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TALES AND SKETCHES

OF

WALES:

BY CHARLES WILKINS,

MEMBER OF THE CAMB. ARCH. ASSOCIATION;

AUTHOR OF "WALES PAST AND PRESENT," "HISTORY OF MERTHYR," ETC., ETC.

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1879.



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DEDICATION.

TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD WINDSOR.

I pray you my Lord accept the dedication of this book on the auspicious occasion of your Lordship's entry into public life. Your Lordship has indicated in the strongest, and most satisfactory manner, the warmest sympathy in all that pertain to Wales, not only in the comfort and happiness of the people, but in the development of the natural and mineral riches of the country; and I am assured, that nothing would be more gratifying to your Lordship than to find that happiness immeasurably increased, and those riches more considerably enhanced. May it be your Lordship's privilege not only to see these blessings realized, but to aid in that consummation with vigorous intellect and generous action, so that in future years, and far distant may they be, when time writes its verdict over men and deeds, it shall be said that the military renown of the ancestor was paralleled by the moral excellence of the descendant, and that if Clive helped to make his country glorious, Windsor strove to make it happy, great, and good. That this may be accorded, with the enjoyment of fullest health, and the long possession of those who have ennobled home life, and given it all its peaceful attraction and its singular sweetness and charm, are the earnest wishes of

Your Lordship's faithful servant,

CHARLES WILKINS.

SPRINGFIELD, MERTHYR, *January, 1879.*

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P R E F A C E .

Those who open this book and expect to find it a dry and learned compilation by a member of an antiquarian society, will I fear, be mistaken. Yet my aim has been an ambitious one. I have endeavoured to mirror Wales, not only its old history, but social life, manners, customs, superstitions; and just as a faithful mirror gives back every object of prominence, so in mine will, I trust, live again the grey old castle, hoary mountain, winding river and pleasant valley, whitewashed farm, and coast line, which are the specialties of Wales. I have endeavoured to the best of my power to keep strictly to chronological precedence, and thus early history and old customs precede farm life and mining industries; but should, accidentally, a grim Ironside come in too close proximity with a collier, or, worse still, a belted knight be inharmoniously contrasted with a weather-beaten farmer, believe more or less in the identity of each of the characters. They have lived, or they live; the error is mine. With this brief prelude, I send my leaflets down the stream, to be ingulphed and lost, or to sail at length into a quiet inglenook of the river, and there fade away. That I must leave to destiny.

THE AUTHOR.

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BRYCHAN, "KING" OF BRECON, AND TYDFIL THE MARTYR.

LIFT the veil from before old Roman times, and carry back the reader to the age of the first Emperor Valentinianus. How startling the change wrought in history since then. The poor Italian sailor at Cardiff, scraping decks and tarring ropes, may be the descendant of men who represented Rome, the world's conqueror; and now what is Rome, what is Italy, and the descendants of the barbarians and the strangers, what have they not become?

To thoroughly understand the epoch upon which I am about to enter, it is necessary that some idea of the times be given.

The painter needs a background, that his characters may stand forth prominently upon the canvas.

The Britons had lived in harmony with Rome. Ostorius had died from vexation with the mountaineers of Wales; but Severus ruled, and from stray relics upon the line of the Usk and the Wye, and upon the broad mountain roads by which the Romans penetrated Wales, it is evident that Roman luxury and refinement were known in localities of the most isolated character. Thus at Gelligaer, a quarter of a century ago, in the byways of a rural and unsophisticated population, fragments of Roman pottery, of baths, of tessellated pavement, could be found amongst the debris of modern ware, just as relics of the nations of antiquity may be even built up, as it were, in the formation of the language of to-day, and even now at Dolacothy and at other places in the neighbourhood of Lampeter, the same evidences still are found. The Romans, coming alone, many unmarried, had intermarried amongst the people, and the dark hue and hair of the "Union" linger amongst us at the present—they had to all intents and purposes "settled down," and four hundred years of occupation, allowing eight generations of the blended races to go down the stream of years, prove very forcibly that the Roman life and the British life had become one.

Then, as every schoolboy knows, troubles at home called for the return of

the Roman soldiers, and how strongly flash upon the mind the scenes which followed ! Putting aside the entire island, and sketching only a part of the Welsh mountains, we can easily see what an excitement would ensue. In every district mourning, and the sorrow of an impulsive race, such as the Keltic, mingling with that of the lighter-hearted, but still impassioned southern. Let but a community leave a hill side now, or a band of emigrants wend their way from any town or village, what a commotion follows, even in our days of constant and considerable travel, when the railway run is one of the necessities of life. But then ! when the only carriage seen was that relic of old Roman times, the primitive imitation of the chariot, an imitation with which farmers a few years ago used to cart away their ferns ; and men and women used so little locomotion that they were like their oaks vegetating on the spot where they were born, then the exodus of a crowd, many taking their wives and children, was an event of the most thrilling, most heartrending nature, and left an impress which necessitated the passing away of more than a generation or two before its effects were forgotten. Few and faint are the records handed down. What we know relates principally to the large and settled communities on the English side of the Severn and the Dee ; of the Welsh mountains and the character and results of the exodus of the Roman, all that can be gleaned is of a fragmentary kind, and the inquirer has as much difficulty in getting any details as the philologist has in hewing out from modern speech stray fossils of the Greek and the Roman.

What little we know is gleaned from the annals of the chiefs or petty kings who ruled, and that little I interweave in my narrative even as the weaver does the bright tinted thread which forms so little a part and yet gives distinction to the fabric.

In the period, then, when the Roman rule was waning, Tewdrig, one of the lesser kings, or, more correctly, princes, ruled in the district called Garthmadrin. In modern days this is represented by the county of Brecon. Unlike his successors, whose families were truly patriarchal as regarded their number, he had only one child, and this was a daughter. Her name was Marcella, and the health and safe custody of this young lady, who is described as very beautiful, was a subject of greater interest to Tewdrig than the affairs of his little kingdom. And there came a time when this consideration for his daughter became of necessity all absorbing, for one of those grievous pestilences which periodically infested the country in those pre-sanitary days began to desolate Breconshire. So, according to the old monkish chroniclers, quoted by Theophilus Jones, he summoned his daughter to him and said : " I am very uneasy lest your health should suffer from this pestilential disorder which now ravages the country. Go, therefore, my daughter, to Ireland, and God grant that you may arrive there in safety." Marcella wore a girdle made of a certain skin, which was believed to be a charm, evidently an old Roman belief against any infection, and though she had such faith in this that she felt perfectly secure herself, yet she yielded to his entreaties, and prepared to go.

Tewdrig gave her an escort worthy of his condition. Twelve maids of

honour accompanied her, and three hundred valiant men of arms. Having seen her safely on her way, he, with his principal officers, retired to Bryncoyn—a place identified as near Llanvaes—where, isolated from the rest of the people, they remained until the enemy, in the form of the pestilence, had worked out its hateful life.

The incidents of Marcella's journey were by no means encouraging. On the first night, reaching a place in Carmarthenshire, such was the rigour of the cold that no less than one hundred of her attendants died.

This was appalling, but still more so on completing her second day's journey, when another hundred men succumbed. This, however, did not prevent her from continuing her travels, for she reached the Pembrokeshire coast, and with her maidens and the remaining hundred of her male attendants, set sail for Ireland, and landed in safety.

There was no one waiting to welcome her, but a messenger having been despatched, it may be assumed, to the Court, the king's son, Anlach, with a princely train, made all haste to give the maiden a royal greeting. The legend states that he was at the first glance smitten with her beauty, and after a very short acquaintance made honourable overtures to her, and married her. "During the early months of their married life," continues the legend, "he made her a promise that in the event of her presenting him with a son they would go and live in Britain." This in due course came to pass, but not before each of the twelve maidens had been given away in honourable marriage. Then Anlach and his wife sailed over to Britain, and the royal pair with their son, who was named Brychan, settled, it is suggested—names of places being difficult to reconcile—at Abergavenny. There Brychan was put under the care of an ancient man named Drychan, and at four years of age he was taken to see his grandfather, Tewdrig. Migration from Abergavenny to Brecon seems to have formed the holiday jaunts of the young prince, and never had any Ulysses a more severe mentor than Drychan was to him. This "ancient" man, doubtless prosy and sententious, according to the genus, revelled literally in auguries and portents. Those familiar with the histories of Greece and Rome know how strongly all these portents were believed—that divinations were common, and that the most ordinary flying of a flock of birds suggested the course to be taken in great battles. As an illustration, Drychan called to him one day when he was in his seventh year, and being dim of sight said, "Bring my cane to me," and they appeared to walk away from the dwelling to the river side. As they stood there a boar came out of the wood and stood by the side of the Usk. In the river, which was shallow, a stag was drinking, and underneath the stag the old sage was able to discern a fish glance by. All this he deciphered to mean abundance of wealth to Brychan. There was also a beech growing on the banks of the river, whereon the bees made honey. So Drychan said to his foster son, "Behold this tree of bees and honey. I will also give thee full measure of gold and silver, and may the grace of God remain with thee here and hereafter."

Thus ends the legends in the Cottonian MSS., and we are left to assume

that this was the closing benediction of Drychan, and that thenceforth the care of the future *regulus* of Brecon was given over to other hands.

And Tewdrig was gathered to his fathers, and Anlach in right of his wife Marcella, succeeded him, beginning his reign in the year A.D. 400, when the power of Rome was already beginning to wane. Anlach, about the time when Brychan had arrived at the years of young manhood, fell out with Bedanell, otherwise known as Benlli Gawr, king of Powys. Their territories joined, and like neighbouring farmers, occasionally, in the same condition they got into logger-heads, and after, I dare say, a good deal of fighting, though no records are extant, young Brychan was given over to Benlli Gawr, as a hostage, and lived at the court of the King of Powys.

Benlli, described as a man of morose and brutal character, had, according to the principles of nursery story books, a daughter so fair, so bewitchingly beautiful, that Brychan, a very impressionable young man, as may be inferred from his Welsh-Irish parentage, forgot his delicate position at the court, overlooked his danger, and in the sight of God, but not of man, they became man and wife. The espousal was of so secret a character that no one appears to have suspected it, and fortunately for both, but unfortunately for the King of Powys, he did not live to make the discovery.

The strange wildness of the legend which describes the king's death is worth narrating, but it is not unlikely that a natural occurrence has been made to wear a supernatural form. The age was decidedly a religious one, miracles were common, wells would spring up in chosen places, young maidens of pious views would sail on pieces of turf to other lands. Thus the characteristics of the period were martial valour, religious fervour, and simple faith. Holy men, who afterwards became saints, walked the land as did the apostles, and dared like them perils, privations, and even death. Such was the character of St. German, who, in the course of his wanderings, finding the weather becoming stormy and the hour late, called one evening at the dwelling of Benlli; and claimed his protection and hospitality. But Benlli, true to that description of him which story books have immortalised, not only refused, but did so with a great display of anger. We can imagine the pious man, gentle of face, as became the possessor of Christian virtues, knocking at the king's door. It was no palace, but simply a larger kind of farm house, built in homely fashion, and whitewashed, and at the door, the tall, stern form of the Pagan shouting him away, and denying him either shelter or food. Down still fell the rain on that pitiless night, and turning away from the inhospitable place the poor saint made his way to a humbler cottage, where lived one Cadell, the chief swineherd of the king. On telling him who he was and what he wanted, Cadell, gave him the heartiest welcome, and feasted him with the best. Savoury morsels of pig—and the pig then, judging from the vast number of places associated with the name, such as Vochriw, was in great use—with flowing mead, soon made up for the harshness of the petty ruler, and after the supper, St. German, warming his toes, by the fire, told Cadell the subject of his mission, and related to him the old story of infinite interest and unfading charm—man's creation, his

fall, and his ultimate restoration to bliss by the mediation of the Saviour. So eloquently did St. German speak, so stirring, and at times pathetic, was the marvellous tale, that Cadell was melted to tears, and there and then not only renounced his pagan folly, but became a convert to the Christian faith.

But while this touching scene was being enacted, a horrible one was taking place at a little distance. Around and about the cottage of the swineherd the storm revelled, drowning all other sounds—the sound of the hissing, crackling, fire, of the shrieks of women, and the hoarse shouts of men. The king's house and the adjoining cluster, figuratively termed the city, had been struck, and when the morn broke the storm had died away, but the city and palace, and all the people had faded from view, “burnt by fire from heaven!”

What follows is even more wonderful, but it shows the exceedingly primitive character of kingship, “and Cadell, the hospitable swineherd, was made king in his stead.” This was a remarkable elevation, but not unlikely or impossible when we consider that the chief agent was a man of great influence; was regarded with superstitious veneration; and was under the direction of a race who did not scruple to get their emperors even from the plough. Cadell was not ungrateful. Thus placed in a day in the possession of large tracts of land and in absolute rule of a province, he became the most generous son that the Church had. Not only did he give largely himself, but his heirs followed in the excellent course, and the antiquary examining old deeds and grants of abbeys, churches, and endowments of lands, not unfrequently comes across tangible evidence of the elevation of Cadell, and of the “swineherd's” gratitude. In the awful calamity which thus fell on the ogre Benlli, his daughter, the “wife” of Brychan, was included. She perished with the rest, but their son, Cynog, Brychan's first born, escaped, to win, in after years, great fame for Christian virtues. He was baptised by Dubricius, and his father was so proud of him that at the ceremony he encircled the child's arm with a bracelet of gold, said to have magical power, and like the girdle, of Marcella, to protect from harm.

And now, when the natural decline of years had replaced vigour with decrepitude, and Anlach, tired of the sovereignty of his land, breathed his last, Brychan succeeded him. This was in the year A.D. 400, and only another generation or two had to pass before the warning hour of the Romans in Britain had come. Whatever Brychan was in his youth, it is certain that his wild seeds were quickly sown, and from the period of his rule he was famous for his moral, well-conducted life; was a pattern husband, a good father, and had all those *in memoriam* recommendations which unfortunately are more frequently ascribed, than really possessed.

Before entering upon details regarding Brychan and his family, and the martyrdom of Tydfil, it would be well, as they do in the drama, to dismiss some of the principal characters, and thus leave the stage more free for action. Cadell flourished in feats. Marcella slept. Dubricius, who succeeded St. German, or as he was Latinised, Germanus, retired from the front to the duties of his post, and St. German next turns up; wandering still, but in North Wales, just at the time when bands of fresh barbarians like those

described in *Norval* came over hills and dales plundering and murdering in the peaceful valleys, both of North and South Wales. These barbarians, Picts, or Pechtis, and Saxons, not only relished murder of itself, but when it included the massacre of good, holy men, it was still more enjoyable. Historians not unfrequently put a great deal of those massacres to the discredit of the Picts and Scots, but it is singular how frequently *Pictau* and *Pictish* appears in old nomenclature, and *Sæson* as frequently, but little or no reference is made to the *Scoti*. St. German on a memorable occasion, accompanied by his brother bishop, *Lupus*, had assembled an immense host of converts near the river *Alyn*, and was going through the baptismal ceremony with quite a crowd of converts, when news was borne that the Pagans were upon them. To retreat from the river to the bank, and to look around in the direction of the foe, was the work of a moment. Yes! there, only too visible, was a strong armed body of men rushing through a gap of the hill, their bodies painted with hideous figures, so done to frighten their adversary, and their harsh wild cry as they poured down was alone enough to strike terror into the hearts of the faithful. But St. German was a host in himself, and he was a wise man, and a wary one. He was like the modern sea captain who trusted in God, yet kept his powder dry, for though bent upon religious services, and devoted to his work, yet the good saint had a considerable number of his men armed. And the converts were not the mild, weak people generally associated with conversion, but hardy men, familiar with arms and expert in the use of them. The saint, calling for silence, told them that if they fled the barbarians would be upon them and would slaughter them like so many sheep, but if they would trust to him, and remain bowed in silent prayer until he called out a word, then they were to spring to their feet, repeat the word as loudly as it was possible to do so, and rush with him upon the enemy.

On came the barbarians with their uncouth cries, with waving of axe, and spear, and ghastly billhook; but as they came near and saw that the people did not, as was their custom, flee in affright, their speed lessened, and, like so many wolves before possible danger, they hung back a moment ere making another spring. Upon an eminence knelt the saint with uplifted head and outstretched hands, his whole being seemingly in prayer, and before, in wrapt and solemn silence was the crowd of believers. Wonderingly and fearful did the Pagans look, and as they looked St. German, springing to his feet like a church militant, shouted out *Hallelujah!* The people in one grand chorus re-echoed the sacred word, and following the example of their vigorous leader, rushed upon the foe with such irresistible power that they cut them down like wheat. The panic was overwhelming; few escaped back over the mountains whence they came; and far over Christian Britain went the tale of this miraculous intervention. In this great drama *Lupus* also took part; and for a time the *Pictish* swarms appear to have been sensibly retarded. And now once again to *Brychan*. Discontinuing the old name of *Garth Madrin*, so called from the number of foxes in that part, he had his principality called *Brycheiniog*, now very generally, by Welsh and English, called *Brecon*.

Soon after taking the reins of power into his own hands, he married, this time in due form; but he was fated to survive not only his second wife but his third, and even his fourth, and to see around him no less than 50 children, 26 daughters and 24 sons.

Llewelyn Pritchard, in his excellent little work on the heroines of Wales, cites cases almost equal to this. The first was William ap Howell ap Iowerth, the patriarch of Tregalan, who died in the year 1580, at the age of 105. He had by his first wife 22 children; by his second 10; by his third four; and by two concubines seven; in all 43 children. His eldest son was 83 at the time of his father's death, and his youngest son only $2\frac{1}{2}$ years old. Between the birth of his first child and his last there was an interval of 82 years, and the total progeny from the whole amounted to no less than 300 people.

The next case quoted is also interesting. Writing of the valley of Festiniog in the year 1756 Lord Lyttleton states not long ago there died in that neighbourhood an honest Welsh farmer who was 105 years of age. By his first wife he had thirty children, and by his second four, and by his third and two concubines seven. His youngest son was eighty-one years younger than his eldest, and eight hundred persons descended from his body attended his funeral!

If Brychan had purposely selected the quaintest names for his wives he could not have been more successful than he really was, for the first lawful wife was named Eurbrawst, the second Ambrost, and the third Pharwysty. The names of the sons given in Bonedd y Saint are as follows:—Cynog, Cledwyn, Drugad, Arthen, Cyvlevar, Rhain, Dyvnaŷ, Gerwyn, Cadog, Matthairn, Pasgen, Nefai, Pabiali, Llechan, Cynbryd, Cynoran, Hychan, Dyvrig, Cynin, Dogvan, Rhawn, Rhun, Cledog, and Caiau. The daughters were:—Gwladys, Arianwen, Tanglwystl, Mechel, Nevyn, Gwawr, Gwrgon, Eleri, Lleian, Nerydd, Rheingar, Golenddydd, Gwenddydd, Tydian, Elined, Ceindrych, Gwen, Cenedlon, Cymorth, Clydai, Dwynwen, Ceinwen, Envail, Tydfil, Hawystyl and Tybian.

Brychan not only filled his "palace" with children, but the calendar with saints, and this list is given to show those interested in the various districts of Wales how many became canonised, and are now identified with the grey and ecclesiastical structures of Cambria.

Cynog, the first-born, a man of austere principles, much beloved for his zeal in Christianity, met his death on the Van, a mountain between Builth and Brecon, at the hands of a band of marauding Saxons. Throughout the whole of the district of the Silures his fame was great, and we may be assured that the sorrow aroused by his sad fate was of equal intensity. The collar which his father had placed on his arm in the days of his infancy retained its marvellous character after the death of the saint, for it is related that a man who had obtained possession of it, and was trying to break it up so as to dispose of the gold, lost his eyesight in the attempt.

A proud old man was Brychan as he looked around him and saw his sons filling high stations, some famous for their valour, others for their piety; his daughters, many married amongst the great chieftains of the country, and not

a few actively employed in single blessedness, winning converts to Heaven by their persuasive eloquence and their good deeds. Not the least in note was Tydfil, who laboured year after year with undiminished zeal in her holy calling, and visited every part of the wide district which owned her father's rule.

In the picturesque valley of the Taff, wooded from the river line to the mountain's summit, were many fair nooks sheltered from the northern winds, and open to the full play of the southern gale. Sunny nooks, where nature revelled in its wild and untrained profusion; where the sunshine gleamed, and the sunset lingered as if loth to leave. In the valley there was no sound heard save that of the river, and of the wind, and of the birds. Perhaps, at intervals, from some small hamlet, came the ring of the smithy, or the festive sound of village games. At times, along the mountain line, a band of native warriors would pass, in the track once taken by the sturdy veterans of Rome; but the occasions were rare. Silence reigned there amidst the beauties of tree and wild flower, and in this favoured haunt Tanglwystl chose her summer home. An old farm-house, bearing inward indications, by double roof and stronger make than ordinary, and about five miles from Merthyr Tydfil, is known as Havod Tanglwys, and this has been suggested, and I think with sound reason, as the summer abode of Tanglwystl. She was the third daughter of Brychan, and the name "pledge of peace" has been assumed by Llewelyn Pritchard to have been given in memory "that her coming soothed some family feud, caused very likely by the notorious galivantings of Brychan." This is rather hard upon Brychan, but it is admitted that though he was a convert to the faith, he had yet a "weakness," and was very susceptible even in his old age to beauty.

To this house of Tanglwystl journeyed, one sunny day in August, Tydfil, her sister, and the martyr.

So few, and faint, and contradictory are the records of the martyrdom of Tydfil, the twenty-fourth daughter, that the scene no matter by whom described, is like a poem, where a large amount of poetic licence has been taken, or a picture for which all that can be claimed is that its title is correct, but that the imagination has been the chief guide.

Let me, then; with historic outlines laid down by a long list of authorities from the Trueman MSS. to Cambrian Biography, essay to sketch the

MARTYRDOM OF ST. TYDFIL.

Old Brychan, grey, and bent, and saddened, by the constant incursions of the pagans who, if driven off from one valley were sure to pour in and desolate another, travelled in the month of August, it is conjectured about A.D. 470, to visit his daughter Tanglwystl. The calvacade was a large one. Tydfil, was there, with her husband and her sons, and Rhawin and Rhun her brothers, and as journeying at these times was dangerous in the extreme, a strong body of armed men accompanied them. Winding up the Roman road, and passing over the Beacons, and so down gently into the valley of the Taff Fechan they go, the clear bracing air of Cader Arthur giving animation to

all, and each picturesque view calling forth pleasure. The times were rude and the days of sentiment had not dawned, but the elevating and refining influences of the Christian religion had had their effect, and even then, nearly 1,400 years ago, men and women could look "through nature up to nature's God," with a deeper sense of its inner life and beauty than many a modern lady feels who delights in the romantic.

Journeying along by the banks of the Taff, its bed even then time worn, they reached at length the home of Tanglwystl, and joyful was the meeting. There, with his favourite daughter once again by his side, the old man felt young again, and the heavy cares of his little kingdom were perceptibly lessened. His daughters in full womanhood, his grandchildren around him, and that fair August time, when the wealth of nature, hidden before, came out in the gold of harvest fields, to please the eye and delight the heart. So peaceful was the scene, so far away seemed pagan and bloodshed, that Brychan thought it wrong to keep a strong force near them. There was no necessity for it. They could return again at a given time, and act as escort back, but perhaps their services were even then urgently needed in the great mountain tracts extending to the borders of Radnorshire. So the men were sent away under the command of one of his grandsons, and in devotional services and domestic happiness time fled by. Then came the hour of parting. It was time for the escort to return. We can imagine that Tanglwystl pressed the old king to stay until they came, but age has its peculiarities, and the seeming pressure of cares are felt more in the decline of life than when the spirits are high, and the strength of manhood at its full. Brychan must go. There was no fear. His arm was still stout, and his sons and grandsons were with him, and to such a place, a wooded solitude no pagan had come. So the old man and Tydfil, with most of the party, started, Rhawin and Rhun lingering behind a while until the rest had nearly reached the site of Merthyr. Then when the two sons were scarcely a mile from their sister's home, down upon them swooped the Brachtyr Fehti. Rhawin soon fell mortally wounded. Rhun gallantly defended a small bridge over the river like a hero of old, until overwhelmed, and next full speed was made by the murderous party in pursuit of Brychan. The little cavalcade had reached the site of the hamlet, which was afterwards formed there, when they were overtaken. Glorifying in slaughter, the pagan dashed upon them; grey hairs, age, beauty, were unheeded. They saw something to kill; the garb and ornaments worn savoured of plunder, and mercilessly did they hack and hew. The strong arm of Tydfil's husband, and of the grandsons, the efforts of Brychan himself gave but temporary obstacles, and but one of the grandsons escaped. The rest lay butchered and disfigured, and, the deed done, the Picts hastened over the river and up the mountain side in full run for the sea shore and their boats. But the avengers were near. The grandson who escaped had not fled a long way when he met the lagging escort, and to hurry back to the scene, to scan a moment the horrible picture, and then to follow on the track of the pagan, was but the work of a short time. On the mountain of Aberdare, where strange

names linger yet, the "Irishman's hill" amongst the number, and faint remains of hastily thrown up defences are still visible they were overtaken, and speedy and ample was the revenge. Few, if any, escaped, for the escort was strong, and the fulness of their anger made them invincible.

To return and bury the dead was the next sad duty, and if tradition is to be credited, the body of Tydfil was placed on the spot where in after years a church was built to her memory.

Her holy and zealous life called for such a memento, but why neither Brychan nor Tydfil's husband, nor yet any of the members of the family, had a tribute placed has always been a matter of surprise, and it can only be accounted for by the fact that in her Christian labours she was conspicuously foremost, and that at the last sad scene, the butchery, there were some circumstances attending it in her case which singled her out for distinction.

What those circumstances were it is easy to imagine, that when Brychan and his son-in-law, and grandson, were fighting for their life amidst the crowd of savages who struck wildly at them, uttering fiendish shouts the while in the abandon of their ferocity, she, Tydfil, imbued with holiest of feelings, running away a pace or two in the impulse of her woman's nature, knelt in the higher impulse of her Christian promptings, and so kneeling and praying devoutly was then brutally cut down, the fair features lacerated and mangled, and the beautiful form trampled upon in the ungovernable hate of the pagan.

It must have been this which caused the horrible butchery to be regarded as a martyrdom, and led in after years to the erection of a church when the hamlet of shepherds and yeomen began to be formed. Such was the martyrdom of Tydfil, and in the secluded valley, first a hamlet arose, and then a village, and by the institution of a fair on the mountain by Jestyn ap Gwrgant, the village increased and slowly progressed, through the Norman times, and Ivor's rule, into the fuller developement of the agricultural era, until the eighteenth century was reached, when the discovery, first of ironstone and then of coal, ushered in the iron age and the commercial history of Merthyr Tydfil.

THE FOOTSTEP AT THE DOOR.

A TALE OF THE WELSH COAST.



HERE is a small fishing village on the coast of Glamorganshire, insignificant in name, and in history, and itself lacking all claims to the picturesque. True a little way off there are the remains of a Norman castle, and the time was when a Grenville at the head of his retainers rode by the shore. But the castle is in ruins, and is not an integral part of the fishing village, which has crept as close to the shore as the spring tides would let it, and there, huddled by the beach, receiving ever and again the contemptuous spray of the ocean, it cringes and lurks, its inhabitants vending oysters, and supplying hot water to the young men and maidens, shopkeepers' assistants generally, who make it their Hastings and Ramsgate, and have their day's outing by the sea. One rarely hears the sound of Welsh there. Its people seems to be a mixture of many nations, as varied as the characteristics of the shingle, yet all speaking English without the patois of any English district. Its women are uninteresting, and seem always to have crying children in their arms, or chubby boys clinging to their garments. Its men are stalwart, affecting principally jerseys and vast boots, and their ordinary occupation seems to be to loaf by the water edge. That they work is certain, but the work is done either in the early morning or at night, or out at sea. One rarely sees anything but loafing. Its shops are marvels of heterogeneous collection. Herrings, kidney beans, bread, cheese, potatoes, and confectionery, are mixed in the windows without order, and the arrangements in the window seem to last from year's end to year's end. Outlying from the cottages and shops are rows of more pretentious houses, which look down patronisingly on the fishing village, but their gentility is modified by the unambitious announcement of "lodgings" in almost every one.

Sprinkle amongst the jerseys and top boots an occasional coastguard man, a few artillerymen, whose hair is always oiled and brushed, and who wear their caps jauntily to the admiration of servant girls; mix a few visitors who walk about listlessly in the streets, and you have shingles, some would call it Mumbles and not be far wrong, as deadly lively a place in wet weather as it is possible to conceive. Its redeeming features are its closeness of access to a

fine coast line, dented with many sandy bays and nooks, all having a wide outlook upon the sea.

Far as the eye can scour, the sea heaves and frets, and upon it sloop and steamer sail by. One never tires of lying down upon the heather and gazing out upon the varied sea-scape, noting now the pleasure bark, and again the laden merchantman, passing onward silently and rapidly to their destination. And then the cosy bay, with its rocky shelters for naiads, from whence they emerge in the most tempting of bathing costumes, and plunge and revel in the waves. Pleasant the sound of their mirth above the murmur of the surf. One would never think that such mermaids with their sportiveness and fun had any thought of fashion, could discuss reputations at tea tables, and dream of cliques and caste.

Far away from these, and out of the sound of their happy *abandon*, on the shingly beach, at a place where the shore gives a wide view of the sea, an old lady used to be taken by an attendant, and placed there tenderly, as an infant, to rest awhile. She would sit upon the shore alone, wet or dry, and invariably at the same time of the day. If wet, she was well wrapped up in a waterproof, and an umbrella placed in her hand, and then she would be left alone. After a time the attendant would return and gently lead her away, and this day after day, month after month, year after year.

Shall I tell her tale?

Years ago, at one of the most busy of the Welsh ports, no more active and able captain lived than Captain Williams. From a boy he had been upon the sea. He had passed through a hardy apprenticeship, figured as an able seaman, become mate, and afterwards acted as master in several vessels of more or less importance. Such were his carefulness and discipline that after a time a wealthy firm gave him the command of one their largest merchantmen, and trip after trip only made them the more satisfied with their selection.

Coming back from one of his voyages, the captain brought a long pending love affair to a happy issue by marrying one of the best tempered and domesticated girls of a village within a stone's throw of the port. She was not a pretty girl, nor was she handsome. Eccentric nature had not, in her case, as she does in many, glossed over defects with beauty, and hid, with sparkling eyes and ringlets and regular features, a rugged disposition. She was just the wife for Williams, and dearly did he love her.

As the years went by, the captain grew more jolly and stout and portly, and his "Yo heave yo" as he came back from a cruise, and paced up the narrow pathway to his villa, was a cherry sound that gladdened everybody.

Everybody implies more than the wife; and true enough, sunny-eyed boys and girls were crowding round the table now, and the captain had to think of other things to bring back than sandal-wood workboxes, such as he used to bring his lady love in the old days. There was now a stalwart image of himself, fast getting fit for apprenticeship, and amongst the girls one had already begun to dream of valentines.

Life on the whole flowed pleasantly, but it was not all fair weather.

Once the captain had suffered wreck, and more than once had put into port with damage to hull or sails. This, however, was the necessary alloy. Life, all sweetness, becomes tame and insipid,

"Constant good will sure to cloy,
 'Tis but by mixture with alloy
 That bliss is bliss, and joy is joy,
 And ecstasy is ecstasy."

After his wreck, the captain remained on shore for more than a year. Then another ship was offered him, and away he went, made a capital voyage and returned. Then for years nothing occurred to alter the even tenour of his way. He was beginning to think it time to give up sea life and settle down. He could, comfortably.

When he looked at his wife, and saw the snow just showing itself amongst the raven hair, and noted his boys growing to manhood, and his girls to womanhood, he thought it was time, and more than once when in the office with his owners, it was upon his tongue, as he would say, to resign his post. He did say so at last, but was laughed out of it by the senior owner, who said,

"Why, Williams, let us both keep together. We began about the same time, have been knocked about a bit, you by your wreck, and I by my land troubles; let's try another voyage, and then let the younger men fall in!"

Williams consented, and, when the Ides of March were raving, sailed away with a large cargo to a distant shore.

What the cargo was and where the shore cannot be named, for reasons which will be seen ere my tale is done.

There was a warm yet sorrowful parting at home, and quite a little crowd of his own flesh and blood gathered on the steps to cheer as with a true seaman's gait he went down the pathway and shut the gate.

The sound of his voice, and the rattle of the gate long lingered upon the good wife's ears, and it was days and days before she fell again into the old track.

Months passed, and in the summer time a letter with a foreign post mark came, written in the well known hand. He had reached his destination and by the time she had the letter would be nearing home. There was happiness in the little villa by the sea, and soon after the receipt of the letter every day was ushered in with hope; but the days passed, and the summer passed, and the autumnal nights came in, and still there was no sign of the captain's return. The wife began to make almost daily journeys to the office, and the owners were becoming concerned and doubtful. Something they feared had happened. They hoped for her sake it was no worse than his former mishap. To themselves the owners spoke with bated breath. They knew Williams, valued him as a tried and trusty man, and, however unfortunate, if living, they knew he would send them tidings from some port or other, or by a chance vessel met at sea.

One night—she never forgot it—the good wife and the eldest daughter were sitting up alone, busy in making some garment for one of the youngest ones. All at once, as she described it, they both heard the click of the garden gate. Nervously expectant, they looked at one another. They heard a tread upon

the shingly pathway, and instantly came the hearty sounds, known and loved so well, of :

“Yo, heave yo !”

“Husband ! father !” they cried, as they ran to the door and threw it wide open ; but there was no one visible. The rain fell pitilessly, and upon their ears only came the sigh of the wind and the hoarse murmur of the sea.

Out into the night, the dark night, they peered tremulously, nervous, fearful. Could they have been deceived ? Had loving thought shaped those words, and imagination revived the tones they knew so well ?

Half dazed, they closed the door, and returned to the room, but there was no more work that night, nor did they seek their beds until early morning.

Days and weeks again passed, and still no news was brought, and when even the mother had given up all hope, a seaman called one day, the bearer of evil tidings at last. He brought a bundle with him that contained all the effects of the poor captain. After leaving port for home he had sickened of fever and died, and was buried in mid ocean. Then the mate took command, and troubles followed them : they got out of their course, and were wrecked, and only after a long time and with difficulty did the survivors get home to Wales. It was the mate himself who spoke to them, and tears trickled down the bronzed cheeks of the narrator as he spoke of the closing hours of the captain, and how, even as the glaze of death was settling upon his eyes, he looked fixedly into the distance, and with a “Yo, heave yo !” died.

Once a day, wet or fine, the old lady comes to the seaside, and looks out “upon her husband’s grave.” Just as the mourners go into the graveyard and sit by the withied or flower-clad mound where the lost one sleeps, so does she gaze upon the sea, the grave of her dead husband, and listen to the ever-fretting wave, which seems to her his requiem. And in the roar of many waters, dashing ever and again upon the time-worn cliffs, she fancies the “Yo, heave yo !” comes back again, and stretches forth her thin, wan hands eagerly towards that other shore, that far-distant land, whither silent time is taking her to him, and will not be stayed.

MEGAN VERCH EVAN.



THE English reader has always been impressed with the idea that a Welsh woman was an exceedingly masculine personage. In the first place, he could not reconcile gentleness and amiability co-existing with the rough, warlike, and impulsive Welsh chieftains. Naturally he thought the women were of the same stamp as the men, and if the men were, as they all knew, untamable and wild, so also in degree must be the women.

This impression was deepened by the accounts in modern times of the assemblage of the Pembrokeshire women in red cloaks on the heights when the French sought to invade Wales, and the belief was general that had the French made a more vigorous sortie the red-cloaked women might have taken an active part in the fray.

I have one record to present of a woman who came up to the masculine idea of the Englishman. Her Welsh name was Megan Verch Evau, but in plainer phrase she was called Margaret Evans of Penllyn.

Pennant describes her as being in the year 1786 about 90 years of age. Her home was near the Lake of Llanberris, but her reputation extended not only through the county, but to all parts of North Wales.

She was not a type of that ancient class who sit with spectacled brow hour after hour before her Bible, and when not so occupied plying the knitting needles as if the making of a stocking was the sole aim of her existence. Not she! Meg was a hunter of great repute. She could shoot, and did shoot with unerring aim, and as for fishing, trout had a sorry time of it in her locality. But this was not a tithe of her abilities, and so varied were they, that she well deserved to be regarded as the Admirable Crichtoness of her age and country.

She could row excellently well, was a capital player on the violin, and knew all the old music. She understood mechanics, was a good carpenter and boat builder, could repair as well as play the harp, was as good a blacksmith as she was a shoemaker, and in her seventieth year could wrestle with any man.

When in her prime, a number of admirers paid their addresses to her, but with the usual discrimination of her sex, which ever suggests choosing the most opposite, physically as well as mentally, she gave her hand to the most effeminate, as if, states Pennant, she was determined to maintain the superiority which nature gave her.

In appearance she was tall and of "noble presence," but of her death no

record remains, and whether she had descendants or not, and, if so, whether they were above or below the commonality, the age that was unblessed with newspapers has left no chronicle.

Only one such lady has come to the writer's notice. She figured in a caravan as a giantess, and from this position an admiring youth took her, and she in return, when duly wedded, took the admiring youth to the sunny plains of Texas, where they may sojourn to this day.

In the caravan she was out of sight, except at certain profitable intervals, but in the domestic duties she was in the way, and it was perhaps a discreet step to go where the appearance of an exceedingly tall and stout woman linked with an exceedingly delicate and undersized man could not attract so much attention.

THE LEGEND OF HAVOD UCHTRYD.



WHO has not heard of the beautiful mansion of Mr. Johnes, of Havod Uchtryd, with its grand library, its collection of antiquities from all parts of the world, its eastern treasures, its fine gallery of paintings? Not throughout all Wales was there a mansion that was such a casket of gems as that of Havod Uchtryd.

One wild night, this precious casket was attacked by that fierce foe of art treasures, fire, and when the next day had passed, all that was left was a smouldering heap of ruins.

It is not of art that I am going to write, nor am I going to add one more lamentation to the many which have been passed over the great national loss sustained by the destruction of the priceless library. All that has been done, is preserved in tourists' guides and in local histories. My aim is to tell the Legend of Havod Uchtryd, and of all legends it is one of the most weird.

I must not be supposed to place implicit faith in the legend, but to be regarded as the narrator of certain strange doings, which, in the neighbourhood around Aberystwith, say for a circle embracing twenty square miles, were at the time and have been since, held in strong belief, and recounted with extreme earnestness.

And these narrations are not the so-called old women's tales; bluff men, well-to-do farmers, intelligent traders, tell them, and tell them seriously and with an air which says more strongly than words, "Believe it or not, I do!"

Well, then, when the house, or mansion rather, of Mr. Johnes was in its pride, there was a rumour current in the neighbourhood that it was haunted.

The haunting took a different form to the common run. No white form flitted through hall and vestibule; no strange sounds were heard; no rattling of chains; no conflict between exasperated shades, ending with a sudden lunge and a dying groan.

There was none of this. The haunting was done by a mischievous but somewhat humorous sprite, and the chief scene of his vagaries was in the stables. If Mr. Johnes wanted a horse saddled quickly, the moment it was done everything would be taken off by invisible hands. Demure mares would suddenly become restive; busy stablemen would get lumps of turf thrown at them, and would be obliged to run away in fear and trembling, and when they returned it was to find everything in disorder—combs and brushes lying about in all sorts of places, harness piled in a heap, and, in fact, just such a condition of things as one might expect from the hands of a practical joker.

After the mansion had been destroyed, Mr. Johnes seriously thought that it was advisable not to rebuild it. What was the use of restoring a place for the imps to gambol in again? And, besides, the current opinion was that it was not elves or fairies who had done these things, but that they were the work of the Old Gentleman in his sportive moods. As if Nicholas was ever sportive!

While Mr. Johnes was debating in his own mind the propriety of rebuilding, he was told that a graduate of Oxford, who had come to reside in the locality, possessed special power in laying evil spirits. This was an opportunity not to be lost, and a message was sent to the Oxford gentleman to call upon Mr. Johnes, and in due time he came, and a long conference took place, during which the visitor was told of the extraordinary doings which had occurred prior to the burning down of the mansion. When fully posted up with the performances of the sprite, Mr. Johnes put the question:

“Now, can you get rid of this tormentor?”

And the answer came as promptly:

“I can.”

One fact was made known to the Oxford gentleman, and that was that since the destruction of the house the gambols of the tormentor had been continued even amidst the ruins. So it was decided that the process of “laying” should take place in the ruins.

It was a serious undertaking this laying of the evil spirit, and arrangements for the ceremony were conducted with all the gravity that the occasion demanded.

Mr. Johnes and a friend or two were in attendance, and together all went to the ruins of the stable, when, selecting an open place, the Oxford man drew a large circle into which they all stepped, and then, opening a book, the performer-in-chief went through various incantations. At the end of these a loud roar was heard, and a bull, exceedingly savage in appearance, dashed at them with so much fierceness that all in the circle gave themselves up as lost, and were only restrained from making a mad effort to escape by the Oxford man who counselled calmness, and told them that nothing could pass the line unless

he willed it. The mad bull, for such it seemed, glared at them almost face to face, and then disappeared. Again went on the incantation, and a ferocious bull-dog sprang at them with glistening teeth and staring eyes, and again they were only restrained from flight by the strong arm of their friend.

In the utmost apprehension they now waited for the third appearance, which was to be the last ; but no roar was heard. An intense calm seemed to prevail, and this continued for a time, when a faint buzz sounded above and over the circle, then, adroitly defying the charm, came a fly and rested on the open book. In a moment the enchanter closed the volume, and with a loud cry exclaimed, "I have got him, the devil is in a trap !"

And sure enough, from the mysterious book came a voice of supplication. Only let him escape, and he would never trouble the house again. His prayer was most pitiable. There was nothing that he would not consent to, and be bound by the most solemn oath, only let him be free. But this was a delicate matter, and it required long consultations and discussion before an arrangement could be brought about, and finally it was agreed that the evil spirit should betake himself to the Devil's Bridge, and there, with an ounce hammer and a tin tack, cut off a fathom of the rock. If he would consent to that, then he should be liberated.

What the nature of the oath was, and how it was made binding, is not stated ; but the good people in the neighbourhood say that the Old Gentleman consented to the terms, and was forthwith released.

They further add that if you go to the Devil's Bridge and get down by the side of the water, and stoop low, you will hear the steady tap of the ounce hammer, as the unfortunate tormentor labours away at his impossible task.

More than this, gossips say that from that day there was no more haunting, and men and horses had perfect peace at Havod Uchtryd.

DAVYDD AB GWILYM AND IFOR HAEL.



THE traditional bard on the traditional rock, by Gray, and painted by the lamented W. E. Jones, was utterly dissimilar to the poet Davydd ab Gwilym, the bard pre-eminent of the 14th century.

Let us picture him. Tall and slender, with flaxen hair, hair so long, that it flowed down in ringlets over his shoulder, quietly but elegantly dressed, witching eyes, which made the hearts of all young ladies throb painfully, and voice dulcet-like in its sweetness. Just as the old bard of the heroic age of Welsh independence was suited to the time to rouse the Welsh to the highest point of daring, to soothe them in the darkest moments of despair, and again pour forth indignation in passionate strains, grand and harmonious, and in keeping with the scenery, so David, was adapted to that softer age which followed, when the turbulence of the nation was gone, and the young gallants of Wales began to court, with more earnestness than they had been wont, the graces and the beauties of their country. David with his handsome person, his masterly power with the harp, and his quick poetic instincts, was, it must be admitted, a dangerous young man, and the fair sex were then as impressionable as they are now; for, though nearly five hundred years ago, no less than twenty fair maidens claimed at one time the honour of being the chosen bride of graceless David. This folly on his part is the most censurable feature of his life, for not content with loving and being loved by so many, he made an appointment one day with the whole of them to meet him in a certain place alone. A little before the hour of meeting he concealed himself in a tree, and there waited until all the fair ones were assembled. It was a picture for the study of a philosopher, but utterly unworthy of a poet. The glances of wonderment, then of suspicion, and, as the truth dawned upon them, of hate, could only form amusement for a thoughtless or an eccentric mind. David seems to have enjoyed the fun, and when the whole bevy were assembled he had the audacity not only to make his appearance, but to tell them in flowing rhyme that the one who was the dearest to him should first assail him. The outcry at this point was such that David was obliged to make a precipitate retreat.

David was a Cardiganshire man, and was born in 1340 at Bro Grin, in the parish of Llanbadarn Vawr. Being connected, possibly in a left-handed way, with several noble families—left-handed connections were very common then

—early noted for his wit and rhyming powers, and petted and spoiled, as precocious boys invariably are, he seems to have fluctuated between the lordly house of Llewelyn ab Gwilym in Cardigan, an uncle of his, and the house of Ifor Hael at Maessaleg, in Monmouthshire, and there his life, or the earliest part, seem to have been one long summer's day.

Apart from the interest attached to David's life, which was the unmistakable, erratic life of a thorough poet, his career is of great value as showing the social condition of Wales in his time.

We are apt in England to speak of the old times of baronial grandeur and hospitality, to associate the homes of the squires, even, and the gentry in the past with good cheer—a round of festivity, in fact; but it is not generally known that this is a British trait, and that if we want to look for the antecedents of this we must go back to the era of Owen Glyndwr, of Llewelyn ab Gwilym, and of Ifor Hael. There not only was it a round of good cheer and hearty enjoyment, but musical and literary jousts were common between bards, and in the pleasant strife the guests realised the utmost pleasure.

Let us picture one of these at the hall of Ifor. Thither came, as streams flow from the hill-side and meet in the river, so came chieftain and wife and daughters from afar, all meeting in the hall upon terms of the pleasantest equality. Wine and ale flowed freely, long tables graced the banqueting room, the position of each guest being well defined above or below "the salt," and the old harper, a retainer of many privileges, enlivened the feast with alternately patriotic or loving strains. Then, when the feast was over, bardic contests in song, music, or englynion became the order of the day, and the company revelled in those impromptu *cisteddfodau* of which our annual gatherings are the faint but much cherished refrain. David's poems are valuable, as indicating the manners and customs of the age, and that they were lax it requires no great penetration to discover. David's marriage, for he did marry eventually, is a case in point. With classic fidelity he resorted to a grove with his bride, and there a considerate friend usurped the post of priest, and made them one. The ceremony throughout was poetic, but as soon as it was possible the parents of the young lady took her away, and left David wifeless.

At his uncle's seat at Emlyn, David's great opponent was one Rhys Migan, a bard of high degree, and as satirical as our bard. Between these two there was a great deal of rivalry, and many a time they made each other wince. The strife we may be certain was not conducted with lofty courteousness. The hits were personal and keen; any little weakness in the character of one was eagerly seized upon by the other, and woe betided the unfortunate bard who had slipped socially or morally. David's weakness for the ladies furnished his opponent with a great fund of raillery, and he used it with vigour. But this came to an end, and if we may accept David's own version, as given in one of his poems, with a fatal result. In a bardic contest between the two, so overwhelming was the assault of David that poor Rhys fell down and died on the spot.

The lot of a poet is proverbially one of a chequered character. He is a child of nature, and, like her, has alternations of sunshine and shadow. Brief episodes of peace are enjoyed, followed by the storm. How long the list of poets to whom this applies. In fact it is the exceptional laureate only who seems above adversity. Many like Chatterton knew sorrow from their infancy, and still more, like blind old Homer, "sing their ballads" for bread. In the eternal fitness of things, the grand adjustment and rectification of the hereafter, this will be righted—let us doubt not, and believe that a special sphere higher than all others is devoted to the poet where the idealities will be made facts, and the lustre of their imagination realised.

"Our" David knew what the inside of a gaol was, and, but for the services of a friend, in gaol he might have lingered and died. Nor was this all. He had the misfortune to outlive his friends, and a more terrible destiny can scarcely be imagined. The generous Ifor was gone, the open-handed Llewelyn, one and all who had been his patrons, who had prompted him to higher efforts, smoothed the ruffled ways of the world to him, and made his course easy, were gone, and he was left alone to mourn them in touching strains and with mood so melancholy, that one cannot doubt that his character was transformed from the gallant to the saint. For had he not also lost his loves; the handsome bearing gone, the long auburn hair grizzled with age, wrinkles clouding the face once lit with smiles?

Before him too, loomed the future. He confessed to a life that had been most unsaintlike, and the burden of many of his poems is a lament for the past, and the dread of the coming censorship. In that mood were passed his later years, and when he had reached, for him, the old age of sixty, he laid himself down and died.

So much for Davydd ab Gwilym. Let us pause a moment over the career of Ifor Hael. All that the historian knows of him is that of the genial, festive-loving man. He figures as no warrior; no doughty combat, no joust in the field of war, no gathering of retainers and contest for independence preserve his name. He is remembered for his social virtues. He was the open-handed friend to everyone, the kind host, the jovial companion. One cannot imagine that his features were ever ruffled into a frown, or that the hearty grasp of the hand could grip as heartily the trenchant blade.

In coursing and the general sports of the field he passed a great part of his time, and when he died not only the poet David lamented him, but everyone who knew him. David's lament is worthy of preservation:—

From dewy lawns I'll pluck the rose,
With every fragrant flower that blows;
The earliest promise of the spring
To Ivor's honoured grave I'll bring;
This humble rite shall oft be paid
To deck the spot where he is laid—
To show how much for him I mourn,
How much I weep o'er Ivor's urn.

Strange is the metamorphosis of time. Three hundred years passed, and the descendant of Ifor Hael was Squire Morgan, of Tredegar, a gentleman

who inherited most of the *bon homme* qualities of his ancestors. Like him he revelled in open house keeping. Like him was passionately fond of the sports of the field. Nothing liked he so much as to ride over those brown mountains of his, which stretched away from Tredegar to the hills around Dowlais.

How came it that good, honest old Thomas never knew of the mines of wealth beneath the fern covered hills? How was it that the black strips in the ravines never caught his eye, that the heavy nodules of iron stone never arrested his attention, or diverted him from fox or hare?

But the time came when the fact that coal and iron were underneath his mountains was brought under his notice, and so little even then did he think of it that he gave a lease of the whole for a considerable period at a nominal figure, only one hundred pounds a year! The venturesome worthy who speculated, told his wife what he had done, and she, seeing utter ruin in the future, gave her husband no peace until he had resigned the lease to another.

Short-sighted Thomas Morgan, shorter-sighted woman. In a very few years afterwards, the Penydarran Company began to pay £50,000 a year for the moiety of the property, while from the whole came that great wealth which the Guest family derived, until the estate lapsed to the Marquess of Bute, and terms more commensurate with its value were obtained.

Ifor Hael the generous, and his boon friend the bard, making the days melodious, and the nights mellow, Old Thomas Morgan the sportsman, and the intervening families, all living in happy ignorance of coal and iron, and knowing nothing of Dowlais, save as that of a bleak mountain, with a farm or two, and a fair held from ancient times on the Waun.

The change from all this to the habitations of twenty-five thousand people, the flash of furnace fires, and the delving in the earth for a dozen miles, complete a transformation scene before which the wonders of the stage dwindle into babyism, and its lustre into the veriest tawdry that ever delighted the youthful mind.

THE LEGEND OF CADER IDRIS.



HERE is a wonderful stone on Cader Idris, upon which, if a tourist should chance to sleep, he awakens either a poet or a madman. Such is the tradition of the country, and Mrs. Hemans has made the legend memorable in one of her sweetly flowing poems.

Lacy and Brindle were two clerks in the Stock Exchange, resident, one at Newington and the other at Hampstead. They had been up the Rhine, they had done Paris, they had ascended Mount Blanc, and become so familiar with tables d'hôte, *rouge et noir*, Mentone, Naples, and Rome, that they longed for fresh fields and pastures new.

One evening towards the end of June, they sat in the smoking-room of Andertons, preparatory to taking their homeward 'bus, when Lacy said, "Well, we have discussed various places for our July trip, what say you to North Wales?"

"Quite agreed," rejoined Brindle. "I believe that in running about to other countries we have overlooked the beauties of our own."

So the two friends quickly settled the matter, and in the first week of July started for North Wales. There were the usual bitters at occasional refreshment-rooms, the tipping of guards, the surreptitious naps, and the final awaking at Dolgelly, "from whence," said their guide-book, to which they made constant reference, "a convenient ascent of Cader Idris may be made." In their hotel that night, traveller-like, having long ago had the conventional angles rubbed off by mixture with men, they fraternised in the bar, and were very pleased with an old-fashioned gentleman who, Lacy whispered, "might have stood for Rip Van Winkle." He was full of quaint anecdotes, and stirring adventures as well, and when he heard of their intention to ascend Cader Idris on the morrow he gave them many a useful hint to make their task a lighter one. "But look here," he added, after taking a deep sip of Scotch whisky, "Whatever you do, don't go to sleep on the wonderful stone!"

"Wonderful stone!" exclaimed Brindle, who had a notion, Cockney-like that the old man was "joking" him, "what is that?"

"Well," said the stranger, "when you are about a half a mile from the summit, by taking the direction I have pointed out to you, and where a bit of a hut has been constructed, take the turn to the left, instead of following up the direct road, and in a few minutes you will reach a little hollow, quite

hidden from the track, and there, hidden in one corner, you will find a large weather-beaten stone, so flat that you can sleep on it. That is the stone; but mind, if tired, or sleepy, or the day be hot, or for any reason, don't have so much as forty winks upon it, for there is a tradition that whoever does will wake up either a poet or a madman."

Brindle looked at Lacy as much as to say this is something new and good.

"But," said Lacy, "I suppose it is only an old woman's tale. Has there ever been a case known?"

"Well," hummed and hah'd the stranger, "can't say exactly, but there are more fools in Dolgelly than in many a town of bigger size," and he laughed merrily at his own wit, in which the two Londoners joined as heartily.

"But now," said Brindle seriously, "do you believe?"

Buckstone might have envied the face which the stranger assumed, so preternaturally grave, so tinged with deepest melancholy. Without saying a word he deliberately struck the ashes out of his pipe, drank the remainder of his whisky, and buttoning his summer coat, arose and said:

"You have put a plain question. I will give you as plain an answer. I do! Good night, gentlemen," and he was gone.

The two friends laughed at one another, and retired to rest so full of excitement at the prospects of the next day that, even tired as they were, neither slept for a long time, and when they did sleep it was a troubled one. Comparing notes at breakfast next morning, one had endured a railway smash and the other been overwhelmed by an avalanche, a particularly large stone, much like the wonderful one, crushing him on the head.

