of the subject, suggested a truly Celtic emblem for the cover of this volume. The design is from a sketch supplied by the Heralds' College. It was taken from one of the rarest and most valuable works in their Library, and is certified as follows:—

“I hereby certify that the Standard of King Cadwalader, on the other side, has been copied from the book entitled “Prince Arthur” (Vincent MS. 152), folio 95, in the Archives of the Heralds' College, London, and has been examined therewith by me, this 26th day of June, A.D. 1893.”

(Signed) “EVERARD GREEN
(“*Rouge Dragon*”).

The “Red Dragon” forms a thoroughly national and appropriate emblem for a book on Wales and the Welsh.

MARIE TREVELYAN.



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I.

HOME LIFE IN THE PAST AND PRESENT.

IN the far past, when Norman lords married Welsh ladies, and the people of Wales became more resigned to the strangers, stray glimpses of home life appear as pleasant rifts among the clouds of disorder that shadowed the Principality. It was probably due to the influence of change in home life and domestic arrangements consequent upon the inter-marriages between the Normans and the Welsh, that, as time rolled on, Welsh princes and Norman lords stood together, and willingly offered their services as soldiers for the Third Crusade.

The very earliest peeps into home life in the Principality are to be found in the account which Giraldus Cambrensis gives of Archbishop Baldwin's celebrated itinerary through Wales in 1188. These glimpses are few and far between, because Giraldus dwells chiefly upon the hospitality extended to the archbishop by the abbots, and the kindness of the Church to the poor.

Giraldus tells us that during his visit, Wales, and the

county of Glamorgan especially, was famine-stricken, and that the good monks of Margam sent a vessel from Port Talbot to Bristol for corn. He adds that the "noble Cistercian Abbey under Conan, a learned and prudent abbot, was at this time more celebrated for its charitable deeds than any other of that order in Wales. On this account, it is an undoubted fact that as a reward for that abundant charity which the monastery had always in time of need exercised towards strangers and poor persons in a season of approaching famine, their corn and provisions were perceptibly, by Divine assistance, increased like the widow's cruse of oil through the instrumentality of the prophet Elijah."

In those days it is stated that the Cymric ladies and heiresses who married Norman lords, sang the songs of Normandy and of wild Wales, to the accompaniment of the harp; and, although highly accomplished in instrumental and vocal music, they were equally skilled in household management and famed for domestic comfort and thrift.

These ladies excelled in making metheglin or mead, and there were women mead-brewers who sold the "meth," as they called it, together with herb tea and botanical mixtures for various disorders.

But even then, the home life was rudely and frequently interrupted by Welsh insurrections upon the persons and property of the Normans. The Welsh ardently desired to win back their own possessions, and, according to the "Annals of Margam," towns were burnt, castles assailed, cattle and flocks slaughtered, and many ravages committed in quick succession. Very little peace existed, and matters would doubtless have been much worse, were it not for the very powerful, and, to a

certain extent, beneficial influence which the Church exercised over the Normans and Welsh alike.

Still the Welsh keenly felt the injustice of the Norman sway; and it is very evident that while the Welshmen fulfilled at an early date the duties of citizens under the "Conquest," it is also certain that constant ravages were made by fierce native marauders upon the possessions of their enemies.

The following incident, related by Sir Edward Mansel, serves to illustrate the social state of the period. "After eleven of the knights had been endowed with their lands, Pagan de Turberville asked Sir Robert Fitzhamon where was his share. To which Sir Robert answered, 'Here are men, here are arms; go, get it where you can.' So Turberville with his men went to Coyty, and sent to Morgan, the Welsh lord, a messenger to ask if he would yield up the castle. Upon this Morgan brought out his daughter Sara in his hand, and passing through with his sword in her right hand, came to Pagan de Turberville, and told him if he would marry his daughter, and so come like an honest man into his castle, that he would yield to him quickly, and, if not, said he, 'Let not the blood of any of our men be lost, but let this sword and arm of mine, and those of yours, decide who shall call this castle his own.' Upon this Pagan de Turberville drew his sword, and took it by the blade in his left hand, and gave it to Morgan, and with the right hand embraced the daughter; and, after settling every matter to the liking of both sides, he went with her to church and married her, and so came to the lordship of Coyty, by true right of possession, and being so counselled by Morgan, kept in his castle two thousand of the best of his Welsh soldiers. Upon

account of his getting possession by marriage, Pagan would never pay the noble which was due to the chief lord, Fitzhamon, every year, but chose rather to pay it to Cradoc ap Jestyn, the person whom he and the Welsh recognised as the Lord of Glamorgan. This caused hot disputes about it; but Pagan, with the help of his wife's brother, got the better, till some time afterwards it was settled that all the Norman lords should hold the seignory, which was made up of the whole number of lords in conjunction together."

Home life at that time must have been strangely confused, and in many respects painful, especially when the Normans fought against their wives' relatives, while the latter destroyed the castles which had become the homes of their kinswomen. Song was then broken by the clash of arms, and the harp was laid aside for the sword. The Norman-French language mingled musically with the sonorous Welsh, and many a Celtic maiden living in the wilds of Wales was lured by the wealth of the Normans to become their wives.

In fragments of history, and scraps of ancient MSS. that float like driftwood upon the tide of time, mention is occasionally made of Welsh ladies who were the "most saintly women of their day," and who "all through life kept at their own expense many poor folk." Through Lent they attended the triple matins of the Trinity, the Cross, and St. Mary. Every day they read the Psalter through, and "persevered in good and holy works to their lives' end."

Turning from the religious fervency of the women to the domestic life of the period, we find the following list of viands consumed at a feast: Sewin, which is a fish peculiar to Wales alone. It resembles salmon trout,

and is mistaken for that fish, although it is quite a different species. Pilchard, hake, pike, eels; pies made of layers of apples, bacon, mutton and onions; cream cheese and flummery, which resembles porridge; great caldrons of soup; salads; red deer and doe roasted on the embers; spits of pheasants, partridges, larks, and buntings; and fruit also. There were red and beautiful apples and grapes, for Glamorganshire was celebrated for its orchards and vineyards. In these feasts, fair hands placed burdock leaves for platters, and willing maidens brought huge flagons of ale from cool and rocky cellars.

Then again it is stated that the Norman nobles prided themselves upon their civilised and smooth-shaven chins, while the Welsh princes were proud of their beautiful beards, and hair of black, brown—and in many instances in South Wales, golden locks—left unkempt and tossed back by the hand when the brow was hot and burning in the fray, or blown from the forehead by the wild winds of the west when the battle was over. The Normans dressed in the full armour of the period, while the Welsh wore the skins of animals killed in the chase. They also wore garments of roughly woven woollen material, chiefly in block patterns of red and black, or black and white, or grey and white or black.

The age then divided its time between warfare and debauchery, and the work of civilisation and instruction was accomplished by the monks. The enthusiasm of the Cistercians was very great. Each abbey was the centre of culture of its district, where it gave a striking example of its peaceful industry and orderly life. The monks attended to the education and religious training of the people. They also drained the lands, reclaimed the forests, repaired dykes, introduced new

fruits and vegetables, and employed new methods of agriculture. So far back as the fifth century, Illtyd the knight and saint improved the manner of cultivating the ground in Glamorgan, and it is said that he taught the Welsh the art of ploughing, and invented the plough which is now in use. Before his time the land was cultivated with a mattock and a spade only.

Of the Norman sway in England and Wales, Thorkel Skallason sang—

“Cold heart and bloody hand
Now rule English land.”

In A.D. 1137, an old chronicle states—

“The French had filled the land full of castles. They greatly oppressed the wretched people by making them work at those castles; and when the castles were finished, they filled them with devils and evil men. They took those whom they suspected of having any goods, both men and women, and they put them in prison for their gold and silver, and tortured them with pains unspeakable, for never were any martyrs tormented as these were. They hung some by their feet, and smoked them with foul smoke; some by the thumbs or by the head, and put burning things on their feet. They put a knotted string round their heads, and twisted it till it went into the brain. They put them into dungeons wherein were adders and snakes and toads, and thus wore them out. Some they put into a crucet-house, that is, into a chest that was short and narrow, and they put sharp stones therein, and crushed the man so that they broke all his bones. There were hateful and grim things called sachenteges in many of the castles, which two or three men had

enough to do to carry. This sachentege was made thus : it was fastened to a beam, having a sharp iron to go round a man's throat and neck, so that he might no ways sit not lie nor sleep, but he must bear all the iron. Many thousands they wore out with hunger. . . . Then was corn dear, and flesh and cheese and butter, for there was none in the land. Wretched men starved with hunger. Some lived on alms who had been once rich. Some fled the country. Never was there more misery, and never heathens acted worse than these."

The above is a gruesome picture, and perhaps, to a certain extent overdrawn, but it gives the modern mind some idea of Welsh life in the far past, when the spirit of freedom was held in bitter bondage, out of which, slowly, as the ages rolled on, it was to rise triumphant.

After that, little is known of home life until the fourteenth century, when Davydd ap Gwilym sings of home and love and the state of social affairs in Wales. He mentions the luscious mead with its golden bubbles—proof of its quality—"swimming around the beaker's brim," and the banquet of that period.

During the fifteenth century, Lewis Glyn Cothi, the ancient *clerwr* or itinerant bard, gives some glimpses of home and social life. His visits were to the houses of eminent Welshmen, as distinguished from the descendants of the Norman settlers. He visited Gower and Aberpergwm in the Neath valley, and also at Llan-dudwg, the seat of Richard Turberville. The Turbervilles were regarded as true friends of the Welsh ever since the days of Pagan de Turberville, who married the Welsh heiress of Coyty, and afterwards valiantly fought for Welsh liberties. The poet warmly sings the praises of the hospitality he experienced. At Aberpergwm

there was a lavish profusion of food, and innumerable table delicacies. There were also silver goblets wherein ever sparkled the choicest wines; and there were wine bearers of huge bowls of strong drink. At the home of the Tubervilles, the cellars were filled with choicest wines from Bordeaux and Brussels, and especial mention is made of the celebrated white Bronte wines.

Lewis Glyn Cothi was a martyr to the Welsh marriage laws of the period. In 1402 a statute was passed forbidding marriages between the English and the Welsh. The poet referred to married an English lady, and went to live with her at Chester. There he was discovered by the mayor, who sold his goods and banished him from the city. Whereupon the bard assails him with fiery poetry, the declamation being considered among the finest in the Welsh language.

Other poets give stray glimpses of the past when the cupbearer was commanded to bring in the sweet and "well-drained mead;" the red wine in the "transparent horn," or the "frothing bragget in a yellow tipped horn." Three kinds of "horns of wild oxen" were kept in royal houses. The first was the Hirlais Horn, which was reserved for the King's or Prince's use; the second was used for summoning the retainers to their duties, and the third was kept by the chief huntsman. On rare and special occasions, visitors were allowed to take a draught from the Hirlais Horn. The "lip" of the latter was described as being "adorned with silver," the cover being of the "same metal," and its "green handles" were "tipped with gold." Those privileged to drink from the Hirlais Horn were expected to drain the contents at a draught, and instantly blow it in proof thereof. A celebrated Hirlais

Horn is still preserved at Aberpergwm in the Neath valley.

Leland, whom Henry VIII. sent on a journey through Wales to gain information in readiness for the dissolution of the monasteries, gives slight glimpses of home life in Wales; but nothing of importance is to be found until after the Reformation, when the middle classes began generally to read and write.

The well-known "Stradling Correspondence" throws but little light upon home and domestic life; and, until the reign of Charles II., it is almost impossible to discover scraps of information on the subject.

Fragments of an old handwritten housebook of that period give glimpses of the housewife's cookery recipes. Therein it describes "How to make a Posset;" "To dresse a Pig;" "To Fricate Calves Chaldrons (tripe) or Liver;" "To Fricate Mushrooms;" "To Bake Brawne;" "To Murine Carps;" "Pumpion Pye;" "To make a great Curd Loafe;" "Rausoles" (the rissoles of to-day); "Hartichoakes;" "Furmity;" "To Make Pap;" "Jacobin's Pottage;" "Minced Pyes;" "Taffy Tarts;" "To Pickle Purslaine;" "To make Metheglin;" "Bakestone Cakes;" "Tinker's Cake," or *Deisen Tinker*.

The "Taffy Tarts" were made of sliced apples, lemon peel, and fennel seed, in cases of puff paste. "Bakestone Cakes" are made of rising dough prepared for bread making. These cakes were then and still are made about as large round as a medium-sized frying-pan, and never less than two inches thick. They are placed upon a round iron plate without any rim, which is set on the top of the kitchen fire, and the cakes are baked first on one side, then on the other. While still hot,

they are split open, buttered thickly, and cut into neat portions. "Tinker's Cake" is made of equal proportions of flour and chopped apples, moistened with milk or cream, and served with or without sugar.

Here is the old Welsh recipe for making metheglin, as it was made two centuries ago. "Take all sorts of Herbes that are good and wholesome, as Balme, Mint, Fennell, Rosemary, Angelica, Wild Tyme, Isop, Burnet, Egrimonie, and such other as you think fit; some field herbes, but you must not put in too many, especially Rosemary, or any strong Herbe; lesse than a handfull will serve of every sort. You must boyle your Herbes and straine them, and let the Liquor stand till tomorrow, and settle them. Then take off the clearest Liquor into two gallons and a halfe to one gallon and a half of honey. Let it boyle an hour, and in the boyling skin (skim) it very cleane, and set it a cooling as you do Beer. And put into the bottom of the Tub a little and a little as they doe Beer, keeping back the thick settling that lieth in the bottome of the Vessel that it is cooled in, and when it is all put together, cover it with a Cloath, and let it work very neere three days, and when you mean to put it up, skin off all the Barme cleane, put it up into the Vessel, but you must not stop your Vessel very close in three or foure dayes, but let it have all the Vent, for it will work, but you must look to it very often, and have a peg in the top to give it vent when you heare it making a noise, as it will do, or it will break the Vessel. Sometimes I make a bag, and put in a good store of ginger sliced, some Cloves and Cinnamon, and boyle it in, and other times I put it into the Barrel and never boyle it, it is both goode, but Nutmeg and Mace do not well to my taste."

Directions are also given for carving, and ladies are taught how to "break a deer, lèche brawn, spoil a hen, unbrane a mallard, display a crane, disfigure a peacock, border a pasty, tire an egg, tame a crab, tusk a barbel, culpon a trout, fin a chub, transon an eel, tranch a sturgeon, undertranch a porpoise, and barb a lobster! If Welsh ladies could not master those difficulties, they were considered very inefficient housewives. They were charged to carve "cleanly and handsomely," and not to "break the meat." They were to "lay the slices in a fair charger," to "lace the breasts of poultry with a knife," to "gobbin" a salt lamprey; and it is added, "when you have roasted a porpos, cut him about; when you unbrane a mallard, lace it down each side with your knife bending like waves!" In cooking a pheasant, "mind and dight the branes;" and in serving a goose, a fowl or a duck, "array him on your platter as though he should fly!"

With wives and mothers so skilful and experienced in such difficult arts as these, is it any wonder that the Welsh were bold, fighting, and frequently very irascible men?

Then follow the prices of food in 1610, in 1663, and other particulars about home life in 1666. In 1610 for "a Bushell of Wheate, 1s. 6d.," while forty eggs were sold for a penny. An old ballad of that period runs thus—

"I'll tell thee what, old fellowe,
Before the friars went hence,
A bushell of the best wheate,
Was sold for fourteen pence.
And forty eggs a penny
That were both good and newe,
And this, I say myself have seene,
And yet I am no Jewe."

In 1662, three pecks of barley malt were sold for 2s. 7d.; eleven lbs. of beefe, 2s. 2d.; eight lbs. mutton, 2s. 3d.; wheate, 30s. per quarter; peas, 24s. per quarter; two ounces tobacco, 1s. In 1666 we find a housewife noting "all this day have I been plucking Lavender, and have not finished." This was in the year after the Great Plague, and the writer continues "Red Lavender Water cured some of the evil sickness. A great posy burnt here, and there is good against it. . . . Sent to Bristol for good Brandy and Comfits for it." Comfits in those days were spices. "Paid 31s. for the Brandy." Bushes of "Frenche Lavender," as it was called, were, and in some places are still to be found in abundance in Wales. Further entries state, "Put by the new China tea, 40s. a pound;" "make one Barrel of Metheglin very good and clear." "Heard this day how a man in Bristol came home cured of the Evil, the King having touched him." The king's evil, or scrofula was then supposed to be cured by the king's touch. Other entries follow. "Bought Castile Sope, 13s.;" "took down the Tabby Curtains;" . . . "to the Silversmith for mending glass, 30s." It must have been either Venice glass set in silver, or a mirror of burnished silver, otherwise the glass would not have been sent to a silversmith for repairs. Mention is then made of "twenty yards of fine flowered damask for a gown;" of "fringed linen;" of "Balm and spice for ointment, 1s.;" "Two fat capons, 3s.;" "Two bottles of peppermint water;" and "sent for one pair of murray coloured gloves for Sunday best wear."

—Glimpses of home life in 1710 reveal to us that tea was then 30s. a pound, and an entry of the period runs thus:—"2 Bushells of wheat 16s., 2 more at 17s. The

two with the bag weighed 134 lbs. What returned from the Miller? 121 lbs. So the toll paid was 13 lbs." Then come "7 yds. of cloath to make a cloake, £4, 16s.; 8 yds. of calaminko for a cassock, £1, 10s.; 1 yd. velvet, 15s.; clerical hat, £1; Lute-string hood for my wyfe, 8s." These are followed by "Fat hog, 30s., the two fitches of bacon when dried weighed 66 lbs.; for 1 quarter of lambe, 3s. 6d.; 8 stone of beefe, 16s. 8d.; a hinde quarter of mutton, 3s. 4d.; a whole lambe, 7s. 6d.; 1 lb. of sugar for preserving quinces, 1s. 1 payr of fine stockings for my girle, 3s., and a horse pillion for my wyfe, 8s." The earliest use of potatoes in Wales appears to have been in or about 1765. Before the introduction of the potato, "scurvy water," "scurvy grass," and scurvy-wort were in great request.

Education in those days had a very limited range. So little was it held in general esteem, that it gave rise to the maxim, "the greater the scholar, the greater the rogue!" The office of schoolmaster was frequently filled by broken-down gentlemen, retired excisemen, or poor naval or military men. In some parts of the country, the schoolmaster was looked upon with feelings akin to pity for his reduced condition, and by-and-by, when a man in town failed to succeed in business, or could not honestly pay his way, he went into a remote country place, and started a school. As a rule, his antecedents were unknown, but he was respected, and looked up to as an authority on all the important matters of life. An old schoolmaster of this class won a very enviable reputation in the vale of Glamorgan as a teacher of navigation; and boys who had learned of him, declared their ability to navigate as well as though they had served their apprenticeship on sea.

The name of this old man was Robert Meyrick. He died on October 7, 1807, aged seventy-nine. It is highly probable he was descended from the old family of Meyricks of Cottrell near Cardiff. Robert Meyrick was evidently of a genial nature, and doubtless much attached to his pupils, as illustrated in his epitaph, which runs thus:—

“My body lies within the grave,
All covered with cold clay ;
But still I hope we all shall meet
At the Eternal Day.”

Then there were the dame schoolmistresses. One, known best by her sobriquet of Nanna the Lanes—because she lived in a cottage among many winding lanes—was a stern and determined controller of the young idea. Her pupils held her in great awe, and one of them relates her mode of punishment for refractory boys. She would set her wafer-making appliance into the fire to get red-hot. This iron instrument resembled a pair of gigantic tongs, which were closed when in the fire, and when open could be extended a considerable width. As soon as it was red-hot, Nanna would open it on each side of the naughty boy's head, and hold it thus so long as she thought necessary. This proceeding struck terror into the boy, who feared to move from right to left because of the close proximity of the red-hot weapon, and he dared not move forward because of Nanna. To retreat would be out of the question, for the dame would pursue him with a vengeance, and all that remained to be done was to stand stock still and faithfully promise to be good until—next time!

The schoolmasters and mistresses alike, of that time,

taught plain reading, writing, and arithmetic, to the children of the middle classes. For the education of the poor, there was little or no provision. The upper classes invariably gave elementary instruction to their families at home, and the sons were afterwards sent to college, while the girls underwent a six months' "finishing" in a boarding school. Accomplishments were few, and the young lady of that period was taught to work wonderful pictures in gaudy coloured wools on canvas foundations, which were afterwards framed. Sampler making was an art at that time, and in "marking" household and body linen and other things, and in "patchwork" and "quilting," our foremothers were adepts.

Music and singing in the homes, even of the poorest people, were general, but as yet the piano had not appeared. The harp and fiddle were the instruments used, and to accompaniments of these, the men and women, the lads and maidens sang the songs of Wales, and, sometimes, the wild roundelays of the age.

One of the greatest household delights was the arrival of the packman, sometimes called bagman. In districts where the roads were exceptionally bad, the man brought his packs on horseback, but the general rule was to bear the burden upon his own shoulders. The packmen of old times were Welsh, but later on, when the people could speak broken English, there was an influx of Scotch travelling drapers. These men were very astute and wary, and easily lured the women and maidens by the small and easy instalment system, which ran through a number of years, so that the house never could get rid of the man. One old woman declared that her family opened an account

with a packman, and for forty years they were in his clutches, having during that time paid more than triple the real value of the goods. In those days, the packman was to the villages and hamlets what the newspaper is to-day. He brought the latest news about everybody and everything, and as he went from house to house, he varied the news to suit the listeners. If there is anything in this world the Welsh like, it is a fluent talker, and the packmen were endowed with "the gift of the gab" in an uncommon degree. The Welsh peasantry are fascinated by a flow of language, and under its influence they are swayed by varied emotions. A bad man can cleverly delude them while he is talking, and it is not until he is gone that the people are aware of having been cheated or deceived. Then they say in their quaint manner of expression, "that was a bad, wicked man," but, after all, "how he did talk!"

It may here be noted that the people have a singular habit of using double adjectives, and of the same meaning. Thus it is always "bad wicked," "great big," "little tiny," "awful dreadful."

Still the Anglo-Welsh accent sounds very pretty and quaint, but it is almost impossible to describe it faithfully. Within the last twenty years the people have become bilingual, but previous to that time scarcely a word of Saxon was spoken in the hill districts or in the far west of Wales. Glamorganshire people took to the Saxon earlier than the dwellers in the other counties; and in some parts of the vale, very little Welsh is spoken. At the same time, the English is very Welshy.

Next in importance to the packmen were the stocking-

sellers and flannel weavers. These men, even at the present day, may be met on their rounds. They carry frames, on which a large supply of stockings are suspended under a waterproof covering. The stocking-men are generally grave, solemn-looking persons, very respectful in their manner, and, as a rule, they speak a little imperfect English. They, unlike the packmen, are not great talkers, but careful and strictly honest vendors of their wares.

Everybody knows when to expect the stocking-man. In bygone days he came regularly with the falling leaf, and before winter set in. Before the warp and woof of the November fogs were woven among the lonely mountains and valleys of Wales, the stocking-man went his mysterious way, not to be seen again until the May blossoms filled the land with beauty. The stocking-men of to-day come every month, and chiefly from Carmarthenshire. Their rounds are very extensive, and now they only come during the best time of the year, for their trade is said to be very dull in the winter. Railway facilities bring the people nearer the towns and shops, and it is to be feared that by-and-by the stocking-man's round will be an institution of the past. These men look very quaint, carrying the old mediæval frames, much like those which the pedlars of Elizabethan times carried in England.

Pedlars have long since vanished, and their place has been taken by beggar folk, who ask alms under the pretence of selling laces and buttons. One of the old Welsh pedlars at the age of eighty-six used to visit the farms and villages in Glamorganshire, and people bought of him, whether they needed goods or not, just "for the

sake of old times." He was probably among the last of his kind.

Cheap jacks and licensed hawkers are still to be seen in the country places, and to this day they are surrounded by crowds of women. In some of the remote villages it is curious to see these men with their flaring oil-lamps suspended above their wares, and to hear the cheap jack or hawker shouting above the crowd till he is hoarse. Very picturesque they look, especially when in the centre of a small town or village, where houses and buildings of the old Tudor times still remain, or under the walls of a ruined castle or deserted manor-house, of which there are many in Wales.

And this brings us closer to the homes of to-day.

In some of the remote parts of Wales, the ancient manor houses are occupied by farmers, and it is of common occurrence to see fifteenth and sixteenth century mansions used as farmhouses. They have thick and strong walls, calculated to resist any attacks but those of the modern cannon, and not a few of these habitations are said to be haunted, while those nearest the sea invariably have their smuggler's hole or secret cellar. It is interesting to explore these antiquated dwellings with their broad polished oak stairways, wainscoted walls, long rambling passages, and lofty rooms with curious mediæval carvings and spacious lattices, with deep cushioned seats. Some of them are in a bad state of repair, or are patched up with modern alterations, which are gradually crowding out the domestic architecture of the past.

Here and there a modern farmhouse will be seen standing in the grounds of an ancient castle now in ruins, and very frequently the building occupies what

were once the lawns of a fair domain. The ancient surroundings, the ruined remains of former splendour, and the legends connected with these castles and manorial halls, do much to foster that spirit of reverence which is still a feature in the home life of Wales. In their respect for the living and their profound reverence for the dead, together with intense religious fervency, the Welsh—more than any other people—resemble the Hebrews.

They live quiet, simple, and, in many respects, almost primitive lives. The Bible and the newspaper satisfy their literary wants, and, in the winter nights they congregate around the old-fashioned hearth—which is protected from draughts by high-backed oaken settles—and spin long yarns about the sayings and doings of their forefathers. The women knit and sew, and eagerly listen to the reminiscences of bygone days. Outside, the wind may howl and rave through the woods and glens, but at home there is warmth and happiness and comfort. There are no temptations to lure people away from home; the streets of the small towns and villages are badly lighted or not illuminated at all, and the distance from the railway is often so great that, unless people have a vehicle of their own, they must either post, or go in with the carrier to the nearest station.

Modern invention has done much to improve the condition of the people in the Welsh towns, but in most country places home life is just as it was a hundred or more years ago. The wives of to-day conduct their establishments in precisely the same manner as their ancestresses did long ages ago. They make the “meth” in the same way as it was made in the Middle Ages; their rhubarb wine, prepared from the ancient recipe, is

as good and sparkling as champagne ; while their bake-stone cakes, cream cakes, and honey cannot be rivalled. Sheep are still milked in Wales, and the cheese made out of the milk is very delicious. Sheeps' milk and cream are used by the Welsh house mother in pastry making, especially for dumplings and boiled puddings.

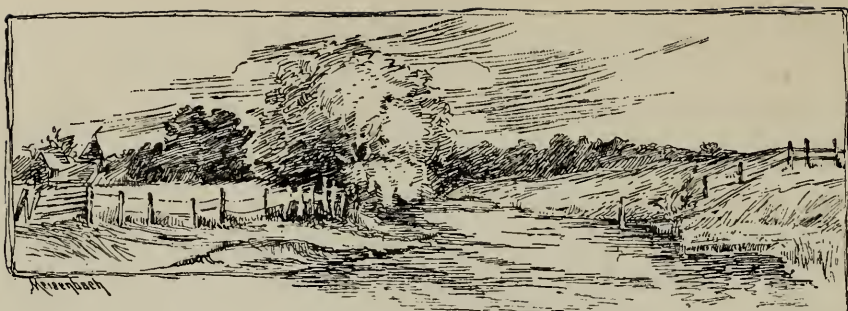
In the Welsh home there is always a full larder, which is subject to frequent and unexpected demands, for people visit without ceremony, just whenever they like, and generally unannounced. It is astonishing to find, even in the houses of the peasantry, a "fulness of everything" as they say, for Welshwomen as a rule are very thrifty, but sometimes "too near" to suit their lords.

The Welsh mother will often deny herself the good things of life in order to save money, and in Wales it is the rule for the wife to keep the purse. A woman who has to ask her husband for a shilling is considered an object of pity ; and if a man goes shopping, his wife is called a "slut." On the other hand, the men submissively bring in their wages, and the wives dole out as much as they think fit for their spouses' pocket-money. If, to use their own exact expression, the wife is a "very saving person," she limits her good man beyond his liking, and forthwith obliges him to secrete money for the purchase of his favourite "cwrw da," or strong beer of Wales. He is allowed tobacco, because Welshwomen have a strongly rooted opinion that a husband who loves his pipe is not only peaceful and contented, but is not liable to the "grumps," and is kept out of mischief.

The people dine at 12 or 12.30 ; they have tea at four o'clock, and supper about eight, when

in some parts of Wales the Curfew Bell is still rung. After supper the young people sometimes play draughts, or fox and goose ; and in well regulated families, everybody goes to bed at ten o'clock, and often before that hour. They get up very early, and it is by no means unusual to find them at breakfast at eight o'clock in the winter, and at 7.30 in the summer.





II.

THE AMUSEMENTS OF THE WELSH.



AMONG the earliest and most curious forms of amusements in Wales, was that of "trying the mettle" of the young men.

According to the oldest records, wild beasts were kept in strong wooden cages in the great courtyards of the castles. From these menageries, bulls, stags, bears, and wolves were in turn let loose at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, and the young men were called upon to exhibit their prowess in encounters with these formidable animals. Sometimes a bear or a wolf bore the reputation of being very ferocious, and the "mettle" of the youthful Celt was tried to the utmost. Then it was that strong arm and agile movement meant life, and the least wavering on the part of the youth might end in death. If the young man conquered the animal in the first adventure, it was considered a mark of splendid skill; and, after that, he was never again called upon to exercise his strength in so rude and barbarous a fashion.

Later on, the amusements of men of "gentle blood" appeared to have consisted chiefly of fierce personal encounters. It was the custom among young Welshmen to strut to and fro, boasting about the strength, though by no means the length of their sturdy limbs, and challenging the Normans and other strangers to wrestle, leap, dance, sing, or fight. The Welsh would pour out a stream of abuse against the Normans and their courage, and each would promise the other to fight and do his worst.

After the challenge an adjournment was made, during which the combatants armed themselves for the fray. Previous to the encounter, the opponents went to the priest to be shriven, and then the godly man would give wholesome warning to the extremely mettlesome youth, who daringly accepted, or provoked the challenge of a man accustomed to fighting from his boyhood up.

All the men at arms assembled to witness the fight, and, to use the actual words of a short and strong Welshman who had to encounter a gigantic opponent, "the bigger the man the better the mark."

A terrible scene then ensued. The javelin, the long iron grapple, the sword—all were used in the fray, and it must have been a sickening moment, when the combatants fell, and rolling together in the dust, were still further maddened by the yells of the men, and the shrieks of the ladies, in the gallery overlooking the great courtyard.

In Glamorganshire, the name Turberville is commonly held to have been bestowed upon the founder of the family for his fighting propensities. Some authorities go so far as to say he derived his name from his

reputation as a "town troubler." However this may be, his characteristics appear to have been transmitted to many of his posterity, and the records of Glamorgan show that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there were numerous headstrong men bearing this name, whose chief delight was fighting and the fray. One of these fighting Turbervilles figures in the family history of Sir Rhys ap Thomas. An old chronicle, bearing date of A.D. 1460-70, reads thus: "Thomas ap Gruffydd, the father of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, who helped Henry VII. to the throne, was famous for his boldness and skill in tilt and tournament, as he was in single combat. He had several encounters in the vale of Towey, particularly with one Henry ap Gwilym, who repeatedly challenged him, and was constantly vanquished. A quarrel with William, Earl of Pembroke, brought upon him another adversary, whose adventures were attended with some humorous circumstances. The Earl's quarrel was taken up by one Turberville, a noted swashbuckler of that day, 'one that would fight on anie slight occasion, not much heeding the cause.' Turberville sent in his defiance, to Thomas ap Gruffydd, by one of the Earl's retainers."

"Go tell the knave," said he, "that if he will not accept my challenge, I will ferret him out of his conie berrie, the Castle of Abermarlais." Thomas received this message very jocosely. "By my faith," said he, "if thy master is in such haste to be killed, I would that he should choose some other person to undertake the office of executioner."

This reply much provoked the challenger; and in a rage he set out for Abermarlais. Entering the gate, the first person whom he encountered was Thomas ap

Gruffyd himself, sitting at his ease, dressed in a plain frock gown, whom he took for the porter. "Tell me, fellow," said Turberville, "is thy master Thomas ap Gruffyd within?" "Sir," answered Thomas, "he is at no great distance; if thou wouldst have aught with him, I will hear thy commands."

"Then tell him," said he, "that here is one Turberville would fain speak with him." Thomas, hearing his name, and seeing the fury he was in, could scarce refrain from laughing in his face; but restraining himself, he said he would acquaint his master; and on going into his room, he sent two or three servants to call Turberville in. Turberville no sooner saw Thomas ap Gruffyd than, without making any apology for the mistake he had committed, he taxed him roundly for his contempt of so great a person as the Earl of Pembroke.

"In good time, sir," said Thomas; "is not my lord of Pembroke of sufficient courage to undertake his own quarrels, without the aid of such a swasher as thyself?"

"Yes, certainly," said Turberville, "but thou art too much beneath his place and dignity; and he has left thy chastisement to me."

"Well then," said Thomas, in excellent humour, "if thou wouldst even have it so, where would it please thee that thou wouldst have me go to school?"

"Where thou wilt, or darest," said Turberville.

"Thou comest here with harsh compliments," said Thomas. "I am not ignorant, however, that as the acceptor of thy challenge, both time, place, and weapons are in my choice; but I ween that it is not the fashion for scholars to appoint where the master shall correct

them." After this parley, Thomas fixed on Herefordshire for the scene of the combat.

Here the champions met accordingly, when at the first onset Thomas unhorsed his adversary, and cast him to the ground, and by the fall broke his back.

The next engagement of this kind in which Thomas ap Gruffyd took part was in Merionethshire, when his antagonist, David Gough, was slain. Having afterwards thrown himself on the ground to rest, and being unarmed, he was treacherously stabbed by one of his enemy's retainers.

Thomas ap Gruffyd's two elder sons, Morgan and David, immediately after their father's death became warm partisans on opposite sides of the rival houses of York and Lancaster, and both perished in that civil warfare.

It seems difficult to realise the truth that far back in those stormy periods, when the English and Welsh were engaged in fierce conflict, time was found for amusements of any description.

But even in those days in patrician circles, the tilt and tournament, archery and hawking, supplemented the earlier and coarser sports formerly prevalent in Wales.

Among the peasantry humbler amusements prevailed.

They had their Beltane sports, and "taplas hâf," or summer revelries, while the St. John's midsummer festivals were Eisteddfodau.

The former appears to have been the last remnant of ancient Druidical celebrations or festivities. A fire of logs was kindled, some say on the first of May, others say it was on St. John's Eve. Around it men and

women, youths and maidens, hand in hand, danced and sang to wild and weird tunes of the harp. Old chroniclers state that the people gave way to the wildest noises, gesticulation, and jumping; and some of the revellers would defiantly leap over the fire, even at the peril of being burnt. The origin of this is traced by some authorities back to the ancient Druidical custom of extinguishing the altar fires on the first day of May. To symbolise this, the peasantry of Wales formerly kindled the fire, and then danced around it, till it went out. When the smouldering embers were reduced to ashes, they were scattered hither and thither to the winds; and from that moment household fires ceased to be used—excepting for cooking purposes—in the dwellings of the people, until the advent of cold and rain in the autumn.

Beltane sports prevailed in the neighbourhood of Porthcawl, Glamorganshire, so late as the last century.

The “*taplas haf*,” or summer revelries, consisted of dancing, singing, and festivities, on the mountains and in the valleys, after the crops had been gathered in.

According to the historians, the Welsh were regarded as excellent dancers. Owen Tudor was invited to dance some of the dances of Wales before Katherine, the beautiful widow of Henry V. While the handsome young Welshman was dancing one of his wild reels, it chanced that he fell against the queen, and the latter with a bewitching smile, said, “that so far from offending her, it would only increase the pleasure of herself and company, if he would repeat the same false step or mistake.” Later on—small wonder!—Katherine and Owen Tudor were married.

The close of the hay harvest was formerly made the

occasion of rejoicing, festivity, and mirth, and the "last load" was brought home to the sound of music and song. The horses' heads, manes, and tails were gaily decked with coloured ribbons, and the maidens wore gay favours on their bodices, and garlands of flowers upon their heads. All the young men decked their hats with flowers and rushes, and each carried his hay-rake, to which bright coloured ribbons with long flowing streamers were attached. They sang hay-making songs and ditties, many of which are still sung in Wales. The evening was spent in dancing, singing, and all kinds of games, which still are played by Welsh school children.

More important and imposing festivities were associated with the corn harvest. It was, and still is the custom, in some parts of Wales, for the farmer who is the first in the neighbourhood to reap, to leave a small quantity of corn standing in the field. Each reaper, taking his sickle by the point of the blade, instead of the handle, throws it at the corn, which is thereby cut. It is afterwards bound into a sheaf, then sent on as a token of God speed to the next farmer, who has yet to complete his harvest.

Formerly in many parts of Wales a harvest queen was chosen, and attired in a white gown decorated with ears of wheat, barley, and oats. She wore a coronal of wheat-ears and roses, and, as a rule, carried a posy of summer flowers. The scarlet poppy does not come in for a share of admiration in Wales, where its presence is regarded as "a sign" of poor land and bad farming. Generally a huge sheaf of wheat was decorated with ribbons, and this was borne triumphantly on the top of the last load. The horses were gaily decked, and led

by the harvesters to the homestead, amid much rejoicing. The evening was spent in merrymaking, dancing, and games in the field nearest the houses, and these amusements were continued until the harvest moon arose in all its splendour, and shed its softening rays upon the scene of festivity.

In the past, Sunday sports prevailed throughout Wales. People who failed to attend the Church services were always in time for football and other sports.

Early on Saturday evening, dancing, music, and singing commenced. On Sunday, some of the inhabitants went to church in the morning, and in the afternoon resumed festivities, many people joining in the sports, and others looking on. In the summer months, interludes and bandy matches were played on Sunday afternoons, and spectators walked many miles to attend them. These interludes, together with the sports, were announced by the parish clerk at the close of the morning service. The clergyman and the clerk joined in the Sunday sports, and the former was generally an adept at football, bandy quoits, and bowling.

In the reign of Charles the First, the clergy, under penalty of suspension, were compelled by royal proclamation to publish in their respective churches the king's declaration concerning lawful sports for Sunday and upon all holidays. Several Welsh clergymen were ejected from their churches for refusing to obey the royal mandate, and with their refusal, Nonconformity, which dawned upon the martyrdom of John Penry, began to rise in the Principality.

The three first clergymen in Wales who were ejected

for disobedience in this respect were William Erbury, Vicar of St. Mary's Cardiff, Walter Cradock, Curate of the same church, and William Wroth, Rector of Llanfaches near Chepstow, Monmouthshire.

Long after their days Sunday sports continued, and in many parts of Wales, so late as about sixty years ago, interludes, bandy matches, football, and dancing were popular on the Sabbath.

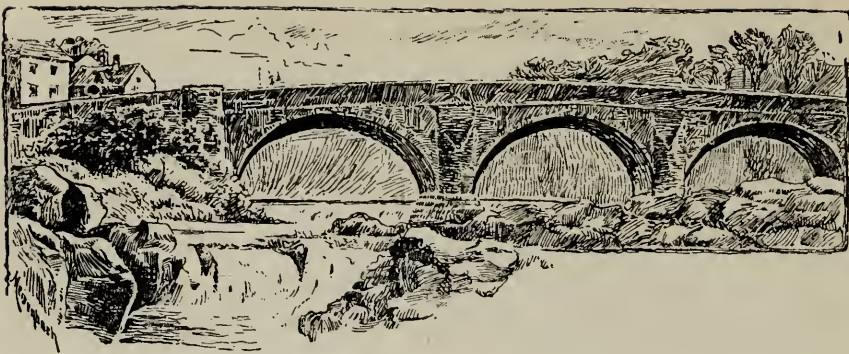
Mal Santau, or Mabsant was the title given to festivities held from parish to parish for a week at a time. These celebrations were chiefly held on saints' days, St. David's Day being the grandest festival of all. The Mal Santau, or Mabsant, included revelry, rustic sports, dancing, solo and part singing, and varied kinds of amusement. Harpists and fiddlers attended every Mabsant, and the inn that had the best musician obtained the most custom. Sometimes these festivities were held in the town halls of little country towns, or else in the village inns, or barns lent by farmers for the occasion.

Almost every youth and maiden—not to mention people of mature ages—were in those days expert dancers. Gradually the simple and primitive character of the Mabsant degenerated, until at length the name became synonymous with reckless revelry and coarse orgies, connected with the Cwrw Bach, or little drinking bout, after which it deservedly fell into desuetude.

Puritanical influence wrought many changes in the old time sports and festivities of Wales, and the quaint and curious holiday amusements that once prevailed in the Principality have long ago been supplanted by modern English forms of recreation.

One old-fashioned amusement alone appears to survive every influence and mutation. It is still the most popular recreation of the Welsh when they go for a day's outing, and those who dislike this game are called "uncommon odd" and "unnatural," because the youths and maidens in Wales seldom refuse to join in "Kiss-in-the-Ring."





III.

SOCIAL CHANGES IN WALES.

DURING the past hundred years there has been a very wide and marked alteration in the social aspect of Wales.

An old diarist of that period attributed the social changes to the “exorbitant practice of tea-drinking, which has corrupted the morals of people of every rank!”

In former times there was but the slightest difference between the landlord and tenant, the served and server, the rich and the poor. There was then to all appearance a freer mingling of the classes—less separation between the degrees of social rank which made up the rural community. An old Welsh adage illustrative of the relationship that formerly existed between the employer and employed runs thus :—

“ Uncle and aunt and broth,
Master and mistress and tea.”

In those broth-days a bond of friendship and unity existed between all classes, and it was nothing unusual

to see the wealthy landlord and poor tenant riding abreast to market, and sitting down at the same "market ordinary." It sometimes happened that the poor tenant was a more intelligent man than the landlord, in which case the latter always gave him the fullest credit. Men of money were duly respected, and men with intellect received honour.

"Money makes the mare to go," said a poor Welshman to a rich neighbour." "Ay, ay boy! but it's manners make the man!" was the reply.

Talent then received ample recognition, and not a few clever but poor men were to be found in Wales. A notable instance of the social feeling formerly prevalent in the country was the life of Edward Williams, better known by his bardic name, Iolo Morganwg or Glamorgan. He was a self-taught mason, a learned antiquary, and a somewhat erratic and credulous genius; but the doors of the castle and mansion were alike opened to him. Travelling through the country in search of antiquarian lore, he met with all classes and conditions of the community, and he amply testified to the unity and hospitality of the people. In those days the nobleman recognised worth and wit, genius and talent; and it was then only necessary for a man to prove himself to be of Welsh ancestry and birth, in order to gain access to the best society in the Principality. Now even a Welshman is obliged to present his credentials before he can enter the ranks of middle class families, not to mention the county aristocracy and gentry. Wealthy merchants and strangers are gradually buying up the ancient estates of the old families, and slowly but surely Wales has been losing its individuality, especially in the large towns.

Another marked alteration—due perhaps to the introduction of tea!—in the social condition of Wales, is that which exists between the served and the server. Love and affection, those once all-powerful ties between master and man, mistress and maid, no longer exist. Personal attachment has almost ceased to be felt at all, and money is the sole consideration in a market where the demand continually increases, and the supply falls off. The good old days of long and faithful servitude have passed away, except in very remote parts of the country.

In the old times, the servant never thought of closing the service excepting by marriage or death. An aged Welshman said, "I have often visited families where the servants have lived to their eightieth year, and never served any other person. One old woman had been seventy years in the same situation, and at the age of ninety she would affectionately speak of her employer as "the young mistress," when she had passed her seventieth year. But then, the good old dame had nursed her!"

Still in some of the lonely rural districts aged servants are to be seen. They are the last of a class that soon will be gone. Patient, hardy, serving women were they—the servants of all work. They were always up with the lark, singing over their work during the day, and at night ready for a romp with the children. Pleasant household creatures they were too. They seemed a part of the house and family; and they scarcely ever went from home from one year's end to the other, only to do a little shopping in May or November, and to church or chapel on Sunday evenings. They never left "for good," only

to get married or to be buried, and if they went away to the sound of wedding bells, it was always in a shower of tears.

Masters and mistresses at that time had "the pick" of the boys and girls of the labouring classes. There were then no recruiting-sergeants, like gay plumaged birds to decoy lads into the army; no "young lady for the showroom" needed; no drapery assistants wanted, and there was no State education to interfere with them. In most cases it was a choice between domestic service out, or hard work with great privation at home. But of course servitude a hundred years ago had its disadvantages. Wages were very low—too small for the work done—and the domestic drudge could not read or write.

From entries made in 1709, we find that the salaries of female servants in gentlemen's families were not more than two pounds a year! Three pounds a year for a manservant, and two pounds a year for women, with sixteen shillings a year for girls, were considered very good wages! Fifty years later there was a rise of five shillings! In 1800, a Welsh cook would go to London for ten pounds a year, and consider herself "made for life." During the last fifty years, wages have gone rapidly up, but even now in country places five pounds a year for a general servant are considered quite enough. The servants of small farmers do not get more than about three or four pounds a year, and they have to work very hard for that. May is still the hiring month for servants in the Principality, only in the towns the monthly system has been introduced as in England. In a great number of the smaller farmhouses the servants sit at the same table with the master and

mistress, and, if when the daughter of a farmer gets married, she introduces the new custom of dining before her maid dines, she is regarded as being very "proud," for which reason the Welsh are exceedingly slow in following any English innovation. They may feel very proud, but do not like to be thought so.

There have been many other social changes in Wales during the past fifty years. Before the introduction of the penny postage in 1840, women chiefly carried the letters to the nearest town twice a week in times of peace, and thrice in times of war. Three pence was charged for each letter or paper, which, with the carriage, would often cost fourteen or fifteen pence. In some of the distant hamlets, the post is still carried by boys; and if anybody wishes to send a reply "by return," he must write quickly while the messenger goes to the last house in the place, where a number of people who live beyond the reach of postal delivery come to "fetch the letters." The lad is not supposed to wait for letters, but will do so for ten or fifteen minutes, for the sake of getting a "tip," and it is often better to pay a trifle than have perhaps to walk two or more miles to post, especially in the rainy weather, or during the severe winter months.

Newspapers are now to be had daily, even in the small towns, but only weekly away in the villages and hamlets. In the past they were regularly taken by the county nobility and gentry, who sometimes allowed their favourites among the middle classes to have the loan of them. The poorer classes, clubbing together, subscribed for the papers. In one part of the Vale, an old man, best known by his sobriquet of "Jack the Tailor," regularly took the papers to which the people

subscribed. Jack's house was called the local Parliament, and therein the Whigs and Tories of those days congregated. The old man was a splendid reader, to whom the illiterate paid the greatest possible attention, alternately expressing praise and fierce denunciation.

Jack was very mischievous too. He would frequently read the Tory paper to the Whigs, who, not being always up to the tricks of the reader, would go away highly enraged, and firmly convinced that the party they favoured had become turncoats. Then when the Tories came in, Jack would proceed to read the Whig paper, to the intense irritation of the opposite party. Weeks would sometimes elapse before the people found out the trick that had been played upon them. Jack loved an occasional uproar, and laughed in his sleeves when the Whigs and Tories abused their own parties.

Next time Jack would change the papers, and the Parliament was once more peaceful.

Jack was the letter-writer for the poor of his district, and in a small way an accountant.

A primitive and peculiar Welsh form of addressing people has not undergone any mutation as yet, especially among the older people. It was and is the habit the folk have of giving their neighbours sobriquets, which were either indicative of the trade they followed, the homes they lived in, or else a term of reproach and disgust. Very likely these cognomens came to be first applied because of the great number of people having the same surnames. So many bearing the names of Price, Thomas, Davis, Jenkin, Hopkin, or Rees rendered it impossible to know which Mary Davis, or Ann Price, or Edward Thomas was meant. Thus it came to be Mary (Davis) the Blacksmith, to distinguish her from Mary (Davis)

the Miller. Then again one Ann Price, who had married a cooper, came to be called in early life Ann the Cooper, which afterwards deteriorated in the next generation to the appellation of the "Rooper."

Asking a young woman, "What do you mean by speaking of the 'Roopers'?" I received for answer, "Why, old Ann the Rooper's grandchildren, to be sure!"

"Pooh! pooh!" cried out the girl's grandmother, "old Ann used to be called Ann the Rooper, but 'twas the Cooper, because she married Billy Price the cask-maker!"

There would be Ned the Thatcher, Tom the Mill, Will the Weaver, Jack the Shop, Dick the Tiler, with the amusing additions of Tom the Mill's boy or Jack the Shop's girl.

Some people were known by the house or place of birth or residence, as Robin o' Roos, Johnny the Downs, Tom of Tyrphil, and others too numerous to mention.

Reproach, disgust, and slang were attached respectively to the names of Tom the Wrecker, Ned the Smuggler, Jack the Fighter, so called because of his fighting propensities, Bill the Wooden Leg, or Phil the Swan, because of his long neck!

All these may sound more or less offensive to modern ears, but it doubtless was the primitive way in which surnames were obtained. In Wales they superseded the tiresome repetition of Rees ap, or son of, Morgan, Jenkin ap Thomas, Caradoc ap Bran ap Llyr, that is Caractacus the son of Bran, the son of Llyr or Lear.

Far away in the dim distance of the past, and coeval with the social changes that have brought Wales more

in touch with England, there looms the solitary figure of a man who was one of the last representatives of a class now passed away. He is no longer remembered, except by a few who in early life were brought into contact with him.

This old man is described as having a stern determined face, a shock of thick silver hair, worn long, and dark brilliant eyes, from which a fiery light sometimes flashed suddenly, and was frequently followed by a stillness and calm that produced a filmy mist closely akin to tears. He wore a quaint coat and waistcoat of grey homespun cloth, with knee-breeches of the same fabric or of corduroy; stockings of black undyed sheep's wool, with gaiters of kerseymere, which was a kind of brown cloth. Sometimes the knee-breeches and waistcoat were of corduroy, and the low crowned hat was of beaver. Frequently the lining of that hat was a mystery, calculated to resist many a hard blow from highwaymen or footpads, who still frequented the land. In his early manhood and middle age it was necessary to protect the person with pistol and blunderbuss, and many a tale he could tell of travellers benighted overtaken and assaulted by highwaymen, who would subsequently be arrested "in the king's name."

In his earlier days men rode on horseback, "like men" they would say, or in gigs like travellers, before the stage-coach had put in its appearance.

People listened to him with awe when at the age of nearly ninety, in the year 1832, he would vigorously denounce men and measures of that period, and unfavourably compare the Radicals of the Reform Riots with the Radicals who remembered Pitt and Castlereagh, and had faced Ellenborough.

He had in middle life watched the rapid transition from constitutional reforms to democratic excesses, and had seen one section of the Liberals seceding with Burke to the Tories, the others remaining faithful to Fox, Sheridan, and Grey.

The "Expenses of the War" were fresh in his memory, and he would tell how wheat had gone up from 50s. a quarter to 80s. in 1795, and in 1801 to £6, 8s. He would remark how wages, though they advanced a little, did not increase in proportion to the cost of wheat. He would state that a carpenter's wages in 1795 were 2s. 6d. a day, and in 1801 only 2s. 10! and he spoke of the labourers in the latest years of the last century, whose wages were then 9s. a week, stating that they remembered the time when with 5s. wages they could buy provisions which in 1801 cost them £1, 6s. 5d. Then he said "there was distress in the country."

Still vivid in his imagination were the executions of Danton and Robespierre, and he had with Southey—whose "Madoc" met with his highest approval—shared in the enthusiastic hopes which the opening scenes of the French Revolution roused in England.

He talked of the Jacobins, of Napoleon's Egyptian Expedition, summing up with graphic accounts of the battles of the Nile, Copenhagen, and Trafalgar.

Tough and sturdy as an oak was the Welsh Radical of the past, in whose heart the fire of patriotism burned with intense fervour, and in whose pulses palpitated the blood of freedom at perhaps its most boiling-point! He was ever respectful to women, and treated them to a degree of deference that now is seldom seen. He never intended them to have the franchise—not he—

and the women of that day did not wish to obtain it; but the influence of womankind was great, and he acknowledged it.

But at last he came to be the representative man of an extinct class—a strong and sturdy community, in which iron will and steady nerve predominated; yes, a class of man in whose composition there was not a particle of modern time tinsel with its flash and sham. He lingered on earth long enough to see the meeting of the great “Reformed Parliament,” when the Whigs carried all before them, and died soon after the emancipation of the slaves.

Exile and imprisonment were the probabilities of all the men of his stamp, and the Radicals of those days frequently underwent both, and for words and deeds which now enter into ordinary daily conversation.

With all his faults and good parts, the vanished Welsh Radical is a personage—a picture of the past—a character whose British patriotism was closely allied to ancient Roman power, and who gathered himself to his forefathers before the great and marked social changes of modern times had begun to be felt in Wales.

Another portrait from the past, and one which forms a fitting pendant to his opponent, is the Welsh Tory of that period. Antiquity, the Church, the British Constitution—represented by a Tory Government—were the essentials of English liberty, prosperity, and orthodoxy. His political fervour embraced religion, morals, literature, and manners. To him Wales was his world, his chart, and his compass, and he measured everything by it. He climbed the genealogical tree with the

activity of a boy, to prove that ever since Wales had lost her own kings and princes, his family had been loyal to the throne. Everything hoary with ancestral age was to be highly commended; all things that met with the approval of the Church were eminently respectable, and the grand old aristocrats were to be emulated and admired.

This old gentleman, with his knee-breeches and chetterlings, his broadcloth, his pure white, or black, stockings, low shoes, bows, and silver or paste buckles, was born, lived, and died a Tory, and was buried with all the honours that a Tory deserved.

His political opinions remained immovable in their towering strength as a rock of adamant, and he was totally different from the Conservative of the present day, who frequently merely bears the name, and may answer to it to-day and to some other title to-morrow. For it is the fashion in modern times to begin as a Conservative, and to end as a Liberal, or *vice versa*. But the Tory of old, like the Radical of the past, was true to his colours from the first to the last day of his life.

He could trace his descent in an unbroken line from the "Abhorrrers," the name given to them by their opponents, the "Petitioners." The "Abhorrrers," subsequently known as the Tories, recognised the Right Divine of King Charles II., and were enthusiastic supporters of the Church; while the "Petitioners," afterwards known as the Whigs, regarded the King as only an official, and leaned to an alliance with the Nonconformists, later on becoming Dissenters themselves.

The Tory of this picture was contemporary with the

Radical already portrayed, and had made his entry into the world and exit out of it the selfsame year. He was a party man to the backbone. With all sorts of devices he would lure people from the poll—he would tempt them with good dinners and an abundant supply of wine; and having comforted the voter's inner man, he would boast of it afterwards, as though he had performed the most worthy and loyal actions in the world.

He was such a liberal and free-handed man too!

Everybody knew when he came that a shower of silver coins would come too. Even the small boys—whose hair he stroked, to the infinite joy of the mothers—knew that the old gentleman's coming meant a sovereign and a bottle of rare old port for father, a new gown for mother, and a shining silver piece for each of the children.

He was a mine of wealth to beggars, and a helping hand to the sick and sorrowful. That was the Tory gentleman who kept his family chariot, and drove the voters about in it.

His double was the Welsh Tory tradesman of that day, a man who never deserted his business, not even for an hour, much less a day, excepting on urgent business, for fear of being thought neglectful or insolvent. He was a creature of habit, always wishful to stay at home; and never having been farther in England than the good old city of Bristol, he regarded Wales as the only aristocratic country in the world. To him the Reform Bill came as a dire calamity, and the Repeal of the Corn Laws was an unpardonable atrocity. He was the soul of honour to his neighbours—excepting perhaps at polling time, when his

stratagemis knew no bounds ; he was courteous to strangers, polite to friends, and never for one moment forgot his dignity, so that the women used to say he bowed like a lord and spoke like a born gentleman.

With all their shortcomings and good qualities, the old Welsh Tories are gone, and become as extinct a class as their stern opponents, the old-time Radicals of Wales. Much of the gallantry of life is gone with them both. In the rush of the present age there is no time for old-fashioned courtesy, and little care for anything but self. Self, in great capital letters, has preserved the fossils of ancient Toryism in the museum of the Conservative party, but it is only the fossils, nothing else ; and Self, in its vivid red cabinet, under lock and key, keeps the whitened skeleton of aboriginal and now extinct Radicalism.

It is doubtless better for the people, as the nation is now constituted, that both the Tory and the Radical of the past have seen their day ; but, with them went many of those old-world manners which brought all classes into closer communion with each other, making life pleasanter and more harmonious than it is on the whole now.

Since the days of the old Radical and Tory, striking changes have taken place in the manner of locomotion.

The way in which journeys were formerly taken in Wales, would astonish ladies of the present day. Frequently, a horse had to be borrowed, and then both man and woman had to mount it, the wife seated—on a pillion—behind her husband, to whom she was obliged to cling tenaciously. Even then there was a risk, for sometimes the horse objected to the

double load, and kicked immoderately, or threw the riders.

A very old man, relating his own memories of the past, said, "My wife hired a horse, and about seven o'clock we set out on our journey to Cardiff. As we were riding through St. Nicholas in the Vale, at less than the footpace of a quick walker, the horse stood still, and continued kicking up until we both were off and soon down in the mud. We were not hurt, but my wife and I had to go to the Three Tuns to clean ourselves. In out of the way places, where the roads were very bad, oxen were put to draw carts, in which people were able to pass through the mud that was too deep for horses to go into it. In those days it was nothing to meet half-a-dozen men carrying their wives pick-a-back to or from chapel, when the roads were in a very terrible condition. I have often seen the parson's wife going to a dinner-party at the squire's. She had no carriage—not she—and the roads were in some places over ankle deep with mud. So she went on the back of her manservant. And if it rained in the summer, she would go pick-a-back to church, for fear she might 'dirty' her slippers."

What would ladies of to-day say to being carried to church or elsewhere by their husbands and in pick-a-back fashion, too!

This ridiculous mode of transit must have moved the most sullen body to laughter.

At that time people rode on horseback, "like men," or went in gigs, "like gentlemen." Long journeys—that is eastward to Bristol or London, or westward to Swansea and Milford, were taken in the Royal Mail.

Stage-coaches ran from country places into towns,

and many of these vehicles were to be seen in Cardiff on Saturdays, and sometimes on Mondays, until twenty-five years ago. They were well known. There were Pob-joy's 'bus, that ran between Newport and Cardiff, twelve miles ; Macey's 'bus, that plied between Llantwit Major and Cardiff, a distance of eighteen miles ; and in addition to these were the 'busses from Pontypridd, Llantrisant, Treforest, and other places. The last of the old 'busses going into Cardiff were Pob-joy's and Macey's.

Then there were the carriers who conveyed heavy goods to and from the towns before the trains came. The last of these old carriers was known as Robin o' Roos.

The 'busses were supplanted but not superseded, so far as shelter is concerned, by the modern brake or waggonette. Even now from many remote districts, carriers convey passengers and goods to the large towns. On Saturdays, and from some neighbourhoods on Mondays, these carriers are to be seen on the highways of Wales. All kinds of vehicles are called into requisition. There are market-cars, each capable of being crowded with six persons, heavily-laden waggons, washed and unwashed waggonettes, and brakes with well-groomed or totally ungroomed horses.

Some of these vehicles toil slowly along for many hours. The drivers and passengers alike appear to be perfectly contented with the pace at which they travel, and it is by no means unusual to hear exclamations against a quickened rate of locomotion. These "slow coaches" trundle on through the dust and heat of summer, and the cold and darkness of winter, halting at every wayside inn where the driver and passengers alight, to refresh themselves with copious draughts of

cwrw da, "good ale," or ale and ginger beer, or to warm their feet and fingers, and have a "drop of something short (spirits) or gin hot."

The passengers discuss the weather, agricultural prospects—which are proverbially unpromising in Wales—and from them many amusing anecdotes can be picked up. These people, coming from farms, villages, and hamlets in lonely places, meet the carriers at certain points on the roads, and very curious they look, especially in the winter, when the women's heads are enveloped in thick shawls to protect them from the cold, and rain or snow, and all sorts and conditions of wraps and rugs are pressed into the traveller's service.

The lives of these people, like their modes of travelling, go on at a jog-trot pace, and they know nothing of the fierce competition of modern times, or of those great and important world changes that have engendered social pressure.





IV.

CURIOUS CUSTOMS.

IN these days when new celebrations, gradually creeping into society, take the place of curious, and, in some instances, obsolete customs, it is interesting to note those that still prevail in Wales, and to glance back at others which have ceased to exist.

Silver and golden wedding festivities have become cosmopolitan in their popularity, and, in England, marriages are not marked by any special custom peculiar to the nation, but the Welsh wedding celebrations are stamped with an individuality exclusively their own.

Curious wedding customs still prevail in Wales, especially in the western counties.

Marriage by capture, even in the present day, is particularly popular in Cardiganshire.