Lacy, with philosophic calmness, attributed the dreams to the bad whisky, but added:

"I am game to have a nap on the stone, if we can find it."

"And I," joined in Brindle, "but query as to seeing the wonderful stone. And even if we did we shouldn't know it to be the right one. Well, the old buffer's directions were minute enough, so let's try."

Then the host was called in, and fortified by directions, and with a guide of peculiarly stolid face, they set out.

Most of the way was taken up with light, harmless chaff at the expense of the stolid youth who led them, and neither showed any very great mental capacity either in this or in the interchange of thought.

Thought! No, they were more of a practical than a thoughtful turn. They liked the realities of life—the tangible, that which could be grasped and enjoyed; and though both could appreciate the beautiful in nature or in art, it was with that passing glance men of the world give to such matters.

Brindle and Lacy were types of a very large class of men—men of the potters' school, fairly educated, well trained, gentlemanly in their deportment, so schooled that they never stumbled in their aspirates, and yet they were going through the world, passing through life, without the deeper feelings, the stronger emotions, the higher instincts of their nature, having been aroused in the least degree; now a ditty from a London music-hall, then a

merry strain, the refrain of an Alpine memory ; then, again, a blessing on the rocky road, and the stubbornness of Welsh hills, and the length of Welsh miles. So they trudged onward and upward. It was the "turn of the day" when they reached the hut by the wayside, and in their eagerness to reach higher altitudes, and discern more of the beautiful and the grand scenery that was unveiling, they had almost forgotten the old gentleman of the previous night and his tale. But the hut re-called it, and stopping short, Lacy said to the guide :

"Do you know, boy, of any wonderful stone up that road?" pointing to the place.

Yes, the boy had, but it was only a big stone. Lots of people had gone to look at it, that was all—there was nothing about it.

"Well," exclaimed Brindle, "recollect our promise. Lead the way, boy, to the stone," and a few minutes walk brought them to the edge of a dingle, and there in the corner, "sure enough," said Lacy, was the big stone. As the boy said, there was nothing about it. It was only a stone, and its chief virtues consisted in being so flat that a tired man could sit upon it comfortably. Both looked at the stone, and then assuming a tragic air, Lacy said—

"Boy ! get you to the main track. Here we stop and rest. If we do not come to you in an hour come back to us !" The boy looked rather suspicious, and was evidently doubtful of his fee, upon which he had been thinking, such is the nature of the class, ever since he started.

The friends sat down upon the stone, lit their pipes, and puffed and chatted. The day was sultry ; they were tired. Gradually a delicious sense of comfort, stole over them ; they nodded ; they slept.

"Hullo ! hi, hullo !"

And looking up, the two travellers saw, standing by their side, the stolid-faced youth, now red in the face from exertions he had been put to in awakening them.

"What fool is this?" said Lacy. "Ha ha" laughed Brindle ; "I dreamt of a grandeur passing all human thought, and lo here is an idiot prancing.

"Ho, ho !" roared Brindle.

Lacy looked from the boy to Brindle and from Brindle to the boy, "Why here are two idiots !" Brindle, upon hearing his remark, capered off apparently in great delight, and, taking the arm of the astonished guide, did a wild waltz in the dingle, which exhausted the hapless guide, and landed that worthy upon the turf. This delighted Brindle, who made an abortive attempt to stand upon his head, and, failing, sat down by the guide and laughed again.

Lacy looked from one to the other, and pressed his hand to his brow. Was this simpering fool the friend of his youth ? What wild transformation was this ? "Brindle !" he exclaimed with severity, but Brindle had no ears for his friend. Creeping along on all fours, with an expression in his eyes that now savoured more of the madman than the idiot, he was making, pantherlike, in the direction of the youth, who, seeing his approach in such a manner, gave vent to one long howl of terror, and disappeared, followed by Brindle, who

evidently intended making short work of him if he could catch him. Left alone, Lacy began to climb the hill, and, reaching a lofty point, gave free vent to his feelings.

"Grand old mountain!" he exclaimed. "From the fountain of thy deep thou scatterest on every hand perennial streams. The tiny rivulet, the boisterous torrent, and the calmly flowing river, all have their birth from thee; leaping down, amidst the tangled thorn and honeysuckle, thy brooks laugh in the sunshine, carolling their way like children, running forth to play. Winding around storied scene and tower, by meadow land, busy town and city, thy elder daughters wander, in turn bearing onward pleasure boat and barque until lost in the mighty sea. But for thee, ocean would dwarf and shrink into littleness. 'Tis thou that feedeth its storms, and by thy power enables it to send its foam tempest tossed to the skies. Huge clouds sweep around from the Infinite and dash themselves against thee. Through the rift thy hoary head hath made the sunbeams spring down and light the land, while fertilising showers seek earth's laboratory, where bee and bird and gay-tinted flowers, and fragrant leaf, with glorious trees, come forth in their appointed time and season. About thy head the thunder rolls, and into thy sides the lightnings flash; yet calm, unimpaired, and unhurt thy grand old brow looketh up to God! Fitting it was in the olden time that is gone for sage and prophet to hitherward direct their steps, and here commune with Him."

For a time Lacy remained in rapt enthusiasm and silence. He had ascended to the highest peak, and looked upon the wondrous expanse of mountains and valleys. Here and there a tiny stream of silver gleamed, with broader bands denoting distant seas. Hill beyond hill filled in the great circle, and as the day was exceedingly clear the view was perfect. Even the farms, miles away, seemed close at hand, and the efforts and successes of man blended in so beautifully, and, as guide-books say, so harmoniously with nature, that Lacy again burst forth—

"No rime of age upon the handiwork of God! All that is of man, castled height, or ancient city, monument and column, memorial of saint or battle-field, all bear the impress of decay, but thou, Nature, never fadest! Emerging from the icy folds of winter, which seeks her death, she comes more lovely every spring time. Joyously, a thing of beauty, she crowns the world with summer glory, lingering through the autumn when her sunsets have tinged the leaves, and e'en the flowers are garnered. Sweet, pure nature, I see her in the distant time, loth to part, like the sweet love of my youth, with whom I parted in the winding lane, and who, ever and anon, turned to give back her look of happiness and love! So thou gleamest through coming autumn shower and storm until the end, and letteth thy sunshine and thy melody of rill and woodland linger to the eve." Again Lacy paused, and once more spoke. "No city hum or whirl of trade cometh here. Vice, with its flaunting robes, shuns this scene. Grandeur of silent majesty! How opposed to gaslight beauty, to song of opera or music hall. The clink of gold, the grasp of greed, ambitious strivings, the fever of fashion, the thirst for power, the wild mad race

of man to make his little span immortal—O God, how insignificant and mean all appear to Thee.”

“Lacy, my boy, what the dickens are you doing?” shouted Brindle, as he came up at a brisk pace towards him, in company with several of the townsmen. Lacy started; “Why, Brindle, what is it? Where have you been? How did we separate?” and a flood of interrogations followed. Brindle explained that under some inconceivable impulse he had chased the boy down fairly into Dolgelly, and then, wondering and alarmed, he sought assistance, to find his friend whom he feared he had lost for ever. Their mutual gladness was pleasant to witness, and the party, giving old Cader Idris brow but a cursory glance, descended the hill. Lacy was tired, and, though he admitted that the view was splendid, it was scarcely worth the climb.

“Want some of our city men here, Brindle!” he said, “to level a bit. A lot might be done in smoothing the road from Dolgelly. And looking at a good photograph or a painting might spare our legs!”

That night they sat in the little bar comparing notes. Brindle’s escapade and Lacy’s euthanasia were dreams, bad dreams, of which little or nothing was retained. The old man sat in the corner eyeing the two. He was a bar fixture, and by long habit seemed to fit the position.

“Well,” quoth he, “did you see the stone?”

Yes, both had, and slept upon it, but beyond an ugly dream they had no recollection.

“Then what made one of you kick up such a dust in the town?” said the bar fixture.

“I was afraid my friend had got into danger.”

“But how came you to leave him.”

“Ah, there,” said Brindle.

“I see,” said the old man, “think back in your city home both of you, unwind the thread of your memory, and see if you won’t have a clearer recollection about the wonderful stone of Cader Idris.”

Next morning saw the friends on their further travels, but wherever they went, whatever they did, phantoms like the bar fixture came before them, and misty memories, fancies they thought, streamed around the mind. No wonder, then, that, back again in their London home, the thread was unwound, and the legend of Cader Idris written. Here it is!

EVAN AB ROBERT:

OR, A GLANCE AT OLD TIMES.

 It is only incidentally that we get any idea of the social life of the people in the old days of independence and in the early years of English rule. Feuds between individuals, combats between the retainers of one chieftain and those of another, like those that once occurred between the rival clans in Scotland, with the periodical leaguings of the people against Picts and Scots, Romans, Saxons, Englishmen, as the successive waves of invasion swept on and over the coast, all this, collectively, make up the history of the country as we get it from the old historians. The little gleams that can be gathered from family histories fill up the blanks, and are invaluable. The only regret one can have is that they are so scarce. One of these sources is the "Historie of the Gwydir Family," by Sir John Wynn, and from this antique source I propose taking something to amuse, even if it does not instruct so much as the revelations of a later and more civilised life.

A great occupation of the principal men in South Wales, and, for that matter, the North as well, was to meet every day at one another's houses, and contend with each other in archery. Doubtless the old yews which still meet one's eye near old-fashioned family residences point to that time when the bow was the great weapon, and this tree invaluable in supplying material for the bow. No gentleman was then without his wine cellar; but, most singularly, Wynn states that the wine was sold to his profit, implying that guests paid for their libations just in the same manner as at a public-house.

But they were moderate as a rule, and the class given to "healthing," that is, toasting one another's health, was one that came upon the scene several centuries afterwards.

In addition to archery, the sports of the Welsh extended to running races, throwing the sledge, wrestling, and other acts of "activitie," and in this masters and men united with commendable zeal and freedom, keeping up the entertainment as long as it was light enough to see, and carrying it on with great good humour.

One of the most noted men of this time was Evan ab Robert, one of the ancestral line of the Wynn family, and if contemporary evidence can be believed, he was truly a grand man, or, as the ancient writer phrases it, "a goodlie man of personage and of great stature." It does not follow that

“goodlie” men are always valiant. Shakespeare thoroughly understood this by describing the big man Falstaff inferentially as a coward.

It is your little men generally who are fearless. Nature compensates for bulk by giving brain, or a valorous disposition; her big children of immense sinews, she wisely thinks, can protect themselves. But Evan was not only stout and tall, but as brave as a lion, and by no means the man one would care to have for an enemy.

Between him and his brother-in-law, Howel ab Rhys, there was a desperate feud. How it began no one knew. They had been boon companions, but the fervour of friendship is not unfrequently followed by the fierceness of hate, and it was so in this case, though the relationship was of a double character, Evan’s sister having married Howel, and Evan in turn marrying the sister of Howel.

Howel’s wife died, probably from ill-treatment; at all events, from the date of her death, Evan shunned the society of Howel, and fraternised with his nephew, John Meredith, who had always been at loggerheads with Howel.

Going thus over literally to the enemy so incensed Howel, that he began to plot, or, as it was said in those times, “draw a draught” and conspire to slay the redoubtable, and very difficult to kill, Evan ab Robert.

Our hero had made arrangements to have a shooting match with his friend and relation, John Meredith, and, in company with a few of his retainers, started on the day appointed, his wife riding with him nearly half the distance, and then parting from him with a pleasant farewell.

Scarcely, however, had she passed out of sight of her husband, when a very different face met her view, a dark, louring, sinister face, as of a thunder-cloud waiting to discharge its artillery. Catherine, the wife, knowing her brother’s passionate character, and rightly guessing that he meant mischief to her husband, as he was accompanied by a strong party of armed men, implored him not to harm her husband, as he meant no ill to him or to anybody. Howel, without replying, turned his horse on one side to avoid her, when she dexterously caught hold of its tail, and clung on for a considerable time, until, forgetting his kinship as well as his manhood, Howel drew his short sword and aimed a blow at her arm, which she observing, let the tail go. Still she was not discomfited, for, running before him to a narrow passage which he had to pass, she took the top rail from off the rustic bridge at the ford, and aimed so violent a blow in turn at his head that he only avoided it with difficulty, and then rode off with his men at the top of his speed.

The arrangement for the murder of Evan was as follows:—One man, called the Butcher, was to keep aloof from the rest, and then when the *melée* was at full his instructions were to go warily behind and strike down the tallest man he saw, which was Evan, who was a head and shoulders above the height of any man.

“But,” said Howel to the assassin, “take care, whatever you do, of Evan’s foster brother, Robin ab Inko, he is a little fellow, but he is always on the watch, and taketh care of Evan from behind.”

Now, then, pushing on with all speed, Howel and his gang soon came up with Evan, and though the latter was much overmatched as regards men, yet he awaited the meeting with calmness. From strong words the whole party soon came to blows, and the combat raged for a long time, Howel discreetly keeping out of the way of his brother-in-law's strong arm. In the very heat of the strife the Butcher stole behind Evan, and was just on the point of giving him a fatal blow, when little Robin, ever watchful, ran him through and slew him on the spot.

This did not suit Howel's plans, so, calling to his men, he made off with the same speed at which he came, crying out, "I had given charge that Robin ab Inko should have been better looked into."

Howel's wife seems to have been of the same villain stamp as her husband. She heard that Evan had put out a child to foster with the plain, homely parson of Llanvrothen, whose character, is excellently summed up in one sentence, "He used not to deny any." Filled with wrath against the parson, Howel's wife sent a woman to his house to crave shelter for the night, and in the dead of the night she made such a violent outcry that the good old man, "waking up in his sleep," made for the direction of the outcry with all his household at his heels, when she accused him with great vehemence "that he sought to take undue freedom with her, and so got out of doors," and informed her three brothers, men fit for any deed of villainy, and these watching their opportunity, pounced upon the parson, and murdered him as he was looking after his cattle.

The three men then fled for shelter to a neighbouring county, being then termed Llawrudd, or red hand; but the custom was, that only the man who gave the fatal blow was in peril, all who assisted not being looked after. Why, then, the three men should have fled seems at first a mystery; but it was a wholesome fear of Evan which prompted the step, and the issue showed that they reasoned aright.

There was another custom also observant; two clans or families in different parts would make compact with one another, so that any murderers whom one family employed would fly and receive protection from the other family, and, *vice versa*.

The three men escaped for the time, and obtained protection from a friend of Howel's; but Evan had also his friend in the same locality, and from him obtained information, which satisfied him that they were in hiding, so, accompanied by only six men, he made all speed to the spot and, after watching patiently for several nights, caught two of his men. It appears that the fellows, also according to custom, slept in the friend's house during the day, and went out to wine-houses at night, and during one of their drinking bouts fell into the trap.

The question now with Evan was how to get them into his own district. The family who had secreted them, the Trevors, were a powerful clan, and would waylay them at some narrow point or other, and destroy them. Then, if he put them into the hands of the law, that would be only another mode

of liberating them; for what would be the course? He would have to take them to the castle gate, where the lord of the manor lived, and as it was a case of murder, and not treason, which latter was amongst the unpardonable offences, it was only necessary for the friends of the offenders to bring a fine of £5 for each criminal to get them acquitted. This law remained in force until done away in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of Henry VIII.

Evan reviewed mentally for a few minutes the difficulties before him, and then, coming to a sudden resolution, said to one of his men, "Strike of their heads!"

His man attempted to do this, but so clumsily that one of the fellows, though wounded, said with a jeer, "If I had your head under my sword I'd make it take better edge," which so incensed our excitable Evan that he drew his own blade, and with two strokes only sent both heads rolling to the ground.

But where was the third murderer? This was a question which puzzled Evan, and he rode home anything but satisfied that even one should escape. The answer came before he reached his mansion. Very quietly were the party riding along a densely wooded hill side, the famed Gallt y Morva Hir, each face and the equipments visible a long way off, so clear was the moonlight, when suddenly the ping of an arrow was heard, and with great force it darted right into the midst of them.

"Oh, oh," shouted Evan, "the enemy is upon us," and instinctively all turned and bent their bows in the direction whence the arrow came, and though no person was visible, yet out of the seven arrows one pierced the body of the third murderer who was then in hiding.

One is tempted to think that there was not much difference in the morals of Howel and Evan, for the "veracious storie" to which we are indebted for particulars goes on to state that there was at the time in hiding at Evan's own house certain murderers who had been sent to him by friends and relatives in Cardiganshire in order to be "safely hid."

Howel was informed of this, and, watching his opportunity, selected a day for his plot when Evan had gone to Carnarvon assizes. Next he obtained the assistance of a noted outlaw, David ab Jenkin, who had a retreat in the rocks of Carreg-y-Walch, with his band of men, and, aided by these, the house of Evan was assailed by force. Evan was absent, but his good wife Catherine, being in charge, had taken all precautions, and stationed a man on the Carreg to give her notice, so that from the first appearance of the enemy there was a little time left to receive them in form. On that eventful morning, being a woman of rare energy and "activitie," she was engaged in brewing mead, and quite a little army of maids was there with great vats and steaming cauldrons. As soon as the signal was given from the Carreg, Catherine aroused all the men in the house, though they were but few, most of the retainers having gone with her husband. Arming them with all available weapons and securing the doors, one man was told off to keep the alarm bell ringing at full force, and then Catherine awaited the attack. It soon came: gates were quickly levelled, even to the outer doors broken down, and a crowd of men dashed in even to the inner door before they saw anyone. But no sooner

was the inner door down than the curious spectacle was presented of a bevy of maid-servants each with a ladle beside a vessel of scalding mead. Scarcely had the foe seen this, when, obeying the instructions of her mistress, each servant dashed a quantity of mead full in their faces, and down, rank after rank, they dropped in horror, screaming out in the intensity of their agony. As the girls were kept well served with fresh mead, the attack in this direction was speedily given up, and efforts directed at other parts; but here the men had been posted at the command of the redoubtable Robin ab Inko, and though the fight continued all day and night, the house was so strong, and the besieged so vigilant, that the enemy were completely foiled, and drew off to hold a parley. Robin then saw his opportunity, and calling to them, advised a speedy retreat.

"As soon," said he, "as the tide goes, Evan Krach, my master's kinsman, will be here with his Ardydwy men, and then you shall be all slain."

The fame of Evan Krach was sufficient, and, smarting with scalds and wounds, the foe made a rapid and ignominious retreat.

When Evan returned to find the outworks of his house a wreck, his wrath must have been intense, but no record remains of any vengeance inflicted upon his brother-in-law. Strong of arm, indomitable in resolution as he was, Evan fell a victim to an enemy more insidious and powerful than the most daring of Howel's. In his thirty-first year the plague swept him away with a great number of others, and the record of a valiant man came to a close.

Under the head of plagues, Wales was ravaged several times, but the pestilence was in all probability of home growth, and not imported from east or west. Little was known then of Nature's laws, sanitary measures were never resorted to beyond those of the simplest character, and up to the verge even of the present generation, the mysterious epidemics which periodically occurred, were ascribed to the action of an offended Deity, and not due to neglect or wilful disobedience of His laws.

HOW A SCOTCHMAN BECAME PRINCE OF WALES.

IT is a matter for philosophic conjecture why Scotchmen should have such a wandering propensity. My own impression is that it is inborn, and in strict harmony with the condition of things. There, in the land of the mountain and the flood, are reared men of vigour and of enterprise, but so sterile and rugged is the country that as soon as the native comes to years of maturity he has a natural desire, which is soon gratified, to wander away from his hard cradle to more congenial soils. Hence it is that in every part of the world they are to be found, the substratum in every colony, the practical element in every society.

And the wandering tendency is by no means modern. It has existed from remote times, and would almost seem as if it bore a relationship to the magnetic current, so marked and certain is its character.

In the year 985 Meredith ap Owen came upon the scene of Welsh history, and while his father Owen contrived, and only by very great care, to keep possession of his own principality, this uncommonly turbulent young man set himself to win a district, or even a principality, for himself. Very soon a most favourable opportunity presented itself, and he may be regarded as serving the hand of Providence in punishing a murderer. At that time North Wales was ruled by Cadwallon, who adopted a very favourite mode amongst ruling powers by getting rid of cousins or brothers who stood in the way. In this particular case the stumbling-blocks were Edward and Ionaual, the sons of his uncle Meyric. Ionaual, the eldest, was soon slain privately, but Edward escaped.

Meredith heard of these things, and, raising an army, marched into the country, and after a series of battles conquered Cadwallon and slew him, and reigned in his stead.

Unfortunately for Meredith, that stalwart race who have left their descendants in the form of strongly-built, gaunt men, with red hair and prominent noses, amongst us to this day, the Danes, were at this period seeking for spoil and abiding places for themselves, and they made it so warm for Meredith that he hurried away from his new kingdom, leaving the North Walians to make the best terms they could with the invaders. The Danes, failing to get hold of Meredith, did the next best thing they could, and seized his brother,

and, as usual, put out his eyes, and then pillaged and murdered until a murrain or plague broke out, when they decamped.

Meredith had one son, and it is about this son that considerable interest was aroused. What he was like the early chroniclers fail to tell us ; but in relation to Welsh history he figures the same as Harold did in connection with our Saxon history, and the son of Louis the Sixteenth in connection with France and the Revolution. To this day, partially fanned by novelists, it is believed that Harold never died at Hastings ; and as regards France, there is more than a suspicion that Simon the Cobbler was privy to a plot which substituted a deaf and dumb boy for the young prince, who afterwards figured in some of the stirring scenes of Napoleon's career. I might notice a host of historical parallels—Perkin Warbeck, the Stuarts, &c.—but must hasten to our Scotchman. The chroniclers state that Meredith was so assailed by the Danes that he consented to give a penny to them for every person in South Wales, and paid it, which to the Danes was more to the purpose. But even this did not secure peace. Claimants arose then, as they do now ; the Saxons and Danes, whose swords and pikes were as purchaseable as legal aid now is, were only too ready to be at the beck and call of a Welsh prince, and, after pocketing the penny for a time, they came into South Wales with their leader Edwyn, a nephew of Meredith, and a terrible scene of slaughter took place. Such a factious spirit was roused by this that a civil war broke out, and what with that and the Saxons and Danes, the doom of South Wales seemed knelled.

In that wild stormy night of Welsh history the son—and he was the only son of Meredith—was slain. Poor Rhun, noted for his prowess and admired for his promise, was no more. His fate, just in the dawn of young manhood, was inexpressibly sad. The chieftains were overwhelmed with sorrow, and as for Meredith, it so affected him that he seemed to care little what became of his kingdom.

Dolorous sat the harper in the hall, and wailed forth the lament of departed greatness :—

I looked forth in the morning
And my son was here. Keen
Of eye even as the hawk, and
Strong and invincible.
Night came and he was no more,
Gone is the grandeur of the king's house,
Faded his greatness.
Desolation sitteth by the hearthstone,
And mourning is all over the land.

This blow was not the only one that poor Meredith had to endure. Disdaining the penny tribute, and hoping to get still more spoil than from any such small subscriptions, the Danes again laid the territory waste even up to the gates of the City of St. David, and as a finishing stroke to their pagan deeds they wound up their foray by killing the bishop.

The death of his son, and this last raid, proved too much for Meredith, and according to the chronicles he sank under his calamities, and died of grief. Llewelyn ap Seisyllt, by right of his wife succeeded to the Principality of South

Wales, and in the faction fights that ensued our Scotchman, for the first time, comes to view. His name is unknown, his clanship the same. How he came to Wales is not stated, nor the why thereof. The only thing that can be gleaned is that he bore a most marvellous resemblance to the lamented Prince Rhun. And when Mac (somebody) was clad in the Welsh garb, with a tufted plume, the likeness was perfect. "It's his very self," the chieftains cried, and one is led by subsequent events to assume that they almost believed it themselves, for they fought so hard in his defence. The old chronicles are so filmy, and confine themselves so much to striking events, leaving minor but interesting matters to the imagination, that one is tempted to fill in the blanks, and picture, for instance, the aged harper moving his fingers more rapidly, and chanting another strain:—

Wonderful is the fortune of this house—
Lo! Rhun is alive again!
He who was laid 'neath the tall stones;
And over whom oak was burnt to ashes,
Is again with us. His sword is sharp.
Meredith descended into the grave
Full of years. He sendeth back
Rhun to defend his country.

The strangeness of the context must be an excuse for the fiction. Imagine the grave and grim Meredith stalking through Hades, and directing Rhun to banish inglorious rest, and return to his duties! This is hard to imagine, but still more difficult to imagine a Scotchman coming back, and rather unkind of the Welshmen to put a Scotchman into such a representative position.

One way way or another—how is not stated—the rebellious chieftains were so successful in palming off the Scotchman that the greatest enthusiasm was aroused throughout South Wales, and from one end to the other the news spread, "Rhun, the son of our king, was not dead; he is here to defend us." Then men began to arm in real earnest, and the time selected was a favourable one, for Llewelyn had taken up his residence in North Wales, and news travelled slowly. When he did hear that his rule in South Wales was threatened, he collected a large force, and marched by rapid stages until he reached the confines of the South. It would appear that the South Walians were equally energetic, for they too had gathered a large army, and instead of waiting in some mountain fastness and there meeting the enraged king, they advanced to Abergwili, and, taking up a formidable position, prepared to give battle. At their head was the redoubtable Scotchman; but I regret to add that he was more cunning than valorous, for instead of giving an illustration which might have been adduced by subsequent historians as an example imitated by Richard on the field of Bosworth, he simply showed himself to the South Walians, as much as to say, "Here I am, Rhun, the identical Simon Pure, the real, not the counterfeit," and then he privately retired out of the battle!

Llewelyn, made of manlier stuff, placed himself at the head of his men, and, shouting loudly for the impostor to come forward, dashed into the fray.

It was no despicable fight. Greek met Greek that day. The rebels, as the

men of the South were called, fought with the greatest bravery, and for a long time neither party showed signs of giving way. The chieftains who led the rebels knew that they fought for their lives. To them it was death or glory, and under this impulse they animated their men to deeds of utmost daring. No canister shot, no grape, no mitrailleuse, but strong arm against strong arm, pike and sword against sword and pike—what a hideous roar was there of strange barbaric war-cries, a faint refrain of which we get now in rural fights, when “*Cymro gwillt ega, Shon Betsy Shon ega*” bounded into the melee. No one cried for quarter; the whirl of the sword, the hard thud, the half sob, half scream, as the life was hurled through the horrid gash; the mad shouts as a little group gave away, and were wildly chased until again reinforced, and pursued became pursuers, gave a scene of vigorous individual effort and realism to which the march and attack of infantry in square of our day seems mechanical in comparison.

“Where is the impostor?” still shouted Llewelyn, who, an army in himself, a very Richard, bowed down in his progress, and showed himself such invincible valour that at length the spirit seemed to fly to and rouse his whole army; until, like a whirlwind, they overwhelmed and sent the South Walians fleeing from the field.

Not even at the last did the Scotchman come forth from his retreat. One would have imagined that, sprung from so warlike a race, the “*Die nevers*” of all our battle fields, he would in the sequel have sprung amongst the foe and died, at all events sword in hand.

But, alas! that it should have to be recorded, the counterfeit Rhun emulated the dead prince, only in name, and running away and displaying the greatest possible agility in so doing, was overtaken and ingloriously slain.

Successful rebellion is glorified, while the answerable actors in a failure only get from the hand of the historian contumely and neglect. Had our Scotchman succeeded in his effort, had he shown individual heroism, and worn the crown he contended for, how very different would have been the treatment of the Welsh chroniclers. Then we should have known his name and ancestry, and the chances are that a claim would have been set up in his behalf, for a descent at some remote period from Welsh forefathers.

THE BEAUTIFUL FLUUR AND MURCHAN THE THIEF.



HERE is a belief entertained in most countries, and found particularly strong in the east, that it is to women we are indebted for all the mishaps, misfortunes, and accidents of life. As the opinion is so current in the eastern world it is but logical deduction to assume that the tradition has floated down, a relic on the sea of time, from the earliest ages, when men and women talked together of a grand inheritance lost in Eden just as the greybeard and the dame review some pleasant dream of their youth.

One of the most memorable instances on record lurks under the traditions of an early history. It is so vague and misty that none of the standard historians appear to have noticed it, or if they did they must have designedly passed it by as mythical.

But, in sifting the mythical from the true, the natural and prosaic narrative, which has neither superhuman feats nor extraordinary occurrences, impresses one with belief in its truth. It is when venerable "young" women, in the guise of saints, make wells spring from impossible places; grain to ripen prematurely, and are thus enabled to feed a distressed multitude when suffering from hunger, that doubts are generated, and if any gleam of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table blend in with a narrative, one may safely put it down as a "boy's tale," in which a modicum of historic fact is wrapped up in a good covering of fiction.

So far as it concerns secular history, the men and women of the past have been the same as the men and women of the present, and effect has followed cause in the same prosy way as it does now.

Anything to the contrary may be set down as legendary, the invention of an imaginative brain told to amuse, even as the wandering troubadours, journeying back from the sacred city, scattered broadcast their quaint lyric poems, or fancifully embellished tales, which kept the ancient Welshman in gratified dread, and filled the harper's stomach and his purse.

Now, as I have promised, this tale is very striking, and yet matter of fact. Assisted by Owen Pugh and M. Prichard, I draw the curtain.

Old Mygnach Cor was a powerful chieftain who flourished in that early period of our history which has left few solid records behind. All that one can gleam

of him is that he was so insignificant in size that he was popularly known as the Dwarf. Nature, regretting such a conception as Mygnach, and wishing to atone, as she often does, and that too in a variety of ways less common than placing the antidote by the bane, gave him a daughter, so surpassingly fair that her beauty and her goodness were the theme of every minstrel who visited her father's court.

Fair as she was, the minstrel still more exaggerated her beauty, so that those who heard of her in other districts imagined that the world had never seen one so lovely and lovable as the beautiful Fluür, the betrothed of Caswallawn. If such a view was held by the honest Britons, what must have been the impression conveyed to the lively, excitable, and most impulsive people on the other side of the channel !

We are told that in Gascony her fame was incredibly great, and one, at least, named Murchan was almost at his wits end, in thinking how he could contrive to gain the wondrous prize. After much deliberation he disguised himself, probably as a minstrel, and journeyed alone towards Britain. It was a striking picture when he put aside his decorations, and resigned his state, for he was a king, and prepared for his journey, its hazards, and its allurements. We are left to picture him, bidding his friends adieu, after looking to the proper charge of his kingdom ; to view him in his cockle-shell boat as he crossed the channel ; and then, the minstrel's profession being regarded as almost sacred, to see him wending his way, steadily but slowly, towards the home of the beautiful Fluür. He did gain it, at length, after a weary tramp.

O, unborn age of first-class railway tickets, special trains, and locomotive superintendents driving royal trains !

There was he, a king, footsore and thinking himself a big fool, for he was getting on in years, was Murchan, standing in a beggar garb, by the door of beauty, and also of the Dwarf !

He soon gained admittance, and soon revelled in the glory of her attractions. Fame had not magnified her charms, and even as he gazed and felt how difficult it would be for him to win such a peerless damsel, for was he not getting grisly and rat like, a great idea possessed his mind, and as soon as he could tear himself away he did so and hastened back to his own country. There he speedily collected a lot of hardy fellows who would do anything he wanted, either by boldly attacking a company or putting a few to death secretly, and getting into his galley, he made for the British coast and reached there at the dead of night. Mygnach the Dwarf does not appear to have lived in a fortress, for without much trouble Murchan disarmed the guards, possibly by using keys against which human force is weak, and seizing the maiden, despite all resistance, bore her off to the sea shore and succeeded in reaching his kingdom in safety.

But he little knew the storm he had roused, for while the thief was gloating over the prize, and debating with himself about his pet idea of disposing of her to advantage, the lover, furious as the eagle robbed of its mate, flew here and there rousing the country to join him in regaining his bride. Soon he had a

large army at his command, and, having ascertained whither Fluür had been taken, he crossed the seas with his troops and attacking Murchan not only routed him ignominiously but slew six thousand of his men. In this great victory he was aided, according to Owen Pugh, by his nephews Gwenwynwyn and Gwenar, and by people of the Netherlands and some from the neighbourhood of Boulogne, who acted as auxiliaries when occasion required. The victory was complete, for Caswallawn recovered his beloved and returned in triumph.

Now comes the moral, Murchan, who ever afterwards was known as the Lleider, or Thief, had intended presenting Fluür to Julius Cæsar, and it is shrewdly suspected that this assault on Gaul by Caswallawn, and probably the exaggerated reports sent about the circumstances and its cause to Rome, led to the invasion of Britain by the Romans!

THE WELSH SMUGGLER.



THE Welsh coast used to be a favourite resort for smugglers, and I am very much afraid that the extreme shrewdness which characterises some of the coast dwellers, take for example Cardiganshire, is a relic of the wariness, the expertness, and the craft exercised to the full, either in "dodging" the king's cruisers, evading the excisemen or coastguard, or finding a way to dispose of the smuggled goods at the best possible price.

The coast-dweller, as a rule, is a man who knows the value of a penny, and how many beans make five. If he sells, the highest prices are named. If he buys, he haggles, and when the bargain is concluded, puts down one shilling after another, as if they were drops of blood.

There was an excursion once from a large district on the Welsh coast, and I exclaimed to a publican in the town to which the excursion was coming, "You'll do well to-morrow." "Why so?" he asked. "A large excursion is coming in I hear." "Oh! oh!" and he laughed heartily. "Why, do you know how those people do?" I confessed I did not. "Well," he added, "the usual course is for three, say, to come in, bringing in their own bread and cheese with them, and they'll either have a bottle of pop, or, at the most, a pint between them!"

To the publican's mind, the contrast was great between this niggardliness and the habits of colliers and puddlers, who once upon a time would scatter a week's earnings in a few hours.

One of the easy ways of getting rid of the "run" of a vessel, the choice brandy brought over from France, was by means of butter carriers, and for a long time honest Thomas Williams the butter dealer was allowed to trudge by the side of his primitive cart with a good stock of kegs under his butter tubs, until the device was found out, and other methods had to be adopted. Until the discovery, traders holding respectable positions in the inland towns were ready enough to take a keg or two, some for themselves and the rest for sale. One came to my own knowledge of a grocer in a large way of business, who had a hogshead which did double duty. One half was filled with sugar, and the lower part was a store for a brandy. One day the excise officers nearly caught him. He had emptied several kegs of brandy into the lower part, put down the division and was filling in the sugar when the officer came down and looked on. The grocer was a man of contrivance, and as he talked he worked, and having completed the filling, they both discussed some choice brandy up stairs. Ten minutes earlier on the part of the officer would have been fatal. As it was, the grocer died a rich man, unsuspected, and the local papers descanted upon his virtues and his labours.

One of the ablest runners of smuggled cargoes on the Pembrokeshire coast was Captain Jack, or, as he was more politely called, Captain Furze.

About 1800, the dwellers in the neighbourhood of Manorbear Castle, noticed a jolly-looking seaman patrolling in the grounds of the castle, and taking stock as they called it, of the neighbourhood, and he was such a pleasant, free-hearted rover, that those who were favoured with his calls of an evening, liked his society immensely. He told them that "he had saved a few pounds, and thought of taking the farm that was to be let in connection with the old castle." He had an impression too "that there was coal in the vicinity, and while some of his people should look after the cows, and work the land, others would sink trial pits." As for himself, "he had a small brig that he should keep running between the Welsh coast and Tenby, and he might be able to do a little trading as well as give occasional inspections to his miners and his labourers." The honest people thought that the good times were come at last. Who knows that if the worthy seaman was successful he might rebuild the castle, and become the squire, and thus bring prosperity and happiness into the district? So they chatted.

In due time a number of stout Cornishmen came over in the brig, and busy enough they were in and about the castle, and on the farm, but there was a good deal more drinking going on, gossips thought, than the owner of the vessel liked, and some stormy scenes occasionally were overheard, which begat suspicion that all was not right. Little by little it oozed out that the jolly seaman was Captain Furze, or Captain Jack as his men called him, and the knowing ones discovered that it was not mining or tilling land that was the object of settlement on the coast, but smuggling.

For a time the captain pursued his smuggling course undetected by the authorities; the vaults underneath the castle cellar, on the cliffs, and, so tradition says, even under the parsonage walls, afforded ample place for con-

bealmment, and it was more than hinted that sedate persons would wink at the matter, and squires voted Captain Jack a very worthy man, so long as they had kegs of brandy in their own cellars, and their wives and daughters wore laces, which were bought for a song. But after a lengthy tenure of success, the captain found it getting, as he phrased it, "too hot."

One day he was nearing the coast with his vessel well laden, when the watch descried a strange vessel upon his lee. "Can't make her out, sir!" he said to the captain, handing him the glass. The captain took a long look, and with an expression which would take a quantity of salt water to make presentable, shouted out, "tack away, give the Jane the wind"—this was the name of his craft—"by all that's living, 'tis a king's ship and she's now showing her bunting." As he spoke a flag went up, and a puff of smoke came from the side of the stranger, as the gun was fired as the signal to "heave to." But Jack, by no means disconcerted, clapped on all sail, and his craft, being a thorough clipper, made a good run off the coast, and getting the wind while the king's ship lay almost becalmed, increased his position to a respectable distance from his foe.

For a short time the smuggler's craft succeeded in its tacking manœuvres, and there seemed a likelihood of its escaping altogether; but, at a critical moment the king's ship caught the wind and came onwards so fast and so ably worked that the Saucy Jane was brought within range of her stern chasers. Then a storm of shots flew into the Jane and about the deck, making the little craft reel again, and the crew to look despondingly at the captain. Some even implored him to yield, but the jolly smuggler had no such word in his vocabulary, and taking the helm watched his opportunity, and directly the smoke belched forth from his antagonist, tacked and escaped the storm. Again and again the king's ship poured forth a volume, but with the dexterity of a hare the Jane doubled, and then shot on its way. For an hour the unequal contest continued. The dusk was now creeping steadily on, necessitating to the cruiser a determined effort, or, in the darkness, their prey would escape. So putting on all sail the pursuer dashed onwards, and then pausing, raked her fore and aft; but still Captain Jack was inexorable. "Run below, you lubbers!" he said to his men, "or lie down on deck, I'll manage the brig myself," and alone at the helm, seeming to have a charmed life, unhurt, while the iron hail cut up his rigging, or made match-wood of his deck, he continued to double and tack until the welcome darkness settled down, and the cruiser, fearful of the coast, drew off from the pursuit.

Tradition says that Captain Jack shouted with ecstasy at his good luck, and exclaimed, "I told you so, you beggars, the timber is not spliced that'll run down Jack Furze!"

But though he succeeded with his run the escape was too narrow a one to be attempted again, and Manorbear Vaults were cleared out, and the brig was seen no more at Tenby.

Yet, for many years after, in a sunny spot, on the Pembrokeshire coast, there lived one of the jolliest of retired seamen. He had his trim villa and

neat little garden, and in the front a cosy seat, where the old man with a chosen group would sit in the evening time and smoke his pipe, and talk about the sea which, ever restless, foamed at his feet, now spreading out its emerald expanse, and then rearing up as if gambolling and wantoning in the sight of one it loved. And gossips say that the jolly seaman could tell strange tales, eventful incidents, and narrow escapes, and knew all about the key-stoned vaults of Manorbear, and the fight of the Saucy Jane with the cruiser of the king.

THE OLD HOUSE IN THE RHONDDA.



HE traveller up the Rhondda will notice a grey old house standing on the left hand of the valley, and near the Havod. Though in the last stage of decay, there are indications about it of better days. One is as struck by it as when meeting an erect, dignified man, in seedy coat and greasy hat. It has all the appearance of old comfort and dignity, and if the patched linen of a collier does flutter on the hedge, and a slattern figure or two appear at the back, it doesn't detract from the old house, which seems constantly to re-assert its dignity, and to say, "I have nothing to do with colliers. I belong to the past, and in my old age and decay am only pondering over all that I have been."

What was the old house, who the owner? The house was the Hall, the most important mansion in the whole of the Rhondda. The squire resident there was Honfray, who, in his capacity as ironmaster of Penydarran, paid the Dowlais Company a rental of fifty thousand pounds a year, and who held greater state in his mansion at Penydarran than even the Guests and Crawshays.

Briefly let me tell the tale of Penydarran; it has more lustre about it than romance, and with its history is wrapped up that of the Havod.

Years hence, when the present generation shall have passed away, only misty traditions will remain of the early colonisation of the iron and mining districts, unless, from the old inhabitants some trustworthy information is gained and handed down. The subject is not a dull one; on the contrary, it is full of interest and with regard to one district in particular it is exceedingly so.

Let the reader accompany me mentally to a place midway between Merthyr

and Dowlais. It is known as Penydarran, in the vernacular, as "head of the rock." Once there were flourishing ironworks and compact collieries there. Now the place is left to decay. From the furnaces, even as out of old castellated buildings, trees are growing, and the rooks build in the very mouth, and in all corners and crevices birds make their nests.

Carry back the mind seventy or eighty years, and there is nothing there only a farmhouse perched on the rock; and the brook running down is sylvan, and meadows and hedgerows are where mills and tramways were placed in after days.

The transformation from such a state was not done by the rubbing of a lamp, as in the "Arabian Nights." It was accomplished by hardy, energetic men, in a long course of time—by men who regarded obstacles and difficulties as natural, and who sat down to their task as veterans do to a siege, determined to succeed.

In a place that was purely agricultural before the iron trade began, one great necessity, after the discovery of iron in the neighbourhood, was the getting of men to turn the discovery to account. The aborigines of the district were not an energetic class of men. They had no gift in the way of discovery, and no talent in the form of invention. They were the relics or descendants of the old retainers who had fought under Ifor Bach and other chieftains, and who, when the fighting days had passed away, tilled little plots of land, grew oats, reared sheep, and all the fighting characteristics of their nature were exercised in noisy scenes, at Fair-y-Waun or at the Star, and in later days still in "ddadls," or equally noisy controversies. It was a heterogeneous collection, fond of alehouses; and as late as the seventeenth century the diligent student of history and of physiognomy might easily have found descendants of Ifor's men farming land, Normans and Flemings following the pursuit of artisans, grandsons of Cromwell's troopers cutting headstones for the departed villagers, and genuine Jacobites farming snug little farms on the hills.

With the discovery of iron came a great influx of men from all parts of the country. From east, west, north, and south they came, and records are extant showing the primitive mode of journeying; the home-made waggon used, piled up as high as possible with household goods, and accompanied by sturdy men, not armed, as in prairie life, for the times were peaceful, but carrying either a favourite child or a dog.

When Homfray began his career at Penydarran he imported ironworkers from Broseley, and they came in this manner.

Wales was the far off and unknown land, its people strange and their dialect uncouth, so the brave and adventurous Broseleyans journeyed to Penydarran just as they would have journeyed to a distant part of the world. They brought with them the whole of their possessions, wives and children accompanied them; one had his favourite blackbird, another his equally favourite cat. Old roots and fruit trees, and old fashioned and fragrant flowers taken up from the little garden plots of home, were safely stowed away in secure corners of the waggons, and strange utensils and furniture, such as the villagers

had never seen before, figured on the top. Part of the way they came by water, and the hardships and buffetings of the voyage were great. Long, too, was the travel on land, and when the haven was reached, there was much praying and praising (for the colonists were a religious people), for the preservation they had been favoured with.

Settled down at last in rows of cottages, they planted their fruit-trees and their flowers in their leisure hours, and laboured hard in the construction of iron works, and then the making of iron.

For a period of fifty years, increasing and multiplying, producing iron of excellent character, making fortunes for their employers, and in many instances competencies for themselves, building chapels, taking a part in local politics, and imparting a solidity to social life; and then the great glare of Penydarran fires began to smoulder, and with the exit of the Homfrays, and the Thompsons, and Formans it died out, and, save in a solitary and eccentric instance, was never revived.

The Homfrays are still represented in Monmouthshire, the Browns have held high position in the same county; but as regards Penydarran, the whole of the early colonists and their descendants have been swept away.

You may find in the town of Merthyr, and in neighbouring valleys, men who claim descent from these early settlers, and wherever found, whether man or woman, the descendant is one who holds a position of respect, if not affluence; but as far as Penydarran is concerned, the old settlers are gone.

Turn your steps, O reader, to the scene not only of ruin but of decay, and recall the past. Visit the row of cottages and revive in memory's ear the strange tongue of men, women, and children; glance at the old garden plots wherein for the first time lavender, and heart's-ease, and mint, and thyme flourished, and then look at the grassy tramways and the tree-decked furnaces, once the scene of prosperous life, now as hopelessly decayed as Pompeii.

Like a venerable couple who have faded side by side, so the old house and Penydarran decayed quietly at the same time; when Penydarran was in its glory so too was the old house; when Penydarran was becoming mean and its prosperity fluctuating so did the old house degenerate; and, very near about the same period as the works fell into disuse the old dwelling began to exhibit the picture of desolation it now presents.

By the side of the wonderful branch of the Taff Vale, that is incessantly carrying down its long trains of coal, which neither by night nor by day is relieved of the rapid roll and the shrill scream of locomotive, stands the old house, old times fading away by the side of new, decay quietly sinking in the view of new and vigorous life. Why wonder that in the narrative of such a history the mournful solemnity imparts its character to the story? For are we not in the "corridors of time," and the autumnal wind roves through deserted halls telling of the past.

A BORDER FIGHT.



ONE of the most gallant combats recorded in Welsh history occurred in the neighbourhood of Monmouth in 1231, when the occasional outbreaks of Llewelyn, and the constant disagreements between King Henry and his nobles made the border land and the interior of Wales the scene of incessant warfare.

Baldwin de Guisnes, with a large troop of foreign mercenaries, was in command of the castle of Monmouth, and anxious was the time and sharp the look-out kept, as Earl Richard was known to be in the vicinity with a large army.

True enough, upon a certain day the earl with his army came up, and, as Monmouth town offered a tempting prize, he ordered his men to march onwards a considerable distance, evidently to make a detour of the place and find out its weakest point.

When they had gone the earl, who was left with only a hundred of his knights, rode up to the castle, and very coolly and quite at his ease examined the fortifications, taking care only to keep out of the way of the arrows.

One can imagine the ire of Baldwin, himself a stout and bold soldier, at this freedom. He was not to be brooked; so, hastily gathering a strong force of not less than a thousand well-trained men, he had the portcullis drawn up and at once swooped down upon the foe. Their intention was to capture the earl and take him prisoner to the king, and had the earl been an ordinary warrior they would have succeeded at once, so great were the odds in favour of the Monmouth braves. Even the followers of the earl saw the power of the steel avalanche that was upon them, and begged him to fly.

"I," said Richard, "I never yet did turn my back upon the enemy, and I won't do it now!"

So, making the best of a bad case, the knights closed around their chief, and the battle began. It was a battle royal. While the mass of the mercenaries pounded away at the knights, Baldwin, with twelve of his strongest and best-armed men, made straight for the earl, who received them with particular coolness and address.

Strong were the biceps of Richard, long and keen his sword; no man ventured within reach but was cut down, and one after the other they fell,

unable even to reach him. Despairing of success, one of the bravest attacked the earl's horse with his lance, and managed to kill it. No sooner however, was the earl dismounted than he caught one of the enemy by the legs, upset him, mounted the animal, and began the fight again.

Maddened at this, Baldwin contrived to throw himself upon the earl and to tear his helmet from his face; then, seizing the horse by the middle, he began pulling his sturdy adversary towards the castle. They had him at last. What would not the king say to such a prize? Alas for their momentary victory! One of the earl's bowmen, seeing his master's danger, aimed his arrow so well as to pierce the breast of Baldwin. This created a diversion. Again the long sword came into play, and the army of the earl coming up, the much reduced soldiers of Baldwin darted at their utmost speed into the castle again.

Such was one of the many border fights of old, when individual prowess effected so much, and the strong right arm was of greater consideration than military strategy.

LLANTWIT MAJOR.

A SKETCH OF MONASTIC DAYS.



TOURISTS amongst the hills come not unfrequently across some remains of old in the shape of a Roman road, a camp, ancient burial marks, or a record in the form of an old legend, or even name, enshrining a record of the past. Quaint looking farms will be found to have a remnant of antiquity built up in some part of the building, and the name "Mynach," "Monach," or "Monachy," or some garbled form of the same carries back the mind to monkish days, even before Julius Cæsar landed, or Stonehenge had become the great temple of the West.

Perhaps few places excel Llantwit-Major for its associations with the past, though anyone unacquainted with the fact might walk through the village, as he would any ordinary coast village of Wales, and fail to discern either beauty or attraction. The stranger might find in hot summer days that attention to sewerage was not so prominent a feature of village life as it is of town life, and if he became a resident for a short time he might regret that railways were not as common as highways, and that places like Llantwit were

not tacked on to one of the Great Western lines. Quicer, old-fashioned place as it is, with its pleasant walks through the fields to the sea, its cosy farms, its antique cottages, its here and there more pretentious houses, its mingling of farm and sea life, its people who are reminiscent of ploughed fields and of the sea,—who would think that here, in old days, one of the great monasteries was founded as a residence, and also a seminary of learning, of which Cowbridge Grammar School, with its savour of learning and antiquity, may be regarded as the descendant? Some date the antiquity of Llantwit to the fifth century, and ascribe the origin to Illutus; but old Welsh MSS. state that long prior to this the second Emperor Theodosius established an institution of learning at Caerwrgon. This hall of learning, which flourished at a time when the ordinary people affected blue paint, and lived in primitive condition, was called Bangor Tewdws, or the College of Theodosius, and conspicuous amongst its early members is said to have been St. Patrick, the great apostle of Ireland, and his contrast Morgan, the heretic, as he was cynically called, but better known in history as Pelagius, a man who caused more religious discussion and rancour than Pusey or Wiseman in our day.

Illutus succeeded in the course of time to the chief position in the monastery, and hence the name Llan Illtud, now corrupted into Llantwit. He appears to have been a remarkable "all round man," and was not only famous as a classical scholar, but took an interest in farming, invented a plough, and doubtless imitated the Greeks in combining mental and physical exercise. This ensured his health and long life, and contributed to that calm, equable mind for which he was famed.

If one were to examine the records of colleges in Wales, by the aid of some old gossip, he would be told, "So and so, who was once scholar here, became vicar of Penhoel; that one, rector of Cwmblaen; another, tutor in such a nobleman's family; another, a canon of Llandaff;" and so on. But Illutus could boast of kings, archbishops, bishops, astronomers, and bards amongst the scholars who owned him ruler. He had no less than seven kings—doubtless of the very smallest sample of regal life, kings then being plentiful; and Gildas the writer, Aneurin the bard, and Taliesin, plodded there to school in their young days just as embryo clerks and undeveloped tradesmen do now. Illutus is reported to have attained an extreme old age, and for ninety years to have remained the head of the college; but this statement is, like many of those made in ancient times, to be taken with due reserve, and with a good many grains of salt. Cornwall Lewis would at once have put down the statement as legendary, for he held total unbelief in anyone attaining even to one hundred years, and to be ninety years head of a college would require that Illutus should at all events have been one hundred and twenty at the time of his death.

Old stones, with half defaced inscriptions, memorial stones, and others, are to be found in the neighbourhood; but there has been, even in this secluded spot, a good deal of defacement of inscriptions. Cromwell's troops are generally credited with mutilating statues, cutting of their noses, burning down castles and the like; but it is very probable that the ultra-zealots of the Reformation

were quite as busy with crosses and ancient stones in and around churches as ever were the soldiers of the Protector.

One stone now to be seen at the east side of the porch, inscribed to the memory of Samson, Archbishop of Dôl, in Brètagne, and also King Juthail, was recovered from a deep hole in the ground, wherein it had fallen by a most strange accident.

Edward Williams, Iolo Morganwg, tells the tale of this and other stories ; and it is as follows :—

“About the year 1730 Mr. Thos. Morgan, a schoolmaster of Llantwit, found an ancient cross of the same age and style of sculpture with that of Illtutus, in an old ruinous place, where tradition said a church formerly stood. Spots are pointed out where seven churches formerly stood, but possibly they might have been chapels of so many separate colleges, or societies of monks and students. The ancient cross just mentioned, Mr. Thomas Morgan placed on the ground before the church door, expressing a desire that he might be buried under it. His wish, I am told, was complied with.”

Iolo further states : “In the summer of 1789 I dug out of the ground in Llantwit churchyard a large monumental stone. It has been the shaft of a cross, and its history affords a remarkable instance of the fidelity of popular tradition. About fifty years ago a very old man, whose name was Richard Panter, was living at Lanmaes-juxta-Llantwit. He, though a shoemaker, was a more intelligent person than most of his class—he had read history more than many, and was something of an antiquary, and had stored his memory with a number of interesting popular traditions. I was then about twelve or fourteen years of age, and like him, fond of history and antiquities. He one day showed me a spot on the east side of the porch of the old church at Llantwit where he said a large monumental stone lay buried in the ground, with an inscription on it to the memory of two kings. The tradition of the accident which occasioned its inhumation he gave as follows :—

“Long ago, before the memory of the oldest person that he ever knew (and he was eighty), there was a young man at Llantwit, commonly called Will the Giant. At the age of seventeen he was seven feet seven inches high ; but, as is usually the case in premature and preternatural growth, he fell into a decline, of which at that age he died. He had expressed a wish to be buried near the monumental stone which stood by the porch, and his wishes were complied with. The grave was dug necessarily much larger and longer than graves usually are, so that one end of it extended to the foot of the stone that was fixed in the ground. Just as the corpse had been laid in, the stone gave way, and fell into the grave, nearly filling it up. Some had a very narrow escape with their lives, but the stone being so large and difficult to remove it was left where it fell, and covered over with earth.

“After I had heard this account,” continued old Iolo, “I had a great desire to dig for this stone, and many times endeavoured to engage the attention and the assistance of several persons, but my idea was always treated with ridicule. In the year 1790 being at work in Llantwit Church,

and being one day unable to go on with what I had in hand for want of assistance, for it was then the height of the corn harvest, and not a man was to be found whose time and hands were unoccupied, I employed a great part of one afternoon in digging in search of this stone, and having discovered it, I cleared away all the earth about it. Evening brought the farmers and their workmen home, and Mr. Christopher Wilkins and the late Mr. David Jones, two very respectable gentlemen farmers, on seeing the stone, ordered their men to assist me. We with great difficulty got it out of the ground, and placed it where it now is.