On the morning of the wedding day, the bridegroom and his friends proceed to the residence of the bride's father. They find the door locked, and the relatives and friends of the bride prepared to resist the bridegroom's entry. Considerable scuffling, merriment, and

sometimes horseplay is indulged in, until order is restored by a spokesman on each side, who hold an animated dialogue, chiefly in verse. When that is concluded, the bridegroom is then admitted, but although he searches, he cannot find the bride, who disguises herself. Great is the merriment when, perhaps, the bride is discovered disguised, either as an aged woman knitting in a corner, or as an old crone nursing a baby boy. The boy infant is regarded as a symbol of good luck, and promise of sons rather than daughters. Shortly afterwards, the wedding party goes to church or chapel, as the case may be. As soon as the bride reaches the church, she is seized by her father and brother or other relatives, who ride or drive off with her. A chase ensues, and when the bridegroom catches the party, the bride is delivered into his keeping; then they return to the church, and the wedding ceremony proceeds in the usual manner.

In connection with the old marriage customs of Wales, there were the Bidding or invitation to the wedding; the Gwahoddwr, or Bidder, whose duty it was formally to invite the guests; the Ystafell, or bride's goods and presents; the Pwrs a Gwregys, or purse and girdle; the Pwython, and the Neithior.

The bidding is a general invitation to all the friends of the bride and bridegroom-elect, to meet either at the houses of the parents, or any other place appointed. If strangers who chance to be in the neighbourhood like to go, they are warmly welcomed. At the Bidding, a voluntary contribution—no matter how large or small a sum—is expected from each guest, in order to make up a purse for the young couple, who, on

the other hand, naturally expect donations from those whose weddings they have attended.

Previous to this reception or Bidding, it was the duty of the Gwahoddwr to go from house to house to invite the guests. He carried as the staff of office a willow wand, from which the bark was peeled. This wand and his hat were gaily decorated with bright coloured ribbons, and a true lover's knot, or white favor, was fastened in the button-hole of his coat. The Gwahoddwr knocked at the door of each guest, and, having been admitted, he would strike the floor with his staff, and then announce the date of the wedding. Sometimes the intimation was made in rhyme, but more frequently in prose. As a rule, the Gwahoddwr was a merry wag or lively bard, who prepared a rhyme for the occasion, and recited it amid the mirth of the company.

In the present day the services of the Gwahoddwr—who was rapturously greeted everywhere—are generally dispensed with, and a written note or circular is sent out instead. This is to be regretted, since it robs the marriage custom of its ancient character. The Gwahoddwr's circuit was one of the most pleasing and merry features of the rural Welsh wedding of the past.

The written note or printed circular which is now often sent out instead of the Gwahoddwr, is worded thus:—

“*March 31, 1892.*”

“As we, John Morgan and Jenny Jones, intend to enter upon the bonds of holy matrimony on Saturday the first of May next, we are advised by our friends

to make a Bidding on the occasion at the house of the young woman's father. The favour of your agreeable company is respectfully solicited. Whatever donation you may be pleased to bestow on us then will be thankfully received and cheerfully repaid whenever called for on a similar occasion.

"The parents of the bride and bridegroom-elect desire that all gifts due to them will be returned to them on the above day, and will be thankful for all favours granted. Your obedient servants,

(Signed)

JOHN MORGAN.

JENNY JONES."

In the present day, these Biddings are exclusively confined to the lower classes, and small farmers; but in the past they were general among the middle ranks of society.

On the Friday before the wedding, the Ystafell, or household goods, were brought home. This included one or two feather beds and blankets, and without fail an oaken chest, probably an heirloom in the family of the bride-elect. Then, according to time-honoured custom, the bridegroom-elect sent bedsteads, tables, and a dresser. Whatever was necessary for house-keeping came in, some of the goods being supplied by the parents of the young people, and others by relatives and friends. Meanwhile, the young man was busy at his home in receiving money, cheese, bacon, and other things from his friends. These gifts sometimes included a cow, a horse, a pig, living fowls, geese, ducks, and other articles of a similar nature if he intended farming. At the same time the bride in her home

received the Pwrs a Gwregys, or purse and girdle. These presents included money, and all articles necessary for a housekeeper.

On the wedding morning the invited guests paid their Pwython—that is, they returned presents for those which they had received at different weddings. Thus, the future bride or bridegroom had perhaps attended five or six weddings before their own marriage, and to each young couple they had given presents. Now, they required and expected those young married folk to bring a gift in return.

After depositing their offerings, refreshment was offered, and then ten or twelve of the bridegroom's friends mounted their horses, or entered their traps or gigs, and went to demand the bride, in whose home the Gwahoddwr was located. When the bridegroom's procession halted at the house of the bride's parents, one of the party—generally a harpist and bard—delivered lines appropriate to the occasion, and these were responded to by the Gwahoddwr, who remained within.

The following verses were composed for a Welsh wedding, and delivered in the orthodox manner.

Bard. "Somebody fair is hiding here,
Somebody who to us is dear ;
Flowers have we to deck her head,
Roses white and roses red,
And roses pink with never a thorn,
A spray of gorse and ears of corn :
All these blossoms are brought to-day,
Now lead the fair one forth, we pray !"

The Gwahoddwr from within replied—

"What is this noise ? What means it all ?
We will not answer a stranger's call ;

Unless you tell us what brings you here,
We will give you something to feel and fear !”

Bard. “ We seek a maiden tall and fair,
With sparking eyes and nut-brown hair ;
She is the best of maidens many,
Beautiful, winsome, loving Gwennie.
We come to claim her as bride to-day,
So open the doors to us, we pray ! ”

Gwahoddwr. “ Our daughter is still so young and fair,
She needs a mother’s tender care :
Go, seek another bride elsewhere.”

Bard. “ But she has been truly wooed and won,
She shall be his ere set of sun,
And we must see her duly married ;
Come, come, we have too long here tarried ;
Unless you give her up, we vow
To burst the door and seize her now.”

Then the “ best man ” called out in a tone of authority :—

“ Silence ! let noise and clamour cease ;
We come to win the bride in peace.
In peace we wish to go our way,
To have our due, and now we pray
The bride may come to us to-day.”

The Gwahoddwr unbolted the door, and throwing it wide open, greeted the bridegroom’s party.

Search was made either then or in the evening, after the wedding festivities, for the bride, who ultimately was discovered under the disguise of a “ granny.” After that, refreshments, consisting of bread and cheese and beer for the men, and cakes and wine for the women, were then served.

In olden days, when riding was more general than walking or driving, the party mounted their ponies or

horses, each lass sitting behind her lad, and the bride seated in the wake of her father or brother. In later years the company walked, and "walking weddings" are general now in some of the rural districts.

At first the procession went at a moderate pace, but by-and-by the bride and her escort went quicker, until, at length, they either rode at a gallop or rode off as swiftly as possible. Then the fun really began. With might and main, the bridegroom and his party pursued the bride and her friends, and everybody did their utmost to chase and catch the bride, because whoever caught her would be married "for certain" within a year from that date. By-and-by the bride was overtaken, simultaneously perhaps, by two couples, and, amid loud laughter and cheering, she returned. When mirth subsided, the wedding-party decorously entered the church.

No sooner was the "knot tied" than the harpist seated in the churchyard, struck up a national melody appropriate to the occasion. It would be "Merch Megan," "Mentra Gwen," or any other charming song, the words of which were sung by the assembled spectators. The bride and bridegroom then mounted their horse, or, walking, led the way to the house of the bride's parents. In their progress, they were "chained" by ropes of evergreens, and the boys and men would not allow them to pass without paying their footing. In the present times, rice is thrown at the happy pair, but this is a modern innovation, for in former days they were pelted with flowers.

The invited guests then repaired to the bride's home, where a substantial dinner—not breakfast—was served, after which the bride and her girl friends, and the

bridegroom and his companions, retired respectively to the best parlour and the village inn until tea-time.

Dancing was the order of the evening, when reels, country dances, and jigs were indulged in up to a late hour. Then the trick of concealing the bride from the bridegroom was played, and great was the astonishment and amusement of the guests at seeing the young husband seeking his wife everywhere, and finding her at last perhaps only behind the parlour door.

After a few songs with harp accompaniment, the wedding party dispersed, and the bride and bridegroom quietly proceeded to their new home.

On the Neithior, or first Sunday after the wedding, the newly married pair always stayed at home to receive their friends, and thus conclude the marriage customs.

In Hone's "Table Book" the wedding customs in Brecknockshire and Merthyr Tydfil are thus described:—"When a farmer's daughter or some young woman, with a fortune of from £100 to £200, marries, it is generally very privately, and she returns to her father's house for a few weeks, where her friends and neighbours go to see her, but none go empty handed. When the appointed time arrives for the young man to take home his wife, the elderly women are invited to attend the 'stafell,'"—this is incorrect; it should be Ystafell—"that is the furniture which the young woman provides; in general it is rather considerable. It is conveyed in great order, there being fixed rules as to the articles to be moved off first, and those which are to follow. I have thought this a pleasing sight, the company being all on horseback, and each matron in her appointed station, the nearest relative going first. All have their allotted basket or piece of furniture, a horse

and car following afterwards with the heaviest articles. The next day the young couple are attended by the younger part of their friends, and this is called a *tiermant*, and is frequently preceded by music."

These curious old customs still prevail in some parts of western Wales, although they are gradually declining in popular favour. Many of the young people now prefer going privately into the nearest town, and there get married in a church, chapel, or before the registrar.

When a rural wedding takes place, the pathway or road leading from the bride's house to the church is previously carefully swept and sanded. Rushes and herbs are strewn all along the way, while here and there, bright coloured true lovers' knots are to be seen, and the aisle of the church is similarly decorated. As the bridal party return after the ceremony, they are "chained," either with ordinary ropes, or ropes covered with flowers and evergreens, and the young couple shall not pass until the bridegroom pays toll.

Another custom still prevalent in Wales is this. Before the bridegroom and the bride leave the altar to go and sign the register, the former gallantly kisses his wife, and then he salutes her mother, while the young wife receives the embraces of her mother-in-law.

Late in the eighteenth century, the bridal flowers used in Wales were the pansy, roses of every kind excepting yellow, maiden blush, prickmadam, gentle heart, lady's fingers, lady-smock, and, strangest of all, prickles. A spray of golden blossomed gorse, or furze, was considered a lucky addition to other flowers. To encourage the bride in industry, red clover bloom was strewn in her pathway. The scarlet fuschia was to remind her of good taste in all things. Golden-rod was

the symbol of caution in domestic and other matters; whole straws were to teach her that to agree is better than to differ; the shamrock was to advise her to be lighthearted; heather was for good luck, and sprays of ivy were emblems of fidelity.

“As soon as you are married,” say the old Welsh crones, “be sure you buy something before your husband has the chance to. Then you’ll be master for life!”

This glorious chance must not be allowed to slip, but how the difficulty is to be surmounted puzzles the bride-elect. The husband pays toll when they are “chained” on the homeward path, so what can the wife do? the girls ask.

“That is only *giving*, not buying,” the old women reply. “You must buy—buy anything.”

Then the moment the bride reaches home she quickly buys a pin or pins from one of the bridesmaids.

Lavender is considered a lucky colour for a wedding-gown, but to be “married in black” was ominous of unhappiness or disaster.

Welsh funeral customs differ in many respects from those of England. In Wales the people have profound reverence for death and the dead, and anybody who fails to observe the time-honoured customs in connection therewith, is regarded as “unnatural” and “unfeeling.”

Their care and thought for the dying and the dead resemble those of the Hebrews, whose lamentations, though prolonged and heartrending, are imbued with humble submission to the Divine will.

In sickness and in suffering the Welsh never forget to be kind and helpful to their neighbours. When it

is known there is no hope for a sufferer, everything is done to smooth the pathway to the grave. Feelings of the deepest awe inspire the people to do their utmost for those in pain and anguish. They say, "Let us do the best we can: our turn will come." The desires of a sick person are religiously studied and gratified, even though they may be difficult of attainment. Sometimes it happens that the sufferer asks for something that can only be obtained by going a distance. That does not matter. As soon as the wish is expressed, several people readily offer their services in getting what is wanted. To refuse to gratify a dying man's request is to lessen your chances for peace in the hour of death; and, they say in Wales, you may do whatever you like in opposition to the desire, "but the dead will have their way."

Singular instances of this are still cited.

It is the custom to call the road along which funerals pass, the "burying lane." Funerals only are allowed to go that way, unless, as in the case of small churches, weddings and funerals alike pass through the one lych-gate.

A woman living in one of the rural parishes expressed a desire that her body should not be carried down along the burying lane according to the time-honoured custom. Her husband, a very strong-willed man, objected to any deviation from the usual funeral route, so he ordered the procession to proceed along the lane. The people who were acquainted with the dead woman's wish strongly opposed the husband's arrangements, but followed his directions. When the procession had gone half-way down the lane, a sudden halt was made. On seeking the cause, it was found that a broken-down

cart and horse obstructed the passage, and the funeral procession was obliged to return and follow the route taken by weddings, thus fulfilling the dead woman's desire.

A similar instance occurred recently in the neighbourhood of Southerndown, Glamorganshire. One day a young man, apparently in good health, surprised his mother by asking if she heard singing near the house. She replied in the negative. In the course of a few minutes, the young man said, "There it is again." But the mother, not hearing anything, said impatiently, "What did you hear?" "I heard the sound of numbers of people singing 'There's a light in the Valley for thee,'" said the son. Three months later he was taken ill, and when it was known that the illness would terminate fatally, the young man requested his friends to sing "There's a light in the Valley for thee," at his funeral. They promised to do so, but when the time came, according to the parents' desire, Welsh hymns were selected. On the day of the funeral, following the usual custom, the minister gave out a hymn before the body was borne out of the house. Another was to be given out as the procession moved towards the church; but just at that moment a minister from a neighbouring village unexpectedly came up, and, in compliment, the selection of a hymn was left to him. By a very singular coincidence, the newly arrived minister gave out "There's a light in the Valley for thee." Thus the dying man's wish was gratified. The most extraordinary part of the story is that the minister who gave out the hymn in question had not received intimation of the young man's wish, and had not the slightest idea a funeral was to take place on that day.

It is the custom in Wales to have what are known as "singing funerals," in which hymns are sung by the choir of the church or chapel of which the deceased were members. The singing commences at the house, and is continued until the procession reaches the burial-ground. After the body has been lowered into the grave, and at the close of the funeral service, one or more hymns are sung, and they are generally those that were favourites of the dead person. In all the villages of Wales, the funerals are attended by anybody who wishes to go, without invitation, and sometimes there is a very large gathering of friends and neighbours.

In nearly every churchyard in Wales, the mountain ash is to be seen. It is regarded as a sacred tree, and on Good Friday, up to the sixteenth century, it was the custom of everybody to wear a cross made of this wood, which was also supposed to have the power to preserve people against the fascinations of witches and evil spirits.

Palm Sunday is called "Flowering Sunday" in Wales, and then the graves present a very beautiful appearance, but still, traces of the old time customs and superstitions are to be observed. The small un-inscribed stones at the heads and feet of the poor peoples' graves are whitewashed, and the earth upon and around them is carefully sanded. Few of the people of to-day know that this custom dates back to the times when there was a strong and all-prevailing belief in the power of elves, fairies, and witches. In recent years, it is becoming the custom in some places to trim and clear the graves for "Flowering Sunday," and to send floral tributes on Easter Day.

The Eve of All Saints, known in Wales as "Nos

Calangaua," the leg or first foot of winter, is still celebrated according to ancient custom.

There is a remarkable uniformity in the old fireside customs of this night all through the British Isles. Nuts and apples are everywhere in requisition, and love-charms and spells have the preference. Among the peasantry of Wales this eve is called "Snotching night," the name being probably derived from the game of snatching apples. This game is similar to that of snap-apple in England. Apples and candle ends fastened to strings, are suspended from the ceiling, and the merry-makers leap forward to catch the apple, but frequently get the candle instead.

The divination of the three dishes is common in Wales. In some parts of the Principality, two of the dishes are respectively filled with clean and foul water, and one is empty. They are ranged on a table, when the parties, blindfolded, advance in succession and dip their fingers into one. If any one dip into clean water, he will marry a maiden; if into the foul water, a widow; if into the empty dish, the person so dipping is destined to be either a bachelor or an old maid. As each person takes his turn, the position of the dishes is changed. In other parts of Wales, salt and earth are substituted for the clean and foul water, salt representing good luck, earth misfortune, and the empty plate death, spite, or quarrels.

Melting lead is peculiar to Wales and Ireland. The molten lead is poured into cold water through the handle, or, more correctly, through the cross-shaped wards of a large, old-fashioned door-key. From the various shapes of miniature tools and implements the molten lead assumes in the water, guesses are made

at the occupation of the future husband. Sometimes melted tallow is substituted for molten lead.

Nuts are burned on the bars of the grate, as in England, and apples are pared carefully, after which the parings are thrown over the right shoulder. Whatever shaped letter the parings assume on the floor will be the initial of the future husband's or wife's Christian name. The charm of eating an apple at a looking-glass is the same as in England. In Wales the girls wash any article of body linen they please, then put it to dry before the fire. At midnight the spectral form of their future husband is supposed to come and turn it. The Welsh farmers always distributed seed-cake and beer to all comers on this eve, in commemoration of the crops that were sown.

Another custom of a more weird and uncanny character even now prevails in remote parts of Wales. It is to walk three times around the parish church at midnight, and then look in through the keyhole, and this is done on the 31st of October.

Hallowe'en is one of the "teir nos ysprydion," "three spirit nights," when the spectral forms of those who are to depart this life during the year are to be seen, by those who care to look through the keyhole of the parish church door at midnight.

The following story is told of a man still living in South Glamorganshire. He, with others, was working in the parish church during the last two weeks of October, about forty-five years ago. On the thirty-first day of that month, a gentleman who had been inspecting the antiquities of the place gave the men some money for drink. As it was nearly dinner-time, some of the men kept the money over to spend in

the evening, but one, whom I will call L——, drank more than was good for him, and at four o'clock in the afternoon he returned to the church; but not being in a fit state for work, he was advised by his companions to take a nap. They promised to awaken him before they left, and L—— entered one of the pews, and soon fell fast asleep, while the other men continued working.

His companions forgot all about him, and when the time came for their departure, they placed their tools away, went out, and locked the church doors. They then took the keys to the sexton, who, according to his usual custom, locked them in the cupboard. The men, never giving a thought to L——, went away, and after that some of the party spent the evening in one of the inns, while others went home.

L—— must have slept soundly until nearly midnight, when he said he was awakened by the sounds of a great commotion. He rubbed his eyes, and soon became aware that he was alone in the church, and in utter darkness. Being a strong, and by no means a superstitious man, he began to grope his way in search of matches, which he expected to find on the reading-desk. As he turned to go in the aisle, he felt as though some unseen force kept him back. Once again he made his way into the aisle, but something impelled him to return to the seat where he had been sleeping.

Meanwhile the commotion increased, and at length he felt convinced that he heard, though he could not see, a funeral procession coming up the nave to the chancel. For a moment only he saw a shadowy and spectral figure standing where the bier was always deposited, while the vicar read the burial service.

L—— recognised the face and form of a neighbour, and then, for the first time in his life, he experienced fear. In horrible dread, he clasped his hands and breathlessly exclaimed, "Lord, have mercy upon my soul," after which he felt strength to move. Still hearing the commotion, and still repeating the solemn entreaty, he groped his way to the church door, which he found wide open. His relief knew no bounds, as he hurried homeward. But before he reached home, he met some men with lanterns. They were those of his companions, who remembered having locked L—— in church, and in pity, fearing he would get frightened, went to release him. They asked him how he got out, and when he explained his mode of exit, they would not believe his story. To satisfy themselves that the sexton had not released L——, they went and made inquiries. On learning from the sexton's wife that her husband had gone to bed earlier than usual, owing to a bad cold, the men were satisfied. L—— had neither received help from the sexton, nor yet had the keys been removed by anybody from the house, where they were taken by the workmen at six o'clock. The men went down to the church, and there found the doors securely locked.

How then could L—— have made his exit? In the morning they closely examined the interior of the church, but failed to find any place by which L—— could have a loophole of escape.

They then asked him to describe the appearance of the spectral form, and, begging them to keep his secret, he named a man well known in the parish. The men were well acquainted with the superstition about Hallowe'en, and were prepared to prove the truth of the "old

saying." Within the year, the person described by L—— died, but nobody was able to solve the mystery of the man's exit from the church on that memorable night.

Many years later some venturesome girls in Glamorganshire wished to test the truth of the old statement about the "three spirit nights." Without saying a word to anybody, they repaired to the church, but previously promised each in turn to divulge faithfully what they saw—if they saw anything at all. Each girl was to look through the keyhole of the church door, and not to say a word to each other until they returned home. The girls looked, and in silence went homeward. One of the girls said she did not see anything at all; the second said she saw her grandfather; but the third was very reticent. At last, after much persuasion, she said she saw a bride dressed in grey, going towards the chancel, where she was soon joined by a man. Suddenly, the bridegroom fell at the foot of the altar steps. The girl turned very pale, and then said, "I could well have believed it to be myself." "Nonsense," said the others. Time passed, and two of the girls were married, but the third remained an old maid.

At length, just after her forty-fifth year, she had an excellent offer of marriage. A few days before her wedding, she said to her old friends who lived near her, "Do you remember that Nos Calangaua of long ago?" They did, but remarked, "'Twas all nonsense. You're not afraid, are you?" "Oh no," she replied, "but 'twas very singular." Then she begged they would not tell her future husband. They promised, and the wedding day came, bringing with it fear to the bride-elect, and subdued feelings of suspense to her friends.

Remembering that the spectral catastrophe happened while the bridal party were going to the altar, the friends sighed with relief when the marriage ceremony was over. And they were glad when the register had been signed, to see the bridegroom leading his bride from the altar. But when the party reached the foot of the altar steps, the bridegroom appeared to sway slightly from side to side, and in a moment he staggered and fell. When the bride and others turned to assist him, he was dead. It was a painful scene, and one that vividly impressed itself upon those who witnessed it.

Turning to a pleasanter subject, the first of May is still celebrated in Wales with many festivities. Some of the old customs still prevail in the rural districts, where on May Day servants are hired for one year certain, fresh engagements are entered upon, agreements are ratified, exchanges are made, and rents are paid throughout the Principality. The day is generally spent in mirth and merriment by the various clubs and general public.

Dancing around the May-pole was formerly general in Wales, but it is never seen now, though in a few rural districts the children sometimes select their queen of the May, but even that pretty custom is dying out.

One of the latest of the ancient May but not May Day celebrations of Wales, prevailed in Llantwit Major, Glamorganshire, until about 1830 to 1840. This custom was in no way connected with the May Day festivities common in other parts of the Principality. .

Many centuries ago a notorious Irish pirate, well known as a frequenter of the Bristol Channel, was renowned for making daring incursions into the country

on the seaboard of England and Wales. Sometimes he made raids into North Devon, and often into Glamorganshire, and always with success. Finding it possible to land at Llantwit Major, and scour the country without much opposition, O'Neill and his companions grew bolder, and each year wrought great havoc in the neighbourhood, until at length, after prolonged fear and suffering, the people were aroused to arms, and resolved to capture the pirate. For this purpose, the inhabitants waited until O'Neill penetrated higher than usual into the country, and then they went to the hills near the sea-side, where the hazels, brushwood, and gorse served as an excellent place of concealment.

O'Neill returned more triumphant than usual. He descended through the meadows in the valley leading to the sea, and there halted to rest before embarkation. Some say he was lured to linger by a Llantwit lass, famed for her beauty and wit, which were more than a match for the rough sea-pirate. At all events, the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood came out of their hiding-place, and quickly surrounded the pirate and his comrades, who were instantly cut off from every chance of escape. A terrible scene with much bloodshed ensued, but ultimately O'Neill and his comrades were captured, and burnt in the hillside gorse on the third of May in a year unknown.

From that period to the present time, the 3rd of May has been locally known as "Llantwit's Anwyl (beloved) Day." Each successive year, revels and rustic sports were held on that day, in commemoration of the capture of O'Neill the Irish pirate; and until about sixty years ago, a queen of the revels was

annually selected. With much ceremony, the queen, riding on a milk-white horse, and surrounded by her twelve maids of honour and courtly retinue, led a gay procession down to the meadows, where all sorts of revelry, sports, games, and dancing were carried on. The effigy of O'Neill was burnt amid much applause, and the evening and night concluded with further amusements in the town. The last of the queens of these revels was Jenny Deere, and the old time celebration is supplanted by club processions and feasts on May the 3rd.

Among the ancient and obsolete customs of Wales were the Cwnstree, corrupted to Coolstring; the Mal Santau, already referred to; the Pylgain; the Mari Llwyd; Purdan, and the Ducking Stool, all of which prevailed in the Principality so late as 1840, and some later even than that.

The Cwnstree, or Coolstring, was a sham trial held with all the pomp and ceremony of a real assize. In this sham trial, the real plaintiff and defendant never appeared. When a wife in a quarrel with her husband had the audacity to strike him with the tongs instead of the poker—the latter being an authorised weapon of domestic warfare, while the former was regarded as an ignominious instrument of defence—the parties were brought to justice. It was considered a dreadful disgrace for a woman to strike her husband at all, even in self-defence, but to touch him with a tongs was a mean action! The offender was accordingly brought to justice, the parts of husband and wife being impersonated by others. The counsel for the prosecution and defence, together with the jury, assembled in the Town Hall, or any other place, with all the mock grandeur

of an assize. The entrance of the judge was announced by a fanfare of trumpets. All the proceedings were carried out in the proper order of a real trial. Sometimes the extenuating circumstances were that the husband was drunk, and exasperated his wife, who possibly was a terrible shrew. The jury of twelve men returned a verdict of guilty, and the judge pronounced sentence of death. An effigy of the offending woman was thereupon conveyed to a gibbet erected under the Town Hall clock. After being hung, the effigy was shot at by the populace until it was completely burnt. This old custom had the effect of lessening the number of domestic quarrels. For a time at least, the fear of public exposure overcame the temptations of ungoverned passions.

In striking contrast to the Cwnstree was the Pylgain. This was a religious service held in all the churches in Wales, at three o'clock on Christmas morning, to watch the dawn commemorative of the coming of Christ, and the daybreak of Christianity. This beautiful service of song, prayer, praise, and thanksgiving was generally held throughout the Principality at that early hour fifty years ago. In the cold loneliness of winter, in the desolate and remote parts of Wales, when the snow covered the earth, and the stilly air was under the spell of the ice-spirit, people thought nothing of going to the Pylgain.

It was a pleasant and touching scene say those who remember this service.

People went to bed very early on Christmas Eve, and got up either at midnight or at one or two in the morning—the time depending entirely upon the distance to be traversed. Sometimes the distance to church was

two, three, or even more miles, and in that case a large party met at a certain point, and picked up others on the way, so that by the time they reached the church a good number was congregated together. Young and old alike were wrapped up comfortably, and quite prepared to resist the weather. On a frosty night when the stars glittered brilliantly in the cloudless heavens, and the roads were flinty hard, the way did not seem long, but when the route to be traversed was slippery and dangerous, with sheeted ice, or heavy with frozen snow, there was difficulty in getting along. Still the people went, unless the snow was too deep for locomotion. The older folk who remember the Pylgain, say that sometimes they started on a bitterly cold and frosty night, and before the service was over, the weather would have changed, and on coming out they found themselves snow-bound. The young people enjoyed the fun of trudging away through deep snow-drifts, while the elderly folk remained with their friends until vehicles could be sent to convey them home. It was a rule that those families living nearest the church should receive the friends from a distance to breakfast immediately after this early service. This repast was substantial, and exceptionally welcome after the long and cold walk, followed, in some instances, by a lengthy service of about two hours.

As time passed, the hour was changed from three to four, thence to five, six, or seven, until at length it came to be known as the eight o'clock Christmas morning service.

In the past, the early part of the day was devoted to religious services and worship, both in the parish church and in the dissenting chapels, and the evening was spent in merry-making and rejoicing.

Another curious custom was that known as the procession of the Mari Llwyd. A man, enveloped in a very large white sheet, and wearing the skeleton of a horse's head which was gaily decked with bright coloured ribbons and rosettes, went with a merry procession around the towns and villages, sometimes on boxing-day, but often from then to Twelfth Night, collecting alms or Christmas boxes. He was generally accompanied by a motley crowd of spectators and companions who sang songs with buffoonery, and played merry pranks. One authority thinks the Mari Llwyd must have been in primitive times a kind of animals' aid society. When the death of the year came, there would be little provender in the fields, and the cattle, according to the old Welsh adage, were said to have "clean teeth." By some the Mari or Marw Llwyd is said to have symbolised the grey death of the year, while others regard it to be typical of the death of Christ and His salvation of sinners. The latter suggestion appears improbable, since the solemn and sad anniversary of Christ's death would not be likely to follow so closely upon the celebrations in connection with His nativity.

Gradually the Mari Llwyd degenerated into a noisy troupe of revellers and roysterers, who struck terror into the minds of young folk. The old custom was for the men to sing an impromptu song outside any house, and there was supposed to be a bard within who could immediately respond in unpremeditated verse. The following impromptu verses were sung at a Mari Llwyd celebration so late as twenty years ago. Voices and revelry echoed through the night air, and presently the girls rushed into the house, crying, "The Mari Llwyd, the Mari

Llwyd is coming," and shut all doors and windows just in time to escape these Twelfth Night revellers, who came up, and demanded entrance. Suddenly the bard within seized his harp and sang an impromptu :—

“What, ho ! Morganwg’s (Glamorgan’s) happy land
Is full of corn and barley,
What, ho ! is your request—demand,
Answer—we grant short parley ?”

The bard accompanying the revellers responded :—

“Honest men are we, who sue
Favours many, money due
To the Mari Llwyd from you !”

Then the bard within promptly replied :—

“Come in, come in, and sit at ease,
Ye merry sons of Cymru,
Here’s sweet metheglin, here’s cream cheese,
With milk, cream cakes, and flummery !”

The revellers were then admitted, and regaled with cakes and beer, and, after being enriched with a money gift, they passed on to another house.

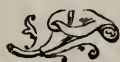
In later times a band of unruly roysterers accompanied the Mari Llwyd ; they would unceremoniously enter any house—provided the doors were not barred or bolted—without permission ; and, if the householder was parsimonious enough not to provide cakes and beer, the men took the liberty to rake out the kitchen fire. Hence it came to be the custom among the people to bolt and bar their doors when the Mari Llwyd procession went around the town.

Purdan was a Welsh ordeal of the past, inflicted

upon any woman who had broken the Seventh Commandment. The guilty woman, covered with a white sheet, was compelled to walk with her paramour, if known, up the nave of the parish church during the hours of divine service. Probably in the old monastic days the guilty pair, on making public confession, were dismissed with a warning, if not full pardon. This custom prevailed at Ystradgynlais about seventy years ago; it was called *Purdan* or *Penance*. It was practised in the parishes of *Languic*, and *Kil-y-bebyll*, in *Glamorganshire*, and in other parts of *South Wales*, so late as fifty years ago.

The *Ducking Stool* was intended for shrews, scolds, and immoral women. This stool, or chair, was fixed to the end of a long pole, arranged so as to be easily moved up and down over a mill pond, or preferably a pool of stagnant and noxious water. The scold was seated in the chair, and bound securely with cords, and then the men, taking hold of the long pole, dipped or ducked the culprit in the water. There, according to an old writer, "the scold, shrew, or immoral woman is placed, bare-headed and shoeless, to abide the derision of those that passed by." In *Wales*, so late as 1845, shrews were "dipped" in mill ponds.

In the olden days, public sarcasm and derision did much to dispel vice, and perhaps was, in some cases, more effectual in reforming offenders than the modern modes of punishment.





V.

WELSH MYTH AND ROMANCE.

LOOKING far back, through the dim distance of ages to the region of Welsh myth and romance, is like taking a peep into the fairyland of childhood's imagination, where every blossom was supposed to conceal a fairy, and every lurking shadow was the hiding-place of grotesque dwarfs, and wicked or spiteful elves.

It is a witching realm—full of life and light, love and beauty, and yet gay with comedy, and at times gloomy, even dark with tragedy.

In the dim vistas of those far away, back-blown ages, brightest and most beautiful of all the fair ladies is Olwen, the Venus of Wales. She is described in the ancient Mabinogion of Wales as a maiden "clothed in a robe of flame-coloured silk, and about her neck was a collar of ruddy gold, on which were precious emeralds and rubies. More yellow was her hair than the flowers of the broom, and her skin was whiter than the foam of the wave, and fairer were her hands and her fingers than the blossoms of the wood-anemone, amidst the spray of the meadow fountain. The eye

of the trained hawk, the glance of the three-mewed falcon, was not brighter than hers. Her bosom was more snowy than the breast of the white swan; her cheek was redder than the reddest roses. Those who beheld her were filled with her love. Four white trefoils sprang up wherever she trod."

Near at hand stands her wicked father, the grim and frowning Ysnyddaden Pencawr, or "Hawthorn Head-giant," while glancing at her with undisguised and unconquered rapture is Kilwech, one of the bravest of Welsh heroes.

With reference to the term "Mabinogion," Professor Rhys says, in his introduction to the Oxford text—in Welsh—which contains the tales: "Since the publication of Lady Guest's (Schreiber's) handsome volume, an idea prevails that any Welsh tale of respectable antiquity may be called a *mabinogi*, but there is no warrant for extending the use of the term to any but the 'four branches of the Mabinogi,' such as Pwyll, Branwen, Manawyddau, and Math. For, strictly speaking, the word *mabinog* is a technical term belonging to the bardic system, and it means a literary apprentice. In other words, a mabinogi was a young man who had not yet acquired the art of making verse, but one who received instruction from a qualified bard. The inference is that the Mabinogion meant the collection of things which formed the mabinog's literary training—his stock-in-trade, so to speak—for he was probably allowed to relate the tales forming the 'four branches of the mabinogion,' at a fixed price, established by law or custom. If he aspired to a place in the hierarchy of letters, he must acquire the poetic art. The supposition that a mabinog was a child on

his nurse's lap would be as erroneous as the idea that the mabinogion are nursery tales, a view which no one who has read them can reasonably take."

A new edition of the Welsh text of the Mabinogion has been provided by Professor Rhys and Mr. Gwenogfryn Evans, while Lady Charlotte Guest—afterwards Schreiber—some years ago, published an English translation, which is not so well known either in England or Wales as it should be.

In that region of myth and romance, we see Branwen or Bronwen, "White Breast," the daughter of Llyr, whose wonderful beauty charmed Matholwch, the King of Ireland, so much that he sought her in marriage.

Bronwen had several brothers, among whom were Bendigeid Vran or Bran the Giant, and a half-brother named Evnissyen the Quarrelsome. During the absence of the latter, the former gave consent to the marriage of his sister to the King of Ireland, whose fleet of thirteen ships rode at anchor at Aber Menei, ready to convey the bridal party across the sea.

Just before the royal company set sail, Evnissyen the Quarrelsome unexpectedly returned home, and coming by chance to where the horses of Matholwch stood ready for embarkation, he asked whose they were. And the people answered, "They are the horses of the King of Ireland, married to thy sister." "Ah," said Evnissyen, "have they dared to bestow my sister without asking my consent? No greater insult could be!"

Whereupon he rushed to the horses, cut off their lips "at the teeth," cropped the ears "close to the head," cut their tails off, and in a word, rendered them perfectly useless.

When the news reached the King of Ireland, he marvelled much, but nevertheless, having won Bronwen the beautiful, he calmly sought his ships.

Before he reached Aber Menei, he was overtaken by a messenger from Bendigeid Vran or Bran the Giant, asking why he was so rude as to take his departure without leave.

"Because of the insult to my horses," said the Irish king, getting very angry.

Bran the giant, seeing that the King of Ireland was offended, endeavoured to appease him by a gift. This was a magic cauldron into which, if the king ever put slain Irish, they would live, only without the gift of speech.

The royal party then sailed for Ireland, where Bronwen, because of her enthralling beauty, was received with great joy. At first all went well with the lovely Queen of Ireland, even though her husband was sorely blamed by his foster-brothers for enduring the insult to his horses. In time a son was born, and he was the delight of his mother Bronwen and of his father, Matholwch, but the foster-uncles were jealous of the heir.

They never forgot the insult to the horses, and now they began to show their resentment to Bronwen. At first they thrust her out to cook for them and their servants, and then each of the men struck a severe blow on her ears every day. For three years they treated her most cruelly, and used every means to prevent the news reaching Wales.

Driven to desperation, and yet concealing her troubles as best she could, Bronwen tried to find means to send a message to her brother Bran the Giant. After many

attempts, and being closely watched, she failed. But one day a happy idea came. She had reared a starling in the cover of the kneading trough, and by-and-by she wrote a letter of her woes. This she bound to the bird's wing, and sent it to Britain. The bird reached Bronwen's brother Bran the Giant in *Caer Seiont*, *Arvon* (*Anglesea*). It alighted upon Bran's shoulders, and to his astonishment ruffled its feathers. Not guessing it to be a messenger bird, Bran would have thrust it away, but on closer examination he found the letter. Deeply grieved, and determined to avenge their sister's woes, Bronwen's brothers sailed for Ireland, and "came to shoal water by the mouth of two rivers, the *Lli* and *Archan*."

Tearful and heart-sore, Bronwen, seeing them approach, sang for joy: "Behold! behold the men of the Island of the Mighty!"

The men of Britain alarmed the men of Ireland, and after some conversation, *Matholwch* consented to resign in favour of Bronwen's son *Gwern*. When this was done, the ex-king of Ireland, who loved peace rather than warfare, built a house for Bran the Giant, so that he might, whenever it pleased him, reside near his sister.

Not long after peace was concluded, Bran the Giant one day called *Gwern*, the son of Bronwen, to come to him. This the boy willingly did, after which he went "the round" of the company, omitting his mother's half-brother.

Then said *Evnissyen* the Quarrelsome, "Wherefore comes not my nephew, son of my sister, unto me? Though he were not the King of Ireland, yet would I willingly fondle the boy."

Bran the Giant requested the boy to go to his uncle, but Gwern exhibited a half shy, half terrified reluctance.

“By my confession to Heaven,” said the evil Evnissyen the Quarrelsome in his heart, “the boy has been brought up to fear and hate me, and the whole thought of the household is that I contemplate slaughter.”

Thereupon he strode across to where the boy stood, took him by his feet, and, before anybody could seize hold of him, he thrust Gwern headlong into the blazing fire.

Bronwen, in her anxiety to save her child, tried to leap into the fire after him, but was restrained by Bran the Giant.

Fearful tumult, warfare, and bloodshed ensued, whereupon Evnissyen the Quarrelsome, in remorse cast himself among the dead bodies of the Irish, and was thrown into the magic cauldron, wherein Matholwch put the slain, who would live but lose the gift of speech. Evnissyen, who also was a giant, stretched himself out in the cauldron, and thereby burst it into four pieces, so that it was no longer of any use.

Bran the Giant, being poisoned with a dart in his foot, ordered his men to cut off his head. He had previously commanded them to take his head the moment it was cut off, and carefully bear it to Britain, and bury it in the “White Mount,” in London, with the face towards France. “Long will ye be upon the road,” he said, and his prophecy was amply fulfilled.

Seven men carried the head, and Bronwen sorrowfully accompanied them.

When they were more than half way over, Bronwen looked back to Ireland, and earnestly gazed on to

Wales, but she could not see either. Then, in deep anguish of spirit, and bowed down with sorrow, she cried, "Alas! alas! woe is me, that ever I was born. Two islands have been destroyed because of me!"

Then, uttering a loud groan, she broke her heart and died of grief.

The men bearing the head landed at Aber Alaw in Talebolyn, a commot in Anglesea, and there "sat to rest;" and immediately after landing they made a "four sided grave," on the banks of the Alaw. There they laid Bronwen, "White Breast," who is mentioned in the Triads as the lady of the "three slaps."

The men afterwards proceeded on their journey with the head of Bran the Giant as far as Harlech, where once more they "rested" and feasted. While there, they heard three birds singing a sweet song, "at a great distance over the sea," though it seemed to them as though they were "quite near." These were the birds of Rhianion. Their notes were so sweet that warriors were known to have remained spell-bound for eighty years listening to them. The birds sang so sweetly that the men rested for seven years, which appeared "but a day," and all the time the head was "as pleasant company as when on the body"

Then they pursued their way to Gwales in Penvro, where, according to the prediction of Bran the Giant, they found a great hall. They remained there for threescore years, during which the head was uncorrupted. And thus it would be their master had said "until you open the door" of the hall that "looks towards Cornwall. After opening that door, tarry not, but set straight forth for London and bury the head."

This hall had three doors of which two were open, but the one looking towards Cornwall was shut.

At the end of the threescore years Heilyn, the son of Gwyn, said, "Evil betide me if I do not open the door, to know if that is true which is said concerning it."

He looked, and instantly became conscious of all the evils they had sustained, of the friends and companions that were lost, and of the miseries which had befallen those who were left behind. And above all, they beheld "the face of their Lord." They could no longer rest, but went forthwith to London, and buried the head of Bran the Giant in the "White Mount." When buried, it was called the "Goodly Concealment." And it would be an "ill-fated disclosure," when it was disinterred, for "no invasion could come across the sea to Britain while the head remained concealed."

Another curious story is that of the son of Beli the Great, after whose death "the kingdom of the Island of Britain fell into the hands of Lludd, and Lludd rebuilt the walls of London, and encompassed it about with numberless towers. And, after that, he bade the citizens build houses therein, such as no houses in the country could equal. And, moreover, he was a mighty warrior, and generous and liberal in giving meat and drink to all that sought them. And though he had many castles and cities, this one he loved more than any. And he dwelt therein most part of the year, and therefore it was called *Caer Lludd*, and, at last *Caer London*. And after the stranger race came, it was called *London* or *Lwyndrys*."

Very beautiful are the mythical stories of "The Lady of the Fountain;" "The Dream of Rhonabwy;" "Kilweh and Olwen;" "Math, the son of Mathonwy,"

and others too numerous to be included in this short space.

Among the minor myths of Wales is that of the basket of Gwyddno Garanhir. This was known as the "Basket of Increase," and if enough food for one man was placed therein, it would be sufficient to supply a hundred persons. Then there was the myth of Blodenwedd—flower aspect—who was changed into an owl for infidelity; and the mantle of Tegan Euvron, which would only fit virtuous women. Among them was the strange and didactic myth of the bees. According to Druidical tradition, the bees of Paradise were originally pure white "as the driven snow," but in consequence of Adam's transgression, they were sent as God's messengers to earth, to teach us that by means of industry and thrift man can attain the height of human happiness.





VI.

CYMRIC FESTIVALS.

FROM time immemorial Cymric festivals have possessed an individuality almost exclusively their own. As intellectual competitions they can only be compared to the classical assemblies of ancient Greece, where the successful aspirant publicly received the poet's bays, brought fresh from the dewy slopes of Parnassus.

There was only this difference between the two assemblies.

The Grecian festival was held in the centre of classical refinement, under the cliffs of the Acropolis, and in a land of sun-kissed splendour, whose shores were girt with the sapphire waves of the south, and in whose groves and gardens Nature, with lavish hand, had scattered her costliest treasures. In that land, the breezes playing around the brow of Homer, and the winds which failed to cool the burning forehead of Sappho, were laden with sweetest odours and incense, while day was brilliant with the radiance of

summer, and night was calm and still under mystic moonlight.

On the other hand, the Cymric festival, named Eisteddfod, was held in a lonely and semi-barbaric island, against whose desolate cliffs and crags the great grey waves of a dreary sea raved and foamed in winter, and sobbed or sighed plaintively in summer. In dim and mysterious groves of oak, wherefrom the sacred mistletoe was gathered, the Druids decided upon the merits of the competitors. Thereto, with the sound of strangely weird but melodious priestly chantings, a long procession of students wended its way from the *caer* or stronghold of the songmen, where during a novitiate of twenty years the young men committed to memory endless verses illustrative of the wisdom of the Druids.

In an open space, when the mossy sward was wet with the dews of morning, the Druids, robed in the spotless white garments of their high office, the bards clothed in sky-blue raiment, and the ovates in green vestments, held their Gorsedd or introductory meeting, during which the place of the next annual assembly was named. Later on, and before noon, the *corn gwlad* sounded for the day's work, and instantly a band of harpists struck out with a popular and national air. After that, one of the Druids introduced the president, who forthwith proceeded to deliver his inaugural address, which was always received with profound attention. Ethics, social and literary matters, and the mysteries of the Druidical religious lore formed the subject of the address, which was invariably a masterpiece of rhetoric.

This was succeeded by three bardic addresses, followed

by one of the chief vocalists, who sang the Eisteddfod song.

On the conclusion of that, the competitors were called forward by name—in some instances to compete publicly—to receive the awards and commendations according to merit. In the case of vocalists and harpists, the adjudicators retired for a short time to decide upon the competitions, and then returned to pronounce their opinions, which were invariably received with loud applause, but sometimes with expressions of dissent.

The poetical honours of the day were awarded to him who in verse had composed the finest ode, and he was, with much ceremony, installed in the place or seat of honour amid the enthusiastic cheering of the multitude.

These assemblies were continued frequently for so long as three days, until the list of competitors ended, and the next annual meeting was announced.

The Druidical year began in July, and the great national assembly was held in August. Minor meetings on smaller scales were held in various parts of the country, each district having an annual Eisteddfod of its own, and at any convenient time of the year.

It appears singularly strange that in the pre-historic ages, and in a solitary island inhabited by semi-barbarians, there should exist assemblies of cultured men and gifted women, for there were also Druidesses in those days. In the Britain of that period there was little loveliness or inducements to poetical inspiration and fervour. The climate was variable; dense fogs, obscuring sky and sea, prevailed in the early winter; the summers may have been more genial than they are now, but they never possessed the splendour and

dreaminess of those of the south. Then again, dense primeval forests, sheltering all kinds of wild animals and ravenous wolves, overshadowed the land with their twilight gloom, and produced a tinge of melancholy verging on the natural gravity of the Druidical imagination.

Traces of this appear in the earlier literature of Wales, until, at length, the din of battle roused the bards from dreamy and solitary musings to warlike activity, followed by keen satire and fierce invective, born of cruel oppression and terrible persecution.

In primitive ages the Eisteddfod was not only a festival, but the Eisteddfa, "Sitting Place," or Parliament of the British. It had its Gorsedd, "great throne," presided over by the Arch-druid, who held the dual office of High Priest and King. All political decisions of the Eisteddfa were ratified in this parliament before they became law.

As the Druids were ministers of peace, they never were armed.

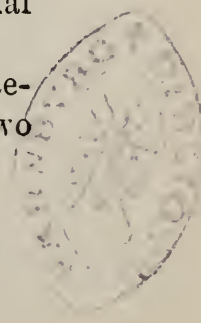
The following extract from the statute of Prince Gruffudd ap Conan forms the basis of all Eisteddfodau: "When the congress hath assembled, according to notice and summons previously issued, at the place appointed, they shall choose as umpires twelve persons skilled in the Welsh language, poetry, music, and heraldry, who shall give the bards a subject to sing upon in any of the twenty-four metres, but not in amœbean carols, or any such frivolous compositions. The umpires shall see that the candidates do not descend to satire or personal invective, and shall allow to each a sufficient interval for composing his englyn (close metre), or cywydd (parallel metre), and music,

or other task they shall assign. They shall, moreover, take down the names of the several bards present, intending to exhibit, that every one may be called by his name in order to the chair to perform his composition. The successful candidates shall acknowledge in writing that they are overcome, and shall deliver their acknowledgment to the chief bard (that is, to him who shall win the chair) . . . and he shall govern them till he is overcome in a future Eisteddfod."

One of the most important Welsh national festivals after the Norman Conquest was that held by Rhys ab Gruffydd, Prince of South Wales, in Cardigan Castle, in the year 1177, when there was a grand and keen contest between the bards of North and South Wales. Giraldus Cambrensis, who was born in Tenby, in 1145, referring to the music and singing of Wales, says, "By the sweetness of the musical instruments of Wales, they soothed and delighted the ear. . . . They do not sing in unison, like the inhabitants of other countries, but in different parts."

This proves that even then the Welsh were acquainted with harmony or counterpoint. And here it may be mentioned that there were several kinds of harps in Wales. One made of leather, with wire strings, which was considered a very discordant instrument; another was so small that it could be played when the musician was on horseback. The third kind, strung with hair, was used until the invention of the triple-stringed harp of Wales, which was introduced about the 14th century. In modern times the pedal harp is generally used.

To return to the old Welsh Eisteddfod, it is interesting to note how unaltered its character is. For two



thousand years there has been an unbroken succession of Welsh bards, who have preserved intact their language and music, which still maintain their primitive individuality, excellence and grace. In the olden times the musical priesthood sang the glories of their heroes, and in modern days competitions in poetry and music form the greatest recreation of the Welsh.

Still alike, through good and evil, through long and weariful years, filled with the sullen roar of battle and the clamour of alien voices, through sorrow and sore tribulation, loud lamentation and funeral wailing, through Saxon jest and jibe, and Norman gaiety and hauteur, the ancient and unique Cymric festival has triumphantly held its own, and will continue to hold its own till time shall be no more.

In spite of every modern innovation, of concert attractions, theatrical display, or music hall "varieties," the Eisteddfod is as popular now as when Plennydd, Alawn, and Gwron, the three primary bards of Britain, regulated the rights and privileges of the people, and established discipline in the land.

During the pre-artistic times, the Cymric festivals only included competitions in instrumental music, singing, poetry, recitation, and elocution, but as time passed, the bards, recognising the power and influence of art, the advancement of literature, the progress of industry, and the importance of science, gave wider scope to the competitors, who subsequently included persons of both sexes and of all classes.

Singular to say, an Eisteddfod is robbed of its ancient individuality, and does not appear to be quite the same kind of institution when held in a hall. Walled interiors, however beautifully decorated, take away the

primitive character of the Cymric festival. The National assembly held in the Albert Hall, London, in 1887, in many respects differed from the same festival held in Wales.

It is more orthodox to hold it in the ruins of an ancient castle banqueting-hall, but better still is it when an Eisteddfod is held in a pavilion erected in a park or spacious field. Then, again, picturesque surroundings enhance the effect, and give touches of primitive realism to the scene.

Every little town in Wales has its own Eisteddfod, conducted in the same manner as the great National Assembly, which is generally held in some important locality in North or South Wales. One year it would be in Bangor or Carnarvon, and next time in Cardiff or Swansea.

It is almost impossible to convey to the English imagination a faithful description of a grand Welsh Eisteddfod. England has no assembly resembling it, or even in the least approaching it.

Let me try to give a word-picture of the scene witnessed at a great National Eisteddfod.

Early in the morning of the first festival day, the trains bring in thousands of excursionists to the town, and, before noon, vehicles of every description, from the nobleman's drag to the creaky old country waggon, crowd the streets, which are thronged with a curious medley of gaily dressed ladies and children, country folk and town people, eminent Archdruids and Druids, Bards and would-be Bards, well-known clergymen and dissenting ministers, Roman Catholic priests, popular Welsh vocalists, and celebrated harpists, and last, but not least, because of the part they will have to take

in the day's proceedings, excitable competitors of all ages. Then there are the large choirs who come in on what is known as the "great choral day," all ready for action, and inspired with a very laudable sense of rivalry.

But the people from those districts in South Wales known as "the hills" surpass all their Welsh brethren for their excitement and enthusiasm. These rough sons of Wales, from the Ystrad and Rhondda valleys, from Merthyr Tydfil and Havod, from the pit's mouth and the furnace fires, are so strongly imbued with a love of music and singing that they devote their leisure to the cultivation of both, and form themselves into great choirs of both sexes, the South Wales Choral Union, with its five hundred members, taking the precedence.

In the morning, when the dew is still on the grass, the Druids and bards hold their solemn Gorsedd.

This ceremony is conducted according to the ancient and primitive bardic rites. The herald, holding a sheathed sword, emblematic of peace, proclaims the roll-call of the bards, dead and living, and the latter, entitled by their learning and good reputation, then enter the charmed cylch or circle, "where none else might tread."

The most indescribably touching scene is that when the herald proclaims the death of a much beloved bard, and the venerable Archdruid, in sadly broken accents, replies, "Alas! alas! He is gone to the grave!"

Then ascending the sacred stone, the Archdruid offers up the Gorsedd prayer, while the assembled throng, with uncovered heads, bow reverently towards the Druidic cyssegr, which literally means the centre of all things.

The following is a translation of the Gorsedd prayer:—

“Grant, O Lord, Thy protection,
And in protection, strength ;
And in strength, understanding ;
And in understanding, knowledge ;
And in knowledge, knowledge of the just ;
And in knowledge of the just, to love it ;
And in love, the love of all existences ;
And in the love of all existences, the love of God,
God and all goodness.”

The chief harpist is summoned into the charmed and sacred circle, and while he plays, the primary singer sings a sweet and soul-thrilling “pennillion.”

Then the assembly is broken up, and the Druids and bards go away, to meet again in the Eisteddfod.

About 10.30 A.M. the scene inside the Eisteddfod pavilion is highly animated. Visitors are rapidly arriving and filling the seats everywhere, while officials flit about in order to receive the distinguished personages who are to take part in the proceedings.

Over the platform are suspended banners bearing the names of the three primary bards, Plennydd, Alawn, and Gwron, with the motto, “Y gwir yn erbyn y byd,” “The truth against the world,” and above them is inscribed in Druidical characters, the name of God, /\\, representing the sun’s light. At the back of the platform the flag of Wales is unfurled. The ground of this flag is of thick sky-blue silk, bearing in the centre the red-winged dragon of Cadwalader, the fringe at the bottom representing the bardic colours, sky-blue, white, and green. The pole is surmounted by a golden acorn, of which there is also one at each corner. Immediately

above the dragon, on this silken flag, is the Druidical name of God, and underneath the Welsh mottoes, “Y nawdd Duw a’i dangnef,” “Under the protection of God and His peace;” and “Y ddraig goch ddyrn gychwyn,” “The red dragon will give the impulse forward.”

Presently a stir is heard, and slowly, but with great dignity the procession of Bards, Druids, and Ovates, wearing the colours of their orders, respectively sky-blue, white, and green, enters the pavilion, and they take their places, some on and others very near the platform.

The conductor is always a well-known and able bard, and the directorship of the platform is usually intrusted to a gentleman who is well skilled as a chairman.

Soon the *corn-gwlad*, or trumpet call, resounds through the pavilion, and for a few moments profound silence follows, after which the director or chairman introduces the president for the morning. Then the inaugural address is delivered by the president, who—if he is popular—receives an enthusiastic outburst of applause. The inaugural address is followed by the thrilling cry, “A oes heddwch?”—“Is there peace?” and the deep-voiced response, “Heddwch!” “Peace!” Bardic addresses are then delivered by the three chief bards. Those at present are “Clwydfarrd;” “Eifionydd;” and “Gwenedd.” At the conclusion of these addresses, touching reference is made to the losses by death in the bardic ranks, and at the conclusion a popular Welsh tenor sings the solo of “Hen wlad fy nadau,” “The Land of my Fathers,” the chorus of which is spontaneously taken up by the thousands of people present, who instantly rise from their seats.

It is a thrilling moment, and one never to be forgotten.

Old and young, rich and poor alike, unite in singing the grand old refrain, which is repeated a second and perhaps a third time by ten to twenty thousand voices—including of course the choral societies—each repetition increasing in strength, in fervour, and patriotic intensity. Some of the verses of this song and the refrain of all run thus:—

“ O land of my fathers, the land of the free,
The home of the *Telyn* * so soothing to me ;
Thy noble defenders were gallant and brave—
For freedom their hearts’ life they gave. . . .

“ Though slighted and scorned by the proud and the strong,
The language of Cambria still charms us in song ;
The *Awen* † survives, nor have envious tales
Yet silenced the harp of dear Wales. . . .
Wales, Wales, home sweet home is in Wales ;
Till death be pass’d my love shall last,
My longing, my *hiraeth* ‡ for Wales ! ”

The Welsh words of this song are by Mr. Evan James, Pontypridd, and the melody is by Mr. James James. The English words are by Mr. John Owen (Owain Alaw).

Not an eye is dry !

Thrills of emotion sway one’s soul, as a strong wind sways the pines on the mountain sides of Wales when this song is sung, while the Welsh singers apparently possess the magic power of Amphiion of old, who moved the forests with the sound of his song.

All the fire, the spirit, the expression, the tenderness

* Harp.

† Inspiration.

‡ Yearning.

and the force of the Welsh language is to be heard in that rich harmonious song. And the faces of the singers are joyous, exultant, and beaming with rapture, which overwhelms the listener, and makes one's eyes swim with tears.

In an instant, all the long-smothered fire and traditional magic of Welsh song seems re-illuminated, and certain it is that none of the singers or bards of old could more move by their singing than these enthusiastic choralists of Wales.

Such songs as these resounding from the dim and hoary forests that fringe the lonely mountains to the lofty peaks that lift their summits to the sky—from the solitary lowlands and wave-worn shores to the sun-touched uplands—from the far-stretching meadowlands to the heather-crowned slopes of Wales—could not fail to rouse the people to a keen sense of right and wrong in the past, and ardent patriotism in the present.

As the song of the Eisteddfod dies away upon the lips of the people, there falls over the assembly for a few moments a profound silence, which is presently broken by the conductor calling out the names of competitors for the prizes. These are awarded for excellence in literary, artistic, and other works.

One by one the prize-winners have to step up to the platform, where generally a lady or gentleman of rank or position makes the award, and confers the badge of honour on the winner. The money is contained in little silken bags suspended from ribbons, which are fastened so as to go easily over the neck.

Competitors for the best harp, violin, pianoforte, or vocal solo go in turn to the platform and there play or

sing a selected piece, after which the judges give their verdict, and the successful person receives the prize.

Among the harpists is a boy of ten. He goes gravely up to the platform, and takes his seat before his instrument. But, suddenly, one of the strings snap. Quietly, and in a most self-possessed manner, the child goes to the edge of the platform, lifts his index finger, and calls out in pretty patois, "Here Mar-grat!" and forthwith from the audience there steps a blushing little maiden—a trifle older than the boy—who gives the necessary harp-string, which her brother proceeds to set in its place.

It is a charming scene—the boy so calm, so thoughtful looking—the girl so prompt in answering the signal; and I wonder if they are still living—that child harpist, whose voice, calling "Here Mar-grat!" still rings in my ears, and that promptly responding maiden, who often in dreams of bygone days appears before me.

Another Eisteddfod scene comes before me, like a vision from the past. I see the bards congregated on the platform to receive a grave-eyed, thoughtful-looking man, the author of the best awdl or ode. With slow and steady steps he comes. In his eyes the fire of poetry burns, but there are tears too—tears of joy, of laudable pride.

With all the ceremony of ancient days, the bards meet him. The three chief bards go through the usual formula in installing one of their order. There is the cry of "A oes heddwch?" "Is there peace?" and the answer is, "Heddwch!" "Peace!" as the swords are unsheathed and sheathed above the poet's head, amid the applause of the people. Then the bards

conduct the poet to the chair of office, and pronounce short impromptu verses on the occasion, to which the successful bard replies in a suitable speech.

Other members of Eisteddfodau fill my mind with pleasure ; and of the grand vocal successes I have heard, nothing could be more perfect than the rendering of the "Requiem Mass," by the South Wales Choral Union, the conductor of which was Caradoc, the talented old blacksmith, who led his "five hundred" to their victory at the Crystal Palace.

During Christmas week every year, in various districts, it is customary to hold an Eisteddfod, and it is estimated that during that period in 1892, 50,000 persons attended the various gatherings, and £6000 were won by competitors in music, literature, and art. Prizes are also frequently given for the best specimens of knitting, of hand-spun and hand-woven goods.





VII.

WELSH SINGING AND SONG.

SINGING and song are as natural to the Welsh as to the birds that fill the woodlands of Wales.

From their cradles to their graves, songs and hymns are to be heard.

The Welsh mother, nursing her babe in the rocking-chair, or old-fashioned oaken cradle, sings the songs of her land, as she rocks to and fro. The Welsh housewife sings while she works—the men sing to their horses, the lads sing to the oxen, and the milkmaids sing to the cows.

There is singing before and after all the feasts and the fairs; the bride and bridegroom are greeted with song, and part-singing enlivens the Welsh excursionists on their day's outing. Then in the solemn hush, when

“the hour draws nigh,
The sentence speeds, ‘To die ! To die.’”

a soothing hymn of submission, of “the sure and certain hope” of “eternal life” cheers the soul through

the dim pathway that leads "from darkness into light"—the glorious light of the Hereafter. When the last look has been taken, the last kiss has been given, a hymn of solace, of soul-comfort is sung; and when the body is borne from its earthly habitation to its last long home, it is usual to have what is known in Wales as a "singing funeral," in which hymns are sung from the house to the church, and from thence to the grave.

The Saxon reading this may be inclined to say, "How intolerable all that noise must be!"

On the contrary, the singing comes as delightful and helpful aids to the work of life, for the Welsh know how, and when, and where to sing; so their songs never become burdensome, and they never are of a noisy or rattling character. If anything, some of them are slightly, but sweetly, sad in tone, but often of a marching order, and sometimes they bear a little resemblance to the quaint old English melodies, "Ye Gentlemen of England, who live at home at ease," and others of a similar kind, before slang was introduced to "Merrie England," and worthless trash took the place of genuine comic song.

Then again, people who do not know, will say, "There is no mirthfulness in Welsh song." But there is. Witty songs, brimming over with fun, and sparkling with merriment, are often to be heard, and this is chiefly called "pennillion" singing, which to a certain extent resembles the celebrated "buffo" song of Italian opera.

The "pennillion" is, however, more varied in style than the "buffo" song. It ranges from grave to gay, from quick movement to slow, and from sprightly tones

to melancholy wailings. A peculiarity in "pennillion" singing is that the singer commences and the instrumentalist follows, and it is by no means unusual to hear the vocalist suddenly changing the key and the time, which necessitates very careful manipulation on the part of the harpist.

"Pennillion" playing and singing are both very difficult accomplishments, and only those who have a very quick ear for music are ever able to attain the art in perfection. A vocalist bearing the bardic name of "Llew Llwyfo," was at one time, I believe, one of the best "pennillion" singers in Wales. Adversity and failing health overtook him, and only a short time ago a fund was raised for his benefit. He was a well-known figure in Eisteddfodau, taking important parts in them, and appearing as adjudicator in various competitions, more especially in "pennillion" singing.

As a "pennillion" singer he was much in request. He would sometimes, in a most eccentric manner, suddenly change the air and strike up a string of spirited national melodies in quick and gay succession, closing either with something pathetic and touching, that would move the audience to tears, or with a patriotic song, rousing the people to unbounded enthusiasm.

It may be remarked that a "pennill" is a stanza, while a trian is a lyric epigram, both of which are very popular and general in Welsh literature. The following is a well-known old Welsh "pennill" translated into English:—

"No cheat it is to cheat the cheater,
No treason to betray the traitor ;
Nor is it theft, but just deceiving,
To thief from him who lives by thieving."



The triban, or lyric epigram, presents three distinct ideas, thus:—

“Three things I love—my native land,
Its sheltered vales, and mountains grand ;
Three things I wish—life free from shame,
A righteous death, and honoured name.”

A very old and quaint triban runs thus:—

“Three things I cannot relish—
A woman that is peevish,
To meet a parson with no wit
And Llantwit's broken English. Ho ! ho !”

Sometimes stanza and lyric epigram are introduced with a curious and fantastical argument, which sets the people laughing. The singer says, “Here, my boys and girls, is a song that will move you to laughter and yet teach you a wholesome lesson. It is a song about a girl who was so very fidgety over her floors, that she laid sheets of paper on them after they were washed, and compelled her sweetheart to take off his boots outside the kitchen door. She had a lot of money, and many were her sweethearts, but they all deserted her because of her fidgety ways. At last a lover came who devotedly complied with all her requests, however ridiculous they might be. He first wheedled her out of her affection, then out of her money, and afterwards ran away and left her to wear the willow-cap. Don't trust to those who say ‘Yes’ in everything with you.” Then the singer proceeds with his ballad.

The next argument would be, “This time I will sing a song to a love-sick maiden. I will promise her joy when the swallows return, and love with the coming of

May. Don't despair, my 'anwyl' (beloved). Already the snows are melting on Eryri (Snowdon), and soon will thy smiles melt the heart of thy beloved." An appropriate song is then sung, followed by loud applause, and clamour for an encore. Very popular as encores are "Morwynion glân Meirionydd," "Fair Maids of Merioneth," the melody of which is very beautiful and animating, and "Jenny Jones, or the Maid of Llangollen."

The former popular song is very ancient, and modern words were written to that air late in the last century, by the then chief bard, Lewis Morris. A domestic song, entitled "Morwynion glân Morganwg," or "Fair Maids of Glamorgan," was composed, about the same time, by the poet Lewis Hopkin, who lived at the ancient village of Llandyfodwg in Glamorganshire. The latter bears the date of 1774.

Among the humorous ballads of Wales are those composed by John Jones of Glangors, the Welsh comic song-wright, whose compositions include "Dick Shon Davydd;" "Bessy of Llansantffraid;" "The Slighted Maid's Lament," and others of a similar style.

Some of the popular ballads of Wales are well known in England, where they are sung by celebrated Welsh vocalists. Mrs. Mary Davies, Miss Anna Williams, and Madame Edith Wynne have made the English familiar with "The Bells of Aberdovey," "The Ash Grove," "Mentra Gwen," "Merch Megan," and "Y Gwenith Gwyn." The latter was composed under romantic circumstances in the early part of the last century, by Will Hopkin, the Welsh bard, in honour of the lady of his hopeless love, the "Maid of Cefn Ydfa." Mrs. Penderel Llewellyn, wife

of the then vicar of Llangynwyd, in 1845 translated "Y Gwenith Gwyn" into English. The first verse of the English rendering runs thus :—

WATCHING THE BLOOMING WHEAT.

"A simple youthful swain am I,
 Who love at fancy's pleasure ;
 I fondly watch the blooming wheat,
 And others reap the treasure ;
 Oh ! wherefore still despise my suit ?
 Why pining keep thy lover ?
 For some new charm thou matchless fair,
 I day by day discover."

There are other ballads which are seldom heard beyond the Principality. These include "Hob y deri Dando" (Away, my Herd, to the Oaken Grove), an ancient duet, which is very quaint and characteristic, and highly popular in Wales, and "Nôs Galan" (New Year's Eve), both being by J. Ceiriog Hughes. The former is very charming :—

"I'm a shepherd born to sorrow—
 Tell us then what grieves thee ;
 I shall never see to-morrow—
 Tell us who believes thee ;
 All at once my friends forsake me—
 Friends will stray ;
 Menna says she will not take me ;
 May, May, maidens say
 They will marry only in May. . . .

But my heart says that the cause is
 Hearts will stray,
 That she loves, the more she pauses ;
 May, May, maidens say
 Men will marry any day." . . .

“Nos Galan” runs thus:—

“’Tis true, as ancient sages say,
Too much is wrong in either way :
The middle path, ’tween both extremes,
Alone with praise and honour teems.

Thy speech, until this very day,
Was ne’er so like to run astray ;
But now I find when going wrong
My teeth of use to stop my tongue.” . . .

An amusing duet is “Old Morgan and his Wife,” the Welsh words by Rev. Evan Evans, and the English words by T. W. Harris. It is sung by Madame Edith Wynne and Owain Alaw.

He. Jane, tell me, have you fed the pigs ?
Their cry is not so fine,
And if you have not, don’t delay,
’Tis nearly half-past nine !

She. There now, your noisy din begins,
Ding, ding, and endless ding ;
I do believe your grumbling voice
Me to the grave will bring.

He. Were you to pop in there to-day,
To-day would end my sorrow,

She. But I shall not to please you Mog,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow !

He. Oh, were you, Jane, to leave this world,

She. And you to beg and borrow—

He. Stop, Jane, don’t talk so silly, Jane,

She. Not at your bidding, never !
I’d talk as long as I thought fit.

He. Stop, stop ! Stop, stop !

She. Were I to talk for ever !

After these come the “Maid of Sker,” “Shy Robin,” and others too numerous to mention.

The music of the "Maid of Sker" was composed by Thomas Evans of Newton Nottage, Glamorganshire, in honour of Miss Williams of Sker, for whom he had romantic attachment, and the words were written by David Llewellyn of the same place.

The English translation given below is by the late Mr. Davis of Crinallt, near Neath, and it is considered by the best authorities as remarkable for its beauty and accuracy. Some of the verses run as follows:—

"What avail I truly love thee,
 Then to close my charming fair ;
 Thirst of gold perhaps may move thee
 To wed some worthless wealthy heir.
 Health possessing,
 Sweetest blessing,
 Think not hard my humble lot ;
 Love soft smiling,
 Toil beguiling,
 Crowns with joy the peaceful cot. . . .

Would surrounding swains discover
 Who thus tells his tender tale ;
 'Tis a fitful plaintive lover,
 Who strings his harp in yonder vale.
 Others wooing,
 Seek my undoing,
 When Sker's sea-girt cliffs arise,
 Smile consenting,
 Scores preventing,
 Maid of Sker shall be my prize."

"Shy Robin" appears to be of a more rustic character than the foregoing ; I think it is seldom heard in large concerts, or important national assemblies, but in rural districts it is very popular. One of the verses runs thus:—

“Young Robin, my sweetheart, is handsome and fair,
His face has fresh colour, and raven his hair,
He never in his life took a kiss, it is true,
Though I was *quite willing that he should have two!*
But my Robin is shy! my Robin is shy!
'Tis very distressing that Robin is shy!”

This, when properly sung, has a *naïveté* that is quite refreshing and amusing.

The songs of Wales may be divided into three distinct classes. There were the war-songs and marches, the serenades and love-songs, and the ballads and comic songs, several of which have already been enumerated.

Of the first mentioned, the following are the most important. “The War-song of the Men of Glamorgan;” “A Mighty Warrior,” which is the song of Blondel the bard to Richard I.; “Bending the Shoe;” “March of the Men of Harlech;” and “Forth to Battle,” composed in 1294.

The serenades and love-songs include “Ar hyd y nos” (“all through the night”); “Gwenllian’s Repose,” composed in 1236; “Mentra Gwen;” “When I was Roaming;” “Lady Owen’s Delight;” “The Missing Boat,” and others all full of beauty and melody.

These songs are to be heard from house to house in Wales, and perhaps never to better advantage than in the open air. As a rule, Welsh girls have powerful voices, which sound far better and more mellow in the open than indoors.

It is nothing unusual, while taking an evening walk, to hear from a distance the milkmaid singing as she milks her cows. The cows stand patiently to be milked, and give every expression of pleasure upon hearing the song.

A milkmaid who had a large number of cows to milk once told me that some songs met the approval of the animals, while others were received with disapprobation.

"There is Cherry," she said in her pretty patois, "if I was to sing the 'Men of Harlech' to her, she'd kick. She do like a love song best. Iss indeed! And if I do sing 'Jenny Jonse' (Jenny Jones), she'll rub her head 'gainst my arm. Then there's Lily—well, she do like something uncommon lively, the 'Fair Maids of Merioneth' especially. As for Lovely—why, if I do drawl out 'Poor Mary Ann' she'll stand like a Briton. But there'd be a rumpus if I was to begin 'Hob y deri dando!' They'd get flighty all of a sudden, and never quiet down until I'd sing their favourite songs. The one they do like best of all is the song my old old grandmother (great grandmother) did tell me a story 'bout."

"What was that?" I asked.

"Well! she did say that a couple of hundreds of years ago a gentleman was travelling in Spain or Turkey, or somewhere like that. And he did say to hisself, 'I hear a voice singing a Welsh song.' He went on a bit funder, and 'pon my word if he didn't come to where a gell was milking a cow. And he did say to her, 'Are you a Welsh girl?' And she did answer, 'Iss, indeed, sir, that I am.' 'From what part?' he did ask. 'From Glamorgan, sir,' answered she. 'And what was the song I heard you singing?' 'That one 'bout the three best dancers in Wales?' And sure anuff it was. There was pleasure to hear the voice of a Welsh gentleman, and when he did give her a gold coin, she did cry for joy! She had gone out to forren

parts with her master's family, and was singing the songs of her home in a far country."

Tears filled the milkmaid's eyes as she concluded her story, which I have faithfully rendered, word for word, after the manner of the Welsh peasantry who can speak English.

"Will you sing the song to me?" I asked.

"Iss, indeed, and welcome," replied the maid, who forthwith turned to another cow.

It was pretty to hear her addressing the animal by way of prelude to the song.

"Daisy, my anwyl (beloved), my fy'ngariad (my love), come now, 'tis your turn. There's not a better cow in the Vale of Glamorgan than this. There now, dewch yma (come here), dewch (come), stand still, there's an anwyl. Now then, dewch dewch, stand still, there's an anwyl."

And forthwith, in a full and rich contralto voice, she sang—

"Tri dawnsiwr gora 'n Nghymru,
Syr Charles o'Gefn Mably,
Scewir Lewys Wych o'r Fan,
A Syr John Carn o' Wenni ! Ho ! Ho !"

It was bewitching, and the maiden repeated the song until she had finished milking that cow.

While the girl sang, all the cows appeared to be enraptured, and remained as still as possible.

I give the song in the vernacular, because the literal translation simply runs thus:—The three best dancers in Wales are Sir Charles; that was Sir Charles Kemeys of Cefn Mably; Squire Lewis of the Van, and Sir John Carne of Ewenney, an ancient Priory near Bridgend.

The music of this song is in a minor key, and has

a pathetic, almost wailing tone, which is indescribably thrilling, especially when heard borne upon the evening breeze through the beautiful pasture-lands of Glamorgan.

This same song is sung by the men to their horses, and by the lads and men who still plough with oxen in Wales.

With reference to this custom, which is of great antiquity, Giraldus Cambrensis says, "You may see one man put his hand to the plough, and another, as it were, goad the oxen, mitigating their sense of labour by the usual rude song." Sir Richard Colt Hoare, writing in 1806, says, "The same habit is still used by the Welsh ploughboy, the countrymen vulgarly supposing that the beasts are consoled to work more regularly and patiently by such lullaby."

Sir Richard lived before the introduction of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or he would not have thought it vulgar to suppose that the beasts found consolation by "such lullaby." Song is better than the lash, and the Welsh, even in primitive times, were proverbially kind to animals. Oxen were formerly used at the plough in England, but the English never sang to their cattle.

In some parts of Wales oxen are still used for agricultural work, and the cattle drivers, like those of old, sing to the oxen. Wales has a special kind of music and song for this purpose, and it is pleasing to know that so far they have not been allowed to become obsolete.

Through long generations may the future milkmaids of Wales sing the songs of their foremothers as they milk the cows, and it is to be hoped that even in those

parts of the Principality, where horses take the place of oxen, the old cattle drivers' song will be cherished till time shall be no more.

Still, the future brings with it the possibilities of a great struggle between the Welsh language, and invincible conquerors in the shape of modern progress, and English advancement in the Principality. Country people are brought into closer communion with the large towns where English only is spoken, and the railways carry with them an all potent factor against the ancient language, which is no longer universal in the cottage homes, the mart, and the market. All the young people over twenty are already bilingual, and where once you might travel for thirty or forty miles without hearing a word of Saxon spoken, all is changed. There is nearly as much English spoken as Welsh, in districts where formerly the old and young alike made a stern resistance against the Saxon, and now the grave danger arises that the old language is tottering on the verge of a precipice, from which there will be no escape, unless prompt and speedy measures are taken for its rescue.

Let us hope that those who dwell fondly on the ancient glories of the Welsh language, its literature, music, and song, will kindle in the hearts of the people of to-day a patriotic enthusiasm to preserve, protect, and cherish each.

Happily there appears to be among the better classes of Wales, especially those who have been brought up only to speak English, an ardent desire to revive the Welsh language. The upper and middle classes are taking more interest than used formerly to be taken in the vernacular, and thus perhaps, among the remains

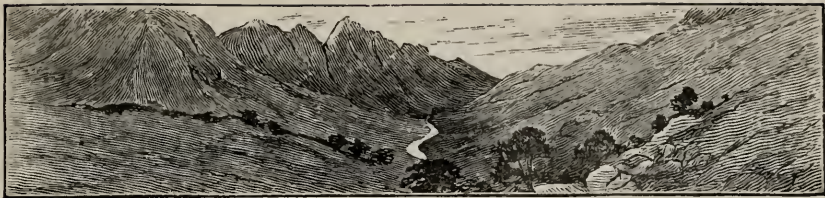
of the ancient British race, there rises from the long smouldering fires of old, a spark that shall be fanned into a flame of unsurpassed brilliance, with a glory never again to languish, to grow feeble, or to die.

Any reference to the music and singing of Wales would be incomplete without some slight allusion to the religious poems and hymnology of the Principality. The most popular religious poems, and those which are said to have done more good than any other in the Welsh language, are contained in a volume entitled "*Canwyll y Cymry*" (The Welshman's Candle), by the Rev. Rhys Pritchard, the good Vicar of Llandovery, in Vale of Towy, South Wales. Williams of Pantycelyn was also the author of a volume of sacred poems and hymns, all of which are held in great esteem by the Welsh.

The most popular Welsh hymn of the present day is entitled "*In the deep and mighty waters,*" which has lived in the hearts of the people since the terrible disaster at the Tynewydd colliery, when numbers of brave men lost their lives.

Nearly all the well-known modern hymns, including "*Lead, kindly light,*" have been translated into Welsh, and of these one of the latest and best collections has been supplied by the Baptist denomination.





CHAPTER VIII.

THE HILL PEOPLE.

ALL those districts of Glamorganshire which border on Breconshire, and incline a little eastward towards Monmouthshire, are commonly known as "the hills."

Formerly those parts were very beautiful and secluded, almost too lonely. There the mountains with their huge crags, and the lofty hills were crowned with wild flowers and ferns in the summer, and with long-enduring snows in winter. Down into the winding valleys, in some instances 2000 feet below the mountain tops, and for the greater part deep and narrow, the moonlight gleamed weirdly among the dark clinging shadows cast by lichen-covered rocks backed by pines, whose long branches waving to and fro in the night mists and vapours, looked like the spirits of the ancient Druids breathing a last sacred benediction on haunts that should see them no more. Turbulent in its solitary course, the Rhondda impetuously dashed over the rocks and boulders that impeded its course, and angrily made its way seaward in riotous and unmolested speed.

The silence, save for the voice of the Rhondda, was

supreme. Not a sound could be heard but the songs of the lark and linnet, the blackbird and thrush in the daytime, and in the evening by the swooping of the kestrel, the kite, and the hawk, while at twilight the bats with unfolded pinions darkened the sky, until at length the owls, with their screeching and hooting, made night almost a terror to the few inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

Those were the Rhondda and Ystrad valleys and hillsides of the past. Of them centuries later even than that the poet sang:—

“Delightful Havod, most serene abode,
Thou sweet retreat, fit mansion for a god !
Dame Nature, lavish in her gifts, we see
And Paradise again restored in thee !”

There—

“Verdant fields, which wide extended lie,
For ever please, for ever charm the eye.”

Now all is changed. Where once the white and purple violets clustered closely under their sheltering leaves ; where the primrose, the sacred druidical flower, looked up from among the long dewy grasses ; where the morning glory flung its tendrils through the tangled woodlands, huge mountains of rubbish and banks of cinders are to be seen. The din and turmoil of enormous works take the place of songs of birds and pleasant voices of the waters ; the sulphurous smoke and vivid flames of furnace fires obliterate the moonlight mist, and the dark shadows of the valleys are made darker by the grime of coal and dust of iron. The river flows as of old, but its waters are blackened,

and its beauty is marred by the stains of toil and traffic that abound on its banks.

Similar changes have come to the whole districts through which the Taff flows. There are Dowlais, Aberdare, Merthyr, and Cymmer, with their liquid furnace fires and dense cloud-folds of smoke, where the Taff, flowing under dark and gloomy crags and shelving rocks, looks like an earthly Styx, and farther south there is Pontypridd, with its ancient rocking stone, looking like a stern monitor of the past, until at length the hills decrease in number, the lowlands appear, and the far-stretching meadows and broad pastures remind us we are once more in the Vale.

"Up in the hills," to use a common expression, the population consists of colliers and miners, who are strangely rough and uncouth in appearance, but in whose hearts there burns the fire of patriotism and enthusiastic love of home, of Wales, the Welsh and their language. These people are warm-hearted sympathisers with those who are sorrow-stricken, and they are willing to lend a helping hand to their brethren whenever the latter are in need of it. The men are thoroughly rough and unpolished, but very hospitable to strangers, and ready at a moment to give information. These "hill men" when in Sunday best always display curious gaudy kerchiefs and mufflers, which look very peculiar, especially when a few hundreds of the toilers and workers from the great North End of Glamorganshire come down to the towns, on the first Monday in every month, known as "Mabon's Day," it having been secured by Mr. Abraham, M.P., as a holiday for the miners of the Principality. Although the colliers and miners of "the hills" are a very noisy

people, they are extremely good hearted, particularly fond of singing, and generally industrious. By dint of perseverance and thrift, these hill folk are able to "put by" for a rainy day, and, as a rule, they frequently save enough to live upon late in life, or to take up a small business. They are regarded as being very jovial, and the inhabitants living on the sea-coast of Glamorganshire, whither the hill people go for at least a week every summer, say that they are very generous, and do not grumble over charges made.

There is one peculiarity among them which is very extraordinary, and marks them with a strong individuality, seldom if ever found in the miners or colliers of England. Both the men and women of the hills have a firm belief in the efficacy and beneficial influence of the sea. When they go to the sea-side, they may be said in American phraseology, to "do" it with a vengeance. They say there is "nothing equal" to sea-water—nothing. On getting up in the morning, and before breaking their fast, they drink sea-water. It may only be a wineglassful, it may be half a tumblerful, or it may be so much as half a pint—but sea-water they will drink immediately on getting out of bed. The dose is repeated thrice a day, while they remain at the sea-side. If they have pains in their feet, they bathe them in the sea; for "King's Evil," as they still call it, boiled sea-weed made into a poultice is a supreme remedy. To promote the growth of the hair, sea-water is recommended, and it is their firm belief that if anybody began in childhood by taking a dose of sea-water every day, and continued to do so all through life, that person would attain a great age. Men and women share alike in this belief.

At the same time it is singular to note that, whereas the men have not the slightest fear of bathing in the sea, the women are very timid. As a rule they go only ankle deep in the water, and then proceed to bathe their faces, necks, and arms, and diligently wet their hair, but no more. Sometimes, by chance, they go so far as their knees in the tide, and then if an unexpected wave comes along, they scream immoderately, and hurry out of the water. These people would not go into a bathing machine for worlds. The older folk have curious ideas about that modern convenience. Some regard it to be an infernal machine invented by the Prince of Darkness, as a trap to lead the unwary to a watery grave and a fiery future.

"What do you think of bathing machines?" I asked a hill woman.

"I did never see the dusprad (desperate) thing but once, an' then, O Anwyl (beloved), our Juan (Joan) did go in it with Morgan Morgan's daughter Gwen, and it did jest take the life out of me."

The old dame sighed at the very thought of it, and paused as though it were almost painful to proceed.

"And what happened?" I asked.

"You may well ask what happened," continued the hill woman, in her patois. "But I can tell you 'twas no joke. An' as to tell you all 'bout it, I couldn't, but my daughter Aun can." Daughter Ann commenced laughing, and afterwards said, "I shall never forget it, no indeed; never. We was sitting on the beach when the gells did go in the machine. No sooner did mother see them than she screamed out at the top of her voice, 'Hu boob murder!' over and over again, an' all the people ran towards us. I was ashamed of

my life! 'What's up?' asked they. 'Up indeed!' shouted mother; 'tis down I should say—down to the bottomless pit—down to the wicked old father of lies and thieving, and putting between people.' 'But what's wrong?' asked a neighbour. 'Wrong anuff,' shouted mother; 'there they have bin an' taken Juan, as sure as she's a livin' 'ooman, to be drowned. I shall never see her agen.' And then she did begin to cry bitterly. 'They've shut her in, and she's gone for ever, an' I shall never see her agen. There ought to be a law made against such machines, which is the work of Satan an' the minds of evil men. I do hate them new inventions, that I do?'"

Ann laughed heartily.

"They did frighten me jest to death, an' you can laugh as much as you do like, Ann," said the mother; after which Ann continued, "But to go on with my story, I must tell you all. Before the gells did have time to undress, the machine was wheeled over the beach to the sands, an' then mother did go on her knees an' cry an' pray 'O Lord, save them, save them! The old Beelzebub has got hold of them, but if Thou wilt be quick, Lord, p'rhaps there's time yet. O Anwyl! Anwyl!'"

"Oh," continued daughter Ann, "mother would not look up, but buried her face in her hands, and kept sobbing as if her heart would break. I did try to make her look at the gells bathing, but not she! 'Tis only a trap,' she did cry, 'an' they'll be in agen, an' I shall never see my Juan agen—never!' By-an'-by the gells did come out of the machine, an' thankful I was too, for I did have a dreadful bad time with mother then. But the gells did laugh fit to crack them-

selves, an' they did say it was very comfortable to undress in the liddle house on wheels."

"Liddle house, indeed!" exclaimed the mother. "None of them traps—them inventions of the old serpent for me. An' if I hadn't prayed an' had faith 'tis down in the bottomless pit Juan would have been since that day. Them machines is bad wicked things, an' worse then the steam ingins (engines) that did take people to all sorts of temptations an' worldly snares. Them trains an' elected (electric) taligrafs, an' penny stamps, an' sewin' machines, an' bathing machines, have made great deal of mischief, an' the makers of such things will have to answer for them schemes in the last day when the trumpet shall call an' the dead shall be raised, an' the Lord shall come to judge the world. As for trains, if it wasn't for them there'd be no gadding about, and no scoorshoons (excursions) stopping the boys an' gells to be savin' for now stead of 'putting by,' they do spend their money on trumpery, and dressing like Merry Andrews, an' come back with great talk about theatricals. An' if 'twere'n't for them trains the boys would know nothing 'bout horse racings an' bettings and such things."

"But the trains are great conveniences," interposed daughter Ann. "And you've come down here in a train comfortable anuff."

"Comfort—talk of comfort, why I'm sore with shakin', not to talk of the rheums that I shall have to-morrow. No, indeed, no more scoorshoons for me! And as for them elected taligrafs—elected goody-hoos (owls) I call them, with their noises. It is click-a-de-click in the pust office all day long, go whenever you will, till you kent hear your own voice, an' when they

do knock at the door, they do jest take my senses away all of a sudden, till I do feel as if the next thing they'll do will be to take me to the county 'sylum Birgend (Bridgend). No, none of them elected things for me, as I do believe they do cause more heart complaints an' sudden deaths nor anything else in the world."

"What is your objection to the penny postage?" I asked.

"It do make sheer wilful waste," said the old dame. "There's a heap of ink, an' a lot of paper, an' pens, an' love-letters, sly writin's an' breaches of promise what was never known in my time. 'Tis bad anuff to talk soft, but to write softness, an' to spend stamps on it, then to have it read in coort (court) by a parcel of gawky tittering young lawyers—why, I'd not demean myself when I was a gell to do such a things. Not me! I'd have seen my Shinkin (Jenkin) dead an' in his grave fust."

"The sewing machine is a useful invention," I remarked, wishing to hear what the old Welshwoman had to say unfavourably of it.

"Useful invention, indeed! Well, some may think so, but I don't. They're very well if you do wear clothes to the thread an' then throw them away, for, as to unpick a dress—you kent, it do stitch so uncommon fast. It do worrit me to try to undo a bit of machine sewin'. Or else they do do bad work, so that if a stitch do open, all of it do give way jest when you don't want it to. No: none of them machine stitchings for me. Give me Mary Ann's tidy sewin'. She do make gowns for me, like her mother before her, an' as I am satisfied an' she is satisfied,

well, we're both of the same mind. Mary Ann do use her machine—but not for *me*. I kent abide machines of any kind. They be only contrivances of the Old Fiend to get people into his clutches, but he shent ketch me, not as sure as my name's Martha Roberts!"

Still another story with reference to the bathing machine, which appears to be the *bête noir* of the Welsh hill women.

The machines were drawn up in a row on the top of a shingly beach when the hill women first saw them.

"Mari," said one to the other, "what be themin things up there?"

"Goodness knows—I don't, Catti Vach (little Catherine), but they do look uncommon odd."

"Iss, indeed," said Catti. "Let us go and give a pip (peep)." So they went.

"Tidy steps anuff," said Mari.

"Iss sure, an' tidy doors, too; an' look, they be numbered," said Catti.

They examined the machines—ten in number—from the north side, and then they went to the south side.

"Oh good anto me, well!" cried Catti, "there be two staircases to the liddle houses, an' two doors."

Mary in sober thoughtfulness looked gravely up and down. She could not understand the machines.

"Well," she said presently, "these be the most uncommon odd things I did ever see. There's a liddle pimpin (small) window an' two doors, an' two staircases, but never a bit of chimbly (chimney) to be seen. Catti—Catti Vach, how do they make their meals 'gainst the men do come home?"

"I don't know," replied Catti. "It dopuzzle me clean. But here comes a young man; let's ask him 'bout them."

"You ask first," said Catti.

"No, not me. You ask," said Mari.

"Very well," sighed Catti. "Here boy, whose liddle houses be them?"

"My father's," said he, ready for a joke.

"All the row?" asked Mari.

"Yes," was the reply.

"And what rent do he get?" asked Catti.

"Sixpence for every half hour," was the reply.

"There's an odd way," mused Mari, "sixpence for every half hour—how much is that a day, Catti?"

"Four an' twenty shillings a day," said Catti.

"Go on with you," said Mari to the boy, "if there's anything I kent abide 'tis lies. Four 'an twenty shillin's a day! An' not a bit of chimbly to be seen! An' it do puzzle me how they do make meals by the time the men do come home."

The boy left them, and presently his father came along.

Catti and Mari, almost humbly, asked him to enlighten them on the subject.

"Why, they're bathing machines," he said, passing on.

"Bathing machines; dear me," said Mari. "They're uncommon odd."

"But what be they for?" asked Catti.

"Don't you see?" said Mari. "I do."

The bright idea dawned upon her at last.

"Well, what *be* they for?" asked Catti sharply.

Mari, lowering her voice, said, "People do go in there an' bathe without being 'bliged to go into the water, which do give some persons the shivers awful bad. An' sixpence isn't much for half an hour, not if people can affoord it. An' you'd have a good many

dips in half an hour, I should think. Well, I must say they're uncommon convenient things."

"An' very decent an' respectable too," chimed in Mary, "'cause, you see, persons can bathe without goin' into the water, an' nobody can see them!"

These glimpses from real life serve to illustrate the primitive character of the Welsh even in the present day.

In some of the remote districts it is almost impossible to impress upon the people the nature of the world beyond them. They seldom go away from home, or if they do it is only so far as Cardiff or Swansea, and there perhaps only for a day. Many of the younger men of the hills go by the cheap excursions to Bristol, Bath, or London, and on their return they are quite prepared to relate amusing stories—sometimes to their own disadvantage—about their adventures.

The hill women never go so far as London. They conjure up most extraordinary ideas about the metropolis. In their opinion it is a region of damp beds, wet sheets, thieves, rogues, vagabonds, and wicked people, who set traps for the unwary in every imaginable place. However much you try to undeceive them, and to explain that comfort and safety may be found there in spite of the many evils of the modern Babylon, the hill women will not be convinced. One unpleasant story about London carries with it a long string of corresponding sequels, the memory of which is never eradicated.

These women, unlike the dwellers in the Vale, are not fond of walking, and therefore are by no means lissom. As a rule they are heavily built, short and stout, with very square figures, and are not generally good-looking.

At the same time, it is possible now and again to meet with a pretty girl or handsome woman. One of the most handsome women I ever saw was in the Rhondda valley. She was about thirty-five, tall, stately, almost queenly—with a very fine figure, and a face and features that could never be forgotten. Her hair was of a rich dark brown tint, and her large and lustrous dark eyes were filled with liquid light, under full eyelids with long sweeping lashes. Her skin was purely brunette, with just sufficient colour to give a bloom to her cheeks, while around her shapely head the hair was artistically coiled. She would have been a splendid sculptor's model for a Venus or a Juno, and would pass excellently well as an artist's model for a Roman or Grecian lady of rank. This woman could not speak a word of English, but her Welsh was very refined, and her conversation was exceedingly brilliant and animated. A glow of pride and pleasure suffused her cheeks when we praised her cream cake, and declared we had never eaten better.

"Not in London?" she asked, in Welsh.

"No! not even in London," we replied, adding, "the Londoners don't know how to make Welsh cream cake."

"Not know how to make cream cake!" she exclaimed.

"Nor flummery," we continued.

"What an outlandish place," she said, "and queer women they must be, who can't make cream cake nor flummery! But there, the English women down here are a shiftless, thriftless lot."

To my surprise this woman was a spinster, and on asking her sister the reason she said, "Her first and only sweetheart lost his life in the pit, and she'd never marry anybody else, though she's had no end of

offers. A rich colliery owner made her an offer, but she refused him."

The speaker herself was the mother of fifteen children—all living—some of whom were very pretty, with one whose face and features bore a strong resemblance to their aunt's. These children could only speak Welsh, and it was most charming to hear even the very little ones chattering in their native language.

The hill women are fond of drinking tea in immoderate quantities, and this is one reason why, as a rule, their complexions fade early, and leave a sallow and muddy colour upon the skin. Tea is drunk for breakfast, for dinner, at teatime, for supper, and again before going to bed. That alone would be five times a day; but, as the teapot is always on the hob, there is no end to the potations. Tea-sipping is the order of the day, and everybody dropping in at any moment is offered a cup of tea, whereupon the hostess takes a cup for "company's" sake, so that there is no limit to the sipping. The daughter of one of these good-natured tea-drinking women, in order to afford me some amusement, allowed me to see a comic love-letter she had received from her "young man," who was away working in the Black Country. It ran as follows:—

"MY HUNY DEAR,—I do love thee as' dearly as a miserly man do love his bags of money, or a hungry man do love roast beef and plum pudding. I would like to wring thee by the hand as a woman at the washing-tub do wring the cloathes she do wash. Oh how I do melt like a pound of butter do melt before the fire in love to thee. Thy voice is sweeter than the goody-hoo's (owl), when she do start out for the night."

This letter, which the girl regarded as being written just "for a bit of fun," is only equalled by the Welsh girl who in real "real earnest" wrote thus:—

"I do send you these few lines to say that this do leave me, thank God, at present in good health, but I do not mean to walk out with you any more, because you did say as how I was as sweet as flummery, and after that you did go and tell Elizabeth Ann that she was sweeter than huney. And if so be I am only flummery, you can put on your best cloathes, and take to huney as soon as you do like. I do mean to walk out with another chap next Sunday. He's huney and treacle put together. So no more now from your late friend and future enemy,

M. R."

The reply to this was brief and to the point:—

"This is to warn you that if you do walk out with Huney and Treacle next Sunday, I will break your legs! So no more now whatever from your determined well-wisher,

C. P."

After all, the "future enemy" and "determined well-wisher" were married and lived happily ever afterwards. The bride declared that "if a man do love you anuff to break your legs, what can you do but consent!"

Fear of him was out of the question, but his jealousy expressed towards a possible rival set the young man higher in the girl's estimation.

The hill people during their annual summer holidays at the sea-side always prefer staying with people who are acquainted with their life and habits. They are quite willing to put up with inconvenience, to sleep

on a sofa, or even on the floor, provided they can be accommodated in the house of a friend.

So great is the attachment of these people to home, to old friends and faces, and to cherished localities, that it would mean heart-break to some if circumstances compelled them to quit the old scenes and surroundings they love so well. This is probably the reason why they seldom go from home, and are perfectly contented with the humdrum of quiet uneventful life. From generation to generation they have been a home-loving people, and are, as a rule, religiously inclined. They do not take so kindly to the Established Church as to Dissent, though in the neighbourhood of Merthyr Tydvil the High Church enjoys considerable popularity, which is due probably to the influence of the late Canon Jenkins, who won the sincere esteem of all classes of the community.

To many people the hill folk appear to be only rough, uncouth, and coarse specimens of humanity, very necessary as workers in iron, or toilers in darksome pits, wherefrom to bring fuel to warm the house, and give brightness and comfort to the home, but in other respects to be regarded as beings little higher than beasts of burden, and almost brainless adjuncts to the general machinery of the world. The thoughtful mind sees in these people many good qualities of head and heart. Their characteristics are patient plodding and indomitable perseverance, with, in many instances, great ingenuity. They may be slow to receive, or to work out an idea, but they are above all things sure, and quite willing to take helpful suggestions. Rarely do the hill men take sudden whims into their heads; whatever they do is well thought out, and considered

from all points of view, and afterwards accepted or rejected as occasion requires. Sometimes, perhaps, they err by thinking too long, until it is past the time of action.

For industry they closely resemble the Germans, and perhaps in slight tendencies to obstinacy, they are also allied to the same people. Their brains are strong, and so far as I have been able to learn, there is but little insanity among the hill population. For excellent qualities of head and heart they will bear comparison with any other nation. They are very warm-hearted and faithful to friends, and kindly disposed to strangers. Although they still do not particularly care for the English, modern progress in all things has done much to lessen the old time antipathy towards "Ar hen Sassenach" (The old Saxon). So far I have referred only to the working population.

The better classes, even in the "hills," are well-educated and refined, despite certain little mannerisms; their homes are not only comfortable, but in some instances artistic, especially is this the case with those persons who hold important appointments in connection with collieries and iron-works.

One word in conclusion, and this with reference to hill men, who have left their mother country and sought homes beyond the Atlantic. In America, at the present time, some of the most prosperous colliery proprietors and ironmasters are directly descended from the hill people of Glamorganshire, and I am sure the Welshmen of the United States have every reason to cherish proudly the heritage of pluck, perseverance, and patriotism which has been bequeathed to them by their forefathers and foremothers.



IX.

WELSH SQUIRES OF THE PAST AND PRESENT.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE! may be said of the Welsh squires of the past, for they have joined the ranks of their forefathers, of whom not one could say *resurgam*.

In ancient mansions and quaint old manor houses, their semblance survives in oil-painted portraits and curious silhouettes, more or less touched with age but still visible.

Their hunting-crops are hung up in the wainscoted halls; their spurs, untarnished by rust, undimmed by dust, swing from oaken pegs; their saddles and bridles are hustled with similar rubbish in the old saddle-room; their top-boots, scarlet coats, velvet caps, white breeches, and smart waistcoats are locked up in disused wardrobes, and down in the quiet old studies, where once they were to be found, but are known no more.

Some of these old-fashioned squires were terrors in their way—so strong of lung that their voices could be heard afar off, and so sound of limb that their angry

foot-stamp, reverberating through the great hall, caused the dogs to start from their slumbers.

These were the squires who one hour stormed away at their minions—making them quake with fright for a time—and the next moment giving them words of encouragement and praise. Squires of this description had an individuality of their own. They punctually headed the stately family procession to church, but generally slept through the whole service, only to awake just in time for the benediction. That was in the days of high-backed pews, with railings and curtains on top of them, enclosing the occupants as in a room.

The old Welsh squire of this stamp was the very quintessence of punctuality and promptitude. He was always the first to put in an appearance at church, first on the field, in a ball-room, in a funeral, or at a wedding. Instantly suiting the action to the word he would threaten and thrash the insolent boy, or promise and perform the deed of kindness. He would give a "piece of his mind" to the parson; dispute the origin of disease with the doctor; contradict the lawyer; and frequently scare away the probable suitor for his daughter by asking plump and plain his "intentions."

At the same time he was kindness itself.

He called the middle classes in the village his "good neighbours." In him the poor found their "best friend." His left hand never knew what the right hand did. His purse was ever open to those who were overtaken by unexpected losses, and his study was the confessional for all classes of the community. There neighbourly grievances were settled with a timely warning, a hearty laugh, succeeded by a glass of *cwrw da* (good ale), or fine old crusted port, all round.

To him the wife came to complain of her spouse's shortcomings and convivial failings, and to him also came the husband to grumble about the henpecking proclivities of his better half. As a rule, in cases of this description, the old Welsh squire had a story to tell.

Here was one of them.

To the wife he would say, "Perhaps you heard how Molly Morgan cured her husband of drinking. No? Well, then, Davy would persist in going to the 'White Hart' and there spend all his wages on the drink. Molly tried all she could to stop him, but failed. At last, one day she went to the 'White Hart' too, and for every blue of beer that Davy would drink, she would have one, and throw it under the grate. For a time Davy didn't heed her, but by-and-by it was too much for him. He couldn't bear to see his Molly playing the same game as himself, so he walked out of the 'White Hart,' and was a one measure man ever after."

Or he would say, "Catti Vach's (little Catherine's) husband used to beat her, and for a time she bore it patiently, till her heart was almost breaking. One day she thought of a new dodge. Billy Davis, who was a little man, came home, and, according to custom, proceeded to thrash his wife. This time Catti said to herself, 'I'm the biggest woman in the parish, and yet I'll let the smallest man for ten miles round thrash me. But not this time.' So she tucked up her sleeves and with clenched fists pitched into Billy right and left. He never thrashed her again! Show pluck, and if fair means don't suit your man, see what determination and severity will do."

Still another of the squire's stories.

“There was a farmer in this county who was the most provoking brute that ever breathed. He worried his wife, tormented his servants, and grumbled at everybody and about everything. One day he was more aggravating than ever. Somebody had been in the store-room and had taken three apples. Who had done it? ‘Not I; not I,’ said the servants and the children. ‘It must be *you*, then,’ he shouted at his wife, who said, ‘All the apples were there when I was last in the store-room. Not one was missing.’ ‘When was that?’ asked the farmer. ‘This morning,’ was the reply. Then the man clutched his wife by the arm and compelled her to go with him to the store-room, so that she should see with her ‘own eyes.’ When they reached the room, lo and behold, not a single apple was missing! The wife giggled, and the husband declared she had played him a trick. He bounced to the end of the room, and she ran quickly to the door, went out, and locked him in! He was in a terrible rage, but she didn’t care. She went away to enjoy the fun. And there she kept him locked up until he humbly promised to behave himself, and that was not till the night time when he sniffed leek broth and felt an emptiness of the inner man. It was enough ever after to say ‘missing apples,’ for he’d put on his hat and go out at once.”

To the henpecked husband he would say, “I remember a man whose wife used to peck at him unmercifully, and at first he would contend with her, but by-and-by he tried a new remedy. Leaning his elbows on the table, he placed his head between his hands and never spoke a word. This sent her mad. ‘O good auto me well, speak, will you,’ she

would cry out. 'Speak something. Iss, indeed, I'd rather you swear than not speak at all!'"

Even the roystering squires of that period were kind. Perhaps they were many bottle men, who were frequently found in an absurdly cramped and crumpled condition under the table after dinner, or had to be carried to bed! Yet they had their good parts, and kept open houses where hospitality was dispensed in free old-fashioned style. These men were too fond of the wine-cup to be ever found in the study. They would not listen to tales, nor hear people's grievances, nor heed the sorrows of those around them. But they atoned for apparent indifference by freely distributing gold, which in their opinion was the only panacea for all the ills of life.

Then there was the good genial old squire, whose rubicund face glowed like a rosy apple on the boughs of September, and whose dark brown hair was touched with the frosts as the brambles sometimes are late in October. He was a portly man, in hale and hearty health, who heard both sides of the question, and sought out for his own satisfaction the true state of affairs. He was always in close contact with the poor, and, to a certain extent, personally distributed his charities. The butler knew it was useless to limit the cuts off the joint for any poor sick person, because "the master" must see the plate before it was sent away, and what was more, it must be as full as it would hold, and of the very best quality. If the plate was not large enough, he would say, "What is the good of that small platter. Get a larger one." The butler murmuring about its being "large enough for one sick woman—sure—ly!" would hear the squire responding

"The larger the better—then the children can have a bit."

This was the squire who entered a cottage home, and found a man of independent means praying for the starving woman and children who knelt around him. "Food first," said he, abruptly interrupting the devotions. "Food first, and the Gospel afterwards. Nobody is near heaven when the cupboard is empty. Bread first, then spread as much religion as you like on it!"

An enviable life had this old squire.

Wherever he went the people sang his praises. Little children would curtsy and then run to let him pat their cheeks or stroke their hair. He had a kind word and silver coin for the young mother, a helping hand for the overburdened father, a few words of kindly advice and encouragement for the industrious lad, and a merry smile for the village girls, who always knew that something would be tossed to them just to "buy a parcel of trumpery!"

He could not listen to a tale of sorrow or suffering without feeling moisture in his eyes, and he could not go to a funeral because he keenly remembered the pangs of bereavement he had himself experienced.

The Welsh squires of the past lived in the hearts of the people, and were, in a manner, one of them. They were an easy-going, hospitable race of gentlemen, who seldom went away from home, and then, perhaps, only to Bristol, Bath, or London. They had never been to France—not they! What did they want across the herring-brook to the land of Bony, and *Parle vous Français*, and infidels! "See Paris and die" was not their desire. With them the adage was stay at home

and "die in your own bed." It appeared to them a dreadful thing to die in a strange bed and among unknown people, which they were convinced would be the case if they travelled far! Then again, they believed in warming-pans, and mutton broth thick with sliced leeks, and elderberry wine, and night-caps, and whipped cream with a "drop" of port or spirit in it, and cordials and ginger brandy, and the like. They supported the Church, and helped Dissent, and very often went to hear the eloquent Welsh preachers who came to the little white-washed meeting-house in the village.

They were not, as a rule, learned men, nor particularly good scribes, though a few of them liked scribbling on the margins of old estate diaries, some of which would present curious details if we could but see them. Here is a marginal reference which was written in the cramped hand of one of the old Welsh squires of the past. Whether the composition was original, or, as he would have said, "made out of my own head," or copied from any book, I do not know. The marginal comment runs thus:—

"MENTAL AND PERSONAL QUALITIES NECESSARY IN A WIFE.—Great good nature, yet prudent generosity. Lively look and cheerful disposition. Not perfectly beautiful but good. Not quite fair, but a little brown. Young by all means. Old by no means. A decent share of common sense, just tinged with a little—only a little—of what is called by the French *repartee*, but what I call 'tit for tat.' Small modicum of wit. *No learning. No learning, I say again and again (either ancient or modern), upon any account whatever.* In spelling a little becoming; deficiency, and in the

Doctrine of Punctuation—or what is generally called stopping—none whatever. A proper knowledge of accounts and arithmetic, but *no sort of skill in fractions*. More than a tolerable voice, a little ear for music, and a capability of singing a song in company, but no peculiar and intimate acquaintance with minims, crotchets, quavers, &c. Ready with her needle, but more devoted to plain work than to fine. Not always in the withdrawing-room, but often in the kitchen. Acquainted with domestic news, but never with foreign. Decently but never affectedly silent.”

A few pages onward, in a different hand, there appeared another written marginal. It looked like the writing of a lady who was skilled in *repartee*. And this may have been copied out of some old book, or composed by the writer.

“MENTAL AND PERSONAL QUALITIES NECESSARY IN A GOOD HUSBAND.—Great good nature, good humour, and good sense. Lively by all means. Stupid by no means. Agreeable rather than handsome. If proportionate, no objection to his being six foot. Well read in the classics, but no pedant. Tolerable ear for music, but *no fiddler*. *I must repeat it again: no fiddling husband, by any means*. No bully, but sufficient courage to defend his own and his wife’s honour. *No traveller*. No enthusiasm for pomp and show and display. Free-thinker in everything except in matters of religion. The above with Mr. Pope’s definition of wit, are the chief qualifications I require in the man who shall have the honour of winning my heart and hand.”

From the above, it will be seen that the Welsh squire of the past disliked talented women. Girton girls

and "sweet girl graduates" would have had no charms in his opinion. He even disliked the "Doctrine of Punctuation," and did not care to improve women's acquaintance with fractions! He liked domesticated women, who knew the practical but not the fanciful arts of housewifery.

On the other hand, the lady strongly objected to musical men and travellers, the former of whom would be much in request at the convivial assemblies of that period, and the latter would always be restless when at home. It is clear the lady of the past would not have tolerated the "globe-trotters" of the present.

Squires of the past would often be seen in the market-place, chatting with the men, and joking the women, whom they had known from their childhood upward. They did not think it *infra dig.* to mingle freely with the people, and the country-folk would never dream of taking liberties with "the squire," who was loved so well and trusted so implicitly.

There was an old-fashioned gallantry too in the squire then, as may have been seen when he took the pretty village lass by the tips of her fingers—as though she were a born lady—and assisted her over a gutter, or out of a puddle. Contact with the people never injured the dignity of the squire of that day—on the contrary, it rather enhanced it, for, had he kept himself shut up in his manor house, the humbler folk would feel as though they had "no squire at all," and thus experience a sense of unutterable loneliness. For they regarded the squire in the same light as the Russian peasantry hold the Czar, whom they call "little father."

An instance of the bondship that existed between

the Welsh squire of the past and his tenantry may be illustrated by the following story. The squire had lost a lot of money owing to the extravagance of a spoiled son, and there was nothing left but to lease the estate for a term of years, and take the family to live on small means in London. This was almost a heart-break to the squire, but there was no help for it. On the eve of his departure several of the farmers on the estate came to bid good-bye to their old friend. One of them, a venerable man whose silvery hair betokened a very long age, said, "Well, well; so you be goin' away from us all, an' 'tis likely I shall never see you agen. The younger ones may, but I do never expect to. No, no; an' now, squire (speaking in an undertone), we do all know why you be bound to go, iss, iss, an' we do all feel sorry. An' I've bin thinking to myself, 'tis only a couple of hundred pounds I've put by, but you're welcome to them. Iss, indeed, an' nobody be more welcome."

"Thank you; I know that, Morgan, but I can't take your savings—no, no. 'Tis a hard struggle to leave you all, but we can manage to live quietly and economically," replied the squire, as the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Well, then, sir, will you take a hundred?"

"No, Morgan, not one penny will I touch."

"You do vex me dusprad (desperately), that you do. If *you* won't take what I do offer, take it for Miss Mary, for the sake of old times. Many's the mornin' when Miss Mary did bring a basket full of good things for my poor old Betty—iss, indeed (wiping the tears from his eyes)—an' if my Betty were alive now, she'd be the first to say, 'Help the squire now he's in trouble,

for many's the time he's helped us.' Iss, indeed—an' you must take the hundred, if you won't take the two? 'Twill be a help like."

This simple act of devotion touched the squire's heart. He took the hundred pounds, which, needless to say, were repaid very shortly afterwards.

Another tenant of the same squire brought him all his savings—ten pounds; and another offered to sell some cottages he possessed, and give his all to his old friend. Such was the love of the peasantry for the Welsh squire of the past.

Both were the last of two classes that certainly made the world pleasanter than it is now, and those who knew them may in vain look around for their successors. At first, perhaps, they do so with regretfulness, for did they not give and take much pleasure? But, remembering the past in which they lived, they must end with the hope that the world—the active, exacting, go-a-head world—may never relapse into the slow-moving age that is gone, or press too eagerly forward to the region ruled by "raw Haste, half-sister to Delay."

Both are gone—the Welsh squire and the Welsh peasant of the past. The self-same native earth mingles with their dust, and alike over their last resting-places the ancient yew tree stretches its long arms, and the whispering grasses sigh in the gloaming. Many a change has taken place since then, and the wailing cadences of the last solemn *Miserere* have died away in the dim twilight of the years gone by, when the squire and the peasant of the past went to their long homes.

For them, when in the desolate woodlands snow-

encumbered branches are bowed down to the frozen earth, the wintry wind chaunts a solemn requiem. For them, when the land is filled with summer radiance, and roses wreath the old familiar hedges, the birds sing songs of regret. And, for them, the aged villager, whose footsteps are going downward, rests on his stick, and pauses among the graves to lament that "they are gone, and there's none left like them."

Thus it is. The "old order changeth yielding place to the new," and the new, with its young and vigorous blood, its thrilling pulse, its ardent heart, and its impatient stride, marches forward from the charnel-house of the long-buried past to the shining feet of the future.

Let us take a glimpse of the Welsh squires of the present, of which there are three distinct classes. These are the political, the sporting, and the refined squire.

The first is a fussy, or excitable, though well-meaning man, whose sole object in life is to teach his tenants the political way they should go. He may be a Conservative or a Liberal, or any lesser light revolving around those satellites which surround that great luminary, the British Constitution. In any case, he is political to the backbone. All the fiery Celtic blood of his ancestors has been churned by modern circumstance into a frothiness that refuses to solidify, and little or nothing comes of it. He goes occasionally to London, and there gathers up the crumbs that fall from the political table, to dispense at large meetings in county towns, and small assemblies in country places. He is a man of his word, and above all things a firm adherent to the party and cause he espouses. In this respect he is certainly worthy of emulation and honour. You may as well expect the sun to stand still as to see

a Welsh squire of the present day forsake his colours. His feet are planted, as it were, on a rock of adamant, around which ocean surges may rave and roar, tempests beat, lightnings flash, and thunders roll, while he stands immovable.

All the fiery intensity of his nature is exhibited in his orations, especially when he attains that point of rhetorical afflatus known in Wales as the "hwyl." Then frequently he resembles the ninth wave upon the force of which the Druids laid so much stress.

Crowned with majesty, girded with wondrous strength, the ninth wave comes as though to destroy all barriers and vanquish its old enemy the earth. It utters its grand protests against giant cliffs, that ever seem to smile at the puny freaks of passionate waves. It comes landward with allies speedily following from east and west, and, gathering fresh vigour from the storm-wind, it hastens towards the grim cliffs, against which it leaps, darts, and breaks, but its fury only ends in radiant wreaths of foam-flakes, in yeasty froth, and in sparkling showers of spray.

Then the roar of battle ceases, the wind is hushed, and a mysterious lull follows.

So it is with the political Welsh squire of the present day.

Crowned with the majesty of ancient lineage, girded with the wondrous strength of a wealthy landowner, the latest scion in an unbroken line from the kings or princes of the Principality speaks as though he will break all barriers, and vanquish his old enemy—the opposite party. He utters grand protests against gigantic Acts of Parliament and important bills, that ever seem to smile at his puny freaks and passionate

threats. On, on, he comes with the torrent of his invective, while his allies are cheering uproariously on right and left. Then, gathering fresh vigour from public applause, he hastens to the grand point at which he has aimed. He waxes warmer, his words are getting still more fiery, they leap, dart, and break at the peroration, and their fury ends in radiant expressions of patriotism, in feathery froth of rhetoric, and in sparkling words of good will to all men.

Then the roar of battle ceases, and the fiery invective is hushed, only to be renewed whenever the opposite party is troublesome.

The Welsh sporting squire is generally known as a "happy-go-lucky" man, who is never in a more jovial mood than when the hounds are unkenneled, or he is in at the death. His whole heart is in sport, and he cares for little else. For him politics have no charm, and measures have no interest, only so far as they affect the game laws.

Early in the morning the sporting squire is ready for pleasure. When, during the hunting season—

"A southerly wind and a cloudy sky
Proclaimed a hunting morn,"

the hounds are unkenneled, and every servant that can be spared attends his master to the meet, and soon the country side rings with the sound of their voices.

In the shooting season the spaniels and other dogs are brought out, and the squire spends his morning in trying either the covers for pheasants or the stubble for partridges, and frequently by twelve o'clock he is able to return home with a well-filled bag. To him there is nothing more enjoyable than a long day on the

moorlands that stretch to the sea, or a brilliant morning on the hill tops and slopes, when the sloes begin to turn from green to purple, and the soft autumnal haze creeps through the woodlands where golden and bronzed leaves fall among the scarlet berries of the wild rose, and the crimson bramble sprays droop and trail on ferny hollows.

The Welsh sporting squire seldom sighs for the pleasures of town, whither he never cares to go unless it is for a short time before or after the shooting or hunting seasons. Then he is restless and impatient for the return of the seasons he loves so well. He lives a quiet peaceful life "far from the madding crowd," and the fatiguing exactments of society. His wife may or may not be presented at court, and as his daughters grow up he seldom troubles himself about matrimonial schemes and brilliant alliances. He is thoroughly satisfied if his daughters marry the sons of neighbouring squires, or young clergymen, or civil engineers, or barristers, provided they are connected with county families. In this respect he is perhaps to blame, especially if his daughters are handsome or pretty, in which case they could make as good matches as any English girl. It is the fault of the Welsh squires that many charming girls are left to "blush unseen." Their mothers would tell you it is all "because of papa." Poor dear papa! he comes in for his share of blame; but he bears it well, yes, provokingly well, for if you remonstrate he only smiles and says, "What's the use of going to court—it's a lot of expense. As it is, the county balls are salty enough. Let those make matrimonial specs for their girls who wish to risk their happiness. As for me—I'm content——"

"That's just where it is," interrupts mamma, "you

think only of yourself, and yet I know if our pretty girls had but the ghost of a chance they might be countesses, marchionesses, or even——”

“Phooh!” says the squire, “I’ve no ambition that way.”

“Nor any other way,” responds his wife in a pet, “unless it is in the way of guns and—game.”

Little heeding what they say, the Welsh sporting squire strides away, and is soon lost in clouds of smoke, or is hidden from view by the heathery crests of his native hills.

The Welsh squire of the present, who is considered ‘very refined,’ has been during a long minority looked after by trustees and guardians, who are determined that their ward shall be a perfect gentleman. In trying to portray him, his fleeting image almost vanishes. There is so little of the real, the solid in it, that it is impossible to know whether we are dealing with a substance or a shadow—a thing that lives, and breathes, and has a being, or an automatic image set in motion by the pull of a wire or the touch of a spring. But for all that he is a real substantial being, though his virtual existence in Wales—the period during which he shines as a visible and luminous body above the horizon—is limited to a very small period of time, namely that which extends from October to January. For these few months, at intervals of two or more years, he comes out of his chrysalis wherever that might be, and sports like a butterfly. He is the centre of a curious circle of old maids, dowagers, and widows, all of whom buzz and drone and flit around him as moths around a candle. These moths have singed their wings long years ago, but to them the refined young squire is a

luminary, the like of which they have never seen before. He is "so very charming;" has a "love of a moustache;" and is a "thorough ladies' man."

He likes a little—just a little sport; dislikes Wales, and above all things the Welsh language, which to his ultra-refined ear is a barbarous jargon composed of gutturals. When away from home he does not care to acknowledge his nationality, and while he remains in Wales he objects to its being thrust upon him. To him the Welsh mountains are cold and unfriendly, and the estate he owns is only appreciated because of its large rent-roll. This is the squire who says a curt "good day" to the peasantry, with just a few words to the tenant farmers. He has little feeling for the people and the poor, and although he carefully plans out the numbers and costs of his charities, he never personally distributes a shilling. While he remains in Wales he shuts himself up in his billiard or smoking-room, and never permits anybody to consult him on any matter. He says, "I'm really sorry, but I can't help you. My opinion would be of no good whatever."

The people pay him the deference due to their squire, but they have no love for him, and it is with feelings of pleasure they see him take his departure for scenes and society more congenial to his tastes. While he is away they are able to breathe freely, but so long as he remains at home they are in great awe of him. This is the squire who goes yachting in the Mediterranean—takes trips to the "land of the midnight sun"—does a little tiger shooting in Africa—tries the mud-baths of New Zealand—has a "look" into the orange groves of Florida—rounds Cape Horn—visits California—runs through the States—and, to use a

somewhat expressive American phrase, returns home a "thorough-paced globe-trotter."

Unlike his brothers the political and sporting squires, he has no friends among the people, and what is more, he does his utmost to avoid Wales and the Welsh, wherefrom he draws all the money that carries him round the world.

The political and sporting squires are always at home, and, to their credit be it said, they endeavour to win the respect and esteem if not the love of their tenantry.

But, with a few exceptions, the old-time hospitality of the past has ceased, and the manor houses that used to be "open to all," are closed for ever. Rust, dust, and cobwebs cling to the closed portals of the once "open houses," where time has worked many changes.

A yawning chasm in many instances divides the Welsh squire of the present from the peasantry, and it may not be bridged.

The fault of the squire is too great a reserve, and the peasant lacks that good old-fashioned reverence, which brings with it genuine respect for, but not servility to, his "betters."

In many districts the peasantry think because education is universal, "Jack is as good as his master." They never for one moment imagine that there are educated fools.

Education is of small value to him who is "By blood a king, at heart a clown," and, however lofty or humble the position of a person, his mental training counts for little unless it is wedded—

"To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind."



X.

THE VALE WOMEN.



HERE is, perhaps, no tract of country in South Wales more beautiful than the Vale of Glamorgan.

It begins where the Rhymney river divides Monmouthshire from Glamorgan-shire; it ends where the Llwchwr forms the border stream of Carmarthenshire, and stretches northward to the base of the mountain ranges that divide the Vale from those districts known as "the hills."

Travellers by the Great Western Railway pass through the whole length of the Vale, but they only get glimpses of the beautiful pasture-lands that fringe the Severn Sea. From Cardiff to Carmarthen the route taken by the railway is, in some places, very picturesque; but seaward of that line, where, as yet, the shrill whistle of the engine has not been heard, there are charming nooks and secluded places which, to the town-dweller, look like dreamland. The shoreline presents scenes of varied beauty, and the country around it is undulating rather than hilly, with glens and valleys sloping to the sea.

The sea-board of Glamorgan extends for nearly ninety miles, of which fifty miles are very bold and bluff, the remainder being for the greater part flat and sandy. The cliffs range between fifty and one hundred and twenty feet in height, and the boldest of these are between Penarth Head, near Cardiff, and Barry Island, then again near Fontegary and Porthkerry, after which they are of no great height for several miles, the next rise being in the romantic neighbourhoods of St. Donat's, Marcross, near the Nash Sands, thence on to Dunraven and Southerdown. Westward of the river Ogmore there are long stretches of sand hills, broken for a short distance by the grim and dangerous rocks and crags of Sker, and thence to Swansea, the land is flat and sandy, but afterwards the cliffs increase in height through Gower to the utmost limits of the country.

All these districts are almost unknown to the tourist, for the reason that they are difficult of access, and the accommodation is of a limited and in some instances a humble kind. Small towns, villages, and hamlets, all very pretty, are to be seen throughout the Vale of Glamorgan, and often there are many miles between solitary farm-houses along the coast.

It is in these remote districts that the Vale women are to be found.