The inscription reads :—

“*In nomine Di summi incipit crux Salvatoris quæ preparavit Samsona pati pro anima sua et pro anima Juthahelo Rex et art mali tegam.*”

So much for antiquity. It is only necessary to add that the greatness is gone away from the place, and the glories of the monastic college exist only as a tradition. Still they add to the interest of the visitor; and if you do meet, on entering the half village, half broken down town, with the usual everyday life institutions of public-house, grocery, butcher's shop, and chapel, there is something about the old church and the traditions that villagers tell that will give a great amount of fascination to the spot. You will think, coming up by the mighty gap in the hill, through which once thundered the sea, that down by the ripple of the wave once strolled the monk of old and looked out, even as you look out upon the wide expanse of sea and sky, that bards wandered along the coast weaving their poetic fancies; and through the unfenced meadows strolled even kings! Modern life may obtrude itself in the form of postmen, newspapers, and landladies who eye you in the street with lodging-house proclivities; but there is a savour of antiquity about old Llantwit which will force back the mind to the past, and the absence of trains, buses, and cabs, favours the process.

THE POISONED ARROW.



IT is a wonder that the enthusiastic Welshmen who claim Shakespeare as one of themselves have not noted the fact that, in addition to the general knowledge the poet had of Wales and its history, one of the leading characters in the play of "Othello" bears an old Welsh name.

In that period of Welsh history between the departure of the Romans and the conquest by the Saxons, a prince named Iago flourished in North Wales, and as his wife's name was Helen, we may fairly assume that wherever he had his from, the wife's was due to Helen, the wife of the Emperor Maximus, who left her name in the nomenclature of roads, such as Sarn Helen, as well as in domestic life.

Iago was uncle to Howel, and, by the way, as this Howel was notorious for his deeds of infamy, and deserved, if he did not get, the name of Howel Drwg, it throws some light upon the reason why his later namesake was designated Howel Dda.

Howel Drwg, then, was not content with slaying foes, and putting enemies into captivity, but he must needs extend the same acts to his blood relatives.

"Uncle" has become, by modern usage, a term so endearing as now to stand, in trading life, for a most useful and accommodating friend, but in the old times uncles were always regarded with mistrust; and Shakespeare, it will be recollected, in the play of "Hamlet," gave the name to the personification of all that was low and depraved. When Howel came to years of discretion, he put Iago into prison, and as he and Edward Vychan also disappeared from history, the conclusion must be that both were, after some time, cruelly murdered.

But Iago had a wife named Helen, and a son named Cawythu Ddu, and these, getting the aid of a large number of Danes, who were always ready to assist in local outbreaks, invaded the dominions of Howel, and ravaged Anglesey. Helen appears to have been of a somewhat different stamp to her namesake, the wife of Menelaus, and instead of causing war, by her beauty and intrigues, acted in the battle field like another Amazon. Cawythu led the rear of the ravaging army of delighted Danes and Welshmen.

Everything was loot. They had fullest license to burn, kill, and destroy, and to pillage to their heart's content. In the van marched Helen, the

Amazonian leader, and on their way they had to pass through a narrow defile, upon which, perched like a crow upon a steeple, was the impregnable Castle of Cedwm.

On the tower, safe himself from danger, was Howel, and it is creditable to him that he allowed his aunt to pass unmolested, but as his cousin's troops came in sight, and he noticed the gay stripling, flushed with conquest, careering by, the old passions woke up, a deadly aim was taken, and Cawythu fell, pierced by an arrow.

Howel noted the fall, and cried out :

"Are you wounded !"

"Yes," said his cousin.

"Ah, then," was the reply, "you are a dead man, for the arrow was poisoned !"

The news was soon taken to Helen, then steadily marching on, and she exclaimed, "This is a cross hour," and to this day the place bears the name of "Cross Hour," though the legend of the sting of the poisoned arrow is probably forgotten.

THE SISTER'S REVENGE.

A BRECONSHIRE TALE.

PUBLIC-HOUSES were in olden times called wine-houses, and before they were brought under the rule of the law were scenes of the utmost licence. Shooting grounds were attached to many of them for archery, and therein not unfrequently many a fierce fight took place, ending in the death of one and the mortal wounding of the other combatant. In the wine-house heavy potations brewed discord, and to go out into the enclosure and settle differences was a very common occurrence. As the country became more tranquil, and law and order asserted themselves, dangerous pastimes gave way to peaceful ones ; for fencing, and shooting with the bow and arrow—sometimes at one another—ball playing was substituted, and other innocent games ; and if passions were aroused in the ale-house that replaced the wine-house, then nature's weapons were the only ones tolerated.

In the annals of one of the Breconshire families closely connected with

Sir David Gam, there is the record of a sad tragedy. Let us lift the mouldering tapestry in the ancient hall of—— in the neighbourhood of Talgarth, and, entering into the scene whence have passed away more generations than I care to remember, call back, in antique costume and quaint manner, the men and women of the fifteenth century, and see the tragedy played out that once thrilled the whole country around.

'Tis evening time in autumn, and the wine-house of Llinwent is a noisy spot. Herds are grazing in the fields, the rooks are hurrying home—other birds at rest; nature is tranquilly settling down for its rest; but from the roystering place not only come sounds of revelry, but of anger, and forth into the soft evening come a crowd, conspicuous amongst whom are two cousins—David Vaughan, of Hengest, in Herefordshire, and Shon Hir, or John the Tall, as he was called, son of Philip Vaughan, of Talgarth. Though so closely related, there was no good blood between them. From time almost immemorial a feud had raged between the families, each one aspiring to be thought the head of the Vaughans; and as they were about equal in point of wealth, position, and acreage of lands, the emulation between them was all the more bitter, as neither could justly lay claim to precedence.

In the wine-house the old subject of precedence had burst forth, and after a noisy dispute forth they came, as I have stated, not to part in anger, but to decide by the sword which of the two cousins was the better man.

A ring was soon formed. There were no constables then, and the sheriff, who generally looked after these matters, was many a mile away, so, undisturbed, the cousins drew their swords and vengefully rushed at one another. Both men were strong, healthy fellows, and skilled in fence; but the combat was most unequal, for while David was slight and undersized, John, his cousin, was stout and unusually tall. This difference in height alone gave him a great advantage, and, notwithstanding the agility of David, it was soon seen that his chance was but a slight one, and, after a brief but severe contest, he was run through the body, and killed on the spot.

It was a no uncommon issue in those times. The lookers on betook themselves to their homes, Shon Hir, by no means downcast, went to his, and the next day the body of poor David was conveyed to his father's house, from which, only a day before, he had left in full possession of life, and health, and cheerfulness.

Dismal was the wail that echoed through the family home of Hengest. It was sad to see the grey old father sobbing like a child over the body of his only boy, and calling down vengeance upon his destroyer; but still more sad to witness the grief of Ellen.

David and Ellen were the only children of Vaughan of Hengest. They had been playfellows together, had grown up side by side, and in all the little world wherein they moved, there was no better man, no truer type of the brave, loving Welshman to Ellen, than her brother David. Her grief was awful in its absence of anything like demonstration.

She could not weep, she did not rave. With eyes fixed, and face blanched,

and her hands pressed convulsively, she gazed, her whole soul in her eyes upon the blood-stained face, and the rich dark locks that lay matted in sweat and gore. This was her old playmate, this her friend, her dear brother. It was a struggle with her for life. Had she been of weaker frame, such was the intensity of her emotion, that she must have fallen down and died; but her strong nature triumphed, and when the tears rained down her face, she was safe, and they bore her away.

When the first paroxysm had passed the full details were learnt. David's servant, who had been with him at the gathering, and had witnessed the whole affray, told all, and if the old man had not been prevented, he would have saddled horse, and with his faithful men, dashed away to Talgarth, and there either fallen a victim himself, or crushed the destroyer of his son. But his age was too advanced for such a step, and so he only sat in his armchair moaning his son's name, and conjuring up the recollections of his boy from the time when he was a crowing infant, the pet and darling, until he had attained his young manhood.

Ellen said little, but every moment strengthened her motives. She had no brother to act for her, and her father was too old, but she was no weak woman, and, God helping her and giving her strength, she would avenge her brother. So ran her thoughts, and as the days passed each day made her mind more settled, and her plan of action more clear.

As soon as the body of the ill-fated youth was taken to its last home, Ellen selected from her men-servants a trusted spy, and sent him to Talgarth to find out what was being done, and to let her know the movements of the detested cousin. It was not long before the messenger returned with the very information she wished to get, and this was that on a certain day Shon Hir was to attend a shooting match or an archery contest with a party of young men at a place called Llandewi, in Radnor. This was the wished-for opportunity. Very carefully she selected one of poor David's bows, and an assortment of arrows. Next she dressed herself in male attire, studiously careful in every respect to make her disguise complete, even to the feather in the hat and sword at the side, and as Ellen secretly departed, her mission and its object, known only to her faithful tirewoman, she was, woman-like, half led to forget her grief in the honest flattery of her maid. "So handsome a gentleman she had never seen;" but it was only for a moment that smile lit her face; the next the old stern grief settled down, and, with hurried direction to make an excuse for her father, she left. On her way to Llandewi she passed the fatal spot, and if a momentary fit of a woman's weakness had stolen over her as she thought of the trial before her, it was quickly brushed away. "There was the very ground where her dear brother had met his foe, on that grassy sward his blood had flowed like water. From thence, late erect and in full vigour, he had been carried away like a felled ox!" Again came the shadow of her grief over her, and to tighten her sword-girth and pass quickly on was the course instinctively adopted.

She was unattended, and, though the times were rough ones, no fear of

harm or mishap crossed her mind. "She had a stout arm of her own, and a keen sword, and she knew how to use them. Then, had she not David's favourite bow with which she could drive an arrow home at several hundred yards distance? So she brushed on, and, after a few miles walking, came within the sound of voices ringing out loudly from a dingle near the village.

How pleasant the sound heard from a little distance, rising and falling as the wind listeth! Who does not remember journeying homeward after long years of absence, and in the mellow summer evening hearing the merry shout of boys at play? The school is closed, books forgotten, and loudly and gleefully come the tones of happiness.

It was just such a shout that greeted Ellen, and she paused a moment to listen. But it was no boyish glee she heard. Deep-toned voices were there, and she knew at once that the contest had begun. Hurrying to the scene she found herself in the midst of a busy throng, and all was excitement and anticipation. One or two matches had already been concluded, and she was pressed to say whether she would take part in the trial then coming on; but she said, assuming as gruff a voice as she could, that she would wait, so on went the contest, and every good shot was greeted with a burst of applause.

That match ended with the success of Shon Hir, who had already carried off every prize, and great was the acclamation which greeted his prowess.

Ellen looked at him as the decoration was placed around his neck. He was a fine fellow, his face open and manly. There was nothing mean or treacherous in his countenance, and, but for David's memory, his was a form she might have admired as he stood in unstudied attitude, his bow poised, one foot slightly in advance, and his keen eyes flashing forth as he took deliberate aim.

Again the match was declared in favour of Shon Hir, and now only one match more was to be fought out that evening, and Ellen saw that her time was come. Hitherto she had stood a little way out from the crowd, more as a spectator than a competitor; now with assumed easy gait, imitating the braggart as much as possible, she entered amongst the young archers, and loudly called for the best man on the ground to compete with her. Every one looked at her in amazement, and all felt that the challenge was for Shon Hir, who was incomparably the best on the field that day. Shon looked at his slightly-built adversary. "Who could he be? There was a something familiar about the face. He had seen it before; but where? He must be mistaken. Some gallant or other from the English side, but," muttered Shon, "I'll show him the way to send an arrow home!" Shon immediately accepted the challenge, and as was the custom in that day, told the young stranger to shoot first, but this Ellen declined, courteously begging Shon to take first shot. Then strode forth Shon, and taking most careful aim, drew his bow, and the arrow, speeding away like a flash of lightning, quivered in the very centre of the bull's-eye!

"Ah! ah!" roared Shon, full of excitement at his splendid hit, "beat that you stripling, if you can!"

"I'll try!" was Ellen's confident answer, and, placing herself in a studied

attitudo, and taking extreme care to have the arrow in the very centre of the bow, she took the string in-hand, and leisurely pulled it until it grazed her ear, then, while every eye scanned the target, expecting to see another fine hit, she suddenly swerved, and the arrow, fleeing with a speed almost as great as that of her cousin's, pierced Shon to the heart !

That was her bull's-eye ! Such was the march she had calculated upon ! And while every one ran hither and thither in extreme excitement, she made her escape, so that when the body had been taken into the wine-house, and inquiries were made for the stranger, Ellen was gone, and the closest search proved ineffectual to find her.

Still, once at home, she did not hesitate to proclaim aloud what she had done, and openly exulted in having avenged her brother's death.

Ellen Vaughan, from that time called Ellen Gethin, or the Terrible, was voted a heroine throughout the length and breadth of the land. No sheriff brought her to justice, and even the family of Shon Hir confined themselves to lamentations.

In some years after she gave her hand to Thomas ab Rosser, son of Sir Vaughan, Knight, of Tretower, Breconshire, father-in-law to Sir David Gam, and for some years enjoyed a happy life. Three brave sons were hers, and a devoted husband, when the wars between the Red and White Roses aroused the land, and at the battle of Danesmore the brave Sir Thomas fell. Of his prowess and her sorrows the famous bard, Lewis Glyn Cothir, sings plaintively. And she needed consolation. Time passed, and her son Richard also died, and then Ellen fades from history, and all that is left of the brave and loving sister, the devoted wife and fond mother, is what we all get in a greater or lesser degree—a memory.

LIFE BELOW THE EARTH,

OR

WHAT THE COLLIER DARED AND WON.

IN the dark coal heading, under the drip, drip of the ceaseless fall of water from the roof, amidst the keen sulphur-laden air that steadily passed by into the remotest parts of one of our deepest coal mines, worked Jenkins, the collier. You scarcely saw him by the light of his small candle. Intense gloom was around. Silence, too, profound at times, and only broken by the stroke of his mandril, and the occasional clang and rattle of the iron tram.

No sunshine streamed down to him ; the wave of summer leaves and the carol of summer birds came not. In imagination he may have seen the sheen revelling on distant meadow lands, and heard the soft splash of the brook that wandered on. But the refrain of the drip, drip, drip ; and the clang of the iron tram burst in monotonously every moment upon his fancies. Far away the ideal, there the real—the labour for bread that an aged mother might live in comfort, and know nothing of the chill penury of the street, or the cold charity of the workhouse.

Jenkins was simply a collier. He was a young man at the time he first came under our notice, but very different in character and disposition to the men around him. His wages were small but sufficient, as he put them out to the best advantage, and the only luxuries he indulged in were his weekly newspaper and an occasional book from the second-hand book stall. His evenings were passed in the society of his poor old mother, she with her knitting, he with his book, and a glance into the small cottage showed a cleanly, cosy place, which, had it but a little more and a trifle better furniture, would have served well as a pattern workman's home. It was quiet. Woman was there represented by one whose summer had long passed away. The bright, smiling face of man's better half, and the toddling steps and loving coo of infancy were not. If ever Jenkins gave a passing thought to such things, they were brushed aside quickly. He felt that if ever he left the pit it must be by incessant exertions and unremitting self-denial.

Hard was the mental fight, severe as ever the physical struggle on old foughten fields. But with Jenkins no plaudit greeted his onward steps, often shrouded in the gloom of despair.

"You do work too hard, my boy," said his mother in her simple Welsh accents, one day to him as they sat at the homely evening meal. "I wish I wasn't such a burden to you, or could help you." "So you do help me, mother; look what a cheerful home I come to, and as for a burden, we sons should think and work more for our mothers than we do." "Well, well," rejoined the old dame, "I know you never will be tired of me, or of giving me half your loaf, but I feel that I am keeping off one who could do better for you than ever I can." "Oh! oh!" laughed Jenkins, "do you think, mother, I am dying for a wife? No, no. My books are wife and children to me. If I married I should be a collier all my life; and that I don't mean to be. Marriage is a fetter, though a pleasant one perhaps. I intend, God helping me with health, to show that even the coal pit may become a school-room from which a man may go into the world and win a name."

The conversation ended here. The old lady could scarcely follow the drift of her son's remarks, but there came a light into her eye and a tremor to her lip as she looked at "the dear boy! the good boy!" in whose face, now becoming that of a man, lurked, hidden to all but a mother's gaze, the dimples of the baby of long ago.

Strong and fervent, and abiding, is a mother's love; passion may disfigure, a life of vice transform, but through veiled and altered character live to her ever the one tended and fondled in early mother days. Even neglect she can forget, and cruelty forgive; to love her child is a part of her nature, ending only with life.

Drip, drip, drip, the water pattered down, and the blows of the mandril were falling fast. Jenkins was working harder than usual; it was getting near the end of the month, and the pit was in full activity. The colliers were intent on making up for their shortcomings, their frequent holidays, their indulgences, and the rattle of the trams was more frequent, and the play of the rope at the pit's mouth more unceasing. If the surface could have been rolled away, what a scene of arduous life would have been witnessed. Three or four hundred men scattered over a wide tract, labouring in an underground city, and its streets and lanes and teeming life, lights twinkling here and there out of the gloom, and the sounds of labour unremitting.

Have you ever by the sea shore, or in the deep wood, felt the strange, the solemn influence of a sudden lull. One moment, and the wind has been sweeping past, rhyming in with the general activity of nature, with the wave of trees, the harmony of birds, the ripple of the river; the next a sudden pause, not a breath of air moves.

It was so in the deep mine, and the old hands knew in an instant its meaning, and before the mandrils could be thrown aside, the poor garments gathered, there was a sullen report, a puff of laden air, and the fire fiend of the coal pit was upon them, rioting in a strength surpassing all that a stranger can imagine. Coal trucks and horses were tossed aside like straws, and the colliers hurled, burnt and mangled, to the ground. There was no hesitation in the ravage of the fiend; no mercy or selection shown. With equal violence were coal trams

and men dashed to the earth, and in the breath of the fiery power, stealthily creeping on, came the afterdamp, completing the destruction so savagely begun. Those who were working nearer the airway, and had timely warning, escaped the one only to fall victims to the other. The wild and agonising cry of man in the last dire extremity; the frightful shriek of wounded horses were hushed; hushed, too, the struggle, momentary, but great, for life; and silence fell upon the scene as profound as the gloom that enwrapped it. A Gabriel had passed over the highways and byways of the coal city, and its workers lay dead. Above, crowds of earnest and heroic men were making preparations to descend, and as soon as the ventilation was in part restored they penetrated into the mine, in time to save some few poor stragglers, whose vitality was either stronger than the rest, or who had fallen near pools of water, into which they had buried their faces until the storm of death had passed by. Amongst them was Jenkins, but he was at the last gasp, and when taken to the top of the pit lay fluttering between life and death. When his senses did return, and he opened his eyes, there was a shout of delight from the assembled thousands, for he was a well-known man. Around him were his fellow-workers—workers no more; some in every attitude of painful horror, others in a seeming sleep as calm as that of a child. Here, powerfully built men, their huge arms bent over their brawny chests, as if warding off the blow that felled them to the ground. There, men bruised, blackened, their eyeballs staring, as though gazing on a presence such as no one could look upon and live. There, boys of tender age, just from the school and the playground, the 'prenticeship of their collier trade visible about them, and on their little garments the patches and darnings of the mother-hand, the mothers who would never see them alive again! It was a cruel, a woful sight; and for a long time there was wailing and lamentation in the vale over the calamity which had hurled a hundred men to untimely graves.

Jenkins was carried home, and the meeting between him and his mother was a sad one, common, alas! in a land where danger attends the employment of the many, and no restraint is ever placed on the fullest display of the excited feelings.

For months he remained at home, slowly recovering. The pit had been restored to working order, fresh hands replaced those resting silently in the grave, but still day after day Jenkins lay on his humble bed, looking out on the clear blue summer skies, and listening to the far echoing shouts of a happy childhood with the yearning the invalid alone can feel.

When fully recovered he again entered the pit, returning to the old routine of daily work and evening study with fresh zest. In the dark stall, wherein he laboured he found, as he often phrased it, his best study. There was no object to distract the attention, scarcely a sound to be heard. The dark void he could fill with brilliant fancies. The characters of the works he read passed vividly before the mental eye. Grave Shakespeare stood by the flowing Avon; sightless Milton smiled upon him, noble divines thronged around him. Thoughts, too, the winged creations of the mind, passed before him—not the ideas of

great men alone, of the living or the dead, but the conception of his own brain; such as, clothed in brilliant guise, and given with all a Welshman's fine oratory, were some day to enchain thousands and sway their feelings with irresistible power. In that fell darkness, his pure conscience raised no upbraiding shade—peaceful the themes indulged; if ambition pictured great results, they were decked with no false lustre, no mock glory. Faine throned him in the career of exalted usefulness, not on the full onslaught of destruction. His return to work was hailed with pleasure, for though his habits were very different to that of the others, and he had few companions, such was his inoffensive disposition and his readiness to aid either by his strong arm or his humble means, that his friends were numerous, and bold would be the man to utter a word of derision against him in the hearing of his fellow-workmen.

Amongst a large collier community it was but natural to find men of most varied character. To the eye of the superficial they were all alike, mere potter's moulds, the uniform black face, and dusty jacket having its corresponding agreement in a benighted condition both of mind and morals. Jenkins knew better. He could point to one man conspicuous by the plain and most homely patches of his clothing, who was not only an exquisite vocalist, but was able, at the head of the choir he conducted, to hold in pleased thrall the largest assembly. To another, a tall broad-shouldered man, whose acquaintance with the Bible was wonderfully great, and who was able to hold his own in the severest argument. Then political debaters were numerous amongst them, and not a few could be found far superior to those shallow declaimers whose incentive to political agitation was their own poverty, and their incapacity to elevate themselves either by greatness of mind or goodness of heart.

One day, it was Sunday, Jenkins preached for the first time. In connection with a few devout men he had often addressed a cottage gathering, but this was the first time for him to preach. There was one amongst the little congregation who showed unusual restlessness. It was astonishing how often the large brass-rimmed spectacles required rubbing with the corner of the faded shawl; how the poor old hands trembled; how eager the gaze in the direction of the pulpit; how anxiously the head was bent forward to catch every word. But there was general attention that day; sympathy shown when there was any hesitation on the part of the minister; confidence, delight, when the stream of discourse from rocky sources and devious windings, began to flow onward with eloquence and power. The dim spectacles were forgotten to be rubbed; look where one would, brightened eyes were to be seen, and intense interest was exhibited. It was not the trained orator or the gentleman they listened to, but an earnest man of their own order, familiar with their homely lives, with their characters, their needs, and shortcomings; and when to this thorough personal knowledge was coupled the natural gift of eloquence, we need not wonder at the influence he exercised and the converts he won.

After this successful essay he still continued the old round, but not with the same regularity as he found in the coal pit, and when full of years his mother was borne away to the grave, the mandril was laid aside for ever.

With his own little savings, and the aid of many good friends, he entered one of the Welsh colleges, and applied himself industriously to learning, and with rare success. Only a few years elapsed, and his name was to be seen amongst the list of the ordained ministers of his country, and the announcement of his coming, especially to his native locality, was the signal for the gathering of those vast crowds so specially and peculiarly an institution of Wales.

There was no one of his near relatives left to hear of his fame, none to congratulate him on the reward for all his years of earnest labour. No near and dear ones around him to brighten up his home with the sweet presence of ineffable love. That Jenkins felt this home loneliness at times is certain; but his duties were many, and he was wedded to them. Every step taken was onward and upward. English congregations he would fascinate equally with those of his own countrymen. There was a fire in his oratory, and a swell of action about him which commanded all attention, and won alike the interest of gentle and simple. Though his heart yearned for his native mountains, his destiny led in mature manhood far away from them, and made his residence in one of the most cultured of societies, and his special province a chair of theology, which he held to the day of his death.

There was an occasional abstraction of character about him, and on Christmas Eve it was strikingly visible to his friends.

He had to preach before a large and fashionable congregation, and as he arose and turned over the notes before him, he suddenly changed his attitude to one of intense thought.

Drip, drip, he heard again the falling water, and the stroke of the busy mandril; again to his ears came the clang of the iron tram and the coarse shouts of the driver. The dark coal mine, the throng of fellow-workers were there, he lived again the daily round, supped off the collier's fare, stood once more amongst the villagers, enjoying with them their simple sports, heard his mother's voice, and sat by her aged form in his old collier's garb.

Was he dreaming? he passed his hand across his brow, and the vision of the unforgotten faded. Before him sat a thousand admirers; beauty and fashion, intellect and rank were there, and though time had slightly silvered his hair, one loving soul, affluent in goodness and riches, whose destiny he afterwards shared, gazed and wondered.

The spell was broken; such a torrent of thought, fiery capped—such a cataract of eloquence had never been heard within those walls, and when the service was over, the awed yet delighted crowd withdrew homeward, vehemently praising one who never forgot that he had been simply a collier boy.

WHO WAS HARVEY?

A TALE OF SOCIAL LIFE IN WALES.



AMONGST the singular acquaintances of a lifetime there was one man who from the first attracted my particular interest, and yet he was only a collier. Many will smile at this statement, especially in a locality where colliers are as plentiful as blackberries in autumn time. Still, to the least observant, there was an indescribable something which singled Harvey out from the mass. He was tall and well built, and when I knew him first must have been about thirty-five years of age. His face was as bare as the palm of one's hand, and the impression amongst his friends was that he never washed it. The tinge of coal was always upon it. Whether he washed his face on Sundays or not no one but his landlady knew. He was never seen in church or chapel, and openly avowed opinions at variance with dissenting minister and clergyman. There was another peculiarity about him—he had a decided stoop, which considerably reduced his height, but once or twice in conversation I noticed that the stoop disappeared, and he stood perfectly erect; but, as if involuntarily, he as suddenly fell into the old habit, and it was remarkable what a difference it made in him.

His face, though so disguised, indicated some degree of refinement, and his eyes were especially attractive. Piercing and glittering when in conversation, they generally fell upon the casual object or person with a sleepy gaze, as if half shrouded by their long eyelashes, or, as it struck me, purposely to lessen the glitter which distinguished them.

He was only a collier. His clothes were patched, and his wages, even in the comparatively good times of twenty-five years ago, did not exceed a pound a week; but, as he admitted, he was lazy, had no wife or child, and his wants were few. He worked simply to live, and being a remarkably sober man little was required. His luxuries were newspapers and books; these, with a pipe—for he was an inordinate smoker—were all that he cared about.

How I knew him—why we came frequently in contact—are matters of no interest. Sufficient that I saw him frequently, and the oftener the more was I impressed with his superiority to the general class. His diction was good, he had read considerably, and in logical discussion, even upon his favourite but unpopular themes of scepticism, he would hold his own, even with men

who had professionally devoted their life, from college to old age, in elucidation and exposition of Holy Writ.

But his reading was not confined to the sober fields of thought. A great war was raging when I knew him, and in this he was much interested. He noted every movement of the allied forces with interest; extolled, lamented, or blamed as the occasion justified, and upon supreme occasions, when describing the great victory won, would thrill his friends with the energy of his manner, his flow of language, and flashing eye, until, as if recalled by some deep-seated secret, he would droop into silence and seeming unconcern.

Man, however abrupt or singular, is a social animal, and nature decreed, by giving each one special traits, either good or bad, that he should mix with his fellows. Thus the collective virtues and intellectual powers became the image on which he was fashioned, and the collective vices no less represent the evil genius of humanity, popularly described with the tail and horns!

Every man, I repeat, is a social animal, and, however quaint, has a friend. Defoe understood this by giving Crusoe his man Friday. Harvey's familiar was a very ordinary man with no originality, no virtue out of the common, only that he was a good listener. He was Harvey's echo and clung to him. I never heard him dissent or object to any opinion Harvey advanced. Applause was his function, and he did it quietly but invariably. In the stirring strikes of the Welsh colliers, in their various movements, I often pictured Harvey as the leading spirit. He was by nature a leader, and could move a great mass of men with the utmost ease, but, excepting an occasion or two, he always refrained from public action, and on those occasions he only addressed his fellows in their committee-room, and in his working dress, but with a power so telling that more than one, hearing his name, exclaimed, "Who is Harvey?"

Strangest of men, evidently fitted to have taken a post amongst those who think, and direct, rather than amongst the human mechanism which is driven, Harvey lived some half dozen years to my recollection and knowledge, and then I saw him no more. It was a month, possibly two, before I noticed with a start that I had not seen him for a length of time, and almost simultaneously with the thought the echo, the familiar friend, Harvey's inseparable companion, stood before me.

"Where is Harvey?" I said, "I have not seen him for an age."

"He is dead!" was the reply, "and buried."

"Good God!" I exclaimed, "is it possible? What was the matter, an accident?"

"Yes," said his friend, "he was brought home with his head crushed, and only lived a few minutes."

"Poor, poor fellow," I exclaimed, "and such a fate!"

"But who and what was he?" I asked.

"Did he never tell you?" was the query.

"No. I never liked to question him."

"Ah, his life was a sad one," exclaimed his friend. "His family was a good

one, he was well educated, but his habits were bad, and quarrelling with his friends he enlisted into the regulars."

"I thought he had been a soldier," I said.

"Yes, he was several years one of the rank and file, and in that time he corrected his habits and set himself, not only to improve his mind, but to get promotion. He did both, and was fast nearing the highest post amongst the non-commissioned officers, when he and the lieutenant of the regiment fell out. They were on active service then. The row took place, Harvey told me, just before going into action. No one but themselves was present, but it was bitter, and there was a lady in the case. When the battle was over, the lieutenant was reported amongst the slain, and Harvey amongst the missing. He came to Wales and saw that the coal pit was a good hiding place and the clothes of a collier a good disguise, and here he has been. There was never any outcry or reward offered, as it was thought he must have fallen, and was buried, unrecognised."

"And do you think he killed the lieutenant?" I asked.

"God only knows!" said his friend. "He never told me. He had a fiery spirit, but he was a generous soul. If he did, he suffered. Ten years he was in a Welsh coal pit, yet any day by disclosing himself he might have claimed kinship with people, not only with tails, but with long handles to their names."

And this was Harvey.

I have often thought, when thinking of the poor collier deserter, that the coal pits of Wales have concealed many a time from the knowledge of friends of position in the world, and from the hands of justice, men, who, in one sense or in another, which the reader can well understand, ought to have figured in the world.

THE LEGEND OF THE WHITE LADY OF OYSTERMOUTH CASTLE.

IT was the close of summer time. Fair summer which had glorified the land, and made beautiful every single nook, seemed loth to leave. Her sunsets had tinged the leaves with gold, and glorious colours yet lingered on the flowers. Nature, in her ceaseless round, seemed to pause, and there was a soothing hum in the air, and a refined cadence in the groves, as the fairest season in all the year prepared, like the swallow, to wing its way, and leave the scene for the blasts, and the snows, and frosts of chill wintertime.

At such a time, in the meadow fronting the Oystermonth Castle, there stood a woman, differing in every respect from the women of the locality. She was tall and fair, yet with the tinge of the southern sun upon her face. But her dress was the distinctive feature. This was purely white, and supported the name she had won amongst the serfs and followers of Neville, which was, the "White Lady."

How such a woman could be the wife of the saturnine, robust Earl Neville was a mystery. It was the oak stooping down to the aspen. A tiger toying with a beautiful dove. No one ever saw anything but a wan, fearful smile, or heard her voice raised above the faintest accents. Gentle to a degree, kind to a fault, ever exhibiting a thoughtful regard for the poor serfs who came now and then up to the castle gates, so she lived. Every now and then the retainers heard the burly earl roaring in her chambers with unsuppressed passion. Loud and stormy was his voice, and as it was followed by a low scream and succeeded by silence, listeners vowed that my lord had struck his lady as usual, and women's eyes filled with tears, and strong men felt their hands instinctively clench.

Nay, one worthy, who had received many a kindness from the White Lady, so far forgot himself one day so as to draw his sword—he was alone—and go through a most elaborate attack, ending by drawing his weapon through an imaginary opponent, he himself dancing jubilantly afterwards!

There were few women in the castle, and the few were old, and as gnarled and rugged as the thorns on the hill side. Ancient prototypes of the Sarah Camps of modern days, they had no evening indulgences in fragrant tea or seductive old Tom, but brewed instead a mixture of honey and mead, which soon affected the head and made the tongue loquacious.

One evening, two of these ancient worthies were sitting in a square cell-like chamber fronting the sea.

Their labour of the day was over, their lord was away, and the lady was at rest. Out from its place of concealment came a brown pitcher, from which anything but a tempting drink was poured into curiously shaped mugs. Still stranger the compound seemed. It must have had a fine flavour judging from the lips that smacked, and the eyes that glistened, after a drink. They sat themselves cosily down, and chatted, and, while the wind beat high, crooned and chirped, old dames as they were, fitter to ride on broomsticks than do housework and cook savoury pottage or drink metheglin.

"Ah," said one, "if my lady only did the right thing, she wouldn't die slowly as she is doing now from the cruel brute!"

"However, did they come together?" said the youngest of the two, who had not long been at the castle.

"Didn't you hear?" said Hilda.

"No," was the reply.

"Well," said Hilda, dropping her voice to a low tone, "it is said that master, years ago, used to gather all his men together, and go down to Milford Haven, and then sail over seas to some country about a day's sail off, and run up into the place, and burn, and slay, and come back with great booty. Well, it happened that one time that even a bishop's palace was not spared, and in the fight most of the men and women were slaughtered. One lady, who was said to be the bishop's niece, was saved from the flames. She was very beautiful, and my lord carried her off. One of the men who came back whispered that she struggled hard, and said she was the plighted bride of some prince, that he would give any ransom, but it wouldn't do. She was brought here and married against her will in the chapel belonging to the castle. Poor thing, she had better have died. He uses her cruelly, and many and many a time have I seen bruises on her poor shoulders from his violence."

"But what do you mean by saying that she wouldn't die slowly if she did the right thing?"

"Oh," said Hilda, "that's another secret. In the lowest dungeon of the castle they used to keep prisoners until they died. Many a time some poor fellow has been put there and forgotten, the men going off to fight somewhere, and so the prisoner would starve to death, and when his old gaoler came back there would only be a corpse half-eaten by the rats!"

"Mercy me!" said the listener with a shrug, and both quaffed of the mug to drive away the horrible picture from their minds.

"Well, long before my lady was brought here, my lord came back from a long journey with some prisoners, and amongst others, a monk. The monk had put himself in the way of the earl, and promised to lead him over a dangerous marsh, by which he might fall upon the Welsh and surprise them; but, instead of that, my lord lost several of his best men, and was nearly destroyed himself; so the monk was brought here that he might be starved to death like others before him."

"The saints spare us !" said her listener, as she shivered again. "Surely that ought to have brought my lord to a miserable death, and soon."

"Not a bit. The monk didn't die so easily as my lord thought. In the middle of the dungeon was a large pillar, and the youngest gaoler, who deeply pitied the monk hollowed out several places where food might be kept, and this was brought secretly and put there. My lord was suspicious of everybody, and used to go down himself and search about to see if food was given ; but the secret of the pillar was not found. Still, what with being shut up so long from the fresh air, and having only poor food, the monk gradually declined and died. Before he died he told his young friend that the pillar should be sacred evermore ; that if any good man or woman, free from sin, should come to the pillar, and pray there, and pace around it nine times, his or her wish would be granted."

"Has it ever been tried ?" said the friend.

"Not that I know of, successfully," said Hilda, "for who is there that has not sin ? I have heard of some of our people going down there at midnight and trying it, but they always came back frightened."

"Do they see anything, then ?"

"Well, some won't say, but old Lenof vowed he saw the monk."

"Tell her, Hilda !" said the other. "Tell my lady, and perhaps she may escape."

"I will, I vow it," rejoined Hilda, and the two old cronies went rather heavily to rest.

Neville is away, hunting, through brushwood and briar, his old opponents the leather jackets. He has had a tough fight in the furthest parts of Gowerland, but we assume he has conquered, and many a noble foe has been laid low, while he, armour-clad and valiant to a degree, has escaped without a scratch. He is resting from his labours. It is night, and armed men pace around the camp fire, while he and his retainers sleep.

It is night, and the castle, far away from the battle scene, is shrouded in gloom. Only the distant surge and the night-bird's scream strike upon the ear. The castle is strong, and requires few defenders, and those defenders are wrapped in deep slumber. Only a light is visible from the western tower—the light in my lady's chamber—and it burns strongly, like a beacon-star, to be seen miles away. Had a watcher been on the distant hill he would have seen that steady light suddenly move, and, at the midnight hour, traced it as it went from casement to casement, from tower to basement, and then disappear.

What did it mean ?

That night, just before the bell of the castle clanged forth the hour, Hilda and my lady were closeted together. The time was opportune, for the earl was away, and my lady was not proof against the superstitions of her race. She was frail in health. Her life was a martyrdom, and dearly, ardently, more than for anything on earth, she longed to be free. She had heard the tale of the wishing post from Hilda, and, though at first disposed to smile, yet

in time she thought even from the reed she might deserve help, and, God helping her, she would try. So, at the midnight hour, they cautiously made their way down to the dungeon. There was no captive, and the great door, with its rusty bars, was wide open. They were scared though, for the light startled the rats, and there was a clatter amongst dry bones in the corner, which froze their blood, as they thought of the wretched fate some poor prisoner had met. Still, in they went, a damp, heavy air clinging around the torch, and there was the pillar, the "wishing post." Meekly, as before pictured saint, she bowed and prayed, while Hilda stood in shivering suspense. Her prayer ended, she walked around the pillar, and then, her task ended, she tottered into Hilda's arms. The ordeal was almost too great; the prayer to be free almost beyond her power. Cautiously they stepped up the narrow and winding steps, seeing nothing, hearing nothing. No monk with ghastly visage peered around the corners, though Hilda to her dying day said she saw him. But the pure lady, without sin, innocent as the child that crows in its mother's arms, saw nothing, and arrived at the chamber. Hilda was dismissed, and the lady sought sweet hopeful sleep.

The morning rose over the battle field, and with the first gleams of the sun the earl was afoot and soon they were marching homewards.

"Hang that chicken-hearted jade," he muttered in his way; "more pouting, more tears. Sorry ever the day I tore her from the Irish coast. No more white-faced girls; no more monks. Doubly hang that monk! I dreamt last night the brute was at my throat, and though I put out all my strength his thin sinewy arms wound around me like snakes, and down, down I was forced, my throat swollen and parched, my eyes starting from their sockets! 'Twas a horrible dream," added the earl, as he shrugged his shoulders and rode onward with greater speed, as if to drive away fell thoughts.

The morning rose gently on the Mumbles heights; the sun tinging hill and tower and sparkling upon the waves. There was a lazy movement in the Castle of Oystermouth. The heavy portcullis was raised for the herdsman to enter, and here and there a figure might be discerned looking out upon the tranquil scene. The women folk were busy preparing the morning meal, all except Hilda, whose midnight adventure had made her sleep later and heavier than usual. When she did awake it was with a start, and, seeing that the sun was getting high in the heavens, she hastily dressed herself, and, hurrying along the corridor to the breakfast-room, inquired if her ladyship had called. No she had not. So Hilda, satisfied that her mistress had also slept late, quietly made her way to the chamber, and, knocking, entered. Through the latticed window the sun shone in full glory upon the bed, lighting up with unusual power the whole face, whiter than ever Hilda had seen it, of her ladyship. Like a saint, with hands folded on her breast, she lay, the eyes fixed on the morning sky—so fixed that Hilda rushed to the bed and fell, in trembling sorrow, on the body. It was but a body, the prayer had been answered, the "wish" granted, for the soul had fled to the Eternal, and the White Lady was—free!

When Neville returned, and found that his victim was dead he swore roundly, and men and women had a sorry time of it. Then when the storm had passed his troubles began, and what with his accusing conscience and the periodical visits of the monk, Oystermouth became unbearable; but whether he forgot his torments in rougher crusades, or turned penitent and voyaged to Jerusalem, this chronicler cannot state. Hundreds of years have passed away since then, and long ago the castle has become simply a picturesque ruin. But every summer men and maidens journey there, some to wander where Neville strode, and retainer paced his rounds, and not a few to descend into the dungeon and walk around the wishing post, some to wish for sweethearts, others for fame, and old as well as young to pray for money.

Many a rude formula is used, and sticking pins in the pillar is resorted to, in order to further the spell.

As the antiquary brightens up a "rubbing" and restores a picture, so I, from fragments heard at a late visit, put the orthodox formula for wishing for money into order, and with it end my tale.

Round and round, like the old hag
Wider the round, bigger the bag.
One round, two, three, and a four,
So we trot on the dungeon floor.
Five, six, seven, and a eight,
Keeping time and the body straight.
Now for the wish, round number nine,
Stick a pin in the pillar, just in a line,
Then look on the wall, away from the light,
And there you will see the Lady in White.

OWEN GLYNDWR AND THE SKELETON.



HERE are few characters in Welsh history around whom more poetry hangs than Owen Glyndwr. In retirement the scholar, in action the warrior, to the fair a thorough gentleman, to the poor generous and complaisant, and yet, in the closing years of life no man had a bigger skeleton in his closet than Owen. We have all our skeletons! The outside world knows nothing of them, yet in our inner consciousness we know we have one. It may be but a memory, yet even as athwart a May-day a cloud darkens, so in the midst of festivity, of jollity, the memory comes, and the light leaves the eye, and a shadow covers the face, and seems to fall upon the heart.

Owen had a kinsman named Howell Sele, and in the days when patriotic efforts were filling the land with glory, and with blood, Howell estranged himself from his people by taking part with the Lancastrians. This act destroyed all Owen's friendship. For the lowest hind in his employ to be a traitor to his country was unpardonable, but for one of the race of the Glyndwr's to do so was a sin that nothing could efface,

The Abbott of Kymmer thought otherwise. Good old man, more imbued with faith and holiness than versed in knowledge of human nature, he thought that if he could bring the two chieftains together, the soothing influences which might be brought to bear, the memory of early days, of boyish friendship, possibly would drive away all feud, and effect a lasting friendship.

Perhaps he was right as regarded Owen, for that illustrious worthy had a noble soul, but he erred with respect to Howell.

The abbot contrived a meeting. It was in the vicinity of Nannau, in Merionethshire, where Howell lived, and the abbot was delighted with the cordiality of the meeting, and, leaving the two together, he disappeared.

Forth one summer's day the chieftains wandered. Glyndwr studiously avoided any topic of difference. The historian is mute over the interview: Let us fill up the void. Both were men of fine stature, and well versed in arms. If Howell had the largest frame Owen possessed greater nervous power and energy. He was one of nature's kings, quick in conception, rapid in action, yet slow, by reason of his philosophic character, to adopt any rash course, but when adopted he resembled his own mountain torrents and was overwhelming.

"So, Howell, we meet again, and in amity."

"We do, Owen, but I could wish that you saw how useless it is to contend against the power of England, and cease to create disaffection in the country!"

"There you and I differ, Howell. If to your household a stranger came, and sought to take possession, to oust you, and seize your property, would you not resent, and exert all your power to expel?"

"Certainly," said Howell.

"Well, we are in the same position. Wales is our own land. We do not crave one rood over the borders; but we do claim to possess, and will, that which is our own."

"But you have not power enough to hold it," said Howell. "The Saxon is more than your match. Defeated once, they can bring superior forces again, and must beat you, even by force of numbers. It is better in such a case to make the best of a bad case, and, instead of keeping the poor mountaineers in a ferment, to side with the stronger, and, by so doing, get a position by policy, which you could not by force."

"That," said Owen, hotly, "is not the sentiment of a Welshman. So, going back to my first illustration, you would, seeing you could not defeat the intruder of your household, welcome him, and let him share your possessions, and even allow your wife to——. But there, Howell!" he exclaimed, breaking off his sentence, "enough of this, look at that doe, you always was a good marksman with your bow, see if you can strike the game."

Owen had not observed the fitful light that gleamed in the eyes of Howell. Suddenly drawing his bow at the mark, that worthy, apparently bent upon slaying the doe, as suddenly turned and discharged his arrow with all his force at Owen's breast. But Glyndwr wore armour underneath his vest, and, though staggered, was unhurt. In a moment all kinship, all friendship, all philosophy flew. He saw before him a ruffian who wanted his life. Drawing his sword, he called upon him to do the same, and in that green glade, without a spectator, save the sweet singing birds and the distant deer, they fought. Far above the sound of the river's song was the clash of steel. They fought with greed for life. Well trained, nerved in each subtle cut and thrust, they wound around each other, until the glade was trampled as if by a troop of contending foes. Howell fought for his life, for he knew the prowess and the skill of his kinsman. Owen fought for revenge, and he soon had it, for, watching his opportunity, when the other had become wearied and less active, Owen dashed upon him, cut him down, and by a thrust let the life blood of his foe stream out upon the earth.

With an ordinary man it has been the case that when his foe is at his feet, rancour flies, and in comes slow-paced melancholy. Not so with Owen. Sounding his horn as he rushed from the spot, he soon had around him his faithful troop, and marching at their head he proceeded to the residence of Howell, and forthwith burnt it down to the ground. It was only when the household had fled, the building razed, and the night, coming on apace, that the fever of revenge began to subside. The day had been a full one. In the morning his kinsman was in the full possession of life and health, house and

lands. Now he was dead, his family scattered, and his residence burnt to ashes. It was an awful revenge. Owen began to loose his warlike feelings; philosophy, grave, thoughtful, gleamed from his brow. As he mused his regrets became frenzied. He was in despair. What should he do? How hide his dreadful deed?

Leaving his men and bidding them disperse he hastened back to the spot where but a few hours before he had walked with Howell, and where after that short fierce combat he had left him dead. As he neared the scene there was a scampering away of some beast of the woods which had already been at work at its tyrant man, but skulked away at the firm tread of Owen. There lay the vanquished, and in the darkening night came the thought, how hide the dreadful deed? Sorely disturbed, Owen walked to and fro, plotting and contriving. Suddenly he came to a blasted oak of large size and great bulk, but hollow. "Ah, the very thing," he exclaimed, as he sprang down from his examination and quick as thought the huge body of Howell was in his arms, and, by dint of repeated efforts, he not only succeeded in getting it to the top of the oak but in placing it down the hollow so carefully that only by mounting the tree could the awful secret be disclosed.

His work accomplished, the deed hidden, Owen Glyndwr walked moodily away, a changed man. True, he had fought fairly, but there was something of the assassin in this concealment, and his own soul told him that he had done a sorry deed, and was ashamed of it. On the field of warfare he could have seen foe after foe go down, heard their cries for mercy, listened to their groans and watched the hot blood spring from the fount of life, and be all forgotten the next moment.

But this! that white corpse-like face on which the wolf was feeding, the change from life and sparkling conversation to death and despair, was horrible, and forth Owen rushed away and time after time he tried to drown his sorrow and to keep back the skeleton in the closet. Sometimes the effort was successful, yet all who knew Owen intimately, knew that to his dying day, in the midst of home happiness, amidst the whirl of state, cares of life, patriotic strivings, a sombre feeling seemed to possess him, and he was like a haunted man.

Howell was supposed to have perished in the flames of his household gods, but a many a surmise was hazarded by the poets of an after day as to the disappearance of Howell. Time, which solves most problems, solved this. During a great storm the huge oak was riven in two by a lightning flash, and forth upon the glade fell the whitened skeleton of HOWELL SELE.

How it came there no one knew, and again conjecture ran wild. To this day the art of the romancist is exercised to explain the mystery, but the searcher for facts need not stray from this narrative.

THE LADY OF CASTELL COCH.

CHAPTER I.



FEW castles have a lordlier look than that of Castell Coch, with its belt of corn, woodland, and pasture. There, in the twelfth century, Owen Griffith lived in state, a feudal king, strong of arm, quick of speech. No one was readier in action than he, and no one quicker in resenting an insult. He was a true Welshman, a fast friend and a fierce foe, and his annals, like the notched tomahawk of the Red Indian, bore evidences of the relentless way in which he displayed the latter characteristic in the acquisition of castles and spoil.

But time had told on Owen, as it does on all mundane things ; it had weakened his arm and enfeebled his gait. He was not the bold warrior that he once was, and he saw that, even as his forefathers had fought and died so the day was nearing when he too would have to lie down and be at rest.

How wonderful is the power and influence of time ! We see a bold bad man in our midst, who has no respect for virtue, and still less for God. He seems to possess a charmed life, and, like the fabled Midias, all that he touches is turned to gold, and with gold he boasts that he can buy everything that life affords or man can own. Woman, the noblest creature of the Divine, whose intellectual perceptions are inspirations, not, like our own, acquisitions, is to him a toy, played with one hour, and the next thrown aside, a bruised flower, to be trampled in the mud. Art, learning, are to him petty crafts, akin to feats of jugglery. Gold, and the power it brings is his god, and it alone does he worship.

Wonderful is time ! One day we envy or wonder ;
We look, and, he is gone.

Upon all, bad and good alike, it falls with soothing, correcting or remedying influence ; over the ruined tower, hanging its traces of ivy and healing wounds caused by death and desolation that no man could heal.

Griffith was not a bad man, neither was he a saint. His true position in the category was perhaps, like most of us moderns, neither one nor the other, occasionally exhibiting some excellent qualities and sometimes showing that moral weakness which the pulpit insists upon as a relic of the Fall !

Owen was blessed with a daughter who, in those pre-cosmetic and panier days, was a delightful picture to contemplate.

I would not describe her as the novelist is apt to sketch his heroine:—a picture of graceful animation. She was a child of nature. In her days there was neither piano nor crotchet work. Some little tapestry occupied her nimble fingers, and there was a harp upon which, by old Gwilym's aid, she had mastered an air. Then as she was motherless, for years before that at which my tale opens the dearly beloved and gentle wife of the rough Owen Griffiths had been laid to sleep, the housework of the castle in those primitive times had to be overlooked by her, and she was not too proud to more than busy herself with the cows and the cream, and the plentiful store of bees and honey.

So Hawys had no time for sentimental reflection, even had such matters then occupied any mind, but her days were days of usefulness, and her nights sweet dreams, periods of rest which restored the rare bloom of her cheeks and the elasticity of her tread.

People lived then pretty well as they do now. Humanity is about the same, not only in every age, but in every clime; and the garb and speeches are nearly the only distinctions. Owen and his family, and men and womenkind, who lived in the clustering white-washed cottages, ate, drank, worked, and slept. Shops were unknown institutions; the great and almost only place of trade was the periodical fair. Weavers made the homespun, women the stockings, cunning hands amongst the men turned out smiths' work, the youths fashioned arrows just as the gipsy boys now turn out clothes pegs, and the same knife that shaped the arrow was also quick in cutting out a spoon or a dish from a piece of wood. This was the work of peaceful times, combined with the little attention that was given to agriculture. Nature did nearly all in the field, and man then simply assisted. In our day men work and nature is the dutiful servant. But peaceful days were the exceptions, and if the Welsh princes were not engaged collectively in fighting the English king, then they were sure to have a feud amongst themselves, and these feuds they carried on with a fierce earnestness that too often consumed the opponents, and left the prize in dispute to be seized by a third, or by the king.

The same traits exist now, but the times are altered, and the weapons are different. By the pen or the voice the descendant of the old race gives expression to his manly indignation in a style as unfettered as the wind that careers over his ancient mountains; and as the arena for combat is now closed, and the law has a gloomy and vindictive way of dealing with men who interfere with the silver cord and the golden bowl illegally, they rush into law, ruin themselves as surely as their predecessors killed one another, leaving lands and stock to the enjoyment of lawyer or Crown.

Owen Griffith had fought and had suffered. He knew too, that while he was getting older and weaker his foes were closing around him, and chief of these, sad to narrate, but not at all wonderful to the student of Welsh history, were his five brothers. These brothers, men of position and wealth, but

inferior in both to their elder brother Owen, saw that the day would soon come when the old lion would die, and then there was only a poor little girl between them and vast domains. They talked over this with extreme unction. They took furtive visits to the hilltop, and gazed down upon Castell Coch, and there luxuriated, ogres as they were, over the coming feast, and the dainty morsel they would swallow.

But Owen was also a diplomatist, and, ardent Welshman as he was, he determined to sacrifice his national feelings to save his child. Nation gave way to nature. So, feeling the infirmities of life coming even more quickly, he journeyed to the Parliament at Shrewsbury, and resigned into the king's hands the whole of his lordship, receiving them again from the monarch as a fief or holding under the Crown. Only his daughter knew of the transformation. He was still Lord of Powys, ruled unfettered as of old, but in his own consciousness he was only an appendage, a part of the fringe, a tassel to the dignity of another.

CHAPTER II.

The pomp and pride and circumstance are gone.
Throned, yet dethroned, a picture, puppet, not a man. *Anon.*

The sands in the hour-glass of Owen Griffith's life were running fast, as they always do at the end. Note the hour-glass, and how slowly at the beginning one grain follows another. Like the progress of infancy, one month seemeth like to a whole year, but faster and faster go the grains, and so rapidly do they fly at the close that the actual disappearance of the last can scarcely be detected. Very soon after his return from Shrewsbury he laid himself down and died.

Whether his somewhat sudden decease was caused by the abandonment of his old national feelings, the chroniclers do not say, but it is likely that the feeble frame had been sustained by the vigorous independent spirit, and, this nourished no more, the stalwart oak gave way and crumbled into dust.

With sorrowful faces but gleeful hearts four of the brothers hastened to Castell Coch to play the hypocrite, just as many a mourner now does, save that crape and broadcloth were not in use, and cambrie was unknown.

They consoled with the maiden; they talked of the old times they had had with their brother when boys, and lamented that any feud should have arisen to lessen the old affection; and they swore roundly, by peculiar Welsh oaths, which had reference to the scene surveyed by Virgil and to the presiding power who was so intimately mixed up in the abduction of Proserpine; and the girl believed them, and, with all her love for her dead father in her heart and welling from her eyes, put her little hand into the horny ones and promised she would be a dutiful little maid, and would love and obey. Her fifth uncle William, who was Lord of Mawddy, was a man of a better stamp.

He had not been over much in love with his brother Owen, as he thought with the rest that in the division of lands Owen had received too much. Still, he could not dissemble or feign regret which he did not feel, so he attended the funeral, and then left, leaving his brothers to act the part of executors until the maiden became of age. The old routine of the novelist at this stage would here call up Gwilym the harper, with whom the young lady would have a tearful conference, in which there would be reference to some young Llewellyn or other; but I cannot infringe upon historical probabilities, as there does not appear any reference to any suitor at this time, and Gwilym the harper, a gentleman pleasant to look at as a picture, but of doubtful sanitary character, and not over-given to ablutions, need not be brought upon the scene.