There is, perhaps, no harder working woman than the farm-wife of the Vale. She gets up with the dawn of day, and all through the long hours till night comes she has not a moment to spare. In the early days of her wedded life she milks the cows herself, and performs all the dairy and household duties without help, or perhaps with the assistance of a small girl. As her

children grow up they learn the way to milk the cows, and the mother attends to the dairy.

In the larger farm-houses servants are kept, but even then the mistress makes the butter and cheese, looks after the poultry, and not only personally superintends the household work, but takes an active part in it.

It does not matter how hard the work may be—and sometimes it is very arduous—the farm-wife of the Vale never shrinks from it. She may not be very strong, in fact she may even be delicate and unfitted for rough work, but her duty is never neglected or transferred to others. Bees-wax is her delight, and she will use it mixed with turpentine for cleaning every article of furniture or household chattel, from the quaint old corner cupboard to the eight-day grandmother's clock—from the hall table to the oaken stairway—from the massive kitchen settle to the high-backed chairs of the sitting-room. And the polish thereof is so fine that you can see yourself reflected in the furniture as in a mirror. Not a particle of dust is to be seen anywhere, not even about the kitchen grate, which is black-leaded till it shines like glass. The farm-wife's dairy, no matter how old it may be, is the pink of perfection, and the dairy utensils are splendidly scoured. These women still adhere to the old-fashioned way of cleansing wooden ware, which is taken to the nearest brook and there scoured with sand and fine gravel rubbed on with a handful of hay. The utensils are then well washed in the running stream, and afterwards dried on the farm premises either out in the sunshine or before the fire.

As quaint old Thomas Tusser, writing in 1557, says :—

“Some respite to husbands the weather may send,
But housewives’ affairs have never an end.”

For the Welsh farm-wives there is no respite, and very often they have to do work which should be left to men. The women, as a rule, have a slight inclination to be parsimonious. Their object is not merely to lay by for the “rainy day,” but to leave something after them. To this end they will deny themselves many things. Others again save money for dress, and will wear very costly garments, but very subdued in colour.

Almost to a woman, Welsh farm-wives are very thrifty, scrupulously clean, and exceedingly industrious. When not engaged in household work, they devote their time to knitting, sewing, and repairing, and sometimes to patchwork, in which they generally are adepts. The patchwork counterpanes are most neatly made, and quilted in fanciful designs.

It is singular to note how carefully these women endeavour to tread in the footprints of their mothers, and it appears to them almost sacrilege to turn any other way. There are exceptions to every rule, and some of the Welsh farm-wives are by no means paragons of perfection in any respect, but taking them as a whole they are very estimable.

These women never “give up;” however indisposed they keep “on their feet,” and when once they take to their beds, it is an ominous token of approaching dissolution. Unless they live to a great age—which is frequently the case—they may be said to die in harness. It is very rare to meet with a Welsh farm-

wife who is an invalid. As a rule they enjoy excellent health, and if delicate at all they invariably become rapidly consumptive. Great numbers of the Welsh farm-wives are the mothers of large families. Ten to twelve children is the average, but in many instances the number is fifteen, with occasionally a family of from eighteen to twenty children.

The women are very energetic, and can walk many miles without exhibiting the slightest symptoms of fatigue. There is an almost Spartan-like fortitude in their composition, and, as models of wifely fidelity, they are unsurpassed. I think I can venture to state that separation and divorce are almost unknown among the farm-wives of the Vale of Glamorgan. The husbands may be unkind, dissolute, or lazy, but alike through evil report and good repute the wives will cling to them still.

Farm-wives who live not very far from the towns receive a large number of visitors, who are most hospitably entertained. In English farm-houses high tea is generally prepared for the guests, who are regaled with poultry and game, hot or cold meats with tea. Nothing of this kind is to be seen in Wales, where, if the visitors come in the forenoon, they dine with their host and hostess, and have tea later in the afternoon. As a rule people are invited only to tea, which repast is served between four and five. And a sumptuous meal it is too! Cream-cakes, home-made preserves, fresh water-cresses gathered from the brook hard by, daintily toasted cream cheese served with buttered toast, jellies, blancmange, custards, several kinds of tartlets, and a variety of cakes, especially small round ones, which are baked in a Dutch-

oven before the fire. Then there are pikelets, and bakestone cakes, which, to a certain extent, resemble muffins, only the Welsh cake is larger.

Some of the farm-wives of the present day venture to give dancing parties, which are dubbed by sneerful neighbours as "farmers' balls." Strange to say, dancing is not so prevalent a recreation in Wales now as it was forty or fifty years ago, when the principal saints' days were devoted to the "light fantastic toe." These festivals were formerly called *Mal Santau*, corrupted to *Mabsant*. It is quite likely that when the *Mabsant* degenerated from the primitive assemblies for dancing and harmless recreation into disorderly revels and drunken orgies, it came to be considered among respectable people improper to dance at all. And by degrees dancing came to be looked upon in Wales as very harmful and highly wrong, even sinful.

The farm-wives are frequently very ambitious with reference to the future of their boys. Many of the latter are sent to good schools, thence to colleges, where they are prepared either for the Church, dissenting ministers, the medical or legal profession, and there are not a few farm-wives in the Vale who will tell you with pride that their sons are clergymen, doctors, lawyers, or dissenting ministers.

There are numbers of men to-day holding important positions in the Church, at the bar, or in the medical world, who look back with pride upon the day when "mother" first urged "father" to let them quit the farm-yard for other spheres of work, even though the cost might for a time be great. Honour be to the farm-wives who have willingly drudged at home, in order to send forth into the world intellectual men

and noble toilers, who are doing many a day's good for themselves and the Principality. It is to be hoped that the young Welshmen of to-day who are eager aspirants for political distinction, will not forget the lessons in patience, perseverance, thoroughness in everything, and honour in all things, which have been and still are daily taught by the farm-wives and mothers of Wales.

Passing from the farms to the homes of the humbler classes, we see the cottage-wives busy at their work, never a moment idle, and ever thrifty. These women are invariably mothers of large families, and it is astonishing how they can make ends meet with the little money their husbands earn. The average wages of the agricultural labourer are fifteen to eighteen shillings per week, while other labourers earn three shillings per day. House-rent is low, three to six pounds a year for cottages with, as a rule, good large gardens. Then almost everybody keeps one or more pigs, so that in Wales the working classes have an ample supply of bacon all the year round, and on bacon the labouring classes chiefly subsist. Once a week they get a little fresh meat, but not oftener. Rusty bacon and greens, hard cheese toasted, with occasionally plain stone or currant dumpling forms the general fare of the poorer classes. They always have good bread, and a plentiful supply of all the commoner kinds of vegetables. The Welsh are by no means a fish-eating people, and although the upper and higher middle classes use fish daily, all the other classes seldom touch it. They consume a little dried fish, and that not very often.

The cottage homes of Wales are invariably very pretty. The roofs are thatched, and the little lattice

windows peeping under the eaves are filled with flowers. Over the fronts of the cottages, roses and trailing plants or vines are trained, and frequently they have in front charming gardens where apple, cherry, plum, and pear trees, with their wealth of blossoms in the spring, make the places look like glimpses of Eden.

Some of the unfrequented nooks, especially those where tiny cottages appear between vistas of blossoming orchards and gardens, where the clear brooklet, flowing between margins of mossy sward and sheltering brambles, truly "seem an outlet from the sky," would please the eye of the artist.

Outside, the cottages look like bowers of beauty, where roses struggle with each other for mastery—where the lily of the valley shyly peeps at its rival the tall white eucharis, or its commoner kinfolk, the great and bold tiger lilies—where Canterbury bells ring their fairy chimes unheard by us—where pinks and carnations cluster between neat, box-bordered banks—and where the evening breeze shakes the snowy cherry blossoms, and scatters the pink-tipped petals from the branches of the apple trees down to the dewy grass, whereon the soft May moonlight flings its silvery radiance.

Inside the cottages are clean and neat. White curtains, which are closely drawn at night, serve the purpose of blinds; old oaken or wooden settles, on one or both sides of the hearth, keep the draughts away. Against the wall is a dresser, on which are displayed dark old-fashioned willow-pattern ware, curious copper coloured ware jugs with dark blue flowers, quaint old china mugs of ancient design, ale glasses of spiral hape, and other knickknackery.

Then there is the corner cupboard. Scarcely a house or cottage in Wales is without a corner cupboard. It may be large or small, it may have a glass door with strange lozenge-shaped panes, or a plain wooden door, but there it is. The corner cupboard is regarded as being almost sacred. In it are kept the household treasures in the shape of teacups and saucers, and ornamental china of every description. It is not at all unusual to see in the corner cupboard, China cups and saucers of the period when handles were unknown, and teapots that were manufactured when tea was first used. There too is the old oaken chest, or the modern chest of drawers, above which hangs the cherished pictures of the household. These, as a rule, include scriptural incidents, the saints and their emblems, with now and again a small engraving or illustration of sporting life.

At the same time, although the cottage is neat and clean, and kept in good order, the stone floors are generally damp and uneven—the low ceiling is often formed of massive wooden beams, strong enough to support a castle, and almost heavy enough to pull a small habitation down; and the only place free from draughts was the innermost corner of the huge open chimney of the past, or the fireside end of the settle of the present. According to immemorial usage, those places belonged to the male head of the family.

As to the female head, the typical cottage wife never sits down. Like the sun she daily runs her course of duty, and never rests until bed-time. She is always on her feet, and holds a firm opinion that if once she “took to a chair” her days would be numbered.

A tidy, busy little woman is the Welsh cottage wife,

whose whole existence is spent in keeping the wolf from the door, and scrupulously illustrating the adage that cleanliness is next to godliness. She will tell you that she has brought up her children in the "fear of the Lord from their cradles." What was done before the cradle days I have never been able to fathom.

The elderly cottage wife cannot read or write, but in plain sewing and knitting she is generally excellent.

It is astonishing to find that the cottage wife is able to "put by" something for a rainy day. How she can do it is a lasting puzzle. But she does it, and sometimes is able in a long life to save so much as one hundred pounds.

The cottage wives invariably enjoy excellent health—they have a supreme contempt for the doctor, and of some of them it can be said, to use their own expression, "She carried all her teeth with her to the grave." Although they avoid the doctor, except in extreme cases, they cling with the tenacity of crabs to quackery and patent medicines. Quack doctors and medicine men are to be found in most of the rural districts, and the people's faith in them is often unbounded. They will take patent medicines in large quantities, and strange to say, they frequently double or treble the prescribed dose.

For herb infusions and similar concoctions they still cherish a secret and sincere love. Rosemary tea with treacle in it is one of their sovereign remedies for a cough; linseed tea, Spanish liquorice, butter and sugar or honey steeped in vinegar, are also much in request for the same purpose. For a cold, hot elderberry wine, treacle posset, egg flip, or "gin hot," are recommended. The "gin hot" of Wales is a stiff glass of Hamburg

spirit or ordinary gin and beer heated to scalding point. This causes profuse perspiration. They say there is nothing like "brimstone and treacle" for spring pimples, boils, and black-heads; while nearly every Saturday morning, like clockwork, the cottage mothers dose their children with what they call "sina" (senna) tea. On Saturday night the children are bathed, and the water is as hot as ever they can bear it. In fact, the water is used so hot as to fill the room with steam. After the steaming hot bath the children are often allowed to dress and to run about, not only in the house, but out of doors. In a day or two the mothers wonder "why in the world" the children have the toothache.

The cottage women always wear aprons of Welsh flannel, which are very large and comfortable. They are to be had in grey and black, black and white, or a mingling of all. Over their shoulders in the winter time they wear small square flannel shawls, called "turnovers" folded cornerwise, and pinned rather low under the chin. On their heads they wear neat sun-bonnets of printed calico, under which the old women wear prim caps tied with black or coloured fancy ribbons. Welsh flannel dresses are still much worn, though they are being rapidly superseded by woollen and cotton fabrics of English manufacture.

These women work hard all the days of their lives, and it may reasonably be asked if there possibly can be any happiness in so long a career of perfect drudgery. Yet there is. The cottage wife singing at her work is as happy, perhaps happier, than the rich man is when counting his gold. Her life is spent in one ceaseless round of cares and little troubles that sometimes sorely perplex her, but her heart is brave, and so

long as her husband and children are well looked after, she is happy. She never has any time for complaining, and seldom finds a moment for indisposition, and when at length the day comes in which she is compelled to "sit down by the fire," she knows something is really wrong. A day or so later she tells them to "send and fetch the doctor," who comes and orders to bed. Then the poor wearied-out cottage wife knows "all is over" with her, and very soon she folds her hands, and passes away to her long last sleep and unbroken rest.

For her never again shall the warm sunlight stream in through the little lattice windows, or the moonlight glint through the blossoming apple trees, or the birds go forth in the early morning from under the old thatched eaves to sing their matins and return after evensong, or the hungry children come trooping in from school, or the father return from work—no, nevermore.

Well-earned rest has come at last, and in the dim distance of the Hereafter she hears a voice proclaiming, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Down in the west of Glamorgan there is a class of women very different from the farm-wives and cottage mothers of the Vale. These are the Penclawdd women, who get or augment their living by selling cockles. In Neath, Swansea, and the Mumbles, numbers of these women—commonly called "merra" or "merrow" girls—are to be seen going their daily rounds and crying out, "Cockles—fresh cockles—fine cockles; will you buy my fresh cockles!"

They gather the cockles, which are sometimes sold as they are, in the shells, or boiled and shelled. On

market-days the Penclawdd women may be seen behind their stalls, which are loaded with little plates filled with shelled cockles, which the masses eat with avidity, having first seasoned them with pepper, salt, and vinegar. In Welsh market-places, cockles are as popular as oysters and whelks are in London. It is a pretty sound to hear the shrilly voices of the women crying, "Cockles—fresh cockles—fine cockles; come buy my fresh cockles!"

Still in some of the towns the oyster men go their rounds of the streets, just as the muffin man does in England, and it is pretty to hear their voices in the early gloaming of an autumnal evening, crying, "Oysters—fine Tenby oysters—fine fat Tenby oy—sters!"

The cockle women look very picturesque in their short gowns of red and black flannel, which are turned up in front and pinned close under the waist at the back. These gowns display neat short petticoats of Welsh flannel. Small turnover shawls are worn over the shoulders, and flannel aprons protect the dress in front. On their heads they wear small Welsh hats suitable for bearing the weight of the cockle pails, which are wooden and scoured as white as possible. A thick pad, known in Wales as a "dorch," protects both the hat and the head from the pail. These untrimmed hats are of black straw with a fancy edge. They come slightly forward over the forehead, and recede to the back of the head, where they are turned up and curved. The only head-covering somewhat resembling it was the one known as the "gipsy hat" and bonnet which appears in the old fashion plates of 1872. The dresses are made with short and shaped fronts, disclosing snowy neckerchiefs, and some of

the elderly women wear neat white caps under the small Welsh hats.

On many parts of the wild Welsh coast, women may be seen busily engaged in gathering laver, which is the sea liver-wort. Its long, broad, and fine leaves—in texture closely resembling oil silk, only brown in colour and semi-transparent—are found clinging to the rocks on the desolate shores and sandy reaches. Great care has to be taken that the laver is free from sand, grit, and the fine miniature winkles that sometimes cling to it. After a sufficient quantity has been gathered, the women wash the laver in the sea-water pools that abound on the shore. It is then taken home and washed and rewashed in fresh water, after which it is pressed very closely, until all the moisture is squeezed out. The cooking process is as follows:—A large saucepan is well rubbed with a piece of fat bacon, and a tablespoonful of liquid fat bacon is put in with a quantity of the laver. The saucepan is then placed on a slow fire; a small folded towel is put on the top of the laver, and the cover placed thereon. From time to time the laver is stirred until it is done, when it is taken out and chopped very finely. It is sold by the pound, the price varying from sixpence to eightpence or tenpence. For cooking, it is formed into small round and flat cakes, about half an inch in thickness. These cakes are dipped in flour or oatmeal, and fried in boiling lard or bacon fat, and served very hot, as a rule with toasted bacon. Pepper and vinegar are considered the proper condiments to use with laver, which is also served with roast mutton. It is necessary to acquire a taste for laver, which if liked at all is generally liked very much.

The most careful laver-gatherers and preparers gain the most custom, for, if the laver is gritty or sandy, or contains a single particle of seaweed, it is uneatable. The same women gather mussels and winkles, and in many instances samphire also. Samphire and sea-kale, together with wild cabbages and greens, are to be found in abundance on the cliffs and crags of the Welsh coast.

In order to see the old Welsh costumes, it is necessary to go to the west of Wales. There the tall beaver hat is still worn by some of the prettiest and most handsome women to be seen in the Principality. Very spick and span these women look with their short flannel skirts either dark red or grey; plain or bob-tailed gowns of grey and black, or red and black Welsh flannel; V-shaped bodices, hooked—never buttoned—in front, displaying snowy lawn kerchiefs; and neat turnovers, the corners of which are securely fastened at waist by the band of the flannel apron. On their heads are pretty caps tied with fancy ribbons, and, to crown all, the tall and glossy beaver hat, which resembles an extinguisher with the fine pointed top cut off.

Some of the women wear low and flat Welsh hats of felt with straight and broad brims. There are other hats of glossy beaver, somewhat resembling those worn by the members of the Hampshire hunt.

It is by no means unusual for the elderly women to wear a kerchief over the cap and under the hat. In the winter, or during wet weather, the women wear long circular cloaks, fully gathered into a band at the neck, and there fastened with a clasp. Some of these cloaks have movable hoods, large enough to be drawn over the semi-high beaver hats.

The south Welsh shires have their own distinctive style of dress.

Pembrokeshire women are renowned for their neatness. They wear dresses of very dark brown or deep claret-coloured habit cloth, which always fit "like a glove," and their low shoes are of fine leather.

Cardiganshire women, who are for the most part thick-set and short of stature, wear dark blue flannel gowns with red stripes. These are bound round the bottom with solidly woven red or blue wool caddis, making the gowns, which are somewhat destitute of fit and neatness, heavy and comfortable. These women are always clogged, and generally cloaked.

Carmarthenshire women wear thick dresses resembling bed-gowns, and petticoats of red brick coloured flannel, sometimes with a pin mark stripe of black or white.

Breconshire women generally envelop their heads in a kerchief, and their long linsey gowns or kirtles are turned up in front, and pinned at the back just a few inches below the waist. They have wooden clogs for everyday wear, and leathern shoes for Sunday, and, as they boast of neat ankles, it is the rule among them to let them be visible beneath short petticoats of bright red or crimson flannel with black or white stripes. They also wear smaller flannel aprons than the women of the other shires.

In days gone by, the Glamorganshire women, who were considered very handsome, did not care so much for dress. They favoured gowns made of a material in which cotton and wool were intermixed. These gowns were made like loose wrappers, and without waists. Flannel aprons were worn with these, and the women's feet were encased in thick lamb's

wool stockings and wooden clogs. Leathern shoes were only worn on Sundays and holidays. Glamorganshire and Breconshire women were not so particular about dress as those of other shires, because they frequently had to work on the farms and out in the fields just like men.

In Pembrokeshire, sometimes called "Little England beyond Wales," there were formerly, and still are, direct descendants from two distinct races, and this doubtless accounts for the more refined-looking women to be seen there even now. There are marked differences both in character and language between the inhabitants of the south and north divisions of the shire. On the south side a peculiar kind of English is spoken, while in the north the Welsh language is still almost universal.

It is said that the Flemings, owing to inundations in their own country, were allowed to colonise in Pembrokeshire about the twelfth century. This Flemish colonisation of South Pembrokeshire is an established historical fact, and some authorities think the same people settled in the south-west of Glamorganshire, known as Gower. In South Pembrokeshire and Gowerland the *patois* is very much alike, though some authorities contend that Somersetshire people settled in Gower, and they were a distinctly different race from the descendants of the Flemings.

This accounts for the marked difference both in physical appearance and characteristics in the inhabitants, many of whom bear Flemish names.

Wherever the old Welsh costume is still worn, the women as a rule speak Welsh only, or interspersed with a little broken English. The national costume is

no longer worn in east, north, or south Glamorgan, but in the west of the shire it is still to be seen.

For these women, who still cling to the old fashions of their native land, there are special hatters and dressmakers who know exactly how to cut and make the quaint costumes which to English eyes look very peculiar.

Yet why should the Welsh costume astonish people any more than the national costumes of other countries? We see no reason. People travelling by the Great Western Railway laugh immoderately when they see crowds of market women dressed in Welsh costumes, waiting for the train at some of the stations, and yet the same travellers passing through Alsace and Lorraine, or visiting Germany, make no remark with reference to the strange costumes to be seen in those countries.

Dutch women, even in the large towns of Holland, still wear their national costumes; the German Frau and the Calabrian peasant woman would feel ill at ease in English costume; the bright-eyed girls of Brittany and the merry maids of Normandy would not dream of discarding their snow-white caps and scarlet, blue, or green kirtles, and the Welsh women should wear their national garb without being greeted with ribald jokes and unseemly mirth, as if to laugh them out of their costumes.

It is the same with place names.

People are highly amused about the names of Welsh towns, villages, or hamlets.

Paragraphs are continually appearing in the papers with reference to "terribly awkward" Welsh words, but the editors never detail German or Russian place names. They say the Welsh words are "so long—so

many l's—such dreadful gutturals!" and they get impatient and will not take the trouble to pronounce them.

Many people take every trouble to correctly learn German names, which are quite as difficult as the Welsh.

Is Llangollen more difficult to pronounce than Schaumburg-Lippe, or Bettwys-y-Coed than Mecklenburg-Strelitz, or Llanstephan than Lichtenstein? Certainly not, and there is no reason why Welsh names should be held in greater derision than those of any other nation.

Names of places and people remain unchanged in the Principality, but the old Welsh national costume is slowly wearing away. Gradually it has worn out in the east, north, and south of Glamorgan, until at length no vestige of it remains. It is getting a little threadbare in the west of the shire, but in the extreme south-west it still survives, as it does in Carmarthen, Pembroke, and Cardigan. Even there the prevailing English fashions are creeping in, and the younger generation is disposed to modify the old Welsh costume, or only to don it on special occasions.

The tall and glossy beaver hats, the bob-tailed gowns, the clogs and the granny cloaks are doomed, as the old English costume was in years gone by, and the day will come when the Welshwoman's wardrobe of the past will be exhibited with other relics of a bygone age, when women openly avowed their nationality by wearing the garments of which their foremothers were justly proud.

The oldest account of Welsh dress is to be found in the Laws of Howel the Good, which give glimpses of the fashions prevailing in the eighth century. The

principal garments were the *brychan*, or upper garment; the *pais*, or petticoat and coat; and *llodran*, the trousers.

Giraldus Cambrensis, in 1188, says the Welsh "either walk barefooted, or make use of high shoes, roughly constructed of untanned leather. Their dress is not different at night to that worn by day, for they defend themselves at all times and at all seasons from the cold only by a thin coat and waistcoat. The men and women cut their hair close to the ears and eyes. The women covered their heads with a large white veil folded together in the shape of a crown. The men shaved their beards, except the whiskers."

In one of his poems, Dafydd ap Gwilyn describes a Welsh gentleman's dress in the thirteenth century as consisting of a long pair of trousers, a close jacket tied around the waist with a sash, and over all a loose flowing gown, trimmed with fur, and a round cap on the head.





XI.

THE POETS AND POETRY OF WALES.

UN^TIL recent years little was known of the poets and poetry of Wales, and even now the English, with very few exceptions, are totally unacquainted with them. It is more astonishing to find that the Welsh, taken as a people, are unaware of the valuable works belonging to them, of which the most important consist chiefly of poetry.

In the Triads, or series of metrical triplets commemorative of the historical events of Wales, which were collected by the Welsh historian, Caradoc of Llancarvan, in the twelfth century, the following particulars appear.

Triads X. and XI. record the facts that “Tydain Tâd Awen first introduced order and method into the memorials and the preservation of oral art—poetry—and its properties: and from that order the methodical usages of the bards and bardism—druidism—of the Island of Britain were first devised. . . . The three

primary bards of the Island of Britain were Plennydd, Alawn, and Gwron."

Triad XII. states that the "three elementary masters of poetry and memorials of the race of the Cymry, were Gwyddon Ganhebon, who was the first man in the world (!) that composed poetry; Hu Gardarn, who first adapted poetry to the preservation of records and memorials; and Tydain Tâd Awen, who first developed the art and structure of poetry, and the due disposition of thought. And from the labours of these three personages sprung bards and bardism, and the regulation of their privileges and established discipline by the three primary bards, Plennydd, Alawn, and Gwron."

Triad XIII. says, "The three primary baptized—or Christian—bards were Merddyn Emrys; Taliesin, the chief of bards; and Merddin, the son of Madawc Morvryn."

The four principal and ancient bards and poets, most of whose works are still extant, are Aneurin, Taliesin, Merddin the son of Madawc Morvryn, and Llywarch Hen.

The chief characteristic of Welsh poetry is its wonderful alliteration, woven around beautiful similes and metaphors. It contains striking interrogations and fine apostrophes, while vivid personification is blended with grand exclamations and brilliant climaxes that increase in dignity and force as they advance. It abounds with synonyms and striking autonyms, and through all the melody is sustained with unflagging force. Another great merit in Welsh poetry is the marked, and, I think I may safely say, the total absence of sensualism. There is nothing in it to offend

the purest mind, and although its imagery may be equalled, it remains unrivalled.

Warlike and stately, the poems of Aneurin ring with the sonorous grandeur of the victor, the tumultuous shouts of wavering hosts, and the loud lamentations of the defeated.

Taliesin takes his place as the laureate of the Christianised bards of ancient Britain, and of him it may well be said, he was

“The first warbler, whose sweet breath”

filled the past with its magical influence. He lived in the sixth century, and tradition says he received his education in the university of St. Illutus at Llantwit Major, Glamorganshire,

Around his memory many legends cling, and with reference to him numerous traditions are still extant.

He appears in the history of Wales at times as a shadowy figure—a phantom that eludes one’s grasp, but whose all-pervading influence is a potent power. Wrapped in the mist of ages he is seen wandering among the mountains and through the valleys of Wales, pausing now and then to ponder over the mystic unity between God and man, or going forth as a messenger of hope to the wounded and dying on the battlefield, or breathing peaceful and calm poetical sentiments in which Druidism and primitive Christianity are strangely mingled.

In his poem entitled “One of the Four Pillars of Song” he sings of the white vine “planted on sunny days, and new moon nights,” thus illustrating a druidical observance, and in the next verse he sings of “the pure body of Christ, son of Alpha.”

His "Song of the Wind" resembles Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," but in translation it loses much of its original force. Put into metrical form it runs thus:—

"Discover thou, what is
This creature that cometh
From time ere the flood was.
Headless and footless,
Boneless and fleshless,
Veinless and bloodless,
It will not grow older,
Nor yet will be younger
Than at the beginning !

Great God ! how the vast sea
Whitens, when first from
The south come its great gusts,
And fierce is its breath
When it strikes on the coasts !
Headless and footless
Through field and through woodland
It takes its way, ageless,
Though it be co-eval
With the five ages or periods !"

Taliesin's "Gwaith Gwenystrad"—"Battle of Gwenystrad"—is terrible in its vivid word-pictures of the warfare, and the "horror" in the "pale faces of the warriors," who "fell together to the ground when the day was lost," and who lay "dyed with red," with "their hands on the crucifix." This vivid and spirited poem appears in the MS. collection of William Morris of Garegybi, who lived in 1758.

Many translations of the poems of Taliesin appear in Thomas Stephens' "Literature of the Kymry," and in Professor William Skene's "Four Ancient Books of Wales."

It is curious to note that in the folk-lore of Wales Taliesin appears as an ideal of mystical origin, possessed of supernatural powers, and very different from the real poet of the sixth century.

The mythological Taliesin is represented as being doomed throughout eternity to remain on earth, and to him are imputed all the fascinating arts of the magician and wizard, until at length—

“Vague, phantasmal, and unreal,
To our thought he seems
Walking in a world ideal,
In the land of dreams.”

One of the mythological poems describes him thus—

“Primary chief bard
Am I to Elphin,
And my original country
Is the region of the summer stars ;
Johannes the diviner
Called me Merddin ;
At length every king
Will call me Taliesin.

I was with my Lord
In the highest sphere
On the fall of Lucifer
Into the depth of hell ;
I have borne a banner
Before Alexander ;
I know the names of the stars
Of the north and of the south.

I was in the Court of Don
Before the birth of Gwydion ;
I was at the place of Crucifixion
Of the merciful Son of God.
I have been for three periods

In the Court of Arianrod ;
I have obtained the muse
From the cauldron of Ceridwen.
I have been bard of the harp
To Lleon of Lochlin ;
I have been on the White Hill
In the Court of Kynvelyn :
I have been a teacher
To the whole universe ;
I shall be until the day of doom
On the face of the earth."

The origin of his birth was supposed to be very miraculous, and the old tradition says that a man named Tegid Voel and Ceridwen his wife, who had borne him many children, lived in Penllyn. Now Ceridwen had a favourite son whose name was Avagddu. So great was her desire to endow her son with all knowledge, that she boiled and distilled certain herb and other waters in a magic cauldron for a year and a day, in order to obtain therefrom the three mystic drops of inspiration which the Druids told her could only be got in that way. Not being able to attend to the cauldron without interruption, she set Gwion Bach to stir the contents. One day it chanced that suddenly and unexpectedly the three wonderful drops for which Ceridwen had waited so patiently fell upon Gwion's finger. Gwion merely touched his lips, and instantly the future was revealed to him. Fearing the wrath of Ceridwen he fled away, the magical drops enabling him to assume a variety of shapes. But Ceridwen also changed her shape and relentlessly pursued him, until at length he transformed himself into a grain of wheat. Victorious at last, Ceridwen turned herself into a hen and swallowed Gwion. Subsequently she gave birth

to a son, and being in terrible fear she placed him in a leathern bag, which she cast into the sea. But the waves refused to keep him, and he was rescued by Elphin, the son of Gwyddno, who brought him up and gave him the name of Taliesin.

Next in rank to the real Taliesin of the sixth century is Llwyarch Hen, the bard and warrior, whose fierce and fiery verses uttered in early life were succeeded by supreme and melancholy expressions of misery and disaster in age.

In pure impassioned verse he boldly challenges his enemies, and rouses the warlike spirit of the people to a point of frenzy. Exhilaration is followed by depression, and later on he sighs over "sorrows without end," and laments that there is "no deliverance" from his "burden."

The late Matthew Arnold, in his "Study of Celtic Literature," places Llwyarch Hen's poems, especially his "Ode to my Crutch," as striking illustrations of Celtic imagination.

After Llwyarch Hen, in succession, come Gwalchmai; Owain Kyveiliog; the brilliant but early blighted Owain ab Howel, prince and poet, and son of Owain Gwynedd; Rhys Goch ab Rhiccert, and other minor singers.

The songs of these poets possess pristine freshness, and are still full of vitality, though the singers have lain silent for centuries, and few details or authentic accounts can be gleaned of them. Their histories are often limited to traditionary anecdotes preserved in MSS., and such allusions to personal affairs as some of their poems contain.

Turning from the heroic to the idyllic poetry of

Wales, which is more in touch with the present day even though it is far away, we come to Dafydd ab Gwilym, the Celtic Chaucer.

It is recorded that Taliesin prophesied the birth and birthplace of a poet, a minstrel whose songs would possess "the sweetness of wine." Tradition stepping in later divides the honour, and we are left to choose between Bro Gynin, in the parish of Llanbadarn Vawr in Cardiganshire, and Anglesea, for the real birthplace of one who was to creep closer to nature and love, leaving war—excepting word-warfare—to spend its sullen breath in rebellion, and ancient defiance to die with the latest warrior-poet of the Principality.

Political allusions were silenced, stern prohibitions prevented the outburst of national animosity towards the English, and the poet who is claimed alike by North and South Wales was born in an era when song, butterfly-like, hovered over the golden-foaming meth, or paused to hear the silvery whisperings of those who had laid aside the war-spear for the tilt and tournament of Cupid's court.

The exact year of Dafydd ab Gwilym's birth is unknown, but from his own poems we glean that he lived in the later half of the fourteenth century, and was therefore contemporary with Chaucer. His father was Gwilym Gam, direct descendant from Llywarch ab Bran, chief of one of the fifteen princely tribes in the northern division of Wales, and nearly related by marriage to Owain Gwynedd. Ardudval, the poet's mother, was connected with the princes of the southern division of the Principality, and sister to Llewelyn ab Gwilym Vychan of Emlyn, a person whom some historians style "Lord of Cardigan."

Tradition wavers about the domestic affairs, even the marriage of his parents; we read of quarrels and reconciliations in the family, and later we find Dafydd ab Gwilym under the protection, and receiving the assistance, of his uncle the Lord of Cardigan.

At the early age of fifteen, bickerings commenced between the poet and his parents, in consequence of his poetical satires, and these led him to seek, find, and long enjoy the friendship of his kinsman, Ivor Hael at Maesaleg, in Monmouthshire, and in course of time the satirist became steward to his patron and instructor to his only daughter.

About this time he loved a lady named Dyddgu, who, it appears, was obdurate to the poet's pleadings, though in charming verse he tried to win her to his "House of Leaves," and sang many songs in her favour.

At length, being somewhat exhausted with his lady-love's indifference, he sneers:—

"I am none of your lovers who gravely revere
Every nobly-born damsel as stiff as a spear!"

And again:—

"Thou wilt not be mine for abundance of song,
I know that thou wilt not, while thou art yet young;
But still I despair not, enchantress divine,
When nobody'll have thee, thou then shalt be mine."

Nevertheless, he continued singing to her, until the charms of Ivor Hael's daughter mastered her tutor, which amour obliged the Lord of Maesaleg to send his child to a convent in Anglesea. Undaunted, Dafydd soon followed, became a servant in a monastery near

her, and consoled his heart by writing verses in her honour, and among these is his address "To the Nun."

The literature of that period both in England and Wales was full of satire on the monks and friars; and Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," and Dafydd ab Gwilym's poems, give us a very good idea of the feelings with which some of the orders were regarded. Dafydd ab Gwilym, in his early life, held the priesthood in contempt, the Franciscan and Dominican friars being objects of his bitterest satire; but in old age he expressed much penitence for having so severely censured the representatives of religion.

The poems of Dafydd ab Gwilym were published in 1789 by Dr. Owen Pughe, and in 1834 Mr. Arthur J. Johnes, who wrote under the pseudonym "Maelog," published a translation. The poems are rendered into faithful English rhyme, and I prefer selecting extracts therefrom rather than trust to any new rendering, which would not help, but possibly mar, their pristine beauty.

Dafydd ab Gwilym's address "To the Nun" runs as follows:—

"Can it be

That the luxuriant birchen tree
Of summer hath no charms for thee?
And dost thou ceaselessly repeat
Thy psalter in yon still retreat?
They say, O star-like maid, thou art
Of yonder holy choir, a part. . . .

Hence with the bread and water, hence
With the vile cresses—and dispense
With paternosters—and give o'er
The Romish monks' religious lore;
Join not in spring the devotees,
Groves are more bright than nunneries!

Thy vows, O beauty, bright and mild,
With love can ne'er be reconciled ;
The ring, the cloak, the verdant dress,
Are better pledge of holiness ! . . .

Haste to the knotted birchen tree,
And learn the cuckoo's piety.
There, in the woodland, will thy mind
A path to heaven, O lady, find.
There Ovid's volume shalt thou read,
And there a spotless life we'll lead—
A life of liberty, where rise
The woodbines o'er the precipice ;
Doubt not, there too thou may'st be 'shriven,'
Full 'absolution' may be given,
Nor is it harder to reach heaven,
For those who make the groves their home,
Than to the sojourners at Rome ! ”

While passionately wooing Ivor Hael's daughter, this lover of many ladies first met—at Rhosyr in Anglesea—Morfudd, whom historians regard as the “Cambrian Petrarch's Laura.”

Morfudd was the daughter of Madog Lawgan of Anglesea, and in her honour the poet wrote many songs—one hundred and forty-seven being extant. Eventually, a primitive secret marriage was arranged between Morfudd and Dafydd ab Gwilym, and Madog Benfras, the bard, performed the ceremony. The poet thus describes the woodland marriage scene:—

“Metrical singer, foster-son of May !
I heard him in brilliant language
Prophecy without ceasing,
And read to the parish
The gospel without stammering !
He raised for us on the hills there
The sacred wafer made of a fair leaf,
And the nightingale, slender and tall,

From the corner of the glen near him,
Priest of the dingle ! sang to a thousand,
And the bells of the mass continually did ring.
And he raised the host
To the sky above the thicket,
And sang in stanzas to our Lord and Creator
With sylvan ecstasy and love !”

Wrath followed this woodland wedding. Morfudd's kinfolk disliked the poet, and at once compelled the beautiful lady to marry decrepid old Cynfrig Cynin or Bwa Bach (little hunchback), who lived at Brynillin, in Merionethshire.

Cynfrig, the “little hunchback,” became the sport of the poet's muse, and in a short time we find Dafydd eloping with Morfudd !

Woe befell them for breaking the seventh commandment. The fugitives were followed, found, and separated. Old Cynfrig Cynin prosecuted, and Dafydd ab Gwylim was fined, but the penalty was so heavy that he failed to pay it, and was accordingly thrust into prison.

From north to south the news of the poet's imprisonment ran like lightning, and so highly was Dafydd ab Gwylim esteemed, that the county of Glamorgan paid the fine, and he was released.

Historians, making no allowance for the age in which Dafydd lived, generally regard him as a libertine. His loves were many, and his amatory poems prove him to have flitted from love to love, like a bee from flower to flower, still ever remaining truest to Morfudd.

Judged by no over zealous moral rigour, it may be said of him, as Longfellow sang of Burns :—

“ He sings of love, whose flame illumines
The darkness of lone cottage rooms ;
He feels the force,

The treacherous under-tow and stress,
Of wayward passions, and no less

The keen remorse.

At moments wrestling with his fate,
His voice is harsh but not with hate.

But still the burden of his song

Is love of right, disdain of wrong ;

Its master chords

Are Manhood, Freedom, Brotherhood ;

Its discords but an interlude

Between the words."

late 14th century
Dafydd ab Gwilym's amatory songs are very similar in style, and as the verses of the Petrarchs to their Lauras of all ages and nations have much the same ring, one literal translation from the works of this poet of wild Wales shall suffice.

The poet having duly and in a becoming manner "died of love," leaves directions for his funeral.

"TO MORFUDD.

"My spotless shroud shall be of summer flowers,
My coffin hewed from out the woodland bowers ;
The flowers of wood and wild shall be my pall,
My bier, light forest branches green and tall ;
And thou shalt see the white gulls of the main
In thousands gather there to bear my train !"

Two nightingales were to be chosen by Morfudd as priests of the sanctuary, while—

"Skilled are its holy monks of orders grey
In Latin lore, and in poetic lay ;
In all the metres ever writ or read,
In the green volumes through the forests spread !

There, organ-like, the nightingales shall roll
His notes in solemn masses for my soul ;

Sweet orisons and paternosters shall be said
The summer through, in honour of the dead ;
Until the spirit of the bard shall rise,
Freed from its sins, and soar to Paradise !”

All that is beautiful and lofty is contained in the poems he sings to nature, and I fancy few are sweeter than his “ May,” which I give in full.

“ MAY.

“ Many a poet in his lay
Told me May would come again.
Truly sang the bard—for May
Yesterday began to reign !
She is like a bounteous lord,
Gold enough she gives to me—
Gold such as the poets hoard—
‘ Florins’ of the mead and tree,
Hazel-flowers, and ‘ fleurs-de-lis.’
Underneath her leafy wings
I am safe from treason’s stings ;
I am full of wrath with May
That she will not always stay !
Maidens never hear of love
But when she has plumed the grove.
Giver of the gift of song,
To the poet’s heart and tongue.
May ! majestic child of heaven,
To the earth is glory given,
Verdant hills, days long and clear,
Come when she is hovering near.
Stars, ye cannot journey on
Joyously when she is gone !
Ye are not so glossy bright,
Blackbirds, when she takes her flight ;
Sweetest art thou nightingale ;
Poet, thou can’st tell thy tale
With a lighter heart, when May
Rules with all her bright array !”

Dafydd ab Gwylim reserves the ancient enthusiasm that once made Welsh poetry a power stronger than the force of arms for his odes to the elements, and from these I take a few extracts:—

“TO THE WIND.

“Wind of the North ! No craft may chain,
No brand may scorch thy goblin wing ;
Thou scatterest with thy giant mane
The leafy palaces of Spring !
Phantom of terror and delight !
Thousands have heard thy airy feet
When, with wild boyhood’s playful sleight,
Thou fling’st the breakers’ tiny sleet,
Or o’er the hoary oak’s dismantled height
Seek’st thy couch of waves unsearchable as night !”

“TO THE THUNDER.

“Clanging armour of the heaven,
Fire and wave in warfare driven,
Flame of wrath, and waves that tame
By their mighty gush, the flame.
Giant echoes of dismay,
Trumpet of the whitening spray ;
Like a thousand voices blending
From the stars of heaven descending ;
Like the crash of forests, hurled
From the welkin to our world !”

“TO THE SNOW.

“Not April’s choicest flowers outvie
Those chilly blossoms of the sky :
They seem ’mid Gwyneth’s stormy skies
Like the white bees of Paradise !”

According to the old Welsh superstition, bees were

white until they were banished with Adam and Eve from Paradise.

The weirdness of Wales cling to his poems "The Mist," "The Stars," and the "Owl's Pedigree."

"TO THE MIST.

"Thou cassock ! woven by wizard spell,
Smoke of the goblin forge of hell ;
Spread like the spider's filmy roof,
Veil of the skies, the tempest's woof ;
The pathless snow is in thy breast,
In thee secure the felon's rest.
On wings obscure, with frosty breath
Thou spread'st the brittle boughs of heath ;
As thou dost float, the fairy tribe
Make thy long flaggy skirts their gibe !
Fleece of the rock, cowl of the heaven,
Thou banished wave from ocean driven,
Cloud of the crooked mountain tower,
Can'st thou not burst, one single hour !"

The poet's path to Morfudd was veiled by the cruel mist, moreover, he was in personal peril, and declares :—

"In endless, viewless swamps I fell ;
In every dank and dwarfish dell
A hundred wry-mouthed goblins cast
Mad laughter on me !"

And dolefully he wanders, the sport of the fairies, but bye-and-by his Welsh "fire" is up, and he exclaims that the mist shall never again lead him—

"The jest of fiends, through briar and brake,
E'en for my matchless Morfudd's sake !"

Very beautiful is his address—

“TO THE STARS.

“Twelve signs of hope at his command,
With showers of splendour light the land,
Majestic splendours, sparks of seven
Fires, that illumine the saints in heaven.
Fruits of the dim moon’s glimmerings cold,
Fair diadem around her roll’d !
Omens of seasons bright and fair,
Bright signals in the heavens displayed,
Scattered like hailstones everywhere—
Like hailstones of the sunbeams made !
Grand coinage of the Deity,
And golden treasure of the sky ;
Those chessmen clearly marked on high
On the broad chessboard of the sky !”

Last we have the quaint dialogue between the Poet
and the Owl in—

“THE OWL’S PEDIGREE.

Poet. “Bird of wondrous sorrows, though
With thy countenance of age,
Wilt thou to the bard avow
What thy name and lineage ?”

Owl. “By the men of noble race
I am called ‘Unrivalled Face’
At the banquetings of yore,
I, the name ‘Flower Aspect’ bore.
I was daughter of a chief,
Proudly through the land of Mon
As the son of Meirchion known,
Rich in golden stores—”

Poet. “O Grief !
Maiden who art called ‘The Morn,’
Who then wrought this fearful change ?”

Owl. “Gwydion, son of Don, in scorn

With his wand of magic sway
Changed my beauty's proud array
For the aspect you behold !
In revenge, because of old
Gronwy, Pevyr, Garanhir
Of tall form, and noble cheer,
Penllyn's lord—to me was dear !”

Blodenwedd, “ Flower Aspect,” was changed into an owl by Gwydion ap Don, the enchanter, as a punishment for her infidelity to her husband.

Dafydd ab Gwylim numbered among his friends Madog Benfras and Gruffydd Grygg of Anglesea, and the latter bard, who was a genius, wrote poems ridiculing our poet for being a slave to the charms of Morfydd.

Gruffydd Grygg—the poet of strong song—despised too much of the light wine of love, so, after the “ wicked ” elopement, his wrath, long kindled, waxed fierce, and he waged stern warfare against his friend. Dafydd ab Gwylim swiftly and fiercely responded ; the poetic fire on both sides seemed quenchless, until one Bola Bael laid a wager that he would bring peace.

For this purpose Bola went to North Wales and spread the report that the much maligned “ nightingale of Dyved ” was dead, whereupon Gruffydd Grygg, sorely grieved, bewailed his loss in a grand elegy.

This accomplished, Bola proceeded to South Wales, and carefully rumoured that Gruffydd Grygg was dead. Sad at heart, and in fulness of sorrow, Dafydd ab Gwylim began to lament, and composed an elegy on the death of his brother bard. Some historians assert that the “ nightingale of Dyved ” went to the supposed funeral of Gruffydd Grygg, where the poets met and ever afterwards remained warm friends. Bola's strate-

gem was truly effectual, whether the funeral part of the story is correct or not.

Dafydd ab Gwylim's addresses to the monks are full of sarcasm, and in some instances very severe. I select extracts from the mildest:—

“TO A GREY BROTHER.

“From heaven all joy and gladness flow,
All sadness from the depths below ;
My song the sorrows can assuage
Of health and sickness, youth and age,
And natural is poesy
To me, as preaching is to thee :
And, justly, hospitality
Is prized by me, as alms by thee.

There is, sir priest, a proper time
Alike for sermons and for rhyme ;
Verse was intended to delight,
Amid the banquet, ladies bright.
In church the paternosters rise
To raise the soul to Paradise.
Well did the brave Ystudfach say,
Regaling with the bardic throng,
That ‘ plenty lives with spirits gay,
But evil dwells with faces long ! ’ ”

Here is another poem, also addressed to a grey brother of Anglesea:—

“Long life, fair journeys, offerings rare
Fall to the chattering raven's share !
The figure like a shadow—those
Deserve not peace who are his foes !
From Rome he comes with naked feet
And tresses like a thorny nest !
In petticoat of net-work dressed
He walks the world, O pastor meet,
A parish with wise words to greet ! ”

The poems of Dafydd ab Gwylim never weary us. He flits from grave to gay, from myth to reality; now moving one to mirth, then to tears, still ever luring us on from scene to scene.

Picture him as he looked—a boy-poet, tall and slender, with golden flowing hair and laughing eyes, watching the wine-feast at Emlyn, and longing to quaff deep draughts from the uplifted beakers. Or watch him during vespers, looking afar—above and beyond the sunset glory in nave and chancel, over the shadows of crowded cowls, and the vapour of incense—for a religion that should leave his soul free from trammels, and his conscience to be self-accusing.

Look at him again. The merry maidens are making sport of his “fine ringlets;” even as he goes home from church they saucily say, “his sister’s hair is on his head,” while he gaily doffs his cap, and bids them beware of the gallant who soon would have all their hearts without “troubling to beg them.”

Follow him home, where soon he is making jest of his neighbours, satirising the priesthood, sneering at the Franciscans and Dominicans whom his father revered, until misunderstandings arise causing the poet’s flight to Maesaleg.

There we find him quaffing deep draughts of luscious mead, the beads and bubbles of which—proof of its quality—“swim around the beaker’s brim;” meanwhile casting covert glances at his “dear perfect Dyddgu,” and the latter in turn dashes the contents of the gift-goblet at the love messenger’s feet. Later on he is whispering “sweet thoughts” over books to his patron’s only child, or praising proud but kindly Ivor Hael’s lofty hospitality. Then we see the Lord of

Maesaleg frowning on the amour but not on the poet's praises; we follow the heiress to the convent and the troubadour as he wanders among the peaks and precipices of the north towards Anglesea, where he becomes a trusty servant in a monastery, choosing rather to serve the "merry monks" for love's dear sake rather than live love-lorn in Maesaleg.

It was but a summer passion, for by and by "dearest, sweetest Morfudd" is accepting his love-gifts, and the marriage ceremony is solemnised in the lonely woodlands with Madog Benfras for priest, and the choir of feathered "monks," skilled in "nature's religious lore." Then follow the parents' wrath and the forced "formal" marriage. Old Cynfrig Cynin, or Bwa Bach (the little hunchback), leaning on his sword, leers at his bidden bride, revels in his success at finding the fugitives, and delights in thrusting his poet-foe into prison.

Then the people of Glamorgan are aroused, and speedily defy the "beloved" poet's enemy.

In return Dafydd ab Gwylim invokes Summer, and begs it to be his messenger of gratitude to "dear Glamorgan." He sings:—

"Thou Summer! father of delight,
With thy dense sprays and thickets deep:
Gemm'd monarch, with thy rapturous light,
Rousing thy subject glens from sleep.
Proud has thy march of triumph been,
Thou prophet, priest of forest green!

O Summer, do I ask in vain?
Thus in thy glory, wilt thou deign
My messenger to be?

Henceforth from bowels of the land
Of wild, wild Gwyneth, to the strand
Of fair Glamorgan—ocean's band.—

Sweet margin of the sea !

To dear Glamorgan, when we part,
O bear a thousand times, my heart !
Take on her lovely vales thy stand,
And tread and trample round the land,
The beauteous shores whose harvest lies
All sheltered from inclement skies !
Radiant with corn and vineyards sweet,
And lakes of fish, and mansions neat,
With halls of stone where kindness dwells,
And where each hospitable lord
Heaps for the stranger-guest his board !
And where the generous wine cups swells,
And trees that bear the luscious pear
So thickly clustering everywhere,
That the fair county of my love
Looks dense as one continuous grove !
Her lofty woods with warblers teem,
Her fields with flowers that love the stream,
Her valleys varied crops display,
Eight kinds of corn, and three of hay.
Bright parlour, with its trefoiled floor,
Sweet garden spread on ocean's shore ! . . .

Plant on the verdant coast thy feet,
Her lofty hills, her woodlands sweet ;
O lavish blossoms with thy hand
O'er all the forests of the land,
And let thy gifts like floods descending
On every hill and glen be blending ;
Let orchard, garden, vine express
Thy fulness and thy fruitfulness,
O'er all the land of beauty fling
The costly traces of thy wing ! ”

Once more the poet takes us to Maesaleg and shows us the wonder of its stately halls—sings of the dignity

and grace of Ivor Hael, from whom the present Lord Tredegar is descended—makes us acquainted with the ancestral towers, the ravines and mountains, the meadows and sea of the south, the charms of Monmouth, and the glories of Glamorgan, and all in golden-mailed song glittering with gems of rarest purity.

Here we watch a war of satire between Dafydd and Rhys Meigan. In this poetical contest the battle waxes fierce and strong, while Ivor Hael and Nest his wife gaze steadily upon the fatal fray until Rhys Meigan falls dead of word-warfare, and the sword-thrust of Dafydd ab Gwylim's satire.

This poetical duel is excellently described by Mr. Charles Wilkins, F.G.S., author of the "History of Merthyr," and "Tales and Sketches of Wales."

Mr. Wilkins says: "The poetical contest was, in fact, a poetical duel—couplets used instead of swords, elaborate fencing at the beginning, then deadly thrust or crushing blow."

Meigan. Give me the power to make the heart
 Feel gladdened as I sing my song,
And let my strain be sweet, not tart,
 As through my life I journey on.

Dafydd. The wasp may crave to be a bee,
 The robin sigh to be a lark ;
But, Meigan, thou canst never be
 Other than the fool thou art.

Meigan. Fool to thyself I'd rather be
 Rhys Meigan, than wear yellow hair,
And prating, puling lover be,
 Whose only joy is with the fair. . . .

Dafydd. Why, 'tis my joy 'neath beauty's smile
 To linger all the livelong day ;
Life's summer only lasts awhile,
 We look—and she has flown away.

Meigan appeared at a loss what to reply, and as he seemed to falter, ab Gwylim continued :—

“So, Meigan, try and get a wife . . .
Thyself and not the grapes are sour ;
Try rope and tree, not minstrelsy,
And quickly end thy luckless hour.”

The luckless bard, overwhelmed with ridicule, swayed suddenly to and fro, then fell heavily, and when a crowd rushed to help, Gwylim amongst the foremost, Meigan was dead !

Later on the Lord of Emlyn, the “Bosom-hand of the people,” is laid low by the dagger of the assassin, on whom the poet’s anathemas fall.

Long afterwards, Dafydd ab Gwylim frowns at the ravages time has made in his own visage, and he laments the loss of those attractions that lured women, and whirled them with the magic of his wizard-woven love.

At last he is left mournfully to survive all the friends of his youth and manhood, while he wails piteously, as if his great throbbing heart must be silenced with sobs and the sigh—

“Ivor is gone, my friend and guide,
And Nest, my patroness, his bride !
Morfudd, my soul’s delight, is fled,
All moulder in their clay-cold bed !
While I, oppressed with woe, remain
Victim to age and lingering pain !”

Finally we see him with folded fingers, and kneeling before heaven’s shrine, pouring forth a flood of eloquent penitence in a confessional ode for having satirised the priesthood. Yet even then the spirit of old is not

quenched, for in the midst of soul humiliation he pauses to express the wish that "no monk," no "priestly enemies," shall survive to witness the change. At the last, in his "Death-bed Lay," we hear him, pain-worn and weary, yet piously, loftily, craving his Creator's pardon for past sins.

Then all is over.

Where the fleet but shallow Teivi flows, where rugged mountains throw their solemn shadows, in the ruined monastery of Ystrad Flûr, (Strata Florida,) among crowned kings, mitred abbots, and cowled monks, the favourite singer of wild Wales rests.

His is a nameless grave, a grass-grown mound, where the sleeper sleeps while others sing; but his songs still live in the hearts of the people, and bloom among the solitudes of Wales like blossoms of may fresh with the dews of the morning.

After Dafydd ab Gwylim the most important poets of Wales were Lewis Glyn Cothi, who lived in the fifteenth century; Iolo Goch; Rhys the Red; Iolo the Red, Owen Glyndwr's favourite bard; and numerous others, until Goronwy Owain began to sing when Wales entered into what has been aptly called "the valley of the shadow of death," the eighteenth century.

The works of these and many other Welsh poets lure one to linger among them, and to cull specimens of their delightful verses, but space will not permit.

Goronwy Owain appears in striking contrast to Dafydd ab Gwylim.

The poet of the eighteenth century came nearer to the struggling impulses and throes of the present day than his predecessors. He had many sorrows which tinged his poems with lofty melancholy, and grievous

longings for the dear old home in Wales, and his life was a prolonged scene of weariful disappointment and meekly-borne adversity.

Goronwy Owain, the son of peasant parents, was born in the year 1722, in the desolate and dreary village of Llanfair Mathafarn Eithaf in Anglesea. His father was too poor to give him any education, but Lewis Morris, the bard, seeing in the boy tokens of genius, took charge of him, and sent him to school, and afterwards to Jesus College, Oxford. There Goronwy studied for the Church, became a Latin and Greek scholar, meanwhile writing Welsh poems which possess great merit and striking originality.

At the age of twenty-three he was ordained, but had the greatest possible difficulty in obtaining a curacy. At length, on becoming curate of Oswestry, he married and had two sons and one daughter.

He received a pitiful stipend of thirty pounds a year, with painfully cruel discouragements and rebuffs, both from fate and the ecclesiastical authorities, and in 1756 he was forced to go with his family to London, where he lived almost penniless, unrecognised, and vainly struggling to find some congenial employment.

At the beginning of his career he was offered the curacy of his native village, Llanfair, and of him George Borrow says:—"Scarcely had he been there three weeks when he had to vacate Llanfair, to make room for a young clergyman of large independent fortune, who was wishing for a curacy under the Bishop of Bangor. So poor Goronwy, the eloquent, the learned, the meek, was obliged to vacate the pulpit of his native place to make room for the rich young clergyman who wanted to be within dining distance

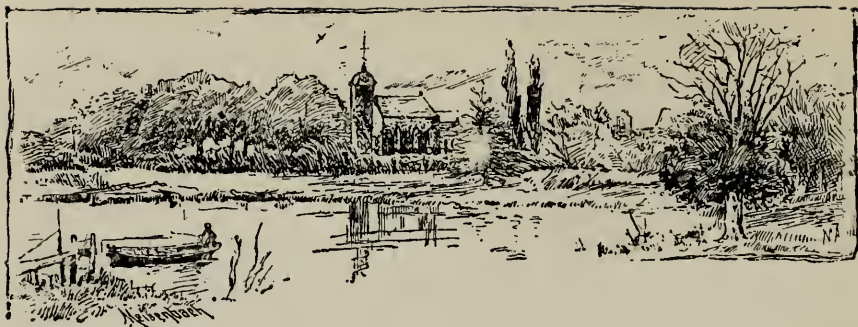
of the Palace of Bangor. Truly in this world the full shall be crammed, and those who have little shall have that little taken away from them!"

Goronwy Owain's finest poem is his "Ode to the Day of Judgement," which is a masterly conception, fraught with sublime power and majestic melody. The lesser poems include some very touching verses on his little daughter Ellen, while his lines written in a London garret contain sadly vivid and original descriptions of the never-ceasing and unfriendly multitudes that constantly passed to and fro under his window.

Later on Lewis Morris found him an appointment as a schoolmaster in New Brunswick, where, exiled from and still yearning for the dear old mother country, he died.

Over his grave the icy blasts of a strange land blow and his dust mingles with alien earth, but his memory lives and his name survives as the last of the greatest bards of Wales.





XII.

WELSH PARSONS OF THE PAST.

PO ago-saf i'r eglwys, pellaf o Baradwys" ("The nearer the church the further from Paradise") is a Welsh proverb that could rightly be applied to the ecclesiastical past of Wales.

The state of the Church in the seventeenth century is described in the journal of Dr. Lewis Bailey, Bishop of Bangor.

Writing in 1623, thirty years after the martyrdom of John Penry, the Bishop says:—"In Anglesea, at Pennon, no sermon had been preached there for five or six years. At Llangwyllog there was no preaching at all; at Llandensant and Llanfair Ynghornwy, Sir John Edwards, the curate, had omitted to read the burial services and the homilies, neglected baptisms and burials, and had not preached since the preceding Whitsun twelve months: he spent most of his time in public-houses, and quarrelled with his neighbours and others. At Llanellechid, in Carnarvonshire, it was

complained that the Rev. Dr. Williams sent his horses to the graveyard, and that he did not see that it was cleaned after them, and that for the preceding two years he had not preached more than once. At Dolwyddelan there was no preaching at all; at Dwygyfylchi it was complained that Sir Edward Jones, the vicar, mowed hay in the churchyard, and converted it into a corn-yard; that he kept his saddle and beehives in the church, and that he neglected to hold communion the preceding Easter. At Aberdaron it was complained that Sir Griffith Parry had, through non-attendance, kept the corpse of a child named Hugh Thomas unburied from Monday to Sunday, and that when he came on the Sunday he was drunk."

In a pamphlet dated 1646, and entitled "Contemplation on these Times or the Parliament explained to Wales," by John Lewis, Esq., of Glasgrug, Cardiganshire, it is stated that they had: "A wretched sermon now and then . . . it being commonly, too, such stuff you know not whether it savours stronger of ale or the pocket. . . . In addition to the charge of indolence and immorality which Penry brought against the clergy of Wales, was that of being ignorant of the language of the people to whom they were supposed to minister. This charge is abundantly justified by the history of the Welsh Church from his day until now."

Physiologists tell us that those senses which are never exercised become enfeebled, useless, and eventually decay or die, leaving no traces behind them.

It is thus with the Welsh parson of the past. He lost his utility and ceased to exist, simply because there was no longer a place or demand for him and the class to which he belonged.

The Welsh parson of fifty, sixty, and seventy years ago was either a favourite of the bishop of the diocese, the son of a nobleman or county gentleman, and the holder of a rich living, or else a poor, ill-paid, badly fed specimen of humanity, receiving a miserable stipend scarcely sufficient to keep body and soul together.

The one, "a gentleman at large," was a kind of *flotsam* and *jetsam*, drifting hither and thither on the tide of life; the other had to struggle against the breakers, and perhaps succumb to the strong currents of adversity.

The prosperous and irresponsible parson never took up life's burdens, because he carefully avoided seeking any to carry. Others may be foolish enough to hamper themselves with all sorts of responsibilities, but he would not. The present brought him no cares or troubles, and, with regard to the future, he was unconcerned only so far as it affected his pleasures. Would to-morrow bring a wind favourable for studies in trout streams? Would the sky be cloudy enough for the harriers to run? Would Sunday be fine for football?

These were the only contingencies that chequered his future—rendering it shadowy or full of brightness, gay or gloomy.

He lived an unreflecting life, and drew all his pleasures and sorrows from the surface.

"It is by the Vicar's skirts that the Devil climbs into the belfry," says the old adage, and, following in the wake of the Welsh parson of the past, the country folk allowed dancing, wrestling, football, mirth and minstrelsy, to infringe upon the sanctity of the Sabbath.

"Whatever do make the wenches go down to sea every Sunday evening for a walk," said an aged dame to her great-granddaughter.

"Didn't you go for a walk after church?" asked the girl.

"Nobody did in my time," was the reply.

"What did you do then?"

"Why, we did come in and change our frocks, and go and dance on the Great Ley, to be sure. Nobody went a walkin' unless they was courtin' in earnest."

At that time the parson thought nothing of playing football with the men and boys of the parish on Sunday. Many of the older people say they well remember the vicar playing ball with the village boys in the church-yard.

The parochial duties of the hunting parson were fulfilled by his curate if he had one, otherwise the work was reluctantly accomplished by fits and starts when necessity compelled.

Then there was the convivial parson, who loved his glass and pipe as well as his brother of the cloth liked to don the scarlet and follow the hounds.

Men at that time, in all ranks of life, drank freely, and often deeply, and if the vicar was what they called "a jolly good fellow," the better he was liked. Very often the vicar, rector, or curate of this type was intelligent, frank, and fond of acknowledging his failings.

A rector of this description, who lived in the west of Glamorgan, was called "Pentyrfyniad da" ("good resolutions").

He wrote out the following rules, and announced his intention of strictly adhering to them:—

To drink four glasses only of strong beer each day at dinner. The first to the King's health, the second to the Royal Family, the third for all friends, and the fourth to present company. With reference to wine or

punch, he resolved daily to take eight glasses only, each glass to hold *only half a quarter of a pint* of liquid, and to go to bed promptly at "ten of the clock!"

These resolutions, which at least provided for an ample supply of liquor, were annually written out on the last day of the old year, and duly kept during the first week of the new year, but after that—alas! for the frailty of human will—the rector relapsed into his old habits, and returned to his customary corner in the village inn. There he would spend the long winter evenings, sometimes in song and minstrelsy, when the parson's fiddle and the sexton's flute were to be heard accompanying "the best singer in the parish."

"Seventy-six years ago," said a parishioner, "I remember seeing Pentyrfyniad da,' as my father and uncles always called him, dressed in his everyday suit, with white breeches and yellow gaiters, coming to church, where he would put on his surplice while saying aloud to the clerk, "Billy, what day of the month is it?"

Another rector of the old school went to church one Sunday morning, and waited for a congregation that never came.

Ten or fifteen minutes after the time for commencing the service, he said to the sexton, "Go and see if anybody is coming."

The sexton went, and returned saying, "No; I don't see nobody comin'."

"Ring again, and a bit louder," said the rector, and the sexton did as he was bidden.

"Go now and see if anybody is coming," said the rector in five minutes' time.

The sexton went, and returned, impatiently saying, "No, indeed to goodness, there's nobody comin'."

"What shall we do?" asked the rector.

"Leave it to the Devil!" was the irreverent and abrupt reply, and forthwith the rector and the sexton adjourned to the "Plough and Harrow," where they held a meeting more congenial to their tastes.

In those days it was not at all unusual to hear the parson and clerk reading a portion of the service and the prayer for the King and Royal Family, then leave the church for the dancing or football field.

The sermons of that period were sometimes very peculiar and personal, and in many respects resembled the fifteenth century discourses of Father Barletta, the Dominican friar, or those homilies that were popular in Italy, France, and Austria in the later half of the eighteenth century. Many of these excited the laughter of the hearers, and would have sounded better on the lecture platform or on the stage.

Some years ago the late Canon Jenkins, Rector of Merthyr Tydfil, in a lecture on "The Church in Wales," gave a specimen of a Welsh sermon of the old style. Canon Jenkins discovered it in the British Museum, where it is still to be seen. The publication of this sermon roused the ire of several good-meaning Welshmen, who said it was the satirical production of an English writer, whose aim was to ridicule the Welsh. Whether their opinion was correct or not, the sermon bears a striking resemblance to those which were sometimes preached in out-of-the-way villages, where the parson was very familiar with the people.

Canon Jenkins said the title of the discourse was "The funeral sermon of one David Morgan, Rector of

Llanymawddy—a funeral sermon for a dead body.” The most singular thing was that the text was in English, though at that time there was no place in the world more Welsh than Dinas Mawddwy, where the post only went once in fourteen days. The rector was the veritable man that used to be chaffed for having prayed for fourteen days for King William after Queen Victoria had ascended the throne. It was a most extraordinary thing that David Morgan should preach a sermon in English. This parson of the old school was by no means particular as to his divinity. His sermons were full of anachronisms. He would illustrate the first century of the Christian era by pictures taken out of the eighteenth. The sermon began thus:—“Good people of Llanymawddy, my dear beloved brethren, we are met here to-day for a great preachment—a preachment for a dead body—the body of Squire Thomas, the squire of our parish. We did all love him, though he had scolded us shocking; but he is dead now, as dead as a door nail—yes, indeed—for I did see him with my own eyes before they did screw him up.” It is only fair to David Morgan to say that the Bible had been stolen. “The text is taken from the four-and-twentieth chapter of the Prophet Maccabeus; well, indeed, I have forgotten the number of the verse, but I do know the words—I do know them in three languages. The Latin language—it is the language of all learned people; I do know them in the English language—it is the language of all genteel people; I do know ‘Watch and Pray;’ I do know them in the Welsh language—of course it is the language of all vulgar people. Now I will stick to my text; I will indeed. Our great grandfather Adam was a very good

old man, and he was a very happy old man till he did marry a wife. He did live in the Garden of Paradise. He did want for nothing, for everything did grow into his own hand; he did not want for nothing there, neither a basin nor a spoon. Talk about gardens, there was a garden! The garden of Squire Thomas was nothing to it, and you know that has four walls; and it would take 20,000 of Squire Thomas's to make such a Garden of Paradise. All sorts of trees did grow there—plum trees, gooseberry trees, strawberry trees, pear trees, and apple trees. Talk about apple dumplings, you men of Llanymawddy, you do boast of your apple dumplings as if there was no apple dumplings in all the world like them, and indeed they are very good, only they do want a little more sugar; but if you had apples from the garden of Paradise, you would want no sugar at all. Well, I did tell you that he did marry a wife, our old grandfather, and oh! there was a beautiful woman; there was a fine figure; and there was hair, but it did grow all over her head and down her back. She did wear it in all sorts of shapes—she did wear it like a tower of Babel on her head, and it was all her own hair. Still she was, I do tell you, the beautifullest of all women, but she was a very peculiar woman. She did want to know everything—things that she ought not to know. And, O women of Llanymawddy! she did go about the garden, and what did happen unto her? She did get with the Devil, and the Devil did teach her all sorts of things, and he did persuade her to go and rob the orchard, and did persuade her to eat the apple, and she did eat the apple, every bit of it, pipskin and all. And then the Devil did persuade her to put one in her pocket, and take it home for her

husband, and he did obey his wife like a good man. Well, after this she did have two brave boys; but one was a bad boy—an unlawful rogue, like his mother. He did concern with the Devil; then the Devil did tempt him to kill his own brother, and that was the cause of all the mischief in the world. It did bring all the lawyers into the world; all the constables into the world; all the excise men—people who go about praying for a drop of good liquor, but there never was a drop of good liquor ever afterwards. Mind you, do not go to the ale-house. It is very bad there. He did go and drink all day there, and come home at night and abuse his family shocking; he did kick his wife and abuse his children, like what you do do, William Thomas, and the same as you did do last Saturday night. Well, I did tell you about judgments coming into the world. Remember this, there will be one great day of judgment, and the parson of Llanymawddy will be asked the question as to the sheeps in his possession. And I will tell the truth plump and plain. I will say there is no sheeps; you are all turned goats, with shaggy hair all over, for you have never given me tithe wool from the very day I did come here till now.”

An aged Vale farmer, whose word could not be doubted, gave the following description of a sermon he had heard in his boyhood. He had forgotten the text, but thought it must have been “Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.” He failed to remember the whole of the sermon, but naturally could give those portions which most impressed his boyish mind. It ran thus:—

“Here we do see before us a shocking bad man. . . . He is so bad that nobody will look at him. He has

been doing all sorts of sins, and by this time he is every inch a sinner. . . . Yes, indeed; and all of you do come and look at him; you do know you do. And I'd like to know which of you is without sin. Yes, indeed, and that I would. . . . There are you, Modryb (aunt) Molly, sitting up there in our pew as prim as you please—are you without sin? No, indeed to goodness, nobody can say that—and live with you. For you do werrit the life out of all the mauids, to say nothing of the men, with your fidgets. You do lock up the food from the hungry, and the drink from the thirsty, and there is no kindness in you. . . . And God will lock you up, as you do lock the food, in the cupboard of His wrath. . . . So you can't shot a stone at the bad man. . . . And there are you, Jack the Mill—I do know your sins well anuff, and p'rhaps better than yourself. . . . I do know your little tricks with the weights and measures, and whether you do believe it or not the time will come when God will weigh you. And then when He do find you have put in a few pounds for the missionaries, and a guinea or so for the poor of the parish, just to make weight, He will say, 'A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is His delight.' . . . Sally James, if I don't know your sins, I don't know what I do know. You do put alum in the bread, that's what you do do—and you do put a parcel of potatoes in it too. And for all that you do say your prayers and 'Amen' like the parish clerk. . . . And there are you, Watkin the Shop, I do know what you do do. Only the other day I did ketch you in a nice little bit of cheatery. You did stretch that two yards of flannel last week unmerciful, that you did. . . . And you did wet the

sugar to make it heavy, till it did run like treacle, and yet you do sing the hymns as loud as the psalm singers. . . . I do know what you be all of you, jest as well as if I was inside of you. You do sin in a small way, and you do think God don't notice it, but I can tell you there is more hopes for the shocking bad man who do sin right out in the face of the world, than for them that do sin behind the doors and in the corners. . . . And you are simple anuff to think God don't see through cracks, but I can tell you He do see through stone walls—the stone walls of your own blind ignorance. . . . There, you can go now, and next time we do meet 'Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.'"

There was not the slightest irreverence in this style of preaching, and in some instances the wholesome lesson administered in a quaint and familiar fashion was more productive of good than a learned homily would have been.

Even in the present day some very original and peculiar sermons are to be heard in the rural districts of Wales, but this method of preaching is never adopted now by clergymen of the Church of England. Dissenting ministers of various denominations have liberty to preach in any manner they like, provided the sermon is orthodox.

The most peculiar results occur when a Welsh minister endeavours to preach in English. A very worthy and much respected minister once said in the course of his sermon, "Not the sheeps (ships) that do sail on the ocean, but the sheeps that do graze on the mountain."

Naturally such an expression might be expected of any person speaking in an unfamiliar language.

To return to clergymen and the Church.

Orchestral music was general in Wales at that period. All parish churches had good choirs that sang to the accompaniment of "bass viol," bassoons, clarionets, and violins. The singing and music were both excellent, and, in some instances, better than in the present day.

Crying lost goods, and making ordinary parochial announcements in church, was a general practice so late as fifty years ago. This custom, which is "more honoured in the breach than in the observance," must have been very peculiar.

The clerk, in the tone and manner of a town crier, called out aloud—

"Lost, stolen, or strayed !

"Three fat sheep and a very lean cow. Whoever will return the same to the Lower House shall be suitably rewarded."

Here is another:—

"Lost, on Sunday last, between the church and the Town Hall, a lady's fine gold brooch, set with pearls and rubies. The reward of one guinea makes it worth while for anybody to return it."

The honesty of the parishioners must have been in a very lax condition, to be bribed only by a large reward.

Still more of these extraordinary announcements:—

"Take notice! Take notice!

"There is a mad dog going the round of the parish with two crop ears and a very long tail!"

Rabies among sheep and cattle were very prevalent at that time, and whole flocks and herds had to be destroyed.

“Beware! Beware!

“Of a man with one eye talking like a preacher, and a wooden leg given to begging and stealing!”

What a very peculiar eye and leg his must have been!

“Take notice!

“A thief is going through the Vale of Glamorgan selling tin ware, false gold, trinkets, and rings, and other domestic implements and instruments, and robbing houses of hens, chickens, eggs, butter, and other portable animals, making all sorts of pretences to get money!”

Last but not least is this:—

“Mislaidd on Sunday last!

“The gold-rimmed vicar’s spectacles of best glass taken from his eyes in going into the poor-box, or put down somewhere when going into the font to fetch the water after the christening.”

The vicar must have been a rare and extraordinary spectacle! He was not only a gold-rimmed man, but the glass was taken from his eyes; he was small enough to get into the poor-box, and able to perform the curious feat of getting into the font!

In those days it was by no means unusual to hear the parson publicly rebuking offenders—even calling them by name. On the other hand, members of the congregation were in the habit of rising from their seats in order to contradict the parson or the clerk.

An eye-witness described the following scene:—

Clerk. There will be a service here as usual, on Thursday evening next.

Churchwarden. No, there won’t. We be going to carry hay all day Thursday.

Clerk. But the service will be held as usual.

Churchwarden. Then there'll be nobody here. 'D'ye think we're comin' to church and leave the hay in the fields? No, no, p'rhaps it'll rain Friday."

Another time the same clerk made the announcement that a parish meeting would be held on a certain date.

"No, no," said the vicar. "D'ye think I'd attend to business on the audit day!"

The audit day was devoted to feasting and conviviality, in which the vicar always took a prominent part.

The parsons of that period were frequently called upon to lay ghosts. This was done reverently and with due solemnity, and as a rule the service was effectual in securing the peace of ghost-ridden people.

These were the Welsh parsons of the past. They lived an easy-going life, in which pleasure largely preponderated, while thought and studies were left to the winds, and clerical dignity was lost in the wine-cup.

Here and there, as pillars of strength amid the ruins of a decaying class, eminent divines kept their places and dignity. They were the exceptions, whose names are handed down to posterity as household words, and whose deeds are recorded in the ecclesiastical history of Wales.

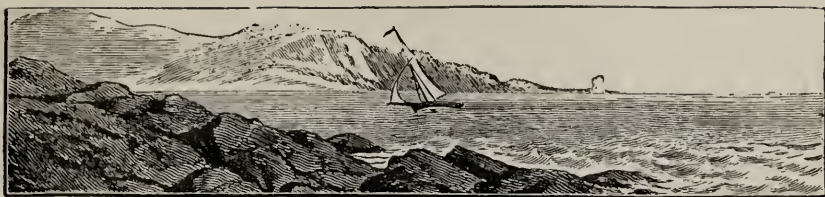
Amongst the most prominent men of this class in the eighteenth century was the Rev. Griffith Jones, who claims the notice of posterity as the founder of a system of free education for Wales, in a time when books were scarce and few people could read and write.

This eminent divine was ordained in 1708, and appointed rector of Llanddowror in 1715. He was so eloquent a preacher that his services were in great demand both in North and South Wales. Endowed by nature with an unflagging spirit, he was able to surmount all difficulties, and travelled all through the Principality preaching the Gospel with such rare eloquence, that he numbered among his converts the gifted Rowlands of Llangeitho, Peter Williams, and the celebrated John Elias.

He established institutions in various parts of Wales, not only for the education of children, but colleges where teachers received instruction, and were trained for scholastic offices. His cheap edition of the scriptures had a circulation of 30,000 copies. His first school was founded in Llanddowror in 1730. Ten years later he had established 150 institutions, providing for the education of over 8000 persons. He died in 1761, leaving about seven thousand pounds to carry on the work, which was continued for thirty years longer by the celebrated Madame Bevan.

Among the last popular parsons of the past were Jones of Llangan, Basset of Llandow, and Lee, all of whom were eloquent preachers.





XIII.

THE GREAT NONCONFORMIST PREACHERS OF WALES.

BEING now to end my days before I am come to one half my years in the likely course of nature, *I leave the success of these my labours unto such of my countrymen as the Lord is to raise up after me*, for the accomplishing of that work which, in the calling of my country, unto the knowledge of Christ's blessed Gospel, I began."

From the scaffold of John Penry that legacy descended to the grand roll-call of celebrated Nonconformist preachers whose names are recorded in the religious history of Wales.

Penry, in his pamphlet on the spiritual destitution of Wales in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, says:—"Thousands of our people know Jesus Christ to be neither God nor man, priest nor prophet, almost never heard of Him. O destitute and forlorn condition! Preaching itself in many parts is unknown. In some places a sermon is read once in three months."

He then proposed a plan for the evangelisation of his native country, and made a suggestion in favour of lay agency and voluntary contributions.

A petition embodying the contents of this pamphlet was presented to Parliament, and immediately afterwards Penry was apprehended.

The prelates of the Church of England, with Archbishop Whitgift at their head, treated Penry's scheme of evangelisation as a heresy and mortal sin. Henceforth the young churchman's life became a scene of bitter persecution, through which Penry still steadfastly kept his purpose in view.

In March 1593 he was again apprehended under the suspicion of having assisted in issuing seditious libels against the Government, but evidence has never been found that Penry had any connection with the "Martin Marprelate" tracts. Subsequently he was subjected to a trial which Sir Thomas Phillips said "disgraces the name of English justice." He had not violated any statute, and could not legally be proved guilty of having committed any offence. But Penry was condemned by the episcopal authorities of the Church of England, and with the consent of the Protestant Queen Elizabeth was executed at St. Thomas-a-Watering, Surrey, on May 29, 1593, in the thirty-fourth year of his life.

The execution of John Penry was the stepping-stone to Nonconformity in Wales.

Forty-five years later, William Wroth, William Erbury, and Walter Cradock appear as the pioneers of Dissent in the Principality.

In 1638 these three clergymen were ejected from their livings for refusing to publish the royal pro-

clamation of King Charles I., concerning lawful sports for Sunday and all holy days.

William Wroth was Rector of Llanfaches near Chepstow, where he formed an Independent Church in 1639. William Erbury was Vicar of St Mary's, Cardiff, and Walter Cradock, curate of the same church, was described by the Bishop of Llandaff as a "bold, ignorant fellow." He assisted Wroth in organising the Nonconformist Church at Llanfaches.

In 1646 Oliver Cromwell appointed preachers under the "Act for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales," and encouraged itinerant preaching. Meanwhile the Nonconformist Churches of Llanfaches near Chepstow and Mynydd-islwyn, near Cardiff, sent out itinerant members, who were guided and directed by young Puritan clergymen.

When, in 1662, the Act of Uniformity came into force, many expelled ministers, just as the Royalists had done under the Commonwealth, continued to call their followers together in some large barn or room, until in 1664 the Conventicle Act forbade all assemblies for public worship other than those of the Established Church.

Then the persecuted ministers began to preach secretly in the secluded glens and valleys of the Principality. They journeyed long distances through the rugged and lonely wilds of Wales, and in faith, though often in fear, they conducted the worship of God according to the dictates of their own consciences.

In 1656, Vavasour Powell was baptized by immersion, and joined the Baptist denomination. He was one of the most celebrated and popular preachers of his day, and throngs of people went to hear him at fairs,

markets, in the fields, and on the mountains of Wales. After the Restoration he spent the last eleven years of his life in the Fleet prison, where he died a premature death, and was buried in Bunhill Fields.

When the Toleration Act came into force, chapels were built throughout the Principality, but after the building of these it is strange to note that lay preaching was neglected, and spiritual life gradually lost its old time fervour and fire.

Nonconformity remained becalmed until the great revival, which began in 1735, came as a life-giving wind to swell the ebbing tide of religious feeling in Wales.

Looking back into the past, we see those grand old Nonconformist preachers of Wales standing in the great "cloud of witnesses."

First on the roll-call of preachers to whom John Penry, the young Welsh martyr and reformer, left his precious legacy, stands Daniel Rowlands of Llangeitho, whose father and grandfather were clergymen. Daniel Rowlands was educated at Hereford Grammar School, and afterwards was appointed curate of Llangeitho, at a stipend of ten pounds a year! He was one of the Welsh parsons of the past, whose chief delight was to be in the village inn, where on Sunday afternoon he met the members of his congregation, preparatory to the football match in which he took the lead.

In 1737 the Rev. Griffith Jones, Vicar of Llanddowror, and the most popular churchman of that day, was announced to preach at Llandewi Brevi. Daniel Rowlands, half in jest, and partly out of curiosity, went to hear him. From that moment the curate of Llangeitho became a changed man.

Awakened to see the lamentable condition of the church which took so much and gave so little, and of the people who had lost all respect for self and the Sabbath, Rowlands revived itinerant and lay preaching at the chapel of ease at Ystrad-ffyn. It was so unusual for a clergyman to preach beyond his own parish, and so extraordinary to hear laymen conducting religious services in the church, that people called him the "cracked parson." Ultimately the Bishop protested against his mode of procedure, and he was deprived of his living.

This served to arouse Rowlands of Llangeitho to the utmost. He at once instituted open air services, which were attended by thousands of people. During the spring and summer months as many as 3000 persons from all parts of Wales attended his communion services, which were held in a field near Llangeitho. People travelled day and night in order to hear the extraordinary preacher, whose power was unsurpassed. Near Llangeitho is still to be seen the Communicants' Well—"Ffynnon y Cymmunwyr"—where the travellers halted to quench their thirst and refresh themselves, after the long and wearyful journeys they had taken in order to attend the celebrated services.

Rowlands of Llangeitho was the first to institute those vast assemblies afterwards known as Cymanfa, associations and great meetings, which are the most conspicuous features of religious life in the Principality.

This great Nonconformist preacher of Wales loved the Church, and to the last retained its liturgy in his services.

His preaching has been described as intensely thrill-

ing and soul-searching. He was so wonderfully and completely carried away by the spirit of his subject that often he was obliged to pause. That pause has been likened to the breathless hush and silence which are succeeded by the low rumblings of distant thunder, followed by flashes of forked lightning, and the terrible crash of the thunder-bolt.

Strange, mysterious feelings, mingled with solemn awe, filled people's minds, as their emotions were swayed by the mighty power of the preacher, the mention of whose name still thrills the souls of all Welshmen, no matter to what sect they belong.

Next in importance to the earliest itinerant preacher of the Principality was Howell Harris of Trevecca, and founder of Calvinistic Methodism in Wales. He entered St. Mary's Hall, Oxford, with the view of being trained for the ministry. While there his reputation as a powerful preacher became so widely known that he had the offer of an excellent benefice in England. This he accepted and held for a brief period, but afterwards he felt compelled to return to Wales. There he at once began his evangelistic labours by going from house to house, and continuing the open air services instituted or re-established by Rowlands of Llangeitho. As his popularity increased the clergy became embittered and preached against him, at the same time hurling fierce invective at those who went to hear him.

So strong was the feeling of the Established Church against Howell Harris that magistrates threatened to fine him and all who dared to receive him into their houses.

Threatened by the authorities, hustled and persecuted by maddened mobs, the great preacher unflinch-

ingly pursued his way and gained thousands of hearers and converts.

Once he was announced to preach at a place near The Garth, the residence of Mr. Marmaduke Gwynne, a county magnate and magistrate. The latter had often heard that Howell Harris was not only the most dangerous enemy of the Established Church in Wales but also a wicked disturber of the peace, whose purpose was to incite ignorant and illiterate people to tumult and disorder. Mr. Gwynne, fully prepared for magisterial action, took the Riot Act to the religious assembly, with the intention of reading it, and promptly dispersing the people.

Before starting he said to his wife, "I shall, however, hear what the man has to say before giving him into custody."

Mr. Gwynne went to the meeting, and soon became impressed by the power and dignity of the famous preacher. So impressive and thrilling was the sermon that the magistrate forgot his purpose, never read the Riot Act, and, at the close of the service, he warmly shook hands with Howell Harris, and cordially invited him to supper at The Garth.

From that moment the magistrate and the minister became firm friends, and one of Marmaduke Gwynne's daughters subsequently became the wife of Charles Wesley.

Howell Harris had not the depth of thought that Griffith Jones or Daniel Rowlands possessed, but his power to sway vast multitudes was greater than either of those celebrated preachers. He seldom took a text for his discourses, and in every way endeavoured to avoid being regarded as an ordained minister.

William Williams of Pant-y-celyn, the poet-preacher of Wales, was educated for the medical profession. Having heard of the fame of Howell Harris, he went to hear that great preacher holding a service in Talgarth churchyard. This was the turning-point of the young medical student's life.

The famous Methodist preacher's sermon so deeply touched him that, subsequently, he resolved to enter upon a religious career. Having been brought up as a churchman his inclinations prompted him to prepare for the Church of England. He was refused ordination, and immediately afterwards joined the Calvinistic Methodists.

During the forty years of his ministry he travelled over 95,000 miles on horseback or on foot through the lonely lanes, over the rugged mountains, down the deep valleys, and among the unfrequented woodlands of Wales.

It was only natural that a poet-preacher, accustomed to travel long and weary journeys alone, at a period when highwaymen rode riotously through the country, should be inspired to sing of the tender mercies and the guidance, rather than of the wrath of God. To Williams, the "heaven-inspired" bard of Pant-y-celyn, the world is indebted for that inimitable and grand old hymn—

"Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land ;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty,
Hold me with Thy powerful hand"—

which has been translated from the Welsh into almost every language.

He too was bitterly persecuted. But his gentle,

poetic nature, that soothed his hearers and lulled them to rest securely in the promise of eternal life, served him often in times of need.

During a visit to Anglesea the people there were determined to molest and annoy him. They tried many means, but failed to disturb his refined and beautiful spirit. While at Llangefni, in that county, a well-known Welsh fiddler was specially engaged to molest him. This man took his fiddle to the inn where the preacher and his wife were staying. Going to the parlour door, the fiddler, bowing very low in mock politeness, asked if he might be allowed to entertain the "celebrated gentleman" with a "little music."

"Certainly," said Williams of Pant-y-celyn, "you may play any tune you like, and we will sing."

"Then I will play 'Nancy Jig,'" said the fiddler, again bowing.

"Very well," said the poet, and turning to his wife when the fiddler struck the first note, he added, "Now, Mary, let us sing," and they at once sang—

"Blood of Christ! It lifts the feeble,
Makes him more than conqueror."

This was sung with such thrilling effect that it melted the fiddler to tears. Begging the preacher's pardon, the man immediately quitted the inn, and told the people that had he known what was in store for him he would not have gone there even if bribed by any amount of money.

Charles of Bala ranks as one of the great preachers of Wales, and stands pre-eminent in connection with the British and Foreign Bible Society. His name was also closely associated with the establishment of Sunday-

schools on the same principle as those founded by the Rev. Griffith Jones of Llanddowror. To these schools he supplied a limited number of Bibles.

Although there had been several editions of the Welsh Bible published previous to 1788, when Mr. Charles established his schools, it was quite exceptional to see a copy in the houses of the peasantry.

About this time a humble Welsh peasant girl, who had been taught in one of the schools, expressed an earnest and fervent desire to study the Bible. A farmer in the neighbourhood gave her permission to read his copy. For six years, in all kinds of weather, Mary Jones of Abergynolwyn walked two miles each way, once or twice a week, in order to read the farmer's Bible. Meanwhile Mary saved up her coppers in order to purchase a copy for herself, and when she had amassed sufficient money for the purpose, she asked the Rev. William Hughes, Calvinistic Methodist minister, where she could obtain a Bible, and he referred her to Mr. Charles of Bala.

Although Bala was twenty-five miles from Abergynolwyn, Mary Jones, then in her sixteenth year, started early one morning to walk the distance. It was late in the evening when she reached Bala, and on her arrival there she was received by the Rev. David Edwards, who hospitably sheltered her for the night. About the dawn of the next day, accompanied by David Edwards, Mary went to see Mr. Charles, who was very much touched by her story. But he had not a copy to give her. Mr. Charles said he had sold all the Bibles with the exception of one or two copies ordered to be kept for friends. He, moreover, said it was uncertain whether he could obtain any more. This

was said regretfully and sadly, and poor little Mary wept bitterly.

For six years she had saved her coppers, counting them each day during all that weariful time; for six years she had walked eight miles a week, in order to read the Book she loved so well; and, at the end of the six years, she walked twenty-five miles to purchase a copy, only to find herself still as far from her Bible as ever!

This was more than Charles of Bala could endure, and forthwith he spared her a copy, and Mary Jones went home rejoicing.

In 1802 Mr. Charles attended the Committee of the Religious Tract Society, to whom he eloquently told the simple yet touching story of the Welsh girl who had walked fifty miles for a Bible. Everybody present was deeply affected, and Mr. Charles thereupon asked that a Bible Society should be instituted for Wales.

The Rev. Joseph Hughes, who was present, said, "If a Bible Society is needed for Wales, why should there not be one for the United Kingdom, and why not for the world?"

"Why not?" reiterated Charles of Bala.

This conversation led to the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The touching story of Mary Jones is very familiar to those who have attended the Society's meetings, but few English people are aware that to a humble Welsh peasant girl the world is indebted for the circulation of the Bible in every language.

Mary Jones died in 1864, aged eighty, and the Book she loved so well is now in the possession of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Like a giant both mentally and physically among the other preachers of Wales stands majestic John Elias, who held vast throngs spell-bound and silent under the solemn thunders of his sermons. In person he was strongly built, handsome and commanding in appearance, and his powerful voice could be heard distinctly at a great distance. He immediately riveted the attention of his congregation, and, as with an electric shock, he roused the people to the highest point of enthusiasm. He possessed the marvellous power of putting dramatic force into his sermons, and in words could vividly portray scenes that aroused admiration or struck terror into the hearts of the people.

In his time, harvest fairs were generally held on Sundays, when people from all parts congregated to buy and sell various kinds of harvest implements, including scythes, sickles, with very often dairy utensils and wooden ware.

One Sunday Rhuddlan fair was crowded by a motley throng. There were noisy booth-keepers shouting their wares—fruit and metheglin sellers clamouring to the country folk—and the makers of wooden ware, of which every kind was represented. There were wooden spoons for use and for ornament, the former being plain and solid, while the latter were intended to go with polished pewter platters and dishes. These spoons were made of box or yew, ornamented with quaint and curious devices, including suns, moons, stars, hearts, darts, and charms. Then there were wooden bowls, ladles, clog-soles, and antique rolling-pins. Beside these were long rows of wooden pails and dairy utensils, with shining ranks of tinware and pewter platters and pots. Sickles and scythes glittered and gleamed in the

summer sunshine, together with harvest implements of every description.

Above the hum of voices, the shouting of sellers, and the hoarse jeers and jests of horsedealers, the ballad-singer could be heard singing droll songs that roused the mirth of the people to the highest degree. Loud laughter followed each song, and a deafening roar of applause succeeded each repetition.

When mirth, music, and ribald joke were at their highest pitch, a strong tall man was hardly noticed threading his way through the dense throng. Going right through the fair, he ascended some steps near an inn, and, uncovering his head, began to pray.

At first with trembling voice and tearful accent he acknowledged that the people in the fair were bringing the wrath of God upon their heads, by violating His holy day. He then proceeded to denounce in terror-striking words the desecration of the Sabbath. The solemn thunders of his rhetoric rolled from end to end of the fair; his voice reached the most distant listeners, and in an instant mirth and music, ribald joke and song were hushed, and the whispered words "John Elias" ran from lip to lip of the multitude with the rapidity of lightning.

It was a strange scene.

The silence as of death held the throngs breathless and spell-bound, as John Elias thundered forth his anathemas, and warned them of the wrath to come. He put the people under a spell of abject dread. Some hid their faces in their hands, others allowed the pieces of money to slip out of their grasp, and the sellers of sickles and scythes hid their wares as if the judgment-day was at hand. Towards the close of the grand and

eloquent appeal, the people looked around to make sure that fire from heaven was not coming to consume them. The fair was broken up, and the people went quickly and fearfully home. So terribly effective and thrilling was the great preacher's denunciation of the multitude's laxity and sin, that one man imagined his arm, on which he held a sickle, was paralysed. He dared not venture to remove it to the other arm, lest that should also become powerless.

The story of Rhuddlan Fair ran like electricity through the length and breadth of Wales, and from that time the people ceased to hold such gatherings on Sunday, for fear of John Elias.

Those who had the privilege and pleasure of hearing this great preacher, say that he was a profound reasoner and expositor, and could descend from the heights of fiery eloquence to the levels of sublime pathos and tender simplicity.

He was once so moved by another and far humbler preacher than himself, that he felt compelled to acknowledge it.

According to the time-honoured custom of Wales, at all the great religious meetings two ministers are appointed to preach at each service. The lesser preacher takes the precedence, and is followed by the celebrated divine.

Jenkin Harry, a simple and self-taught but much beloved minister, had to preach before John Elias in North Wales. This earnest though uneducated man was one of Nature's teachers, who in unfettered fervour proclaimed the love of God for man. Sometimes, when in the height of solemn enthusiasm, he felt unusually blessed in spirit. This was the case when he preached

before John Elias. His soul overflowed with thankfulness for the blessings of God, and in a chanting, almost recitative intonation, he cried aloud and repeatedly, "Gogoniad! Glory, glory be to God!" and added, "We thank Thee, O Lord, for now and then a small cake of comfort in the cold and barren regions of the North!" The sermon was a perfect specimen of those fervent discourses for which the great Welsh preachers have ever been celebrated. These sermons possess an element that is rarely heard in England. It is the "hwyl," without which Welsh oratory is considered imperfect. This Welsh "hwyl," or afflatus, is said to be derived from the breeze-filled sails of a ship; hence people say, "He has the hwyl"—that is, he is in full sail—he is full of feeling and fire.

When Jenkin Harry ceased, John Elias took his place, and, in touching accents, said his predecessor's sermon was so powerful as to overwhelm him. His pent-up feelings were eloquently expressed in a solemn and fervent "Thank God for the ministry of Jenkin Harry!" That tribute, coming from the greatest Welsh preacher of the day, melted people to tears, and it was only John Elias, and no other, who could have ventured to prolong the service.

Grand, majestic, unique and unsurpassed, John Elias stands foremost in the roll-call of "such of my countrymen" to whom the legacy of John Penry descended.

After him appears another tall and commanding man, with regular features, large lustrous eyes, and rich melodious voice pitched in a minor key. But instead of the dramatic force of John Elias, there is the intense though beautiful melancholy of John Evans of Llwynffortun. Those who often heard him,

say he was sometimes very absent-minded, and oblivious of everything, owing to the stress of great thought. It was by no means unusual to have to remind him that the congregation waited. On those occasions he promptly arose and, in striking grandeur, commenced the service. One who well remembers him says that, at a period when almost every Christian denomination had lost a celebrated preacher, John Evans referred to each as having gone home comparatively early, while he still remained to lament their departure. In tones of touching pathos, he said, "Beloved souls! I am a long while growing meet for heaven. Sometimes I think I am like 'winter apples'—a long time getting ripe. From the surrounding trees all the fruit has long been gathered, while I remain unripe, and ungathered. But I do devoutly hope that the days are shortening, and there is less strength in the heat of the sun, there is less need for that heat, and that I, even I, shall be gathered in ere the sere and yellow leaf has fallen, and the earth has been wrapped in her winding sheet."

John of Cilgerran, whose style was very forcible and often laconic, was very plain—almost ugly. Once when he was on a preaching tour in North Wales, the weather was bitterly cold, and he muffled closely up, leaving only his peculiar and weird looking features visible. Looming through the dim and frosty twilight, he appeared more like a grotesque and unearthly form than a human being on horseback. As it grew darker, a gentleman driving along the lonely road saw the strange figure leaning forward over the pony. At first the gentleman was terrified, but when he saw the object was after all—only a man, he shouted out, "Why, man alive, you're enough to frighten the devil!"

"That is my mission, sir!" loudly replied John of Cilgerran.

This great preacher spoke of heaven as having "no dial to record the passing moments—only a pendulum ticking solemnly, 'For ever—ever: ever—for ever!'"

John Jones of Talysarn was one of the most distinguished ministers of the Principality. He too had a fine and imposing presence, an impressive style, and fine musical voice. His sermons are described as being very beautiful, and his appeals to the congregation were very striking. On one occasion during the course of his sermon, he turned to the left, and looking intently and directly at his hearers, he said, "Let all who are followers of Satan say 'Amen.'" He then paused, and a profound, almost breathless silence prevailed. Then, turning to the right, he solemnly and strikingly added, "Let all who are anxious to follow Jesus Christ say 'Amen.'"

The effect was startling.

From hundreds of throats, a pent-up chorus of "Amens" rushed and roared like a flood breaking loose from a bursting reservoir.

Edward Coslett was one of the most popular preachers in the early part of the century. He was endowed with rare physical strength, and was known to walk from thirty to forty miles on Saturday, and retrace the same distance on Monday. By trade he was a blacksmith, and by nature he was plain and homely in speech.

On one occasion the famous clergyman, Jones of Llangan, said, "Edward, where did you get that sermon?"

"In a study where you have never been, sir," replied the preacher.

"And where is that study?" asked the clergyman.

"Between the anvil and the fire, sir," said Edward Coslett.

In a sermon to young men, he once said, "Don't serve the devil,^s boys. I served him for many years, and I never received from him so much as a nail to put in a tip."

He was obliged to apply to Quarter Sessions for a license to preach. Owing to numberless threats, it was necessary for him to seek the protection of the law. One of the magistrates, observing his countrified look, said, "Do you mean to tell me that you preach the Gospel? If so, God help you!"

"Amen!" responded Coslett. "His help and your good wish will do, sir."

The brothers Thomas and Ebenezer Richards were renowned preachers. Ebenezer once said that in the last century "the Lord kindled about half a dozen torches that lit up all the Principality, but I am afraid they have given way to candles twenty-four in the pound."

Williams of Wern, the celebrated Independent preacher, displayed singular force in illustrating subjects to suit the locality and occupations of the congregations to which he preached. Once, when preaching on the Christian character at Bala, which is the centre of the Welsh stocking industry, he said, "How does a man form his character? Just as you Bala women knit stockings—*a stitch at a time.*"

On another occasion he said, "Eternal midday is the hour of heaven—its sun never declines. Eternal midnight is the hour of hell—its clock will never strike *one!*"

He was fond of allegory, and in style resembled Bunyan.

In one sermon he described the king's officers going in search of the miser, who, owing to his numerous aliases, cannot be found. The officers are told, "He lives at No. 14 Greedy Street," but when they inquire if such a character lives there, they are answered in the negative. "But who then does live here?" ask the officers. "Oh, Mr. Pay-his-way." The officers go on. At No. 10 they find Mr. Provide-for-his-family; at No. 7 Provide-against-a-rainy-day is found. Then the preacher exclaimed, "Nobody owns the name of miser."

Christmas Evans appears as a tower of strength in the pulpit, and at the Association. He is described as being rugged-looking and powerful, with massive intellectual head and features—"just the man to command an army." Although deprived of the sight of one eye, the other with its penetrating glance instantly fixed the gaze of multitudes upon its owner.

This remarkable preacher exercised supreme mastery over vast congregations. In style he was unique even among eminent Welsh divines, and in allegory he remains unrivalled. He has already been faithfully portrayed to English readers by the late Rev. E. Paxton Hood, but I have it from veteran Nonconformists, that it would be almost impossible to describe his power and force of speech. From the first moment he opened his lips to speak, to the last word of his sermon, people remained in breathless silence, and then their pent-up feelings gave utterance to a solemn outburst of "Amen! Gogoniad! Glory, glory be to God!" and "Hallelujah!" Once seen he was never to be forgotten, and I have been told that his words penetrated into the deepest

depths of the human heart and soul, as no other preacher's possibly could.

On one occasion, when preaching to an English congregation, he desired to illustrate the subject in his customary manner. He proceeded as far as possible, and at last exclaimed, "Oh, I would that I could but tell it you in English, as I can in Welsh!" The English language curbed the wonderful oratorical powers of Christmas Evans, whose delivery and sermons were spontaneous and unpremeditated.

One of his celebrated and unique sermons was entitled "Satan walking in dry places," and the following extracts are therefrom:—"I saw him speed along, occasionally hovering like a vulture in the air. At length he came to a lonely valley, where, beneath the eaves of a little cottage, he saw a maid about eighteen years of age, sewing at the cottage door, a lovely flower among the surrounding flowers. 'There is one,' exclaimed the devil, 'I will whisper an evil suggestion into her heart, and repeat it over and over again, until it shall become an evil deed, and then she will be obliged to leave her home, and wander far into sin and shame.' With this he hastened to hurl his fiery dart into her mind, but as he approached, the hills reverberated with the echoes of her sweet voice, as she sang—

'In ages numerous as the sand
The song will be commencing.'

'Ah, this is another dry place!' exclaimed the tempter, as he again took flight. . . . Seeing an aged woman sitting with her little wheel, 'Ah,' said he, 'I will try to bring her grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, and allure her soul to destruction. He descended toward

the little cot, but, as he drew near, he heard the tremulous yet exultant voice of the aged saint repeating the promise of her gracious Lord. . . . Then he flew away as if pierced to the heart, exclaiming, ‘Another dry place — another dry place!’ . . . Anon he passed through a little Welsh village under a hill. He saw a faint light in an upper room, and said to himself, ‘There old William is slowly pining away. He is over eighty years of age, and hasn’t much mind left. Thanks to me, he has had a hard time of it often, and hasn’t found serving God altogether a pleasant thing. It will be a grand thing if I get the best of him after all, and make him doubt his heavenly Father.’ . . . The devil had no sooner drawn near to accomplish his wicked design, than the aged saint sat up in his bed, and with a smile like the light of heaven upon his countenance, he stretched forth his hands, and exclaimed, ‘The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. . . . Thou preparest a table before me *in the presence of mine enemies.*’ The aged man fell gently back upon his pillow. Those were his last words on earth before he passed into his Master’s joy. ‘Ah,’ exclaimed Satan, ‘this is a fearfully dry place,’ and glad to escape from such confusion and shame, he added, ‘I will return to my place; I had rather be there than here.’”

When Christmas Evans was at the zenith of his fame, the stormy times of persecution had ceased, and ministers of all denominations were allowed to preach unmolested. There was, however, considerable contention among the different sects. Religious controversy was rife, and great preachers expounded and defended or denounced the Arminian and Calvinistic doctrines. Eminent Welsh Wesleyan preachers became the ex-

ponents of Arminianism, and their arguments were assailed by celebrated ministers among the Calvinistic Methodists, the most powerful of all denominations in Wales.

The pioneer of Wesleyanism in Wales was Edward Jones of Bathafarn, who, at the age of twenty-one, appealed to Conference for help for the Principality. In January 1800, he secured a room in Ruthin for preaching purposes, and there a small congregation assembled to worship. At first the Wesleyan Conference disregarded the young Welshman's appeal, but in August 1800, when Edward Jones was in a state of extreme depression, the Conference appointed the Revs. Owen Davies and John Hughes as "Welsh missionaries to Wales," to reside at Ruthin as their centre.

Among the earliest of the great Welsh Wesleyan preachers were Robert Roberts, Hugh Hughes, and William Hughes. The latter was a wit, but he kept that talent well under control, and never allowed it to find place in a sermon or religious address.

At a district meeting, he presented a schedule requesting permission to build a chapel within his circuit.

"How do you propose to warm the chapel?" asked the chairman; "I see you have not answered this question in the schedule."

"No, Mr. Chairman. I have left it blank because we intend to put plenty of fire in the pulpit. That is how we warm our chapels in Wales."

Another time, at the South Wales District Meeting, he asked permission to become a supernumerary. He gave as a reason for his wish to retire, almost complete failure in walking power. Otherwise he rejoiced in excellent health.

"You look very well in the face," said the chairman.

"Yes Mr. Chairman," said William Hughes, "but we in Wales do not walk the circuit on our faces!"

William Hughes was very much beloved, and gained great popularity as a preacher. He died at the age of eighty, in the year 1861.

Richard Bonner was one of the most popular Welsh Wesleyan preachers about fifty or sixty years ago. He has been described as very gentle, and never in the least rough in manner or uncouth in speech. His voice possessed a great charm, and his sermons were pathetic and emotional. Few preachers were able to move a congregation more effectually than he could. He was very often selected to preach at the close of an enthusiastic meeting, or a series of exciting services, his sermon acting as a calm and holy benison.

The Rev. Richard Roberts, himself a Welshman, an eminent preacher, and ex-President of the Wesleyan Conference, writing of Richard Bonner, says:—"In 1841 I attended the North Wales District service in Dolgelley, rendered memorable to many by the wonderful influence that came down upon the congregation when the Rev. Richard Bonner preached from 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' When near the close of the sermon . . . with lingering accents, in melodious tones, he exclaimed—"In-cor-rup-tible; un-defiled; and that fadeth not away." Well, my

friends, don't you think that the Provider of such an inheritance demands a song of praise? Why should we not give him one? I want you all to join in the old song, "Bendigedig"—the Welsh word for 'Blessed' in the text. He then begins his chant—

'Ben-di-ged-ig for the originating Love, &c.

Ben-di-ged-ig for the birth of Bethlehem's Babe, &c.

Ben-di-ged-ig for the agony of Gethsemane, &c.

Ben-di-ged-ig for the death of Calvary, &c.

Ben-di-ged-ig for the victory of the resurrection morning, &c.

Ben-di-ged-ig for the ascension and session at the right hand of the Majesty, and

Ben-di-ged-ig for the inheritance He has gone to prepare for us; hear it—incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away !'

"The preacher's voice rose higher and sweeter with every line, and the responses followed in louder strains, until, just at the close, the whole congregation rose to its feet, singing, shouting, rejoicing, weeping, until the preacher's voice was lost in the outburst of triumphant joy."

The Welsh Wesleyans counted among their number that profound thinker and unique preacher, David Williams; Samuel Davies, who in sermons and volumes was the exponent of the difference between the doctrines of Wesley and Calvin; Thomas Aubrey, called the "Chalmers of Wales;" William Powell; Dr. William Davies, and regal-minded Rowland Hughes.

One of the latest of the renowned Calvinistic Methodist ministers of Wales was Edward Matthews, who died so recently as 1892. His preaching was of the "old

order," and those who can speak from personal experience, say that Edward Matthews modelled his style upon the original design of Christmas Evans.

The following extracts from the sermons of Edward Matthews have been faithfully translated by the Rev. Cynddylan Jones—a popular Welsh preacher of the present, and delegate of the British and Foreign Bible Society—in his work on the "Welsh Pulpit of To-day:"—

"Suppose we give another turn to find the ungodly. . . . There was a great hunt yesterday, it was the 'County Meet.' . . . Surely he was there! No; I looked narrowly for him, but he was not; I sought him, and he could not be found. . . . Well! well! where can he be? Suppose we explore the slopes of the 'Dark Mountains;' who knows but that he may be found thereabouts? 'Heigho! Have you seen a man from our neighbourhood, going this way on his journey? he was a great man in our country.' A demon sends the answer back in shrill tones, 'Yes; he passed this way the other week. I saw him traversing the land of the setting sun, and entering a black lowering cloud yonder; after that, I saw him no more.' No tidings come out of perdition; the lost have no history.

"'Mark the perfect man, behold the upright.' He also draws towards the end; he goes down the valley, meets the king of terrors at the foot of the 'Dark Mountains.' . . . Mark him, behold him, follow him with the eye; he is drawing towards the close it is true, but he will not be lost; it is growing light—lighter the deeper he goes. . . . Pity him not; though he has weathered many a tempest, it is growing still

towards the evening. . . . See the portals of the eternal dawn opening to allow him to enter—hearken to his departing cry, ‘Behold, I see the heavens opened!’ . . . The light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ paints with beauty even the grim face of death; it adorns with rich gold the fringes of the dense clouds which hang over the ‘end,’ darkening all the horizon of this life. . . . Does his history conclude here? No; ‘in the evening there is light—light enough to read the small print of death, and to see that the history is to be continued on the other side of the page. . . . Behold, the heavens are opened, and he has entered; he was not lost in the swellings of Jordan. He is still to be found. Look towards Mount Sion: the innumerable company of the spirits of the just men made perfect. . . . Give a shout of victory to welcome him to the abodes of bliss.”

All these great Nonconformist preachers of Wales, in person, voice, manner, and peculiarities differed from their English brethren of the pulpit, as the rugged and awe-inspiring mountains differ from smooth and undulating uplands.

Their talents were many, and highly varied. Some were mighty reasoners and profound expositors—others were strong-voiced thunderers, whose overwhelming appeals moved congregations to deep reflection and contrition—others possessed the pathetic power to melt and subdue, while many were gifted with brilliant imagination and vivid imagery, that gave effect to apt and telling illustrations.

A marked feature in the religious life of the Principality has ever been its great periodical gatherings or festivals, which are attended by thousands of people.

The services are generally held in a large field in country places, or in a suitable open space in towns. When the weather is bad, the largest chapels are borrowed for the purpose, and two preachers are appointed to each service. Four services with two sermons at each are held, making in all eight during the day, and two introductory discourses on the previous evening. These services begin at 6 A.M., and, with only brief intervals for refreshment, continue until 9 or 10 P.M. The great preachers are always to be found at these services, and sometimes their sermons are two hours long without causing the least weariness on the part of the congregation.

Everybody who has travelled in the rural districts of Wales, will have noticed the little meeting-houses with their bare and blank windows, and the plain, stone-built chapels where the Nonconformists have worshipped for generations. The structures erected by the Baptists, Calvinistic Methodists, Independents and Wesleyan Methodists in the country places are strikingly devoid of even the merest outlines of architectural beauty, and it appears as though those bodies reserved all their superfluous decorations for city and town Temples and Tabernacles. The meeting-houses and chapels in the remote rural neighbourhoods are generally white-washed or stuccoed having the stereotyped door in the centre, or a window or windows each side of it, with—if there is a gallery—windows above, and if not, a large round window just for the purpose of admitting extra light but not ventilation. Inside, the pews are narrow and uncushioned, and there is little or nothing in those chapels to inspire anybody with feelings of awe or profound reverence.

But picture those chapels in the past, when the grand old ministers of Wales preached to earnest congregations—when the bare walls were a world too narrow for the crowds that sought entrance—when the windows were too small to admit sufficient air to the heated assembly, and when people were glad to sit down in turns, or even to stand all through the service rather than miss it.

The scene is impressive. Suppressed silence holds the people spell-bound as they wait for the great preacher to rise from his seat. Calmly, and with much solemnity, the minister opens the service with a well-known hymn or prayer, followed by the reading of a portion of the Scriptures. Then he gives out the text. At first his voice is subdued, but as he progresses it becomes stronger and more impressive. He is inspired with the singular parable-loving instinct, which plays a most important part in all Welsh sermons, and his power over the vast congregation is most marked. He leads his hearers, by vivid strokes of rhetoric, from the dark and gloomy shadows of the Valley of Death, to the shining summits of everlasting Life—from lonely Hagar in the solitude of the desert, to beautiful Esther in the brilliance of the palace—from miserable Dives to happy Lazarus—from the scapegoat in the wilderness to the Cross on Calvary—from the last bitter Agony to the glorious Resurrection. As he passes from point to point, his eloquence and fervour increase. He sways the emotions of his hearers as the wind bends the pines on the mountain sides—he moves them to tears that persistently flow—he rouses them to rapture—he carries their minds and thoughts away with the impassioned and unrestrained

eloquence of his language, and at last, when the "hwyl" comes, and long before the grand peroration is reached, the pent-up feelings of the preacher cause him to intone his words in a minor key, to which the congregation responds with a solemn grandeur of "Amen."

Silence deep and profound follows the glorious charms of the discourse, and the congregation is astonished to find that the sermon, which took two hours to deliver, seemed to occupy only a fourth of that time.

It is to be regretted that the old-fashioned and fervent style of Welsh preaching is gradually undergoing alteration.

The young dissenting ministers of the present time are certainly better educated than their predecessors, and they have experienced the refining influences of higher college training and wider reading. At the same time, their object apparently is to displace the ancient landmarks and level the deep ruts made by the old preachers.

Manuscripts and notes are making insidious inroads into the pulpits of Wales, and the spontaneous flow of almost unpremeditated rhetoric that the Welsh cherish so dearly, is being checked by the production of studied essays, which too often now supplant sermons.

The young Nonconformists seek fresh fields and pastures new, and adopt a novel and very composed method of preaching and delivery, which in their opinion is peculiarly adapted to hearers of to-day. They keep the emotions well under control, and the iciness of restrained oratory is their greatest forte.

Modern Welsh ministers—with few exceptions—lack the inspiration, the fervour, the masterful thought and

style of elocution that made the great preachers of the past a power in the land.

That grand, impassioned, uncurbed, and unbridled eloquence, which strikingly marked the sermons and delivery of the great preachers whose fiery zeal had wonderful influence over human emotions, is seldom heard now.

In the grand old preacher's stead, there stands a self-possessed minister, who is accurate in all things—who measures out theology by the yard-stick, and preaches the Gospel as though it were a matter of accountancy, or particular skill in fractions. He is inanimate, and to the last would not be guilty of moving his congregation to tears, or a grand and solemn response of "Amen." To him very well may be applied the words of a Welsh preacher of the old school, who, when a member expressed dissatisfaction with a modern minister, said, "God called Morgan Morgan, but Timothy Morgan answered."





XIV.

WELSH COUNTRY DOCTORS OF THE PAST.

NEXT in importance to the spiritual is the medical adviser in every country. Perhaps, in some respects, the physical adviser can lay greater claim in order of precedence, because, without health, the world is of little account to a man, and he is not so ready to accept spiritual advice or comfort, without first seeking a spark of hope, or receiving a word of warning from the doctor. The clergymen, the ministers, have their power, but the doctor's fiat is either the life-giver, or the means by which the pathway to the grave is smoothed and rounded.

When a man's heart or head is pierced by acute physical pain, or his body is racked by intense agony, he promptly sends—not for the parson or the pastor—but for the doctor.

The old Welsh country doctors of the past may be divided into two classes. One was the most comfortable, easy-going man in the world. He settled down in his shabby gig as if he had been born in it,

and trundled in and out of the long and narrow lanes, as though there was never a turning for them or him. Still, on he drove, not too quickly, unless in cases of emergency, and even then, although expert, he was provokingly easy, and never by any means in a hurry.

He somewhat resembled his contemporary the stolid and prolix old Welsh preacher, whose few preliminary remarks were interspersed with many deep sepulchral "hems" and "ha's," and "well my friends—h'm—you know—h'm—that h'm—we've met together—h'm—to-night h'm—to have a few—h'm—words—h'm—for the good of our souls—and—h'm—for the glory—h'm—of God."

The doctor, while putting his right arm in his great-coat sleeve, would say in a deep-toned voice, "I think—y—es—I certainly do—think;" then he put the other arm in the other sleeve, while continuing, "y—es—I think that—with proper—care—and—y—es—and—be good enough to give a pull to my undercoat, there's a dear child—y—es—with—that will do very nicely—proper care, and—my hat if you please—attention—she'll come—now my gloves, there's a man—y—es—she'll come round again—now Mary, here's a shilling for the baby, and mind you don't spend it—and be better—y—es—be far better—in health—now for my rug, quickly, there's a pretty damsel—than she has been—y—es—for—years! Good morning—good morning! God keep and bless you all!"

Then, with the "agility of an Abernant goat," he would enter his gig, wave his hand, and drive away.

On his rounds he would stop to take up a small boy, or weak woman, or even to give a lift to a working man or a weary-looking pedestrian. He was polite in

an old-fashioned manner to the landed gentleman, and exceedingly courteous to the county lady. At the same time, he was homely with the poor man, and almost "motherly" to the peasant woman. He never cared for dress—not he! His overcoat was either green or sad brown with age, and the beaver of his top-hat—he always wore an ample sized chimney-pot—showed many traces of exposure to wind and weather. He talked Welsh and English fluently, and always readily adapted himself to all classes.

In his day, the greatest enemy to mankind was the small-pox, which was known in Wales as the *frech wen*—white plague, or pest—and regarded as the certain messenger of doom. His treatment of this disorder was peculiar. The moment the symptoms appeared, he ordered the patient into bed, and dosed him with hot beer, and ordered more to be supplied whenever the sufferer was thirsty. Uniform heat was the most prominent remedy, and very often his treatment was successful. The only difficulty was to keep the person from scratching the inflamed surface, and in this matter the doctor sought the aid of and trusted to those who undertook the nursing.

This type of doctor was more "like my old granny," the girls said. He would pat the little ones' cheeks, stroke their hair, and take the youngest on his knee. He knew the fair day as well as they did, and never forgot to give his "fairing" to the children. The women enjoyed gossiping with him, and loved to hear his funny stories and merry jokes. He would suggest the most ridiculous remedies, just to tease the people, and, in their own parlance, would greet them with, "You've got the 'liver complaint,' have you? Poor

thing! Never mind, you won't die this time, to spite us!" or, "You've got a sore pain in your side. 'Tis sure to be heart complaint!" or, "Well! well! you *do* look solemn. What's the matter? Only indigestion? Have a good laugh—you don't laugh enough—and you'll soon be better."

These remarks did the patients more good than medicine, cheering them up, and giving them fresh life. In real suffering, in seasons of sorrow, and in the hour of death, he was a father to the people, and many a good old doctor of the past has gone to his grave a comparatively poor man because of the charity he dispensed with his drugs. He was a tender and sympathetic friend to the poor, and no case of genuine poverty or suffering was allowed to pass without his aid. English was his general language, but he could talk Welsh fluently, and this pleased the people.

His faults were professional, and of a nature common at that period. He treated the effect rather than the cause, and sometimes ventured to use extraordinary remedies. When cases became difficult, he was prone to "kill or cure." Rather than spend time in "doctoring" an injured leg, he would amputate it, and he had a wonderful partiality to teeth extraction. As a surgeon he was somewhat harsh and rough in his treatment, but, with all his faults, he was much beloved, and went to the grave full of years and honours.

His contemporary, the other type of Welsh doctor, was never to be seen in a vehicle of any description. He always rode a spirited if not a thoroughbred horse, and the rate at which he went used to frighten people. On the highway, he outrode all other riders. There was nothing in his appearance that would cause

anybody to think him to be a surgeon. In dress he resembled a sporting gentleman; in manners he was polite but inclined to be severe; in his profession he was active and clever, and sometimes, but not always, painstaking. He had little or no patience with people who "gave way" to suffering, and he quickly discerned real from feigned illness.

A well-known doctor of this class was called upon to attend a farmer, who had been ill for a long time, and at last became alarmingly affected.

"What is the matter?" asked the doctor, who had been hastily summoned.

The farmer's wife was giving the most minute details, when the doctor, in his well-remembered quick and short tones, interrupted her with, "There—that'll do. Is anybody with him?"

"Yes, sir," said the frightened and tearful wife. "They've been witnessing the Will."

"The Will?" queried the mettlesome doctor.

"Yes indeed, sir. He was so bad we thought he'd die before morning," said the wife, mentioning the names of the neighbours who were still with him.

"I see, I see," said the doctor. "Now please show me the way to his room."

The poor sorrowful wife did as she was bidden, though not without much fear and trembling, for the doctor bore the reputation all through the county of being "uncommonly odd."

"Well," said the doctor, who had not removed his hat, and still held his whip, "and what's the matter with you?"

The farmer feebly reiterated his wife's statements.

"You look well enough," continued the doctor;

"and you've more flesh on your body than is good for you."

The neighbours looked narrowly one at the other. They knew the doctor was accustomed to do the most peculiar and reckless deeds.

There was a fiery light in the doctor's eyes, which sparkled brightly as the owner thereof seized a corner of the blanket, tore it off the bed, and proceeded to do the same with all the bedclothes, much to the amazement of all present. Then, lifting his riding-whip, he exclaimed, "Now, if you don't get up and dress yourself this instant, I'll give you a sound good thrashing. Yes; I'll horsewhip you within an inch of your life, and then, you—shan't stay in bed!"

Needless to add, the farmer in terrible fear and trembling got up, and, with the assistance of his wife, dressed immediately.

The doctor would not go downstairs before his patient who was obliged to obey.

On taking leave, the doctor said, "If I hear of any more illness, I will come and repeat the dose—administering double the quantity next time!"

From that day the farmer was an altered man, and he lived to a ripe old age.

This well-known Glamorganshire doctor was once called upon to treat an intelligent person who was not his patient, but had heard of his skill.

"Do you know what is the matter?" he asked curiously.

"I think I know," was the reply.

"Well; and what is it?"

"I believe—though the doctors will not tell me—that I am suffering from weak action of the heart."

"That is correct, and you must be treated accordingly," said the doctor, after an examination.

"What is your fee?" asked the patient.

"Nothing whatever," was the doctor's reply. "It is rare to meet with a person whose imagination is not misguided."

This type of doctor, in his general conversation and manner with men, women and children alike was spirited, candid, and natural, at the same time keen in some respects, and often severe. At first sight, people would call him "odd," but on further acquaintance they learned to like, even to love him.

His lively conversation was very attractive, and though he was not a handsome man, his face was full of tender sensibilities, that were exhibited by the flashing of his eyes, the quick play around his lips, and the homely hand-grasp. There was a wonderful spell in his manner, whether he brought himself to the level of his patients, or soared to heights beyond their comprehension.

Men of his description are now drafted to the great towns. Lesser men will do now for the rural districts of Wales—men well qualified doubtless for their duties, but not such "all round men" as the Welsh country doctor of the past.

His place is filled by English surgeons, or assistants to the doctors of small country towns. The people feel little or no attachment to the "strangers." The old doctor was homely, and would spend a little time in friendly conversation with his patients, but the "new man" is strictly professional, of few words, and fails to learn the art of winning popular esteem or affection. He has no sympathies with the Welsh as a people, and

because he does not really understand them, or does not wish to do so, a barrier—which cannot be broken down—is kept between surgeon and patient.