The grave closed over the old Welsh lord, and matters seem to have gone for a time smoothly. The fair lordship was ruled by the brothers just as if it were their own, and the young lady, having no heavy milliners' bills or subscriptions to Mudie's to annoy her, quietly blossomed into womanhood as gracefully as the rose expands into perfection. But then came troubles—not of a lover kind, for still no daring suitor had been found hardy enough to face four grim uncles and plead his love at her feet, but troubles of a monetary character. She found herself hampered and thwarted at every step. She had no money allowed her to give in benison, or to buy a fair young colt of the mountains, or some of the rare work the wandering peddler exhibited in lace or gold; and little by little it dawned upon her mind that her father's property had been seized by her uncles, and that she was simply a servant, acting as housekeeper without wage, and living upon sufferance and charity.

She began to get sleepless nights, and there was more of the lily and less of the rose on her countenance than used to be. Still she gave no sign of what she felt and thought, and the uncles kept on their way undisturbed.

Months passed. Spring had given way to summer, and the woods, never neglected, as poor man often is, put on their summer suits, and looked most beautiful. To an utilitarian eye, however, there was more of the wood than of the corn in that neighbourhood. Great wastes abounded, fenced here and there with rude unmortared stone walls, and nowhere were square plots of verdancy with trim green hedgerows as now. Still-summer sunshine threw its gold over every defect, and there was a murmur in the song of the stream, and a cadence in the outpourings of the lark even as delightful as in our time; but then it was the playing out of a grand drama on a noble stage to an empty, or at all events a heedless or inattentive, house; think of a concert without an audience, of roses blooming with no appreciative nose! As well imagine fond turtles—not doves—sunning themselves in bliss most innocent upon unknown shores, long prior to the advent of aldermen and mayors! Summer in mid-Wales brought about a very necessary condition. It made the roads, which were huge ruts, or as like ditches as possible, more easy to traverse, and this fact decided the mind of the fair lady Hawys upon the course to take. Her dead father had been a baron of the king's creation.

This he had told her; why should she not make her way to the king? This was her thought, and all her wits were exercised to find an opportunity for carrying out her scheme. Gwilym, of course, was taken into confidence, and told of her intention, at which the worthy old man was alarmed beyond measure. "To ride to London!" said he, "why, lady, it's madness, pure madness. I remember once when our good lord who is gone, journeyed there before you were born, Hawys, and it took him a week to reach there, and the troubles and dangers he met with were awful. He said he'd never go again. Even in peaceful times like now it's a great risk, Hawys. The Saxon hasn't very great love for the Welsh. They say we cross the border too often for their liking, and that our arrows have keen points. No, no, Hawys, don't go." But the little lady was resolute, and she reminded Gwilym that even if she died on the way, or was carried off to sea and captivity as many a poor Welshman and Welshwoman were, what then, "Gwilym," she exclaimed, "am I certain of my life here? My uncles want the property, and once put me out of the way and they can do as they like."

Ladies, however weak and infirm of purpose, are rather obstinate when it comes to the point, and Hawys vindicated the characteristic of her sex, and steadily persisted in making her preparations.

One or other of her uncles was always resident at the castle, so the difficulty was in getting a day, for if she could obtain a day's start she felt herself safe. Fortunately a hunting day was announced. The *lurck*, or roebuck, was to be hunted, and preparations on a grand scale began to be put forward. Hawys saw her opportunity, and, hurrying on the evening before the hunt to the stables, took the man in charge into her confidence, and by promise of a good reward on her return succeeded in getting him to invent an excuse, by which a favourite black mare could be kept at home. She knew, with all a woman's sagacity, that if she pleaded illness on the day of the hunt it might be taken as an excuse for herself, but not for the mare, which would be immediately picked up by someone; and her reasoning proved correct.

The day came, and the sound of horn and hound rang around Castell Coch. More active than strong, as Giraldus describes the ancient Welsh, the young bounded hither and thither, now racing at the top of their speed and again wrestling with each other with boisterous cry and mirthfulness, while the older and the more sedate looked to the primitive trappings of their unkempt horses or waited quietly, looking up at the castle for the lords to come forth. William, lord of Mawddy, was absent, so also was David, who on hunting the *sahnon* had slipped out of his coracle and had a narrow escape of being drowned. John, Griffith Vychan, and Llewellyn were there, and with them a number of friends, full of eager anticipation at the chase in view. Hawys pleaded sickness, and as she was really unwell no pressure was exerted, but the mare when asked for could not be found. "She had broken loose" the man thought, "the night before, but he would be away at once in search, and he would soon have her back;" the mare all the time being quietly stabled in a little hollow quite out of the way of any probable course the hunt would

take. And so with renewed uproar, and shout, and song, the mass of men and dogs swept away, and find or no find, Hawys knew that she could get a fair start. Her preparations were simple, a bundle of oaten cakes fastened to the saddle, a little money in her purse, and bidding old Gwilym a tearful farewell which sadly discomposed that worthy, she made her way eastward.

The world all before her, where to choose
And providence her guide.

CHAPTER III.

“To London and the king.”

What an expedition for a woman! Well might Gwilym tune his harp to the most dolorous of airs, and the maids, all of whom loved her, watch yearningly as long as she was in sight, and then mourn her as lost for ever. Two hundred miles, great roadless wastes, vast hills to ascend, and bog and pathless woods to traverse, and her only guide the sun! But Hawys was made in the heroic mould. She had well considered all obstacles. It was to do or die, to see the king or never more return to Castell Coch.

That day she passed over a great stretch of country, and at night slept in a wood. It was no great privation. The common class were adepts in contrivances. Many simply lived in osier houses, and as for sleeping out, a few twigs on the ground, and a woollen covering over was all that was needed. So Hawys took a wrinkle from the villian's life, and rose with the sun and the lark, and pushed on her way.

Excelsior! That traditional young man mounting through the snow up an ordinary hill-side had a pleasant time of it compared with that of Hawys. Here a fordless river, necessitating a great bend, there a ravine blocking her way, and at its foot the bleaching bones of mountain sheep or steed. Then a mountain, rearing up grim and gaunt on her way, its sides so slippery that once Hawys threw herself on the ground, and in anger and vexation cried herself ill. Still, onward, no strange device but “London and the king,” the mental passwords cheering her on. The active mare browsed now and then, and drank of the brook. Her store of oaten cakes was a fair one, and the brook refreshed and satisfied.

Hitherto she had kept aloof from castle and dwelling, but on the evening of the third day after crossing the border she drew up at one of the old monastic institutions which in those days afforded rest, refuge, and hospitality.

Some may deride these places as conservatories of a “creed outworn” but they were conservatories also of the seedlings of literature, and art, and science, and therein the poor obtained the only arms obtainable, and wanderers such as Hawys the refreshment and shelter now dispensed at wayside inn or commodious hotel.

It was left for the middle ages to hang a bush by the door or put a quaint sign on the elm before ale-houses, and only in the time of George the Second that

ale-houses came into note and legislature enacted, and according to Hume, and in his own words, "laws were passed which enabled justices of the peace to tyrannise over publicans !"

How Hawys fared at the monasteries or afterwards history tells us not. Pritchard, who includes her in his list of Welsh heroines, thinks she had a difficult time of it on her journey, so overrun was the country with robbers, but the sturdy Welsh lady overcame all obstacles, and once on English ground, with a clean chart laid down for her guidance, the worst part of the great undertaking seemed to her over. We are left to imagine the interest with which she passed through the strange scenes, landscapes which lacked the woody character of her own, but were more fertile, and more thickly peopled. Scenes all new to her, whose history had yet to be made ; people with whom nature was familiar, but civilisation had not even opened an acquaintance. Franklin once remarked that he should like to be the fly in amber to come forth at some distant age upon the scene and see the changes in life and manners. Better still would it be, with the knowledge now possessed to be carried mentally back, and wander on through the years. See Chaucer as a little boy, go on a pilgrimage with the Canterbury pilgrims, be with Shakespeare or else Yarth, note Millar in his age and live through each great chapter of the country's history. Better this than this fly !

Several times she wished herself back amongst the heath and the gorse, and would better have liked ravine and boisterous mountain stream than the rude churls, and ruder men-at-arms, with whom she occasionally came in contact. Passing through one large city where the soldiers were in great force, she evaded them with difficulty, and it would have fared ill with her but for one in command, who came opportunely on the scene. Fortunately for her womanly modesty, the rude jest and licentious remarks were not understood, and it was only when a brawler stood in her path or endeavoured to molest her that she comprehended her danger.

The morning of the eighth day saw her nearing Babylon, then a great city, but not the mighty Babel it now is. Surrounded by a great wall, garrisoned and armed at every point, the inner circle was full of wretchedly-built houses, chiefly of wood, which were to be patched and repaired until the great fire read a lesson for architect and builder. Cheapside then was the Chepe or trading place, and the Strand simply the shore of the Thames. Rude and primitive as it was, the hugeness of the place, the varied costumes, the different nationalities congregated there, were to her a wonder. To her the scope of her view had been bounded by the everlasting hills, and a few hundred men had been the largest multitude she had seen. Good luck favoured her even at the gates, for the guard took her to the officer in command, one Sir John Charleton, who lost his heart at the first glance. Coming as he did from a neighbouring county, and knowing a little of the language, he was able to converse, and soon won her warmest thanks by the enthusiastic way in which he proceeded to obtain for her an interview with the king. This was troublesome, but at that period was not so difficult a matter as now. Royalty, won by the strong

arm and iron will, and retained by their exercise, was of and amongst the people. The throne had not its surroundings, the king nothing like modern state. It was no unusual thing for a king to fight on the battle field as hardily as any common soldier, to tramp the country a pedlar refugee wanting the necessities of life. Kingship in England is a growth, a development, and the youth of kingship had its sorrows and trials as much as anything of human birth or institution. It took an age to fashion its surroundings to form the Olympus and gather the clouds.

Edward received the Welsh maiden graciously and heard her tale, and as he listened he thought here was a chance for one of his knights. This pretty girl was marriageable, she had a fine dowry. Many of his knights were as poor as rooks, and would gladly pluck such a prize. He did not listen very attentively to the appeal; petitioners very rarely get such condescension. His mind seized upon the salient facts. "Father dead, large estate, under executors to the girl, and wish to get property. Large property. Uncles have it? No! One of my knights have it? Yes. How? marry the girl! So very graciously Edward took his fair pleader's hand and said, "Lady, I will inquire into the case, and if it should be as stated, and of that I have no doubt, your prayer shall be granted upon one condition. That condition is, you marry one of my nobles. I could not think that one so beautiful and so rich should return alone into the wild mountains of Wales without one to protect you from all future wrong."

Gwilym polished up the king's English, but this was the sense.

The audience was over. Red as the reddest of heroines, Hawys hastened away to her temporary residence, Sir John attending, and looking defiance upon all and everyone who dared to cast a longing look upon the fair heroine.

Edward was an astute monarch, and Wales was to him what Ireland was to this country at a later age, a veritable thorn in his side, so this espousal of Welsh heiresses to Norman knights was a favourite plan of his, and was an addition to the tranquilising elements.

He had then one more support in the enemy's camp. As regarded the lady's views, that was a secondary matter. Love even in her day was a cottage question. Rank, wealth, the paramount matter in hall and of court. Let us be thankful for the country, and for the existence of a humanity ungilt by rank, and bound to no slavish love of wealth. It is amongst such that the virtues are born: that purity of thought, and high principle, and faith, and charity, go forth to leaven the world, which would otherwise stagnate into corruption. Pure and bright and sunny the rivulet at the fountain amongst the hills. Watch it upon its course—how fouled it becomes ere passing and losing itself for ever in the sea; but track it again to its source, and purity once more meets the eye.

Fortunately for Hawys, the strong passion aroused in Sir John Charleton was reciprocated. Sir John was in close attendance upon the king, and it was not long before he contrived to bring matters to an issue, and in grand state, the envied of all the court, to call Hawys not only his sweetheart, but his bride.

CHAPTER IV.

Return we now to our old home, and to the irate and disappointed uncles, who in their disgust and affright, and yet seeming vexation, doubtlessly crooned some ancient melody like :—

Oh where, and oh where is my true love gone.

Griffith Vychan did not so express himself when he came home, but he swore as roundly as a trooper when Hawys was reported missing.

It was night when they returned, and they had come back unsuccessful. Men and horses were jaded, dogs were tired. There was a disposition on the part of the uncles to use adjectives freely, and serving men and serving women had a bad time of it. "But where was Hawys; still in bed?" No, she had arisen immediately after the lords had gone. "And the black mare, please," said the hind who had charge of the stables, "I found it in about an hour, and when coming back to the castle met my mistress, who took it from me and rode away." The uncles looked at one another. What did it mean. There were no friends near to whom she was likely to have gone. She had never expressed any great liking for her uncle William, but there was old Meredith, a great friend of her father's at the Van. Could she have gone there. They discussed the probabilities, and it ended in sending a man on one of the best bred of the animals to enquire if she were there. It was morning when he returned, and the news he brought was unsatisfactory.

Old Meredith knew nothing of her. The truth oozed out, however, in the course of the day from some incautious expression by one of the girls. Then the harper was stoutly examined, and being pushed into a corner told all he knew. This "all" was serious enough. Edward the king was known to have had a great liking for Welsh nobles, but more for Welsh lands, and the story of the girl, whatever it might be, possibly would bring a hornet about their ears. But how circumvent, how intercept! Far ahead amidst the unborn years was the wonderful iron horse, and still further away the magic electric current, possessing the unseen and instantaneous attribute of thought. Marvellous secret of nature, only wrung from her after the lapse of many a thousand years. What could they do. The black mare was "the better horse," and to overtake was impossible. So they did the only thing they could do, which was nothing, and waited for the storm which could not be averted.

The position of the harper in a Welsh household was somewhat of a sacred one, and Gwilym's grey hairs were respected, but they did not extend to the adroit worthy who had supplied the mare, and if he had not lied even more soundly in his own defence than he had in aiding his young mistress Ieuan would have lost an eye, or his tongue, or possibly have had his tenure of life summarily shortened. But he swore, and he called the saints to witness that

the mare had escaped the previous night, that on returning with the animal his mistress had taken it, as he thought, for a ride, and so with a cuff he was sent about his business.

Griffith Vychan, the most cholerie of the uncles, and courageous to a fault, began forthwith to put his house, or rather his castle, into order. The defences were looked to, the young men busily employed, some in making the light greave kind of armour worn, others in getting an ample supply of bows and arrows, while cattle were slaughtered and the place provisioned for a siege.

But the days went by, and there was no sign of Hawys. No penny post, no telegram then? All was dark and mysterious, and, as time passed by, the uncles began to hope that Hawys had met with some mischance which would effectually prevent her return. Possibly in some remote nunnery she had been tempted to stay and forego the practical affairs of every day life for the spiritual, or possibly her beauty had tempted some ruffians of the road and she had been destroyed. They would not have been much concerned at this, or, at any rate, so long as she did not come back to trouble them. A month passed, and still no sign. They took heart, the jade was dead, the castle and lands were theirs. But, alas! one fine autumnal day the look-out reported the gleam of spears in the distance, and soon afterwards announced a strong body of soldiery approaching. Vychan was only at the castle, but he prepared instantly for defence, for he was bold if bad, and was determined to fight to the death. Yet, as the foe came nearer, he was sick at heart in seeing that the force much outnumbered his own, and that amidst a brilliant throng of knights there were ladies, one of whom his own conscience told him must be Hawys.

Nearer still they came, and riding out from the throng a messenger challenged the castle in the king's name, and demanded that it be forthwith given up to its lawful owners, the Lady Hawys and Sir John Charleton, her husband. Griffith Vychan saw that to defy the king would be madness, and called a parley. This ended in a meeting between the contending parties, when the whole circumstances of the case were explained, and formal possession given up to Sir John and his wife. History is mute as to the subsequent action of either party, whether the lady and her uncle were thoroughly reconciled or not; but this is known, that love and happiness for many a year took up their permanent quarters at Castell Coch, and that the descendants of that happy couple, by the name of Clive, not only figured in the brilliant successes of India, but are to this day most intimately connected with Wales.

SAXON SLANDER AND MORFAR RHUDDLAN.



HERE is an old Saxon distich which has reference to the predatory visits of "Taffy" into England. He is represented as making free with Saxon beef and Saxon bone in this manner :—

Taffy was a Welshman,
Taffy was a thief,
Taffy came to my house,
And stole a leg of beef.
I went to Taffy's house,
Taffy wasn't at home,
Taffy came to my house,
And stole a marrow bone.

There is a great deal of history wrapped up in these ancient rhymes, and they are well worth analysing and expounding. With regard to this distich, it is of course at once seen that it is composed from a Saxon's point of view, and embodies his prejudices and his bias. But Taffy was justified in his visits, for they were simply retaliatory, and provoked by the previous marauding expeditions of the Saxons. Divested of its animus, and put into historical phraseology, the legend would read thus :—

The Welshman came into the land of the Saxon, and made free with the herds of cattle that were found in the enclosures of wealthy landowners. Provoked by this raid, the Saxons armed themselves, and, crossing the borders, penetrated into Wales ; but the natives fled to their mountainous recesses, and the assailants returned empty handed to their country.

Scarcely, however, had they returned than the Welshmen again entered into the lands bordering the Severn, and, enriching themselves with spoil, retreated safely into their own mountains.

That is the historical rendering of the collection of rhymes, which have an antiquity equal to that of any ballad or distich we possess.

Now let us trace the origin of the slander, and see who really was to blame.

Rowland's "Mona Antiqua," p. 188, states that in 763 Offa reigned in Mercia. It was this worthy who set an example in plundering. He it was who, looking at the fair lands of South Wales which bordered the Severn, was seized with an uncontrollable desire to possess them, and actually directed a constant series of inroads, aimed first at the herds and goods of the Welsh, and secondly to get actual possession of their lands. So well was this

accomplished that the Welsh were driven to inhabit the rocky fastnesses, while a their fertile lowlands were taken by the Saxons. They endured this for a time, but being stung by the incessant attacks and encroachments, at length mustered in force, and, inspired by a common feeling of hatred, paid the Saxons out in their own coin, entering Mercia with fire and sword, and pillaging to the very top of their bent.

The return of the victorious Welshmen was the signal for great rejoicing.

Not only were they loaded with booty, but in their midst were numerous herds of cattle, which had been driven away from Saxon lands; fat kine of large size, and such as gladdened the wives and children of the mountaineers.

One can imagine the rapturous delight of a people who had up to this time suffered all the horrors of invasion, now to taste the sweets of spoil themselves.

The division of booty, the sharing of the herds, the pleasure in looking at the substantial cattle which had cost simply the labour of driving them away was luxury.

The first taste was so good that greater bands, more numerous and determined, began to make periodical incursions, until at length Offa was roused to action, and, mustering a large army, aided by the other Saxon princes, crossed the Severn and penetrated into Wales.

But the Welshman "was not at home." Unable to resist so great a force, the South Walians retreated into the mountains, where they were secure, though it is tolerably certain that the Saxons did not return empty-handed, but took all that was movable, and what they could not take destroyed.

It was to prevent these inroads of the Welsh that the famous Dyke of Offa was made, extending a hundred miles, from the Dee to the Wye. Towns also were built, and strong bodies of Saxons placed in them as frontier posts, and for a time this step would seem to have had the necessary effect, and the Welshmen were confined to their own country. But the remembrance of Saxon beef, the lingering fragrance of Saxon marrow bones, once again tempted the Welshman.

Pouring over the Dyke, and assailing Offa even in his camp, near Hereford, they committed dreadful slaughter, and the great Saxon leader only escaped with difficulty.

Offa, however, had previous to this insisted upon, and obtained hostages from the Welsh for their good behaviour, and incensed by this rupture of the Welsh, and their breaking of the truce, he not only confined the hostages, who must have been persons of rank, still more securely, but he sold their wives and families into slavery. And as soon as he could collect forces he again entered Wales, and is stated to have endeavoured for several years to subdue the natives, but "he could not catch them!" They did with Offa as their forefathers did with Ostorius, the Roman general, decamped from superior forces, cut off detached parties, and from every point of 'vantage harassed and fretted him.

Still, made of that stern stuff which knows not defeat, a characteristic which

combined with the fortitude of the Gael and the clan of the Kelt, has won deathless fields of glory for Britain, Offa pursued the Welsh with a pertinacity that was not to be checked, and coming up to Rhuddlan, where the natives under Caradoc were assembled in great numbers, a battle ensued, and the Welsh were routed with great slaughter. Offa, Herod like in his hatred of children, ordered all who fell into his hands to be massacred, and the historian relates that it was with difficulty that the women escaped his fury.

This sad day for Wales is immortalised by one of the most ancient and most touching Welsh ballads extant, namely "Morfa Rhuddlan." It is composed in the minor key, and, by its weird and plaintive melody, recalls one of the most sorrowful days of old.

Historians are somewhat in doubt whether the ballad refers to this conflict with Offa, or to one of the two other defeats the Welsh sustained at Rhuddlan. But the internal evidence of the work points to the one I have described. There is no mention of the slaughter of children, or the seizure of wives and daughters, at any of the others. The Welsh could lose a prince, or sustain a defeat, without much exhibition of lament. Forced to flee they would assemble, and combat again. Conquered they would submit, would bide their time, and at the first favourable opportunity would again rise and fall upon the conquerors. Lands they might lose, herds be taken from them, and in their own turn they would make reprisals, and regain lands and houses with interest. But the dead children could not be restored, and the abducted wives were lost for ever. It was this which touched the soul, and the doleful lament of the bard is the expression of the country's grief—a grief which could not be soothed, "Rachel mourning for her children, and would not be comforted."

THE UNKNOWN KNIGHT.

A TALE OF BRECKNOCK.



FRANCE has had its Man with the Iron Mask, the unknown and "unhappy nobleman" about whom all sorts of conjectures have been hazarded, and yet to this day it is uncertain who and what he was, though many a close guess has been formed. England has had its Man with the Iron Mask, a literary unknown—Junius—who lashed his political enemies until they writhed, and then he disappeared, or died, and made no sign. Who and what he was, whether Francis or Burke, is to this day a mystery, and the most valuable treatise on the subject is still but a guess. Wales has had its Man with the Iron Mask, who figured conspicuously in the Norman era and then—but I must not anticipate, but cull from chronicle and legend, and present to my readers the tale of

THE UNKNOWN KNIGHT.

In the time of Henry the First Traharn ab Caradoc was King of North Wales, and had for wife Nest, the daughter of Griffith ab Llewelyn ab Seisyllt. Two children figured as the issue of the marriage—Llywarch, the son, and Nest, the daughter. Of Llywarch nothing good can be said, as his prowess in the field was linked with infamy in the dark, and, however bold a warrior he may have been in open conflict, he did not scruple to lend his hand now and then to assassination. Nest was a beautiful woman, inheriting her mother's charms and her misfortunes.

The history of all times and all countries is pretty much the same. Quiet virtues rarely come to the front, and aggression, violence, and vice are the kinds that are recorded. Of that age, when Traharn ruled, and the Norman was stoutly battling for supremacy, we know little of the virtues; the home life of kings and queens, of knights and the people, remained the under-current, while the seething foam and the wreck were alone visible to the chronicler.

What the home life of the daughter Nest was we are all ignorant, but this is known, that after the death of her father, at the memorable battle of

Carno, she and her mother and brother, the first of whom had estates in South Wales, lived in the neighbourhood of Brecon, and, though divested of much of their old state and grandeur, still held high position.

This, too, is known, that when a young maiden in all the freshness and glory of her beauty she fell in love with an unknown knight and was privately married.

Suspicion may have pointed to this one or that, but whoever he was is not stated. All that can be learned is that he was a gentleman of martial bearing; and, inductively, one can glean a little of traits and characteristics, which proved that Nest had not given her heart to a shadow.

Pleasant was the home of Nest in Breconshire. No cloud was upon her horizon. Her life flowed smoothly as a brook in June, and even the secret affiancement gave a charm, and her husband's love was all her own. That the marriage would be revealed they both knew well. Nature would tell their secret, and some day or other it must come out, and they would have to dare parental strife and brother's scorn. But, till then, flow on the soft brook, and let the woods murmur, and love's dalliance last.

This was the condition of things when Bernard de Newmarch the Norman invaded Breconshire, and that thoughtful and vigorous worthy, remembering well, by the example of his brethren in arms, how much better it was to cement conquest by marrying into the race he had conquered, bent low before Nest the beautiful, and craved her love and her hand.

What consternation overwhelmed her! Bernard was a noble personage. She might have loved him had she never met the Unknown; but now!

The mother and brother were delighted with the conquest of Nest, and thought the offer a golden one. They had their suspicions of the secret marriage, but that could soon be put aside, and Llywarch, skilled in the art of dispatching his enemies, made no secret of his intention to put the obstacle, whoever he was, out of the way. This Nest discovered, and lost no time in hurrying to her husband and bidding him, as he loved her, and regarded his own safety, to flee. The Unknown yielded to her wishes. The fond and secret parting must be imagined, for his history records it not, and, escaping the dagger of the assassin, he made his way out of the country, and in another land began a life of martial adventure and success.

The coast was now clear for the Norman, and Bernard so plied his suit that Nest very shortly afterwards became his wife.

In that age the chapel was confined either to the castle or the monastery, and we are left to assume that marriage vows, religious feeling, and the moral virtues, were quite as restricted. It was an age when might was right, when the strong arm won the land or the wife of his enemy, and in many cases the wife was as easily won as was the land! The rigorous observance of marriage vows seems to have grown in harmony with our commercial progress, and, though abused, as it often is, as our divorce courts only too frequently show, yet the moral code is high in comparison with what it was in the old times of conquest and adventure. Whatever may have been the morality of the people,

that of the Court was lax, and history records no sighs and sorrowings when Nest became the wife of Bernard de Newmarch, and took her proud position in the castle home of the conqueror of Breconshire.

In due time a son was born, and was named Mahael, and although, if statements can be believed, Newmarch was more than doubtful that the child was not his own, yet he accepted the credit of paternity, and discharged his duties as a father until the great conqueror of Norman and Briton, death, appeared upon the scene, and Bernard was summoned unto the dead. Nest was now ruler of Breconshire, but her son Mahael, when he grew up, became desirous of taking all power into his hands, and fretted at the idea of petticoat government. Love for his mother was secondary to his thirst for power, but Nest, like the strong-minded women of her time, was not disposed to figure in a secondary position, and thus it was that home life at the castle of Brecknock was a life of bickering and contention.

This continued for a time, and often Nest wished that she could resign all state and power, and go back again to those early days of love, when her first, and still unforgotten, husband, the Unknown, met her lovingly in the groves of Brecknock. Her wish was realised. A whisper spread around. Amongst her friends who visited the castle there was one of kingly presence, tanned by southern sun, who held the chief place in her estimation.

Who was he? Nobody knew. Llywarch was not there to identify, nor was Nest the mother present to accuse.

To Mahael he behaved with the utmost affection, and yet with deference, but the young Hotspur disdained both, and lost no opportunity in private to insult him. This, coupled with his outspoken determination to get the rule of Breconshire into his own hands, chilled his mother's affection, and taking a bold, and what we may deem an unnatural step, she proceeded to the court of Henry the First, and, after stating the position she was in, and the extreme hardship of her case with so turbulent a son, she openly avowed that Mahael was not the son of Bernard de Newmarch, but that of her first husband the Unknown.

Henry had a more difficult case than a modern law court generally has, but he reasoned that a mother must be driven to a terrible plight when she was thus forced to avow her own dishonour, and accepting her statement as true, and as wrung from her by her son's cruelty, he directed, at his court of Worcester, that the lawfully begotten child of Newmarch and Nest was Mabil the daughter, and that Mahael the son should have no right or power in the county of Brecknock.

It was a terrible confession, but for a brief time it resulted in peaceful hours.

The unknown knight and Nest were now more frequently than ever together, and the southern tower of Brecon was the scene for a time of love's happiness.

Nest and the Unknown again plighting their troth, and planning the means for escaping to another land with sufficient affluence to spend the close of their life in comfort with one another. But,

The drama of life was ending.

Mahael, brooding over his wrongs, one day met the Unknown in an unfrequented path, and to his kind and courteous greeting returned only a sneer. He saw not the love of the father beaming from his face. Nature spoke not. He only beheld in the stranger a man who had withdrawn from him, not only his mother's love, but his legal rights, and taking advantage of the meeting he so taunted him that swords were drawn, and the Unknown was forced to take the defensive.

Mahael, spurred by his passion, fought with the utmost fury; the Unknown, on the contrary, simply stood on his defence, and, being a trained swordsman, parried all his blows with the utmost ease. This more than ever maddened the Hotspur, and the solicitude of the father to save the son caused him to neglect himself, and the result was a severe wound. Still, wishful to spare Mahael, the Unknown, at the last moment, thinking he was confronted by his son and not by an assassin, left himself open, and Mahael treacherously availed himself of it by inflicting a vital wound, and the Unknown fell a bleeding corpse at his feet!

Thus ended the history of the Unknown. Mahael's sorrow—if he did mourn—Nest's anguish, are unrecorded. They pass from the chapters of Welsh history, and of their after fate the chronicler tells not a word.

A darker episode in our history there is not. The fond love, renewed often, the lapse of so many years, and that dread conflict between father and son, remain amongst the saddest of annals, marking with its fair light and dark shade the picturesque county of Brecon.

A MYSTERIOUS MURDER.

N one of the principal towns in Wales, twenty years ago, there was a quiet, old-fashioned, sedate tradesman whom no one would have thought had ever taken part in anything more stirring than the ordinary duties of the world, taking shutters down and putting shutters up, retailing his stock, debating with commercials; and striving, between times and short-moued customers, to make those perverse things of life, "two ends," meet!

Picture the sedate old man, for he is old now, in conversation on one of the quiet winter evenings, when the warmth of the coal fire and the cosiness of home make one think with less love of old summer days and rambles, and imagine him the writer instead of being the narrator of the following tale.

"I know I am old-fashioned, left on the banks, a relic, not moving onward with the stream; but, come now, you would never think that I once figured in a charge of murder, and was actually under arrest!"

"You don't mean it," I exclaimed. "You!"

"Yes, really, and whenever I want to astonish a little circle, as we sit now by the fireside, I turn round and startle them as I see you have been startled, by saying, 'Did I ever tell you of that grave charge that was once brought against me?' 'Grave charge!' is generally the response. 'Yes,' my rejoinder is, 'the charge of murder.' 'No!' is the invariable, 'do tell.'"

"And so, as I have frequently told before, I do so again, that you may gain for my tale a larger audience than it ever had, for there are special features connected with it, which are not undeserving of notice, at a time when circumstantial evidence is shown, according to the new society which has been established for the repeal of the law relative to hanging, to have led to the destruction of many innocent lives.

"Thirty years ago I was a thoughtful young man, deeply imbued with a love for botany and geology, and in the habit of indulging in the study in frequent and lonely rambles, either in far off green lanes, by quarries, on the sea shore, or amidst the mountains. These rambles were occasionally varied by a trip over a distant mountain to meet a friend, who had formerly lived in the same town, but who was at that time located as the principal station master in a busy neighbourhood less than ten miles away.

"Being prone to old friendships, and finding in him a kindred spirit, we

would occasionally, say twice or thrice in the summer months, make an appointment to meet half way, and spend the afternoon together, when the weather was very fine in gossiping, perched on a rustic gate or reclining on the heather of the mountains. There we would stay and smoke for an hour or two, discussing the various incidents that had occurred since our last interview with all the zest which youth and health can give. Then, having exhausted our several budgets, we would either part at the meeting place, or, as it sometimes happened, he would accompany me to the top of the mountain, and take our leave in sight each of our far distant homes.

"There was an attraction about it that charmed us. We were both of studious habits, and at that time no Jeanie Deans had engrossed his attention nor had a Di Vernon come across my view.

"How altered the times. Old John still lives in the same place, with a little army of children, and like myself, similarly blessed, we now regard these episodes of old as the romantic era of youth, no more to be thought of now than to begin spooning again, or writing *billet doux* to a lady's eyebrow.

"It was a beautiful summer day when one of the last, but not the least, of these meetings took place, and so genial was the air and velvety the turf of the mountain, that I walked with quicker and longer steps than usual, and reached the trysting place long before my friend. I have said that botany was a failing. I repeat it, for on that hangs my sorrow, and never since have the flora of the mountains had such charms as they had of old. Seeing that I was before my time I began fern hunting in the ravine, and in the ditches near, and had collected quite a nice little assortment before I heard the shrill whistle and recognised the burly form of my staunch old friend. There was the old greeting, the warm shake of the hand, the kind inquiries after friends, then out came the dudheen and meerschaum. Pipes were lit and the chat began. I do not know how it was, or why, but there was a feeling of depression hanging about my friend which made our conversation assume a more sedate character than usual. I think it was due to some family trouble, but at all events he wished my counsel and guidance, and as the evening was coming on he accompanied me a considerable distance on the homeward journey, until we had reached the highest point of the mountains. There we loitered a moment or two over some final topic of interest, and were about to separate when the unusual spectacle of half a dozen men were seen, armed with stout clubs and coming in a straight line towards us. There was a purpose in view, it was evident, and the directness of gaze and movement pointed to ourselves as the objects. Thanks to the efforts of an old army sergeant both were skilled in fence, and, having serviceable sticks we instinctively, without showing any apprehension, prepared for a possible onslaught. But as the party drew near they slackened pace, and one stepping out from the rest and approaching me said, civilly, 'I am sorry to interrupt you, but you must please come down to the B—— police-station with us.' 'To the police-station!' I exclaimed, 'whatever for?' 'Well, you see, sir,' said the man, sidling up to me, while his companions adroitly put themselves between me and my friend, and stood

so closely as to interfere with resistance had we made any. 'You see, sir, there has been a murder committed down by that farm there,' pointing to one in the distance, and in the direction we had come from. 'Well,' I rejoined, 'what of that?' 'The body was found,' continued my interrogator, 'in the hollow by the farm, and you were seen for half an hour, or more, searching in that hollow, and we have had orders from the police to watch the place, and bring them anyone we saw hanging about there. So,' he continued, 'we have sent down to the town for the police-sergeant to come up, and you must come along with us!' In a moment the awkwardness of my position flashed upon me. Here was I, a total stranger, who had been seen prowling about the ravine in which a dead body had been secreted, evidently, so thought the farm labourer, for still further hiding the victim. What did they know about botany. They could not conceive a full-grown young man wasting his time in such trifling matter as 'gathering flowers,' an occupation more fitted for a young miss in her teens than for a sedate, whisker-honoured man? I protested, however, strongly against the absurdity of the accusation, and my companion, equally indignant, asked what cock and bull story they were inventing. He had heard of no such murder and didn't believe one had been committed. 'Ah, but there had, though,' said a ruddy-faced hedger and ditcher, 'but the matter was kept secret so as to ketch the fellar as did it,' glaring at me the while as the suspected villain.

"What or who was murdered?' exclaimed my friend.

"A little girl,' said another of the band, who had recognised him as the station-master of B——, and touched his hat deferentially, 'a little girl about two years,' and in a few minutes we were placed in full possession of the facts.

"Two or three years before this, a pretty maid of the farm had given birth to an illegitimate child. Who the father was no one knew but the girl. That it was someone in one of the neighbouring towns was tolerably certain, and that the someone was well off seemed probable, from the fact that the poor girl received handsome presents at intervals, and regular sums of money for the support of the child. A year ago the misguided maiden died suddenly, and no clue had been given as to the father of the child, but still money was sent occasionally, and had been continued to within six months ago, when it suddenly stopped. The old farmer and his wife from the first had acted with the utmost kindness, and now, with the death of the mother, continued to rear the child as a granddaughter of their own. No effort on their part had been spared to try and learn the father's name, but on this point the mother of the child was silent. She had taken an oath not to reveal it, and as marriage was promised at no distant date she would not break her word.

"These facts we gleaned on our downward way, for, learning that the police officer was coming up, and resistance was foolish as well as futile, I had made up my mind to go at all events and meet him. We further heard of the discovery of the murder. The poor little child had been in the habit of toddling about the farm yard, and one day was missed. The well was searched, outhouses examined, but still no signs of Fanny. In all likelihood no trace would ever

have been had of her but for the discovery of one of her little shoes on the brink of the ravine.

"This led to a close examination, and underneath a pile of stone and old briars the body was found.

"The poor little thing had been savagely killed, and, as I listened to the details, fears for my own safety were forgotten in the feeling aroused against the ruthless murderer, and my strong desire to aid in bringing him to justice. We had not gone far before we met the police-sergeant coming up in hot haste, and the instant he saw me he stopped, astounded. He knew both of us and had known us for years, and coming closely up, with a smile of recognition to both, he said :

" 'There is some mistake here. You have made a muddle of it. This gentleman,' pointing to my friend, 'you cannot accuse, I'll answer for him.'

" 'No, no,' exclaimed several, 'it's the other !'

" 'And don't you know him ?' he asked, 'why, that is Mr. — of —.'

"There was an instantaneous change. Unknown myself, yet the position held by my father in the county was so undeniably high, and so thoroughly known, that I saw at a glance that their suspicions were shaken. The leader, however, desirous of showing that he had not arrested me without cause, said :

" 'But what was he doing in the hollow ?'

" 'Gathering these,' I said, pointing to the ferns, 'and my object, in coming near the farm, to meet my friend here.'

" 'Of course, of course,' said the sergeant, 'its all right. You have made geese of yourselves,' turning to the party, 'and laid yourselves open to trouble.'

" 'No, no,' I rejoined, 'they have only done their duty, and now, as we are near the farm, let us go in and rest awhile, and see if some clue cannot be had to the real man.'

"My suggestion was agreed to, and we startled the old couple exceedingly, by marching in, the police officer with us, apparently in charge of two murderers. When the cause was explained, the home-brewed was brought out, the farm labourers dismissed, and we sat for a little while to discuss the horrible tragedy which had occurred, and to wonder who the culprit was. 'Have you no suspicion?' I said to the farmer. 'No, not the slightest.' 'When had you the last money?' I continued. 'Oh, long ago, five or six months.' 'And the amount?' 'A sovereign.' 'How was that received?' 'Oh, by post,' said the old dame. 'We get a postman by here three times a week.' 'What ! and the letter was regularly posted and addressed ?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'Have you the envelope ?' The farmer 'thought he had,' and, after some rummaging, found it. Yes, there was the letter with the B— stamp on, marked too, with the fee, which had been paid, in red ink, but the writing, to me, though strange, was a superior hand, and evidently not that of a labourer.

“ ‘Let me see it ?’ said my friend holding out his hand, but the moment he saw it he started, and, turning to the sergeant, whose face was at that moment buried in a jug, said :

“ ‘Sergeant, havn’t you seen that writing before ?’

“The sergeant took it gravely, and scanned it very carefully, but no light of recognition flashed across his face. ‘No, it was unknown to him.’ My friend whispered a name in his ear. The sergeant, in his turn, started, and said, ‘Tis ; now I see it ; wonderfully like ; good heavens, is it possible ?’ The farmer was eyeing us anxiously, but my friend with a subtle purpose, put the old man’s doubt at rest, and with a promise that we would do our best to find out the villain, we hastened away—I homeward, for the night was stealing on apace, and the sergeant and my companion to B——. In a few days the three met again by appointment, and this time in the town. The sergeant produced the envelope, and the writing was carefully compared with that on several papers relating to parish business. It was unquestionably very like. But the man ! Two or three miles from the farm was another homestead, where a bachelor lived, a gentleman farmer of considerable wealth and influence, but whose reputation was so ill that every drawing-room was closed against him. No lady could enter his house, nor was his presence acceptable anywhere but to men of his own ill-regulated stamp. He sat on the bench, mixed much in parish business, and it was his writing we were comparing with that on the envelope. What should we do ? The sergeant volunteered to take the subject in hand and seek an interview with the squire, but on one condition, for his safety, as well as our own, that we muttered not a word about it to anyone until he saw us again. This we readily promised for the squire was a violent man, and would scruple at nothing to satisfy his revenge. If he really had nothing to do with the murder, and the accusation could not be sustained, woe upon the accuser ! So neither my friend nor myself was sorry that the sergeant took the leading part in the inquiry. A week passed, and I heard nothing ; another week, and still no news. So I wrote to my mountain companion for information, and was told to come over by horse and trap, and as expeditiously as possible. This thoroughly aroused me, and in a few hours I was closeted in his office. Like myself he had been waiting daily for news, and as he met the sergeant now and then he interrogated him respecting his mission, but the sergeant had either failed to see him on account of his absence from home, or his engagements. ‘But,’ said the sergeant, ‘I have got him to come such a day, and then look out ; the day after I’ll be with you.’ ‘That day,’ said my friend, ‘is come, and the sergeant, whom I saw yesterday, will be here in a few minutes.’ We sat in expectancy some little time, when a knock came at the door, and there, true to his promise, was the sergeant. But he was altered. The frank kind smile was gone, and he looked thoughtful and absent-minded. This disappeared in a few minutes, and, having seen that there were no eavesdroppers, he told us of his mission. ‘After considerable difficulty,’ said he, ‘I had a private interview, and very cautiously approached the subject. I mentioned the seduction of a girl, her death, and the murder of her infant, but he stood it all

like an innocent man, gentlemen, and never winced once, but swore roundly at the villain. Then I came to the letter and produced the envelope ; still no sign, but he said with an oath that the scoundrel did not write much unlike him. He then wrote the same, and very different it looked when side by side, so I let the whole affair drop so far as he was concerned, and made him think that I simply wanted to consult him as to tracking out the culprit.' My friend and I looked at one another. 'Have you the envelope with you?' I enquired. 'No, I left it with him.' 'And what do you purpose doing?' 'Get on another track, if possible,' said the sergeant, 'and see if those young labourers about the farm know anything about it.' Thus ended the affair, the sergeant left us, and in an hour or two I was on my way home, musing over the stirring incidents which had occurred, and hazarding an hypothesis, which perhaps my friend would have laughed at soundly. The murderer was never found, and to this day old gossips ask one another, who could it have been? I have my own opinion, but though the squire has long been dead it would be unsafe amongst his wealthy relatives even now to breathe that opinion. This I may say, that the sergeant never filled the coveted post of superintendent, but took a very large farm in the next parish, having had, so he said, a round sum of money left him, and there lived many years a cosy life, and to this day his widow lives there. I have thought, indeed I am morally certain, that the acres were bought with the squire's money, and that the gold was spotted with blood."

"A good tale, a capital tale," I said. "Yes," added the old inhabitant, "and true." Give it to the world if you like, only no names! Why, if you only gave names of men and places you would cause more than a seven days' wonder. Just as well set fire to a train of gunpowder or hold a dynamite fuse in hand when exploding."

I have withheld names of men and places, avoided the train of powder, and sedulously dropped the fuse!

“PIXIE LED!”

A PEMBROKESHIRE TALE.



WHEN the present generation of Pembrokeshire men were boys, there prevailed in the nooks and corners of that county some faint relics of a superstition which the waves of civilisation had not swept away. By civilisation I mean that strong disbelief generated in schools, and in places of worship, which refused to give credit to anything which was out of a common sense track; warnings before death, for instance (“canwyll corph”); and the hundred and one so-called fancies of the imagination which were irreconcilable with the ordinary matter-of-fact life of the people. But in these nooks and corners, amongst an old-fashioned people who clung to the relics of the past, they were held in strong belief, and any one who doubted was thought to be deficient in judgment, and passed by accordingly.

One of the superstitions was concerning the Pixies. They were believed to be a kind of elfish sprites who luxuriated in leading people astray. Sober, decent men, who most unaccountably, would find themselves lost on the mountains, and reached home at unearthly hours, with every appearance of having had more than was good for them, were said to have been decoyed astray by the elves, or “Pixie led,” and many a curious tale is extant of that kind, which met with the thorough belief of the good old men and women who are gone. John Morgan Thomas was a strange kind of individual, whimsical in manner, odd in look, strange in his life. He seemed to have been singled out especially by the Pixies, and the only reason I can suggest for it is that the strange, weird elves naturally liked to fraternise with odd people like themselves, and to exhibit their liking by teasing them in that funny, yet mischievous way which a monkey might be supposed to adopt.

John did not thrive in life. Cross-grained critics in his village by the Pembrokeshire coast said they didn’t wonder at it—that when shoemakers would persist in going to village ale-houses in the middle of the day, instead of making boots and repairing shoes, nothing else was to be expected than a poor cupboard and straitened circumstances. John resented this, and defied anybody to show him a more industrious, hard-working man than he was, or, at all events, than he intended to be. Didn’t he go with resolute will and sit on his bench and pound his legs until they were sore, and didn’t Pixie come

and whisper that he must be getting thirsty, and the beer at the Ship was very good; and didn't Pixie tease and tease and tease until he was obliged to throw the leather apron into the corner and go to the Ship? No, no, he defied all slander. If only the Pixies would let him alone they would see—what they would see. But the Pixies wouldn't hear it.

One day a funeral procession wended its way along the road that ran some distance by the sea-shore. An old inhabitant had departed this life, given up hedging and ditching and tramping over the farm. The dogs were there that for years had followed him, but the old man lay with arms listlessly lying by his side, and eyes closed to his farm, and to the sea and the sky. So they were bearing him, and the whole village were following him according to one of the best and oldest customs of Wales; and blending with the sound of the surf was the dirge, the low funeral dirge in the minor key to which the humbler masses seem so partial.

All at once, into the ranks, with his leathern apron on, stepped John the shoemaker, and scandalised everybody by his total disregard of the proprieties.

His hair was as usual uncombed—terrible would have been the ordeal of a comb to wander through the maze! His face as usual, was sunburnt and dirty, and his garments showed strong inclinations to separate, and give up the notion of covering him in disgust. And as for his boots! But there, how is it that humble shoemakers, and humble tailors as well, are always most neglectful of that very part of the attire which their trade could so well enable them to supply?

One can imagine the feelings of the crowd of people, all in their "Sunday clothes," at the appearance of such an object as John. A venerable deacon of Carmel Chapel not only felt, but acted, and withdrew John out of the procession, asking him "what he meant?"

John looked for a moment like one in dreamland, and then, shaking off the cloud, rejoined, in great distress.

"Pixies, sir, Pixies, they are always at me. I could no more keep from joining the funeral than fly."

Deacon in turn shook his head, and sending him to his home, told a friend "shoemaker been drinking as usual."

John vowed that at times the Pixies had complete power over him physically, and do what he would his steps would be directed in opposite directions to those he wished to take. His direct road from his home to the vicar's, say, was along the highway, down by the wheelwright's shop, turn down Crow Alley, then into the road, and a quarter of a mile brought one to the parsonage. But never, even by accident, would John take this route on his return with the vicar's boots for repair, and the boots and shoes of the family. And that long-suffering woman, the wife of John Morgan Thomas, always knew that when he went to the vicar's, she should have, late at night, to go to the Ship, or the Red Cow, or the Golden Lion on the top of the hill, to find him, drifted into some out of the way track, and take him home, in a bewildered state, talking about Pixies.

And certain was she, many times in the following night, to be much disturbed by rambling incoherencies, which again, gossips, whom she spoke to, attributed to beer, but John, defiantly, to Pixies.

Sitting in the corner of the kitchen at the Ship, he was occasionally solicited to give some account of the Pixies, "what they were like; did they speak; and what did they say?" and his information was always of a relishable kind.

"They were little men and women of the size of dolls, very quick in their movements, and they would chatter away at a fine rate. There were many of them, too, and very strong. If John wished to go one away, and they didn't want him, a number of them would pull at his coat, some would climb up his back, and cover his eyes with their caps, so that he couldn't see which way to go, and it was dangerous to hurt them. He never did. If he had, he shouldn't be there then."

It was said that his hearers, looking preternaturally solemn at John, would wink at one another, while he was looking into the bottom of his pint, and it was equally said that, even as they winked they would pursue their inquiries, and put John to no end of trouble in answering their questions. John, at times, was very communicative, and his description of the dances he had seen in the moonlight, and the bright green rings left in the morning, showing where they had been in their speed and lightness, and the suddenness with which they vanished if a stranger came near, was all very interesting, but the most astounding event of his life was to come, and all the frolics and gambols he had seen were to be surpassed. He told the tale when a very old man. One Farmer Morris was a customer of his, and he lived a long way off amongst the mountains. It was always a day's journey for John to go there and return, and to do it comfortably; John liked the word comfortably. He always started early in the morning. Farmer Morris had ordered a pair of winter boots, strong in uppers and thick in sole, and the boots were ready. John's wife tied the boots in one of the old-fashioned bundle handkerchiefs, and, fortified with a cup of tea, on the eventful morning John started away, promising as usual to come back straight; but the day passed and the night came and there was no John. The long-suffering wife made her usual journeys, but there was no shock-headed husband busily drinking away the price of the boots and shoes. She even went far out of the village in the direction of the farm, but no sound of footstep came upon the ear, only the sigh of the wind and the distant wash of the sea against the cliff could be heard. So back she hastened, thinking he might have taken another road, but on arriving at the house there was no John. The poor woman made another round of the Ships and the Golden Lions, with the same ill success, and at length went to bed, comforting herself with the thought that Farmer Morris might have kept John all night; but her own convictions were that he had not, as it was a thing he never did.

The day dawned, and still no John, and about midday the poor woman sallied off accompanied by a neighbour—for the village was now all astray—to find her way to Farmer Morris's, and see what had become of John. They

duly reached the farmer's, and learned that after making a hearty dinner he had returned home, "and had scarcely drunk anything," a piece of information which surprised the wife immensely. The poor woman was now greatly distressed. He had fallen into one of the coal pits, that she was certain. There were many of these pits on the hills, and the probability was not a remote one. They hurried back to the village to alarm the place, and sent out parties to scour the hills, and in the afternoon of the second day sturdy men were tramping about the mountains, and every possible place that could be searched was searched, and still no John.

It was getting quite dark on the second night, and the bands of searchers had returned.

John's wife was seated at the fire-side taking a stronger cup of tea than usual, with two or three old ladies similarly employed. And the old ladies, neighbours of hers, were soothing John's wife, and talking of his virtues. They always do, good old ladies, at such times, and every foible, and even vices and defects, are forgotten, so charitable are they on such occasions. Now and then John's wife would relieve her feelings by putting her apron to her eyes, and at such times she would saw about, and rock herself, and think of departed goodness. Poor old soul. Too good for John! Presently, there was a noise at the door, and rushing to open it, there was John! dazed, bewildered, and with him the one and only village constable.

He, the constable, had been coming from a neighboring village, and on the way had met John, and taken him, not into custody, but into his care, and had brought him home.

"Drunk as a fiddler," said the constable, in a whisper to one of the old ladies.

"Pixies," said John, overhearing the remark, "Pixies!"

The wife was too overjoyed to scold, and when the neighbours and the constable had departed, John told his tale, as he told it ever afterwards, but it was noticed with variations and additions.

He had started away from the farmer's, placing his bundle handkerchief in his pocket, and had passed through a couple of fields on his homeward journey, when a little voice, about the compass of a tin whistle, said:

"Here's fun, here's a handkerchief!" and looking round a dozen of the Pixies had abstracted his handkerchief, and, holding it out like a table cloth, they were tossing one of their companions in it.

"Come now," said John, "let's have the 'kercher," but they couldn't think of such a thing, so John, giving it up as a bad job, turned sulky and trudged away home without it; but in a minute or two they were after him, and climbing up his shoulders like a swarm of bees. He tried to release himself but could not, and what did the elfish sprites do but tie the handkerchief about his neck, and a hundred of them, yes, he was sure they were a hundred, pulled him, now one way, and then another, until he was tired to death. Then they released him, after a great deal of merriment, and he plodded towards the village, but he felt he was "Pixie led," for do what he would he could

not keep in the right track. As darkness came on he became frightened, and especially so when he stumbled and fell, tripped up he believed at the side of a dark opening in the ground. Another minute and he would have been dashed to pieces. There were more sounds after these of the tin whistle compass, and he got up and took an entirely different direction and before he was aware of it he had plunged into a ditch. It was with some difficulty he got out, and as he was climbing up the bank he was hastened by sharp pins being driven into various parts of his body, and at every groan there were more tin whistle accompaniments. All night he wandered about, now on the mountains and then in the fields, and when the morning broke he was so tired that he went to sleep in a deserted colliery hut, and slept until midday. Then he began to look about him to see where he was. His tormentors were gone, and taking heart he stepped out briskly, feeling the while awfully hungry, as he expressed himself, and soon found himself at a village some four or five miles from his own. There he halted and there he melted some of the price of the boots, and at night took the road home, and on the way was met by the village constable. This was John's tale, and its main features he related to the last. But there were some matters that the wife could not understand. The money given by Farmer Morris had been considerably diminished, and though John suggested the Pixies must have taken some, the village constable, who occasionally went to the neighbouring village, whispered another tale, and hinted about a "cruise," "having a night of it," and certain other unfriendly remarks.

So it is in this life. The suspicious element prevails, and any doubtful act is regarded in the most unsatisfactory light. John, the last or one of the last believers in the fair world, was apt when commenting upon any strange occurrence to take his short pipe out his mouth to say "Pixies," and put it back again, while the village tailor, himself an oracle, politician, and sceptic, would as sententiously withdraw his pipe, a long one, and with the word "beer," replace it and blow a full cloud as a commentary.

THE VILLAGE BOYS.

A TALE OF THE WELSH BORDERS.



AM going to tell a plain and simple tale ; it shall neither unveil any vice nor disclose any wretchedness. There shall be no exaltation to wealth, nor shall there be any fall to poverty. Simple and unadorned as are the lives of the people, so is this simple and unadorned ; yet if, in the lowly undergrowth by the wayside, one little flower can be seen upon which the eye of the passer-by may rest with love and tenderness, the tale will not have been told in vain.

“Why tell it if only a simple tale of the people ?”

“Ah, there ; I believe that there is in the honest and humble home-brewed of common life very often more substantial good than in the airy, and winsome, and sparkling champagne. You read of startling incident, grouped amidst the flutter of high life, and in the lees is there anything to think of with pleasure or recall with profit ?”

* * * * *

Do you remember the apples your grandfathers stored, and brought out from hidden recesses in the winter time to give to truant and much-spoilt grandchildren—the wrinkled “Blenheim apples,” the famous, and also wrinkled, “Ribstone pippins ?”

Enlarge a couple of these, and imagine them human faces ; let grey hair in scanty locks steal over them on stalwart frames, bowed with the weight of three score years and ten ; give each a stout stick, such as no dandy would carry, and you have John and George.

I saw them first, old, wrinkled, yet happy-faced men at a fair on the Welsh borders, and was so struck with them as to make persistent inquiries into who and what they were.