The English doctor who wishes to gain popularity among the Welsh must cast aside all formality, be very very frank and free, and, above all things, a fluent conversationalist!

For if there is anything in this world the Welsh like, it is a “a good talker!”

The gift of conversation is, ever has been, and doubtless ever will be the magic charm—the “Open Sesame”—to the heart and soul of the Welsh.





XV.

WELSH TRADITIONS AND SUPERSTITIONS.

VILLEMARQUÉ, the enthusiastic authority on Breton lore, says:—"It is related that St. Patrick, wishing to know the history of Ireland, went to consult a good old wife, who had seen several generations pass. She had, in spite of her years, an eye still quick, a springing foot, a fine ear, a fresh voice, simple speech, an ingenious and inexhaustible memory, and a heart of fire under the snows of her white hair. The people loved her, followed her, believed in the truth of her tales, and listened to her with admiration. A Welsh shepherd of the Valley of Myvyr met her also wandering in the mountains of the North of Wales. Walter Scott tells us he followed her along the Scottish border. For myself, I have seen her more than once seated at the fire of a Breton peasant—her eye as quick, her ear as fine, her voice as fresh, her heart as warm as in St. Patrick's day. To whoever asked her name, she replied, "I am Celtic Tradition."

As of old, in Wales, by the firesides in rural neighbourhoods, where swift-footed progress has not yet

ventured, among the humble and primitive-living peasantry, dwelling in the lonely glens, under the gloomy mountains, and beside the desolate shores, the traditions and superstitions of the land are as full of vitality as ever.

Wherever a mysterious cromlech appears, or a half-broken circle of stones is seen, or the last few oaks of an ancient grove remain, there too, in imagination, may be heard whispering voices, that ceaselessly murmur strange and awe-inspiring secrets, handed down from the hoary ages, when the Druids were a power in the land.

Standing beside Arthur's Stone, when the dim land of Gower is purple with autumn mists and vapours, and the ancient memorial of bygone ages is lighted by the weird red glow of the low-burning sunset, it seems as though some unseen power holds one spell-bound to the spot.

Lingering in the cold and pallid moonlight, where the Rocking Stone of Pontypridd looks grey and ghostly under the heavens, it seems as though at any moment a white-robed Druid may beckon one back into the pathless distance of the past.

Pausing to see the great and ancient cromlech at Duffryn near Cardiff, when the scarlet berries of autumn fill the brambles in the thicket around it; or while wandering among the druidical stones of St. Lythan's, and under Cotterell, near St. Nicholas, Glamorganshire, when wintry winds whistle through the bare branches, it appears as though the spirits of the past stretch forth their hands to greet the dreamer of to-day.

Whenever an old woman is seen knitting, and croon-

ing over the past in the twilight, when the glowing embers illuminate the cottage home, or lonely farmhouse kitchen; or whenever an aged man is seen resting awhile in the fireside corner of the worm-eaten oaken settle, of them will be heard the traditions and superstitions of Wales.

Presently, when the stars appear in the purple skies, these aged folk will point out one of the constellations as "Telyn Arthur," "Arthur's Harp," the Lesser Bear as "Arthur's Plough," and Orion's Belt as "Arthur's Yards."

Towering regally above all others in the traditionary lore of Wales is the half-mythical half-real King Arthur.

Thomas Malory's "Morte D'Arthur" and Tennyson's "Idylls of the King" have made English readers familiar with him whose

"grave should be a mystery
From all men, like his birth."

But Arthur the King, of sixth century Celtic tradition, is not idyllic.

He is represented as a man of strong will, half-barbarous but noble, free and hospitable, used to the roughest life and adventure—a man of mettle, moved readily to arms at the sight of a sword, and willing to sacrifice himself rather than his honour.

According to the old traditions of Wales, one Christmas Eve the people saw the mystic sword Excalibur held in an anvil upon a great marble stone, and on New Year's Day, when all other knights had failed, young Arthur pulled it out, this proving his right to the kingship, as prophesied by Merlin.

In the Mabinogion, Arthur the King is described as living a primitive life, taking his rest upon a floor strewn with fresh green rushes, over which was spread a covering of flame-coloured silk, with an elbow cushion of red satin. He regaled his guests and knights with venison, boars' heads, roast swans, bitterns, spiced collops, metheglin, wine and ale in abundance, while, to quote the ancient tradition, "If it should be said that there was a porter at Arthur's palace, there was none. Glewlwyd Gwavaelvawr was there, acting as porter to welcome guests and strangers, and to receive them with honour."

The life of Arthur appears to have been a scene of almost continual warfare, relieved only occasionally by festivities, and those chiefly of a rude and boisterous character. His death is represented as being surrounded by mystery, and the tradition of his enchanted sleep is still told as a nursery story to Welsh children.

I herewith give it, in the words of an aged dame who loved the traditions of her land:—

"KING ARTHUR AND HIS ENCHANTED KNIGHTS.

"Whether Vivien the wily, after learning Merlin's charm, went and exercised it upon Arthur, as she was sorely tempted to do, I know not, but this I know. After his last battle against the Saxons, Arthur the King and twelve of his knights were seen marching in the direction of Craig-y-Dinas, in the Vale of Neath.

Those who saw them passing through the villages and hamlets, noted a flushed look upon the faces of the warriors whose battle-stained armour glinted in

the sunset glow, and said, 'Why not pause to rest, O King!'

"But he shook his head, and in silence marched on.

"At last, tired out with the heat and dust, the king and his knights paused to rest in a grassy hollow on Craig-y-Dinas, where the shadows were cool and refreshing, and afar in the west the sunset burned low, like a welcome hearth fire, promising comfort and rest at the end of the day. So pleasant was the shelter of the hazel branches, and so cool was the mossy sward in the grassy hollow, that the king fell fast asleep, and one by one his knights slumbered, and all was silent.

"When twilight deepened into night, a white-robed figure was seen to hasten towards the hollow, and there was a great flutter of white garments and long flowing tresses on Craig-y-Dinas. And an ancient beldame exclaimed, 'It is the witch Vivien!' but the people said, 'Tis only the white mist of the evening—'tis a sign of more heat to-morrow.' But the beldame shook her head, and muttered to herself, 'For a certainty it is Vivien. She hath successfully woven her charm around great Merlin, and hath longed to use her magic upon the king. I will see.'

"And in the evening, when the moonlight streamed into the hollow, the beldame visited the spot, and there she saw the sleeping king and his knights, and she shook her head. 'There,' she said to herself, 'didn't I say 'twas Vivien the witch! She hath been here waving her long arms, with her magic and her woven paces, and from this slumber the king will not awaken. But I will watch with my eyes open, till sunrise.'

"The beldame seated herself upon a mossy bank

near by, and watched the pure pale moon-rays, as they illuminated the no longer flushed faces of the king and his knights, and it seemed to her that the sleepers appeared to be glorified, and transformed into spiritual and shadowy beings. She watched until the moon sank behind the hazel copse, leaving dark and gloomy shadows in the grassy hollow, and then to her surprise the darkness, instead of obscuring the faces of the sleepers, served to show their pallidness the more. The beldame soon became aware that the pale light in the countenances of the sleepers began to dazzle her eyes, as those would be that gazed long and steadily at the full-orbed moon in a clear blue sky. And so great was the glory of the light in the sleepers' faces, that it lured the beldame to sleep until the sun was high in the heavens the next day. Then she looked around for the king and his knights, but they were gone, and on the spot where they were seated, she saw the entrance to a huge cavern. She moved towards it, but, as she approached the brink, lo ! it closed suddenly, and only tall rank grasses and clustering hazels remained. From that day the beldame declared that Vivien the witch had lured the king and his knights into an enchanted hall, the entrance of which was in the hollow. But none believed her.

“Years passed, and a Welsh drover, who used periodically to attend Barnet Fair, lingered one evening on London Bridge. He looked travel-stained and weary, as well he might be, after a lone and arduous march from Wales. In his hand he grasped a long hazel stick, such as drovers may be seen carrying to this day.

“‘Where didst thou get that stick?’ asked a queer-looking stranger, addressing the Welshman.

“‘What’s the odds to thee?’ tartly responded the Welshman.

“‘Not so much to me as to thee,’ said the stranger. ‘That stick grew on a spot where countless treasures of gold and silver may be found.’

“‘I don’t believe thee. Thou’rt a wizard or a magician, or an—imp.’

“‘Whatever I am, I know that hazel stick grew far away from here,’ continued the stranger.

“‘It did,’ replied the drover.

“‘I suppose thou dost know that the hazel wand is much used in divinations, to show where metals are to be found?’ said the stranger.

“‘I don’t know much about it,’ said the Welshman, ‘but if by the stick thou canst show me where to find treasure, I’ll tell thee where I found it.’

“‘If thou wilt take me to the spot where it grew, I will make thee master of much treasure,’ said the stranger.

“The Welshman agreed to accompany the stranger down to Wales, and forthwith they started. On the morning after their arrival, the drover took his guest to the grassy hollow, where grew the hazel from which he had cut his long stick.

“It was the identical spot where the ancient beldame said she had seen King Arthur and his knights in their enchanted sleep.

“‘Now, be it known to thee,’ said the stranger, ‘this is the very hollow I saw in a dream. Get a spade and a pick, and dig as I direct.’

“The Welshman obeyed orders, and proceeded to dig up the roots of the hazel wherefrom the stick had been cut. After digging for some time—the stranger and

drover taking it by turns—they discovered a very broad and flat stone, which with some difficulty they removed. Underneath the stone, the men seeing a flight of steps, they descended, and went on into a long corridor, in the centre of which a huge bell was suspended.

“‘And now, take note,’ said the stranger; ‘on no account must thou touch yon bell, or dire will be the consequences. But follow whither I lead.’

“Then they went on until they reached a large cavern which was very wide, and in the dim light of a solitary lamp, they saw thousands of warriors lying asleep in a large circle. They were clad in bright armour, with their shields beside them, and their swords unsheathed ready for use. In the centre of the circle were twelve knights, and amongst them was one more distinguished than the rest, by reason of his battle-axe and crown of gold set with rare precious stones which lay beside him.

“‘There,’ said the stranger, ‘sleep the renowned King Arthur and his twelve knights and thousands of warriors, until the grey dawn of the great day when the Black Eagle and the Golden Eagle shall go to war. The loud clamour of that Eagle warfare shall make the earth tremble, and cause the bell to ring so loudly as instantly to arouse the warriors to take up arms, and destroy all the enemies of the Cymry. Then shall Arthur the King return and possess the Island of Britain, and govern with justice, and be blessed with peace until time shall be no more. But woe be to him who shall ring a false alarm!’

“Right in the middle of the space around which the twelve knights slept with their king, were two goodly heaps, the one of gold, and the other of silver.

“‘Thou canst enter yon charmed circle,’ said the

stranger, 'and bring therefrom as much as thou canst carry of either the one or the other of those heaps at a time. But, mark me—not from both piles at once.'

"The Welshman felt very nervous, but was encouraged by the stranger, who said, 'Fear not here in the hall of enchantment, for they are sleeping the magic sleep.'

"Then the drover took as much as he could from the pile of silver, which by no means appeared to be diminished.

"As they went out, the stranger said, 'There is one warning I would give thee. Beware thou dost not touch that bell. But if by accident thou dost, one of the warriors will lift his head and ask, "Is it day?" and in peril of thy life thou must answer, "It is not day; sleep thou on."'

"Then the stranger and the Welshman ascended the steps, and went homeward.

"The next day the stranger took his departure, and the drover never saw him again.

"Time after time the Welshman went to the hall of enchantment, and therefrom brought hoards of gold and silver alternately, and in safety.

"By and by, the drover grew very rich and less heedful. One day when he went to replenish his hoard from the treasure, he slightly touched the bell, which pealed just as the man entered the hall.

"Then one of the grim-looking warriors lifted his head and shouted in a stentorian voice, 'Is it day?' The Welshman promptly responded, 'It is not day; sleep thou on,' whereupon the warrior fell asleep again.

"This happened several times, and the drover carefully made the proper answer.

"In an evil hour, the Welshman overloaded himself

with treasure, and, full of breathless excitement, tried to carry out a larger hoard than usual. He touched the bell, which rang loudly, whereupon one of the warriors cried out, 'Is it day?'

"In his excitement the drover forgot to reply, and to his horror, one of the warriors moved from the grim crowds, and took the gold from him.

"The scene was terrible.

"Quick and fast the warriors moved from their slumbers, and crowded around him. Their eyes glared in their sockets, and their long bony fingers were stretched out to grasp him.

"The drover ran for his life, but the angered warriors pursued him. He felt their breath like fire around him, but the grasp of their fingers was as the touch of cold steel or ice.

"On, on they came, and dragged him back into the centre of the charmed circle, while the thousands of warriors in strong but hoarse voices chanted a mysterious song. Then they beat the man terribly, and carried him out of the hall of enchantment, and up the steps, where they threw him out, and triumphantly yelling, drew the stone over the entrance to the cavern.

"The drover never recovered from the effects of the beating, and was poor ever afterwards. He often went with his friends to Craig-y-Dinas, to search for the spot where the stone covered the entrance to the cavern. But all in vain."

It would be useless reiteration to give the numerous traditions with reference to King Arthur, which have already been published in many forms—that of our late poet laureate being the most beautiful and attractive.

But Merlin, who, like Arthur, lived in the sixth

century, is not so well known to English readers, only those who are acquainted with the works of Geoffrey of Monmouth, or the old Latin "*Vita Merlini*," or Villemarqué's "*Myrddhim ou L'Enchanteur Merlin*."

Geoffrey of Monmouth, who was Bishop of St. Asaph in the twelfth century, gives an interesting account of Merlin. And here, by the way, it may be remarked, the three leading characters of Welsh tradition—Taliesin, Arthur, and Merlin—were said to have been mysteriously born. Geoffrey says, "Vortigern, after the infamous treachery of the long knives, retreated to Mount Eir—which is Eryri, or Snowdon—and here he ordered the building of a great tower of defence, whose foundations, however, were swallowed up by the earth as fast as they were filled in." The magicians, on hearing this, said he must procure the blood of "a youth that never had a father," and sprinkle it on the stones and mortar.

Messengers were accordingly sent to different parts of the country in search of such a youth.

Geoffrey continues: "In their travels they came to a city, called afterwards Caermerdin, where they saw some young men playing before the gate, and went up to them; but being weary with their journey, they sat them down there. . . . Towards evening, there happened on a sudden a quarrel between two of the young men, whose names were Merlin and Dalbutius. In the dispute Dalbutius said to Merlin, 'As for you, nobody knows what you are, for you never had a father.' At that word the messenger looked earnestly upon Merlin, and asked who he was. They learnt it was not known who was his father, but that his mother was daughter to the King of Dimetia, and that she lived in St. Peter's Church, among the nuns of the city."

The King of Dimetia's daughter, on being questioned, gave a very peculiar account of the birth of her child, whose father she declared was a supernatural being.

Robert le Borron, who in the fourteenth century wrote the French romance entitled "Merlin," gives a demoniac origin to the child, and this is the popular idea that pervades all the Welsh folk-stories of Merlin.

Vortigern's messengers persuaded young Merlin to accompany them to the king, and together they went from Carmarthen to Snowdon. Heywood, writing eighty-one years ago, says that Vortigern, casting his glances upon Merlin, "began to apprehend strange promising things in his aspect, as having a quick, piercing eye, an ingenious and gracious countenance, and in his youthful face, a kind of austerity and supercilious gravity, which took in him such a deep impression, that he thought his blood too noble to be mingled with the dust and rubbish of the earth, and therefore, instead of sentencing him to death . . . he opened to him the purpose he had to build this castle. . . ."

Merlin not only helped Vortigern to build the castle, but discovered, under its foundations, the red dragon and the white, that respectively symbolise the Celtic and Saxon races. Vortigern was amply repaid for sparing Merlin's life, and in many ways. When the king was sad-hearted in his solitary tower, Merlin would solace him with "several strains of music both courtly and rural—the sound heard, but the person not seen, as with the harp and cymbal. Sometimes, too, he would have a hare or hart hunted by a pack of dogs in the air, the game flying, the hounds, with open and audible mouths, pursuing, the huntsmen winding their horns. . . . The champaign, plain, woods, and coverts

appearing as visible and natural as if the sport had been upon the firm and solid earth."

At the end of a long street leading westward out of the town of Carmarthen—where the great magician was born—Merlin's Tree is to be seen. This ancient tree was struck by lightning some years ago, and is now in a very withered condition.

With reference to this tree, there is an old Welsh couplet, which, if I remember rightly, runs as follows:—

"When Merlin's Tree shall tumble down
Woe shall betide Carmarthen town!"

Or

"Then shall fall Carmarthen town!"

About two miles from Merlin's Tree, is Merlin's Hill, above the secluded and quiet village of Abergwilli, and Merlin's grave or cave is at the westward base of the hill. There, some old Welsh traditions say, Merlin is held in imprisonment by Nimue—Vivien—and the children are still told, that if they listen in the twilight the master of magic may be heard groaning, and bewailing his folly in trusting to a beautiful but wicked woman, who artfully contrived his disappearance.

Many versions are extant with reference to the fate of Merlin.

Some Welsh stories describe him as being held spell-bound in a famous house of glass on Bardsey Island.

According to the "Black Book of Carmarthen," as reproduced by the late Dr. Skene in his "Four Ancient Books of Wales," after the terrible battle of Arderydd, Merlin lamented—

"Seven score chieftains
Were turned into spirits:
In the wood of Celyddon
Were they transformed."

After this transformation, tradition says that Merlin became insane, and was doomed to haunt the Caledonian forest.

There, in his madness, he is seen wandering with only one companion—an old grey wolf. By-and-by, the magician's sister sends for him, and he meekly allows himself to be led home, where he is tempted to remain by the offer of rich gifts, of "purple robes, dogs, falcons, horses, collars of gold and pearls, and goblets of great price."

But his sanity is short-lived, and for him there is no rest. Fretting for freedom, longing for the shadowy depths of the vast forest, and ever bitterly lamenting the loss of his kindred and friends, he escapes and returns again, is recaptured, and returns again to the spirit haunts of his old companions.

Later on his devoted sister had a house of glass built for him. It had "sixty doors and as many windows." Some stories say this house was in Bardsey Island, others say it was in the forest.

When wintry winds howl through the forest, and shriek around the house of glass, Merlin studies the stars at night, and by day he goes to one of the sixty doors, where one hundred and twenty bards wait to hear and write out his prophecies. In his winter palace, he receives Taliesin, who renounces the world, and goes to dwell in the solitude of the forest, with Merlin and his sister Gwendydd.

In the old traditions, Merlin is pictured as an old man "clothed only in skins and his long white hair, his beard like the grey moss on the trunk of an old oak, his eyes troubled, boiling like the water of a pot upon the hearth."

We see him wandering among the primrose stars, when dewy violets fill the woodland hollows with beauty, or lingering where summer blossoms scatter their petals upon the mossy sward, or flitting wildly through the forest when crimson and russet leaves whirl downward through the air, or—accompanied by his old grey wolf—hastening with the coming of the first frosts to his devoted sister who waits for him in the solitary palace with its many windows, whence through the long and dreary winter he remains star-gazing, until spring arouses him from his occult studies.

Wherever Merlin is seen, he appears like a giant looming through the mists of the past. From the commencement of his brilliant career, through long years of world renown, and masterful power, to the mysteries surrounding his final fate, the great Enchanter stands as an unique character in Celtic tradition, and one worthy of the fullest study; but space here will not permit.

Pure, holy, and Christlike is the character of St. David, the patron saint of Wales. He was born at Dinas Dewisant—St. David's—in the extreme west of Wales, and in the Valley of Glyn Rhosyn, the saint first taught his pupils that "He who works not, also shall not eat."

There are numerous legends about his birth and education, his missionary tour, his return to and settlement in Pembrokeshire, his contest with Bryn, his miraculous preservation from being poisoned, his success at the Synod of Llanddewi Brevi, his elevation to the archiepiscopate, and death, and through all vicissitudes, his career was marked by a long self-sacrificing struggle for the spiritual as well as the temporal welfare of the people.

One of the traditions with reference to St. David is, that he was the disciple of St. Paulinus, uncle of King Arthur. He is said to have been educated at the ancient town of Llantwit Major—or Llaniltyd Vawr, on the seacoast of Glamorgan—which is considered one of the most sacred spots in Wales.

Llantwit was the only university town in Britain in the fifth century. The Emperor Theodosius the younger established a Christian college there early in the fourth century, but owing to piratical raids it suffered greatly. In this condition it was found by Germanus, who came over to Britain early in the fifth century to suppress the Pelagian heresy. Germanus re-established the college at Llantwit, and placed it under the direction of his colleague Iltutus. Soon afterwards it became a great educational centre, and its reputation spread all over Europe. It was the *Alma Mater* of St. Patrick, St. David, Taliesin, Dubricius—who crowned King Arthur—Germanicus, Gildas the historian, Sampson, Archbishop of Dôl, and others. There still may be seen the college bell of St. Iltutus, with its inscription, “Ora pro nobis sancte Iltute.”

In the church of St. Illtyd is another ancient bell, and inscribed on it is the couplet—

“I to the church the living call,
And to the grave do summon all.”

And in the churchyard is the cross erected to the memory of the learned St. Iltutus, by his pupil, Sampson, Archbishop of Dôl, in Brittany. The cross bears the words, “CRUX ILTUTI ;” and on the opposite side, “SAMSON POSUIT HAUC CRUCEM PRO ANIMA EJUS.”

There are numerous traditions connected with St.

Iltutus, one of which runs thus:—"Put to sore straits by the overflowing of the sea, he was about to quit in despair the place he had fixed upon for building a church and dwelling, when he was comforted in a dream by an angel, pursuant to whose command he went down to the shore, when the sea at sight of him began to recede as if it were a sensible animal." When the shore was dry, he struck it with his staff, "and thereupon immediately flowed a very clear fountain, which is also beneficial for curing diseases, which continues to flow without falling off; and what is more wonderful, although it is near the sea, the water emitted is pure."

An interesting tradition is that of St. Teilo and his wonderful bell. St. Teilo was born at Eglwys Gunnion near Tenby, about 480 A.D. He received his early education at the College of St. Iltutus, Llantwit Major, and afterwards went to the monastic seminary of Mochros, on the Wye, which was under the governorship of St. Dyfrig or Dubricuis, Archbishop of Caerleon, and first permanent Bishop of Llandaff. In company with St. David and St. Padarn, St. Teilo made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and on their return they visited Rome, and were consecrated bishops. In the year 512 St. Teilo was appointed to the bishopric of Llandaff. This saint, who was an eminent theologian and teacher, died at Llandeilor Fawr, Carmarthenshire, in A.D. 566.

When St. Teilo returned from Jerusalem, he brought with him a wonderful bell. This bell, untouched by mortal hands, regularly struck the hours, and the primitive people of that period believed it to be either under occult or angelic influence. The harmony of the bell not only worked wonderful cures, but if a suspected

person appeared before it, the bell proclaimed his innocence in low and soothing tones, but the guilty one was startled into confession by a loud, abrupt, and prolonged clarion.

The bell possessed other miraculous powers, and continued to exercise its influence until it was polluted by profane hands; then its work was accomplished, and it became useless.

St. Teilo was known as one of the three blessed visitors, and his services were frequently in great request. The King of Dyved was much troubled because every night a kinsman, servant or guest was slain, and the reason could not be discovered. He sent for St. Teilo, but as the eminent churchman could not go in person, he sent two of his pupils, and they served all the food and beverage to every one present. The charm was broken, no murder happened that night, and the king gave land to Teilo in recognition of his services.

It is but one step from the traditions of Wales to its superstitions.

In lonely rural districts, the country folk will still tell you that they hear strange voices rising above the storm, and see weird omens flashing along the darkling sky. They behold the gigantic form of the Brenin Llwyd, the Grey King, sitting afar gloomily and ever silent in the clinging mist; they hear the howls of the Crwn Annwn—the spirit hounds—that are said to hunt the souls of the departed, as separate sounds from those of the wind and waves; and they hear the agonising shrieks of the Gwrach-y-rhybin, the hag of the mist, and the flapping of its leathern, bat-like wings in the twilight. Although they tell you that the hills are not now peopled as of old

with fairies, giants, and monsters, they glory in the fame of the giant philosopher, who sat among northern mountain peaks to watch the stars, for, from the traditional haunts of Idris, the power of his astrological influence is talked of alike among the snowy summits of the north, and the summer meadows of the south. Of him the Triads say: "So great was his knowledge of the stars, and of their nature and situations, that he could foretell whatever might be desired to be known to the day of doom."

There were two other astronomers and astrologers, Gwyddion the son of Don, and Gwyn the son of Nudd.

The wizard monarch Gwyddion formed a lovely woman out of pure fair blossoms, and made swift-footed steeds—"swift as the sea-mew"—out of "springing plants."

The Crwn Annwn, or spirit hounds, are said to be heard in the gloom of night baying or yelling. These hounds are supposed to inflict torments on disembodied spirits abandoned to their mercy in the regions of the air, in retribution for some heinous sin or sins committed on earth.

The Gwrach-y-Rhybin of Wales resembles the Banshee of Ireland. This night-hag is described as having long flowing black hair, piercing and glaring eyes, and gloomy face. One eye is supposed to be grey and the other black, and both are deeply sunken. She is represented as having a thin spare form, with a crooked back and pigeon breast. Her long trailing robe of black clings closely to her body, and her bat-like wings are folded when she is seen wandering around some ancient castle or manor house, but they

are expanded as she takes her flight, or ascends to flap them against the doomed person's window. This hag of evil omen is only seen before the death of those who belong to the ancient families of Wales.

In order to ascertain the extent of modern belief in portents and omens, I spent the autumn of last year in collecting lore of this description from people who still tenaciously cling to the superstitions of their land.

Among the most important of the superstitions of Wales, are the death portents and omens. The most prominent of these is the *Cyhyraeth*, which, even in the present day, is said to be heard before a death or deaths.

The *Cyhyraeth* is a doleful wailing or moaning sound, generally heard by somebody nearly related to the person whose death is approaching. When the moaning sound is heard on the shore, it portends many wrecks and loss of life; if it wanders through a village, it is a token of pestilence or an epidemic in the place; if it proceeds from or near a house, somebody in that dwelling will soon die. This wailing and moaning generally goes like a person lamenting along the way leading from the house to the place of burial.

A woman, whose husband died from the effects of an accident, said she heard the *Cyhyraeth* before her husband's death. They were coming along a lonely road in the night, when the woman heard a strange melancholy moaning and wailing sound close beside the bridge.

"Did you hear that sound?" she asked her husband.

"What sound?" he asked.

"Moaning and wailing on the other side of the bridge. I'm afraid somebody's hurt."

The husband cried out, "Who's there? what's the matter?" and not receiving an answer, he remarked, "'Twas only the wind in the trees." Then they went on.

About noon the next day the wife chanced to cross the bridge, when she again heard the moaning. "It was just as if somebody was in great pain," she said.

Once more she heard the wailing, in the same place, and three weeks later her husband met with an accident on the very spot whence the sounds proceeded. When found, he was in great pain, and moaned piteously.

The Cyhyraeth was the presage of his death, and the spot where the accident happened.

Another person, hearing moaning in a wayside inn, entered and asked what was the matter. The landlord said there was not anything amiss.

"But I heard somebody moaning," persisted the neighbour.

"My wife heard moaning here only last night," said the landlord.

"That's very odd," muttered the neighbour, who, on her return home, said to her husband, "I've heard the Cyhyraeth; mark me, there'll be a death in that house before long. It'll not be the wife, for *she* heard the Cyhyraeth too."

Three days later the landlord died suddenly.

Sometimes this baneful sound is heard proceeding from the room of a sick person, and so distinctly as to cause those who are present to suppose that the invalid is really moaning.

"I thought I heard you moaning as I came up the

stairs," said an incautious young woman to her aged and sick mother.

"If you heard a moaning sound," said the latter, "it was the Cyhyraeth, and for certain I shall die soon."

The next day her prophecy was verified.

Whereas the Cyhyraeth is described as being long drawn, moaning, and wailing sounds, the Tolaeth is represented as spirit knockings, rappings, tappings, strange noises, or sound of footsteps.

One night a man and his wife living in Porthcawl, Glamorganshire, heard the shuffling as of many feet coming up the garden path. They wondered what could bring people to their house so late at night, when everybody was in bed. By and by, hearing the door opening, the good folk began to fear that "thieves were in the house," and listened attentively. Next they heard somebody moving the chairs, and the sound as of a heavy burden being set down. It was only in the kitchen these noises were heard.

Two days later, their only son was drowned, and his body was borne home on a ladder, to make place for which, the chairs had to be moved just in the manner the parents had heard them.

A girl named Gwenllian Jenkins, of Nash, one day took her father's breeches downstairs in order to repair them. Just as she put her needle in the work, she heard three raps, as she thought, at the door, but on going there, not a person was to be seen. So she recommenced working again, and once more the raps were heard. Each time she attempted to repair the breeches, she heard the raps. Her father, feeling unwell, came home from work earlier than usual that

evening, and the breeches were set aside. About a week later, the old man died.

A carpenter in Glamorganshire always knew when he was to have an order for a coffin, by the loud, almost startling knocking in his workshop, or strange tappings on the door of the cupboard in which he kept funeral trappings and decorations.

Sounds are sometimes heard in the night, of a funeral procession wending its way towards the burial ground of a chapel, or the parish churchyard. A singular instance of this happened recently. A woman was aroused in the night by the sound of a funeral procession approaching her house. To her surprise, it halted at her own door, where she heard the shuffling of feet, after which the procession passed on. She told a neighbour of it, but they failed to solve the mystery of the halt.

In the course of a few weeks, a funeral from a distance entered the town, and, in accordance with the wish of the dead, the hearse halted at the house in question, where the deceased formerly lived for many years.

"How do you define the difference between a funeral and any other procession?" I asked a Welshman.

"In a funeral procession the footsteps are very slow," he said. "Once I heard the sound of many people running past the house, and a few days later a number of boys ran breathlessly along to tell a farmer that his son was drowned."

The Canwyll Corph or Corpse Candle is a pale light seen going along the route which a funeral will take. Sometimes it is seen carried by a spectral representation of the dying person. But as a rule it is seen

hovering like a will-o' the wisp. If a mother and her babe are indicated, a tall and a short candle will move side by side.

If the candle is faint, a child will die. For a young man, it blazes brightly; for an old man it is red, and for a woman it is a white light.

This weird and pale corpse light is seen moving from the house—where death will soon take place—down the road to the church, and then it dances around the churchyard, and hovers over the spot where the dead will be laid.

An old sexton used to say he always knew the exact spot where the next grave was to be dug by the corpse light that came as a premonitor. In one corner of the churchyard, there was the neglected grave of an aged couple, whose only son had left the parish in his boyhood. Fifty years later, the sexton said, "somebody is to be buried in that grave," pointing with his index finger towards the grass-grown mound.

"Never," said his neighbour, shaking his head,

"A corpse candle has been flickering there for the past three nights."

About a week later, news came that the good old people's only son, who died at Bath, was to be buried in the same grave with his father and mother.

A Welsh lady going homeward from church on a dark night, saw three corpse candles hovering near her own door.

"They were," she said, "pale yellowish blue lights of different sizes that moved about for a moment, then vanished."

She was very much troubled, but concealed her feelings.

In a few weeks, three of her children were seized with diphtheria; two died one night, and the other the next, and the triple funeral took place the same day.

Another omen of death is the corpse bird, which is described by some as being a little smooth brown bird without feathers or wings. Others aver that it has soot-black feathers and wings, and is so peculiar looking, that there is no mistaking it for any other bird. It perches it itself upon the roof of the house, or on the window-sill of the room where death will take place. This mysterious bird, which the people say is never seen only just before a death, cries “Dewch! Dewch!” “Come! Come!”

A young mother saw this bird as it perched itself upon the window-sill under which her little girl of two years old was playing. She said the sound of it struck terror into her heart. Within the week the child was seized with an illness from which she never recovered.

A man heard this bird of ill-omen in the apple-tree under the branches of which his father was standing, and within ten days the old man died.

Two sisters heard it under the thatched eaves of their brother's house, and a week later he was dead.

Spectral dogs are said to be seen near the residence of one whose dissolution is fast approaching. Such an one was seen by the old servant, whose aged master was ill. She described it as a large white dog, with glaring red eyes, and it sat upon the top of the steps leading from the gateway of the house. Its presence sent a shiver through her, and she said she felt “as if cold water was running down her back.”

This dog is generally white, but sometimes it is said to be black. It goes noiselessly along the road, and

crouches, as if in a very forlorn condition, beside the door or anywhere near the premises of the doomed person.

Some old women in Carmarthenshire have a strange notion about the spectral dog. They say that if a white dog appears "the soul will be saved," but if a black dog is seen, the person "is very wicked, and his soul will be taken to everlasting torment."

Another omen is the death-pinch, or mark on any part of the body, but particularly on the arm. This mark is dark coloured, almost black, looking just as though somebody had unmercifully pinched the person. It is a pinch that cannot be accounted for, appearing suddenly, and often for months before the death of a near relative. As a rule, this pinch portends a legacy, or some benefit owing to the death.

In Glamorganshire and Carmarthenshire, the yarrow, commonly known in Wales as "Boy's Love," is called the death flower. If it is brought into a house, it is a presage of the death of one or more members of the family. For this reason, yarrow is never allowed to be brought into a house, and if it is accidentally conveyed indoors it is regarded as a "certain sign of death."

Sometimes the peculiar odour of this pervades a house, even when the plant is not seen, and is known not to be on or near the premises, in which case, the people say, "there'll be a death in the family."

If anybody remarks, "I smell freshly turned earth in the house," the neighbours say, "There'll be a grave wanted for one of the family."

The old folk say they can always "smell death" before a funeral, and they speak of it as a peculiarly indescribable odour, just "as if a dead body was in the house."

Sometimes they "smell death" on the shore, in which case there will be a wreck or wrecks on the coast.

Then there is the wind of death, the "gwynt traed y meirw," "wind blowing over the feet of the corpses," which is felt sometimes in the churchyard, by a relative of the person who is going to die, and often near the house, or in the garden.

"It is a wind that sends a shiver through one," say the people, "a wind that searches to the marrow, and makes the teeth chatter for a minute or so."

This wind, or rather breeze, is felt in the heat of midsummer, on the brightest day, and in, perhaps, the sunniest place.

If a person shivers beside a roaring fire, or in the noontide heat of summer, the people tell you, "The spirits are searching for your grave."

If a sick person hears sweet and soothing music, so beautiful that he never remembers having heard the like of it before, the people shake their heads and say, "Poor fellow, it is all over with him;" and the same is said if the sufferer hears the ticking of the death watch in his room.

A dog howling, the untimely blossoming of a tree, or the screech-owl seen or heard near a house, portends the death of an inmate, while a cock crowing at an untimely hour is a "sure sign" of an unusual kind of death in the parish. The sound in the ears as of a bell, is a token of death in the family.

In the old fifth century university town of Llantwit Major, the passing bell is said to toll without the touch of human hands, before a death in the parish. The bell is frequently heard tolling over, or in the direction

of the house where an inmate will soon die. Some of the people there say that before a funeral noises and commotion are always heard in the churchyard where St. Illutus was buried, and that still, if anybody has the courage to look through the keyhole of the church door, on one of the "*Teir nos ysprydion*"—"three spirit nights"—he will see the spectral forms of those who are to depart this life during the year. Blaenporth, Cardiganshire, is also noted for the passing bell tolling before a death in the parish. If it gives three tolls at noon or midnight, somebody of influence will die.

The "three spirit nights," when, according to Welsh tradition, the souls of the departed are permitted to return to earth, are the eves of All Saints, Christmas, and the New Year.

"If there's one funeral, there'll be three," is an adage in Wales, and, turning from funeral omens to pleasanter superstitions, "If there's one wedding, there'll be three."

Some of the Welsh folk say it is unlucky to find money anywhere. Others say if money is found in a very unexpected place, be careful not to reveal it, or divulge the secret to anybody, because it is a gift from the "*Tylwyth Têg*"—"Fair Family"—or fairies, who will never put a silver piece in your way again. These good fairies are sometimes called "*Bendith i Maman*"—"Blessing of Mothers"—who shower benefits on their favourites.

The Welsh say that fairies are the souls of persons who were not so depraved as to be sent to everlasting punishment, nor so free from evil as to merit admission into eternal bliss.

It is considered unlucky to keep peacocks' feathers in the house.

"So long as they remained in my house," said a Welsh lady, "we continually had legal disputes, troubles, and difficulties. They were thrown away—not burnt, for that would be unlucky—and the unpleasantness ceased."

"For the two years that peacocks' feathers were in our house," said a merry Welsh girl, "we had frequent losses. We threw them away, and good luck returned."

"Everybody in the house was melancholy and low-spirited while we kept the peacocks' feathers," said a Vale farmer, "but once they were gone, all was right again."

"Don't bring May-blossom indoors," say the Welsh-women, "for you'll bring ill-luck or sickness with it."

If blackthorn blossoms are brought into the house "snakes will follow."

To break any article made of glass is unlucky. If a magpie crosses your path, ill-luck will follow soon.

"If you break a looking-glass of any size or description, you'll have bad luck for seven years," say Welsh housewives, adding, "If one piece of crockery is broken, two more must go."

— It is considered unlucky to meet anybody on the stairs, or to see a squinting person on the first day of the year, or early any morning, and the evil luck will continue for the year or day as the case may be.

"A cold hand, a warm heart; but a warm hand, a cold heart."

There are three chances for a Welshman.

When you get a cold, count back three days and you will find out where you caught it.

The third day tests a servant's capacities.

When you are at the seaside the old women will tell you, "Nine dips no danger," and "Beware of the ninth wave, for it is the longest and strongest."

The Welsh believe that seven and nine are fateful numbers, each connected with some particular circumstances. Thus we find that they consider the most important years of life to be 21, 27, 35, 36, 45, 49, 56, and 63. The sixth number was held sacred among the Druids, and on the sixth day of the moon in each month they held their principal religious festivals.

—To put the left stocking or shoe on first is unlucky.

Seeds set, or plants planted on new moon days, or nights, will flourish best.

One of the Welsh papers recently stated that the Vale farmers still believe in witchcraft. I do not think this is true, for, after careful inquiry, I have been unable to discover any person who has the reputation of being a witch, though I know of more than one old man and woman living who can charm warts away. How they do it I have been unable to fathom. But I have seen warts charmed away only this year, in Wales.

"All the witches are dead," said a Glamorganshire gentleman to whom I applied for information on the subject, "but so late as fifty years ago they were alive. I myself remember Kate the Witch of Flanders. She kept a small farm, and to her great annoyance the hounds would go there. Kate was supposed to turn herself into a hare. If ever a hare proved too strong for the hounds, they called it the Flanders Witch. She would worry the hounds, let them come close up to her, and then escape. Once she went to Ham for a

pitcher of milk, which was refused her. When the cows were driven to the water to drink, one of them went on its horns, and could not be moved until the witch came. They never refused milk to Kate again. One day she took her shoes to the shoemaker to get them repaired. He refused, and soon after found himself unable to get up from his seat. 'What is the matter?' asked the neighbours. He said he could not move. 'I suppose Kate the Witch has been here,' said a friend. 'Yes,' was the answer, 'and I refused to mend her shoes.' They sent for Flanders Witch, who came and coolly surveyed the man. 'I can't move,' said he. 'I knew that,' said Kate, who stroked his knees for a second, after which he was able to get up again. She was well known for her witchcraft, and all the people in the parish, and for miles around, were terribly afraid to offend her.

"There was another witch in the same place. Her name was Dorothy Charles, and the day of her funeral was marked by a thunderstorm of unusual severity, which commenced just as the body was being borne to the church. The thunder was accompanied by forked lightning and torrents of rain, with a darkness almost like night, which caused people to believe the storm to be a token of God's displeasure with a woman who had been, in truth, a minion of Satan. The church was flooded, and the graves were broken down, and the churchyard was in a deplorable condition."

From a Vale farmer, who has gone to the majority, I had interesting particulars with reference to a witch who, in the days of his youth, used to frequent Porthcawl, Kenfig, and other places as a seller of Ewenny earthenware. He said she lived in an old half-ruined

cottage—long since demolished—in or near Southern-down. According to his description, her house was a solitary one, on the outskirts of the village. He described her as being tall, thin, and haggard-looking, with piercing eyes, deeply sunken in their sockets, and a hoarse masculine voice.

He was once persuaded by a companion to visit the witch for the purpose of testing her powers. Although afraid to go, he did not like to appear cowardly, more particularly because his friend was a fearless and almost defiant disbeliever in witchcraft.

When they knocked at the door, the old woman, opening it, seemed to read their thoughts, for she said, "I know you disbelieve my power, but you shall behold it as no mortal has yet witnessed it," and then she admitted them.

The contents of the room consisted of three-legged stools, a rickety table, three black cats whose eyes glared at the sight of strangers, and three ravens that croaked immoderately. Near the hearth, upon which a turf fire burned, they observed a cauldron and a sack. Drawing two three-legged stools from under the table, the witch invited her visitors to be seated. Then the witch drew a circle with chalk on the floor.

"Look at me," she said, "but don't speak."

In the midst of the circle, she placed a chafing dish containing burning embers, and on that she placed the cauldron half-filled with water. She then told the Vale farmer's friend to stand close to, but not within the circle. Then she opened a sack, and from it threw several things into the magic cauldron. The visitors thought the objects resembled a skull, cross-bones, and the carcasses of several small animals, which she threw

in, while muttering an incantation in Welsh, which, translated into English, ran as follows:—

“ In the devil's name we pour this water among this
meal (earth),
For long doing and ill heal ;
We put it into the fire,
That it may be burnt as we desire,
It shall be burnt with our will
As any bubble upon a kill (kiln).”

When the water boiled, the witch gave the young man, who was bidden to stand beside the circle, a glass filled with water from the pot, and told him to look through it at the cauldron.

He did so, and saw a figure developed in the steam. She asked him what he saw, and he replied that he beheld his brother in his usual attire, standing on the deck of the ship of which he was mate. The witch asked how he looked.

“ Very pale and ill,” was the reply.

“ What is he doing ? ” she asked.

“ Clinging to the mast,” was the answer.

“ To-morrow, at midnight, when the tide will be out,” said the witch, “ go and stand for fifteen minutes by the Witches' Point, and watch the tide. Go alone, or the charm will be broken. There will be nothing to fear. But come to me the next day.”

The Witches' Point, close under Dunraven Castle, is dreaded as a lonely, and at all times a dangerous spot.

The young man, whose will was strong, determined to see the end, and went as directed. It was a calm moonlight night, and he remained there the prescribed time. When he had been there twelve minutes, he heard a low-moaning and wailing sound, “ exactly like

the Cyhyraeth," he said, and suddenly the water became troubled. In terror, he hastened from the spot, and as he went home he saw a large Newfoundland dog crossing his path. Thinking it to be astray, he patted it, and coaxed it home with him, but at the doorstep it vanished.

Next day he summoned up courage to go and see the witch, who told him that the dog he had seen was the Crwn Annwn, or spirit hound, which portended the death of a relative.

Three days later, the ship of which the young man's sailor brother was mate was wrecked off the Tuskar rocks, and his body was washed up on the shore, close under the eastern side of the Witches' Point.

Needless to add, the young men never again consulted the witch!

In those days, the Vale farmer said it was customary to keep certain things which were supposed to protect people against those who practised the "art that none may name."

These are included in the following list:—

A small, smooth, limestone pebble picked up on the sea shore, with its edges rubbed down by the friction of the sea, and with a natural hole in it. This should be tied to the key of the house, stable, or any other building.

A horse-shoe found by accident, should be hung by sailors on the foremast, or by other people anywhere.

Let the witch have the wall, or the best side of the path.

When you meet a witch, turn the thumb of each hand inward, and close the fingers firmly upon them.

Take care your gloves, or any apparel worn next the skin, is not touched or seized by a witch.

Never go out before eating something, if only a few crumbs.

Keep thick white curtains across the windows at night, to prevent her evil eye seeing in.

If a few drops of the old creature's blood could be found, they would be supremely efficacious in preventing her "baneful workings."

The mountain ash is effective against witches. No witch will come near it. The smallest twig of it crossing the path of a witch will stop her progress, no matter how wild it may be. The branch of an ash tree kept at the head of the bed is a protection against her.

A hare's foot carried in the pocket will keep witches away.

A person in Glamorganshire bought a pig, which soon afterwards became very ill. Witchcraft was suspected. To ascertain if this were true, nine buds of elderberry were laid in a straight line, all pointing one way. A dish made of ash wood was inverted and placed carefully over them, and left until the next morning. If the buds were then found in disorder, the pig was bewitched; if not, all was right, and the complaint arose from natural causes. It transpired that the illness owed its origin to the latter.

A witch is known by her ugliness and penury.

There is generally a protuberance of flesh on some part of the neck or jaw, by which it is known she has sold herself to the father of lies!

The witch is an envious, malicious prognosticator of evil. If she comes into a dairy, she prevents the people to churn, or rather impedes them. To prevent her evil power, the churn-staff should be made of ash.

In the night she sometimes ties the cows together and milks them.

Very often she mounts the broom-stick and goes to the moon.

The huge black cat and croaking raven always kept by witches are supposed to be imps of Satan.

Should a witch pursue you, repeat the Lord's Prayer, and she will instantly run away in the opposite direction.

If you wear your body-linen inside out, you'll never be in danger of being bewitched.

In Wales, as in England, it is averred that the witches were in the habit of making what is called the "dead man's candle." According to the old superstition, so long as this taper continues to burn, the person who has aroused the ire of the worker in "black art" will have restless sleep and terrible dreams, or hideous nightmare.

The dead man's candle was placed in a dead man's hand, which in England and in France was known as "The Hand of Glory." The Welsh say that the witches were always to be seen "busy around the gallows tree."

The dead man's hand was obtained thus:—

From a murderer's or any other corpse, the right hand was carefully severed, when the veins were bloodless, and before the flesh left the bones. It was then put into a piece of linen, while the witch counted the "mystic count of seven." She then named the seven "governors of heaven"—Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury, the Sun, and the Moon. These ghastly fingers were then placed in an earthenware vessel, and covered with dragon-wort. Afterwards they were bleached in the sunshine.

The dead man's candle was made of the marrow of a murderer's or any other corpse, mixed with wax and Lapland sisame, the wick being made of the twisted hair of the dead.

The Welsh say that the witches went body-snatching when they could not obtain the corpse of a murderer, and in order to prevent them doing so, the stones marking the heads and feet of the graves were whitened. This custom has been handed down from generation to generation, and even in the present day, in Wales, the gravestones of the poor are whitened, though happily few people now know that it was formerly done to "drive the witches away."

Another superstition formerly prevalent in Wales, but now treated as being only an "old story," was that connected with the mandrake. It was regarded as perilous to uproot the mandrake, which the people said resembled a "sensible human being." On being uprooted it "shrieked and groaned," and from its stalk a "sweat" like blood oozed and dropped. Its leaf and fruit were called "charnel food." Some say it was engendered only beside the gallows tree. The old saying was, "Whoso gathereth the mandrake shall speedily die." Those who plucked this noxious plant were said to "die groaning, as the mandrake died," some expired "raving," and others passed away uttering "penitent prayers" for having uprooted it. But in all cases, the inexorable penalty of death was speedily inflicted upon those who dared to uproot the mandrake.

The ancients, in uprooting the mandrake, "took the wind thereof, looking all the time to the west, and with a sword described three circles around it," then drew it out of the ground.

Another plant of evil repute is the henbane, and Welsh children still say, if you eat "ever so little a bit of it, you'll go raving mad," and they believe that if a child fell asleep where the deadly nightshade grows, he "will sleep for ever."

It is unlucky to cut the nails of an infant under six months old. The mother should bite them off as they grow.

To step over a child will stop its growth; if by chance you do so, step back again for luck.

— If you cut your hair when the moon is waning, it will never grow.

If a cat sits with its back to the fire, a stranger may be expected.

When a cat washes itself very often, much rain will fall.

A spider on the clothes in the morning means bad luck, but in the afternoon or evening it is good.

Never kill any kind of spider, especially the money spider.

It is unlucky to look at the new moon through glass. When the moon's horns turn up, it is a sign of fine weather; if they turn down, rain is coming.

— The first time you hear the cuckoo, take off your shoe, and if you find a hair on the foot of your stocking, that will be the colour of your future husband's hair.

— You should never sigh. For each sigh you will lose a drop of your heart's blood.

May marriages are considered lucky in Wales, and Saturday is regarded as the best day for a wedding.

In Wales as in England, they say, "Blessed are the dead that the rain rains on," and "Happy is the bride

that the sun shines on ;” but the Welsh have two sayings—

“ A wedding in rain,
Means trouble and pain,”

And

“ A wedding in wet,
You’ll live to regret.”

The farmers in Wales will not allow their men to touch or meddle with the earth on Good Friday, because it would bring them a year of ill-luck.

It is considered very unlucky to pluck flowers from graves. If you do take any blossoms from a grave, there will be a death in your family.

Health, happiness, and success attend the bride who in marriage is not obliged to change her surname.

A bright speck on the candle or griddle means the coming of a letter, or a stranger.

— If a dull fire suddenly blazes, the person who is sitting near it will soon have a good sweetheart or husband.

To be followed by a strange dog is considered very lucky.

If the candle burns blue, a spirit is in the room ; if it burns badly, the witches are abroad.





XVI.

THE WELSH FARMERS.

IF any man in Wales has escaped the touch and changes of time, it is the Welsh farmer. His occupation does not alter, and admits of little or any change, and the spot where he pursues it remains much in the same condition as it was a thousand years ago.

Ages pass, religious, political and social mutations take place, but they do not materially affect him. No matter whether a king or a queen reigns—whether Conservatives or Liberals are in power, they cannot do without the farmer. The sheep must be tended on the hills, and the cattle looked after in the valleys, and the man who attends to them is equally respected and disregarded by all parties. He retains his place and characteristics in peace and solitude, while all around him is in a state of excitement and change.

The life of the Welsh farmer is, as a rule, a “hard one.” It presents few or no opportunities for self-

improvement, and possesses none of those rungs or steps in the social scale whereby Fortune's ladder may be mounted. As a rule, once a farmer, always a farmer, and his son has nothing higher to look for than to follow his father's occupation.

Minds formed for study may imagine that in the farmer's life there are many tempting opportunities for contemplation; but these are invariably overbalanced by the absence in a farmer's existence of those incentives to exertion which are supplied to other men by closer contact with the fierce and breathless competition of town life. Let the most ardent lover of solitude try a year's farming in the wilds of Wales, and those valleys which look very beautiful in summer, would have no charms in the dreary winter weather, when the wind shrieks through the gloomy ravines, and the mists cling closely to the mountain sheep-paths.

The Welsh farmer endures this with stolid patience. But it does not develop his mind, or raise him in the scale of humanity. It is a question if the tendency in the life of the Welsh farmer of modern times is not to sink rather than rise in comparison with other toilers. The latter move onward with the stream, but *he*, by the conditions of his life, is stationary. His world of action is narrow, and is not likely to be enlarged. Still he remains—perhaps more closely and truly resembling the familiar figure that was seen in the same pastures and on the same hills five hundred years ago, than any other man on mountain or plain of Great Britain.

As a rule, the Vale farmer of Wales has greater opportunities and facilities for improving the conditions of his life, than his brother of the hills or mountain sides.

The latter has to contend with many difficulties, both as regards his mode of farming and the greater distance from large towns.

Some of the lonely farmhouses to be seen among the hills and mountains remain as the last memorials of what was formerly known as the *Hafod un-nos* system. *Hafod un-nos* means "One summer night." Ages ago, if a poor family made a rude hearth, and boiled a crock thereon for one summer's day and night, on the outskirts of a common, or a desolate spot on the mountain side, or a dreary dingle, they claimed, from ancient usage, their right to the spot. Subsequently a rude hut was first built there, then a cottage, which gradually developed into a small farmhouse, surrounded by land taken patch by patch from the neighbouring common or hillside, and enclosed. In the course of a few years a small farm was created, and if the intrusion remained unnoticed—which frequently was the case—it became a freehold property.

Thus it is, among the hills and mountains of Wales, curiously placed farms are to be seen set on the borders of gloomy ravines, where long-maned unbroken horses, and numberless flocks of small shaggy sheep are almost the only objects to be seen. All around them, the horizon is closed in with frowning mountains, whose lofty mist-encircled peaks crowd one above another in wildly strange but most grand confusion.

In those regions, the fields still have their boundary ditches, surmounted by prickly furze with its profusion of golden blossoms, intermingled here and there with purple and pink heather, instead of the hawthorn, willow birch, and hazel hedges of the sheltered and beautiful owlands.

There too are storm-beaten woodlands, where stubby and stunted trees, forced by the wild winds to droop their heads all in the same direction, and close in their weird-looking shadows, are desolate mountain lakelets and pools, where migratory birds pause in the crimson sunset, to rest, during their hasty flights southward.

Think of lonely and small farms in such positions, and at distances of from three to five miles from the nearest habitation, and seven to ten miles from the nearest market town or railway station.

It is in those remote spots of rural Wales that the traditions, superstitions, and anecdotes of Wales and the Welsh chiefly survive.

Feelings of awe mingled with solemn dread fill the minds of the farmers of those districts, when, with ghost-like movement, the mountain mists glide noiselessly downward to the valleys—or the thunder rolls under cloud-encircled peaks—or the forked lightning plays around the gnarled oak that has stood the storms of centuries, until the fatal bolt shatters it beyond revival. It is in those places that the religious sentiments of the people are tinged with a gloominess which seldom admits of sunshine, and an almost all-pervading sense of fear-bound submission to the Divine Will, however severe it may be.

There is one amusing characteristic common alike of the Welsh farmer of the mountains and his brother of the Vale.

Go when or where you will among them, they will say, "It is very bad times with us now." The Welsh farmer is proverbially a grumbler, and he suits his grumbling well to the occasion. If wheat has risen in price, he complains that hay, or some other product

is of less value than ever he remembers. If you remark how fine the weather is, he says, "But 'tis gettin' uncommon dry—too dry by half." After a few days' rain, he declares it has never poured so long and continuously "for years." If he gets a misfortune, it is the worst he ever had in his life; if he is indisposed, he "never was so bad before;" if one crop of turnips is not quite so good as usual, he persists that every turnip in the field is rotten; and if his cattle and sheep go astray, they are gone for ever and ever.

Upon remarking this to some of the farmers' wives, they said, "Don't you notice them a bit. 'Tis their way, you know, and they'll never get out of it."

So at last it is possible to grow accustomed to the Welsh farmers' grumbling tones, and set them down as "it's their way, you know."

There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, and those are chiefly among the younger folk.

But even the grumbler turns occasionally aside from "his way," and forgets his little grievances in the social pleasure of a few hours' conversation. Once he warms to the subject, there is no better relater of anecdotes than the Welsh farmer. He knows all the curious narratives that have been handed down from generation to generation of farmer folk, and there is a sly look in his eyes as he tells you of the pranks he played in his boyhood.

At the same time, it is most difficult to get the farmer of the old type out of his groove, in which he is as deeply set as are the ruts in the marshy lanes on his farm. He strongly objects to strangers, and is as disappointingly reticent in their presence. Even long residence in the Principality will not bring the

stranger into close communion with the Welsh farmer, unless thorough friendliness arises between them.

They cling very firmly to old localities, faces, and servants whose servitude extends over periods of twenty-five to fifty years on the same farm. Master and servant frequently grow old together, until, as one aged farmer said, "'Twill just be a tie between us, when our time comes to go."

The habitations of even the "well-to-do" farmers are not nearly so good as English farmhouses, and the food is, in some instances, much coarser than that which is supplied in England to farm labourers. There are exceptions, but as a rule the Welsh farmer is parsimonious, or what the people in the Principality call "near." But farmers of to-day are altering, and, in some respects, improving, and the farms are kept in a more orderly condition than formerly.

It is very astonishing to notice, in some parts of Wales, the prevalence of limed or what is called "white-washed" houses. The whitening process is carried on to such an extent that not only are the walls of the houses and outhouses white, but every inch of boundary, even to the rough stones which are placed here and there on the roadsides leading to the homesteads. Some farmers have a weakness for ochre as a colouring for their houses, but this is now only general among the poorer classes. The better kind of farmhouses are stuccoed or built of stone, and in many instances they were formerly ancient manorial halls, around which tradition and superstition cling like the ivy that garlands their gables.

Many a Welsh farmer is able to live well and yet to leave a small annuity to his family. But, while in

the land of the living, there is, according to his own account, no poorer man in the Principality. He says he has to "scrimp and turn and twist" a hundred different ways in order "to save a penny," and he accomplishes the "work of two men," so as to avoid hiring a labourer more than he can possibly do without.

The farmers of the Vale generally enjoy jokes at the expense of the hill people, who are proverbially unconscious of the amusing rôle in which they appear abroad. Here is a story as told by a farmer only this year. In his exact words, it runs as follows:—

"There was an excursion, or as the people in the hills say, 'a scoorshoon,' to London from the Rhondda Valley, and about five hundred people went with it.

"On arriving in London, one of the Rhondda men looked across the platform, and presently saw a railway official, around whose cap was a band of gold braid. For a minute the Rhondda man looked surprised, but in a while he mustered up courage to address the official.

"'There's a dusprad (desperate) lot of people in London to-day, sir,' said he.

"'Not more than usual,' replied the official, glancing around.

"'Gosh! but there is an uncommon lot in London to-day. Man alive, there be five hundred with the scoorshoon from the Rhondda. London's full to-day.'

"The official smiled.

"'This is a tremence (immense) stasshoon (station) an' no mistake. 'Tis an uncommon big place.'

"'It is large,' was the reply.

"'An' now, sir,' continued the Rhondda man, 'I s'pose you be a greet (great) man here. You be the stasshoon master, I s'pose.' And as the official made

no reply, he added, 'An' you do know the place well anuff, an' you do know the turn of every colner (corner); an' p'rhaps you'd be so kind as to tell me where I ken get a liddle drop of *cwrw da*?'

"*Cwrw da* (good ale) was Arabic to the official, who, shaking his head, said, 'I don't know.'

"'Not know!' exclaimed the Rhondda man in amazement. 'Well! well! I be come to somethin', not to have a drop of *cwrw*.'

"Suddenly a happy idea flashed across his mind, and he continued, 'I do see now, that I do. You don't understand my languidge, which is the languidge (language) of the anshent (ancient) Britons—but p'rhaps you do know when I do say, round which colner is the—tap-room?'

"'There's no such thing as a tap-room here.'

"'No tap-room—an' here in the greet city of Llundain too! Dear de helpody well! no tap-room in this 'ere big town! They do talk an' talk 'bout it, but I did never hear of sech (such) a thing in my life! No *cwrw da*—no tap-room—no—nothin!'

"In his despair he looked around, and to his relief saw a friend, to whom he shouted in a stentorian voice, 'Here, Shinkin! no more of this for me. I'll go back to the Rhondda where there's tap-room, an' plenty of *cwrw* an—all!'

"'Why' man alive,' said his companion, 'there's a big tap-room in the public round that there colner. I've bin an' 'ad as good a drop of *cwrw* as you could 'ave anywhere.'

"And forthwith the disconsolate Rhondda man was led to the place, where, to his intense delight, some beer could be obtained."

Another story told by the farmers of the Vale, illustrates their appreciation of a joke.

A gentleman living in Llanblethian desired to send the young pup of a scarce breed to his friend at Gabalva, near Cardiff.

In those days it was customary for gentlemen to use the "thee" and "thou," when familiarly addressing their servants and others.

"I want thee to take this pup to Gabalva," said the master.

"An' a beautiful pup it is, too," said the servant.

"Thee must put it in a bag," continued the master.

"An' sure—ly 'tis the best of the litter," was the response.

The pup was forthwith put in a bag, and the old servant started on his journey. He walked so far as an ancient wayside inn known as the "Three Tuns," in the village of St. Nicholas, near Cardiff, and there paused to rest and have some beer, after which he proceeded to Gabalva.

"What hast brought in this bag?" asked the gentleman.

"As fine a pup as ever you did see, sir, an' the best of the litter, too—indeed to goodness."

The bag was opened, and out leaped a frightened cat!

"A pup indeed! Why, thee'st brought a cat. Take it back, thee old fool, and tell thee master I've got plenty of cats in the house already."

The old servant bitterly lamented. "'Twas a pup when I did leave Llanblethian; iss indeed to goodness, sir, if I was never to move agen, 'twas a pup!"

Then he returned the cat into the bag and went

home, pausing once more at the "Three Tuns" to imbibe some beer.

On his return to Llanblethian, he said to his master, in his usual familiar fashion, "Thee'st made me look a pretty simpleton, sendin' me to Gabalva with a cat. I was ashamed of my life, an' I did make sure 'twas a pup thee didst put in."

"But 'twas a pup," said the master; "did'st think I would send a cat! Didn't I put the pup myself in the bag?"

"'Twas a pup when I did leave here, but 'twas a cat when I did get to Gabalva. Didn't I see it with my own eyes, sure as I'm a livin' man?"

The master opened the bag, and out rolled the plump young dog.

"Thee'rt surely bewitched," said the gentleman. "Dost see with thy own eyes 'tis a pup?"

"Sure anuff 'tis a pup here, but 'twas a cat in Gabalva—indeed to goodness it was."

This joke had been perpetrated by the landlord of the "Three Tuns," for the Llanblethian gentleman's servant was well known throughout the country-side.

Some of the Welsh lads are very quick-witted.

An independent gentleman living at Bonvilstone used to stand at his gate every day, and persistently ask questions of all who passed, and he never failed to obtain answers to his satisfaction. But one day a lad driving some cattle went past.

"Whose cattle are those?" asked the gentleman.

"My father's," was the reply.

"What's thy father's name?"

"Same name as me."

"And what's thy name?"

"Same name as my father's," and, to the old gentleman's annoyance, he passed on.

Another lad, whose paternity was doubtful, was asked, "Who's thy father?"

"Llantwit parish," he replied.

"And who's thy mother?"

"Catti, my grannie's old maaaid," said he.

An old woman, in one of the hamlets of the Vale, used to fold her hands, and spend her time chiefly in making her right thumb revolve around the left. This, and her stolid indifference to mundane affairs, used to annoy her brother, who was a farmer.

One day it worried him so much, that he asked in a tone of intense irritation, "Dost always twiddle thy thumbs that way?"

"No, no, bachcan (boy), sometimes I do go this way," she replied, provokingly reversing the motion by turning the left thumb around the right.

"There's not another thumb so big as thine in the parish—that I'll venture to say," said a farmer to his brother, who had very large hands and feet.

"No; I'll warrant it," said a neighbour.

"And there's not another foot so big as his, for ten miles round," added the brother.

"No, I'll be bound there isn't," chimed in the neighbour.

"What will you bet on it?" asked the owner of the large hands and feet.

"I'll bet a guinea," said the brother.

"And I don't mind betting a crown," said the neighbour.

"Will you keep to the bets?" asked the owner of the thumb and foot in question.

"Oh, yes!" was the response from both, almost simultaneously, as they laughed heartily at the very idea of any one finding so large a thumb or foot in the parish.

"I'll win the bet," said the man, and promptly he put forth his left thumb and right foot, to the utter confusion of the company.

From one of the Vale farmers the following story, of which there are several versions, was obtained.

It was Cowbridge Fair day, and six men started from Llantwit Major early in the morning, in order to have a good long time of it. The morning was devoted to business, and the afternoon was spent in merry-making. The shows and booths were very attractive, and the girls were so bewitching that the men of Llantwit lost their heads. When the time approached for returning home, one of the number said—

"Let me see; there's one of us wantin'. Six of us did come, but we be only five now."

"Oh," said another, "he's gone to have a drop of *cwrw* (beer), but he'll be back directly."

Then some of the party went into a show and others roamed around the booths, after which they started on the homeward journey. All went well until the men reached Llanmihangel, then one said, "There, didn't I say there was one a wantin'!" "You did," was the general response. "Iss, indeed," said another, who counted the number, "there's only five of us comin' back, and six of us did go." Then each man in turn counted the number of the company, and found only five persons.

"What shall we do?" asked one of the party.

"Go back, to be sure. Poor fellow! 'tis uncommon short to leave him behind."

So they returned, and of every body they asked, "Have you seen a Llantwit man on the road?" But the general answer was "No."

As the men passed under the gateway into Cowbridge, a collegian met them. Seeing their doleful looks, he asked what troubled them.

"Well, sir, our trouble is great," was the reply. "This mornin' six of us did leave Llantwit, and there's one of us wantin', an' we be come back to find him."

"What will you give me if I tell you where to find the missing man?"

"Oh, sir, we'll stand you anythin'."

"A bottle of port?" said the student.

"Agreed!" exclaimed the men.

The collegian counted and found six men, for each man had forgotten to include himself in the number.

The port was given, and the Llantwit men went on their way rejoicing until they were nearly home. Then one of the party raised the doubts of the others by saying, "I do believe that young fellow did do tricks for the sake of the wine." Whereupon, not being satisfied, they counted again, and remained convinced that still there was "one-a-wantin'."

To this day the Llantwit people are called "One-a-Wantings," and, as a retort, they say when a man delivers accounts to the inhabitants of Cowbridge, he is told to "Call again to-morrow, please," for they are too poor to pay, and too proud to own their inability to do so.

A certain number of Llantwit men were called "The Vipers." They saw two extraordinary-looking vipers—

of a kind never before seen—under a hedge. So they obtained a gun to shoot the creatures. They fired, and the shot entered—not the vipers—but the links of an old rusty chain in which a piece of leather was entangled.





XVII.

WELSH SMUGGLERS AND WRECKERS.

TWO classes of smugglers formerly flourished on the wild coast of South Wales.

Of these, the first were the *exporters* of wool and corn, which English legislators tried to keep at home, in order, as they said, to protect the woollen manufactures; while the second, and later, were *importers* of foreign goods, chiefly tea, spirits, tobacco, and silk. The duties on the latter were so enormous as to almost prohibit the use of them, and some manufactured articles were prohibited altogether.

At that period, the smuggler was a man of importance. From him the Squire procured his fine Bandana handkerchiefs, and the Squire's wife obtained her tea.

From 1671 to 1787, all the severity of the law could not prevent the exportation of wool, which traffic was carried on to a considerable extent in Wales, where the almost impassable hills and cwms (dingles) were looked upon as a protection against discovery. At times, many of the gangs of smugglers were broken up

—some of the leaders of the wool and corn smugglers seeking safety in the fastnesses of the mountains, or in flight to France or Holland, while the bodies of their captured companions were to be seen swinging from the gibbet erected on the cross-roads in sight and sound of the sea.

This class consisted chiefly of landowners and farmers who were interested in the illegal exportation of wool to France, while the smugglers of brandy, Hamburg spirit, tea, and silk into Wales were of a lower order, who frequently showed so much brutality, that eventually they became a terror to the people.

Some idea of the state of the Welsh coast may be formed from the following autograph letter, from Robert Jones, Esquire, of Fonmon Castle, Glamorganshire, to the Commissioners of His Majesty's Customs when George the Second was king:—

“TO THE COMMISSIONERS OF HIS MAJESTY'S CUSTOMS.

“*December 10, 1737.*

“SIRS,—In pursuance to your commands to Mr. Traherne of Cardiff, I have certified the method I took to cause the proclamation to be read to the rioters at the wrecks in Cohumgh Bay, near the port of Cardiff, and I have also taken the affidavits of those persons that can be evidence against any of them. By your letter, sirs, that was communicated to me, I apprehend that you conceive that there is nothing wanting to bring the rioters to justice but my having complied with the Act and your having sufficient evidence against them, but I am afraid, sirs, that though the prosecution may be as well grounded as you could wish, that the apprehending of the greatest offenders

cannot be executed in the ordinary methods of doing it, and it is only on this account I take upon me to trouble you with this.

“You must know, sirs, that the *ringleaders and promoters of this riot are people that belong to a town called Bridgend. They are a people who set themselves above the law, and despise His Majesty’s writs.* There are this day outlawrys out against some of the inhabitants, particularly against Edward David, whom you will find often mentioned in the affidavits, *but no officer dares to enter the town to take them, for they have a bell for a signal, which they have agreed to ring if any of them should be apprehended, that the whole town may rise to rescue the prisoners and punish the officers for their insolence in coming against them.* I don’t mention this, sirs, with any intent to insinuate that it is impossible to take these people, for I am of opinion they may as easily be brought to reason by resolution and proper methods as any other of His Majesty’s subjects; and I hope, sirs, you will pardon me that I take upon me to offer some proposals to your considerations, which I do with the utmost deference to your Board. As these Bridgend people have agreed to rise in arms and defend themselves against any warrants or writs sent out against them, it must be confessed that no one can go to execute them, but upon the hazard of his life, and this has been the reason that has intimidated every officer from doing his duty; but, sirs, if the Government would please to give a reward for taking some of the notorious offenders (as with great prudence it has often in other such cases, particularly in the riot lately committed in Cornwall upon the exportation of corn), it would be easy to get those that

would venture to take the offenders, though at the hazard of their own life. I have talked with some that would venture it if it was made worth their whiles, and they could be supported by an armed force; for I am persuaded, sirs, that you will think it necessary to have some of these people made an example of, when I can assure you, and you may be satisfied with the affidavits, that the insolence of the whole mob was owing to the encouragement and instigation of the Bridgend people. They say they did not mind the proclamation or its consequences, for they had heard it often before at other wrecks, and I can take it upon me to say that I could have kept all the rest of these Bridgend people, who first broke in upon His Majesty's Custom-house officers, who had indeed been obliged to be on hard duty night and day, and behaved very well through the whole affair. I shall trouble you to propose one thing more, which is, that if it should be His Majesty's pleasure to give an encouragement for the bringing of these offenders to justice, and to order an armed force to march to the assistance of the Civil Magistrate, that it may be communicated with secrecy to those you think proper, for it will be much easier to apprehend them on a surprise than it would be after they had notice of it; and I am afraid if but a very few here should know of such a design, it would soon fly abroad before it can be executed. I apprehend that twenty or thirty soldiers under a proper officer, ordered down from Bristol to the assistance of the Civil Magistracy here, may be sufficient to apprehend the rioters and to quell any mob that may arise to rescue them when taken. These soldiers may be shipped off with privacy from Bristol on a down tide, and may be landed

in the beginning of the night at Barry or Aberthaw, which is about eight* miles from Bridgend, and may meet the Civil Magistrate by appointment, and be immediately marched by night to Bridgend to surprise the offenders early in the morning, before they are out of their beds. . . . Your most obedient and humble servant."

This letter was written in the year marked by the Porteous riots in Edinburgh, by turnpike revolts in the west of England, and by general insubordination against the laws affecting smuggling.

Mr. Robert Jones was the son of the member for the county of Glamorgan in 1737. He was an early supporter of John Wesley, who, in his diary, makes mention of the family and their beautiful seat.

Although every effort was made for the suppression of smuggling, the "trade" was still carried on. Its profits were too great to be given up, and, for some wild adventurers, its perils had wonderful attractions.

Huskinson, who became President of the Board of Trade in 1823, told the House of Commons once, that the only way to put down smuggling was to take off the duties, otherwise all their supervisors and blockade men would be defeated.

"Honourable members," he said, "were well aware that Bandana handkerchiefs were prohibited, and yet I have no doubt there is hardly a gentleman in the House who has not a Bandana handkerchief," at the same time drawing one from his pocket amid loud laughter.

* Twelve miles from Aberthaw and about nineteen from Barry Bridgend.

For years after that, smuggling was carried on with more or less success along the Welsh coast, and many people, even so late as forty years ago, were brought in contact in some way or other with the men who continued the "trade." Stories of them and their adventures formerly were the staple topic of conversation, and smuggling anecdotes still live in the memories of Welshmen of the present generation. Even now, it would be improper to give the names of well-known Welsh smugglers, many of whose grandchildren are still alive, and remember their grandfathers' deeds.

When the exportation of wool and corn ceased, the high duties on tea, silks, tobacco, and spirits left ample work for the smuggler in the introduction of those articles into the country without payment of duties. And, when successful, the profit was so great that numbers of men were ready to risk their lives for it.

In times gone by, the Welsh farmers used to connive at a fraud on the Government by allowing their barns to be filled with contraband goods, or their horses to be "borrowed" by smugglers, or even by leaving their gates unlocked, and their doors unbolted, so that free access to their premises may be had at any hour.

Traditions of the spots where smugglers concealed their goods still remain, but now every year the details are getting more obscure. Very curious places were sometimes chosen by smugglers in which to conceal their goods. The Vicar of a remote country parish, not far from the shore of the Glamorganshire coast, had reason to visit his church earlier than usual one Sunday morning, when the sexton declared he had lost the key. Search was made, and the key was found among the flowers on a grave near the porch. When the Vicar

unlocked the church door, he discovered the floor of the belfry and even the font filled with kegs of spirits. These had to be cleared out before the hour of divine service. The sexton had lent the key to the smugglers, and the Revenue officers did not dream of searching for contraband goods in the parish church.

Smugglers' holes and caves are to be seen in many parts of the coast, and in some old seaside farmhouses, smugglers' cellars and rooms are still shown.

The smuggler was a popular man, and although the law was against him, he had the majority of his fellow-subjects with him. If he was very successful, people talked of him as a "fine fellow."

Quite a different character from the smuggler was the wrecker.

Few wreckers in any part of the country bore so bad a reputation as those who pursued their nefarious practices on the wild and desolate coast of Wales.

Among the well-known localities for these men were those dangerous parts of the shore where quicksands and rocks abound, and where the vessels were driven by the storm-winds on to the teeth of the jagged crags that form impassable barriers between land and sea. The most secluded haunts of wreckers were the villages of St. Donat's, to the east of the Nash Sands; Marcross Cwm, or dingle, in close proximity to the lofty cliffs where the Nash Lighthouses now stand; Monknash, Dunraven, and Southerndown.

Some terrible stories are still told of the wreckers of those parts.

Before the lighthouses were erected, it was the practice of the wreckers of those neighbourhoods, in seasons of storm, to fasten lighted lanterns to panniers,

which were afterwards put on donkeys. The animals were then led up and down the shore, and the storm-driven vessel, sighting the lanterns, would mistake them for friendly lights and make for the shore, there to be shattered to pieces on the terrible rocks, or dashed to pieces on the grim cliffs which frown angrily over the dark grey waves of the Severn Sea.

Many a story is told of the ruthlessness of the wreckers in their greed for gain.

One afternoon when the sea was rolling mountains high, and the storm-wind howled mercilessly through Marcross Cwm (dingle, or coombe), and whistled weirdly around the towers of St. Donat's Castle, the wreckers prepared for work. They replenished and trimmed their lanterns, and carefully concealed them in the wicker panniers which were soon to be placed upon the donkeys' backs. But the wreckers would have to wait for night-fall before they could go down to the shore. Even they shunned the eyes of their neighbours, and longed for the coming night.

A cruel fiery light gleamed and glittered in the eyes of those heartless men, who drew their slouched hats low down over their brows, bound them securely around the head, and tied them under the chin by means of a broad piece of rough woollen caddis. Full soon they buttoned up their greatcoats, and closely strapped their leathern leggings, and then impatiently waited the right time for action.

In the deep shadows, broken only by the flickering firelight, these men sat, looking both in colour and style, like figures in a Rembrandt picture.

Restless at times, and with heavy strides they paced up and down the room where they always met, and,

in hoarse-voiced accents, gloatingly recounted former ventures, or daringly prophesied future success.

Meanwhile the sun slowly sank like a crimson ball behind the grey clouds and banks of vapour that enveloped the western horizon. Deeper grew the shadows through Marcross Cwm and St. Donat's ravine; darker looked the cliffs and the ancient ivy-covered watch-tower on the heights; and around the castle battlements, the cawing rooks wheeled in darkling crowds.

With sunset the wind arose to a gale. In maddened ecstasy, a wild wave-warfare began at low-water point, and presently, with the turn of the tide, the waves, like furious racehorses, chased each other landward. In the purple twilight their white crests looked like the flying manes of frightened steeds, and when nightfall came, louder blew the tempest and more fiercely roared the waves.

In an awful darkness that could almost be felt, the wretched wreckers proceeded to prepare for their nefarious schemes. They descended to the shore, and there, up and down among the jagged and rugged rocks, they led the half-frightened donkeys, bearing on their backs the lantern lights.

"Wh—ew!" whistled the wind as it dashed the cutting salt spray into the wreckers' faces.

"Wh—ew!" whistled the fiendish men on the Marcross side of Nash, as through the darkness—in which a man's hand could only just be seen—a vessel appeared scudding before the storm.

There was a feeling of suspense in every man's heart.

Would the ship run into Marcross beach, would it rush into the hungry jaws of the Nash Sands, or would it press onward to St. Donat's?

Who could tell ?

Nobody ; and the wreckers could only wait and see what would come of it.

Meanwhile, the waves around Breaksea Point—miles away—hoarsely responded to the roar of the sea in the Nash Passage, which is locally known as the "Guttar Vawr."

On, on, fleet as the wind, the good ship goes to her doom. To the annoyance of the Marcross wreckers, she passes the shore on which they wait. She runs like a chased stag close beside the yawning jaws of the Nash quicksands, and presses onward to St Donat's.

There, the wreckers are in wild glee, for their lantern lights accomplish their cruel work.

Then, like a helpless and wounded bird, the vessel droops her pinions, and succumbs to the mercy of the storm. One more noble effort to save herself—one terrible attempt to mount the waves, and she rushes upon the rocky ledges, there to become the shattered spray of the merciless waves.

The wreckers of St. Donat's gleefully rub their hands.

The crew and passengers of the ill-fated ship cling to the spars and splinters.

So near to land, and yet no arm to save them !

Within a few strokes of the shore, and yet driven back by the angry waves !

In the dim light of the wintry dawn a lady swims landward. She is a good swimmer, as can be seen by her masterful strokes.

The tide has turned, and she at least will be saved, the only one of all the ship's passengers or crew.

One of the wreckers sees her coming, and his cruel eyes, fitted almost for discerning objects in the dark,

sees more than a woman's supreme effort to save herself. He sees around her neck a golden band set with precious stones; on her shapely arms costly bracelets are clasped, and, as she swims landward, he sees rings glittering on her beautiful snow-white fingers.

Yes, he sees all; and bending quickly down, he searches for and finds a smooth round pebble, such a one as David might have used for the slaying of Goliath.

But this is not Goliath of Gath.

It is a helpless woman, bravely fighting for her dear life.

The wrecker aims at the swimmer and fails. He aims again, but does not succeed.

He aims once more, and this time with success.

A piercing shriek, an agonising groan, and the beautiful head and arms sink into the waves that fling her landward, there to be seized by the murderous wrecker.

He drags her up high on the shore, wherefrom the tide recedes with a heavy dragging sound. High and dry, he places his victim under a huge sheltering rock, where alone he may gloat over his treasure.

What matter to him that the crimson life-blood oozes from the broad and beautiful forehead! What matter to him that the sea-stained face looks ghastly and pallid in the daybreak! Little cares he that the white hands are clasped as in the death agony, and the lips are parted as they were in the last long throe. He has his treasure, and that is all he wants.

Eagerly, as a miser counting his gold, he unclasps the golden neck-band and puts it in his capacious pocket. He unfastens the bracelet, and proceeds to remove the rings. But in this he fails.

The beautiful white and tapering fingers are sadly swollen, and the rings cannot be removed. Once again the wrecker pulls the ring, but fails.

Shall he allow the corpse, with all those precious rings on its fingers, to be wafted by the waves?

Not he.

Fearfully he looks around to see if any one is watching him, and to his intense relief his companions are at too great a distance to scrutinise his actions.

One hurried glance, to make sure he is not watched, and, with a wolfish glare in his glittering eyes, he bends down closer to the corpse beside the sheltering rock. He lifts the fingers, and once more tries to remove the rings, but fails in the effort. Then, with an impatient gesture, he seizes the ringed fingers one by one, and, like a ravenous animal, desperately bites them off.

"Bah!" he says, as he flings the fingers away into the sea, while he pockets the precious rings.

Then, moving with heavy strides, he leaves the corpse under the sheltering rocks, there to be found later on, not, as he expected, by the returning tide that could not bear witness to his crime, but by his wandering companions, who, noticing his earnest quest at a distance, came to see what was the object of his greed.

Despite his denial of the crime and subsequent cruelty, witnesses attested to it, and, although the story was only whispered during his lifetime, the man's action and his name have descended to posterity as a lasting reproach upon the infamous race of men known as "the wreckers."

Not far from the spot where that deadly deed was committed, the Nash Lighthouses now stand, and from their massive masonry—

“Steadfast, serene, immovable, the same
Year after year, through all the silent night,
Burns on for evermore that quenchless flame,
Shines on that unextinguishable light !”





XVIII.

ECCENTRIC CHARACTERS.

ECCENTRIC characters are almost indigenous to rural districts of every country, but particularly to Wales.

Far from the busy world, where social attractions rub out peculiarities, and round the angles of a too pronounced individuality, men and their manners are liable to rust, until, like ancient keys, they refuse to turn in the locks, or else, like doors off their hinges, when approached, they creak and grate unpleasantly. Some of these characters, growing cranky with age or seclusion, become sarcastic, or very reticent, and frequently awaken feelings of amusement or resentment in their neighbours.

There have been, and still are in Wales, notable eccentric characters—men whose peculiarities were or are household words in the Principality, and others who are only known in their own immediate circle. For obvious reasons, the living notable eccentrics will be left unnoticed, and the great unknown must not, as Welsh children say, “be named by name,” though they may be described.

Foremost in the ranks of this class was the late Dr.

Price of Llantrisant, Glamorganshire, whose individuality was very strongly marked. In early life he entered the medical profession, and attained celebrity throughout South Wales for his skill. But as an eccentric, and at times a very erratic character, he was best known. As a Chartist, contemporary with Frost Jones and Williams, of Newport fame, he had to take flight to France, and, when safely landed in that country, he wrote to thank the English detectives who had politely assisted him—disguised as a lady—out of the boat when it reached the French coast. Dr. Price remained in France until it was safe for him to return, and when once more he settled down in Wales, it was to enter upon a life of almost continual litigation, caused chiefly by his own peculiar views.

As the years passed by, Dr. Price adopted what he considered to be the attire of the ancient Britons. He wore a head-dress made of a whole fox-skin, and a suit of garments of dark green cloth braided with red, and grotesquely vandyked around the neck. The trousers were cut in vandykes around the edge, and braided with red. A red girdle with long flowing ends completed this peculiar costume.

Dr. Price's tall figure was as lithe at ninety as it had been in his young manhood. His head, face, and features were strikingly majestic, giving one the impression that they belonged to a patriarch, or a Druid of old. His eyes were filled with the fiery light of activity, and his long flowing hair fell in snowy ringlets over his shoulders.

He was an Arch Druid, but his peculiarities kept him much aloof from the fraternity of Bards, who respected him but could not sympathise with his views.

His daughter received from him the name of "Iarlles Morganwg"—Countess of Glamorgan, which title he said was hers by right, in virtue of her distinguished descent from the Princes of Wales. But he went to a most extraordinary extreme when he named his little son Jesu Grist—Jesus Christ!

Dr. Price did not believe in the legal bond of marriage, and after the death of the mother of Miss Price—Countess of Glamorgan—he remained some years without seeking a partner, and at length, in extreme age, he took as "housekeeper" Miss Gwennllian Llewellyn, a young lady of about eighteen. This youthful lady became the mother of three children—Jesu Grist, who died at the age of five months, in January 1884, Penelopen, and Jesu Grist the second.

In 1884, Dr. Price created a great stir in Wales by attempting to cremate the body of his infant son. His mode of proceeding was certainly somewhat singular, but to the Welsh it appeared little short of an atrocity. The doctor took the body to the summit of a hill on Caerlan fields—his own freehold property—at Llantrisant, where he had placed a huge cask containing half a barrel of paraffin oil. Therein he placed the body, wrapped in linen, and set fire to it. In less than fifteen minutes the police and crowds of people, who were frantic with rage, hustled the doctor about as if he had been a malefactor, and some persons present threatened to throw him into the burning cask. He was arrested, and an inquest was held on the child's body. The jury found that the child had died of dentition, and the police applied to the coroner for permission to bury the body in the usual way. Dr. Price objected, and the coroner could not interfere, so

the police had to return the body to the doctor. Subsequently, Dr. Price was tried before Mr. Justice Stephen at the Cardiff Assizes for endeavouring to cremate the body on the 13th of January, but the doctor succeeded in proving that he had not transgressed the law, and he was acquitted. In March 1884, he carried out his intentions unmolested, and the body was cremated, or rather burned, in half a ton of coals on Caerlan fields.

Popular feeling in Wales against cremation at that time had no bounds. To "burn" a body was to commit a crime for which a man deserved the severest punishment, and the Welsh—who in their respect and lamentation for the dead resemble the Hebrews—gave expression to feelings of extreme horror at this "new-fangled" kind of burial. Since this mode of interment has become more general in England, these feelings are slightly modified.

At the time of the disturbances about the "burning" of the infant's body, Dr. Price's house was attacked by an infuriated mob. Only the mother of the cremated child was present. She was disturbed about ten o'clock at night by the howling of crowds of people, who hurled stones in through the window. The front door was locked, and the young lady had four dogs within. Promptly loading two pistols, and standing behind the animals, that were barking furiously, she gave the crowd to understand that she would shoot the first man who tried to force an entrance. By these means she kept the crowd at bay, and eventually they went away. Later at night Dr. Price returned home, having spent many long and weary hours in eluding his pursuers.

Dr. Price was almost severely simple in his manner of life. The bare walls and boarded floors of his study, or consulting room, would testify to the disregard for bodily comfort—not to mention luxury—of the well-known doctor.

Wherever he went, he wore his own peculiar style of dress, and though he was a pleasant, open-speaking man, a fluent conversationalist in more than one language, the quips and cranks of his character manifested themselves unexpectedly, and at odd moments.

His services were in great request in complicated cases, or when other practitioners pronounced a hopeless fiat, and his mode of treatment was sometimes extraordinary to a degree. Public faith in his skill was unbounded, and people went very long distances to consult him, or sent for him at great expense as a last resource.

He had very keen insight into human nature, and generally used it to great advantage. Once when he went to see a dying woman in a remote village, a man who suffered from rheumatism consulted him.

"How long have you used these crutches?" asked Dr. Price.

"For two years, sir," was the reply.

"Have you ever tried to walk with a stick?" asked the doctor.

"Oh, no, sir! I couldn't," said the man. "For the life of me, I couldn't stand by a stick!"

"Then, for the life of you, you'll go on crutches," said the doctor.

The man looked amazed, as Dr. Price continued, "Put the crutches away, and walk by a stick. I'll see you next time I come."

"But you'll not be here again, sir," said the man.

"Who said so?" asked the doctor.

The man muttered something about the patient who was "given up."

"She will be better in a week, and quite well in fourteen days. I'll see you then," said the doctor.

And so he did.

The woman recovered, and the man had set aside his crutches, and could walk feebly with the aid of a stick.

When Dr. Price came, the man expressed surprise at not having medicine.

"You need the medicine of movement," said the doctor. "If you refuse to use your limbs they will become useless. I will now take away the stick, and you must walk unaided. Walk again as first you did when a child, and then learn to walk like a man."

The doctor then gave him some embrocation to be applied to the affected parts, and in a few weeks the man was completely restored.

An old Welsh woman once asked the doctor for "something for the headache."

Dr. Price asked to be allowed to look into her bonnet.

The woman, surprised, handed him her head-gear, which was thickly lined with two layers of flannel, irrespective of the straw and trimmings, whereupon the doctor examined it, and said, "No wonder you have a headache. This thatch is fourteen ounces too heavy. Reduce the weight, and the headache will go."

A farmer once asked him, "What shall I do, Dr. Price? I'm as stiff as an old horse."

"Wash and be clean," was the laconic reply. "With

the dirt of half a century upon your body, how can you expect to be anything but stiff?"

A man consulted him about troubles which were brought on by excessive eating and drinking.

"What do you think is the matter with me?" he asked.

"I know—I do not think," was the doctor's reply.

"You are suffering from—consumption."

"Consumption?" doubtfully reiterated the patient.

"Yes; consumption—rapid consumption, too."

The man gasped.

"And there is no cure for it, but——"

The patient sighing deeply, interrupted the doctor with, "Consumption—no cure!"

"It is consumption—table consumption of the most hopeless kind," said the doctor, "and there is no cure for it, unless you live lower and feed less."

In conclusion, two more anecdotes of the doctor.

A pretty girl was pining away, and her debilitated condition caused her mother such great anxiety, that she took her to be seen by Dr. Price, whose silence as to the nature of the illness surprised her.

"Well, sir," said the mother, "what do you think is the matter with her?"

"Heart complaint," was the reply.

"I did think so," said the astute mother. "She do look that uncommon pale sometimes, and her breath is short, 'speshully on goin' up hill, an' there's always them stitches in her side. Will you please, sir, to have the kindness to give her something for it?"

"I can do nothing for her—nothing whatever," said the doctor, who, observing the mother's anxious look, added, "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it."

The doctor was consulted by a man on a matter of argument with a neighbour.

"You are clearly on the wrong side of the hedge," said the doctor, "and there is no help for you."

"Not a chance?"

"No. There's a very obstinate, foolish, and bigoted man against you. He is your worst enemy."

"And who is he?" asked the inquirer earnestly.

"Take up your Bible," said Dr. Price.

The man did as he was bidden.

"Now, turn to 2 Samuel, chapter xii.," said the doctor, who was immediately obeyed.

"Read the first line of the seventh verse," said Dr. Price; whereupon the man read, "'And Nathan said unto David, Thou art the man.'"

"Stop!" exclaimed the doctor, and the reader laid down the Bible as if it had stung him.

In February 1893, Dr. Price died at the great age of ninety-three. At the time of his death, not a wrinkle was visible in his face, and his complexion was as fresh as it had been in the prime of his life. The doctor had arranged that his body should be cremated, and the manner in which it was accomplished was indicative of the eccentric characteristics of his life.

The body, dressed in the peculiar costume always worn by the doctor, was placed in a receptacle constructed of sheet iron encircled by strong iron bands. It was specially constructed by a local blacksmith. Sheet iron was selected so as to materially assist the process of cremation, and at the same time preserve the ashes, which the doctor had arranged were to "be cast to the winds, and scattered o'er the earth, to help the green grass and flowers to grow."

The spot selected for the obsequies was the summit of a hill to the south of the town of Llantrisant, on the plot of land known as the Caerlan fields, where the doctor had cremated his child. A small crematorium was there erected, beside an enormous flagstaff which the doctor set up a few years ago. At eight o'clock in the morning the ceremony took place, and was conducted by the Rev. Daniel Fisher, curate of Llantrisant. The usual Church of England service in Welsh was used, and slightly altered to suit cremation.

In the presence of the doctor's relatives and personal friends and thousands of people the cremation took place, and so effectual was the fierce heat that not even a particle of dust remained to "be cast to the winds."

Miss Price "Countess of Glamorgan," with her little half-brother Jesu Grist, and his sister Penelopen Elizabeth, accompanied by their mother, attended the cremation, with many personal friends. Miss Price was dressed in Welsh costume; Miss Llewellyn wore a long dark cloak and the Welsh national hat with a low crown; Penelopen, wearing the Welsh *pais a becwn*, and a red shawl, looked very picturesque; while Jesu Grist wore a full costume the exact counterpart of that assumed by his father, only, to suit the child, breeches curiously vandyked at the edge reached to just below the knees.

About eight hours after the cremation, hundreds of people scrambled among the cinders searching for souvenirs. Many people claimed to have discovered portions of the calcined bones of the celebrated doctor, while others took away detached pieces of the coffin, the shattered skeleton of which was conveyed to the house of the deceased.

This curious cremation was a nine days' wonder in Wales. The people were amazed, and many expressed horror and disgust because the "body was burnt," instead of being "decently buried."

Among the many eccentrics unknown to the Principality at large, but locally remembered, was an old gentleman—a member of a county family—whose sayings and doings are orally preserved, and were given to me by one who remembered him well. This eccentric character never was addressed as Mr. W., but as Billy W. He evidently inherited his peculiarities from the maternal side of the family. One of his mother's relatives—a lady—expressed a wish before her death, that instead of tolling the bell, there should be round ringing at the time of her funeral, and she left a sufficient sum of money to amply fee the bell-ringers. Her wish was carried out to the letter, and my informant, who was present on the occasion, says he never can forget the extraordinary proceeding.

Mr. W., or Billy W., as he was familiarly called, was very eccentric. When his brother, Mr. C., died, he attended the funeral as chief mourner. After the coffin containing the mortal remains of his brother had been brought out of the house, and placed upon the bier, Mr. W. called the estate carpenter to him, and, in a stentorian and important tone of voice, called out, "Carpenter, come here!" and the man came.

"What is the length of the coffin?" demanded Mr. W.

"Seven feet three, sir," said the carpenter.

"Oh, seven feet three," reiterated Mr. W.

"Ay, ay, sir," said the carpenter.

Well, he was a taller man than me," said Mr. W.

dryly. "But he was not so strongly built, and hadn't such limbs and muscles as I have."

He paused a moment, then shouted out—

"What age is on the breast-plate?"

"Seventy-three, sir," was the reply.

"Oh, indeed! Seventy-three—seventy-three."

"Ay, ay, sir," chimed in the carpenter.

"That is three years more than the allotted age of man," said the old gentleman, "and all above that are additional days, and, in consequence, we should not grumble to go."

He had an eye to business, since at that moment he expected he was heir to the estate.

Then he called loudly for the parish clerk.

"Clerk! come here."

"What is it, please, sir?" asked the clerk in fear and trembling.

"I want a hymn sung at the grave."

"What hymn do you wish sung, sir?" asked the clerk.

"'Weep not for me, ye standers by.'"

"I don't think the parson will allow it," said the clerk.

"The parson won't allow it, eh?" said Mr. W. "The parson speak a word to me, I'll knock him down."

He was very proud of his muscular Christianity.

Meanwhile the parson, who was present, the family solicitor, and the nephews of the deceased, impatiently waited during this scene, but they dared not move until his unique questions were answered.

When the obsequies were over, the solicitor, exercising a little diplomacy, diverted him from the grave by reminding him that it was getting late, and asked

him to accompany him to his office to hear the contents of his late brother's will. He readily consented to this, in order to get the news speedily. It was fortunate for others concerned in the will, that Mr. W. went alone with the solicitor, because, when the contents were known to him, the old gentleman was spellbound with disappointment and rage, which would have been mercilessly inflicted upon those—had they been present—in whose favour the estate was left.

Portions of the property and a farmhouse were left to Mr. W., who improved the latter by immediately removing the gates. In their stead he built high walls with holes in them, wherein he could place his feet, and thus get over. When asked his reason for this peculiar change, he replied, "Every lame beggar can't get in now."

Mr. W., who professed to be a follower of John Wesley, was a very early riser, and, at all times, exceedingly punctual in his attendance at the Wesleyan chapel.

According to the old Wesleyan rules, the morning service was held at ten o'clock, and concluded at eleven, so as to enable the congregation to go subsequently to church. One Sunday morning, the Wesleyan minister who occupied the pulpit, seeing the congregation assembling slowly, decided to wait a short time. Mr. W. remained quiet awhile, but presently, getting restless and impatient, he called out in a loud voice, "Come, come! my man, it's time for you to begin. If you wait for the last to come in, it will be time for the first to go out, and when the church bell rings I shall go." True to his word, the moment the church bell rang, Mr. W. took his departure.

At a week-night prayer-meeting, the old gentleman, punctual as usual, and being the first to enter the chapel, he lighted the candles. When the congregation had assembled, the leader of the meeting called upon a member to engage in prayer. Mr. W. could not stand this insult. He put down his mighty and ponderous foot with a thud that made people tremble, and exclaimed, "No, no! I was the first to come to chapel, and the first to light the candles, and I will pray first too." He always ruled the roost, and did so with a pious vengeance.

Mr. W. sometimes suffered slightly from a malady which in his imagination was scurvy, and in order to effect a cure he bathed in the sea every morning, even including Sunday. A gentleman, who was scrupulously observant of the fourth commandment, meeting him, remarked, "Is it you, Mr. W., at the sea to-day instead of being in the house of God?"

"Yes," he replied, "and if you read your Bible more carefully, you would there find that it is good to be healed on the Sabbath day."

Another person asked him if the malady from which he suffered was not very troublesome.

"Oh, no," he said. "It is very nice when you can have a good scratch."

This reminds one of the Scotsman who, seeing mile-stones for the first time on the Inverary estate, rubbed his back against them and said, "God bless the Duke of Argyle!" He thought the stones were intended as back-scratchers.

Some years before his death, Mr. W. put up for himself, on the front of the parish church, a monument of Bull-cliff marble—Barry stone. The inscription was

inserted, with the distance mentioned thence to the grave where he was afterwards interred. The date of his death and age were omitted until after his decease.

Welsh eccentricity, like the rivers of Wales, has its strange moods—now sparkling with the brilliance of activity, and the rapid flow of thought, then gliding passively with a slowness and lethargy that are almost oppressive.

An eccentric old woman named Nancy, living on the outskirts of a village in one of the wildest and loneliest parts of Wales, had the reputation of being a miser, and a man-hater. She kept one maid, and she was her niece Peggy. Nancy got "a notion" into her head that Peggy had a sweetheart, and one day, when the niece thought her aunt was safely in market, the old dame unexpectedly returned. The sweetheart was in the kitchen when Nancy's trap was heard entering the yard.

There was no help for it. Jenkin must be thrust into the kitchen cupboard which was beside the fire.

"Dear me! to be sure," said Nancy, entering, "and I did go to market and leave the cupboard door open," and she locked it.

"There's nothing in it," snapped Peggy, as her aunt put the cupboard key in her pocket.

Nancy took up her knitting.

Six, seven, eight, and at last nine o'clock came, and the old dame would not move.

"We'll have a bit of supper," said Nancy, and Peggy prepared it.

Nancy was provokingly long over the repast, and Peggy fretted herself as to how her lover could be released.

By-and-by a noise was heard in the cupboard.

The concealed lover found it too hot in there, and at last, driven by sheer desperation, he cried out, "Open the door, or I shall be suffocated. I can't stand this any longer."

Nancy smiled, but never moved.

Peggy trembled like a leaf.

Presently the young man, who could not endure longer imprisonment, burst the cupboard door, and emerged, gasping, "Peggy or no Peggy, out I must come!"

And away he darted, glad to breathe the fresh air again.

Much to Peggy's annoyance, Nancy only laughed, and said—"When next thee dost hide thy lover in the cupboard—keep the key."

Nancy had reason for believing that a woman, who occasionally worked for her, had stolen a pound of butter.

"Come here, Molly," said Nancy at tea-time, "'tis uncommon draughty over there."

"No, sure," said Molly, "I be right anuff here."

"But I do know better," persisted Nancy. "Come here."

And she gave her the fireside corner of the settle.

"'Tis too hot here," said Molly.

Still Nancy would not allow her to move.

Molly grew very restless, and Nancy was most provoking. She talked, and talked, until—whatever could it be?

Poor Molly was perspiring. Beaded drops were trickling down her face, and fell in little greasy streams to her neck.

For Molly had put the stolen butter into the crown of her low Welsh hat.

"I'll never do it again—I'll never do it again!" pleaded Molly on being discovered.

And Nancy provokingly said, "When next thee dost steal butter, conceal it in a cooler place."

Everybody called Nancy a miser, and she encouraged people in the belief that she was very rich. For this purpose, whenever a relative or friend came to see her, she would say, "You shall have a peep—no more." Then she would unlock the door of a small room, in which hundreds of small bags were suspended from nails fixed in the walls.

"Each one of these holds a hundred," she would whisper.

In view of the treasure, people humoured Nancy's whims, and invited her to their houses. She never failed to accept the invitations, only she would not sit down to table with a man.

When Nancy died, and her affairs were made known, it appeared she had left five hundred pounds to Peggy, and never mentioned a word about the bags locked in the room. On examination, each of these bags was found to contain exactly one hundred beans, and nothing more!

"If I had known that," said a relative, "I'd never have given the old wretch a dinner every Saturday, to say nothing of the baskets full of good things I often gave her. And, after all, not to have a penny!"

In the days when tithe was taken in kind, a queer old Welsh farmer told the rector to send for it in potatoes.

One morning the parson's messenger came, and the

tithe-payer drew forty potatoes, and gave the man four.

The servant expressed surprise.

"Forty potatoes are enough for a meal for my family," said the farmer.

"Then it won't be worth master's while sending down every day for—only four potatoes."

"Can't help that," said the farmer. "Forty potatoes are enough for a meal for my family, and nobody can say I'm not just to the parson."

A middle-aged bachelor living in South Glamorgan, rather than have a woman into his house, performed all the domestic duties himself.

One day a friend, meeting him, said, "How do you do, Mr. R.?"

"Very well, thank you," was the reply, "but I am very tired. It is Friday, and I have been house-cleaning. The stone floors give me all the trouble in the world."

"How do you clean them?"

"Why, I used to sprinkle them with lime to purify the place, but that was bad for the shoe leather. Then I used Hudson's dry soap, but now I have taken to use washing powder. It cleans linen, so it ought to be suitable to floors."

This man made his own hats, and when asked how, he said, "I take an old rush hat, and cover it first with flannel inside and out, to keep out the cold. Then I cover it all over with waterproofing, to keep out the wet, and, after that, I case it with cloth for the looks."

His hat was covered with dark claret-coloured cloth. Around the crown there was a broad band of

scarlet braid tied in a bow, with an old umbrella tassel at each end."

He was his own seamstress and tailor.

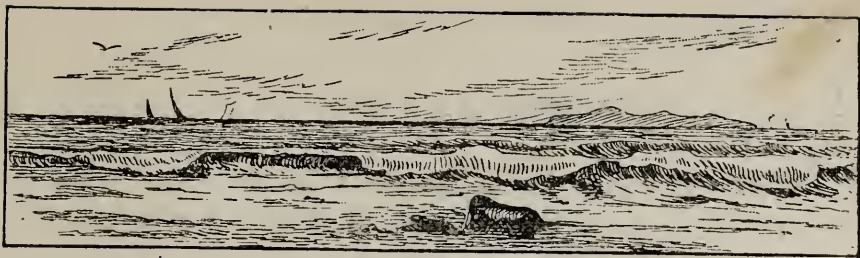
A farmer, finding him one morning in a rage, asked whatever was the matter.

"I've made myself three shirts, and never a sleeve for one of them."

"That is easily remedied, I should think," said a neighbour; "cut one shirt into six sleeves."

He did so, and then went into a rage, and lamented that he had "an odd pair of sleeves and no shirt to go with them!"





XIX.

WELSH ANECDOTES.



VERY peculiar old Welsh farmer was travelling to market in company with others who patronised the local carrier.

“Ned,” said an old woman, addressing him in the vernacular, “didst hear what that gell did say to the other one when they did go down?”

“Humph!” grunted Ned.

“Didst hear her sayin’ ‘she’s a floort?’” (flirt).

“No, not I, sure,” replied Ned. “Did’s say floort?”

“Iss, indeed. And what may a floort be, Ned?”

“How do I know. I did never hear it in my life before. There’s no such word in the Welsh language.”

The carrier, over-hearing the conversation, explained the exact meaning of the English word flirt.

“Humph!” muttered Ned. “I do see now. A floort is a young ’ooman with a heart of steel that do try to sharpen a man who has got a blunted blade for a head.”

The same old man, seeing a village girl dressed in a very smart gown, said, “A fine gown don’t make a

lady. Eels have got very fine skin, but they be brought up in the mud."

With reference to a strange minister who came to preach in one of the chapels, Ned said, "Poor fellow! He did look well anuff in the pulpit, but the moment he did open his mouth, he did bray uncommon loud."

A young and earnest minister preached in the chapel one Sunday night, and at the conclusion of the service Ned got up and asked if he might "say a few words." The minister consented.

"Thee art a young preacher, an' I b'lieve thee dost mean well, and so I do know thee wilt take a word or two of advice from an old man. Thee has jest been teachin' us the way to escape the consequences of sin, an' 'tis very good to know how we can get out of the mire and the clay. But it do come to my mind that teachin' us how to escape is like sayin', 'Go thee as cunnin' as thee dost like into the mud, I'll show thee a nice an' clean little way out' "

One day a young man picked up Ned's broad-brimmed hat and put it on his head, at the same time sarcastically saying, "Your hat is a trifle too small for my head."

"Oh, indeed," replied Ned. "But t'would be bigger than a beehive over thy small brains."

"Hi, hi, Edward," shouted a Cheap Jack to Ned, "which is the way to the turnpike road?"

"How didst thee know my name?" asked Ned.

"Oh, because, you know, I'm a diviner—a sooth-sayer."

"Then thee canst divine the way to the turnpik' road," said Ned.

A tall girl who married a very short man met Ned.

"What do you think of my husband?" asked the girl.

"Well," said Ned, gazing at the bridegroom from head to feet. "Well, I must say, thee'rt a sensible girl—more sensible than thy granny was."

"Why?" asked the bride.

"In marryin', thee didst take to mind the old Bible sayin', 'Of two evils choose the least,' but thy granny did take the most."

"There's a good deal of likeness between a doctor and a snipe," said Ned to the village surgeon, "for both of them do live by their long bills."

"I don't know what it is," said Ned, "but the risin' families now bent like what they used to be when I was a boy. Then it was father and mother an' obey; now it is son an' daughter an' submit. An' married men do only go home now when there's no other place to sit down in."

"I pity the husband of that woman," said a girl to Ned. "She is such a scold."

"Why, maaid," said Ned, "the man's as deaf as a post."

A very good anecdote is told of Sir Roger Williams, a Welsh officer of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Marshal Biron, a French general, in conversation with Sir Roger, remarked that the English march for the infantry was heavy, sluggish, and spiritless, and a striking contrast to the French quick and short foot march.

"The march is thoroughly English," said Marshal Biron, "and characterised by your dignity and gravity, but ponderous, and—very slow."

"That may be true," said Sir Roger, "but slow as it

is, it has been sure in traversing your king's country from one end to the other."

In the time of Edgar, King of England, Gwaithvoed was Lord of Cardigan. Edgar sent forth a command that all the Welsh princes were to come to Chester, to row the royal barge on the river Dee. Gwaithvoed was summoned, but he said he would not if he could obey the behest, unless it were to save the life of king or vassal. The King sent a second, and very imperious command to the Lord of Cardigan. A third time Edgar sent, and then Gwaithvoed said: "Tell the King 'Ofner no ofna angau'"—"Fear him who fears not death." Discovering the fearless character of the man with whom he had to contend, Edgar changed his command into a friendly request, and Gwaithvoed went to the King and gave his hand in pledge of his sincerity. After that the Lord of Cardigan adopted his message to the King as a family motto.

A Welsh gentleman who prided himself on his descent and love for his country and people, said, "I am a Welshman; I live in Wales; my wife and children are Welsh—in fact, everything belonging to me is Welsh."

"What about your coat?" asked an Englishman, thinking to catch the Welshman napping.

"That is pure Welsh too. The wool was grown in Carmarthenshire, and was woven into cloth in Cardigan."

"The Welshman boasts of his ancestors," said a quaint old dissenting minister, "but, like the turnips, the best part of them is under ground."

"I don't know what it is," said a vain Welsh matron. "Somehow or other, they do make the lookin'-glasses

very diff'rent to what they did make them when I was a young woman."

"What is the difference, auntie?" asked a merry girl.

"Diff'rence, indeed! Can't you see?"

The girl looked, but still remained in ignorance.

"Well, to be sure. I could see the diff'rence with my eyes shut. Look at the scratches and seams that do show on the glass. Why, it do make me look quite odd."

She saw her own crows' feet and wrinkles!

"What sort of stuff has thee got in thy best dress?" asked one Welshwoman of another.

"Stuff, indeed! 'Tis sheeny cumn shaney (meaning a shot mohair). An' what kind of stuff is in thy gown, to be sure?"

"Oh, I don't know! 'Tis all of a shine like, an' 'tis black, an' it do stand of itself."

"'Tis black, and it do shine. Well, well! But what is it?"

"How do I know!" was the impatient reply.

"But waait a bit, an' p'rhaps I can remember—there—I do know. What do they call the old gentleman in English?"

"Satan, to be sure."

"Well, that's what it is."

"Good anto me well—an' that's how it's black and shiny. But I wouldn't put it on for my weight in gold."

A well-known Welsh gentleman once caught an old woman stealing potatoes.

"Why, Mary, is it you?—and stealing potatoes," he said.

"Dear de helpody well," replied Mary. "Au' dost thee call it stealin' to take a couple of 'tatoes!"

An old woman was seen gathering a handful of sticks on Sunday.

"You know what is said about the Sabbath day," said a neighbour gravely.

"Dear me, well," replied the old woman. "Do you think God would bemean Himself to notice such trifles!"

A Welsh clergyman preparing a candidate for confirmation, asked, "Do you know your catechism, my good girl?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know who made your body?"

"Yes, sir. Ann by the old Place did make the body. My mother and me did make the skirt."

"Oh, my poor girl, I'm afraid you are not fit for confirmation."

"No, indeed, sir. My mother did say she must take it back to her—it don't fit at all."

"Now, Mary," said a worldly Welshman to a good old woman in the Vale of Glamorgan, "do you mean to tell me that you really believe the Bible story that a whale swallowed Jonah?"

"Believe it? Iss, indeed; and if the Bible was to say Jonah did swallow a whale, I'd believe that too."

Mary the Mill, as she was called, was summoned for not putting her name on her cart. The magistrate asked her why she had not done so.

"Well, indeed, sir, I kent tell what name I ought to put on it," said Mary.

"Your own, of course," said the magistrate.

"But it bain't my cart, sir."

“Whose is it, then?”

“Well, ’tis uncommon odd, I do know; but ’tis a kind o’ company’s cart, you see, sir.”

“Then put the company’s name on it.”

“Company’s name, indeed, sir! Well, well, I s’pose I must do it after all. An’ now I will tell you all ’bout it. The shafts do belong to Watkin Powell, the tail-board do belong to Jane Jones, and the middle of it do belong to my uncle Jack the cooper, an’ indeed to goodness ’tis only the old horse do belong to me. So I s’pose I kent do more nor put my uncle Jack’s name on it.”

An old Calvinistic Methodist preacher of Glamorganshire, known to be very parsimonious, had a servant named Jenkin.

“Please, sir,” said Jenkin, “I have been with thee goin’ on five years come May, an’ I have grown up with thee. An’ now I do look for higher wages.”

“Oh, indeed,” exclaimed the minister, surveying the boy.

“An’ then, sir, I be getting a better boy. Thee dost know I be getting better in every way than I was, and that’s one great reason why I do want higher wages.”

“Oh, indeed,” exclaimed the minister, “thee dost talk like a book; but I don’t want thee better, Jenkin—I don’t want thee better.”

A Welsh parson of the old school took for his text, “The devil goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” “And now,” said the preacher, “we will consider the devil, and for this purpose I have divided the discourse into four parts. Firstly: who the Devil—he was. Secondly: what the Devil—

he is. Thirdly : where the Devil—he goeth. Fourthly : why the Devil—he roareth.”

A small town on the sea coast of Glamorganshire had the reputation of being one of the worst parishes in South Wales. Of the inhabitants a neighbouring vicar said, “First they were pirates, next they were smugglers, then they became wreckers, and by this time there is not an honest man left among them.”

A Welsh curate, having preached several sermons which were considered superior to his own powers of composition, was asked by a friend how he managed to prepare them. He replied, “I have got a volume of sermons by Thomas Manton, and a very good book it is too. I translate one of the sermons into Welsh, and then back again into English, after which the devil himself would not know it again.”

Young Griffith Lloyd, of the county of Cardigan, went to Jesus College, Oxford, where he was regarded as a great dunce. He had a calf-skin waistcoat, tanned with the hair on it, and trimmed with broad gold lace and gold buttons. One of the Oxonians, who was a well-known punster, said that Griffith was like a dull book, bound in calf-skin and gilt, but very ill-lettered.

When the free-trade question was being discussed at a meeting in Wales, one of the speakers said, “Mr. Chairman, if there’s anything I’d like to see put down it is smuggling. The smugglers are unprincipled people and great cheaters. I think I ought to know more about them than anybody, because I was a smuggler myself for fifteen years.”

At that moment a smuggler in the audience got up and shouted, “He failed in the business, Mr. Chairman, or he wouldn’t be here speaking now.”

An old Welsh journeyman tailor, having been sued by the rector for tithes, asked the reason why he should be troubled.

"Why," said the rector, "I want the tithes."

"Tithes," exclaimed the tailor, "and for what?"

"For preaching in church," said the rector.

"I've nothing to give thee," said the tailor, "for I never come to hear thee."

"Oh, but you can come whenever you like," said the rector; "the doors are always open."

Next day the rector threatened further proceedings, whereupon the tailor took a bill for forty shillings to the rectory.

"For what do I owe you money?" asked the parson angrily.

"For tailoring," was the reply.

"For tailoring!" exclaimed the rector; "why I never was tailored by you in my life."

"Oh, but thou might'st have come and been tailored any day thou didst like, for my doors, like thine, are always open."

A Welsh lawyer was very much annoyed because, at a ratepayer's meeting, precedence in order of speech was allowed to a retired and wealthy butcher. The latter, who was a man of considerable mettle, said, "Excuse me, Mr. Chairman, but let those who break the eighth commandment go first, the executioner is willing to follow."

"Dear me, Juan (Joan)," said a parsimonious old Welshwoman, on what proved to be her deathbed, "I do want to know why you do burn that there candle all these hours?"

"Well, you can't see without light, aunt," said Joan.

"Dear de helpody me, I can see to die well anuff in the dark."

Another Welsh lady, who was very miserly and seriously ill, was asked by a relative if she would like to change her linen.

"Yes," she said. "Bring me my oldest night-gown, and I'll have it put on."

"The oldest?" exclaimed the relative.

"Yes, the one that's just in tatters."

"Why?"

"Because I am told that the gown I die in must be the nurse's perquisite, and any old rag is good enough for Margaret Morgan."

"I hear that thee hast been giving notice to thy mistress," said a Welsh farmer to one of the maids.

"Iss, indeed," replied the girl. "I be tired of bein' here. The missis do scold me that shocking bad from morn till night, and I kent abear it any longer, so I did give notice to-day."

"Thee canst think theeself well off. I wish I could give notice too," said the farmer.

At one time the Dissenters of Wales were much given to ranting, and some of the scenes were very ludicrous. One of those witnessed within the past thirty years was described in these words.

"I never did see anything like it, never! The chapel was crammed with people of all denominations, and the pulpit was full of preachers. Yes, indeed. Two of them did sit on the pulpit seat, while the other did preach. That was, you see, a great convenience, because if one man did preach a bit too long the others could pull by his coat-tails. After the three sermons, the meeting was called back. And

then we did know what was coming. First we had a bit of prayer, then a slow drawling hymn about the wrath of God, then one of the deacons did address us. Of all things in the world it was like being in a funeral. He told us life was a 'howlin' wilderness,' a 'valley of dry bones,' a 'miserable charnel-house.' Then up jumps one of the deacons and says, 'No, indeed; no such thing. If you do call it a "miserable charnel-house," I don't. No, no—come along—follow me—I be goin' to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Put on your wedding garments and come with me. There'll be no sackcloth and ashes there—no howlin' there—no dry bones there. No, indeed! Come—come—there'll be a plenty of wine there, and milk and honey there, and more than you can eat and drink there!' That was anuff. The men began to stamp and the women to cry, till the place was like a bedlam. One of the deacons ordered the windows to be opened to give air, and because the people couldn't do it he did take a stick and did smash the panes all round, till the glass did fall in splinters all about. Then one of the preachers did feel the draught, and what did he do but take his red and yellow cotton handkerchief, and make a knot at each corner, and put it on his head. We did jest split laughin'? Then up gets consequential Nancy and says, as quaint as you please, 'Excuse me—excuse me, but I am the chiefest of sinners; I am the Door—I am the Door!' and with that somebody did call from the end of the chapel, 'What leads to the City of Destruction!' There was rampin' she did get! Then one of the ministers did say, 'We will sing the first, second, and last verse of the third hymn, page four.' 'No,' says the deacon,

jumpin' to his feet, 'you will sing it all if you do like—don't you notice him. Do you hear, Sarah?' he did say to leader of the singin'. After that one of the ministers did go to one of the young gells and he did say to her, 'You must be born again,' and she did call out, 'I kent, 'cause me mother is dead.' And then to top all, one of the old men did say, 'If there is any-thing I should like to be 'tis a real man of God.' 'Ay, indeed,' says a woman in the colner (corner), and so should I, and so would Jaane, I do know that, I do!' Then there was more noise and shouts of 'Gogoniad!' 'glory,' 'hallelujah!' and the women did tear off their bonnets, and threw up their gloves, and the men did toss up their hats to the singing gallery, and the boys did throw them back agen, and coats was taken off, and shirt-sleeves rolled up, and I don't know what more before they did finish. By the time we did come out I can tell you we did look as if we'd been in the steam of the copper boiler and the washtub."



XX.

FOLKLORE AND GHOST STORIES.

LIKE sea-weed drifting hither and thither upon the restless tides, the folklore of a land drifts from place to place, and is subject to many changes.

Nearly every county in Wales has, with few exceptions, the same folklore, diversified by local colouring, or adapted to surrounding circumstances and scenery.

Thus we find the weather-lore varying with change of district.

In the mountainous parts of South Wales, clouds hanging heavily around the craggy summits that rear their lofty heads to the skies, are said to portend fair weather, while, if distant mountains are clearly seen, rain may be expected.

All along the sea-board of Glamorganshire, people say, "If you see the English hills distinctly, you may be sure rain is not far off," while a dense haze enveloping the Severn Sea is indicative of fair weather.

Iolo Morganwg — Edward Williams, the bard—
sang :—

“When the proud waves of Severn are roaring aloud
And Penlline’s lofty towers are involved in a cloud,
If true the old proverb, a shower of rain
Is brooding aloft, and will soon drench the plain.”

Another Glamorganshire weather proverb runs
thus :—

“When Breaksea Point doth roar and cry,
Gileston lane is never dry.”

When the stone floors are damp and “giving,” the
women say “it’s a sign of great heat.”

If a cord snaps, rain is near.

Sea-gulls flying seaward betoken fair weather;
when they fly landward, a storm is coming.

If on a calm day the sea “makes a great noise,” a
storm may be expected.

Another Welsh weather proverb is this :—

“February’s winds, when at their best,
Will blow the goose from off her nest.”

Crows flying low portend rain.

When the aspen leaves make a great commotion,
rain may be expected.

“If a donkey brays in the morning,
Let the haymakers take a warning ;
If the donkey brays late at night,
Let the haymakers take delight.”

When many water-wagtails appear, the people say,
“Rain is coming, and we shall have a spell of it,” and
the children sing :—

“Little lady wash dish
Stops us to catch fish.”

If the pigs squeak immoderately, high winds may be expected.

When a door creaks noisily on its hinges, rain is coming.

Many porpoises seen in the Bristol Channel is a token of fair and unusually warm weather.

When the hay-crop is light, the Vale farmers say, “There is no need to rake it very clean; we shan’t want it all.” If the crop is heavy, they say, “Rake every bit; you’ll want it all and more before May is in.”

A cat born in May will bring snakes into the house.

“Which is the first month of the year?” said one Vale woman to another.

“Why, May, of course!” was the reply of an aged dame, who throughout her long lifetime remembered the first of May as the annual date for engaging servants, renting houses, and entering upon any new or renewed agreement.

Quite recently I heard a peculiar folk-rhyme with reference to Welsh curates. It ran thus:—

“His wife had washing,
’Tis his lot
To pare the turnips, watch the pot;
He reads, and hears his son read out,
And rocks the cradle with his foot.”

The poor Welsh curate’s “lot” was by no means an enviable one, judging from the above rhyme.

“O, wel te’n wir”—“O, if that is true,” exclaimed one woman to another across the sweet-briar hedge,

where they were spreading fine linen to dry in the brilliant sunshine of June, "I'd sooner wash for the Rectory than for the Castle."

"Why?" I asked, surprising them in their little gossip.

"Because it takes a great deal of washing to get the linen of a bad-tempered person clean. And I don't care who it may be, I'd know the body-linen of a good-tempered man or woman, even if my eyes was shut, for it takes little or no rubbing."

Later on, I overheard the same woman telling her daughter, "As sure as you're a living person you'll have a drunken husband," and when I asked why she said so, she replied, "Look how wet her apron is."

When soap falls to the floor, the washerwomen of Wales say, "Fresh work is coming."

A diamond-shaped crease in the centre of a tablecloth denotes the coming of a stranger, and a similar mark in the centre of a sheet foretokens death.

When the cat's eyes are dark, the tide is in; when they look lighter, the tide is out.

To trip in going upstairs means speedy marriage for the person that next ascends the stairs.

If you serve anybody with salt, the people say you are serving them with sorrow.

A good workman is known in his cradle.

If a spinster tries on a widow's bonnet, she will never be married; if a married woman puts on weeds, she will soon be a widow.

If a person not in mourning put on any apparel trimmed with crape, there will soon be a death in that family.

If the wedding ring falls off a brides finger on her

marriage day, separation, or early death of partner is foretokened ; and if a wedding party meets a funeral, early and peculiar kind of death, separation, or divorce will come to pass.

When bread falls, the people say, "You'll have a disappointment."

To quit your house, and, having forgotten something, return, means bad luck for the day.

If you forget something you meant to say, the children tell you "it must have been an untruth."

A hard hand, a tender heart.

A soft hand, a hard heart.

A man who cannot give you a hearty hand-grasp is easily overcome by the opposite sex.

Steal a cutting of a plant and it will surely grow.

To dream of friends is a token of rain.

If an Irishman spits on a toad or a frog, it will surely die.

Put a married woman's garters under your pillow, and the dream of the night will, without fail, come true.

Snakes will not bite the Irish.

A snake is never seen in St. Donat's, Glamorgan, because one of the Stradlings imported Irish earth there.

If you wish to ascertain the disposition of a person, take a hair from his or her head, and draw it between the thumb and forefinger. If it curls much, the person is very proud ; if only a little, the pride is laudable ; if it will not curl at all, the owner of the hair is easily imposed upon.