They would have stood for the brothers Cheeryble. They were men who had been stalwart in their day, and were still stout and hearty, they were comfortably clad, but the softened, happy expression of each face was the most noticeable thing about them, and no one could look at them without a tender, softened feeling stealing into the eyes. Quiet, unaffected goodness, content gleaned there. If the dream of their lives had been like our mountain brooks, rugged, and wild and heedless, all had sobered down into a calm, even as the stream sobers ere it passes into the mighty sea and is lost for ever.

John and George had been village boys seventy years before I saw them first. One was the son of a weaver, and the other of a tailor, and the fathers of both were poor men. They played together at the national schools. They sailed paper ships on the same pond, and flew kites, played marbles, or trundled hoops in the idle hours, just as other boys did, and have done since the time that kites, marbles, and hoops have been invented. Fortunately for both, the schoolmaster was a good and wise man. He saw in both the signs of superior capacity, and thanks to him, ere they reached young manhood, both were in a good way of life, though in different towns. Before they were separated, they made a compact, that, if fortune should favour them, they would end their days even as they had begun them, together; and with this, and a hearty shake of the hand, they parted.

Years rolled on, and the lot of the friends was unchequered by misfortune or sorrow. Once or twice they met; occasionally they corresponded; but the duties of life pressed heavily, and the youthful friendship seemed a far-away picture of the past, a memory that time had dimmed, as it dims all things.

One married, and reared a large family, and sitting by the wife's side as the years flew on, he "saw himself go wooing with his boys, while she was courted in her girls."

George did not marry. He wooed science, and in his leisure hours gazed with wrapt wonderment through the eyelets of science.

Electricity and the microscope were his loves, enabled in the working of one to stand seemingly in the great engine-room of Nature, whence came the grand forces that worked her will, and gratified by the other in tracing a beauty and perfection which to the thousands remained unseen and unknown.

The world had prospered with them, but John realised the lot that seems inseparable from humanity. His children went forth into the world, even as he had gone. His girls, mothers themselves then, and in other counties, his sons, some on foreign shores, and all wrapt up in their own hopes and pursuits, gone too, and the old couple left by the hearth alone.

They had listened to the prattle of infancy; had watched their children's growth and progress; had looked, half sorrowfully, and all lovingly, as one by one they had wandered away; and the old home echoed no more to the prattle of child, or to maiden's song.

Have you ever thought, reader, of the indurability, so to express it, given to an old house? How its rooms are hallowed, and made sacred by the home life that has been born and nourished to its fulness there?

So it was with the old homestead of John. A few years more, a little more silvering of the hair, and the wife of his heart and the mother of his boys passed softly away, gently as the seared leaf falls in autumn time.

Now, truly alone, John thought of his old schoolfellow, of whom he had not heard for many long years, and putting his house in order he sallied forth on his pilgrimage to the town from whence he heard of him last. There everyone knew George, retired now, but not over wealthy, said his informant. He had

got his bread and cheese. Would have been a rich man if he liked, but, Lord bless you, anybody could do him, his pocket belonged to all the beggars in the place. You had only to draw a long face and whimper, and he'd say, "don't, now, don't," and in would go his hand into his pocket, and off would go the beggar with a chuckle. And then he'd stand looking after him and say,

"Dear bless me, what troubles and poverty there are in the world!"

"Scientific man still?"

"O yes, and that's one reason he didn't become a very rich man. Would leave the shop any day to see some strange plant, or a butterfly miles off, and, at the briskest time at night was up, moon gazing on the roof, when he ought to have been behind his counter."

"Was doubtless robbed?"

"I believe you. Young Jennings dressed better than his master, and sported no end of jewellery, and lived in such style! The old man's eyes were opened at last. Wouldn't believe it for ever so long, but found him out one day, and then found, too, he must have lost thousands."

"What did he do?"

"Took him into his parlour, and talked, and talked with him, as a father would, and then let him go with his boxes and things, just as if he was sending off his son for a holiday!"

With these and other insights into his old friend's life, John was much interested, and amongst other things he learned that every night, at a certain hour, he was in the habit of going to the Free Library, and there poring over the daily paper before going home to his rest. John had been to his house, but he was away, and not expected until the evening, so, at the expected hour he sallied forth from his hotel and sat, apparently busy with a newspaper, until his friend came in.

A click of the latch, a step, and in, quietly, came George. Placid the face, calm as that of a man who looked beyond the trifles and petty vexations of life, the face of the earnest thinker,

Looking through Nature up to Nature's God.

He came and sat by John. That worthy knew it must be his friend, from some faint resemblance to what he was in the old days, but George only saw a stranger. Very methodically the last comer pulled out his spectacles, wiped them and placed them on his brow. Then as methodically he looked for the paper which John had secured, and when George was about solacing himself with an old one, until the last was disengaged, John said, handing him the paper at the same time, "The day's paper, sir."

"Thanks, many thanks," he rejoined, and as he took it into his hand he seemed to muse over the voice of the stranger. It touched an old chord of the memory, it was familiar, and yet where had he heard it? So affected was he that after a minute's hesitation and pondering he turned around and said,

"I have heard your voice before," looking him full in the face.

"George!" the old smile beamed over old John's face as he spoke, and

with the exclamation "John!" hand was clasped in hand, and firmly held. There was no reading newspapers then, but a speedy adjournment home, and hasty preparations for a repast. Then a sitting up long into the night, when each told his tale, and both planned the future course of action.

A week or two after that, they might have been seen walking through the village, the scene of their birth and childhood; the elms were there on the village green; the white gate at the parsonage looked smaller than of old; the place more quiet and further away than ever it had been from the track of busy trade. Even the villagers spoke to one another with a quiet, half-asleep manner. Not even in the bark of the dogs was there anything like briskness, and children's mirth was sobered too in that little hamlet amidst the hills, where the only changes seemed to be in the increase of little mounds in the village churchyard.

Quietly through the village, noting each old spot, the friends walked, gazed at by every man and woman and child, and at length they came to the Grange, the old squire's residence, but the squire was dead!

Tired of the monotony of having nothing to do, and having no taste for any of the out-door amusements which give such a zest to country life, he had deliberately committed suicide, and now the heir lived in another county, and the old place was going to ruin.

They made inquiries, and, finding it could be had for a moderate rental, took it. Then, entrusting the repair to competent hands, and arousing quite a clamour in the village by the act, they again disappeared.

It was not long before the business of George was sold, and the homestead of John satisfactorily let. This done, and the Grange finished, and well supplied with furniture and all things necessary, the old friends settled down. Very soon their secret oozed out, and they had a swarm of friends and old faces gathered around them. They were known as the two old bachelors, and there was not a curly-pated youngster who did not know Uncle George and Uncle John. You might see them any day in the fine weather, either in the village street, in their carefully kept garden, or sitting in front of the Grange, and very frequently together.

Starting away in early life, they had returned with wealth to be of the greatest benefit and comfort. There was no selfish indulgence, no consideration of self. John liked to smoke his pipe, and look out upon the village street, and see in the distance the train whirling on its way to London; on returning, bound for the innermost parts of Wales; and nothing pleased George so much as to go up to Doverous Wood, and come back laden with trophies in the shape of insects or plants, over which he would descant with animation, the while John smoked, and looked half amused at his companion's earnestness.

Looking at them together, one would note, perhaps, a shade more of thoughtfulness on the face of John than there was on that of George, and those who knew their history, and saw John gazing at the distant hills through the clouds of smoke from his long pipe, believed that the mental gaze was riveted on those that had been loved and lost, and above the song of birds or

wave of trees, or even the gleeful tumult of the old school playground, voices were heard that had sounded by the fireside, or when "good-bye" was uttered for the last time.

Once a year, and that at Christmas-time, and for a whole week, the sedateness and solitude of the Grange were disturbed. George was driven to his wit's end in taking care of his cherished specimens, and of his instruments. The place was invaded. Curly-headed boys, and young damsels ringleted, marched everywhere, and George had all his work to interest and amuse them. As for John, it was the happiest time of his life to take his children and his grandchildren all over the village or sit with them around the groaning table.

And how rich were the invaders when they left the Grange; what soft crackling paper filled their pocket books; how wealthy were all the youngsters in treasures of toys; and how inconsolable they were, as they looked out of the village fly taking them stationward from "pore ole gran-pa!"

It was a long time before the old quiet was restored, or the echo had seemed to die away of merriment and childlike fun. But it did return, and was again broken, and was again restored many and many a year. Old Time, ever breaking up home circles and ending human histories, seemed to pause over the career of John and George, and linger lovingly, not caring to write its solemn finis to their life.

But one day a whisper ran through the old hamlet on the Welsh borders, John was dead; he had died in his sleep, and on his brow, placid as that of a child, no sign of pain. George followed him to the grave, and a little knot of men—themselves aged, his own sons—followed too.

Again time lingered, and still, with unchanged zeal, old George—"Old Squire George"—followed his bent, and through fields and woods and over marshy lands pursued his hobby. But rheumatism came, and pains and sickness. He rallied, but from that time was an old, old man; he gently faded; a child of nature, his end was as one—the tranquil endings of nature's times and periods. The day blended into the night, and loving friends knew not when the day ended and the night began.

* * * * *

Now and then I visit the border village, and a void seems there. The generous hearts are at rest, but their names are household words, and better than storied urn or monumental bust, than eulogistic epitaph or painted memoriam, is the "In memory of" which is inscribed on the Grange, and which renders it the almshouse of the village, where half-a-dozen old men live in comfort and thank God nightly, if not hourly, that men like John and George were not only blessed with riches, but with kind hearts to bequeath those riches after them to the benefit of old villagers for ever.

THE FATE OF SIR WALTER MANSEL.

A TALE OF KIDWELLY CASTLE.

(FROM THE ANNALS OF THE MARGAM FAMILY.)



THE character of a nation is no more susceptible of change than that of an individual. The Psalms denounce usury, which was evidently a favourite pursuit of the Jews, as indicated by the fact that they did business in the Temple, and "converted it into a den of thieves;" and how strikingly maintained is that usurious character in the bill-of-sale-loving Israelite of to-day.

I am led to this thought by the recollection that many a writer in Wales thinks the Welsh of the Middle Ages but little above the heathen. Instead of that they were a most devout people. Holy wells abounded, monasteries were common, and "yspytty," or hospitals, in the widest and most generous sense, showed that the religion believed in was capable of a most practical application. That devotional character of the Welsh shown by deep-seated superstitions in the early ages, by Roman Catholic devotedness in after times, is now as strongly indicated in the churches and chapels of the present day. In fact, every colliery community which nestles down in a solitary dingle soon indicates its nationality by founding a chapel, and as they advance to a higher degree of refinement, and approach more the character of a town, found a church.

It was at the time of the Crusades when, as William of Malmesbury states, the Welshman left his hunting, the Dane his drinking party, and the Norwegian his raw fish, in order to fight for the Cross. Hunting was the passionate amusement of the Welsh gentleman, but this he gave up readily to fight the Saracen. From all parts of Wales the Crusaders journeyed; the lord of castle and land, the young scion whose only inheritance was his sword, and the sturdy villager, into whose devout soul the monks had infused their own earnest zeal—all gave up castle and home, and journeyed away, careless whether or not they returned, so long as the great object of wresting the sacred spot from the infidel was attained.

At Kidwelly Castle all was excitement. The Crusades had been proclaimed, and the Lord of Kidwelly, Elirdir Ddu, Knight of the Sepulchre, was preparing to depart. He had a yearning to be away, for not long before the Saxon wife of his heart had been laid to sleep. He was not alone in the world, for three children had been born to him; but sorrow pressed heavily upon him, and he felt that it was only in the thick of battle that he could forget.

What a din of preparation went on; rubbing of trappings of man and horse; ladies working assiduously at banners, and huge leather contrivances, now represented by Gladstone bags, being put in order for holding the necessities of Sir Elirdir Ddu. We pry not into what they were. Romance gives us pictures of knights who seem to live and sleep in armour, and we are told nothing of hose or linen; do not know about collars or studs, and no reference is made even to brushes and combs. Romance is too dignified for detail, so we take the knight, who, by-the-way, is a strictly historical personage, in the lump as he was, namely, in armour.

The leave-taking, when it came, was a sad one. His youngest son, Rhys, was to accompany him, and Griffith and fair Nest, the only daughter, remained behind. There was another fair lady, too, amongst those who were left, and this was Gwladys, a niece of Sir Elirdir's, and daughter of Sir Elirdir's brother, Philip ap Ddu, who, having the misfortune to die at an untimely age, left his only daughter to his brother's care.

* * * * *

A great clattering in the court-yard, a neighing of steeds, loving and sad farewells, and the band of the worthy knight pass under the raised gateway, and like an arrow disappear into the mist of the morning.

It will be many a day ere they return, if ever. Who shall say who will, or will not, leave his bones to bleach on the battle plains of the East?

Griffith now was governor of the castle, and, like many young men placed in positions of greater responsibility than their age warrant, ruled rather differently to his sorrowful sire. How lordly his voice, how imperious his commands! He was very different to his sister, who was the very pattern of loving amiability, just the kind of wife a man loves who places implicit confidence in her husband, and eschews all idea of Caudleism.

Nest was in love, and her lover was Sir Walter Mansel, a young and gallant knight, whose attentions to Nest had only just begun at the time when Sir Elirdir left, and so strongly had Sir Walter fallen in love that he could not think of Crusades, or of anything else that would take him from the presence of his beloved. Unfortunately for Sir Walter he was the very man with whom ladies always fall in love. Nature had made him in every essential of bearing and deportment a lady's man. He was winning, fascinating, accomplished in arms and sports, gay, *debonnaire*. What more can be said? But unfortunately, I repeat it, for Sir Walter, he not only captivated Nest, but her cousin Gwladys as well, and unwittingly, for he was a true knight, and was quite content to know that Nest returned his love. He did not care for the other, though she, too, was very beautiful; but while Nest had, as

an old writer described it, soft blue orbs and golden ringlets, Gwladys had the clear, rich, dark complexion, flashing eyes, and glossy black hair of Cambria.

Gwladys loved him passionately from the moment she saw him first, and unheeding the fact that he had openly professed to love her cousin, did all she could to wean his attention to herself.

But Walter was firm to his allegiance, and even when Gwladys had almost overstepped the bounds of maidenly decorum in her blind infatuation for him, he gently parried endearment of word and allurement of eyes. Nest was worthy of all his devotion, and to Nest he would be true.

This was a serious complication. In the stately old castle two ladies in love with the same man ! Nor was this all. Griffith was also in love with his cousin Gwladys ! -

Little did the good knight, Sir Elirdir Ddu, think of this as he went jogging along to the seaboard. Little knew he of the clouds that were looming, as the transport bore him and many a stout Welshman away.

Griffith loved his cousin as fervently as she loved Walter, and she saw this, and, like a cunning jade, began to plot how to turn it to account. She did not like Griffith; he was too coarse and impulsive; but she dissembled. She might make his love a weapon, and if she could not gain the love of Walter, she was determined no one else should !

That one so beautiful should entertain such a vicious determination is one of the strange problems of human history. In the lower types of life, what venom lurks under the fascination of the cobra, and in the higher, of what villainy was not the superbly handsome Borgias, capable !

There was yet another complication at Kidwelly Castle. Previous to setting out upon his journey, Sir Elirdir had been won over to some extent by Griffith to refuse Sir Walter admittance into the castle until his return, for Griffith hated Walter most vindictively, and regarded him not only as a personal enemy, but as one of those hateful Normans who had assisted so materially in despoiling the rightful Welsh lords of their property.

Sir Elirdir was more generous, but still he thought that young blood was hot, and possibly some quarrel might ensue between the young men, so he hinted to Walter that he did not dislike his attentions to Nest, but it would be better that he did not visit the castle until his return.

Such was the tangled web at Kidwelly Castle, and after remaining unaltered for a month or two, Gwladys made a discovery which sent her anger up to extreme heat, and scattered her love for Walter for ever. The discovery was this. She had noticed her cousin going out occasionally, and displaying more than ordinary care in her dress. She had further noticed that the occasional absence was often a long one, and that Nest looked particularly flushed and happy on her return.

What should Gwladys do ? She soon settled the point by watching her opportunity and following Nest at a safe distance upon her stolen journey. At starting, poor Nest, innocent crafty one as she was, took a course diametrically opposite to that she intended taking, and when out of sight of the castle,

proceeded in the direction of Trimsaran, where Sir Walter had a temporary dwelling, from which he now and then drove to Margam. Very quickly, now, Nest went on her way, and very stealthily Gwladys followed. There was no one to see the pursuit of the dove by the hawk. Gwladys took good care of that, and cautiously pursued until she saw a scarf fly in the distance, and noticed Sir Walter bound over the sandy common, and meet her with every indication of the most ardent affection.

Gwladys did not wait. She saw enough. She saw that, as she had feared, Sir Walter had given the whole of his heart to her cousin, and from that time the Cambrian beauty vowed a fearful revenge, and repeated her dire resolve. If she could not have Sir Walter no one else should. The place of meeting was called Pont y-Gwendraeth, and it spanned a river which, being indirect, and in near connection with the sea, was a tidal one, and very deep.

Very soon after her return Gwladys had a quiet meeting with Griffith, who was delighted to be thus favoured, and thought that his cousin was beginning to respond to his love suit at last; but instead of telling him that his love was returned, she fenced him off in this respect, and broke to him the stolen meetings of his sister and Walter.

Welshmen, in their present refined era, have the credit of being quick in anger and speedy in revenge; but then, unfettered by the law, their volcanic currents had no limit, but poured down, destroying everything in their track. Fired with anger, Griffith took hasty resolve, and a letter was intercepted from Walter to Nest naming the next meeting. This was all the conspirators wanted, and when Griffith said that the only thing now wanted was a man who would carry out their intentions, Gwladys at once fixed upon the individual. This was the black sheep of the castle, her own foster brother, Merig Maneg—a fellow who lacked every good feeling, and was so notoriously knavish and villainous that nature very kindly, and not all according to her wont, had put a mark upon him in the form of a crafty, cruel, and malicious look. Your genuine scoundrel is not unfrequently a very plausible, good-looking fellow, and Merig was, in consequence, very generally avoided.

Gwladys sent for him, and the fellow, very proud of the distinction, took an oath to obey Griffith in whatever he wished, and then the beautiful snake, satisfied that all was in fair trim, proceeded to play soft dalliance with Nest, so as better to conceal the part she was taking in the affair.

The day came for the tryst. It was a beautiful day in September, too early for the slightest sign of winter, but not too late for autumn's gold. Very fragrant the air, very soft the wind; the radiance of many a sunset seemed to linger on the trees, as if stamped indelibly there by the Power that bestowed and loved all its bestowals and its creations, even as we do the little ones of our home and heart. Very beautiful was the sky—so blue, and wide, and far stretched, no cloud to hide some watching angel guarding the life and happiness of Nest. And gently tripping over meadow and common she went. The bridge was near. There was the play of the scarf, and the old bound as he sprang upon the bridge, but as she neared the centre she heard the whirl

of an arrow, saw him stagger and fall, and ere she could gain the side of the stream she saw Merig, the villainous, spring from a place of concealment on to the bridge, and, catching up her lover in his arms as he would a child, throw him into the waves! Nest waited not, faltered not, but, giving one wild shriek of despair, plunged in after the hapless knight, and the tide, then turning, carried both the bodies out to sea. One minute sufficed for the tragedy, and two strong loving hearts were stilled for ever.

There was a great ado at the castle the next day, for neither Griffith nor Gwladys had calculated upon such an ending. The death of the knight was all that was wanted, and now here was another complication, and what would Sir Elirdir do?

Together the worthless pair concocted a tale—how it had come to their knowledge that Nest had agreed to elope with Sir Walter; that the window of her bed chamber was found open and the bed undisturbed; that tracks were found reaching down to the sands; and that evidently, in trying to get away, the tide had overtaken them and drowned them.

The bodies were first discovered by a fisherman, who, whenever he heard what the people said at the castle, laid a forefinger, an ancient sign, against his nose, and looked uncommonly shrewd. And to his cronies over their cups—for it would not do when a man's life was worth less than a cow's to tell stories of the ruling powers—the fisherman whispered of an arrow wound near Sir Walter's heart.

Unhappy Sir Elirdir! Little did he think that at the moment his bright broadsword cut down Saracens to the chine that his beloved and only daughter was meeting such a hapless fate: When the news did come, borne by messenger, sorrow and sickness and exposure broke down the little vitality that was left, and Elirdir slept where so many a noble Briton had slept, and were to rest again under the shadow of the cypress and the cross.

Griffith waited a little while after his sister's death to renew his profession of love to Gwladys, but she wouldn't hear of it. "She marry the man who caused his sister's death!" and she shrugged her shoulders and retired, leaving Griffith to meditate whether it would be better to kill her, hang himself, or go to the Crusades. Fortunately for Gwladys he decided upon going himself to join his father in the East, and, accompanied by that precious scoundrel Merig, he started and did good service, for if he was a bad, he was a brave man, as many a Saracen found to their cost. In the lapse of time Rhys, the younger brother, returned home, and about the period when Griffith fell in a great conflict with the infidel, he and Gwladys were married.

But, hear it, ye believers in the eventful shaping of the roughest end, and the reward of a just life, and the satisfactory dealing out of justice to the honest, she was not happy, and when gossips began to speak of a white-veiled form haunting the bridge of Pont-y-Gwendraeth, the little reason she had, left her, and for a time she was under restraint. From this she rallied, and, though in sinking health, was sufficiently rational one day to receive her foster brother, who had returned in broken health to Kidwelly to die.

From the moment he had murdered Sir Walter he had known no rest. One glance of an anguished face was ever before him, one wild shriek ever in his ears. He had followed Sir Griffith to the wars to get rid of life; but some charm about him made him invulnerable. In the thickest of the fight, wherever men went down like corn before the reaping hook, there was Merig to be seen, and out of it he always came unhurt and free.

The first time that Nest appeared to him was on the death of Sir Elirdir, and then she told him, "that her spirit was doomed to walk the earth as a punishment for her suicide, until a marriage should take place between one of her father's descendants, and a member of the Mansel family. When this came to pass," she stated, "that her probation would be over; but that until it did occur, she would appear on Pont-y-Gwendraeth to give warning of the approaching death of every member of the family." She also added "that a descendant of Merig's would meet with an ignominious death through the instrumentality of one of her's, and that, about that time, her visitations on earth would cease."

Such was the tale told by Merig, and very shortly afterwards his troubles came to an end, and a narrow grave received him.

And now for an authentic verification of a genuine ghost story. From that day the bridge became known as Pont-yr-yspryd-Gwyn, (the bridge of the white spirit,) and for many a generation it was said to be the scene where a white form would occasionally appear, give utterance to a wild unearthly shriek, and vanish.

In 1775, Mr. Rhys, a lineal descendant of Rhys Ddu, of Kidwelly Castle, lived in the neighbourhood. The fortunes of the family were not so bright as of old. They were no longer lords of Kidwelly, and the castle was a ruin. Still Mr. Rhys was a gentleman of position, and a magistrate, and he was returning one evening from quarter sessions, when he was startled by seeing a white figure flit rapidly across the bridge, and disappear over it into the water. Mr. Rhys felt the horse he rode tremble under him, and the animal for some time doggedly refused to go onward. Instantly Mr. Rhys thought of the ghost story and the prediction, and riding towards Kidwelly, when a few miles from home, noticed a large crowd, and heard that a shocking murder had been committed upon a poor old woman. He entered the cottage, and discovered on looking about, a small portion of a man's coat-sleeve lying upon the bed. This he held up, and asked if any one was known who wore a coat of that colour, and a dozen voices at once shouted out "Will Maneg!" Will was arrested, and, confessing his guilt, was hanged on Pembrey Mountain; while, as still further to strengthen the prediction, Mr. Rhys was informed that day of the death of his brother, Arthur, of the Royal Navy, who was drowned at sea, and of his wife's mother's death, Lady Mansel, of Iscoed, who was burnt to death at Kidwelly, her sleeve having caught fire as she was in the act of sealing a letter.

After so correct a fulfilment, no well-behaved ghost could be expected to fail in keeping its word, and thus though the tradition lingers in the neighbour-

hood of Kidwelly still, and many a lover tells the tale and makes his sweetheart cling more confidently to the strong arm upon which she leans, yet the only thing that retains any resemblance to a visionary life is in the name of the bridge, the Pont-yr-yspryd-Gwyn.

MARCH OF THE MEN OF HARLECH.



POPULAR as this musical composition has always been, it is unquestionably now placed in the highest rank by the genius of Brinley Richards. Those who have heard him, and watched his wonderful fingering on the pianoforte, are enthusiastic in his praise. Yet he claims no credit, but awards all honour to the unknown author, who, somewhere in the fourteenth century, composed a piece which, for musical talent and military fire, stands equal to the finest martial composition of modern days.

Harlech means bold rock, and throughout the history of Wales, from, it is conjectured, the fourth to the fourteenth, or even the fifteenth century, maintained its character as one of the most formidable castles in Wales.

It was first built by Mallgwynedd, prince of North Wales, about the year 350, and after figuring in many important strifes, was rebuilt by Edward the First, in the thirteenth century.

Here the fair Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry the Sixth, found an asylum, and in the romantic quietude of this lonely spot recalled the gay and brilliant past, and dreamt of the possible restoration of former grandeur. Here, too, came the last Welsh chieftain, Owen Glyndwr, and in possession of the fortress pictured himself in full possession of the title and power he craved.

It was, however, in the fifteenth century that the old castle won its immortality by its brilliant defence against the king by the Lancastrians.

Sturdy old Davydd ap Ivan ap Einion was then the governor, and he scorned capitulation and defied all assault.

William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, besieged it in force, and long remained camped without the walls, every effort being frustrated by the brave defenders. The Earl's brother marched to his assistance, and all supplies being cut off, they literally starved the old Welshman out. Glyn Cothi, the bard, has

described the march to the support of Herbert in an able poem, but the defence, and the undaunted bravery of the defenders, won from other hands a tribute more imperishable than Glyn Cothi's muse—the celebrated "March."

The whole district is, to coin a phrase, martialised. Stones still erect are known as the tombs of heroes, glens are dignified by the term of "the loud shout to battle." An impress of valour seems yet to linger about the spot, and to recall the day when, in defence of land and liberty, the men of Harlech fought and died.

When one listens to the martial strain, and is roused to enthusiasm by its patriotic fire, it is pleasant to think that the descendants of those who assailed and those who defended are now welded together; are blended into one race, and that while the old valorous spirit still exists, and is as ready now as ever to defend home and land, or win fresh renown on foreign battle fields, that the habits insensibly have long become directed and moulded into peaceful channels. The fire we trace in the pulpit, the energy in commerce, the ability in literary pursuits, the sword, in fact, has been ground down to the ploughshare, and the reaping hook; and the ripened corn falls in golden heaps where once fell a ruddier stain.

Harlech is now a scene for the poet and the artist. The one may pen his ballad, and the other perpetuate upon canvas ruined towers and living foliage.

Néver again is it likely to be the scene of strife. Rank, wealth, and commerce now camp beneath its walls, in mansion, villa, and dwelling, and the past has become simply a tradition to while away the leisure of the tourist, and bring back the grim days of old.

THE STRANGER.

A TRUE PEMBROKESHIRE TALE.

PREFACE.



EST it be thought that I am romancing, it will be as well to assure the reader that the substance of this strange tale was told me by one who heard it from the doctor's lips.

It was told me one winter eve by the fireside, in a low solemn voice, and though in the after part, and the general working up, I may have departed from the exact wording of the original, yet the outline is the same.

For the "text," then, blame my informant; who he was must remain unknown. For the "sermon" I am answerable.

There was not a more bountiful man in the whole of Pembrokeshire than Dr. ——. I will call him Dr. Thomas.

In early life he had studied the art of healing; had walked the hospitals; lived in France; sojourned in Germany, and had settled down in his native town to practice, when an old uncle—how fortunate it is to have an old uncle, how traditionally excellent is even the name—died, leaving him a large tract of freehold, and a good round sum at his bankers. By his uncle's decease he became suddenly a rich man.

Dr. Thomas soon put his resolves into action. His lotions, powders, and calomel, were placed into a cupboard for occasional service amongst the poor, and then the doctor became the country gentleman, and, being a man of culture and refinement, who had seen a good deal of the world and observed and thought much, his society was sought after, and many a tempting heiress might have been had for the plucking.

But he had contracted bachelor habits, and though he liked society as an occasional variation, he liked still better his books and solitude.

Yet, it was not to be expected that this state of things could continue long, and so, after a few years of bachelor freedom, he married, and, as he called it, settled down, dispensing physic and good advice to any poor labourer, and justice once a week in his capacity of J.P.

At the time when my tale opened he and his good lady were famed for their hospitality, and their generous aid in any hopeful movement. No children had blessed their union, and so the wealth they possessed was used liberally, not simply in catering to a clique, giving elaborate parties, and confining themselves to a circle of inanities ; but extending a wide and beneficent action over the whole neighbourhood, so that, far and near, the fame of the open house of Dilstone was known.

It was the hay harvest. The doctor, as he was always called, had seen the heavy swath scattered about by men and maidens. Through the lanes had gone the great loads, leaving, amidst the wild roses and the honeysuckles, the fragrant "wisps" of hay. In great stacks it had been placed in the ample yard near his residence, which was half farm, half mansion in appearance, and one fine morning the doctor was standing near one of them, admiring its build, and delighted with its fragrance, when a little, weazened-looking man, dressed in rusty black, and wearing boots dusty and worn with travel, stepped nimbly from behind it, with a "good morning, sir ! There's many a worse place than a hay stack to sleep under."

"Good gracious !" exclaimed the worthy doctor, "you don't mean to say that you have slept there all night."

"Yes," said the stranger, "and slept like a top !"

"But why not have had a bed in the village, or knocked at my door ? you should have had a bed and supper too if you wanted."

"Thanks," said the rusty man, "but I'm accustomed to this sort of thing, and in the summer it's refreshing. There's a smell in common houses, but a fragrance here. My lot has lain amongst the poor, and, do you know, there's a particular odour with poverty, just as there is a special odour with crime, and I don't like either."

The doctor laughed at the quaintness of the stranger, and said, "well, you have not broken your fast, will you come and do so in my house ?"

"Again thanks," was the rejoinder, "but my wants are very few. I have still a few pence for a crust, and the brook will supply the rest."

The doctor again pressed him, for he saw that he was not speaking with an ordinary tramp.

The little man had taken off his shabby hat, and above that weazened face was a thoughtful brow, and his eyes, too, glittered with a keenness and power which had a strange weird fascination. The doctor was determined he would know more about the stranger he was talking to, and, yielding reluctantly to his request, the stranger accompanied him to the house.

"Now," he said as they reached it, "either you shall get your wants supplied in the kitchen or in the breakfast room with me."

"The kitchen, by all means !" was the reply. "You don't know who I am. Perhaps I have been thinking to plunder your hen roost, or to set fire to your stacks, and it would be singular," and he laughed strangely, "for the criminal to hob nob with the magistrate."

"How do you know I am a magistrate ?"

"Well, if you are not, it would be singular. You have the best house in the neighbourhood, and possess an intelligence above the usual clodhopper farmer; but there's a manner about a man who rules which those who are ruled can scarcely fail to observe."

The doctor smiled, and, ushering his visitor into the kitchen, bade a servant lay a substantial repast before him, and nodding a good-bye, saying, "don't go until I've seen you again," went into his own breakfast-room to tell his wife of his adventure.

"I never see'd such a man as master is," thought the girl, as she placed the fragrant ham and snowy eggs before the stranger.

"I can't abear his eyes. If I don't look after the spoons my name isn't Jane."

"Good girl," said the little man. "Now, don't let me detain you. Your spoons shall be all right, I promise you."

The girl started.

"Many thanks, this is the best meal I have had for many a day, don't stay, ta, ta."

As the girl told the housemaid she added, "you could a' knocked me down with a handkerchief, he seemed to know what I was a thinking of." She didn't stay, and was "only too glad to be away from them eyes."

"Well, sir, I hope you have enjoyed yourself," cried the doctor, as he looked in after giving him sufficient time, as he thought, to satisfy himself.

"Very much indeed," was the reply, "and if I had an inclination for your hen roost, it is all gone!"

"Had you an inclination?" laughed the doctor.

"Well, I can't say. Hunger prompts a man to do things which he wouldn't think of after a good meal. It's a spur, a whet, often, to villainy. Hunger and drink fill the gaols. Giles, starving, traps a hare—Giles drunk, becomes very often a fiend.

"Very true," said the doctor, more than ever struck with the man's quaintness. "By the way," he added, "can I help you in any manner on your road? What direction are you taking?"

"The roads I choose," was the reply, "are those which are the easiest walked. I have no particular course, or, indeed, object."

"What are you?" said the doctor.

"Simply a traveller."

"But how do you live?"

"As I can."

"Have you no means of livelihood?"

"None; I am worse off than the gipsy, who has his clothes pegs in moral moments; and lower than the tinker, who is able to patch a tin when he can't get a stray fowl, or pilfer a sheet off a hedge."

"But surely you have not always been a poor traveller?"

"Haven't I," was the rejoinder, that seemed more a soliloquy than a reply. Then in a musing manner he continued: "I have tramped the prairies of the

nor'-west, and slept in the shadow of the Pyramids. I know what the Indian sun is like, and I have felt the rigour of the Russian steppes. I have lived in France so long as to feel myself imbued with the instincts of a Frenchman, in Germany until Bavarian beer and sauer kraut seemed indispensable. Once I was near becoming a mandarin in China, and I have since helped Sir John Franklin with his whaleboats."

"Mad as a March hare!" said the doctor to himself.

"Not a bit of it!" exclaimed the stranger. "One of the worst guesses you have made."

"God bless me," thought the doctor.

"I hope he will!" said the little man.

"I say?" cried the doctor, "either I think aloud or you read my thoughts. You and I don't part easily. Come into my study. Let me know more about you, and see if I cannot help you in some way or another."

"Alas! Alas!" was the reply. "I don't see how you can. If you could transform me into one of your docile William Williamses or John Joneses, that I could hedge or plough; get me from myself, make me other than I am, then you might. But now, alas!"

"Whatever you are, one thing is clear, you are poor."

"Yes, I have only a few shillings, not a ducat, a Napoleon, or a greenback, but I can get some when hard pressed."

"And how?" queried the doctor.

"Preach at the wayside, write an article to your papers, or magazines. My last pound came from Blackwood; or teach."

"Can you teach?" said the doctor.

"Yes," said the rusty man, "train village boys through their A B C, spelling and rudiments, help others with their Latin and euclid, and put embryo ministers up in Hebrew points or their Greek articles."

"Then," said the doctor, who was holding this conversation in his study, "you are the very man for this neighbourhood. We have lost our school-master, and if you like the post I can get it for you."

"Thanks again," said the stranger. "I'll think about it," adding, with a laugh, "It will be funny to talk to the Pembrokeites about Tasso and Petrarch, amuse them with old Horace, and give them rural notions from Virgil. Shakespeare, too. I'll quote Hamlet until they dream of graveyards, and rant Richard until they are wild with military fever."

"No, no," said the doctor. "All we want is someone to teach the simple rudiments of education. I don't think that you will have any scope for anything else."

"Ah, there," said the little man, "now we can't agree. I am a child of nature, like the brook which goes on its way unchecked; like the wind which blows or does not, as it listeth; like a bird; yes, many worse things than a bird if it wasn't for hawks and fowling pieces."

"But surely," said the doctor, "you would conform to a few simple rules."

"Well, now I think of it," said the stranger, "I will. I accept your offer with thanks, for a time at least."

"Now you are getting reasonable, and if you will come with me we will make the first step."

Thus speaking the doctor took his hat, and first introducing the little man to his wife, as the new schoolmaster, accompanied him to the little town or village of——

The first thing the worthy doctor did was to find him comfortable lodgings, next to secure him the post at the village school, and after the lapse of a few hours this was completed, and helping him liberally from his purse, the doctor departed homewards.

But before leaving him he said "there is one thing I have omitted. You have not given me your name."

"Name?" said the stranger, "no, exactly; what shall it be—Jones or Williams, just as you please."

"No, no," said the doctor, "let me have your real name."

"Real name;" was the reply, "I have forgotten it."

"Ah! now you are not dealing honestly by me," said the doctor, "or you have some special reason for concealing it."

"On my honour," was the rejoinder, "I don't know it. It's changed in every place and in every country that I have been, and what it originally was I really don't know. Let me see," he said, musingly. "Ben Akim. Something like—well, say Benjamin, Mr. Benjamin."

"Well, then, Mr. Benjamin, good day," and with a hearty shake of the hand they separated. The doctor felt that Mr. Benjamin was a puzzle, an enigma which he could not solve. His knowledge, his great penetration, were undeniable. Had the doctor lived in the days of witchery and the occult sciences he would have put Mr. Benjamin down amongst the professors of the black art. As it was his singular power in reading one's thoughts was, in his opinion, simply due to extreme sagacity. So thinking he gained his residence.

The next day Mr. Benjamin began his duties as schoolmaster. His predecessor had been a tall man, and the high stool and desk had not been out of place. Now it was decidedly, and the little man looked almost grotesque as he sat perched there. He was not quite at his ease. He missed the song of the brook, and the freshness and beauty of nature. Every now and then he would sniff the air, and look plaintively towards the open window like a caged bird sighing for freedom, but louder uproars within soon recalled his attention, and the boys felt that their master was there.

Upon the third or fourth day the doctor called at the schoolmaster's lodgings, after school hours, and begged him to come and dine with him the next day, and this was the beginning of frequent visits, the doctor and his wife being charmed with the strange knowledge and wonderful learning which flowed from the master's garrulous lips. He had a strange way, too, of identifying himself with the past, and in his remarks concerning men spoke as if they were personally acquainted with him. "Socrates and Hugh Miller," he had

remarked, "types each of their special class, in different ages, both hadn't philosophy enough to wait and let the sands of life run out. They must needs shake the hour glass rudely. Fine man however, was Socrates. Knew him. He had a grandness of view superior to Plato. Socrates had more of the Christian character than the other, Diogenes was a prig—just a cobbler critic, a little removed from the men one meets with nowadays: He also was a type of his class—a class comprising the hermit of six to eight hundred years ago, and the genuine monk of the present. Always bilious. Knew him. Surely people are not naturally bad-tempered people. Astonishing how much is due to a weak stomach and a disordered liver." And so he would wander on, touching on men of ancient days as well as those of a century or less ago. He invariably ended his remarks with "knew him" and a solemn pause, as if recalling some familiar face; but when the doctor would say with a surprised air, "But surely you did not know him personally?" he was always met with "Did I say so?" and a boisterous laugh.

By this time he had a free entry into the doctor's house, and was constantly in the library, whether the master was there or not. The domestics gave him a wide margin, for none cared particularly about him, and the cook especially, who never forgot his reading her thoughts, always voted him, if not the old gentleman, then somebody very closely acquainted.

The doctor's lady was amused with him; but he was too prosy and learned for her, and she rarely came in his way. So it was that it fell out upon a certain evening that the good doctor, who had been warmly disputing with his friend in the library upon some matters pertaining to Goethe and Schiller, was called away suddenly by one of his own men, whose wife was dangerously ill, and the little man was left alone. For a time he read, and then soliloquised aloud. He had forgotten the open window and the prying servants, and gave vent to his feelings.

"I must leave this," he said. "He is very good, too good; but the old feeling is growing too strong to be resisted. It is love of home, the *heim weh* of the German? My God, what home have I? Is it thirsting for solitude, and the mountains, and the streams? Partly, perhaps, Nature soothes me with her great hush, and I fall to sleep, and dream not. Is it ever to be thus throughout the ages, myself untouched and unfading, while all around die? What use to me is love?—the passion of the bird for its mate is not much more fleeting than the passion of man. One is a summer month and the other a few short years. I was one of the gnats that sunned in the glory of Cæsar's throne. Where are the other gnats? Earth claims her children back when wearied with the sport and turmoil, calls them as a mother calls her children to her bosom, there to sleep and sleep. No sleep for me, no rest for the weary."

The listening servants heard him pace the library floor rapidly, and then all was quiet.

When the doctor returned home his friend had left, but he was told a curious tale "that Mr. Schoolmaster had been just like one beside himself,

and had cried out he must go several times, and that he wanted to sleep, and a lot more of Bedlam-like stuff."

This made the doctor anxious to see his friend in the morning, but when he called there he had not returned the previous night, and the servant thought he must have slept at the doctor's, as he had occasionally. Then the doctor went to the school, and awaited its opening, but no schoolmaster came. One by one came the future labourers, and sextons' assistants, and public-house keepers that were to be when this generation had passed away; but the weazened face, and the glittering eyes, and the quaint figure, came not, and, in high glee at so unexpected a holiday, the boys gambolled home.

Mr. Benjamin came no more. No one in the village ever saw him again, with the exception of the worthy doctor. That good man was sojourning for his health many years after at the German spas, when a man passed him whom he thought he knew. A huge cloak muffled the figure, and partially draped the face, so that it was difficult to recognise. So hard and steady, however, was the glance of the doctor that the stranger, who still remained near, was evidently discomposed, and seemed halting, as if uncertain what to do. At length, appearing to make up his mind, he came near, removed the cloak, and said, "Yes, you are right. I am your base, ungrateful friend; but don't scold, don't say a word. Couldn't help it, no more than the snared hare let loose springs back to its covert, or the released bird to soar in the golden sunshine and sing good-bye. Thanks, again thanks—thanks ever. Not a word," he continued, as the doctor seemed on the point of bursting out with a flood of questions. "As long as I live I will remember you and thank you; and I shall live, yes! live when all of your race and name are resolved into dust; when your boasted institutions are talked of as we speak of those of Greece and Rome; when other creeds replace the prominent ones of the age, and your literature is dreamt over by the *savan* even as you ponder over Brahmin lore and Chinese philosophy.

"You start. I mean what I say. Your poets crave immortality! I have it! To you all the shroud is a terror, and the last sleep an agony. O God! how gladly I would lay me down and die, and shut my eyes for ever to the sight of the earth and its beauties, and my ears to the baleful sound of man's happiness and mirth. Death, which makes your cheek blanch and your knees tremble, I welcome! O death! come and wind around me those fleshless arms, and bring that ghastly face close beside my own. Fairer than from any of earth's fair daughters would I hail that embrace, and with ardent, passionate love would take it, the thing you hate, to my arms, and in its winding shroud sleep—sleep on and in this life wake no more.

"Farewell! I see by your eyes you have guessed who I am. I am indeed the Wandering Jew, condemned ever to walk the earth until He comes to judge; to know no peace, no rest until then, but through all lands, in all ages, unloved, unfriended, make my way alone, the poor, wretched—Wandering Jew."

EINSON, THE FUGITIVE.

THE ORIGINAL "ENOCH ARDEN" OF TENNYSON.



EVERYBODY who has read Tennyson's poems knows that the source of a great deal of his inspiration is the fruitful field of Welsh history, the idylls and legendary lore of Arthur's time, and the long epoch generally of early British history, which, with all its marvellous doings, its giants, its wonder workers, its feats of arms with magic swords, have supplied poets, play-writers, and nursery rhymists for the last hundred and fifty years. All this is well known to the educated reader, but very few even of these are aware that "Enoch Arden" and his pathetic story comes from the same source, and that we have in Cambrian annals the original of that much enduring man, as described by the poet, who exhibited as great an amount of philosophy as can possibly be shown by any man, no matter what his nationality.

Ever since Tennyson's noble poem appeared the papers have occasionally supplied incidents of a similar character, and we have had American "Enoch Ardens," French "Enoch Ardens," and "Enoch Ardens" of other nationalities. Let us now see the original, and tell the story of

THE WELSH "ENOCH ARDEN."

In the neighbourhood of Amlwch there is a fine old seat of the Pantou family, known as Plas Gwynn, and in one of the fields are two stones, grey with antiquity, and preserved with great care in their original *situ*. No one passing that way would notice anything unusual about them, and the ordinary tourist would imagine that they were "mere stones" placed to mark some parochial or parliamentary boundary; but the stones have a place in tradition, and the tale told is one of the most novel. Einson, in the era prior to Norman rule, was one of the youthful celebrities of the neighbourhood, and combined, in a remarkable way, mental and physical excellences. Superbly built, he could wrestle, or shoot with bow and arrow, and run or leap with the strongest. Then his dancing was perfect, and he was as noticeable in courteous bearing as he was agile and brave in the field. Nor was this all; his touch on the harp was perfection, and few could surpass him in original accompaniments. These original accompaniments are special features of the old days, dating

from the epoch of the wandering minstrels, and doubtless came to their acme of development in the time of the Crusades.

It was not to be expected that so gifted a man should go through the world by himself, and certain it is that many a fair one looked upon him with favour, and sighed to think that he did not return their affection. The fact was he soared high. There was one beautiful damsel in the same district who also united two very essential virtues; those of being beautiful and rich. She was an heiress of an old house, the last of an old line. Inheriting, with immense possessions, the hauteur of her family, she was not so approachable as were most of the young ladies of the county, and it was a common remark of the young men that the "eagle of the rock" would be worth possessing; but the danger of the attempt and almost certain result of failure could not be borne. So men looked and sighed when Angharad came to the merry makings or was seen in any of the public gatherings, but Angharad passed by as cold and as calm as though they were not present and the male gender was an inferior creation.

But it came under the observation of certain dowagers who had pretty daughters—for there were dowagers then as well as now, and as long as roses have blown there have been thorns to guard them—that Angharad stole now and then a look at Einson, which meant a great deal. In that unspoken and most ancient of languages, that of the eyes, it meant, "Why don't you try? Surely I am worth the winning. Try, man, try!"

He caught the look one day, and it sent his heart bounding. Back from the eyelet of his soul flashed responsive feeling—she was loved!

After that little unspoken speech everything went smoothly. Einson sought her presence and was favourably received, and step by step gained her complete affection, so that she admitted there was no one in the world she loved so well as Einson, but—. These little "buts" generally protrude themselves in the most disagreeable manner at awkward times. Your friend would have the greatest possible pleasure in advancing you a loan, but—. Your solo composition at the cisteddfod was by far the finest rendered, but—. Your old uncle fully intended leaving you the whole of his property, but—. So a but protruded itself in Einson's case. The lady had a weakness, as most of the amiable creatures have in one way or the other, and the weakness of Angharad was to be won by some man who would distinguish himself in leaping, or doing some extraordinary feat. It was necessary first that candidates for her hand should be of almost equal position to herself, and that she should feel a strong affection for them; but, more than this, they must signalise themselves by doing something exceedingly wonderful.

Here we cannot but wander a little from the current of the story, and recall incidents which show that this whim of the lady is as "old as the hills." How often in the Athenian games have not the prizes been really and truly the lady's hand—the lion fights in the old Roman era where the lady would drop her glove for her lover to bring out of the very jaws of death; the Spanish bull fights where fans and handkerchiefs have been thrown into the arena for

the same purpose; and finally, that touching German tradition of "Vergiss mich nicht," where the lover, sinking into the stream, threw to his beloved one the forget-me-not which she had implored him to get. Doubtless the little jade knew by repute that it was a safe venture, as his renown in leaping was established, so when she told him that he must distinguish himself by excelling everything he had done before, and that then her hand should be his prize, both were tolerably well satisfied that the marriage was a certainty.

A people like the Welsh, hardy and impulsive, could not "moon" over the mountains, tending sheep, sit down always in the evening to their harps, and talk poetry to brooks and trees. The old sagas of the tribe might like the meditation pipe, but youth loved to wrestle and to run, as possibly the great progenitors of the race did in days of which blind old Homer sings. Periodical contests of this kind, handed down from remote antiquity, were much encouraged, as they maintained the strength of the youth of a district in full vigour, and gave to warlike and impulsive spirits a good vent. So from youth upwards Angharad had been familiar with such sports, and to encourage the victor, and reward him either with prize or praise, had been one of the greatest of her duties.

It was all settled. At the next feast, or merry-making, Einson was to give a prize for the longest leap, and in this he was to enter himself as one of the competitors, it being an understood thing that if he won no further objection would be raised to his suit.

This oozed out, as most little private arrangements do, and great was the concourse and warm the enthusiasm at the game. One by one the minor competitors passed; the throwing the disc or quoit, the wrestling match, the contest with bow and arrow, the race, where the competitors had not, as Achilles had, the support of one of those accommodating goddesses who always descend from the clouds at the right moment, but their own muscles to depend upon; and finally came the event of the day. On an elevated part of the ground sat Angharad and all the principal gentry. Amidst the throng of eager youth stood Einson, his face all aglow with excitement, his thin, keenly cut lips pressed tightly, his nostrils dilating like those of a high-bred horse, as he stands eager for the contest, and the rise and fall of his chest as it heaved and fell was alone a picture.

There they stand; it is to be a level leap, and amongst the competitors are some of the best runners in the country. One, two, three! they are off, headed by Einson, who coming to the mark, bounded into the air like a stag, and cleared fifty feet, alighting at a distance so far from the mark, and in a way so magnificently done, that only one or two of the rest attempted it, and all fell miserably short. Then rang the welkin with uproarious applause, and so overcome was Angharad, strong and courageous, and no timid dame as she was by nature, that her friends had to take her way.

There was no difficulty now in the way of marriage, and very speedily were Angharad and Einson united amidst great rejoicings and festivities.

In the ordinary course of life this is the termination of a man's public

career. The novelist has laid it down with unerring dictum that all proceedings of a man's or a woman's life after are matter-of-fact, commonplace.

The race for the golden apple was exciting before; won, how tame become all things connected with it. But Angharad and Einson were no common people, and it was fated that they should be the means of handing down one of the most remarkable incidents in Welsh history.

They were married; how life passed with them, what was the number of their family, what special occupation engaged their time, history sayeth not, but tells only this, that after a lapse of a number of years Einson disappeared!

Some hint is thrown out that he ran away, and we are left to assume that he became mixed up in transactions either such as conflicted with his native land and made him regarded as a traitor, or else some matter of home life, overwhelming debts, or the like. At all events he disappeared, and years and years passed by; and to Angharad came no sign or sound of Einson. It was more than passing strange that after such a display of fervent affection Einson should have been content to allow his wife to remain in ignorance of his fate, and she was, after a lapse of many years, quite justified in thinking that he was dead. Prior to the dawn of modern times, it was not unusual for a man even of note to disappear. The envy or malice of relations, the feud of neighbours, caused many a disappearance. It was a short shrift, a dagger in the back, a plunge into a stream, and there was no unpleasant inquiry, no vexatiously troublesome detectives prying here and there.

When Einson "ran away," his wife was still in the full bloom of her matronly beauty, and when her husband had been completely given up as dead, she consoled herself by marrying another. It was quite a marriage of affection, though youth was no longer on her side; and she now anticipated, with a good and kind husband by her, a revival of the old happiness she had formerly experienced in the affection of Einson.

The marriage party had returned to the hall. The guests were in the grounds and the house, and sounds of mirth and music, of light feet tripping, and of light hearts exultant, came from the festive scene, when a poor old harper made his appearance, and sat down by the gate. For a harper to come at such a time was a very common event, but the harper did not seem at all anxious to join in with the festivities. He wanted only to see the lady of the house. The lady of the house had no wish to see troublesome old harpers; but at length she was induced by a whisper of tidings of Einson to go to the door, and there was confronted by her long lost husband! The harper was Einson come back from the wanderings of many years, but so altered that his best friend would not have known him, and even his wife scrupled, or feigned to do so.

Einson, seeing her doubts, placed his harp on the ground, and, running his hands over the strings, sang—

"Look not, Angharad, on my silver hair,
Which once shone bright of golden lively hue;
Man does not last like gold; he that was fair
Will soon decay, though gold continues new.

If I have lost, Angharad, lovely, fair,
 The gift of brave Edynfed, and my spouse,
 All I have not lost (all must from hence repair)
 No bed, nor harp, nor yet my ancient house.

I once have leaped to show my active power—
 A leap which none could equal or exceed,
 The leap in Ober Mwydd, which thou, fair flower,
 Did once so much admire—thyself the meed—

Full fifty feet, as still the truth is known,
 And many witnesses can still attest
 How there the prize I won—thyself must own
 This action stamped my worth within thy breast."

Such was the plaintive melody poured forth by Einson, but it does not appear to have been effectual. His aged appearance contrasted badly with the bridegroom's, and Angharad dismissed him by vowing that he must have fallen in, years before, with her long-lost Einson, and gathering from him, before his death, some details of the place, and of the festive games and the leap, had come to pass himself off as the lost. "She would not entertain him, wretch, impostor. Men drive the rascal away!"

We are left to assume that the harper retired from the scene, his home, his wife, now another's; his own children recognising him not; but who shall say that in the after time, in quiet hours of thought, the old harper did not come again before the mind's eye of Angharad and chide her, and conscience sting her for what she had done.

Nay, more; can we not imagine that in the quiet autumnal eve, when the incident of the harper was passing away from memory, and all the ferment and fever of the new marriage had sobered down, that, sitting by the table with husband and children around, the harper should come once more to the casement, and look in ere wandering away for ever.

Such is the picture of "Enoch Arden," and such, we imagine, is the germ handled so well by Tennyson—another proof, if one were needed, that in the old legends of Wales there is much that Southey and Sir Walter Scott left unexplored.

THE CROCK OF GOLD.



ON the borders of Radnorshire, where so many a wild foray has taken place in past times, where the Fleming has settled, the Norman fought, and the Welsh mountaineer pillaged and burnt when incensed by invaders, it is no uncommon thing for a farmer to come across some old landmark, some mound, or quaint cluster of stones that are records of strife, invasion, burial, or what not, the history of which is unknown.

The farmer, as a rule, cares little about these things. He leaves sentiment to the wanderer, who passes by and sketches his farm either by pencil or in poetic effusion. He is eminently practical, and nothing pleases him so much as to make a discovery, that is of a substantial character, such, for instance, as a "crock of gold."

I will tell you a tale of a crock of gold, and it shall not be without its moral. John Davies, who was better known as Shon Bach, lived on the Welsh edge of Radnorshire, and had all his life been noted in the little dingle amongst the grand old Radnorshire hills as a hard-working, striving man. Under the direction of his father he had been taught all the wrinkles, and hints, and modes which constitute the practical knowledge of a farmer. He had gathered almost, so to speak, instinctively, the lesson of nature; could tell the meaning of the fiery sunset and the red dawn, the early leaf of the oak, and the restlessness of the herds, the mackerel sky, and in fact and in short the hundred little indications given forth by nature as the prophecies of the future, whether as regarded the weather or the crops. In addition he knew tolerably well how to crop his land, where lime was good, and where "long" or "short" manure was valuable; where fallow was needed, what a proper "succession" should be; and in the rearing of cattle Shon Bach was regarded as one of the most successful.