The English have a saying that the devil dwells in Mid-Wales, and the Welsh whiten their doorsteps to prevent him entering their houses.

Never is there a Welsh house to be seen without "white-washing," or white lime on some part of the premises, because that is said to keep the witches and their master away.

It is unlucky to find money.

Pull your knuckles, to see how many sweethearts you have, for each crack means a sweetheart.

Spit on the first coin you get in the day, and you'll have luck for the next twenty-four hours.

A stone with a hole in it cures nightmare. This doubtless is a fragment of old witch lore.

If you carry a potato always in your pocket, you'll never have rheumatism.

If you keep the bark of the ash-tree in your pocket, or rub your hands therewith, snakes will not touch you.

Put "brimstone"—powdered sulphur—in your shoes, and your feet will never swell.

Rub the feet of your stockings with soap, and you will walk a great number of miles without experiencing the slightest fatigue.

If a bramble clings to a girl's skirts, her companions say she has a sweetheart.

To lose a garter, is to lose a sweetheart.

If the right ear burns, somebody is praising you; when the left burns, you are being blamed.

If your foot or feet itch, you will soon stand on strange ground; if your right hand itches, you will receive money, and then the children say—

"Rub it against wood,
It will come for good."

If the left hand itches, you are going to give money; while if your nose itches "you will be kissed, curst, or

vexed, or shake hands with a fool!" in which case a kind friend generally extends the right hand, but mischievous young fellows frequently seize the opportunity, and kiss the young lady. I have known saucy girls box the boys' ears so as to make it true that they shall be vexed.

The mothers tell their children that if they eat green gooseberries, ponies (lice) will get into their hair.

Take an apple seed, say the children, and place it in the palm of the left hand, cover it with the right hand, and repeat the following verse:—

“ Kernel, kernel of the apple tree,
Tell me where my true love be,
East, west, north, south,
Pretty kernel, tell the truth.”

Whichever way the pointed end of the kernel is found, in that direction the “true love” lives.

When the girls wish to know what the occupation of their husbands will be, they take what they call the “wishing grass,” and while touching alternately each sharp blade on the stalk, they say—

“Tinker, tailor,
Soldier, sailor,
Apothecary, ploughboy, thief,”

and thus continue until the blades are exhausted, the future husband being indicated by the name that falls upon the last blade.

The children string cowslip blossoms on a piece of strong thread, then tying the ends together, form it into a flower ball. This they toss up and catch with the right hand only, meanwhile repeating—

“ Pistey, postey,
Four and forty,
How many years shall I live?
One, two, three, four,”

and so on, until the ball falls at a certain number, which indicates the length of life the tosser shall attain.

The English substitute “Tistey, tostey” for the Welsh expression, which always is “Pistey, postey.”

Children are induced to eat crusts by telling them that if they do so their hair will curl, and the Welsh as a people are very proud of curly hair.

“Grey eye, greedy; black eye, beauty;” the children say, “Brown eye, magpie.”

The Welsh say that red-haired people are always bad tempered.

Never stir the fire in anybody’s house unless you are a friend of seven years’ standing.

Wish whenever you get the first taste of the season of any kind of food.

If you let a piece of bread fall, you will have a disappointment.

The Welsh housewife says, “If you throw your hair-combings out through the window, the birds will take them, and after that you’ll never be able to get any rest.”

The same authority says, when the kettle is long on the fire before the water boils “there is a frog in it;” and when the fire is dull and lifeless, “the old gentleman is sitting on the chimney-top.”

If you take up one of two crossed knives, you will “take up a quarrel.”

Three crows flying at the same time across any body’s path portend slander.

A crow circling in the air immediately over a person's head is a token of a peculiar kind of death.

Taste as many Christmas puddings as you can ; the more the better, for luck's sake.

Cross yourself if you have to pass under a ladder.

If you listen very attentively on Christmas Eve, you will hear the oxen talking in the stable, and the horses whispering in the manger.

Holly must be removed on Twelfth Night, and it is to be burnt, not thrown away.

A division between the two front teeth means wealth ; if you can pass a sixpenny-piece through it, wealth and wisdom are promised.

Fever may be cured by shutting a spider in a nut-shell.

Curious remedies were suggested in Wales for the cure of hydrophobia, even until very recent years. Pilgrimages were made by people whose friends suffered from this complaint to the Leys, near Aberthaw, Glamorganshire, for a herb that grew in the sand near the shore. It was regarded as a certain cure for hydrophobia.

A herb growing in Llanfrynach churchyard, boiled in milk, was another Glamorganshire remedy.

Sometimes the patient was taken out to sea in a boat and plunged into the water thrice. Between each plunge the patient was asked if he would like to have another, and the moment he opened his mouth he was plunged in again. The more salt water got into him the better.

The patient was firmly secured by cords tied round his waist, and then suddenly thrown from a height into a pond ; in his struggles to escape death by

drowning, the cure was accomplished. When within a hair's breadth of real danger, he was drawn up by the cords.

At Mynydd Yclwyn there was a stone which the people regarded as almost sacred, so valuable were its curative properties in cases of hydrophobia. People procured a piece of this stone, which was ground to powder and taken in milk by the patient.

When all remedies had failed, and the case proved incurable, the sufferer was smothered between two feather beds.

A Vale farmer who had many quaint and peculiar sayings, used to make a curious remark if anybody's wits were wool-gathering.

"Ho! ho!" he would say, "I can see plain, I'll have to send thee to Doctor y Bendro!"

"Who is Doctor y Bendro?" I asked.

"Don't you know?—not know Doctor y Bendro? Why, he was a clever doctor for mad people."

Then he told me that the doctor lived in Anglesea, and took upon himself to cure lunatics. At the end of his house he had a large room filled with filthy water that had a vile smell. The doctor—so they said—used completely to strip his patient and place him in this pool rather over knee-deep. Some he would place in the water waist-high; others deeper still, and each patient was tied fast to a pole. At this stage the only nourishment allowed was turnip broth, or water gruel, of which three tablespoonfuls were given once in forty-eight hours. The patients suffered so intensely from hunger, cold, and the terrible smell of the water, that they either recovered their memory or senses under the operation. Gwion

the empty head, as they called him, was thus treated for a fortnight by Doctor y Bendro, and went home cured.

Once or twice afterwards I heard the same expression from the lips of very aged Welsh people, who used or remembered it as a household word.

Clwf Tegla—St. Tegla's disease—falling sickness, was cured by the waters of the well under the tutelage of that saint. The patient after sunset washed his limbs in the well, dropped into it a fourpenny-piece, and walked round it three times, on each occasion repeating the Lord's Prayer. Each patient carried a fowl in a basket as an offering. These baskets were carried by the patients round the well, into the churchyard, then into the church. There they went under the altar table, covered themselves with a rug, or piece of carpet, placed a Bible under their heads, and remained in that position until day dawn. Meanwhile the fowls were left in the church, and if in the time they died, the cure was effected, and the disease was transferred to the feathered victim.

When a supply of any kind appears to be inexhaustible, the people say, "It's like the Penlline Cow." A lady living at Penlline kept one of her cows especially and only for the sake of the poor. The cow was daily milked by those for whose benefit she was set apart. This animal grew venerable, and was regarded as almost sacred. The yield of milk was enormous, and at whatever time of the day or night she was milked, the supply never failed. In fact, the Penlline cow was regarded as a miraculous animal.

In many parts of Wales there are places called Beggar's Bush, Beggar's Field, or Beggar's Pound. The

name, according to some authorities, is derived from the mendicant friars who probably took up their quarters on those spots, and there preached and begged alms for various religious purposes. This doubtless gave rise to the following verse :—



“Hark ! hark ! the dogs do bark,
The beggars are coming to town,
Some in rags and some in jags,
And some in silken gowns !”

This verse strikes terror into the hearts of Welsh children, who are much afraid of beggars and tramps. The following line has the same effect :—

“Around the rugged rocks the ragged rascals run their
rural race !”

The girls pull the yellow petals of the dandelion to see if the schoolboys love them, and they say alternately, “He loves me, he loves me not,” until the flower is exhausted. They blow the down from the leafless stalk, to know the time of day, and they hold buttercups under each other’s chins to see if they love butter.

The dragon-fly is called the “devil’s messenger,” from which the children and girls run screaming, and the Welsh folk call the sorrel “crinche cranche.”

When the little girls have to nurse a baby sister, they sing this :—



“Hush-a-bye, baby,
Sleep like a lady ;
You shall have milk
When the cows do come home.”

Another popular nursery rhyme, to be recited or sung, runs thus :—

“To market go the gentle folks,
And so do we, and so do we ;
And after come the country clowns,
Hobadegee, hobadegee.”

Here is another, which reflects upon the state of the Church in Wales years ago :—

“The clerk is drunk and gone to bed,
The sexton is the same ;
The parson is a-hunting gone,
He knows no other game !”

The last line is repeated thrice. This is generally sung.

A very old rhyme sung by Welsh nurses is the following :—

“On New Year’s Day,
I heard them say,
Davie did ride his Dobbin grey ;
To Flimston he is gone again,
To court the parson’s daughter Jane !”

This rhyme is varied to suit different localities. The one I give is popular between Porthkerry and St. Donat’s, in Glamorganshire.

If you wash on Friday you’ll iron on Sunday.

Friday is better than no day.

A wet Friday, a wet Sunday.

A fair Friday, a fair Sunday.

In Wales, as in England, every castle and manor-house has its ghostly visitor that either appears before a death in the family, or persists in frequenting the

old familiar haunts which it loved or disliked during its earthly career.

The distinguished ghosts of Wales are so innumerable, that it is impossible to crowd them into so small a space as I have at my disposal, and it would be *infra dig.* if those stern spiritual lords, and queenly ladies, were allowed to descend to the level of the numerous plebeian ghosts with which Wales abounds.

The green-robed lady of Caerphilly Castle would strongly object to hob-a-nob with the poor curate's ghost of a quiet out-of-the way village, and it would never do to place the dignified but very restless spirit of Sir John Wynne "cheek by jowl" with the gigantic ghost that haunts "Big Man's Stile."

If I committed such an error, I fear the wrath of all the aristocratic ghosts would be hurled at me every night, stirring up blood-curdling thrills in my heart at the first stroke of the midnight hour.

So to them and all their shadowy and peerless friends I will say, "Requiescat in Pace."

My object has been to glean from the people the hitherto unrecorded ghost stories, which prove—whoever may say nay—that the Welsh still possess traces of the superstitious characteristics of their foreparents.

"If ever a house was haunted, this is," said a lady, showing me over her old-fashioned house, every nook of which could not fail to arouse strange feelings of awe in the imaginative mind.

The deep-seated windows, wainscoted rooms in which the fire-glow, shedding its crimson radiance, caused the shadows to look mysteriously dark and dense in the corners—the old oaken stairway, the winding passages leading into rooms in unexpected places—all helped to

foster the belief that the lady had reasonable grounds for indulging in the fancy that her house was haunted.

"I never sit in the dining-room in the twilight, without hearing hurrying footsteps upstairs, as if somebody was chasing another through the passages, and the latches of the old doors downstairs, often sound as though they were being lifted, when I know they are not."

"Are you afraid?" I asked.

"Oh, no! I am quite used to the noises," said the lady, a fine fair-haired, blue-eyed, and dignified daughter of Wales.

She could not account for the noises, and did not know of any ghost story connected with the house, but everybody knew it was haunted by strange noises, that at first were troublesome, and afterwards became familiar.

Not far from her house, a ghost was to be seen, at least so many people said.

"I have seen the ghost many a time," said an old woman, "when I used to milk sheep in the fields by West Orchard."

The fields referred to are at the western extremity of the village of St. Athan, Glamorganshire.

The good dame then told me that, singular to say, the ghost always appeared in the morning, and "before the dew was off the grass." Several persons testified to this, and all agreed that the apparition never appeared at night.

They described the ghost as being robed in long trailing and shimmering garments, which she allowed to fall in graceful folds behind her. She was seen to go slowly and in a very dignified manner to a particular

spot and to walk around it as if in a circle several times. She would linger there, as if very unwilling to go, and afterwards take her departure, always carefully lifting the trailing folds of her silken gown over her right arm.

"Is there any story connected with the place?" I asked.

"I never heard much about it," was the reply all round, "only that 'tis said some woman was buried alive there," said the people.

"Not far from there, by the Twmpath (the name of a field), I always feel in the night, as though somebody was pulling my gown," said the woman.

"Are you quite sure you never heard any story about it?" I asked the oldest of the women.

"No, indeed, never: not more than I tell you about the buried woman, and my mother, who used to see the ghost in her time, said she always saw it the last ten days of June."

These good people had seen the apparition, but were unacquainted with the ancient tradition connected with the place.

The Castles of East and West Orchard were built by Rogerus de Berkerolles, who came into England with William the Conqueror, and went to Wales as one of Robert Fitzhamon's knights. The castles were built to defend two celebrated and ancient orchards, of which the best was destroyed in the thirteenth century by Ivor Bach.

East Orchard, which is on the Thaw, about a mile and a-half from Aberthaw, in Glamorganshire, is in ruins. The site of West Orchard, which was at the western extremity of the village of St. Athan, is now

almost covered with grass, which marks the outline and ground plan of the ancient feudal castle.

In the year 1188, when Archbishop Baldwin preached the Crusade in Wales, Sir Humphrey Berkerolles offered his services on behalf of the cause. He had a very young wife, who was renowned for her beauty. According to some accounts her name was Tybote, while others give it as Joyce; the most reliable favour the latter. Lady Joyce bitterly lamented because her lord became a Crusader, and, for a time, was almost inconsolable. When Sir Humphrey returned home from the Holy Land, he discovered that his wife had proved unfaithful to him. His testimony was the word of a neighbouring Norman lord who had endeavoured but failed to induce Lady Joyce to flee with him during her husband's absence.

The stern and angered Crusader accused his wife of infidelity, and notwithstanding her protestations of innocence, he imprisoned her in his castle of West Orchard, and forbade anybody to supply her with food. But his orders were repeatedly disregarded, and owing to her beauty, food was secretly conveyed to her by those who believed in her innocence. He gave strict orders, that if anybody attempted to give her food, or sustenance of any description, the offender should suffer the penalty of death.

Sir Humphrey then condemned her to a cruel death.

Lady Joyce was bound by the hands and feet and buried up to her neck in the earth outside the castle. There she remained till death put an end to her sufferings.

When the unfortunate Lady Joyce was doomed,

Sir Humphrey gave permission that, while undergoing the slow torture of an agonising death, his wife should be visited once daily by her sister. This lady went very early each morning, and while proceeding to the unfortunate victim, she allowed her long silken gown to trail in the wet grass. She dared not offer her sister any nourishment, but the least thing she could do was to provide moisture to cool the fevered lips, burning tongue, and parched throat of the beautiful Lady Joyce.

Each morning, with noble devotion, this lady, whose name is not mentioned, allowed her silken train to sweep up the dew, and then passed and repassed her sister, who eagerly sucked the moisture therefrom.

For ten or twelve days she did this, meanwhile uttering words of consolation, and comforting the beautiful victim with assurances of heaven's reward for her innocence.

Slowly, and at length utterly exhausted for want of nourishment, Lady Joyce died, and in her last moments still protested her innocence, and breathed a blessing on her murderer.

Scarcely a year had passed, when a great change came over the Lord of East Orchard. The fervent religious knight, and ardent Crusader, began to drink deeply, and to swear violently. Matters were going from bad to worse, when one of the Umfravilles of Penmark came and whispered a few words in Sir Humphrey's ear. Everybody said it was the confirmation of Lady Joyce's innocence. Thereupon Sir Humphrey went mad, and his brother was obliged to secure him in the Castle of West Orchard, where he lived for a few years, and died the victim of raving

insanity. During the worst paroxysms, he used to run wildly through the castle in search of his beautiful but wronged wife Joyce.

When the wind howls through the caves, and the tide runs mountains high, under the beetling cliffs and crags of Dunraven; when the foam is white around the Witches' Point, and the breakers rush with mighty force against the shelving rocks of Southerndown; when the beacon light of the Tusker Rock is dimmed by sea-spray; when the sea-swollen Ogmere floods the valley through which it flows, and the sea-fog obscures the splinty crags and rocks of Sker—then the old man in the fireside corner of the farmhouse settle tells a story of the early part of the eighteenth century, when Wales entered into funereal shadows, and folklore gathered and grew in strength.

“On such a night as this, I always think of the old story of the master of Dunraven,” says the farmer, who, with many interruptions, relates the narrative.

Thomas Wyndham, of Dunraven Castle, Glamorgan-shire, bore the reputation of being an insatiate wrecker. The old story describes him as a man whose greed for gold, and treasure of every description, knew no bounds. Whenever there was a wreck on the shores in the vicinity of the castle, Thomas Wyndham was the first person present, directing his minions, and seeing to the speedy conveyance of treasure to his stronghold. As time passed, he grew more greedy, and, owing to the frequency of wrecks between Southerndown and Nash, it was whispered among the people, that he resorted to various wicked devices in order to lure ships to destruction. Like a miser counting his gold, he loved to count his treasures. His cellars were well stocked with

hogsheads of wine, and kegs of spirit; the rooms of his castle were filled with costly articles brought from the despoiled cabins of stately ships, and his coffers contained a vast hoard of gold, silver, and copper coins and jewellery, brought from the strong boxes of sea-captains, the luggage of rich passengers, and even from the berth of the poor sailor. Rich and poor alike were robbed by the heartless master of Dunraven.

He must have been by nature a lover of ill-gotten gain, for he had goodly possessions both in land and money, and, as the story goes, "wanted for nothing."

The only sorrow of his life, was that his sons were delicate, and each one died, so that when the last surviving remained he ordered his wife to devote her whole and special attention to the care of the heir. All the other boys died either in infancy or early childhood, but when the last attained the age of eighteen without having had so much as a day's illness, the joy of Thomas Wyndham was unbounded.

The pleasure for a time made him neglect his treasure-hunting, but when the autumn set in, his inordinate greed returned in greater strength, and he made the excuse to his conscience that he needed more because of his son whom he wished to enrich.

Then he set up a lamp in his ivy-covered tower, and fearing it would not receive proper attention, he personally took charge of it. And there, alone in his turret, he would trim the wick, and replenish the fount with oil, and rub his hands in glee, when, as a reward for all his assiduous labours, a goodly vessel was wrecked in sight and sound of the land.

In order to prevent his son becoming acquainted with his evil deeds, he sent him to France and Italy,

there to complete his education and return home in time to celebrate his twenty-first birthday.

The three years were approaching their expiration, and Thomas Wyndham hungered for just a few more wrecks before "the boy" came home.

When the September gales raged furiously, he and his trusty men were unusually busy, for many wrecks were brought about by means of the wonderful lamp, and its keeper and trimmer.

October came and went, and November brought its fogs, through which the weird lamplight of Dunraven looked like a spectral taper, or the corpse candle that precedes death.

Thomas Wyndham set his room in order, trimmed the lamp, and replenished it with oil, putting in a larger supply than usual, so that the light could be better seen through the fog.

Then he went down to the shore as usual to await results, and superintend proceedings.

He had not long to wait, for, through the fog, the shadowy form of a ship appeared making "straight for the shore."

"All hands ready!" muttered Thomas Wyndham under his breath, as he gleefully rubbed his hands, and restlessly paced the long stretch of sand along which the tide was rolling speedily on.

"This will be the last wreck for me," he sighed. "Next week the heir will be at home, and then—no more sport. *He* must not know how my money has been made."

There was a sadly regretful tone in his voice, as though he wished his wicked schemes could go on without interruption, forever.

A loud crash disturbed his reverie.

Another crash, and the stately ship had met its doom under the cliffs on the eastern side of the Witches' Point.

The waves hissed as they leaped upon their prey, and, above the roar of the sea, came agonising cries for help, mingled with the death groans of sufferers.

All was over !

The good ship lay shattered to pieces on the wave-worn ledges of rock that stretch like the teeth of ravenous animals into the relentless sea.

The night passed.

In the morning—at daybreak—Thomas Wyndham was seen on the shore.

“For the last time,” he said mournfully, as he gave directions to his men.

It was for the last time !

In searching the bodies that were thrown up by the angry waves to the beach, Thomas Wyndham and his men observed that several corpses were unusually well dressed.

Some of the minions of the wrecker-lord had found valuable rings, a handsome gold watch and chain, and a large sum of money on the person of one of the victims. Would their master come and see ? Of course he would.

But this was the last time !

Eagerly he pressed forward, and gazed upon the up-turned pallid face of the rich man's corpse.

With a sudden start he recoiled, looked once more, and then reeled back into the arms of his servants.

For the pallid features, on which there appeared an imploring expression, were those of the wrecker-lord's only son !

Thomas Wyndham was carried home insensible, and when he recovered consciousness, it was to face the terrible fact that he had caused the death of his only son and heir, who returned home unexpectedly, and by sea, as a pleasing surprise to his parents.

The wrecker-lord of Dunraven gradually sank into remorseful and moody humours, which developed into melancholy insanity. Accompanied by an attendant, he would pace the sands when the tide was out, and wail piteously; but when storms came, his agonising shrieks could be heard above the noise of the wind and the waves.

And, back in the years that are gone, the peasantry in the neighbourhood said that the ghost of the master of Dunraven always haunted the sands before a wreck and on the anniversary of that fatal night, when he was seen wringing his hands or pressing them to his forehead, as if in agony. At the same time the ghostly voice was heard alternately wailing and shrieking, above the roar of the sea and the howling of the tempest.

Westward from Southerndown the Ogmore river flows into the sea. The mouth of the river is fringed by low margins of sand, interspersed with hummocks of short grass, through which the sea-thyme and sea-daisies peep.

In hot summers, when the river is shallow, it is possible, though not always thoroughly safe, for horses and vehicles to cross the river at a certain point, but at other times it is exceedingly dangerous to attempt a passage, because the current is more or less swift, and liable to become unexpectedly swollen, especially when thunderstorms prevail in the hilly country above Bridgend.

One summer evening, about a century ago, a man driving a heavy waggon and three horses approached the river from the Southerndown side. He wished to proceed to Porthcawl, *viâ* Newton Noltage, and by crossing the river he would save many miles. Seeing him going down to the river, a man advised him not to cross over, because there had been a heavy thunderstorm in the country above Bridgend only that morning.

Heedless of the warning, the man drove along, and was approaching mid-stream when the leading horse stumbled, and some delay was caused by the driver's endeavours to get the animal on its feet again. Then the man observed that the river was deeper than he thought it to be, and, with a ribald laugh and noisy oaths, he cracked his whip and urged his team onward.

Suddenly he felt the current stronger than he supposed it was, and soon the horses were in deep water. Swifter and deeper the current flowed; the waggoner soon lost control over his horses, and without a chance of escape, or the hope of being rescued, all were swept out to sea by the increased force of the strong-flowing river. The next day the dead horses were washed to shore, but the heedless man's body never was found.

Ever afterwards, the people said that a ghostly waggoner and his team haunted the spot, and at night, when the moor birds and sea-gulls were at rest, and only the owls kept their solitary vigils in the wild retreats in and around Merthyr-mawr, the shadowy group, led by a spectral taper, is always seen, before danger on land, or *péril* on sea.

On the outskirts of a sparsely inhabited village in South Wales, where the walls and wells are white-

washed—where horse shoes are nailed up under the granary windows, and pebbles with holes in the centre are tied to the door-keys to keep goblins, elves, and witches away, stands a lonely but deserted farmhouse.

Wind and weather beating against the window-panes, have driven them in. Through rifts in the thatched and moss-grown roof, the stars shine down upon empty upper rooms, and through yawning cracks in the doors, the rain makes its way to the floors of the lower part of the house.

The once trimly kept garden is choked with weeds and nettles that struggle for mastery, and the sweet-briar and privet hedges overhang a tangle, where even now the old-fashioned cabbage and tea-roses flourish in profusion. At the back of the house, tall, weird-looking poplars cast their shadows, and to the west, a decaying cedar stretches its long branches gloomily, as if to ward off the sunset.

Long dreary expanses of moorland stretch between this house and the sea, and the people say that when the gloaming deepens into night, a strange unearthly light flits from room to room, always pausing longer than elsewhere in the eastern window of the upper floor.

Some of the villagers say the light is carried by a frail graceful girl, clad in a snowy white dress that clings closely to her figure; others declare it is borne by a clergyman dressed in black and wearing a white wig, but all agree that a beautiful maiden appears, and is always followed by an elderly gentleman.

The Squire shrugs his shoulders and declares the light to be Jack-o'-lantern engendered by the swampy moorlands that stretch for miles around the old house.

Everybody who tells "the truth" says the house is haunted, adding, "and the Squire knows it, too."

In the later half of the last century, the present squire's ancestor was vicar of the parish. He was the son of a poor Welsh business man. In course of time he was fortunate enough to marry the heiress of the Manor. Everybody said he only married her for her money, as she had neither the charms of youth nor beauty with which to attract any man. The vicar had a stern unconquerable spirit, and he compelled his wife to make her will entirely in his favour, to the utter exclusion of her own people. She, poor soul, accustomed to submit, not only made her will and duly signed it, but placed it in her husband's possession for safe-keeping. This greatly pleased the vicar, who, having gained this point, became an altered man. Before his wife made and signed her will, and until she promised to do so, he was unkind, cold, and unflinching in his stern mastery of her, but afterwards he became her willing slave. It was, as the old folk said, "Yes, my dear," and "As you please, my darling," and "By your leave, my pet," to a lady who was twenty years older than himself.

"'But there's no accounting for taste,' as the old woman said who kissed her fine fat hog," remarked the narrator of this story.

"The Squire," as the lady of the Manor was called, lived to a good old age. In fact, when the first twinges of gout, fostered by high living, too much crusty port, and deep draughts of old Burgundy, vexed and fretted the vicar, he began to fear his wife would survive him.

"Another notch for me," he said when he married,

and again when his wife signed her will, and once more he made the remark the moment the doctor pronounced the hopelessness of the "Squire's case."

She was ill for a week, and as soon as the breath was out of her body, the vicar said, "She died as she had lived, poor darling, very gently. Never a meeker wife trod shoe-leather." And he wept bitterly.

The old lady had only two relatives, and they attended the funeral, after which the vicar's solicitor read the "Squire's" will. To the astonishment of all present, the estate and all the money—with the exception of a few small legacies—were left absolutely to the deceased lady's husband. The relatives were speechless with astonishment.

In the silence that followed the reading of the will, a little, thin, weazened-looking man begged to be allowed to speak.

"Certainly," said the vicar's legal adviser.

And forthwith the stranger read a will by which the "Squire" left the estate and money—with the exception of an annuity of £500 a year for the vicar—to her "niece Miranda's only child Gladice." This will was attested by the vicar of a neighbouring parish, and by two of the late lady's oldest tenants. There was no disputing it. The witnesses were within call, and the document had been signed exactly a year and a day after the will which the vicar held.

"Who is this Miranda?" asked the irate widower.

"Was Miranda," corrected an elderly gentleman. "She was my wife. I too am a widower, and can deeply sympathise with you in your sorrow."

A covert sneer was conveyed in the condolence.

Thus the vicar was outwitted.

"I always thought her a snake in the grass, but not so artful as that," he muttered.

Time passed. The vicar quitted the Manor House, and went to live in the vicarage.

Miranda's husband died, and Gladice the heiress—then in her nineteenth year—accompanied by her maiden aunt, came to live in the Manor House.

The vicar was devoted in his attentions to the child and her guardian.

When the heiress attained her majority, her aunt died suddenly, and the sorrow affected her health. By-and-by Gladice became very delicate, and expressed a wish to stay awhile in the old farmhouse on the moorland. It was a strange fancy, and at first the vicar opposed it, but at length he "reluctantly consented."

Every day the girl's devoted great-uncle-in-law the vicar went to see her, but, with all his "care and attention," she pined away, and died, but not before she made a will—leaving all her possessions to the vicar.

"The right notch for me this time," the old wretch said as he followed the beautiful Gladice to her long home.

It was whispered, but could not be proved, that the vicar slowly poisoned the heiress.

Two years later he died, and the estate and money passed to his only brother, a naval officer, and great-grandfather to the present squire.

The people declare that the old house on the moorland is haunted by the beautiful Gladice and the vicar, whose ghost compelled the tenant for years to obey him.

Some said the tenant aided and abetted the vicar in worrying and poisoning the heiress.

Several tenants in turn occupied the house, but all said it was haunted, and in time it could not be rented.

Year by year the haunted house on the moorland crumbles away, but even now the strange unearthly light, and the shadowy figures of an old man and a maiden are to be seen—at least so the people say. But the squire shrugs his shoulders, and says it is a Jack-o'-lantern—a will-o'-the-wisp, engendered by the swampy lands that stretch for miles around the deserted house.

Two farmhouses near Llantwit-Major, Glamorganshire, are known by the names of Great and Little Frampton, corrupted from Francton. Tradition says they owe their names to the English knight, Adam de Francton, who slew Llewelyn, the last Prince of Wales.

Prince Llewelyn, while at Aberedwy, near Builth, on December 10, 1282, discovered that the English troops were quickly approaching, and in order to baffle his pursuers, he engaged a blacksmith to reverse the shoes of the horses. Snow was on the ground, and, by reversing the horses' shoes, the prince hoped to escape. He, with a few of his soldiers, rode swiftly to Builth Castle, but was refused entrance.

The blacksmith who had reversed the shoes of the horses gave information to the English, who immediately chased the prince. Llewelyn and a single esquire, both unarmed, hurried into a deep and narrow dingle on the banks of the River Irvon, near Builth. The English soon surrounded the dingle, and Adam de Francton seeing a Welshman leaving it rushed forward and plunged a spear into his body.

The Welsh, eagerly expecting their chieftain to join

them, entered into an engagement with the English, and the slaughter on both sides was terrible.

Meanwhile, Llewelyn was lying in a dying condition near a small well, on the summit of the dingle. On December 11, after the battle, Adam de Francton returned to the dingle. To the surprise of the knight, the wounded man, who still breathed, was Llewelyn, the last of the native Princes of Wales. The prince's head was cut off his body, and sent to Edward I. at Conway Castle. It was afterwards placed on the loftiest pinnacle of the Tower of London.

When Prince Llewelyn crossed the Irvon, he said, "If the English cross this river, it will leave its bed." People say that grass grows where the Irvon then ran.

Llewelyn's head was carried by soldiers in branches of broom, and, according to local tradition, the broom has never grown in that parish since, though it is found in abundance in the surrounding parishes.

To return to Adam de Francton. Tradition says he was connected by marriage with some of the families of South Glamorgan. Filled with bitter remorse for having slain Llewelyn, the knight retired to the remote and secluded neighbourhood of Llantwit-Major, where he became the victim of ceaseless restlessness. He could not sit still at home, but rode recklessly to and fro through the country side, as though he were pursued by a demon. One evening, while riding homeward with some boon companions, he met an untimely death by a broken neck, caused by a fall from his horse, in the roadway leading to his house, now known as Great Frampton.

To this day, the country people declare that, often in

the twilight and early night, strange sounds, resembling the clattering of horses' hoofs, may be distinctly heard, followed by a loud thud, as of something falling. Children in their play, or while gathering wild flowers in the roadway, say to each other as the twilight approaches, "Come, be quick, let us go, or we shall hear the Frampton horses."

Not very far from the place associated with Adam de Francton is a field which bears the reputation of being haunted by a gigantic black dog with eyes "like coals of fire." This dog is "chained," and people say they hear the noise of the links rattling. In the same field a man is sometimes seen tossing smouldering hay. He is described as being a swarthy gentleman, respectably clothed in black. His particularly luminous eyes glare fiercely under a black slouched hat. This energetic gentleman is to be seen any time after ten P.M., but, unfortunately only by appointment, for those who go expressly to call upon him never find him at home. Another field near at hand is reported to be charmed or witched. People say they have wandered around the field for two or three hours, and have failed to find the exit. Whether they are fairy led, or driven by witches or warlocks, none can tell; but even now, young folk do not care to go through the field after dark, fearing they would experience "bewilderment" therein.

In the same parish, and leading to the remains of the ancient monastic buildings, is a stile known as the "Big Man's Stile." There a gigantic ghost sat in the eventides fifty years ago, but he is never seen now. This ghost appeared to be of a meditative turn of mind, for he is described as leaning on his elbow, and gazing

moodily to the west. He too is reported to have been swarthy, with coal black hair and fiery eyes.

In the adjacent village of Llanmaes there is a road known by the grueomes name of "The Gallows Way." There horses passing at midnight see ghostly dogs—doubtless the faithful attendants of men who suffered the rigours of the law on the Gallows Tree—and strange noises are heard in the evening. These noises are varied. They are described as the "sound of a lot of people running," or "something heavy falling into the road," and more than one person says that wailing sounds are heard there at certain times of the year.

In the vicinity of this village is Bethesda, a lonely chapel belonging to the Independents, and nearly opposite, is a farmhouse, known as Froglands. Both the chapel and the farmhouse are a considerable distance from any habitation. To pass along the road leading to the chapel, at night, is said to be very unpleasant. Solitary individuals, or even two or three persons together, get jostled about as though they were surrounded by vast crowds trying to enter the chapel. To be hustled by a ghostly crowd must be—to say the least—remarkably unpleasant, but matters are worse when the mob becomes unmannerly, and pinches, strikes, or kicks the unwary mortal who dares to pass or obstruct the spiritual procession. Some people say the chapel is very dimly lighted by pale blue tapers; others see a single yellowish light there, and some will not look at all, in which case they feel the ghostly blows worse than those who take a glimpse or only a "peep" at the windows.

Far away from the meadow-lands of the south, and just where the higher ridges, craggy steeps, and lofty

peaks appear as sentinels to the grand mountain ranges of the north, the following narrative was told by an old shepherd, whose sentences were uttered so brokenly that they cannot be given verbatim. Woven into story form, it runs thus :—

Among the bleak and dreary ridges, traversed only by shepherds in their wanderings with their flocks of mountain sheep, is a *Cistfaen* or warrior's grave, in proximity to the remains of a Roman camp. If it chanced that two or three shepherds met on these ridges within sight of their respective flocks, the men would beguile the long hours by telling stories of fifty or a hundred years previous to their time. One of the stories was about Llewelyn, a farmer's son, who lived in the early part of the present century. Llewelyn once met a stranger who had lost his way wandering along the sheep walks. The stranger, who requested the farmer's son to direct him to the nearest village, remarked, "I have to pass the *Cistfaen*, and the Roman camp, I think."

"Yes, sir," replied Llewelyn.

"Do you know the old story about them?" asked the stranger.

"No, sir."

"Now here is a rhyme about it," said the man, pausing to rest awhile.

"Go up when you will on Michaelmas night,
On the grave of the warrior there burneth bright
A weird-looking light ;
And the light strikes into the Roman camp
Like a ghostly lamp."

"That is only a bit of doggerel," continued the stranger.
"but my nurse told me of it when I was a tiny child."

She said ghosts were to be seen there, and if I wished to prove the truth of her words, I must go to that spot on St. Michael's night—the night of the autumnal equinox—and walk once around the *Cistfaen*, meanwhile saying all the time—

‘Pray let me come in
To see who will win ;’

and if ever you do go, you must go *against the sun*, not the same way as the sun—mind that.”

“I shall never do it,” said Llewelyn. “I don’t believe in those old stories.”

The stranger laughed scornfully, and said somewhat sarcastically, “We shall see. Wiser even than you have been obliged to believe in the powers of the great Unseen.”

Then the man went, not in the direction of the village, but away swiftly across the ridges, as if a whirlwind whisked him, and yet, said Llewelyn, “there was not a breath of air to be felt.”

To the end of his days, the farmer’s son firmly believed the stranger to be no other than the Prince of Evil Spirits.

Llewelyn thought no more about the uncanny visitor, until the bracken began to grow brown among the ridges, and the blossoming heather set faint tinges of purple upon the lonely mountain ranges. Then the farmer’s son began to wonder if there was any truth in the curious account about a light burning on the *Cistfaen*. There could be no harm in “having a look.”

The twenty-ninth of September was almost like a summer’s day. Not a sound, but those of partridges’ whirring wings, could be heard. Late in the afternoon Llewelyn went to a spot where he could get a good

view of the *Cistfaen* without going too near it. The sky was grand with the brilliance of an autumn sunset, that tinged the bracken with gold, and lent a ruddy glow to the purple heather.

So entrancing was the scene that Llewelyn, leaning back among the bracken, gazed dreamily upon it, until at length he fell asleep.

Meanwhile the low-burning sunset looked like a distant camp-fire in wild wastes of heather, and the full moon like a golden ball arose above the dark ridges where frowning shadows lurked. Then Llewelyn awoke from his dreams, and gazed long and earnestly at the *Cistfaen*.

Yes! there it was, true—quite true!

A strange and unearthly light burned brightly upon the warrior's grave, and it struck directly across into the Roman camp.

Something impelled Llewelyn to go nearer the *Cistfaen*.

Whatever could the light be?

He must find out, and, before he was aware of it, he had walked around the *Cistfaen*, and all the time, for the life of him, he could not help saying—

“Pray let me come in
To see who will win.”

Then he became conscious that his head was burning and throbbing terribly. He would rest. Going foolishly around the *Cistfaen* had made him giddy. Just as he was about to sit down, shrill cries startled him, and before he could move from where he stood, he was surrounded by ghosts.

It was a terrible sight—a scene never to be forgotten. Haggard, hollow-eyed, and wretched-looking ghosts

crowded around him, peered into his face, stretched forth their long bony arms to him, as if in entreaty. Was there no chance of escape? No. The ghosts jostled him unmercifully in their eager haste to reach the *Cistfaen*, and in their hurry they dragged him with them. Then through the air a great battle shout rang, to which the ghosts responded with shrill unearthly cries, followed by sounds resembling the din of warfare.

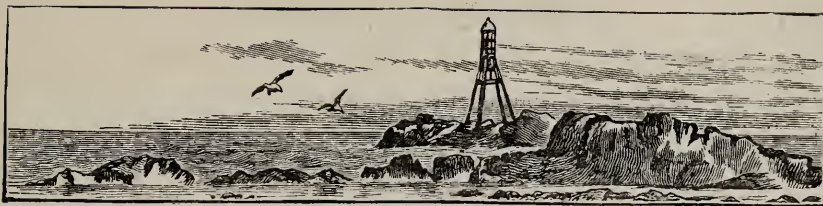
On that terribly uncanny battle-ground two ghostly warriors met and fought. The fight was desperate, and when the victor stood triumphantly over the prone figure of his ghostly adversary, wild and ringing cheers rent the air, after which the spirit crowds vanished as suddenly as they came.

Shaking with fear, and trembling from head to foot, Llewelyn looked at the *Cistfaen*. Not a glimmer of uncanny light could be seen on the warrior's grave, around which the mellow moonbeams of September shed their soft golden radiance.

As Llewelyn descended the ridges, he felt his limbs trembling, and a cold shiver made him quicken his footsteps. It was morning when he reached home, and when he complained of indisposition, his people said, "No wonder. You must have been mad to sleep on the ridges all night."

The next day he was very ill, and for several weeks he suffered from the effects—so the doctor said—of a great shock to the nervous system.

Until he reached middle age, Llewelyn never told anybody of the ghostly crowds he encountered, and the ghostly fray he witnessed beside the *Cistfaen* or warrior's grave among the lonely mountains of Wales.



XXI.

THE LATTERMATH.

WHEN the summer fields have been mown, and the hay is still green and fresh in the ricks, the pasture lands yield a second crop of grass known in England as the Aftermath, but in Wales the people call it the Adladd or Lattermath.

These "Glimpses" only reveal a small portion of the vast pastures of Welsh lore, and even this little holding yields its Lattermath, or second mowing.

It is doubtful whether the whole of England can supply such a roll-call of longevity as may be found in a small area of Wales.

First on the list is Dr. Salmon of Penlline Court, near Cowbridge, Glamorganshire. This venerable gentleman, who is the oldest surgeon in England—possibly in the world—attained his 103rd year in March last. Dr. Salmon is still in the enjoyment of excellent health, and though unable to walk out, he is wheeled in a chair to the lawn in fine weather. His intellect is as clear as ever, and at his last birthday reception, his friends did not observe the slightest mental change in the good and beloved old doctor.

Of the distinguished Welsh bards, "Clwydfardd" is ninety-two, and "Gwalchmai" is ninety, while among the humbler classes, numerous instances of longevity can be cited.

Mr. Thomas Morgan and Elizabeth his wife, who lived at Cwmbbran, were centenarians. The husband was born at Llantrisant, Glamorganshire, on May 4, 1786; the wife first saw daylight at Caerleon-on-Usk, on January 17, 1786. The former died in 1891, at the age of 105, and the latter died early in 1893, at the age of 106. Had he lived till May, he would have completed his 107th birthday. This aged couple were married at Caerleon on May 4, 1809, and had experienced a married life of 82 years. Of their fifteen children, three were born before the battle of Waterloo. The eldest daughter, who lives in America, is 82, and 17 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren are still living. Up to within a short time before her death, Mrs. Morgan was able to walk out, but Mr. Morgan acutely felt the loss of his wife, to whom he was deeply attached, and never recovered from the effects of the bereavement. They were both staunch Nonconformists, and had led a happy and serene wedded life.

Another centenarian is Robert Jones, an inmate of Merthyr Workhouse, who has attained the age of 102. He was born at Llanddewi-Brefi in Cardiganshire, and worked as an agricultural labourer at Cwmtaff for sixty years. In December 1889, failing strength compelled him to seek admission into the Workhouse, where he has since remained. In April of this year, the master of the Workhouse had the old man photographed, and a portrait was sent to the Prince of Wales.

Llanmaes, Glamorganshire, is celebrated for the longevity of its inhabitants. In the parish church of that village, Ivan Yorath was buried. He was formerly a fisherman, and afterwards a soldier, in which capacity he bore arms, it is said, at the battle of Bosworth. Yorath died at the age of 180 years. A man named Punter, living in the same parish, was a centenarian.

In the parish church of Llantwit Major is the gravestone of Matthew Voss, who died in 1534, aged 129. John Deere, the parish clerk of the same town, died in the present year, at the age of 95, and the Rev. E. W. Vaughan, who has been nearly fifty years vicar of Llantwit Major, attained his 84th year in July 1893.

Apropos of the Suspensory Bill and the Disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales "Morien," the Arch-Druid, and correspondent of the *Western Mail*, writes:—"The late Rev. Thomas Price, 'Carnhuanawc,' rector of Cwmdru, Crickhowell . . . the author of the standard history of Wales in the Welsh language, relates the following particulars with reference to the disestablishment of the Church during the Commonwealth:—In Wales, a numerous body supported King Charles I., and they fought bravely in his support, but his opponents in Wales were equally active in support of Nonconformity. After Cromwell's victories, special measures were adopted to further the cause of the latter. A commission "dirprwyad" was appointed to spread the Gospel in Wales. By that means the Welsh clergy were universally turned out of their churches and residences, and Nonconformist ministers were appointed

in their stead. . . . The most striking stories of that period I can remember are the following, which I heard related by an uncle of mine who was born in A.D. 1714, and who had conversed with many who had lived during Cromwell's government. In connection with the revolution in its relation to the Church, he said, among others, the clergyman of Llanmihangel Bryn Pabuan, near Builth, was turned out of church and home, and he had to go and reside in a poor dwelling in the parish of Llanafan Fawr, where he had to maintain himself during several years. . . . But the most remarkable, my old uncle said—and he said it most solemnly, as a thing he had heard from trustworthy witnesses—was the following: that when the clergyman was turned away, all the jackdaws which nestled in the church buildings left it with him, and took up their abode with him in the poor cottage. During the clergyman's absence, the baptismal font of the church was conveyed to the neighbourhood of a house near the top of the parish, and used as a trough for swine. . . . My uncle stated that a number of soldiers on horseback came once to the farm of his grandfather, whose home was called Bwlch-y-Garth. They turned their horses into the barn full of corn, which they trampled under their hoofs. The soldiers entered the farmhouse to steal. The Cymric maid in the family grew desperately indignant with the conduct of the soldiers, and, taking in her hands a beehive—no doubt stealthily from the garden—and proceeding to the barn where the horses were, the gallant Mari hurled the beehive among the cavalry horses! The swarm of bees instantly manifested their loyalty to the King and Church, by attacking the chargers. They instantly

grew frantic with pain, and broke out of the barn and galloped away like mad, no doubt followed by the enraged bees. The soldiers never came again to Bwlch-y-Garth, Builth."

Many versions have been given of the Glamorgan-shire romances to which two celebrated ballads of Wales owe their origin. "Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn," "Watching the Blooming Wheat," was composed in honour of the maid of Cefn Ydfa. The author of the words of "Y Ferch o'r Scer," "The Maid of Sker," was David Llewelyn, and the music was composed by Thomas Evans the harpist, who vainly loved the fair maiden. Common report with reference to the maid of Sker, described the harpist to be a victim of the small-pox, by which means he became blind. Popular belief in this myth originated in the fact that Thomas Evans the harpist had a pupil named William Matthew, who became blind owing to the small-pox.

I have before me a curious little pamphlet with the following title-page:—

"THE CUPID,

*Being the histories of the Maid of Cefn Ydfa, and the Maid of Sker,
together with the histories of their lovers*

WILL HOPKIN, THE BARD, AND THOMAS EVANS,
THE HARPER.

BY

THOMAS MORGAN (LLYFNWY), CWMAVON."

This pamphlet contains the authentic account of the romances. From it the following particulars are culled. Cefn Ydfa is about six miles to the north of Bridgend, and in the parish of Llangynwyd. It was occupied in

1700 by William Thomas, Esq., whose only daughter Ann—subsequently known as The Maid of Cefn Ydfa—born in 1704, was left an orphan and heiress to her father, who died in 1706. Miss Thomas became acquainted with William, commonly called Will Hopkin, who, though only a tiler and plasterer, was considered an excellent bard. A romantic attachment arose between Miss Thomas and the bard, and ripened into a deep and passionate love, which ultimately ended in the insanity and premature death of the young lady. Will Hopkin was born in the parish of Llangynwyd in 1700. When the young lady's feelings became known, her mother and the family tried to break off the connection between the rich heiress and the poor plasterer, who afterwards met clandestinely in the woods. These secret meetings were discovered, and Miss Thomas was kept prisoner in her room.

Anthony Madock, Esq., sought the heiress's hand in marriage, but was refused. The young lady, aided by a servant, corresponded with Will Hopkin. Her letters were placed in a hollow tree in the woods, and the bard's were secreted there in return. This was discovered, and then writing materials were taken from her and she was urged to accept Mr. Madock. When every means of communication with the bard had failed, Miss Thomas is said to have written to him on a sycamore leaf with a pin dipped in her own blood. She would then throw it to the winds. Ultimately, in 1725, she was compelled to marry Mr. Madock. Their married life was a short and tragically painful one, for the young wife became insane, and her cries for the bard were said to have been heart-rending.

A peculiar incident was connected with her death,

on June 16, 1727. Will Hopkin, after the marriage of the lady henceforth known as the "Maid of Cefn Ydfa," went to Bristol. There he dreamt that Madock was dead. So impressed was he with the dream, that he returned to Cefn Ydfa to find the husband still alive, and the wife in the pangs of insanity. The doctor advised Mr. Madock to send for the bard, in order, if possible, to allay the mental agony and fearful cries of the ill-fated sufferer. This was done, and as soon as Will entered her room, the young lady sprang towards him, and became quite calm, but in a few hours' time she died peacefully on his arm.

The house where the "maid" lived is said to be haunted by her spirit, and although at the present time it has been offered rent free, people will not live in it. The last to live there were disturbed by noises and strange apparitions.

Will Hopkins lived fourteen years after the death of the Maid of Cefn Ydfa, but he never married, and his death was caused by a fall.

Miss Elizabeth Williams, "The Maid of Sker," was the daughter of Mr. Isaac Williams of Sker, which is an ancient farmhouse near Kenfig, and about three miles from Porthcawl, Glamorganshire. She was born in the eighteenth century, and early in her girlhood she met Thomas Evans, the harpist of Newton Nottage. He was a carpenter, but his musical abilities caused him to be in great request at the various *Mal Santau* in many parts of the county. The young people fell in love with each other, but the parents could not give their consent to their daughter's marriage with the poor harpist. Miss Williams prepared to elope with her lover, who brought a carriage and pair to the house

late in the night. Just as the young lady was about to enter the carriage, the dogs began to bark, and the family were aroused in time to intercept the arrangements. The harpist had to take flight, and Miss Williams was sent to her room, where she was compelled to remain until she promised to marry Mr. Kirkhouse of Neath. Three years later the harpist was at Swansea, where he played to the militia then stationed in that town. Mrs. Kirkhouse, who heard that the harpist had composed in her honour "The Maid of Sker," sought him out, and requested him to play and sing it to her. The lady was followed by her husband, who, discovering her in the harpist's company, censured her severely for her conduct. She went home to Neath, took to her bed immediately, and died shortly afterwards. Thomas Evans married in his fiftieth year, and died on October 30, 1819. His son, James Evans, is still alive, and has reached the age of 87, his father the harpist having died when he was thirteen years of age.

The harp on which Thomas Evans of Newton Nottage played was bought by the father of Mr. John Thomas, harpist to the Queen. That celebrated musician—at five years of age—first learned to play on the instrument used by the composer of "The Maid of Sker."

In "Home Life Past and Present," the ancient Welsh recipe for making metheglin is given, and the following extract from "The History of the Principality of Wales," by R. B., London, 1695, may serve as a pendant. "R. B." says: "They have likewise metheglin, first invented by Mathew Glin, their own countryman; it is compounded of milk and honey, and is very wholesome. *Pollio Romulus*, being 100 years of age, told Julius

Cæsar 'that he had preserved the vigour of his mind and body by taking metheglin inwardly and using oil outwardly.' "R. B." must have confounded metheglin with bragget, which consisted of the wort of ale and honey mixed together and spiced—a beverage still used by the lower classes in the Principality.

Metheglin was the ancient wine of Wales, where it is still served with cream cakes as a great mark of respect, especially to strangers. It is clear, still, and bright, in colour resembling light sherry or Amontillado, and when old—I have tasted beaded metheglin that had been kept twenty-five years—it is exceedingly delicious, but a very little goes a long way, because it is so luscious.

Mr. James Howells, the author of "Epistolar Hoeli-anar," writing to a friend in the first half of the seventeenth century, says—

"Sir,—To inaugurate a good jovial New Year unto you, I send you a morning's draught, viz., a bottle of metheglin. Neither Sir John Barleycorn or Bacchus had anything to do with it, but it is the pure juice of the bee—the laborious bee and king of insects. The Druids and the old British bards were wont to take a carouse hereof before they entered into their labours with anything. It will do you no hurt, and I know your fancy to be good. But this drink always carries a kind of State with it, for it must be attended with a brown toast. Nor will it admit but of one good draught, and that in the morning; if more, it will keep a humming the head, and so speak much of the house it comes from—I mean the bees. As I gave a caution elsewhere, and because the bottle might make more haste, I have made it go upon these (poetic) feet:—

‘The juice of Bees, not Bacchus, here behold,
Which British Bards were wont to quaff of old ;
The berries of the grape with Furies swell,
But in the Honeycomb the Graces dwell.’

This alludes to a saying which the Turks have, that there lurks a devil in every berry of the vine. So I wish you as cordially as to me an auspicious and joyful New Year, because, you know, I am *your truly affectionate servitor*,
J. H.”

In former times Whitsuntide was celebrated in a peculiar manner in Wales. On Whit-Monday all the country people were obliged to get up at three or four o'clock in order to keep the holiday. The penalty for neglecting to do so was that of being pulled out of bed and put in the stocks.

Among the Whitsuntide amusements in Wales was Morris dancing. Nine men were required for this dance, and their breeches were ornamented with ribbons attached to the knees. A fool, and a man called Megan, dressed in a woman's garments, accompanied the dancers. The fool acted as a clown, and Megan, whose face was blackened, represented a hag.

In many parts of Wales, large patches of ground were carefully kept and levelled expressly for dancing and sports of every kind.

From an old MS. I glean that one of the ancient and peculiar customs of Wales, was known as “Sin Eating.” So late as the early part of the eighteenth century, an old man called the “Sin Eater,” for a small compensation, hired “his own soul for the ease and rest of the soul departed.” When the corpse was brought out of the house, and laid on the bier, a loaf of bread was delivered to the Sin Eater. The latter

was then given a bowl made of Maple, which was filled with beer. The man was expected to drink the beer, and afterwards accept sixpence, in consideration whereof he took upon him *ipso facto*, all the sins of the deceased and freed him or her from walking the earth after death! This strange custom bears a striking resemblance to the scape-goat under the old dispensation.

That the love of leeks has by no means diminished in the Principality, is amply testified by the following stories:—

Two of the “Rhondda Boys,” as the colliers of that district are called, were travelling along the Taff Vale Railway. They presently passed several fields containing young green wheat.

“Look, boy,” said one to the other of the men, who were more accustomed to the pit than to agriculture, “Look, boy, look; there’s crops of leeks. It do do one good to look at them.”

“Ay, indeed to goodness,” was the reply. “There’s leeks in plenty—that’s the place for leek broth, boy.”

And they both yearned to get out of the train.

A Cardiganshire lover took his sweetheart to the National Eisteddfod at Swansea.

“He—er’s—a—greet—town,” said the man, in the drawling tone prevalent in Cardigan.

“Yess—inteet—and—it—iss—very—goot—to—be he—er,” responded the young woman.

“We—can—get—anything—he—er—I—spose,” said the man to the waiter in the refreshment pavilion, on the Eisteddfod field.

“Anything you like, sir,” said the waiter. “Shall I bring a glass of port for the young lady, and a drop of whisky for you?”

"No—sir—and—thank—you. Put (but)—if—you—can—accommodate—uss——"

"With anything you like, sir, only name it," said the bustling waiter, growing impatient with the slow Cardigan man.

"Weel—as—we—can—get—*anything*—he—er—pleace—to—give—uss—two—basins—of—leek—proth (broth)."

"Weeth—a—bit—of—bread—an'—sheese—after—it," added the young lady.

The waiter, laughing, explained that leek broth could not be obtained in the Eisteddfod refreshment pavilion, whereupon the Cardigan man said, "Not—if—I—pay—for—it?"

"No;" was the reply.

"De—er—me—," said the lover to his lass. "Weel—weel—he—er—in—thiss—pig (big)—town—of—Swaancee—no—leek—proth (broth)—weeth—or—weethout—pay!" and they went their way hungry and disconsolate.

"Jenkin Jones, how did you come to marry Jane Morgan of the Twmpath?" asked one Welshman of another, who was a farmer.

"Well, indeed," was the reply, "this is how it did come about. Our fields is next the Twmpath field; the Morgans' horses do go to drink with our horses, an' my father do go to drink with Jaane's father. Jaane's mother do buy in the saame shop as my mother, and they do always wash the saame day, an' go to church an' market together. An' then agen, when I was up with the toothache, so was Jaane; an' when I did have the chicken-pox Jaane did have it. Jaane an' me was christened the saame day, an' we did come to think as

we'd growed up jest like two kidney beans on one stalk, we might as well finish it by gettin' spliced the saame day. It do seem jest as though Jaane an' me was born on purpose for each other."

Marcross Well, Glamorganshire, was formerly celebrated for its healing properties, and a popular distich about it runs thus :—

"For the itch, and the stitch,
Rheumatic and the gout,
If the devil isn't in you
The well will take it out!"

People who visited the well were not only expected to drop a pin or silver piece therein, but to leave some portion of their wearing apparel there. The rich frequently bestowed a whole garment, while the poor deposited a small fragment of their clothes, and in some instances merely a rag. The place abounded in shreds and rags, while the better class of contributions were readily seized by mendicants, who concealed themselves and waited the golden opportunity.

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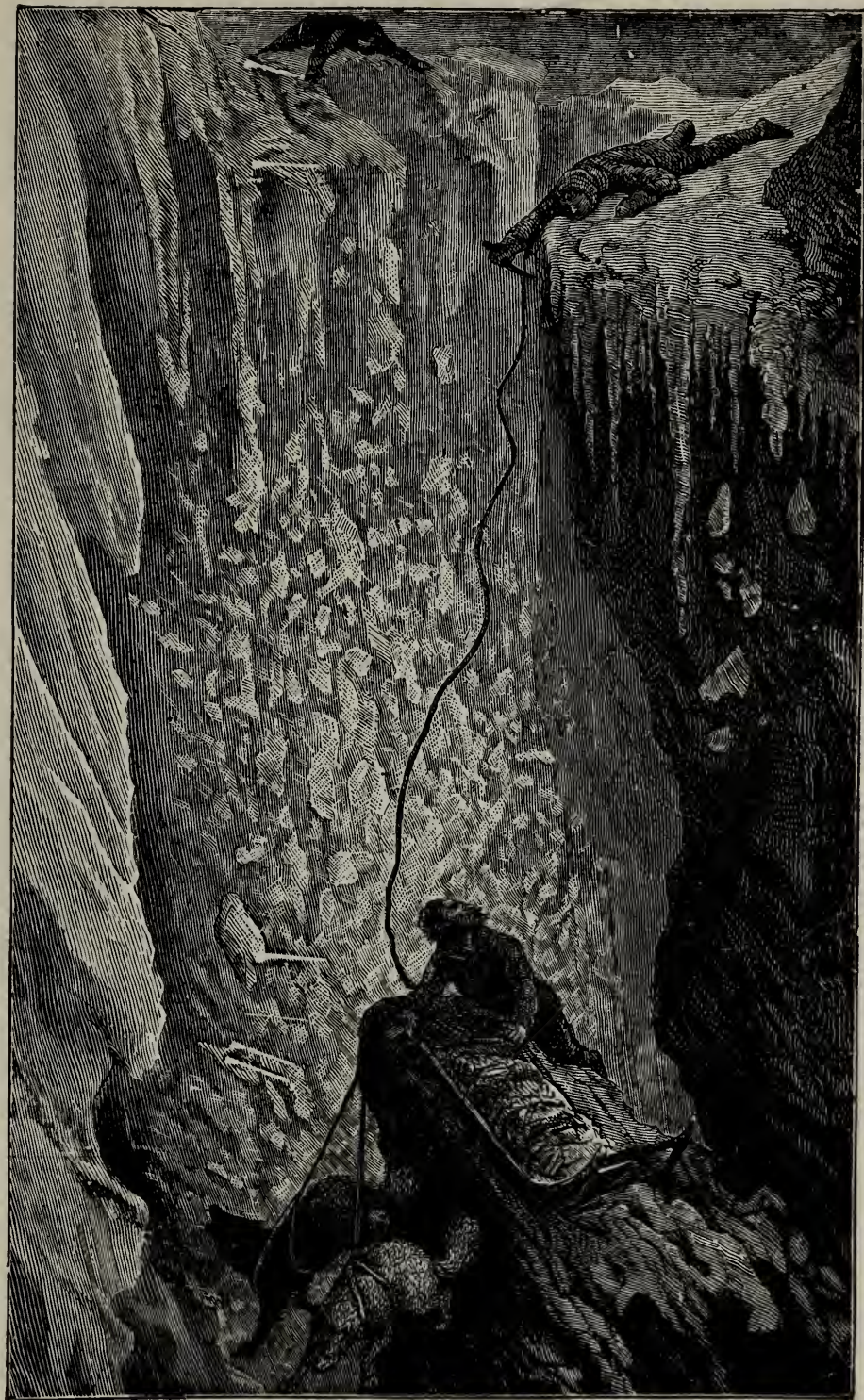
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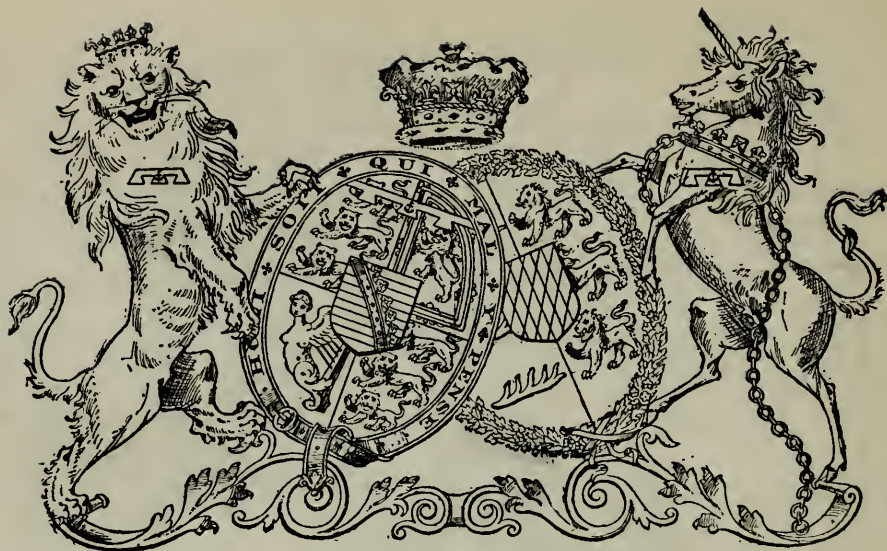
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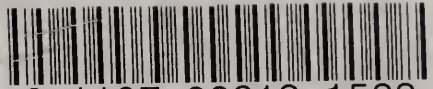
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