It is almost useless, after this, to state that John was a thriving, well-to-do farmer. Like the majority of his neighbours in the dingle he was a family man, and having married a cousin, as most of the others had done, or a cousin more distantly removed, he was allied to the majority of the little farmers of the valley. They formed a clan, or "sept," and old dames of stocking-knitting and gossiping proclivities could tell the degrees of relationship linking them all, and if a death occurred, as one did occasionally, could interest

their hearers by a detail of rustic biography that was very gratifying and instructive.

A funeral in that lone, out-of-the-world valley was a great event. From the death of the person until the burial all was preparation and expectation, and when the day came what a gathering there was. From east, west, north, and south the old farmers came jogging over the mountains on their antique steeds, some with a wife, or a son or daughter, and novel was the spectacle of the gathering, first from all quarters, the winding journey to the grave, and the farewell feast, where the memory of the dead was kept green, and the home-brewed, specially prepared for the occasion, was drunk with freedom and approval.

Such was the scene when Shon Bach bore his poor old father to the graveyard, and returned home to find himself "master of all he surveyed," and his "claim," notwithstanding the litigious character of Welsh cousins, brothers, aunts, and uncles, "there was none to dispute."

So John went on tilling and hedging, and ditching, and going to market, and thriving as his old father had done before him, in the dim years when the wrinkled old man and the aged wife were bustling about in their little world.

"What are you going to do to-day, Shon?" said Shan one morning in February.

"Well, I be going to pull down that old hedge twixt Cross-fawr and Cross-fach, and make two fields into one. There's a main sight of good land wasted there as may be turned to account."

"O!" said Shan. "Well, I'll sing out when the broth is ready, as you'll want to work late, days being short."

And John, without any more farewell than a grunt of approbation, departed, followed by his constant shadow, his old sheep dog.

John set to work manfully. The hedge was one only in name. Here and there a stray thorn grew, but it was more a mound than a hedgerow, and John's opinion of the qualities of the soil was justified as rich soil crumbled under his blows.

"The very stuff," said John, "for tatos!"

The sheep dog watched the process as if at one time or other he had been an old farmer, occasionally looking up wistfully at the distant sheep on the hill-side, and giving a furtive whine.

Steadily Shon Bach worked, and after a long spell he began now and then to look towards the house, and to wonder how it was that one of the young ones did not come to him, or Shan call, as she had promised. As he worked he thought of the constituents of that famous mutton broth he should have for dinner, the bit of mutton in the pot, the turnips, the herbs; and the taste of the last bowl was beginning to come strangely to that memory taste which is so strongly and strangely a part of our nature, when his pick struck against a stone and jarred his elbow.

"I'll get it out," he said, "'fore dinner, as 'tis a big one."

And he strove arduously for the next ten minutes, but failed. He couldn't move it. Then he brought his spade into action, and, throwing away the earth, found that it was a huge "crock," more like a circular stone box than anything else. He was now all excitement, and wiping the heavy perspiration away from his brow with his hand, he looked down upon it with wonder.

"Shon!" clearly and distinctly on the air came the shrill cry of his wife, "Shon!"

John looked around and waved his hand in sign of hearing, and then nervously tried to prize the "box" open with his pick. Failing in this, he threw a little earth over it, lest anyone should see his discovery, and trudged away to dinner.

Never before had he been so absent. That unctuous mutton broth disappeared without comment. He said little to Jane, less to his troop of small children, and, without waiting to have his after-dinner pipe—a most extraordinary occurrence—sallied off to his work.

His wife said nothing, but thought he was anxious to get the job finished, and went busily about her work of cleaning up.

John reached his hedge, uncovered the crock once more, and then carefully working around it, so as to get the upper part quite free, managed to lift the lid. What a sight! It was full to the brim with spade guineas!

He looked around. Not a soul was in sight. He dipped his hand in and drank in with intensity a metallic chink.

"Good Lord!" he exclaimed, "here's a prize! I'm a rich man for life!"

Very stealthily he filled every pocket. He put on his old brown coat, and filled the pockets of that, and then, heavily laden, and still keeping his eyes intently around him, hastened to the farm, and, calling his wife into council, told her all as he emptied the treasure trove on the table. It was necessary to be cautious, as there was a servant girl in the house—the only servant man was away at a fair.

"Thank God for it," said John.

So getting a basket and a cover, the farmer trudged back to his "find," and as the basket was brought in the wife as carefully put the contents by. Six journeys did John make, and then the "box" was emptied.

The servant was adroitly sent away the first journey to a neighbouring farm for a loan of some articles for the dairy. So the two had ample time to put their guineas by in a place of security; but as for counting them, it was impossible. They could only estimate that there were several thousands. As for the box, or crock, John broke that up into the smallest fragments, lest his man, as he phrased it, "might think something, John Williams, of the Frwd, having found a crock with some few pieces of bones in it, and some money, years ago."

There was none of the old tranquil sleep that night. Both farmer and dame turned and twisted; dreams, most unusual things, troubled them, and Shan saw herself "in silks and satins, and with gold jewellery" like the squire and the parson's wife, and "giving parties." And as for John, he was the squire, and had his hounds, and kept great state.

When the morning came there was the same opinion with both that the past day's discovery had been a dream, and it needed a visit to the hoard to convince them otherwise. Then came the query, what shall we do with it; and, after a long conversation, it was decided that John should take a few to the nearest town and see what he could get for them. He was wise enough to know, for the discovery of the last crock had shown it, that money found was treasure trove, and claimed by the Crown, and he had no inclination, so he said in his rather strong and peculiarly disloyal phraseology, though he was not as a rule a disloyal subject—"to grease fat pigs."

"Did you ever hear, Shan," he said, "that old David John, my grandfather, was a very rich man, but his gold never came to light?"

No, Shan had not.

"Well," pursued John, "it be true, my father often told me that he was never more surprised in all his life that his father cut up"—another rather ugly expression of John's—"so badly; and now I see how it is; this is his, and if 'twas his 'twas my father's, and if 'twas my father's 'tis mine."

And the logic being conclusive, John satisfied himself that as the legal owner he could justly keep it.

This, however, I must say, was a highly coloured fiction. Old David John had been a hard-working, striving man, and he was reported to be worth a pound or two, but no neighbour or son knew what he spent in the law suit between himself and Morgan Jenkins about the ownership of the Coedcae, and the fact that no money was found after him was simply owing to his having given it to Owen and Davies, the lawyers, in the town of R—. But the more Shon thought of his fiction the better he liked it, and the good wife was equally ready to believe as strongly, though both admitted it would not do to tell any one of the neighbours.

Putting twenty of the spade guineas into his old leather bag, John started away the next morning on the mare to the market town. There one John Williams kept a shop as watchmaker and jeweller, and a good business he did in selling time "keepers," repairing them, supplying spectacles to suit all ages, and furnishing those little gold circles which are used in one of the most sacred and solemn of rites as emblematic of the link which binds all Shons and Shans!

"I've got a few old guineas of my grandfather's," said John to John Williams, the watchmaker; "what would you give for 'em?" and as he spoke he pulled them out of his pocket.

The watchmaker looked at them, weighed them, and very generously said they'd fetch as old gold about sixteen shillings apiece. This John took rather reluctantly, and returned home.

"He didn't like," he said to his wife, "to quarrel about it, but if they wasn't worth a pound they wasn't worth anything."

Again there was cogitation and discussion. John Williams was not a rich man. He had to scrape up the money to pay for the twenty guineas, and it was not likely that he could buy a hundred, much less a thousand. Besides

R—— was too near. People might talk and make inquiries. Long and serious talk ended in John starting first to R—— and then by coach to London with five hundred of the spade guineas in his carpet bag. It was a matter of some risk, but it was necessary, and on the fourth day after the start John, with his bag on a stout stick, found himself for the first time in the great city. He was wary and shrewd, and, by keeping a still tongue in his head, passing by obtrusive strangers, and putting up at a respectable hotel, he escaped the dangers to which so many fall a ready victim. He had little difficulty in disposing of the guineas for eighteen shillings each at a shop in Fleet Street, where a goldsmith also kept a bank, and returned unscathed, with a fund of anecdote which ever after gave him place and dignity in the eyes of his friends.

No one but his wife knew why he went. To all he said it was to see the world, but more than one wondered why this desire to see the world should have necessitated half a dozen visits that year, the neglect of the farm, and the losing of a reputation for quiet, plodding industry, which John never regained.

People talked and wondered when the old farm was sold, and John and his family went to live in R——, where they had quite a mansion. Still more when a gossip went about, given forth in the first instance from the old bank, that John had the largest amount of ready money in the bank of any customer !

The old valley saw no more of John. He became a guardian, a J.P. in R—— ; his sons and daughters grew up young gentlefolk, and Shan had her wish to ride in a carriage of her own, and to wear silks and satins and gold jewellery. One of the sons became an officer, and left his bones in the East ; a daughter married well ; another son came to grief in horse racing and almost ruined the old man, and certainly shortened his days.

John died, aged sixty or thereabouts, and his widow a few years after him. Good living did not suit them, and it is questionable whether either had derived a tithe of the happiness that had been expected.

They had seen the world, mixed amongst the gay and thoughtless, innocently ignorant of the amusement they created amongst those to whom they gave their banquets. But the old healthful feeling that John had enjoyed at his work and in his rambles on the hills was lost.

Many a time, sitting in broadcloth, and listening to the small nothings and inanities of parties, he would too gladly have donned the old brown coat, taken the slip of mountain ash in hand, and with his sheep-dog trudged away through copse, over brook and up mountain side, a spring in his gait, and contentment in his heart. No gont then, no sleepless nights, no headaches.

No dainty had ever delighted him, as the old and famous mutton broth ; nor, when clothed in her "silk and satins and gold jewellery," did Shan forget the pleasure of the quiet cup of tea and bakestone cake with widow Jones in the days of old.

To both, the whitewashed farm in the valley was a dear picture of the past. The crock had brought them wealth, but it had lessened that calm, pleasurable content which no crocks ever have, or ever will give.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF LLEWELYN,

THE LAST PRINCE OF WALES.



HERE is a romantic as well as a practical element in the history of most nations, for the sentiment of a people must find its vent as well as the commercial or any other characteristic. Welsh history has less romance than Spanish history, for example; still it has its share, and not a little gleams forth in the closing years of native rule. Possibly the investigator might find a great deal in the earlier and more flourishing years, but there is less of the poetic about the sun at midday than there is at sunset. In the one we have the garish brilliance, but the softened tints and harmonious blending of colours are reserved for the end.

Thus it is that the life and deeds of Llewelyn possess such charms; that the cultured Welshman still resident in his own land or in founding families of repute and distinction in America, Australia, or other lands reverts mentally, as he thinks of home and country, to the noble prince who closed in his own person the line of native princes, and with whose untimely death ended, with the solitary exception of the irregular efforts of Glyndwr, the dynasty of the Princes of Wales.

History, dictated by the cold practical Saxon, tells the tale of his life with a few lines, but song and story and tradition have filled the bare outlines, and bequeathed a record which will only fade when the language ceases to be spoken.

Llewelyn, the last Welsh prince, was the son of Gruffydd, who was the natural son of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, and in 1246 he and his brother Owain were elected Princes of North Wales.

At that time might was held to be right, and questions of inheritance instead of being dispassionately reasoned out in courts of law, were summarily settled by the sword. Had Llewelyn flourished in our own era, his claims as a natural son would have been very quickly placed on one side, and Sir Ralph

Mortimer, who had married the legitimate daughter of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, would unquestionably have had to act with his wife in the discharge of the legal duties as sovereign ruler of the Principality.

But the very fact of Sir Ralph being a stranger was sufficient to do away with the remotest chance of his success, even had he been sufficiently powerful to raise a strong force in vindication of his right, and so Llewelyn remained for a few months in peaceful occupation of his throne.

But Henry the Third, who was uncle to Mortimer, thinking this a favourable opportunity to gain a share at least of the power in Wales, invaded this country, and was so successful as to bring Llewelyn to terms. The arrangement was that the Welsh prince should serve Henry on the Marches with one thousand foot and twenty-four horse, or with five hundred foot elsewhere; that he should hold his rule under Henry, but that Llewelyn was to receive the homage of the Welsh chieftains as the Prince of Wales.

The chroniclers tell us that for nine long and peaceful years after this event Llewelyn ruled; his sway unquestioned; his whole heart and soul bent on making his country the scene of contented labour and civilising progress; but the great curse of the country—internal discord—once again showed itself, and with the close of the ninth year our prince found himself confronted with a most formidable rebellion, led by his brother Owain, and aided by his younger brother David.

It will be remembered that the sovereignty of Wales had been given to Llewelyn and Owain, and the latter for a time had been content with a divided empire; but with his growth grew the thirst for supreme power, and it did not require much entreaty to persuade David to join him in trying to obtain it.

There is every reason to suppose that the English king took advantage of the quarrel to move secretly in the matter. There always was, from the first to the last of the feudal days, a strong desire amongst those who witnessed a row to benefit at the expense of one or other of the combatants, not unfrequently both, and not unfrequently was the row actually fomented for ulterior purposes, pelf, or aggrandisement.

Llewelyn, in the campaign which ensued, showed rare capacity. Not only did he signally defeat his brothers, whom he placed in confinement, but, having received an appeal from North Wales to the effect that the English were becoming most oppressive on the borders, he turned his attention in that quarter, and in the course of a few days such was his vigorous onslaught that he had not only chastised the foe severely, but recovered all the land and property generally of which his countrymen had been despoiled.

An old writer, describing the principal battles which took place between Llewelyn and his brothers, quaintly gives the true picture by stating that the English stood by, well prepared to fall upon both!

The year following was full of vigorous action. In Cardigan, as well as in Breconshire, and still more so in North Wales, there were many chieftains who envied Llewelyn, and thought it was unfair that he alone should have the

kingdom. These stirred up such dissension that the prince gathered all his forces together, and, aided by Meredri ap Rhys Grye, inflicted summary chastisement upon them, meteing out justice by the old rule of equity—taking lands from one rebellious chief and giving them to another. Singularly enough, one of these transactions took place in the neighbourhood of Builth, where it was Llewelyn's aim to render an act of generous thoughtfulness to a family from whom in the end he received the greatest injury. Next he despoiled the lord of Builth of his castle and lands, which so incensed Vychan that he went over to England, and so represented his case to the king that Henry sent over a strong army under the command of Bacon, who early in the spring, landed at Carmarthen. Then, having formed into order, he proceeded forthwith to march in the direction of Dynevor Castle, doing as much damage on the road as it was possible to be accomplished.

The invaders had been pent up on board their vessels, and, like boys let out of school, were ripe for all sorts of mischief. Coming to Dynevor Castle, this place, then of considerable strength, was besieged, and the English soldiers were already congratulating themselves on the certainty of reducing it, when Llewelyn with his army hurriedly rushed up, and the enemy withdrew from before the castle, and prepared to give battle.

The contest that ensued may well merit the term of a battle-royal. The forces opposed were fairly equal, and there were none but valiant hearts, the English being well selected for their bravery, while Llewelyn commanded men whose valour had been proved in many a desperate strife.

How long the battle raged no record shows, all that the chroniclers agree in is that it was a long time, but that in the end the enemy broke and fled, leaving Llewelyn master of the situation, and two thousand men dead on the field.

Llewelyn's army at that time consisted of ten thousand men, a large and well-disciplined force, with which he proceeded, in the manner approved of by Welsh princes, to settle personal quarrels and grievances, and read lessons to doughty Welsh nobles, which they took sullenly, muttering to themselves, there is no doubt, that a time would come when it would be their turn.

One of these rejoiced in the name of Griffith ap Madoc Maylor, a man who loved to oppress, and to injure, and whose patriotism was at so low an ebb that when Llewelyn was opposed by the Earl of Chester, he joined the earl with all his forces.

When Llewelyn had settled matters with the earl, he turned his attention to Maylor, and we may be sure that his vengeance was complete, if we only accept the simple record of the historian, "that he miserably laid waste the whole country," that is, the district where the son of Madoc luxuriated as lord.

In this year an incident took place which shows that the Welsh were not the poor nation of mountaineers so often represented, living in great part on the pillage exacted in strife. For at this period they had a fleet of their own, and one not simply on paper, but, as shown by subsequent events, one able to figure well at sea in a naval engagement.

It would appear that Edward, Earl of Chester, was so afraid of being over-matched, that he sent over to Ireland for mercenaries to aid him.

Of this Llewelyn had timely notice, and equipped a fleet, which sailed away and met the Irish contingent in mid-sea. The Welsh proved not only that they could figure well on land, but take their part as sailors to perfection, as was but natural to a nation having such a rugged nursery for seamen as the long extent of rocky coast gave them. So it was not surprising that after a warm conflict the Irish were beaten back with severe loss. This disaster roused the king to put forth his best efforts to aid the earl, and rapidly collecting all possible support from St. Michael's Mount to the Tweed, he entered Wales and advanced with a great army into the interior of North Wales. In this difficulty Llewelyn proved himself a shrewd general, for he so contrived to limit the invaders by cutting down bridges and harassing them that, in want of food and forage, and in dire extremity, the enemy took that backward march which was so frequently adopted by the aggressor from the English side of the border. To march into Wales with flying colours, to make the valleys ring with the shouts of a strange soldiery, to burn, and destroy, and kill, was always a feature of invasion, and to go back still more hurriedly, to die by the roadside for want of ordinary nourishment, equally characteristic of these raids.

By the discomfiture of the king, Llewelyn's foes in Wales were rendered powerless, and so again he marched hither and thither, settling scores, taking the lord of Bromfield prisoner, banishing the chieftain of Powys, and raising the castles of obnoxious nobles. In this journey the Welsh encountered the steel-clad veterans of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, and one of these picturesque affrays between Norman and Welshmen took place which have made Welsh hillsides and valleys so memorable. But Llewelyn's army was too powerful for the Norman, who was driven off in disorder, and as Llewelyn then made it his special business to reduce the castles which were on the lands of Gilbert, it is more than probable that many a mossy ruin around which tradition lurks, and the destruction of which has been ascribed to the much later times of the great castle destroyer and monument defacer Oliver Cromwell dated their destruction from this period.

The defeat of the king's stoutest soldier, Gilbert de Clare, not only incensed, but alarmed him. Where will this end? This enterprising Llewelyn, who was clearing Wales of the disaffected, linking diverse natures, and winning powerful support by the freedom with which he bestowed castles and lands upon his generals, would soon become too formidable to cope with, and once more the stage-like farce of gathering soldiers and journeying towards Wales was resorted to. This time, however, such was the fear inspired by the prowess of Llewelyn that the invaders only went as far as the borders, and there the medley of an army composed of valiant Englishmen, excitable Irish, and blustering mercenaries from Gascony contented themselves in the sunny autumn by destroying all the corn they could see, and perpetrating as much mischief as it was possible to do, taking good care to keep out of the way of the Welshmen, and not venturing far into the valleys.

The invaders soon returned to safer quarters, but it was not long before the mountaineers were assailed by an enemy that did them more injury than the Norman horse or foot accomplished. Lord Audley, the father-in-law of the lord of Bromfield, went secretly to Germany, and succeeded in getting the aid of a large number of German horsemen. The appearance of these, the unusual size of the horses, which were probably of that heavy Flanders type which still retains its huge character, startled the Welshmen, and when the first encounter took place the Germans had it all their own way, and punished the Welsh forces exceedingly. One of the leading features of a high-spirited race is its objection to defeat. To be defeated at any time was galling, but especially so after a long series of victories, when triumph seemed to have cast its nimbus around the Welsh crown, and clothed with invulnerability its defenders. Deep laid schemes of vengeance were forthwith concocted, and a strong force proceeded to the territory of Lord James Audley and, as they expected, forth came the Germans with a rush, and the active little Welsh ponies, and fleet footmen, for the Welsh always excelled in running, darted away with agility to a chosen spot. There the Germans, elated with their recent victory, pursued them. But the slow-witted Germans found themselves in straits. Had they been on a plain, with free scope for the management of their horses, the task would have been an easy one; but now it was the case of a bull in a marsh surrounded by hornets, and with so much vigour and hate were they assailed, that scarcely any of the luckless heavy brigade returned home to tell of the disaster. The defeat was overwhelming, and we fail to hear of any more incursions of Germans for a length of time.

At this time, 1258, there was a great scarcity of oxen and horses in England, and from a solitary line in the annals of Wales are gleams that a great deal of beef used in England was supplied from the Welsh Marches, and already that great cementer and civiliser, Trade, was beginning its work, prompting the Welshman to devote his time to the rearing of cattle, and the growing of corn, instead of being constantly in the strife of battle. How interesting would have been the pictures of social life, amplified from these mere lines in history and annals; to have heard of the loading of the corn, and its transport in amongst people, who the next day would be at deadly feud; to see the drove of oxen from valleys and plains, such as those extending from Newport to Cardiff, so excellent for the rearing of cattle, to see them making their way under the shadows of the hills until the Gloucestershire inglenooks were reached, where the descendants of the Dane, the sinewy, big framed, and long-nosed maker of gloves, tanner of skins, yeoman, or the like, drove hard bargains, and buying the cattle sent them forthwith into the English country.

These were the forerunners of those never ending flocks of Welsh mutton which we of modern days have taught the old enemy to love with a love passing most good things of life.

How vividly such things pass athwart the mental view, and how infinitely superior to those incessant records of beating this army and razing that castle,

which, with occasional murder and frequent slaughter, seemed to the old annalist all that was necessary to bequeath as history.

The year 1259 was a startling one in the annals of Wales. Just as the traditional league was said to have been formed by the animals against the common enemy, so did all chieftains and nobles forget their personal grievance, and unite in a band of defence against their invaders, the English. In a solemn conclave they promised to be for ever accused of perjury if they broke faith, and it seemed, so eager and earnest were they, that from that day Wales would begin a new and more glorious page in its history, and end the factious spirit which had so long weakened its councils, lessened its strength in the field, and opened wide its fertile land to the enemy.

Alas! scarcely was the ink dry on the parchment when Meredith ap Rhys, more indebted than any man to Prince Llewelyn, broke his plighted bond, and went over to the service of the English King. Henry was so pleased with this sign that he hurriedly began preparations for the conquest of Wales, and if Parliament had only granted the necessary supplies the conquest would have been attempted early in the year, but the king himself was not surrounded by the most loyal of supporters, and his measures fell through by reason of a ferment amongst his nobles.

In a subsequent meeting of Parliament, which was held at Oxford, representatives from Wales stated that the Welsh lords were open to be tried for any offence they might have committed against the king, but this did not suit the policy of Henry (if the Welsh annals can be relied upon), who showed his desire to be rather that of crushing out all independence and annexing the country than to tolerate that *quasi* freedom which the Welsh enjoyed.

As a speculative venture the lordship of Kidwelly was given to one of the king's parasites, a fellow noble as regards name, but thoroughly ignoble in nature, judging from his actions. He luxuriated in the name of Patrick de Canton, a blending of the Irish-Norman, always good for warfare and unquestioned as regards gallantry, but foremost in affairs of a shady or treacherous character.

Patrick soon gave a proof of this. His gift was in accordance with royal gifts of the kind—to take if he could, to hold if it was possible, and to enjoy as long as the Welsh would let him. If we can imagine the estate of Dynevor, Dunraven, or Bute offered in our days to a needy adventurer who has found out the weak side of a ruling power, we can realise the condition of things when Patrick made his way as lieutenant for the king to Carmarthen, with the object of meeting commissioners of Prince Llewelyn and arranging a peace. Llewelyn accordingly sent two of his trusty generals with a small company of men to Newcastle Emlyn, and Patrick, knowing their route, and hoping by one good blow to seize the prince, laid an ambuscade, into which the Welsh fell and suffered severely. It was a bold stroke of Patrick's in the heart of an enemy's country; and in the midst of his exultation he found out his mistake, for the few who escaped the snare soon roused the country, and brought such a force against the traitor that he was caught in his own trap, and was miserably slain with a great many of his followers.

Naturally incensed as Llewelyn was by so gross an act, he still saw that for the interest of Wales it would be better to sheath the sword and live at peace with England. The thought of the emptiness of military glory; that, while the country rang with plaudits and rejoicings over the defeat of this invasion, and the retirement of that, the land remained untilled, commerce declined, and poverty spread her ragged and sable garb over all—this prompted him, in the highest spirit of patriotic thoughtfulness to make an offer to the king, to purchase peace by paying first seven thousand five hundred marks, and as this was not considered sufficient, then, through the Bishop of Bangor, sixteen thousand pounds were offered, on condition, first, that the Welsh should enjoy their ancient laws and customs, and that all causes should be tried at Chester.

The king, utterly unable to appreciate the purity of Llewelyn's sentiments, and resolved, when he was able, to complete the entire subjugation of Wales, returned no answer, and, as no record of any reply is extant, would seem to have treated the application with contempt.

This was more galling than defeat to the pride of Llewelyn, and unsheathing his sword, scarcely waiting for the snows and frosts of winter to disappear, he marched from his mountain eyrie in North Wales into Radnorshire, and fell upon Sir Roger Mortimer at Builth with the violence of an avalanche. In the castle of Builth he found a great quantity of warlike stores, which were of eminent service, and having drawn Mortimer out with his retainers and taken possession, he proceeded deliberately throughout the greater part of South Wales, received everywhere with enthusiasm.

It was a royal progress, with some of the elements of a barbaric time around it. The sinewy men, half armoured, the quaint device and the red dragon flaunting in the wind, as borne by a stalwart North Walian, made it picturesque as it wound through the Welsh valleys, now crossing mountains and keeping an old Roman trackway, and again descending and entering towns, where, disaffection being felt, it was deemed politic not to show it. The "progress" was continued until the palace of Aber, near Bangor, was reached, and for the remainder of the year the country enjoyed some measure of tranquillity. Yet the peace enjoyed was scarcely deserving of the name. There was not sufficient exercise of power in the Principality, and we may fairly assume that many a far-seeing mind saw around the indications of an approaching time when a strong and stable government would be a necessity if the country was not to be given up altogether to rapine and abuse of might. Around the border land, like hungry wolves, roamed needy nobles, hungering for the flocks and possessions of Wales, and within the land of the mountain and flood, right was still exercised by the strong hand whether of Welshman or stranger.

As little chance had the virtues to flourish then as for unobtrusive worth to be recognised, or the poor man have justice meted out to him. Llewelyn was in the north, as far removed in those roadless days as if he had been on the continent of Europe; and thus the government of the country was left to his nobles, many of whom regarded the land as their own and the

people as created to serve or fight for them. Still there was no great conflict or open rupture, nothing in fact to bring Llewelyn from the north until 1263, when some Welsh troops sacked Melieynyth Castle on the estate of Sir Roger Mortimer, and, taking Meyric, the governor, and his wife prisoners, put the rest of the garrison to the sword. This was done with the full knowledge of Llewelyn, as he gave orders personally that the castle should be demolished.

Roger, hearing of the strife, marched to the spot, and posted himself with his men and knights amidst the ruins, half fearing to take any attitude but that of defence before so tried a warrior as the prince.

The army of Llewelyn and the forces of Mortimer retained this position for some time, when at length Mortimer sued for peace, and was allowed by his forgiving antagonist to march away in safety.

We next find Llewelyn in confederacy with some of King Henry's barons, Simon de Montford amongst them, who were opposed to his rule, and several conflicts took place, the castle of the Earl of Chester being in particular singled out for destruction. Increase of power and the evident hesitation of the king to enter Wales for a time lulled Llewelyn into a sense of security, and, looking around him, he was reminded of his brother David, whom he had kept in captivity for the preservation of his own power. He now released him, and David's retaliation was to make all speed to the English court, where he was received with great favour.

Troubles rarely come singly. While Llewelyn was in a fever of expectancy as to the course David might take, Griffith ap Gwenwynwyn, one of the leading Welsh chieftains, also deserted from him, and his great representative in South Wales, Meredith ap Owen, who had kept the rather factious South Walians in good order, succumbed to the united influences of care and age, and in him Llewelyn lost his right hand.

At this critical period in Welsh history, when Llewelyn expected every day to hear of the appearance once more of the king, and a powerful army, the representative of the Pope did good service, and was instrumental in bringing about a peace between the Welsh and English. The name of this good man, Latinised into Ollobonus, deserves to be recorded, and handed down with all respect and veneration. He was a shrewd and a practical Christian. He knew that the promulgation of the Christian doctrines amongst a people always at war was a waste of effort, and he could but see and deplore that while the Principality remained the object of the king's desire on the one part, and the nursery ground for vigorous defence as well as determined offence on the other, it was useless to plant the seeds of peace, and charity, and goodwill. So he bent his whole mind to the task, and was happily successful in getting the king to accept thirty thousand marks from Llewelyn as an indemnity for the past. In return the king was to grant the Prince of Wales a charter, empowering him to receive homage from "all the nobility and barons in Wales except one."

Thenceforth Llewelyn was the lawful Prince of Wales, even in the estimation of the English king, and wielded supreme power; and this important

arrangement, having been accepted by King Henry and endorsed by the Pope, remained in observance until the death of the king in 1272. Four years of tranquil rule were thus enjoyed, and in that time Wales prospered, and the corn lands were luxuriant, and the herds increased, and flocks dotted every bleak mountain side.

By the death of King Henry the treaty fell into abeyance, or indeed was supposed to be virtually ended, and scarcely had the obsequies ended when the English barons began to look forward with avidity to the prospect of getting border land, or for that matter some of the rich possessions in the interior of South and North Wales. Still Llewelyn was allowed a longer interval of rest than at first was expected, as Prince Edward, valorous to a degree, was at the time of his father's death getting rid of his great surplus of vitality by fighting the Turks in the Holy Land, and maturing that military sagacity which afterwards served him in good stead in the control of his own dominions and Wales.

As soon as Edward arrived in England preparations were made for the solemnisation of his coronation, and amongst the nobles directed to attend was Prince Llewelyn. But knowing the treachery which had been so often exercised against Welsh delegates and hostages, he refused to go to the ceremony unless a safe conduct was given to him. He evidently had not much faith in the king, and still less had he in his nobles through whose dominions he would have to pass.

His demands, honestly, were rather stronger than he could reasonably expect the king to grant. His stipulations were that the king's brother and the Lord Chief Justice of England should be delivered into his custody as pledges that he should go and return unharmed. The reason for this stipulation he forwarded to the Archbishop of Canterbury in a letter still extant, and no stronger evidence can be given both of his superior, thoughtful nature, and of the earnest interest he felt in the preservation of peace. Indeed, this fear, that by his coming, hostilities would be aroused on the route, and his subjects retaliate, and war again break out, is the burden of his letter.

King Edward was but a man, and, divested of his regal power and military tact, a very ordinary one. He could not forget that once upon a time he had suffered defeat at the hand of this obnoxious Welshman, and the deep injury then inflicted ever rankled, like an old wound, and he vowed, there can be no doubt from his subsequent conduct, to have revenge.

As soon as he could gather his forces he marched into North Wales, and reaching Chester, again sent to Llewelyn, insisting upon his coming to pay him homage.

Once more the Prince of Wales returned a firm refusal. Then Edward, skilfully dividing his forces, and giving the command of a division to Paganus de Camutis, a general of high renown, proceeded to devastate the country.

Paganus came as far as the west of Wales, conquering wherever he went; but on nearing the borders of the south, voluntary submission was tendered to him, which he as readily accepted.

It may here be worthy of notice to remark that the warlike springs were generally to be found in the north. The character of the South Walian was of a far more tractable kind, and even in later tumults it will be found that one section, notably the people of Cardigan, were more disposed to English rule, as it favoured peace and commerce, than to join in movements which left the great body of the people in a worse plight and simply gave power and dignity to one.

They always were a shrewd people, those of Cardiganshire, and have retained the characteristic to this day.

In this great invasion of Edward's, when all resistance seemed to be hopeless, Llewelyn took a wise step. He saw that his own subjects were not to be relied upon, and made a virtue of necessity by asking for peace. But to the careful student of the times, especially regarding the past annals, wherein the invader, however successful at first, always came to grief in the end, it is apparent that Llewelyn would have fought with energy even at this juncture but for — woman !

When battling against King Henry, and aiding thereby the disaffected Earl of Leicester, that nobleman conceived an attachment for Llewelyn, so great as to bring him to the notice of his fair daughter Eleanor. Like all Welshmen, he was impressionable, and if her beauty and character were anything like that which the historian and the poet tell, it was no wonder. At a subsequent interview troth was plighted between the two, and Llewelyn yearned for peace, so that he might wed her, and place her in the proud and happy state her virtues deserved. He yearned for home life, and looked less pleasantly upon the camp and the battlefield, and from the date of his attachment was, it must be confessed, less anxious for the razing of castles and the discomfiture of factious nobles. Woman's wiles had softened his heart, and made him think philosophically of the fleeting visions of fame. So the stern critic will say. Possibly the stern critic was right.

Just, then, when Edward was favoured with victories, and Paganus receiving submission, Eleanor, the betrothed bride of Llewelyn, fell into the hands of the enemy, and Llewelyn felt unnerved and unmanned !

The capture of Eleanor, the betrothed of Prince Llewelyn, by King Edward, when on her way from a French convent to England, at once led the prince to submit, even though the terms were most exacting. With Eleanor in poverty he could be happy. Without her no power, no rank, or condition could satisfy the aching heart.

Plato believed that man and woman were originally one ; that being separated and scattered, happy marriages are the results of the right halves coming together, and unhappy ones of the reverse.

The wonderful love and amity of Llewelyn and Eleanor favoured this eccentric notion. Intended for each other, their first acquaintance led at once to love ; apart they were unhappy ; together all other attractions and influences became secondary. The home surpassed the kingdom, and to rule lovingly in the household was preferable to ruling an empire.

It was a master-stroke of policy on the part of the king to secure Eleanor. No sooner was Llewelyn aware of his loss than he made a humble application to the king for peace, and obtained a prompt reply granting it, but upon certain conditions, which even the most ardent lover would have thought exacting.

The annals state that the conditions were ten in number, and these were as follow :

First. That the prince should set all prisoners at liberty who had been confined on account of the king, that is, who had taken part with the king in any movement against Llewelyn.

Second. That he should pay fifty thousands marks.

Third. That four cantrens or hundreds, wherein Tegamony Castle, Denbigh, Rhuddlan, and Rhuthy stand, should remain in the king's hands.

Fourth. That the lord marchers should quietly enjoy all the lands they had conquered within Wales, excepting in the Isle of Anglesey, which the prince was permitted to retain.

Fifth. That for this island he should pay down five thousand marks, and one thousand marks yearly from Michaelmas, and in the event of Llewelyn dying without issue, then the island to relapse to the king.

Sixth. That the prince should come every year to England, and pay homage to the king.

Seventh. That all the barons of Wales, excepting five in number, should hold their lands and estates of the king and no other.

Eighth, and this was as hard as any of the others, and one that few would have expected Llewelyn to sign : That the title of prince should remain only for his life, and not descend to his successors, and after his death the five lords of Snowdon should only hold their lands from the king.

Ninth. That ten persons of the highest position in Wales should be given up as hostages, the king to detain them how and where he liked ; and that twenty persons chosen by the king in North Wales should make oath for the due fulfilment of the conditions, and that if not fulfilled, and their warning not be heeded to repent, then the twenty persons should become the prince's enemies.

Tenth. That Llewelyn's brothers should quietly enjoy their own in Wales.

It is very probable that the king thought his fierce opponent would refuse to sign these articles, and such was the changing character of the times, so evidently was the breach between North and South Wales widening, that Edward must have felt himself able to overwhelm the lingering remnants of independence whatever action Llewelyn took. But Llewelyn did not refuse. Patriotism became subservient to love. Llewelyn not only signed the conditions, but went to London, accompanied by many of his principal nobles, and the place allotted for them was in the "merrie" village of Islington. They were not sorry to get back to their mountains, and very shortly after the return of Llewelyn he had the first indication of vassalage by a most peremptory order to meet the king at Worcester.

It was most galling to do so, but the prince had brushed away scruples ; the cup of bitterness must be drunk to the dregs. Conceive his surprise, his delight, when, on arriving at Worcester, he was received kindly by the king, who presented him first to the queen and then to—Eleanor !

They were married in that city on the thirteenth of October, 1278, before a brilliant gathering, graced by royal presence ; but the astute monarch, even in the midst of the festivities, exacted another promise, and that was to refuse all protection to anyone who had incurred the royal displeasure.

With what profound joy did Llewelyn hasten away after the wedding, leaving the improvised English Court, the presence of the king he hated, and yet affected to like, the wondering looks of the yokels of Worcester, untutored then in the china and pottery which made their place famous, and, turning his back upon them, sought the old mountains, which in their hazy outline, even from there, seemed to woo him back—to woo him from court and festivity and duplicity to where tranquil peace might be enjoyed, and a reign begun that should be for his subjects happiness as much as for his own.

Alas for the fleeting and unstable hopes of man. The duration of Llewelyn's married bliss was limited to two short years, and then in the bright morning of her life Eleanor was taken away. Her death acutely, violently aroused Llewelyn from his dream, though for a time he remained passive, venting his grief in solitude, facing scenes endeared to him by her memory, and wherein his imagination recalled every look and word of the dear one that was gone.

When at length time had soothed, and time only can soothe in such a trial, he began to look around and to listen to that growing complaint of his people which, unheard by him at his retreat at Aber, near Conway, now forced itself upon his attention, and prompted decisive action.

A nation of inerts, slaves from their birth, and accustomed to the yoke, generation after generation, can bear fresh imposts of tyranny without a murmur, much less making one bold effort to be free. Not so the mountaineer, be the land that of Tell, of Bruce, or of Llewelyn. An instinctive love of freedom forbids the endurance of oppression, and if it is endured for a time it is only to gather strength in order to overwhelm.

Thus with Wales ; though a growing dissension continued between North and South they had but one feeling in common against the injustice which was literally heaped up against them. While Llewelyn seemed to forget his position as native Prince of Wales, and defer to the rule of the English King, and even allow the lords marchers to do almost what they liked, the people chafed and fretted, praying for the hour of their deliverance. At length they roused Llewelyn to action by studiously ignoring him, and going to his brother David with their complaints and prayers. David received the deputation with kindness and attention, and though he had been a favourite with Edward, and received a great deal of consideration at the English Court, he elected for the sake of his country to be regarded as an ingrate, and openly denounced all allegiance to England. Llewelyn learning this, at once made overtures to his

brother, and the two became reconciled after a long and sometimes bitter feud between them. As soon as this was brought about Llewelyn threw off also his allegiance, and publicly raised the standard of revolt. Soon there was a gallant gathering, and led by Llewelyn and David, the Welsh began to attack the lords marchers, and wound up a successful campaign by laying siege to the castles of Flint and Rhuddlan, Llewelyn taking the lead at one place and David at the other. The discomfited lords marchers in the meanwhile were not idle. A post, travelling night and day, soon reached Edward, and directly the king heard of the revolt of the brothers a hasty levy of money and men was made throughout the kingdom. The preparations completed, the vigorous king, not at all disliking the opportunity once again to unsheath the sword which he had wielded so well against the Saracen, invaded North Wales on the Chester side, and with the utmost celerity and determination attacked the prince, who, quietly gathering in his forces, cautiously retired to the edge almost of the Conway, when, getting into a favourable position, he in turn attacked the king, and so skilfully had he laid his plans that Edward was beaten at all points and compelled to retire with the loss of fourteen standards and several thousands slain. Amongst the killed were Lords Audley and Clifford, and a large number of prisoners in addition were taken.

This great victory was not gained without a severe struggle, and many a brave Welshman succumbed in the course of the contest. Possibly one great cause of the defeats so often sustained by the English in their invasion of Wales lay in the incongruous elements of which their army was composed. Retainers of Warwick were massed by the side of De Clare, of Hereford; men of Kent and men of Suffolk, men of Gloucester and men of Surrey, all were banded together, with a number of foreign mercenaries, and having had no experience in acting with one another could not naturally succeed so well against the compact masses of Welshmen, who were often in concert, and were animated by the same feelings—love of country and hate of king.

Edward, beaten thoroughly, had a great deal of the bulldog element in him, and a defeat simply provoked him to further and more determined measures. He retreated to Hope, on the borders of Flintshire, not to make his way back into England but to recruit and prepare. This done, and fired with vengeance, he again began his march against Llewelyn and arrived at Rhuddlan Castle where he was constrained to stay a while by the urgent entreaties of Archbishop Peckham, of Canterbury, who thought he might emulate Ollobonus, and bring about a peace between the two belligerents. Llewelyn had in the past time prayed the assistance of the archbishop, and now it was tendered, but Peckham was of the true Church militant, and his eccentric letter to Llewelyn alternately breathed of peace and of war. Parry, referring to it, said it was a singular mixture of admonition and of menace, exhorting him, on the one hand, to a declaration of his grievances, and, on the other, threatening him with the severest penalties, both spiritual and temporal.

Llewelyn was sincere in his wish for a peaceful settlement with the king, but resolved to fight to the bitter end rather than enter again into any such

servile arrangement as the last. The conduct of the lords marchers had been so gross that life and property were not respected, and even religious houses, which by this time had multiplied in the land, suffered gross injustice, monks and nuns having been wantonly murdered without redress.

From sundry stray notices gleaned from various sources, it is evident that the hold of England upon Wales, principally by the lords marchers, had become a strong one. Justiciaries and bailiffs executed the king's authority in all directions and with severity, and the rule of the prince was, especially in the south, regarded as simply nominal.

The seashore especially was under the sway of the marchers; flot and jetsam were theirs, and insidiously they had extended their influence inland, having little regard for native lords, and no scruple about the acquisition of their lands. In the far North Llewelyn of the "red lance," as the poets of the time described him, was still a Power, and over a great portion of North Wales exercised it, but the green tents which formed his encampment were rarely seen in the South, and the trade-driving southerners equally with those who lived in the domains of the marchers cared little about seeing them again.

Edward appears to have taken quite a secondary part in the efforts to promote peace, and as soon as it was seen that Llewelyn refused vassalage thenceforth, he started a large force by sea to take possession of Anglesey, and placing himself at the head of another and still more numerous body, marched towards the defences of Llewelyn, determined to bring the contest to a speedy issue, let the cost be what it would.

His general, reaching Anglesey, made short work of all who supported the cause of the prince, and a slaughter took place, the tidings of which, borne by a few of the escaped fugitives to Llewelyn, showed what he was to expect from so bitter an opponent. But instead of dismaying it filled the hearts of the Welshmen with the keenest resentment, and fierce and uncompromising they awaited the opportunity for repaying back the wholesale murder with interest.

We left King Edward luxuriating in the slaughter of the unoffending natives of Anglesey, and making preparations for driving Llewelyn into a corner of the Welsh mountains, where resistance would be fruitless, and the independence of Wales could be summarily ended. The Welsh were, on the other hand, equally on the alert, and determined to fight to the bitter end. They appear to have been chiefly North Walians, with some few of the more warlike spirits from South Wales. Few mercenaries were to be found with the Welsh army, but the reverse was the case with the English, amongst whom fighting men from Germany, France and even Spain were to be seen, who let their swords and strong arms at so much per diem, and with the same matter-of-fact unconcern as artificers in modern days sell their skill and labour.

Let us then picture the motley army of English and foreigners, steadily wending their way to the foot of the lofty mountains. Edward is there, the king, and around him, or in command of divisions, are some of the bravest generals of the kingdom.

What force can Wales own that will discomfit such a gallant throng? The storms now are at rest. Nature no longer favours the children of the mountain and the flood, and if their valour serve them not, now is the hour of their decline.

Gifted with considerable strategy, Edward devised a plan for crossing the Menai at a narrow point called Mal-y-Don, near Bangor, and a bridge of boats was so formed that sixty men were able to march over it abreast.

As soon as this was completed, a large number of the army, principally the Spanish contingent, under the command of Sir Lucas Thang, and a force of English, under Latimer, marched across, and pushed their way from the shore toward the land in all directions, and in some cases ascending the hills, but without seeing the least sign of the enemy.

The enemy, however, was there, and in considerable force.

From their mountain retreats they saw the whole scheme, the bridge of boats, the marching over, and the parade of English and foreigners, and they must have chuckled amongst themselves, as they thought of the coming tide, which would render the bridges useless, and put the invaders at their mercy.

Sure enough, the tide began to rise, and when the bridge was for the time useless, Llewelyn swept down.

“As mountain wave from wasted land, swept back to ocean blue.”

There was no time for flight, only time to die! The onslaught of the Welsh warriors was terrific, and the fight between the foemen was worthy of one another.

The invaders saw themselves in a trap. On the banks opposite were their friends, useless to aid. Rushing at them from every 'vantage ground, with lance and sword, came the race whose prowess they knew only too well. Some faint hearts amongst the foreigners giving way led to a fatal issue, and by the sword or wave perished nearly every one of the brave host who had dared to assail Llewelyn in his own mountains. A few good swimmers, not in armour, managed to get across; the rest were literally cut down as they stood, or trying to flee were lost. It was a miserable ending to a campaign that promised so much, and Edward appears to have been half maddened at his losses. Latimer escaped by swimming his horse over, but the death roll enumerated thirteen knights of fame, seventeen cadets, and a whole host of ordinary soldiery. Llewelyn did not remain in idleness to exult over his victory, but continuing his advance assailed Edward, and closed the run of good fortune by putting the king to flight and taking fourteen colours. Here, again, a number of brave men were slain, and Edward had to mourn the loss of several lords who were personal friends as well as material supports to the royal cause.

The king escaped to the castle of Hope, and there remained deliberating upon the course of action he should take. In the meanwhile the South Walians were active.

A strong force in Cardigan and another in Carmarthenshire were fighting

with valour against superior numbers; and in some cases without winning the decided success which had attended Llewelyn. The Earl of Gloucester and Sir Edward Mortimer had the command in the south, and the co-operation of Rhys ap Iwerth. Hence it was natural that when Llewelyn had effectually crippled the king, he should make his way down to the south to aid his friends against the lord marchers. The English historian has blamed him for so doing, and maintains that after so great a victory his policy should have been to retire to his mountain stronghold and wait the certain retreat back again of Edward into England. But those who so condemn have paid but little attention to the external character of Llewelyn's nature. He was not the man to repose on his laurels when his own countrymen were struggling against superior numbers. Valiant to a degree, impulsive to rashness, like so many of his race, he disdained inglorious ease, and hence we find him very soon after the battle of Mynydd-y-Don in the midst of the lands of the renegade Rhys, burning down his houses, wasting the produce of the lands, and doing all the damage that it was possible to achieve. But having accomplished this he found that the people lacked the warm-hearted adhesion to his cause which characterised the men of North Wales, and while his own army was small, that of the Earl of Gloucester was very large, and constantly increasing. He appears to have put himself in communication with some of the Welsh chieftains, and there is too much reason to fear that not only was he deliberately enticed into a dangerous locality, but that information at the same time was given to the enemy. Coming to the neighbourhood of Builth, where he expected to meet his friends, he found himself in the vicinity of Mortimer's forces, and their numbers prompted a retreat which he would have done well to have adopted. But his star was setting, and setting amidst clouds, of ruin and disaster. The closing annals of Llewelyn's career have had numberless chroniclers, and each has exercised his imagination in accounting for the results which followed Llewelyn's approach to Builth. Their material—that is, the certain facts known—is confined to a few lines, and with this many a surmise has been added which is out of keeping with the disposition of our hero. Throwing aside these surmises, and keeping strictly to the little that is known, we abandon the old rut of the annalist and the biographer, and sketch for ourselves what appears to have been the cause and the issue of the last campaign of the prince. A change, and a startling one, had “come o’er the spirit of his dream.”

All around him were Welshmen who indicated dislike instead enthusiasm. And it was to free these that he had fought! Men he had raised to power had supported the king; friends whom he had taken from obscurity had forsaken him. His hold upon life was gone. His wife was no longer living to cheer him to fresh exertion. What was to be the end of all this turmoil and vexation—this waste of blood? Some day he might return into North Wales, to Aber, where once was happiness, but now desolation. There, true, he might hear again the ringing shout of his own men, but in a little while Edward would again assail, and he must exert himself to the uttermost, and

for what?—to defend a people who cared not for his defence, and to retain an independence they did not appear to think worth preserving. Picture him, then, moody, depressed, exhibiting none of his old resolution, and, though in the face of a superior army to his own, showing no forethought beyond what the merest tyro in military matters might have shown. All he did was to station a force upon one of the little bridges over the Wye, and then leaving his men he wandered away into a thick wood, in the expectation, it is assumed, of meeting one of the native chieftains; but instead of meeting him the enemy was apprised of his whereabouts, and a strong party assailed the men on the bridge. The fight was severe; though unable to force a way, yet they contrived to get a detachment over a ford lower down, and the Welsh thus assailed in front and flank, and without the inspiriting influence of Llewelyn to cheer them, gave way, leaving him to his fate. The traditions of the district intimate that Llewelyn was on horseback, that hearing the skirmish, and finding that he was betrayed, he made all possible haste to the bridge, but only in time to share in the general overthrow; that in the wild pursuit which followed, when every man either fought or ran for his life, he succeeded in escaping to a rocky ravine a few miles to the south of Builth, and there remained for a time in one of the natural caverns that is still pointed out as bearing his name. Local traditions add that from this place he made his way past Builth and obtained the assistance of a smith, who shod his horse, and reversed his shoes to mislead his pursuers; that keeping his way as due north as possible, evidently bent on making his way to North Wales, he reached Cwm Llewelyn, several miles from Builth, where secreting in a wood he was assailed by the mercenaries of Sir Edmund Mortimer, one of whom, named Adam Franceton, pierced him with a spear and left him for dead. People still point to a small ravine where he is said to have remained, and to have received a cup of water at the hands of an aged woman. Others state that when dying he received the last office from a monk; but this is certain, that at the time of his death, or immediately afterwards, his head was cut off and taken first to Mortimer, and then sent to King Edward, who received it with the utmost exultation, for now the most formidable of his enemies was no more, and Wales was at last at his feet.

Such was the end of Llewelyn, and the descendants of his race, whose supineness or positive enmity led to his destruction have religiously preserved in name and story all that reminds one of the gallant but ill-fated prince. Amidst the crowd of the brave he looms a conspicuous figure, linked with the roll of his great predecessors, yet himself standing on the threshold of the new age, when, merging her history into that of England, Wales entered again a career of industrial development, and carved a name as illustrious for peace and order as it had been for unflinching determination and bravery in the days of old.

LUNDY ISLAND AND THE PIRATE DE MARISCO.



THE great expanse of the Bristol Channel is as smooth as glass, and the sky as blue as that of Italy. How peacefully the giant ocean slumbers, how calm in repose! Who would think that the playful whisper of the wind would make it lift its hand, and that a soft caress would send a great thrill along its deeps? Still less would one believe that the moment the wind rises with anger the response of the ocean is sudden, and the howl of one is echoed in the harsh moan of the other.

Unruffled lies the Channel on a midsummer day of 1242, and few are the ships and small their proportion that speck the horizon line. One vessel larger than the usual run lies idly rocking in the sea, making little headway. Her head is in the direction of Lundy Island, and, judging from her course, she has come from the fishing port of Cardiff. Though of large built, only a few men are on deck. Is she a merchantman or a king's ship? Where is she bound? A little group on Lundy Island, lying huddled together, ask these questions. Various nationalities are there represented, and the samples are not of the choicest kind. Murder is written on many a face; craft and brutality on nearly all. There is the German mercenary kicked out from amongst his companions for his bad deeds; here a few of the scum from Normandy, mixed with Welsh and English, all of low type, and with but one desire in common, to get plunder and indulge themselves in every riotous manner to the top of their bent. At their head is De Marisco, who, too low in the scale to get castles and lands like the knights with whom he came to Wales, has fixed himself on Lundy to play the pirate on all nationalities, and no more make a selection than does the tiger crouching in his lair.

"Get ready boats, men!" said De Marisco; "if the wind does not rise we shall board her in a few minutes. She is drifting down with the current. But stop!" and with a coarse imprecation he jumped to his feet.

The large vessel was now within a bowshot, and to the astonishment and alarm of the freebooters on the island, there was seen man after man to come up from below deck, until no less than a hundred armed soldiers were visible, and here and there were men in armour, with one stalwart form heavily mailed, who was shouting words of command.

"We are lost!" said Marisco, as a flight of arrows came to the very spot where they lay. "Curse the earl; to cover until they land, and then fight for your lives!"

The men, some of them wounded, sullenly obeyed. "What could a few score do against men in armour and of superior force? Better yield at once," so they muttered. But they knew that De Marisco would not give in without a struggle. For him, against whose account many a dark deed was placed, capture meant death, and it was as well to die sword in hand as without one.

Now boats began to be lowered, and while a strong body of archers guarded the landing, the rest landed and took up a position until the ways and means of defence on the island were seen. The group they had noticed crouching near the beach were gone. What their strength were was uncertain, but they knew the cunning of their leader, and were cautious. It was well they were so, for now from the rocks came a steady flight of arrows, and so skilfully directed that many a brave Norman went down, and still not a foe was visible. All they could do was to aim in the direction from whence came the arrows, but the outlaws were so concealed that none of them suffered, and it was evident that could that strategy be pursued the invaders might be thinned until too weak to oppose, and then the big ship would be theirs. So thought the pirate. They did not know the valour or military sagacity of their leader. Retiring to a little distance, the Normans divided their forces, one part by a rapid detour reaching an elevated height commanding the rocks and completely exposing the pirates to their attack. Once seen the storm of arrows was incessant, and while the attention of the pirates was fully occupied the other part took them in flank, and, after a desperate struggle, all who survived, and they were but few, were taken prisoners. De Marisco, much as he would have liked to die with his front to the foe, for he was a brave though a bad man, was disarmed and secured, and over his fate, which was no doubt a summary one, with a short shrift, history is mute.

There was great satisfaction in all quarters when the good news spread that the pirates' nest had been broken up. Taken by fishing-smack or sloop, the welcome tidings spread not only coastwise but over Channel, and Lundy from that day lost its evil character, and was no longer avoided as worse than a sunken reef.

A LEGEND OF THE BLACK MOUNTAINS.



THE Black Mountains, rugged, vast, and lonely, were just the places for the strangely imaginative mind of the Welsh in former days to people with strange beings, and make the scene of equally strange events. If gnomes of dwarfish size and elfish character were to be found, it was on some of the ranges of the Black Mountains that they disported themselves, and the Vale of Neath and their own recesses divided between themselves the honour of being the localities where fairy men and fairy women lived out their brief life, as the gnats do in the sunshine. Like those things of a summer day—but what a summer of sunshine and dancing, there life was limited and brief, but it was an existence, judging from the traditions we have concerning it, of a very joyous character. They paid neither rent nor taxes, and avoided all the worry and trouble which assail bigger mortals. In fact, it was only when they were enticed to fall into the ranks of humanity that they shared humanity's sorrows, and then, poor fairies, often and often they wished themselves back again in their former condition. In the legend of Myddfai this is well shown, and to Giraldus (J. Rowlands) I am indebted for material, which, without further preamble, I add to my collection.

Once upon a time there was a very impressionable young farmer living at a snug little farm, where the brook that ran near was shaded by lofty trees, and altogether was a desirable residence. Tall trees indicated deep soil, and the soil was deep and rich, and the farmer luxuriated in the possession of a herd of milking cows. Such had been the case for generations, so that the farm was known as Esgairllaethdy.

Our farmer at a late fair had purchased a number of lambs, which he drove up on the Black Mountains in the neighbourhood of Llyn-y-Fan-Vach, and there, occasionally, lest a fox should steal down from the rocks and take one of them, our farmer would go and look up his lambs, and note how quickly they grew from nipping the short sweet grass of the mountains.

One beautiful evening while he was taking a last look he noticed three white figures come out of the lake and walk along the banks. He was entranced! They were like the pictures of angels in his mother's old Bible at home, and as he gazed upon them he quietly stepped nearer. As he did so all religious feeling and, indeed, all spiritual feeling fled, the figures were so beautiful, so

captivating, and looked so archly at him that he increased his stealthy pace to a run and tried to catch them, but the effort was a failure, and he had to return home disconsolate, and to dream, when he was not too sound asleep for that, which was often, that he had captured one of them and had made her his wife. Every day now he visited the lake, and every day repeated the attempt, and in each case the beautiful fairies, for such he concluded they were, teased him until he was almost grasping them, and then one with a wicked laugh would say, as they plunged into the waters of the Llyn,

"Cras dy fara
Anhawdd ein dala."

which, translated, would run,

You who baked bread eat,
To catch us are by no means fleet.

Dan Jones, the farmer, mourned excessively, and his sale of milk fell off and his farm suffered, but he kept perseveringly on, vowing in his own mind

"One of you three my wife shall be."

And one day, as he stood by the lake, a piece of moist bread came in his way, which he eagerly devoured, and when the three fair damsels came next, to their surprise and his delight, he caught them. They were, indeed, beautiful, and had Dan known the couplet he would have exclaimed with the poet,

How happy could I be with either,
Were t'other dear charmers away.

Dan talked most lovingly to them, and in a few minutes summoned enough courage there and then to propose marriage to the one he thought not only the prettiest but the best. The fairy tenderly accepted his heart and hand on one condition, which was that he should distinguish her from her sisters on the following day. This was a puzzle to the farmer, for they were so like in form and dress, but what will not a Welshman in love accomplish?

He looked so full of love, and so beseechingly to the fair one of his choice, that she, smitten herself in turn by his earnest devotion, drew his attention by a glance of the eye to her feet, when he discerned that there was a slight difference in the tying of the sandal. This was enough for him, and the next day he was able to single her out and bear her away.

The legend does not say anything about marriage, but as he had professed it, no doubt the priest blessed them, though he must have been kept in the dark as to the lady.

Before departing from the lake, the fairy thought that a marriage portion would not be unacceptable, and by a wave of the wand, which did away with all rearing or attending fairs, and would be an acceptable art now-a-days to many a needy farmer, out stepped from the lake seven cows, two oxen and a bull.

Settled down and happy, the farmer promised to love and honour her faithfully until death, and she, as fervent, promised always to be his good wife, until such time as he struck her three times without cause,

This the farmer thought was equivalent to three warnings, and he was quite certain, not only that he should never strike her three times, but that he should never strike her once.

The fairy wife, judging from a little incident or two, cast aside all her fairy propensities, and became a model housewife, never scrupling to put her hand to anything useful. The years flowed on like a calm and gentle river, and the farmer, in a few years, saw four brave sons and a comely wife sitting by the hearth that was once desolate.

He was very happy, and this was the time when he should have been most careful.

It is when fortune wraps us warm that we should treasure the fortune; care and self-denial in the dark hour of bitterness are useless exercises.

Fair day came round, and Dan was in a great hurry to be off. With his mouth full of oatmeal cake and milk, he went on lacing his boots, so as to loose no time in getting ready, and while so doing, asked his wife to go into the field and bring him the horse for him to ride. She said she would, but as she took a little more time than he thought necessary in starting, he said playfully to her, slapping her at the same time with his glove:

“Dos, dos, dos,” or “Go, go, go.”

One glance gave the wife,
With a sigh from her heart,
“O, Dan, you’ve forgotten,
And now we must part.”
One glance gave the wife,
One groan gave poor Dan,
And out from the farmhouse
The fairy-wife ran.

It was all over. Dan saw it in a minute, and as ill-luck generally comes in a cluster, Dan found his stock was sensibly diminished, as the seven cows, two oxen, the bull and the descendants all came lowing out of the fields, and, taking whatever was attached to them in the shape of ploughs, harness, or what not, and going to the margin of the lake, walked in with the fairy-wife in advance and disappeared.

The legend does not tell us what became of the bereaved husband, thus losing a wife without having even the melancholy pleasure of following her to the grave; but he disappears from notice, and if it was into the mysterious lake, so much the better.

The four sons grew up, not in riches, but that which surpasseth riches, which are often the accompaniments of a fool—wisdom, and dearly did they love in their youthful manhood, even as they had in their youth, to resort to a ravine called Cwm-y-Meddygon, and talk of their beautiful mother who had faded away, and of the sweet voice they should never hear again.

But they did hear it. They were sitting there one summer’s evening as usual, when, with the old sweet smile, she came in the midst of them and wound her loving arms round her dear boys and kissed them, but she said that she could not stay. She had no power to; all that she could do was to give them some blessing that would aid them in the battle of life; and with this and still more sweet kisses, she gave each a bag, and was gone.

These boys became noted in history as the "Meddygon Myddtai," and were respectively Rhiwallon, Cadwgan, Gruffuad, and Emon, famous about the year 1220 for their skill in the art of healing, taking precedence of all the most learned cures; and doughty Rhys Grug, Lord of Dynevor, had the benefit and the honour of regarding them as his own physicians.

A good deal of conjecture has been hazarded on the matter of the three little bags, but the age that regarded the healing art as a gift, and not, as we do, a science, has always maintained that in the bags were either some choice medicines or some written directions to cure various diseases.

And so ends the legend of the Black Mountains.

CARMARTHEN AND MERLIN THE WIZARD.



CARMARTHEN, the *Cacr Merddin*, or Merlin's town of the Welsh, and the *Maridunum* of the Romans, is one of the most conspicuous towns in Wales for historic associations. In old times and in new, it has figured prominently. It was here that the prophet Merlin was born, here that Pieton went a truant boy to school; here that Nott the warrior-hero died. Plain and unambitious, destitute of grand architectural attraction as it may be, there is that in its history which is full of interest, for on its scenes old Welsh warriors, Roman, Norman, and the other elements, which in combination with the Welsh make up the British race, have paced along, and so pacing, making history, doing deeds of woe or weal, which schoolboys read about with bated breath, and historians muse upon.

Merlin was the Bacon of the day, the monk, not the philosopher. Just as in a young forest, one sapling will shoot high above the rest, so in the early history of our civilisation, there were some great minds which stood out boldly from the common herd. Look at Chaucer, the father of English poetry. How great his stature above his contemporaries. So, too, Shakespeare, amidst the play-wrights, Milton amongst the courtiers; but this century has ushered in a change, there is a greater dead level of respectable eminence of moderate talent, and the appreciative capacity has kept good pace with the creation.

In Merlin's time the monks seem to have monopolised the very ordinary ability which was displayed. War, or the simplest of agriculture, occupied the attention of the people, and religion, and some very faint mental strivings that of the monks. Merlin, who was no monk, but a man of great learning, was so utterly distinct from the mass, that he was regarded as possessed of

supernatural power. His personality is a subject of dispute. Davies, of "Keltic Researches" fame, believed in two Merddins, one the son of Mororyn the Merddin the Wild of Welsh bards, and the Merddin 'Emrys, or Merlin Ambrosius of Nennius Godfrey and the romances.

But Stephens in his literature of the Kymry, in a most exhaustive section, has so stripped away his identity with the poems ascribed to him in the "Apples" and the "Pigs," that one is doubtful as to wherein his fame really lay, whether in divination or in poetry. With regard to the quaintness of the subject matter of the poetry ascribed to Merlin, apples and pigs, Davies is inclined to regard the first as having a Druidic meaning, but Stephens regards it as a reminiscence rather of the time when the Kymry were in the Summerland. My own view, given with all deference is, that the apple has a religious aspect. The first mental influences brought to bear on the mind of the Welsh were religious, and the story of Eden in its striking simplicity, and with its wonderful results, could but have had a strong effect on the primitive people amongst whom the monks related it. And thus the bards, men of few ideas, having this Iliad of Paradise riveted upon their attention, used the "apple" in their poems, and metaphorically applied the term in their narrative of history.

Then again, as this is a prosaic dissertation, with regard to pigs, the pig is a favourite with the Keltic family, both with the Welshman and his cousin, the Irishman. One large section of North Walians were known as the Moelmant, and not the least conspicuous of the Welsh poets was the "Poet of the Pigs." The pig was esteemed for its wisdom when living, and for its savoury character when dead. "Listen little pig," is the invocation as well known as the classic, "Men and arms I ring." "As contented as a sow in stubble" is one of the oldest of proverbs. Even to this day the pig is "respected," and the expression of a genial freeholder, that no dinner was complete without pig, in some form or other, is one that will be generally accepted by the majority.

Hence I take it that, without any far-fetched Orientalism, the religious feature of the apple and the familiar one of the pig explain everything.

When Gworytern ruled in Britain the days of the complete governing of the island were drawing to a close. In fact he was driven by Saxon inroad to the mountains of Cambria, and not knowing how he should preserve even his standing there, he sought a wizard, who told him to build a fort or stronghold in a certain place. This he attempted to do, but directly the foundation was laid it sunk from sight. Day after day this continued, and in his extremity he again sought advice and was told to send messengers abroad in order to find a boy who was born without a father. This boy was to be slain, and the foundation cemented with his blood, which would secure the stability of the building. The messengers did as directed. They came to Carmarthen, and when walking through the street one evening, watching some boys at play, they overheard one taunt the other with having no father. They immediately seized the lad, and, making inquiries, found that it was as stated. That his mother had been "surprised by a spirit," and the boy was the issue. They

brought the boy to the king, and when he was told that he was to die he wanted to know the why and the wherefore. He then said that under the rushes which grew there, there was a pool of water and at the bottom of it a stone chest in which two dragons were asleep, and that every now and then they awoke and it was the encounter of their fighting that caused the foundation to sink.

The king saw that the boy was above the ordinary rank, and by his assistance the pool was drained and there appeared the chest which, on being opened, disclosed two dragons, who began, forthwith, a desperate fight. The red one proved the stronger, and not only drove out the white one, but almost killed it. This white one, the boy said, was the Saxon, and the red one the Briton, and though the British were now oppressed, yet in the end they would triumph and get rid of their oppressors.

Such was the manner in which the great wizard Merddin first came into notice, and, from that date, into fame. His achievements, powers, and prophecies permeate the literature of the past, and a great deal more is placed to his credit than is deserved. Stripped of borrowed plumes, and of the credit of deeds which he took no part in, the simple fact remains, first, that there was such a man; secondly, that he was above the ordinary dead level, and that, to the popular eye, the possession of a little intellect gave him the fame of supernatural power.

ELLEN DWN, THE TRUE HEROINE OF "YOUNG LOCHINVAR."



SIR Walter Scott, like Shakespeare, drew his inspiration from other lands than his own. We have to thank Denmark for giving us the immortal Hamlet, and to Wales is due the credit of supplying Scott, amongst many other fragments, the Norman Horse-shoe to wit, with the much admired, and often quoted and sung "Young Lochinvar."

I do not profess to have made the discovery. It is due to poor Llewelyn Prichard, whose life was one long uphill game, and whose death was as miserable as it is possible to conceive.

But of that more anon. In the eventful and stirring incidents connected with the life of Ellen Dwn, Prichard traced the fount whence the germs of Sir Walter Scott drew his "Young Lochinvar." But Sir Walter Scott, as

Prichard states, Scotchified it, and concealed its Cambrian origin, and glossed over with his gentle and flowery minstrelsy some details that would have given a tragic colouring to the history. With this tribute to Prichard I will now in my own way tell the story of

ELLEN DWN.

The Dwms, as the name indicates, were of Welsh extraction, and prior to the reign of Edward IV. had settled themselves on the English side of the river Dee. There, in the course of generations, the name had been altered to Done, and in the reign of Edward IV. the representative of the family was Sir John Done, of Ulkington, county of Chester. His daughter Ellen was the impersonification of a poet's dream. She was not a picture only for the eye to admire, but a living reality, as good as she was beautiful, with a will of her own that rightly regarded her future destiny as a matter of consideration to herself more than to her parents. With every regard and duty to her parents, she yet thought that in the disposal of her hand it was necessary that her own heart should be consulted. She was not like an estate to be sold to the highest bidder, and come woe, come weal, she would have her own way.

One cannot but admire those strong-minded women of the past. Such as she was were the mothers of the men who laid the solid substratum of England's greatness, the mothers of the men who won our battlefields and naval victories; who founded our commercial basis; who carved out our canals and railways.

They could dance a "measure," but did not make the ball-room an idol. They liked the attractions of dress, but did not bow down to it as a fetish, and follow fashion blindly, and often, as we see it, to the death. Many a panegyric has been devoted to great men who kept cottage and hall in times past, and made themselves a name in the history of their country, but little attention has been given to those who in the early years of childhood, and up to manhood, watched over and nurtured the proud spirits which won deathless names. In the Walhalla of our country, Westminster Abbey, those names are preserved; they live again in storied verse, in classic painting, in sculptured marble; but the mothers who bore them are forgotten.

Fair Ellen Dwn! When David Myddleton, the young, the gallant Welshman, saw her he lost his heart, and he vowed a vow that no other should be his wife. His family were in point of rank equal to the Dwms, or Dones. He was allied to the Myddletons of Chirk Castle, he held high office under the king, and he boasted a descent from the ancient tribe of Ririd Vlaidd. Still the Dwn *père* and the Dwn *mère* did not like him, for some reason or other which history has not handed down. They resolutely put their face against David, and, instead, tried all they could to bring about a match between Ellen and a cousin named Richard Done.

Bold as he was ardent, and relying upon Ellen's love, and also upon his own family prestige, David made a formal request to the parents for liberty to pay his addresses to their daughter.

"Couldn't think of it," said Sir John.

"Her affections are otherwise engaged," said Lady Done.

"Humph!" quoth David, "Ellen's eyes tell me otherwise. I will dissemble a while, but forego her never."

Debarred from visiting at the Dones David was only able to get an occasional brief meeting with his beloved, and often was obliged to be content with a distant view of his fair mistress in the church.

In the old and sacred pile, where the radiance of the summer falls through painted windows in dreamy light upon aisle and worshipper, Ellen would sit and exchange those telegrams of love which need but the eyes as the medium, and the heart as the interpreter. And David would look, and dream, and plot, and yet for the life of him he could not see the way to accomplish his ends.

In the few and furtive interviews they had been able to obtain David had won her avowal. The love was mutual; but she could not run against the wishes of her father; she hoped that time would soften his dislike, and that all would yet be well.

But David Myddleton was a proud man, and, fully conscious that Ellen would be his eventually, secretly resolved to put a bold face on the matter, and show as much unconcern as possible. So his attendance at church became unfrequent, and when he did attend he seemed more inclined to devotion than to exchange loving glances. Ellen was piqued at this, and the father saw it, and thinking it a golden opportunity lost no time in hinting to his daughter that:—"After all, you see I was right; that young Myddleton was evidently taken up with some fresh fancy. That was not the man to make a good husband. Look at your cousin Richard, he was a plainer man, not half so gallant or handsome, but how true, how faithful; he worshipped the very ground she trod upon, and if she married him he would be her slave."

Power is a great attraction to man and woman. To rule, to have someone that looks up to you, flatters the small vanities we possess, and Ellen was not proof to feeling in her annoyance with David some little bit of gratification that somebody thought well of her, if *he* didn't. And yet, when the evening died away into night, and she was alone in her own room with no one near her to disparage David, the recollection of his manly form, the remembrance of his tender voice, of his earnest avowals, would come and revive all her love. Then, again, with the morrow would come the parental influence; sometimes, also, the cousin lover came and made himself as amiable as it was possible to be, and talked of his lands and of his mansion, and of his horses and hounds, and again and again begged her to become mistress of Croten Court. With the best of women there are moments when the weakness inherited from mother Eve displays itself—the tendency to yield. In primeval days of rustic simplicity the apple was sufficient; gold, gems, estates, are now required. Far from it be my intention to think even slightly of the fair Ellen, or wander from narrative into metaphysics; but the temptation to speculate at this trying period of Ellen's career is great, and so it will be advisable to imagine the best, to believe the best, in fact, to put the best appearance forward before the very grave truth that in an evil hour Ellen forgot David, and promised Richard that she would on a certain day become his wife.

To her credit I must add that even this she did conditionally, and the condition was, if by the time mentioned David did not come and claim her as his wife.

So even at the worst aspect it is possible that Ellen was only dissimulating a little to get rid of her pestering lover and her plaguing relatives; that, after all, her love for David was as firm as ever, and her belief in his coming to save her as strong. The day that the promise was extorted from her was to her one of the saddest. What if he did not come? What if he had really forgotten her? Then her happiness would be sacrificed for ever.

It must be understood that the women of those days were of a practical turn of mind; it was left for a later age to resort to poisons, running brooks, and other means of ending misery, though, as a rule, at any period of history there are more of these things, and the "worm in the bud," and "the damask cheek," in shilling novels than in real life. Many a noble woman may be found amongst us whose dream of love never dawned into the day; whose romance lies buried with a faded flower or a locket; whose early love is the obese (practical too) somebody else's John, while she herself has found that comfort and family cares, and the prattle of children, coupled with household expenses, help considerably to obliterate the moonlight nights and the wooing of old.

What did Ellen do in her extremity? The moment she had signed the bond her peril was disclosed to her, and without a moment's delay she sent a messenger to David, telling him what she had done, and conjuring him, if he still retained any love for her, to come and save her—save her from her cousin, from her friends, from her fate.

It is not known in what manner the message was sent. History tells us that it was by a faithful messenger, and in that case there was no necessity of resorting to the quaint handwriting and expression of the period, thus:—"I besych yo as yo vale mi luve to come ere th vij Monath. I wis yo," &c.

Whatever the way, the message was sent, and the messenger arrived safely at his destination; but, alack a day! David was absent; no one knew where he was gone, and no one knew when he would return! The messenger had taken a long time to travel, and there was only a few days to spare ere Ellen would be led to the altar.

That ancient illustration of the wife of Blue-beard asking her sister if she saw anyone coming was indeed but a nursery tale compared to the anxiety with which Ellen looked out upon road and moor for a glimpse of her messenger. The hours flew by; day succeeded day; the wedding preparations, hurried on by the parents, were near completion, and the cousin Richard gloated delightfully over the prize that he felt was now his own.

The eventful morning dawned. Feverish with anxiety, Ellen looked forth for the last time from her casement, and the bleak distance, dotted by no figure, chilled her heart. It was all over then; either her messenger had been intercepted or David loved her not. In a maze, scarcely knowing what she did, she descended at the last moment, arrayed, as many have been, and will be, for the sacrifice, yet unassisted, with step that was still firm, and mien proud

in its gracefulness, she began the journey to the church, whence came sweetly on the ear the sound of harmonious bells.

And what of David?

Late the night before, or very early in the morning, he had returned home, found the despairing messenger awaiting him, and in a trice was informed of the fate that awaited Ellen! Like a madman he sprang to horse, rode furiously here and there to the residences of his friends, and collecting a dozen stalwart supporters, who donned their mail and girded themselves for the fight, led the way, and as in a battle charge, without once halting or drawing rein, rode desperately at their head to the rescue of his beloved. Yet even as he rode he knew it was hopeless. She would be lost to him. No power on earth could save her, and he swore fierce oaths he would be revenged.

She should be his wife or the wife of no other.

Furious as was the pace the rescuers arrived too late. They drew rein as they neared the church, and wondering rustics gathered around and told him that the wedding party had been in the church a long time, and even as they spoke the bells again rang forth and out came the long array, the bride looking wondrously beautiful but faint even to death, while the bridegroom, an "insignificant man with smirking air" looked about him for the joyous shout that the rustics failed to give.

One glance gave David at the group, one spring gave he from the saddle, then as the panther leaps upon its prey, so bounded he, sword in hand, upon the hapless Richard, and one thrust through the heart and the smirk of triumph was stilled in death!

Not more rapid is the lightning stroke than was the flash of his sword, then while a cry of horror ran around,

One touch to her hand, one word in her ear,
So light to the croup the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung,
She is wan, we are gone over bank, bush, and scaur,
They'll have fleet steeds that follow quoth young Lochinvar.

The action of David was instantaneous; his friends closed around him, and shouting the word on, he leading the way, dashed at the utmost speed of his horse into the river Dee. This once forded, and in the land of Cambria, he defied all pursuit. Once at a safe distance the party took things more leisurely, and arriving at the abbey of Denbigh, fair Ellen was again married, and however much she may have regretted the hapless fate of her cousin, in David's overwhelming love the past was forgotten.

One is always wishful to know the subsequent fate of the hero or heroine. Generally the novelist gives the suggestive sentence—"Happy ever afterwards," and we are left to conclude that the storms of adversities after a period are bottled up, only to be used again upon the unfortunate Ulysses when he angers the gods. But we all know that this, if it suited past ages either of classic time or dim remote history, is out of place with our shop-keeping practical era. With regard to David Myddleton he was too powerful with the king to suffer punishment, and the transitional era of a Welsh history

was such, and so many matters of greater importance pending, that this was looked upon as a little escapade, and soon forgotten. Of their married life little is known but that the sons from this union descended the present Myddletons of Chester County.

VISIT OF WELSH BARONS TO LONDON IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

I SHALL have occasion in the course of these sketches to pourtray many a romantic scene and interesting incident, especially those associated with Llewelyn ap Griffith, and his brother David; with David's grandson known in France as Yvain de Galles, or Evan of Wales, and with Owen Glyndwr. In connection with Llewelyn's life and rule there is one incident which is not generally known, and yet well deserves not only to be known, but to form the subject of an historical picture. This is the visit of the barons of Wales, knights, or chieftains, as termed by others, to the Court of Edward I. in London, there to pay him homage.

The Londoners have seen from time to time the entrance of remarkable men, emperor and sultan, pasha and native prince. Even our own Dr. Price, of Pontypridd, has attracted attention in the Strand by the novelty of his costume!

Macaulay relates the visit of representatives of the reigning-house of Russia in an emblazonment of jewels. Yet it is questionable if at any time the Cockneys have had a greater attraction than was afforded them about the year 1378, when the Welsh chieftains paid homage to Edward.

They were accompanied as usual by large retinues, and being so considerable in number were located at Islington and, as the historian then described it, other adjacent villages. "Merrie Islington" would be startled now by such an appellation.

They were not very happy there. We are told that they could not get sufficient milk, and that they did not like the London beer and wine. Very probably the same objections would be raised now by the modern visitors! But still more, they disliked the crowd of curious men, women, and children, who thronged to see them go out, and come in to their lodgings, just in the same way as the public gaze now at the variegated colours of circus men.

The proud Welshmen could not endure this show business. For them, lords

of the mountain and the valley, to be gazed at by the Saxon, with just the same curious interest as would now be given to the inevitable New Zealander, was galling to their pride, and the historian relates that there, in Islington, they vowed a vow never to submit to such humiliation again, but to revolt at the first opportunity.

Little did the Saxons think of the storms they were helping to brew. Returned to their native mountains, the bitterness awakened knew no rest until many a lordly Norman house had lost its best and bravest sons, and Edward, chafed to the uttermost point of anger, had risked his own rule in the effort to retaliate and vanquish.

Saxon churl, Norman knight, Welsh chieftain, in the London of the fourteenth century, might form a fitting theme for one of our native artists. Even the relation is of extreme interest. It brings the past vividly before one. The mist of centuries is blown away from before the land of mountain and flood, and there is the impulsive, irritable, warlike race before us, just as they were with war plumes, and wild fanciful dress, disliking town and artificial life, and preferring the grand loveliness of nature and the simplest diet. Such a picture is worth all the histories which exalt or decry, represent the old chieftains as either like the Homeric gods or little better than North American Indians.

A GLIMPSE OF FARM LIFE IN WALES.

SKETCHED FROM CEFN, NEAR LLANDOVERY.



THE life of a Welsh farmer is, as a rule, a placid course of things, and no wonder that, wrinkled like the old thorns on the hill-side, tanned like a sailor, they live to a good old age. There is not so much fret of life with them or jarring of the nervous system, none of that irritation going on which, in town and city life, contributes so much to the tinging of the hair with grey, the bringing on of "crows feet," and other indications of troubles, and of age.

Then there are times of pleasurable excitement, and up in the Carmarthen shire districts, the delight of a cheery fox hunt across the ferny hills is no uncommon treat. I well recollect, in the neighbourhood of Llandoverly, hearing a burst of music, on the hill top, and an excited farmer shout "'tis the finest music in the world."

During a hunt the hospitalities of any farm house on the route are offered in the freest manner, and anyone neglecting so to do earns the name of a churl, and lies ever after under a cloud.

But, as a rule, the farmer visited is only too happy to spread his table, and to bring out the best things, eatables and drinkables, he has in stock, and if the hunt, after a good day's vigorous run, does not find itself at the close in the condition of Burn's character, "happy and glorious," it will be no fault of the jovial old farmers amongst the hills.

A great day also, in the neighbourhood of Llandovery, is the sheep-washing.

What a bustle of preparation there is in the morning ! With the first faint streaks of dawn the family are up, and Moss, and every other dog besides on the premises, having an instinctive feeling that work is brewing, are up and jumping about, and barking noisily. They have scarcely patience to wait for the breakfast to finish, and when it is over, the sturdy old farmer and his sons and servants set out, some for the river with their raddle and hurdles, and the rest with the dogs to the mountains, the excitement increases. Then when the dogs have the signals to gather in the flocks, what a splendid scene is presented. Far away little dots of snow upon the vast mountain-chain may be seen at rest ; but at the first bark of the dog there is a commotion, and if one were nearer it would be highly interesting to see the small delicate head of the mountain sheep raised, the eyes glistening, the whole attitude one of attention and fear. That far away sound is known only too well, the enemy is approaching, and soon the little dots of snow gather in a cluster, all in a state of the highest nervous excitement.

When the enemy, in the form of Moss with his tongue out, appears on the scene, then the scamper is instantaneous, and the old routine of running away like mad, then swerving around as Moss gets ahead, is to be seen, the old dog working them well, and eventually bringing all down panting and troubled to the water's edge.

How vividly comes back the picture of the far distant past, the gathering together of a mighty flock of sheep, such as one of the patriarchs might have owned with pride ; the excited dogs, proud of their prowess, and rounding the flocks with incessant haste and delighted bark of self-esteem. How, I repeat, comes back vividly the past.

Then comes the real work of the day, and sturdy must be the arms to lift the struggling sheep and souse them in the water and restrain their frantic plunges to be free. The evening sun gleaming upon the little gathering down by the river, the scene of action, of thorough farm life, set in as it were in a frame-work of repose ; the lofty background of stern, solemn hills, unchanged since Adam ; the distant white-washed farm and surroundings. No "rails" in sight, no sound of steam heard in this hollow amongst the hills, all impress the mind of the "Saxon" stranger with pleasure, with wonder, and a profound sense of calm happiness, and it is no unfrequent matter for a visitor to wish that he could put office life or shop life on one side, and settle down amongst the eternal hills, and forget all of business and worry.

But if his stay should be long at a Welsh farm he will find that to thrive the farmer must not sleep, but from morn till night be incessantly occupied, and turning everything to account. Then markets, sales, fairs, to be profitably attended must be thoroughly looked after, and, as the good wife keeps the purse, and is the cashier, treasurer, and director-general of all things in the money way, the good man if he would keep things pleasant at home must be careful in his sales and his purchases. In many cases the wife sells her own butter and poultry, leaving the husband to manage the ponies and cattle, she reserving her power to express an opinion, and a very decided one too, upon all transactions. So it is, that in looking at the tranquil picture of the farm house in the hollow, the river that runs by untinged as yet with coal, and the valley resenant not with the whistle of engines, that one is apt to dream of a peace and happiness passing all human understanding. Yet sooth to say, here, as in everything else that is of this earth earthy, there are cares and sorrows, and trials and troubles, and the bed of the farmer is not, any more than that of the king, one of roses. But in one respect the Welsh farmer manages his troubles better than the townsman. He of the town gets thin and careworn and his face tells his tale. Not so the farmer ; the wild free air around him seems to waft away a good deal of his vexations, unchanged continues the tint upon his cheek, even as certainly as it does upon his apples ; and with active life, bracing air, plain but substantial food, and an occasional extra indulgence at market-day, he bears his load lightly and sees grandsons holding the plough before Time approaches him with his scythe.

THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE.



IN that primitive age of our great grandfathers, which was so delightfully innocent and arcadian compared with this of ours when the keenest exercise of the wits is necessary to keep ahead in the world, everything unusually clever, from a cathedral to a bridge, was put down as the work of the devil. It was a wonder that the celebrated bridge of Pontypridd was not credited to his sublunar majesty ; and had Edwards been a stranger of dark complexion, wearing of necessity a tall hat and large boots, for obvious purposes of concealment, it would have been ; but Edwards was so well-known and was such an innocent, good-natured fellow, that everybody knew and liked him.

The Devil's Bridge is certainly, as regards its workmanship, so astonishing

a performance, that the old-fashioned people in that part of the world might be excused for thinking that it was built by no human hands. Bold, majestic, it blends in with the bold and majestic of nature, and seems to be as much a part of nature as the ravine and the falls, and the great rocks and rivers.

So it must have been in the days of its glory, but the necessities of the age have now led to the old bridge being retained simply for its associations, picturesque character, and as an attraction to tourists who pay; while a new one, rising in place of the old, better serves the purposes of the trader and the traveller.

The old bridge is stated to have been built by the monks of Strata Florida, and such would be the local opinion, as it is known in the district as Pont-y-Mynach, but as there is an *hospitium* not far away, dedicated to St. John, an opinion has prevailed that the knights of St. John built the bridge, and exercised their masonic skill, not in the subtle ethics and pure philosophy of freemasonry, but as operatives.

If one could believe that, it would invest the crumbling and ivy-ornamented bridge with additional interest, but no amount of plausible statement will satisfy the peasantry but that the devil had a hand in it; so as such we will let it remain, and tell the legend that still lingers in the district.

The dark visaged gentleman, on whose face a thunder-cloud seems to have rested ever since the eventful expulsion from heaven, was wandering in the neighbourhood of the bridge, when he heard a great row. He looked about to see what was the matter, and there saw that an old woman, well known in the place as a very good bargain-driving farmer's widow, was wringing her hands, and pulling her hair, on the banks of the Mynach; while on the other side, leisurely cropping the grass, was a favourite cow, the last of all her stock. How the cow got there was a mystery to the woman, but not to the old gentleman, who, it is shrewdly suspected, whisked the cow over himself, as a quiet kind of hazard to see what would come of it, just as he had speculated in the matter of the apple.

Assuming an air of great nonchalance, he walked up to the woman and inquired the cause of her grief, and she, drying her eyes, pointed to the cow, and said she was ruined. It was her only cow, and there was no getting it back! "Oh!" said her questioner, "that's nothing; I can join those rocks easily by a bridge." "O, do it, do it," cried the woman, beginning to have her wits about her as to whom she was talking.

"Yes, will I," said the devil. But, looking at the old lady, he added, "the first thing that crosses must be mine, and on that condition I will build a bridge at once."

The woman gladly consented, and in a few minutes there was the famous bridge of Pont-y-Mynach.

"Now," said the devil with a leer, "fetch your cow;" but she, taking from a convenient pocket a piece of bread, called to her little dog and threw it over the bridge, and the cur, bounding after it, brought it gleefully back and began to eat it.

"There," said the old woman, "that's the first to cross over, so you must take the dog."

"Done brown!" exclaimed the devil, "and very cleverly. But as I don't want dogs you can keep it," and away he walked, and if tail there were, doubtless it was not so curly and defiant as before. Possibly, however, as the old gentleman looked at the old lady, he consoled himself with the thought that she would have been no great catch. Men have a convenient philosophy for soothing themselves in misadventure or misfortune, and why not the devil?

In an old MS. quoted by Giraldus the tale is well told in verse, and in this we get further particulars:—

"Old Megan Llandonach, of Pont-y-Mynach,
Had lost her only cow;
Across the ravine the cow was seen,
But to reach it she couldn't tell how.

"The devil, that chanced to wander that way,
Said he, 'Megan, what is the matter?'
'I am ruined,' said she, 'for the cow's lost to me,'
And she set up a dolorous clatter.

"Said the devil, 'A bridge I'll raise from the ridge,
And the two rocks together I'll join
To recover your losses; but the first thing that crosses
Must ever and ever be mine.'

"Old Megan contented, and quickly consented;
Satan hoped to have made her his prey;
So under her nose the high arch arose—
Said the devil, 'Now trudge it away.'

"In her pocket she fumbled—a crust out she tumbled,
Then called to her little black cur;
The crust over she threw, the cur after it flew,
Said she, 'The dog's yours, crafty sir.'

"Old Satan looked queer, and scratched his right ear,
And sprang from the side of the ravine;
Said he, 'A fair hit—the biter is bit,
For the maugy cur isn't worth having.'"

A MAY DAY TALE.



HAT a glorious time is May ! A southern wind gently streams up the valleys and over the mountains, and nature, with its minor key, the hush of the stream, and the low hum of wandering bees, exercises a soothing influence upon all human kind. The winter is forgotten, and the troubles of life fret not as we gaze on the soft green tracery and the delicate tints which prevail everywhere, whether in copse or mountain, or in the field where the labour of ploughman and sower is beginning to bear fruit. The old lanes, which have been clogged up with snow, or made almost impassable by heavy rainfalls, have become the trysting-place, for violets peep out from green coverts, and primroses star the banks, and sweet is the smell of the hawthorn and grateful its leafery. But nature's pictures, however beautiful, require human life to redeem them from sameness, and human life placed in the most witching of scenes must have an object of comfort, love, or ambition, or else the mind becomes dissatisfied, and there falls the baleful *ennui*, or weariness of the soul.

Annie Thomas, the merriest, and most charming of Welsh maidens, had an object on the May-day we are picturing, as she was hurrying through the old green lane leading from the farm-house where she lived near Croyddyn, on the river Conway. She had promised to meet her lover, a stalwart young farmer, who lived in the neighbourhood of Penmaenmawr, and to effect this they had to cross by the ferry-boat. It was a fair day, and there were many maidens and many stalwart farmers going upon the same mission. Most of them, too, were young people, and the May influence which shone so gloriously on trees and all animated things did not, of course, exempt the lads and lasses, and thus every face was bright, and every eye shone, and feet and hearts were light with happiness.

How comes it that when the sun is pouring down tropical rays, and the sky is at the bluest, the thunderstorm is near ? that in the fullest bliss of happiness we are nearest sorrow ? in the height of mirth the nearest tears ? So it is, and the eventful annals of Annie Thomas, of Croyddyn, proved this. In gleeful haste they poured down the banks ; the ferry-boat, accustomed to take over a solitary old farmer or a tourist, was unused to the load, but away went the boat, groaning and creaking as if it felt the burden, until midstream was

reached, and even then it is tolerably certain that a safe journey would have been performed if the young men in the boat could have refrained from giving practical evidences of the regard in which they held the young women sitting by them.

The rough embrace, the slap on the face, and "dcn't, John," with its accompanying floundering about of young men and women, who had no claim to be considered sylphs, taxed the old boat to the uttermost, and a more than usually vigorous attack settled it. Over went the boat, and down went the passengers, and where late song and laughter, and pleasant greetings were heard, only shrieks, and the panting cry

Of some strong swimmer in his agony.

People on the bank, waiting for the boat, saw the accident, and though it was some way across, more than one stout farmer plunged in, and made for the boat, which had righted, and to which one or two clung in their terror and anguish. But before anyone could get there, one by one the survivors of the great struggle disappeared, until only one woman was left, and that was Annie. Out of eighty persons, says Pennant, she was the only sole survivor!

Seventy-nine unfortunates carried down Conway's flood, like the flotsam and jetsam of the shores, the wild flower, the wisp of hay, the branch of tree—and as bereft of life and as inanimate, and Annie, all colour gone from her cheeks, and her hair hanging in wet profusion around her face, lying on the bank in seeming death.

I have said that her mission was to meet her lover, one John Humphreys, an honest, plodding young husbandman, whose sole ambition in life was a comfortable farm and the hand of Annie. What to him were castles, great estates, titles, gold? Just enough to enable him to rub along, and to pay his way that was enough, and he began to think that he could manage it. Such was the burden of honest Shon's thoughts on the day of the accident, and little did he know that, even as he pictured the little farm, and the happy wife, and all those interesting additions which follow a man when he pitches his tent in the world-wide wilderness, Annie was lying on the grassy shore of the Conway, with hard but honest faces about her, and tender hands aiding in trying to woo the spirit back, as it seemed to hesitate in its journey to the far away.

Strive gently, but firmly and zealously, tender hands! coy is the spirit. Does it not seem to long for the eternal and to be free? Does it not gaze down upon the earthly tabernacle and think of the trials and sorrows of earth which ever assail it? Does it not look upward and with its spirit eyes see the eternal heavens in the light and glory of suns that never wane? Softly coy spirit, shall the human love that lately filled that poor heart there come back no more, and the merry eyes lose their radiance, and the cheeks their tinge? Come back—oh! come back. Softly as the evening zephyrs steal into the landscape at evening time, sweetly as the blush of maiden comes stealing o'er face and brow, so came back the soul, and Annie opened her eyes and gasped heavily. She was saved!

John didn't think at all about this, as he knew nothing of the occurrence ; but with his heart full of love he hurried on, and was much too abstracted for the very dangerous road over the promontory of Penmaenmawr, a road which not only required at that time full daylight, but keen eyes and a steady tread. Along the frightful precipice, here and there treacherously worn, he dashed, and scarcely a hundred yards apart were records, known to him, though not to the ordinary traveller, of narrow escape and horrible death. But even as the beacon love would lure o'er a sea swarming with shoals and sunken reefs, so love of Annie led him by a constant series of dangers, and for a time in safety. Then came a stumble, a partial roll over the cliff, next a wild, despairing effort to regain his footing, a glance to heaven for help, a vivid sweep through the brain of every incident from boyhood, a palling of the trembling hands, a sob for mercy and forgiveness, and down the steep sides of the precipice, bounding from point to point, fell poor hapless unfortunate Shon.

"Dashed to pieces, of course," is the verdict of the reader. Not a bit of it ! Weirdly, as if ministering hands broke his fall at every jutting crag, did he come upon a bush or outstretched branches, and when he fell prostrate on the pebbly beach he was certainly shaken and stunned, but there was not a bone broken, and in the lapse of an hour, feeling a little dizzy, as if something had disagreed with him, Shon limped, or rather I shall say, shambled off, and contrived to reach the beach, at which the ferry-boat was usually moored, and where not only did he welcome Annie, but hear the wonderful tale of her escape.

This remarkable incident, or trace of incidents, must not be classed amongst the imaginative. Pennant and other veracious chroniclers of Welsh history support the statement in its entirety, and add that in a very short time afterwards, the fortunate couple were married, and so little did the accidents each sustained affect them, that Annie lived to the good old age of one hundred and sixteen and her husband survived her five years.

The scene of Shon's accident became memorable after this by the successive fall at the same place of an exciseman and of an attorney, both of whom also escaped unhurt, but the Rev. Thomas Jones, rector of Llanhau, had a narrow escape. He started off hurriedly one night to fetch the midwife, an interesting event in his family being imminent. He rode a stout nag, and on the return journey, the old lady being mounted behind, the nag fell down, carrying the double burden with it to the bottom of the precipice. Llewelyn Prichard relates the anecdote, and adds that the nag was killed and the midwife, but that the rector was unhurt, and gathering up the trappings of his steed, as a sagacious North Walian would do, marched off rejoicing.

A TALE OF HAVERFORDWEST CASTLE.



ONE of the most daring of men was Ivan-ap-Meyric. By the Earl of Clare he was denounced as a robber, but no common robber was he in the modern acceptation of the word. Ivan believed, on the best of grounds, that a large tract of country was his; that a castle was his, and as might was right in those days, and the bold earl and his retainers were too many for him, he just took what he could seize on the principle of the bold Robin Hood of Huntingdon and Sherwood Forest notoriety; with this difference that whereas Robin is reported on the authority of tradition to have taken from fat millers and given to lean ploughmen, Ivan kept all he could get.

A famous archer was Ivan, as many of the Welsh were in early days. No one could pull a string with stronger power or more unerring aim, and his arrow seemed by instinct to fly to the joints of the Norman armour, and find out the weak and vulnerable spot.

The odds, however, were so unequal; a poor Welsh "robber" and a few men against an earl and a strongly armed force, that in the end, and it was not long in coming, Ivan was overpowered and secured.

Very jaunty was the earl as he took Ivan bound to his saddle homeward. Hearty were the shouts of the vassals as the drawbridge of Haverfordwest Castle was lowered, and like a chained dog Ivan was led in, as he knew only too well, first to languish in a dungeon and then to die.

Dungeons in the old times of Welsh history, and of any other country's history, were as inseparable from the requisites of a castle as cellars are from dwelling-houses of our day. In *their* cellars they stored captives; we put wine, and beer, and the general run of the good things of life, into ours. They scowled and frowned, and always had disordered livers; we laugh and sing and carry a smile on the face instead of a thundercloud, and are unquestionably a happier people than the men who built castles or those who lived in them. Happy is the change. Let the graveiary cling⁷ around their homes. We surround ours with flowers. Dark is the gloom of their vaults, ominous in many are the scored mementoes of the doomed. Fine is the flavour that hangeth around ours, where the only captives are beeswinged bottles and puncheons!

Ivan, with all possible contempt, was cast into a dungeon, and there

left. Every now and then there would be a rustling of chains, and a pitcher of water and an oaten cake or two would be placed within. Then the door would swing to, and the step depart, and Ivan was left to dream of the mountain stream, that in all human probability he was never to see again. His hatred of the Normans was great before, now it was intensified, and he would lie day after day in a species of maddened stupor, strength still in his arms, the will to crush still as dominant as ever, and yet he was as powerless as a child. He lost all reckoning of time, and as the days passed by, and still was brought the water and the oaten cake, it dawned upon his mind that he was to be kept a prisoner for life. In that dark cell he was to feel old age creep over him, the limbs now so strong would weaken; the grey feeling steal over face and head—see he could not, and some day, not far remote, the gaoler would come and find that neither water nor oaten cake would be wanted any more. Better death than this he thought, and he pondered how he should thwart the cruel earl. But the earl did not intend any such a fate. He was simply too much occupied with the king to think of his prisoner. When he did think of him, it was to promise him the gratification of seeing him die. There was gloom and despair in the dungeon; yet above, on terrace and in tapestried apartments, there was both sunshine and happiness. The stern earl had a wife, and she was as beautiful and kind as he was ungainly and harsh.

How comes it that fate links so many of the opposites; that so many Bluebeards have such gentle better halves? The hunchback calls the fair Clarinda his, and the flowing streams of life, even in a casual glance shows age and youth, feebleness and grace, austerity and beauty, mated?

Three fair boys blessed the marriage of the earl and countess, and comelier lads it was difficult to find. They inherited with their mother's gracefulness all the warlike tastes of the sire, and the eldest son in particular already longed like another Norval to enter upon the field of action. He was strongly impressed with the accounts given to him of the prisoner, and one day during the earl's absence accompanied the gaoler to the dungeon, and actually went in and accosted him. Ivan was at first uncouth and distant; but with a second and a third interview became conversational, and was sorry when the surly gaoler—gaolers are always surly—told the young fellow that he must go. Again and again he visited Ivan, and Ivan told him many of his stirring adventures, and related incidents of heroism and strife, worth all the nursery tales.

Happening one day to speak of arrows, and the difficulty he, the young nobleman, found in getting his man to fashion them properly, Ivan volunteered to make some if the materials were brought.

The young heir gladly complied, and sticks, feathers, and points were brought, with a good strong and sharp knife to make them.

The result was a bountiful supply, which answered so admirably that they were soon exhausted in being shot at every imaginable object. The brothers after this became wishful also to get their arrows made by Ivan, and thenceforth the three boys now and then accompanied the gaoler, and as they rarely

visited him without some better food than he was in the habit of having, and occasionally a flask of wine, the sturdy old Welshman began to look more hopefully at his position, and to dream yet of life and liberty. Even the surliness of the gaoler gave way, and it was nothing uncommon for gaoler and prisoner to sit down together and discuss the wine, while the lads were employed under Ivan's skilful directions in making the arrows.

While so employed Ivan heard, and not without a tremor, that the earl was soon expected. In fact preparations were already being made for his return. The gleam of sunshine then was to fade! He knew too well the earl's vindictive and cruel nature, and was satisfied that these pleasant visits would henceforth be forbidden.

Long he brooded over the darkening prospect; plans, schemes without number were thought of only to be dismissed as useless. He was doomed, and must be resigned.

The last day came. On the morrow would come the earl.

The young fellows, more than ever wishful to soothe their good friend, brought with them an unusually bountiful repast, and the gaoler and he, who had become fast friends, were helping themselves liberally, when suddenly a loud blast of the horn was heard, and a distant rumbling of the drawbridge.

"O Lord!" cried the gaoler, jumping to his feet, "it's the earl! Get all these things together while I see. I won't be a moment," and he dashed up the steps like a hare.

Ivan saw the golden opportunity; the key was in the lock!

His plan came like an inspiration. Springing to the door he withdrew the key, and pushing the large door close, locked it from within. Then, while the startled boys looked in amaze and fright, he said:

"Pardon me, sirs. You are good boys, you have been very kind to me, but my life is as dear to me as yours is to you."

"But what do you mean by locking us in?" said the heir.

"Mean this, that either I go out with you, a free man, or the earl your father will find you stretched dead upon this straw and myself by the side of you!"

So saying, with the utmost deliberation, he sharpened the knife which had been given to him to make the arrows, and for the next ten minutes nothing was heard in that lonely cell but the measured rasping of the knife, and the wailing of the younger lads. The valiant heir for a moment looked at the stalwart Ivan, and meditated a rush upon him, and a desperate effort for life, but Ivan flourished his knife, and with a "down boy, I'll not hurt you, unless your father compels me;" so in fear and trembling they waited the issue.

It was not long in coming.

Hurriedly down the steps came the gaoler. They heard him pause, and utter an exclamation at the door, and then push strongly against it.

"Hallo Ivan!" he cried, "open the door quickly, it is the earl."

"I guessed as much," said Ivan.

"Open, then, at once; come, there's a good fellow."

"No, Ranof, I don't open it," rejoined Ivan. "Go and tell the earl so. Say his three boys are here, and that unless I have my freedom I shall first kill the boys and then myself."

"Good God!" said Ranof, "you are joking!"

"Never more serious in my life. I swear it by the Holy Virgin!"

Again and again the gaoler expostulated, but it was useless, and with a doleful face and trembling limbs he betook himself to the earl and told his tale. The earl was furious. The countess fainted in a dead swoon, and leaving her with her tirewoman, and taking men and weapons, Clare hurried to the dungeon.

"Ivan!" he thundered.

"Well," answered Ivan.

"Open the door, and let my boys out, or by the rood I will flay you, and cut you in quarters afterwards."

Ivan didn't say, "first catch your hare." That lively illustration is of modern origin, but he made use of a phrase that was equally expressive, using an adjective as forcibly as a navy. Clare again threatened, and vowed he would have the door at once beaten in.

"Look here, Clare," said Ivan, "I swear solemnly that I will kill your boys, and then destroy myself, unless you promise on the rood, and in presence of your priest, that if I let the boys go unharmed, you will grant me my liberty to go where I choose."

"Monster!" said the earl, "you dare not slay my children."

"As true as there is a God in heaven I will!" exclaimed Ivan.

"Father," cried out one of the boys, "for dear mother's sake let Ivan free."

There was a pause. Within raged Ivan, flourishing his knife, and vowing vengeance; in a corner huddled the boys, and without, on the stone stairs, his eyes dilated with the fierceness of his anger, stood the earl. Could he but burst that door open, and plunge upon his foe. Half his broad lands would he give. Nay, were there a dozen Ivans there instead of one, he would dare them all to save his boys.

"Now, Clare!" shouted Ivan, rasping the knife against the stone wall. "Yes or no?"

Hatred of Ivan, love for his children, were warring together in the earl's mind. What should he do? His men stood aloof. To be near him was death.

Better have stood in a cage with a lion robbed of its young than with Clare.

The whetting of the knife, the plaintive moan of the boys, the murmur of the men as they saw the earl linger doubtfully, were drowned by a loud shriek, and fleet as the wind, her heart in her eyes, her hands stretched forth madly in the fulness of her love, came the countess, and rushing to him, and throwing her arms around him, she cried:

"O Clare, can you hesitate a moment for our dear boys. O save our boys!"

Clare hesitated no more.

"Ivan," he cried, "I grant you your wish, open the door, and if my boys are safe you shall be free."

"It won't do, Clare," said Ivan, "I trust no man's word, and less of all thine. Bring the priest and swear upon the rood!"

A fitful glare again came into the eyes of the earl, but hastening one of the men for the priest, he said :

"You have your wish Ivan, the priest shall be here."

Ivan had not a bad heart. It is doubtful whether at the last moment he would have played the part of murderer, but he hated the earl, and was determined to wound him to the quick. So, even as the priest was hurrying down, there came that solemn whetting of the knife, thrilling every heart, and Ivan used more than ordinary vigour in making the sound sinister and disagreeable.

"The priest is here," cried Clare.

"I am here, Ivan!" said the priest.

"Take his oath, then, father, on the holy rood, that I shall go free and unharmed, and be molested no more if I give him back his boys unhurt."

A few words sufficed to put the priest in full possession of the particulars of the case, and the earl, in a loud voice, repeated the solemn formula after the priest, and with the final words the key turned in the lock, the door swung open, and into their mother's arms rushed her children.

Every man there was deeply moved. Even down the hard features of the earl stole a tear, as with a choking voice he caressed his heir.

Ivan stood apparently unmoved, but his breast heaved as he gazed upon the scene, and thought that once more he should be free.

"You have beaten me," said the earl. "You are free, and let us from this time forth be friends."

"That I will," rejoined Ivan, "I love your boys, and, if only for their sake, will forget the past;" and through the ranks of the men-at-arms, accompanied by the earl, who himself took him over the drawbridge, he went forth, eager only to breathe the pure air and see again the blue sky over the mountains.

That evening a man, bare-headed, was seen strolling along the hill-side, drinking in with ecstasy the mountain ether, and tossing his arms in delight as he bounded on. It was Ivan; no bird hurrying to its mate more glad than he; the hideous dungeon dream was gone, and life and liberty and love were his.

I hope the earl kept his oath.

Nothing is known of the "robber's" after fate, but the imagination may well picture the grizzled mountaineer fighting side by side with the boys grown to manhood on fields we prize as famous. Makers of grim warlike history; hewers out of deathless fame—so let the curtain fall!

Giraldus Cambrensis, who gives the outlines of this tale, relates that in France a very similar case occurred. A nobleman had seized upon his foe, and, having first blinded him, confined him in a dungeon. The poor fellow from long blindness was able to move freely in his cell, and afterwards was permitted to roam about the castle, being, it was thought, harmless. But he cherished revenge, and happening to be left with the only son of his enemy

he caught him in his arms and ran with him to the top of the tower, and there, securing himself against capture, remained. The nobleman with his retainers, seeing him at the top with his son, implored him to come down, but instead he shouted that unless he consented to be blinded, even as he had blinded him, he would jump from the tower with the boy and be dashed to pieces. Failing to move him from his deadly purpose, the nobleman consented, and cried out as if in great agony.

"Where do you feel the pain?" said the blind man.

"In my veins," was the answer.

"False!" cried the other; "you are deceiving me," and prepared to jump.

"Hold!" exclaimed the agonised father, and, pretending, again shouted as if in terrible pain.

"Where do you feel it now?"

"In my heart," was the answer.

"False again," said the blind man; "now I wait no more."

Seeing that his enemy was inexorable, the nobleman at last, in order to save his boy's life, suffered the loss of his eyes, and again screamed, this time with real agony.

"Where do you feel it now?" came the query.

"In my teeth."

"Ah, now I believe you, for that was my experience," and with this he sprang from the tower, carry the hapless boy, and both were killed!

A more hideous revenge, if true—and the monk related some fact as well as fiction—cannot be found in the annals of any country.

THE "SIGNAL BOX" IN THE WELSH MOUNTAINS.



ON one of the Welsh railways, where need not be mentioned for obvious reasons, I came one day to a most secluded telegraph station. It was the hermitage of stations, out of the world, amidst the mountains.

It was near no town, no village, no house top. Bleak wastes of country stretched themselves, roadless and houseless on every side. One wondered why a station was placed there at all, till it was seen that it was a crossing of two important lines. Trains stopped not except at rare intervals, when the signal was against them; the solitary occupant of the box was placed high up, and converse with passing drivers or guards was out of the question. He could only exchange waves of the hand or nod of the head, and thus had become somewhat morose. I christened his station Eddystone, a lighthouse amidst silent mountain waves. He lived alone, and judging from a line run from one short pole to the other, at the back of his box, he did his own washing. Further, he must have lived in his station, for there was no house near, and the recluse accordingly had made it as much like a house as possible. He had bright geraniums and fuchsias in the windows, domestic matters in one corner, and a snug fireplace which was not in use when I entered. As I looked in, there was strong savoury perfume of the weed King James abominated, and the signalman was deep in the perusal of a book.

It was the place of places for one loving solitude. Far below, every now and then, would dash long passenger trains; fashion, business, pleasure, on their way to great cities; the lover hastening to his bride; the couple on their way to spend the honeymoon; the commercial traveller with his samples; the youth venturing on his first essay in life; the wealthy merchant on his way home from his labours to rest and die. The signalman had a fine observatory for speculation, and he used it, for he was of the thoughtful class, and far superior to the ordinary run-of-railway officials. Before I knew him, I noticed many indications of taste and refinement, and on a second visit propounded the question, what had he been.

His answer led the way to the story of his life which I will call—

A CLOSE SHAVE.

Boy and man I have been all my life on the line, now in one part of the country, and then in another. First it was as parcel boy, and occupying

spare time by dusting the office, then as lamp cleaner, and a vacancy occurring in the engine shed by the scalding to death of little Jim, I was put to engine cleaning, and dirty work it was. I can see myself now oily and coaly, and the mere sniff of oil any day will bring back the pictures. I left the engine-shed soon, and was put on as stoker, at first only stoking the yard engine, but gradually advancing until I was allowed to stoke the luggage engine, to be called mate by the driver, and sometimes permitted when shunting to manage the locomotive myself. How intense my pride when I told my poor mother I had driven the engine nearly all the way home! That engine, Briareus she was called, was my delight. Big and massy, of great power, and with the biggest wheels I ever saw, she could do almost anything. I could make her go as softly as a bird, and drive her up to the trucks as tenderly as if she was a thing a child might play with; and then wouldn't she fly with all her steam on! and to her pulling power there was no limit. Bit by bit, from assisting my mate, I got to drive short journeys with the "goods," and it was not long before Briareus came into my own hands, and I was told by the station-master that the locomotive superintendent had named me as her driver.

There was a charm to me in driving, such as even the most frequent passenger knows nothing about. You—clerks, professionals, gentry—who look out at the flying landscape have no idea of the delight, the excitement, some drivers feel. Going with the hounds is nothing to it; riding a race tameness in comparison. Mounted on Briareus, with a clear run of twenty miles before, and a little time to make up, oh the ecstacy, the delight! There is no bounding of the iron steed, but a glide, marvellous in its swiftness; and with an accompaniment of a measured roar more grateful to the ears of an old driver than any music in the world. With hair flying wildly, and eyes bright, and teeth set, you hold on to the rail as you sweep on, no time given for thought, to dream of the comfort and luxury even in villa or mansion; all is a whirl, a maze, you yourself in a species of delirium, till some prominent landmark tells it is time to slacken speed, and then you gradually sober down, and think of what is before you.

I finished my "goods" life without any accident of account, and was in turn put on a "passenger," and eventually was a "regular." I can look back now to ten years of engine life; regular, special excursions—what a throng they are to think of, what a variety of incident has been passed through, what happiness seen, what sorrow noted. I have "driven" thousands of wedding couples; many and many a time has a coffin and its occupant been in my horse box. Why don't they put on a funeral car? was an exclamation in my time, and I believe it is still a want unsupplied.

Then the excursions! What rounds of jollity. How anxious the excursionists were to treat guards and driver, and make them as merry as themselves. It is a thoughtless habit, and I may as well say what the newspapers have never mentioned, that to this habit many an accident has been due.

The great freedom from accident is mostly owing to punctuality, and this virtue is generally disregarded by excursions.

I shall never forget one summer having a most narrow escape. I had been down the coast with an excursion train from the Welsh borders, and it was a splendid day. There was a band in the train, and what with the roar of the train, and the singing, shouting, and laughter of the people, and the noise of the brass band, there never was such a wild medley. Giles, ancient and turnip-hoeing, leant upon his hoe and watched us out of sight; little children stood expectant hand in hand, hurrahing as we went by, and every house near turned out its inmates to look and wonder.

We reached the coast, with several hours' time to spend by the sea, and it was passed in revelry. The excursionists were mostly young men and women, and dancing and singing, with a good deal of drinking formed the amusements. Well, perhaps even I had a drop to much, but when the time came for starting I felt sober enough for any duty! It was a full half hour after the proper time. One of the guards was done up completely with the trouble he had been to, and the extra quantity of beer taken, and slept, I found afterwards, all the way, a thing not unfrequently done on most lines to my knowledge; but then the great "care taker" of a train, and this I say, perhaps, who ought not to say it, is the driver. Well, we started. There was only one place I was afraid of, and that was C—— crossing, which then, but not now, had facing points. By losing my half hour I should reach this place at the same time, or very close to it, as the N—— express, and the difficulty on my mind was whether to put on at full steam and pass before it was due, or drive up to the crossing and wait. It was such a ticklish place. You came upon it suddenly around a corner, and if you didn't keep a good look out for signals there would have to be a sudden pull up, the guards would grumble, old gentlemen swear, and complaints be made to the directors or to the *Times*. Within a couple of miles of the place I found by my watch that I should have plenty of time to pass, and so put on full steam. "Didn't we fly!" said my mate, as we were getting closer. "George I think I hear the express, hadn't we better pull up?" "No, no," I said, "that is the 'goods' on the other line." At very instant the pipe I was smoking went out, and I turned to the corner where we kept such things side by side with our cans. It wasn't the act of a moment, but it is on these little acts, I have heard, most great results hang. I looked up, and glaring in my face like a demon was the danger signal, while at the same moment I heard the measured roll of the express, with only fifty or a hundred yards to run. I knew it was madness to slacken speed. My only hope was in a dash, and the dash was made. I saw a maze of red and green signals, a frantic signalman, and a long line of light, which I knew to be the approaching express; but faster than the wind, with a storm howl drowning every other sound, we tore over the crossing, and thank God—I thank him to this day—escaped. We reached our journey's end in safety, but the buffer and end lamp of my last coach were missing. It was the cleanest shave I ever knew, and could only be accounted for by the great speed at which we were both going.

There was a row of course, and I was brought up before the directors, but

the whole thing was kept very private, and, having a good character to fall back upon, was reinstated, and kept to my berth for years, until something happened which ended my career as an engine-driver for ever.

What that something was, and the calamity which sent my friend to his Eddystone signal-box or telegraph station, I shall relate again.

THE GIRL AT THE "FOX."



ROSY-CHEEKED was Mary Walters, the bustling maid of all work at the "Fox," a small wayside public-house within less than ten miles of Pontypridd. The "Fox" was the resort of farmers and travellers, with an occasional sprinkling of colliers working about the Nelson, and, added to those, the blacksmith, carpenter, and other village notabilities of the place where stood the "Fox."

The landlady of the "Fox" was in the flesh, and substantially so. She stood five feet five in her boots, and was stout in proportion. The landlord slept quietly, at last, gossips said. He had had a bad time of it, and what with having little else to do but taste his liquors and smoke his pipe, it was not many years before that very ordinary occurrence in public-house annals, the rubbing out of the man's name and the substitution of the woman's on the sign, took place, and he being departed, Jane Gwyllim Rees reigned in his stead.

It has often been a matter of speculation to visitors that so many landlady's should keep public-houses, not but that as a rule, even when the landlord is alive, the landlady seems to exert more authority, and to regard her husband more in the light of an able-bodied man servant in the day, and to amuse his customers at night, and the reason clearly is, as I have suggested that his occupation is too sedentary, and his thirst too great.

The landlady of the "Fox" being an expansive woman, was too unwieldy for much work, and she generally contrived to seat herself all the afternoon in the little bar, sewing or knitting, it is true, and chatting overmuch; but the genuine work of the house, together with a good deal of the waiting, was left to Mary.

Mary was a cheerful, good-tempered girl, with a smile and a pleasant word for everyone; but if she had a cherry cheek she had also a strong arm, and daring must the young collier be who thought to snatch a kiss as she brought in the flowing pint.

Mary had many admirers. There was Will the runner, who had won many a race in the neighbourhood of Quakers' Yard, and who, when he was not at work, which was not very often, was either running, or drinking at the "Fox." Being so often there, and figuring repeatedly as the hero of the day, it was no wonder he thought everybody should admire him, and why not also Mary? But Mary didn't. She saw a drunken, bandy-legged little fellow—keen observers are women; never taken in by the heroics—and though she was pleasant with Will, she was nothing more, and every approach to something warmer than acquaintance was at once repelled.

Next to Will in the ranks of admirers was John Thomas, the carpenter, a man who always seemed to wash with the essence of spruce pine; a handy workman, red of whisker, but quarrelsome in his cups, and reputed to have come from the north.

He and Will, and indeed others of the frequent visitors, frequently fell out when the pints went around too quickly, and many had been the fight arranged and carried out in the copse by the "Caiach," but John Thomas never figured in one of them. He always contrived to get out of a positive row, was chicken-hearted, some said; too much of a sneak, said another.

The "Fox" was the largest house in the outskirts of the village, very roomy, with a pine end specially adapted for ball playing, which was one of the institutions at the "Fox," and many a good game for a round sum had been fought, especially in the days of the departed landlord, who liked a ball match, as then he drew no end of barrels.

Quiet the house in the morning time, after Mary had washed the front, and occasionally cleaned the windows; and cozy it looked in its clean, whitewashed covering, with the old hound, a relic of Dr. Thomas, of the Merthyr Cwrt, stretched in front of the pavement, and a boy or two toddling about. In the summer mornings a quieter place could not be found, the murmur of the Taff could be heard near, but rarely went by cart or gig, as the rail, then only in the tenth year or so of its age, monopolised all.

Occasionally a yellow caravan, the vanguard of a menagerie, brought the hamlet out, and with the procession that followed gave subject for conversation for a month. Had a philosopher dwelt near the "Fox" he would have had fine scope for reflection. There he would have seen the circus men and women, clowns and ring masters in very so-so garb, and with anything but a pleased expression of face, journeying by, the women haggling, the men sour, clowns moody to a degree. A few miles above, on the outskirts of the large town, presto! gilt, finery and paint, clowns merry, ladies beautiful and smiling, acrobats—types some of Adonis and others of Hercules. "Mad world, my masters!" Yes, and a crafty one too.

There, on this same highway, between two large towns, the philosophic might have studied humanity well; the gipsy remnant of an old race—the tinker, the broken-down "tradesman," something, once woman with a ripple in her laugh and honesty in her eyes, shambling by in rags and infirmity. Then Jack's, genuine salts going to join ship, and "padding it," having spent

all on their land cruise, and all within a few hundred yards of the Taff Vale line. That word recalls me to my track, and the railway also reminds me that amongst the lovers of Mary Walters was the stoker of one of the trains, whose name shall be William George.

William was in a fair way to take that distinguished position on the Taff Vale line, the driver, which is the grand aim in view, the highest object of ambition to the humblest engine cleaner. He was round of face, and ruddy from the constant fighting against the stiff breezes that blew down from the Beacons. He was active in gait, happy in manner, knew when to take a glass and when to stop, and being free and easy in his manner was just the man to take the fancy of such a girl as Mary Walters. In his "off" time he generally found his way to the "Fox," and it soon became known that he stood well in the opinion of Mary. John Thomas saw this as soon as anyone, and putting all his wits together, and making himself as presentable as possible, he made a grand effort before it was too late, and, catching Mary alone in the brewery, told his love and begged her to accept him. He went home that night in a condition which, however favourable to the character of the strong beer of the "Fox," was not calculated to improve his reputation at the house where he lodged. John, in fact, was drunk, and this was all owing to his desperation in having been very kindly but very firmly refused by Mary, who told him "that she couldn't have thought of him at all as a husband, even if William George had not had her promise the day before." William George from that day was the enemy, the villain, the destroyer of his happiness. If he used the axe it was viciously, as if it were against William George's head. If he took the plane it was with the thought of how he should like to use it on William George's round body, and reduce him as he did his plank. When he met William the pleasant greeting of the stoker was taken as an insult and received with a frown. In fact, if John could have summoned up sufficient courage he would have liked nothing better than to thrash him within an inch of his life, but as he had not the courage, he daily slaughtered imaginary William George's, and so vented his anger that way. He still kept going to the "Fox," and one evening was noticed as showing a great deal of interest in a tale that William was telling about a mineral train having been thrown off the road on the Taff Vale line by a sleeper fixed to a crossing. It seemed to have been a narrow shave, and William expressed the great delight he should have in punching the head of the fellow who did it.

The place where it happened was several miles from the "Fox," and the night had been very wet and stormy. There was no clue to the scoundrel, but it was a singular fact that on the night it happened John came home even later than usual, very sober, but wet through. He had fallen down, too, for his jacket was covered with red mire, and red mire was plentiful enough on the side of the railway.

A week or two after this little adventure, for William George was on the mineral train, the round-faced stoker said that he had got a step at last. He told this beamingly in the "Fox," and stood glasses round. He had been put

on the "passenger's" as stoker, and very soon he should drive; Mr. Fisher had said as much. On Wednesday, he added, he should stoke the last train up, and his mate would soon let him get his hand in for driving. John Thomas went home drunk again that night, and had warning; his landlady couldn't stand it any longer.

Wednesday evening came. It was a beautiful evening in autumn, and in the neighbourhood of 'Quaker's Yard autumn revels, if anywhere in the valley, in the glory of her tints and the softened melody of her birds. The white-washed farms on the distant mountains, suffused with the radiance of the setting sun; the far echoing cry of the shepherd to his dog; the soothing hush of old Taff hastening down with its burden of song to the sea—What a picture of beauty and repose as one by one the tints deepen, and the veil of night falls softly over all!

Had our philosopher been there at such a time he would have said:—Surely the harmony and peace of nature must act upon all humanity in its scope, and nothing but peaceful hearts and contented minds be found. But had he been there he would have seen a man cautiously peering up and down the line at a curve where there was no signal-box in sight. Looking more closely he would have seen the stranger breaking down one of the young ash trees, and with a strong knife cutting away hastily at one end. What was he doing? Hush! There was a whistle in the distance, a mineral train came in sight, and he hurriedly concealed himself. Then when out of sight he again came from his cover, and hacked away until he had got something like a point to the limb of the tree. This done he selected a rail on the side nearest to the river, and with great strength and determination prized it up from its bed; then, pitching it down the bank, he clambered again to the cover, but not hide. He lay there a moment or two, and then, like a hunted hound, worked his way through the copse, and, as the night was far advanced, entered his lodgings and soon went to bed.

It was market day, and the last passenger train was full. The vendor of sweets, the hatter, the stocking seller, the dealer in trinkets and earthenware, and the bookseller who had been down to the market town to give it its weekly intellectual promptings was there too, and in every carriage there was pleasant chat as the train swept up the valley with a strong grip on the rail.

William George was stoking, and as he stoked he thought of Mary and of the time when he might fairly claim her promise and begin his happy married life. Strongly and swiftly glided the train up the valley, passing through the gloaming with the resistless and measured force of strength and power, its steam escaping with regular sound, like the pulses of an iron heart. Then, all unexpectedly, the engine gave a swerve to the right, in a moment the alarm whistle was blown for the brakes, and William George and the driver did their utmost; but thud, thud went carriage against carriage, and, amidst the shrill warning of the whistle, the screams of the affrighted passengers, over went the engine upon its side, and a scene of dire confusion

and terror was substituted for the pleasant journeying of a few minutes before. Happily no life was lost, though bruises and bleedings were plentiful. William George was shaken with the rest, but not seriously, and all were congratulating themselves on the narrow escape from destruction when a loud cry was heard from the guard. He had made a discovery. The rail nearest to the river had been taken up, and this was the cause of the accident! Fortunately the miscreant was not a scientific man. The deed was done at a curve, and had the inner rail been taken up instead of the outer a complete wreck must have followed. The discovery of the guard was the signal for an outburst of feeling, and if the villain could then have been caught summary vengeance would have followed. As it was, messengers were sent to town for aid, and it was only far in the night when the wearied passengers reached home.

This second outrage caused a great deal of gossip, and when William George appeared at the "Fox" with a black eye he was regarded as an hero, and his narration was listened to with rapt attention. In Mary's eyes he was a better man than ever, and even the black eye was a dignity.

Two or three days after the occurrence William George was sitting at home after his work, when he was told that he was wanted. Some gentleman wished to see him in private. William's red face became more red as he wondered what was the matter, but he quickly arose and went to the door, where a tall, erect-looking gentleman stood, who asked him if his name was William George. William told him it was, and asked the stranger into the little parlour, while the rest of the household wondered what was the matter. Seating himself, the stranger said:

"I am a detective, and have been instructed to fish out if possible the fellow or fellows who have been doing mischief on the line."

William expressed himself as pleased.

"Now," said the detective, "it's strange that you were on both engines. first with the mineral and secondly with the passenger train."

Yes, William was.

"Have you any suspicions as to the criminal?"

No, William had not the least idea.

"Is there anyone who is an enemy of yours?"

No, William didn't think he had one in the world.

"Now, for instance, continued the detective, "you have been promoted lately, have you stepped over anybody's head?"

"No."

The detective looked puzzled. "Are you married?" he said quickly turning his head around to William.

"No," rejoined William with an uncommonly red face as he thought of Mary, "but I hope to be before long."

"Ha, you are in love, then?"

"Yes, and the day almost as good as fixed."

"Now pardon me," continued the detective, "of course I have no wish to pry into your domestic affairs, but are you the only lover the young lady had?"

"Oh, no," said William with a laugh, "I believe she had lots, but I cut them out."

"Was anyone in particular," said the detective, "that you cut out; anyone, now, very spoony, who fell wild because he failed and you succeeded?"

"Well," said William, a sudden light coming athwart his face, "there was one, John Thomas, the carpenter, of——, he did feel, I believe, and if looks could kill I should have been dead long ago."

"Where this John Thomas live?" was the next query, and being directed to the house the detective left, first strongly impressing upon William's attention the necessity of being as "mum as a mouse"

John Thomas, as red of eyes as of whiskers, and with a white anxious looking face, was told in the course of a quarter of an hour that a gentleman wanted to see him. John was engaged at his dinner in the corner of the room, wherein the landlady washed and children played about on the floor, the breadwinner, a sturdy collier, being then at his labours. John, flurried, put down his knife, and went to the door, where stood the stranger, who, on hearing that his name was John Thomas, eyed him with a glance so keen and investigating that John didn't like it.

"I want to see you privately," said the stranger.

John didn't know where to take him. "There was no other room downstairs."

"You have a bedroom, I suppose?" was the query.

"Yes, he had."

"That will do," was the rejoinder, and up both went.

"Now," said the stranger, "Where were you on such a night? I am a police-officer."

John, who felt uncomfortable at first, now waxed doubly so, and the stranger, as he saw the nervous guilty look, began to think he was on the right track.

John, in reply, said that he "was home, never left the house, and he could call witnesses in proof."

"Well," replied the stranger, "we'll see into that. Someone is accused of throwing the Taff Vale engine off the line, and I am sure you will aid in catching the parties."

John professed his great willingness to do so, and felt better.

"Got a knife?" said the detective, taking out an ordinary black lead pencil. John coolly handed him the needed article, and the detective leisurely opened, not the small, but the large blade. In an instant came back all John's terrors, especially when the stranger held it up to the light in keen scrutiny.

"That— that knife," said John, stuttering in haste, "is not the one I carry. I had had that knife in my—my box till to-day!"

"Oh," said the detective. "I am afraid, John Thomas, you are telling lies. The stick that tore up the rail from its bed was cut with a knife that had a notch on the blade. This knife has got a notch. The attempt was made by someone who had a spite against William George. You have a spite against

William George, because Mary Walters preferred him to you. Come, now," said the detective. "Your little game is up, or I am a——"

And John, with a curse, admitted it was, and shortly after left the house in custody.

"No, he didn't want to lock his box, or to do anything. They might hang him now. He had been jilted for a pudding-headed fellow, and as he could not have the girl, didn't care what became of him."

In due course the trial came on. John pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to a term of penal servitude, which he took without a murmur, and when it was ended came back, once only, but not to live again in the old valley of the Taff. In the North Walian town, as a grey-headed carpenter, reputed well off, with a wife and children, no one would recognise the red-whiskered John who was transported years, aye, years ago. "And what of Mary and William George?" The course of true love is rarely smooth. The obliging novelist would wind up the tale with the marriage of the two, and possibly give a parting sketch at rosy cheeked reminders of Mary and George.

I am very sorry that I cannot oblige you, lady readers. William George was terribly smitten by an "uncommonly pretty girl which got out at the junction," and so fell off in his visits to the "Fox" that Mary first rebuked and then discarded him, and, what was more, would have nothing to do with Will, the runner, but kept at her labours as pleasant as ever, as bustling as ever, apt at times in her bedroom to sigh and "sniff" audibly, and was caught crying by her good-hearted mistress more than once.

People said at length she would never be married, but Mary had a letter one day that made her start, and soon after a visitor called, but not at the "Fox."

Singularly, and following closely on letter and visitor, Mary gave the usual month's notice, and, do what her mistress would, nothing could induce Mary to stay. When she left, the "Fox" seemed to lose its individuality, to contract itself, to look meaner, and never again was it looked upon with the same warmth as before, though the beer was as good, and the landlady as jolly.

"And what became of Mary?" This I cannot state, but the industrious wife of the carpenter in a North Walian town, which is well-to-do in the world, is uncommonly like the old servant girl of the "Fox," with fifteen years added to her age. If she is really Mary Walters she is happy, and her husband's love is unfading. Her name is Mary. His is John, and "John Thomas, carpenter and builder" is on the sign.

THE STRANGE MARK ON THE HAND.

A WELSH COUNTRY TALE.



FROM the same ministerial friend to which I have been indebted for one or two well-known tales, notably the "Wandering Jew," and the "Farmer's Magic," I received, some years ago, the outlines of the following, which, in the parlance of the novelist, would be described as thrilling. My readers may receive it with some distrust; especially the practical and hard-headed ones; but if they had seen the grave face of the minister who told the tale, their view might have been shaken; at all events, they would give him the credit of saying that which he believed to be true.

With this prelude I will begin my story, the scene of which was laid in a pleasant rural district on the borders of Pembrokeshire.

Jenny Thomas was one of the servants in the household of Squire ———. In all the girls on the establishment were four in number, and as they were all smart and passably good-looking, three of the girls had most devoted sweethearts, in the form of country swains, but Jenny, most singularly, so everyone thought who did not know her well, had no sweetheart. Sarah, Mary, and Betsy, had their occasional trips to the fair, their Sundays out, their mysterious whisperings, at back doors, with the respective John, Thomas, and William; and yet no one saw Jenny with a lover at the fair, church, or chapel, walk or anywhere else.

"She is too proud," said neighbours; "look's above us," said the coachman, who had made overtures, and had been "freezed," as he said; while as for the young gardener, "cauliflower" they called him, he one day presuming to present her with the first June rose, and to make a pretty compliment at the time, was "determined from that time forth, to know first who he gave his presents too, and not to fine starchy misses, who thought everybody dirt but themselves!"

The squire's wife liked Jenny, and kept her in attendance upon herself, and there is no doubt that the constant gazing into looking-glasses, handling jewellery, and resorting to the thousand little ways ladyfolk have to make themselves charming, had insensibly imbued Jenny with higher notions of

herself than her position in life warranted. Thus, when dressing her mistress's hair, she saw before her a very plain face, thoroughly angular, and bad as to complexion, while over the said face there shone her own regular features, dimples and roses, and Jenny said to herself, often and often again, that by rights the one doing the hair should be sitting in the chair, and the one sitting a-dressing the hair instead." But the good lady, who saw only a pleasant, simpering face, never imagined that there was any treason hidden in the respectful tones, and, as I have said, she liked her, and wondered, too, that one of the young farmers, or upper male servants in neighbouring mansions, did not make up to Jenny and woo her.

The squire's residence was like many in that party of country, half mansion, half farm, and one of the great treats of the household in the summer time was to go out hay-making. It was on such an occasion that Jenny met with an adventure, which had a great effect upon her future life. One of her fellow-servants, Betsy, and herself had followed the wain of hay into the yard, and Betsy's sweetheart had just left both with a promise to return on the morrow, and show his intended what he had purchased, the said purchase being nothing more or less than the ring, as Betsy blushingly admitted; and as she said this, she added, "I do wish Jenny, I could see you take up with somebody."

"Not with a farmer," rejoined Jenny, with some starchness in her manner. "I will never marry anyone but a gentleman, who can keep me without working, for I would rather have old Nick than a fellow who would make me slave all day!"

"O fie," cried Betsy with an alarmed face, running away at the same time, and leaving Jenny alone.

It was a beautiful summer's eve, just the one when the first tints of autumn begin to appear, presagers of the sunset of Nature. There was a dreamy stillness in the air, and the perfume of the new made hay was deliciously fragrant.

"It's a fine evening ma'am," said a voice behind, and turning round, rather startled, Jenny saw, as she told her friends afterwards, such a handsome young man, quite the gentleman.

She replied that it was, and a conversation ensued, which ended in the stranger asking her, very courteously, if he should see her, the next evening at the same place. She consented, and all the next day she was in a flutter of expectation, and more than once her mistress had to rebuke her for some omission or other, which Jenny bore with an ill grace, audibly saying,

"That the time would come, perhaps, when she would have someone to attend upon her."

The evening came at length, and, having an hour given to her, Jenny was in waiting when the stranger came, and delighted was she to find that if possible he was more handsome than he had appeared at the first interview. His bearing was respectful and tender, and the issue of the walk that took place was the appointment of another evening in the following week, which

was duly kept, and the acquaintance thus strangely begun ripened into a mutual attachment.

He was a naval officer, he told her, and his vessel was then at Milford ; but he had come up into the country to recruit his health, which had been indifferent, and now he must soon rejoin his ship.

But he gave her to understand that his parents were rich, and after another cruise he should sell out and settle down, and then he would ask her to be his wife.

She was in ecstasies ! The girls could scarcely endure her constant descriptions of her handsome lover ; what a gentleman he was ; how fortunate she had been ; and the plebeian John and Thomas had rather a hard time of it in retaining their place in the girl's affections, for if Jenny could pick up such a prize why not they ?

One more meeting took place, and then, with a solemn promise exacted from her that she would be his on a certain day, they parted, and very tearfully and sad did Jenny return home. It was a difficult thing to fall back into the old rut after summer evening walks and roamings. As easy for the schoolboy to return from holiday to school and take to his hard tasks, as for Jenny to go through the light, but still tedious drudgery, with the recollection of the admiration she had received in the company of her handsome lover. Her mistress felt that Jenny's services would soon become worthless to her, and was sorry to hear that in six month's time her maid would leave for a house of her own,

One evening when Betsy and Jenny were sitting together by the kitchen fire, and the other girls were out, Jenny treated her friend with the fullest possible description both of her admirer and his position in life.

His name was George Wilding, she said, and such were his means that he would be enabled to maintain a house quite equal to the one they were now sitting in, "and you will see, Betsy, that before another year comes round I shall have a maid to wait upon me the same as I am now, and oh, Betsy," continued Jenny, "when he wished me goodbye he made me take such a solemn promise to be his, and he squeezed my hand so hard that it seemed to burn for hours after ; and do you know," she said, showing her hand at the same time, "I noticed this mark upon it, and do what I will it won't rub out !"

Betsy wonderingly looked at the hand, and sure enough on the palm was a distinct impression of a finger, as if burned into the flesh.

"Whatever can it be ?" cried Betsy.

"O something of his fun," was the reply. "He had put something on his hand that would leave a mark, and you know he has been in no end of foreign countries, so it's something he learned abroad amongst the foreigners."

Betsy was a shrewd girl, and yet not divested of superstition. She didn't like it.

"Do you know, Jenny, that I have had my doubts about your lover ? Do you recollect what you said the evening that I ran away from you, and it was directly after that you told us he looked over the gate and spoke to you."

"Tush, nonsense," cried Jenny, "the idea of the thing. What! do you think that my George is the old gentleman?"

"Well," said Betsy with a laugh, "he doesn't look like him, but it's singular, his coming so suddenly, and though there were people in the field, no one saw him before."

Jenny was of high-strung nerves, and this reminder of Betsy, and the unaccountable mark on her hand, which for the last few days she had been trying to wash away, made her fidgetty, and she determined she would go into the town on the Saturday, and call at the druggist to see what the mark was. The Saturday came, and she called at the one and only druggist, where the blue, and green, and red bottles shone with cabalistic figures thereon, and when she stated her wants the sage old tradesman took her hand in his, and examined it with considerable attention.

"This cannot be washed out," he said, "it may wear out; it's a burn?"

She assured the druggist that she had not touched anything that would burn her. But he was positive she had, though possibly did not notice it the time, and so with sorry comfort Jenny went home. Her lover had told her that he had lodged at a farmhouse a few miles away from the squire's, and getting an hour or two's absence she went there to see if he had gone, and whether he had told them the time he was coming back. She was certain of the farm, as they had passed near it upon one of their sweethearting walks, and conceive her surprise when she was told that no gentleman had stopped there.

"Were they quite certain?"

"As certain as you are here, miss."

She was in amazement. There was no other farmhouse within half a mile. She walked outside and looked around. There was the path in the fields, there the high stile over which he had lifted her. She could not be mistaken, and again she returned and asked them if they had not made a mistake.

"His name was George, Mr. George Wilding, he was a naval officer, and he was here for the benefit of his health, having come up from Milford."

The old farmer looked at his wife, and the wife looked back again at him, with that masonic intelligence which exists between married couples, and the interpretation of it was "The girl is mad!" Again and again they assured her that no one had lived, or called at, or lodged in, their farm for years, and so in sad trouble she took her homeward way. He had deceived her, that was certain. He had represented himself as living at the farm, and he had not lived there. If he told her falsely in one case so he might in another. She had been deceived. And who was he then?

Worked up to a positive fever the poor girl sought her bed, and in the morning when the bell rang Jenny was too ill to appear. The good mistress came and saw her, and administered some homely remedy of herbs, but the next day she was worse. The doctor was sent for, and the symptoms puzzled him. Still he prescribed, and left, and day after day visited her without seeing any change for the better.

"This disorder," he said to the squire, after one of his visits, "is beyond

my cure. It is one of the mind. She has something on her mind. Has she any relations?"

No, they knew of none. She was an orphan.

"Better send for the vicar," said the doctor, "let him speak to her, and try and see what is preying upon her mind."

So they sent for the vicar, and he came, and went away as wise as when he came. Jenny raved deliriously at times about her handsome lover, about her promise to be his, and would shriek convulsively as she held up her hand with the mark, still as distinctly visible as on the day it was impressed.

After a while she rallied slightly, and there seemed a prospect of recovery, but the progress was very slow, and at no time was she able to leave her bed. Five months had passed, and as the period of her lover's return to claim her came near the delirium and all the worst features of the malady returned. One lucid interval she had, and in that she told the good clergyman all. "She had given her soul away!"

Never before had the worthy man been so perplexed. He sought the advice of a leading dissenting minister in the parish when he found that Jenny had for a long time attended his chapel, and together they discussed and cogitated.

I will tell the sequel in the words of the narrator: The day for Wilding's return was now close at hand. The day came, and it was a beautiful autumnal day. Jenny had been raving all night and throughout the morning. As the evening drew near the vicar and the minister sat by the bedside. They had prayed long and often. She seemed to sleep. Nature too was at rest, and the soft hush of river and leaf came in through the open window. The sky was without a cloud. In the landing the servants stood occasionally, mutely listening, while the squire and his wife sat in the dining-room below, sick at heart with the long illness, and fearful as to what it all portended.

Suddenly in the far west there was heard a sound as of distant thunder. Jenny caught the sound almost as soon as any of them, and sitting up in bed cried "He is coming, he is coming. O save me, save me!" Down knelt the vicar and the minister, and as the thunder roll increased in volume so in fervent expression the prayer of the minister increased in volume, the vicar loudly saying Amen at every sentence of the earnest supplication. Nearer still came the roll. It was like a chariot dashing through the corridor, and the awe-struck spectators seemed to hear the rush of mighty wings as the lightning flashed and the loud artillery of heaven revelled overhead.

Undismayed the vicar took up the thread of beseechment. While the war of nature seemed at its height, and his prayer the most impressive, the half-maddened sufferer suddenly ceased her moanings; the light of peace and happiness replaced the terror-stricken gaze, the artillery died away, the lightnings lit no more the scene with their awful lustre, and sinking calmly back Jenny fell into a sleep as tranquil and peaceful as that of a child!

Awe-struck and overwhelmed with what all had witnessed, one by one the strangers left the house, but the family did not retire to bed that night, and

it was a long time before the old routine of life was resumed. Jenny from that day recovered apace. "It was a bad fever, accompanied with delirium," they said. Gossips shook their heads and talked.

But this is certain that the handsome lover came no more, and twenty years ago, in another county, might have been seen a matronly woman with many an olive branch around her, in whose happy features some resemblance to the Jenny of old might be traced. She had married well. She was very happy. To the close observer there might perhaps be seen a slight shadow lurking in the eyes as of some past suffering, and there were more grey hairs than her age warranted. Still her laugh was a merry one, and the jolly butler who was her husband never saw any difference in his wife to ordinary women, only that she never liked the dark, and trembled if any reference was ever made to the "old gentleman."

WILLIAM JONES AND THE MONMOUTH ALMSHOUSES.



HERE is a story in connection with the "foundation" of Monmouth Alms-houses, which has a better basis than most of the current legends, and one might as well impeach the accuracy of more sacred things in the good town of Monmouth than doubt the wonderful career of William Jones.

His first appearance in public life was as boots at one of the hotels in Monmouth, and, as he was known as Wild Will, it may be inferred that he was not the most sedate chapel or church going lad in the world. In his capacity as boots he had to assist the country gentry when they drove in on market day, to busy himself as much with old-fashioned gigs, dog-carts, and horses as upon week days with the luggage of commercials. It was during one of these market days, and his busiest moments, that Will lost his heart. A cosy freeholder, ample of land and chin, and whose broad lands were well typed by the expansive chest, drove in, accompanied by the pet of his household, one Ellen Vaughan. She was the fairest maid he had ever seen, and her bright eyes shot such a shower of love's artillery, even accidentally, in the direction of poor Jones, that for the first time in his life he wished himself better than a boots. His most assiduous attention upon Ellen and her father

won their notice and thanks, but neither thought for a moment of him but as a very civil fellow, and Jones in the course of a few market days came to the same conclusion, and in his disgust threw up his berth. It was done so suddenly that it left him with little means to go away with, so he made a slight raid upon the traders, getting, in particular, a pair of good boots from a Mr. King, and with these literally, as well as metaphorically, walked away, and was seen no more. Will was a character, and the disappearance of a character in a town is always a public event. The town crier, the postman, the seedy man who has had a legal training, but has succumbed to the attractions of gin, and now ekes out a living by accountancy; the auctioneer, the bill-poster, the boots, all these have a public post and significance—are part of the public property, and when they go, as Will went, or to the grave, a void is created which takes a generation to fill.

It has always been a wonder to us where characters come from, even as evermore a mystery lurks as to where they go. We cannot conceive the growth of a character in the ordinary sense of infantile development—the strange elaboration of his eccentricity by gradual processes. He seems made for the post by sudden operation, and when he dies, or disappears, the one who fills the vacancy is always regarded by his generation as a substitute for the time being only. What a commotion there was in the town when Will was missing! His familiar form was no longer to be seen. The coachman, as he drove in, was as surprised not to see Will as he would have been had the inn itself disappeared. He looked down from his eminence, ensconced in a coat of many capes, and asked for Will; the postman carried the news of Will's disappearance to the remotest inglenook; the farmers on market days, the butchers talked of Will, and what a time there was for days amongst servant girls and housemaids out of the hotel and in! But there is a limit to the life of wonder, and the more burly and bigger it is the sooner, mushroom like, does it fade. Will was forgotten. His parents were poor people living at the village of Newland, and in the course of time they died, and if any news had been received from Will there was no one to communicate it to the good folks of Monmouth. Tardily to some, rapidly to the aging, passed the years, and only amongst a few of the elders was there any recollection retained of the good looking, vigorous young fellow who, thirty years ago, had made his exodus from Monmouth town.

Monmouth was changed somewhat. It still retained a good deal of its old-fashioned character, but some buildings had succumbed to the years, and new erections, like new men and new signs, were to be seen here and there. Still less were the changes in the older-fashioned and quaint village. The cottage where Will was born was there, the garden where the old man dug his potatoes in the evening time; and even the little bench whereon he sat when his work was done, and smoked his pipe, and watched the sunset, thinking not unfrequently of his absent boy, with tearful eyes,—that, too, was there; but he was not; nor was the old dame; and the little village graveyard showed no hoary tombstone, only a little wattled mound where both slept in peace.

The cottage was occupied by strangers ; a strange woman bustled about the house , and youthful beings—one perhaps to become a future boots, to have his annals, and live in quietude or disappear as Will did—toddled about the house, waves of life following in the track of those that had gone before. To the door, before which grew two large trees that once were slips planted by Old Jones, came a poor, grey, and ragged man, and under the shadow of the trees sat wearily down. It was a hot day, and the shade was grateful, but the dame in the cottage did not care to have an intruder, and bustled out hastily and asked, in a metallic, unsympathetic voice, what he wanted. “ Only rest and cup of water ” said the stranger. “ I am tired and old.” She “ couldn’t help that, and had no time to give water to beggars.” “ Who lives here now ? ” said the old man. “ What was that to him ? ” “ I once lived here myself.” She “ didn’t care about that,” and the virago, so utterly unlike the cottagers of the Welsh mountains, actually gave her dog a signal, and the stranger was obliged to march away.

The beggar was no less a person than the missing boots, poor Will Jones. Very wroth with the woman, he next sought the familiar bench under the tree that was shade and sign for the alehouse frequenters, the relic of the “ bush ” that in scriptural days announced the wine that was to be had within. But here again, when the landlord found that Will simply wanted rest, and not ale, he was driven away. The landlord, however, was a little better than the woman, for he told Will to go to the poor-house if he had no money, and see the overseer, who might get him into the union. So to the overseer he went, and made his petition. He was William Jones, a native of Newland, and thirty years before he had left Monmouth where he had lived for years as boots ; that now he was returned, ragged and penniless, to end his days, only craving a little support until he could be buried in same grave yard where his father and mother lay. Will was brought up before the guardians by the kindly-disposed overseer, and they sat in judgment. Grave men, to whom the affairs of the parish were of State magnitude, and who one day dispensed justice on the man who abstracted a cabbage from the garden by the wayside, and the next mercy to the luckless being who could not get along in the world.

It was a solemn place that of the boardroom. The clerk, jocose at nights in the “ Holly Bush,” spoke there with a hushed voice ; the constable dogmatic, tyrannic, terror of children and of evil-doers was there another being, deferential, bland ; and when the Fates, on the bench or in the guardians’ chair, joked and made small puns and witticisms, they were all accepted as of rarest ring, and the indulgence to laugh heartily taken as a great condescension. Before these stood poor Will, and once again his case was related. The Fates glanced at poor Will with suspicion, and heard his tale with doubt. It might be true. One had in deed some remembrance of Old Jones and his faithless son. The decision was soon given, that his long absence from the place, his leaving from Monmouth and not from Newland, put him out of court as regarded that parish, but they would send to Monmouth, and so they did, and in Monmouth workhouse was settled down at last the quondam boots.

It would seem from ancient usages that the workhouse in the past and the workhouse of the present were two very different things. Judging from the description given by Crabbe, they were not savoury, but then they were not the poor men's gaols they now are. The pauper wore the paupers coat, and he ate pauper's fare, but he was able to be about the place, to come in and out with more freedom, and, if under the sunny influence of home-brewed he was found rather late in the evening at the poor-house door, there was not the storm and ensuing punishment which now follow on the track of such derelictions.

Workhouses past and present ! What a theme ? The old workhouse was a cottage in comparison, and the people who lived there were paupers generally by descent ; but the workhouse of the present represents a system, and within its walls are the relics of the storms and accidents of life. Note them on a sunny day, when the sweet influences of summer are around. Too old to break stones, too weak to act as servants or messengers, they will sit there, going back over the events of life, noting the false turn here, the mistake there, and it may have been that the poor old relic held a good position, now herded with men who have sunk by their vice and folly.

But to return to Will.

By reason of the old laxity the pauper was able to look up the few old acquaintances whom time had spared like seared leaves on the tree, and amongst them was the old shoemaker, who in his days of simplicity had trusted Will with boots. Joe the shoemaker liked a gossip, and he and the poor old pauper had many a long chat about old times and people, for it was not at first that Will revealed himself. One day, however, he asked Joe if he remembered a "boots" who lived at the "King's Head, named Will. Joe did, and had occasion to remember him, for he had bought a pair of boots and never paid for them. "Scamp of a fellow," said Will. "No," that the shoemaker would not agree to. "He was a very decent lad, and he heard had gone to London, and some day would pay for the boots if he was alive and able." Will was on the point of thanking him for his good opinion, but he altered his mind and, after a little more chat, left.

It was a singular thing. That night Will never went home to his pauper house and bed. He was missing. Thirty years before the boots had disappeared. Now it was the pauper. People did not draw contrasts, for the indentivity of Will was only known to a few. Doubtless the magistrate, Mr. Wyndham, who had sent him to the guardians of Monmouth wondered—that is, if he heard of it—but the disappearance of a pauper is of less significance than a boots, and so beyond the poor walls there was no sensation. Now follows what is uncommonly like romance. A few weeks passed, and up to the King's Head dashed a carriage and pair. The appointments were perfect, and mine host even went outside to rub his hands, and passed with bent head by the carriage side after the manner of hosts. The carriage door was opened, and out stepped an erect, broad-shouldered gentleman, who was ushered into the hotel with every mark of respect. At the hotel he stayed a few days, visited

the little village of Newland, called at the shoemakers, who had trusted the boots, who had decamped afterwards, who had returned as a pauper, who had cheated the guardians by running away with his pauper clothes, and then after a short residence in the "King's Head," feeing everybody, and acting the grand seignior, the strange gentleman left, bowed obsequiously away.

The strange gentleman was William Jones, who had made a very large fortune in London, and having made it, visited his native place in the disguise of a pauper, living on pauper fare for a much longer time than did the amateur assume Mr. Greenwood, and the result of his enquiries as pauper and gentleman was the handsome present of five thousand pounds to his native village, and the founding in perpetuity of the Monmouth almshouses.

There is no record of the fate of Miss Vaughan. It is certain that she did not become Mrs. Jones, or the fact would have been treasured and handed down. The whilome boots evidently got over his attack of love and devoted all his energies to the making of money.

Possibly he began with the determination to get riches, and then win the prize ; but how often does it happen that in the pursuit of the practical, sentiment dies away ! Position, fame, riches are won. These gained, the winner halts, turns around for the flowers, and, alas for him ! the attraction is gone, gone for ever.

BURIED ALIVE :

OR,

THE FATE OF MATILDA DESPENCER. A TALE OF COITY
AND CAERPHILLY.



O not, O reader, run away with the idea that I am about to inflict another Tynewydd history. The record here amplified refers to the Norman occupation of Glamorgan, and has the dust upon it not of coal, but of the antiquity of seven hundred years. Let us brush it away, and look for a brief period upon Glamorgan ere the furnace fires flashed in the valleys or the begrimed collier trudged nightly home.

Sir Thomas Despenser ruled at Caerphilly. The huge castle was in its entirety and strength. No sounds other than warlike woke the valley. Now and again the huge drawbridge rattled, the gleam of spears shone on tower, the whirr of the arrow was heard, and only from the cottages nestling in the shadow of the castle came the sound of children's laughter and woman's voice.

No, there I am wrong. Within the castle the soft Norman tongue of woman was heard. Matilda, the eldest daughter of Sir Thomas, reigned there over her maids, and the maids said that though the voice was sweet her actions were harsh. She was a beautiful woman. The exterior was fair, and many a Norman knight had almost lost his heart to her until they had found that there was a headstrong, wilful disposition, quick in imagining discourtesy where none was intended, and more pleased to bring men to her feet than win them by the golden charm of true womanly gentleness. It would seem that she was too strongly imbued with the warlike fever of the time ; that better than listening to the love song of the harper was it for her to hear of a wild foray, where the leather-jacketed Welshmen went down before the rush of the Norman horse ; and sweeter to her the lament of the widowed than of the sound of rural harmony amidst the valleys. Such a woman would have scouted the attentions of a poet. A poet indeed ! who would sing of the sweet spring time and of the golden autumn, to whom Nature was a grand book teeming with the beautiful and the wonderful. Man's destiny, to her

thinking, was to conquer and then rule with iron hand, and her ideal was the victor in the fight with vast strength and iron will.

Matilda's beauty won, but her imperiousness chilled, and thus it came to pass that many a fair Norman lady became a happy wife in Glamorgan, and there was scarcely a castle from whence there came not now and again the sounds of festal gathering and marriage harmony, while Caerphilly remained unblest, and the scene only of the warrior's outgoing and returning.

Sir Thomas, long widowed, was ill at ease at such a state of things, and many a time would ask her if there was no knight amongst the whole of Fitzhamon's descendants whom she would not like to wed, and the answer always came that she had never seen the man yet to whom she could resign her liberty,

Her maids might have told another tale, had they dared. They might have pointed out one of Despencer's esquires as a wooer who was so infatuated with her charms as to aspire to her love, and in the winning of it submit to her tyrannical rule, and dare even Despencer's displeasure—or worse.

They might have told of nightly meetings, of vows breathed, of daring measures planned and then abandoned for a time. For Matilda was but a woman, and, with all the pride of a despencer, yet had a heart, enveloped though it were to all appearance in meshes of iron.

Robert the equire, of knightly birth and parentage, was a man of indomitable will, and only lacked the opportunity to distinguish himself. But the opportunity had not presented itself, and though he had figured in many a well-fought action, the prize coveted of castle and land had invariably fallen to lot of his leaders. He chafed at this, but his passion for Despencer's daughter overrun his warlike ardour, and he waited and loved, and loved and waited, hoping some day to see Despencer carried to the vault at Tewkesbury, when he might wed Matilda and call the Caerphilly Castle and domain, and the proud beauty too, his own.

Coming back from a foray over the mountains, he met for the first time one who he soon saw was to be his rival.—Sir Lawrence Berkolles of Coity. Lawrence had heard of the beautiful Matilda, and as she happened at their first visit to be in a gracious mood he was away with admiration, and did not scruple to show it.

The time was opportune. Matilda had begun to think that, however near Robert was to her ideal lover, he yet lacked some quality or other that would win him distinction. She had hoped that his valour, his determination, would long since have achieved some great success, and still the time rolled on, and Robert remained a simple attendant upon his lord.

So she was first attracted by the marked attentions of Sir Lawrence, and as these were continued, and visit succeeded visit, Robert found himself neglected and, he imagined, despised. How bitterly the fiery Norman chafed at this, how he longed for an opportunity when a pretence could be found that would enable him to measure sword with Lawrence and crush him! In his mad moods he would gladly have murdered even the father, but he knew that this

would for ever have lost him the daughter, so he fumed and fretted, took every opportunity to disparage his rival, to jest at him as a stripling who had seen nothing of warfare, and who could not hold his own if the wild mountaineers rose against his rule.

Sir Thomas noted the attentions of Lawrence with considerable satisfaction, and congratulated Matilda upon the prize she had won. Coity was a domain worthy of his daughter. As its mistress she would hold her place amongst the best, and at the Norman court would be second to none. Roused by this, Matilda received the attentions of the young knight with the demure glance, the attractive blush, and whispered tones which women know so well how to use. Visit succeeded visit, Robert was forgotten, and ere a month had passed Matilda and Lawrence were affianced, and throughout the domain of Norman rule the whisper ran that the haughty beauty of Caerphilly was won, and Coity would soon receive its mistress.

Robert glowed and fumed. He sought every opportunity to speak to Matilda alone, and to upbraid her; but she, with womanly tact, always managed to avoid such interviews, and took care that some of her maids were present.

Despencer half guessed that there had been something more than ordinary friendship between the two, but he could not tolerate the thought that a squire of his should assume to pay lover-like attentions to Matilda, and in order to divert the mind of Robert he selected him for all the arduous duties of the time, aiding especially in the "loot" that always found its way to Caerphilly. If a native chieftain was inclined to revolt against exactions and decrees, it was Robert who was chosen to meet him, and reason him out of his obstinacy. If actual revolt took place, and a strong force would defy the ruler of Caerphilly, it was Robert who had to lead the attack, and bring about submission. All the while the course of love ran smoothly, and when the woods around Caerphilly were tipped with the gold of autumn, the chapel became the scene of the eventful marriage.

On the wedding day Matilda looked wondrously beautiful. There was no longer any *hauteur* there. The imperious front was sunned over with smiles, and when the priest placed hand in hand, Lawrence blessed his good fortune that had given him such a dowry. Neither looked at Robert, who was there in attendance upon Despencer. His cheek was of ashy hue, and when the ceremony came to a conclusion he half drew his sword out of its scabbard, and then mastering his emotion rushed from the scene. There was no scattering of rice then; there were no postillions and carriages. Noble horses, bravely caparisoned, bore bride and bridegroom; a gallant array of mounted knights and men accompanied them, and with loud huzzas from the assembled throng Lawrence bore his wife away to Coity.

Despencer felt a sense of loneliness that night at Caerphilly. Matilda was gone—the last of his children. His wife was dead. He was alone. Yet he consoled himself with the thought that he had seen his daughter happily married, and now he mused on sterner times and deeds.

The history of the Despenchers and their fate belong more to English history;

so, leaving Caerphilly and the fortunes of the Despencers, let us journey away mentally to that fair estate on the sea margin, where Lawrence bore his bride.

For a time there was revelry and happiness, but little by little the natural disposition of Matilda showed itself, and, then too late, Lawrence found that his bed was not altogether of roses. Matilda was not content with domestic happiness. She liked intrigue, and she was only happy in the exercise of rule. Lawrence, a scion of the old Norman race, had been trained to regard the wife as secondary, the helpmate, dutiful and kind, to be concerned with her tapestry and her children, and to take little or no interest in the affairs of the estate or of the realm. Matilda, on the contrary, wished to regard her husband as her loving slave, to obey her behests, and to be guided by her in all things.

Remonstrance on his part was followed by open rebellion on hers, and very soon Coity became the scene of constant strife. He would not yield. It was not his nature so to do. She would not give way. It was not her nature to yield.

When Matilda found that she could not coerce, her love gave way to hate, and every hour she blamed herself for giving up her liberty. It was then at such times that the image of Robert came to view, and she lamented her folly in sacrificing one who she felt sure would have given her both love and obedience.

How could she release herself? Such was the burden of her thoughts by night and day. Murder, the fell fiend who, in one demon form or another, abides ever amongst us, and lures its victims to destruction, came and whispered to her ear. What of the hemlock, that grave plant growing in the castle garden? A little of that stealthily given would give her liberty, and then Coity would be hers. Lawrence would be in his grave, and Robert! yes, Robert should take his place.

Matilda gathered the hemlock; her hand never faltered as she prepared it and placed it on the dish for her lawful lord and master. He was away hunting. That night he would return.

He did return, with his friends—a gallant throng, and she met him with honeyed smile and caress. He was delighted; the chase had been successful, and this beautiful woman more beautiful than ever she had been. She was sorry for her caprice. After all, she was vexed with herself. He could see that the future yet would be a dream of love. There was no guardian angel by Lawrence as he partook of his repast. Meekly as a handmaiden she waited upon him, and when it was over she dismissed the servants. Her lord was exhausted with the chase. He was drowsy. The wine had flowed freely. Strong limbed, she helped him to his bed, and from that he rose no more. On the morrow he was ill. A skilful cure was called, but could not rouse him, and drowsily he slumbered from the sleep of life into the eternal sleep of death.

Like the sculptured Paladdin in the chill cathedral aisle he lay on the morrow. A set frown on the strongly-marked face, as that of one who, con-

fronted by death, yet dared and defied. She, roused to the full enormity of her crime, raved and sobbed, and tore her luxuriant hair, and threw herself over and anon upon the lifeless figure, bewailing his death and her infamy. It was repose and action—the repose as of one listening, in the rigidity of extreme and passionate earnestness, for the final tromp; and the action of despair and sorrow, and bitter unending remorse.

There let us pause awhile, in the course of the narrative, and dip into a dryer theme. Life in those days was not of great value. Even Hywel Dda, in his laws, appraised human life at so many silver pence, according to the status of the man who was slain. And the highest money penalty inflicted was twenty silver pence, for, as Hywel observed, was not our Saviour's blood purchased at thirty pieces of silver?

Under the Norman rule one is led to infer, from occasional instances in proof, that the punishment of murder was more severe, especially when a Norman was the victim. Even supposing that the statutes of the country were in force, as unquestionably they were, in some places the dispensation was most varied, as each owner of an estate had likewise the power to dispense law; and their enactments, in an illiterate age, when there was no recording newspaper existent, could but be warped to the whims of the dispenser.

My lamented friend Mr. Stephens thought that "Court House," of which there is generally one in a place, was derived from the Roman Cohort, a military force stationed in many districts during the Roman occupation of the country. I would submit with all deference that in this interpretation he was wrong, and that the name originated from the ancient institution that all estates of any size gave the owners the position of a magistrate!

Having thus had a little breathing time amidst antiquity, the main thread of the history must again be taken up.

There was no necessity for investigation, Matilda stood confessed a murderess, and was kept in close custody by the relatives of Berkolles, until the case was brought before the Lord of Glamorgan, Sir Richard Begam.

The Iolo MSS. supply only a line or two from whence one can glean the subsequent events; but those lines contain material which Mrs. Radcliffe would have worked up into three volumes of horrors.

The sentence of Sir Richard was that Matilda should be

BURIED ALIVE!

Imagine, if it is possible so to do, such a sentence in our own day. How the country would be thrilled with horror. How "specials" would journey down to record the execution of the sentence, and from one end of the country to the other, would ring imprecation and menace against so harsh a law.

But in an age when might was right, and muscle was superior to brain, and the dispensations of rugged laws and injustice and tyranny tinged the annals of the time, little if any emotion was aroused.

It may arouse surprise that the child of one so powerful as Despencer should have been subjected to such a fate, but there was a cloud over the fortunes of

the house, and not even the sire was exempt from the taint of treason, for which he suffered a brutal execution in the streets of Bristol.

They led her forth in the bright spring time, and in midday led her forth from her dungeon to die. The poem of life rang out from every bush and tree, the carol of young life was given forth by the choirs of nature; it was hummed by the wild bee, and the refrain came in song of river and brook. Death gloomed and glowered by the open grave. Ashy-white, uncared-for, untended, stricken old by her crime and her anguish, she was led forth, and amidst the dense crowd of men-at-arms there was no sorrowing face. Only stern visages met her eye as she looked around for the few brief moments that were to be her last. What her thoughts were none could tell. Did she in that dread hour recall as drowning and dying men do every incident of the past from the innocent of youth down the stream of life to the eventful and horrid present? No cry, no look betrayed her thoughts. Perhaps her brain wandered, mayhap remorse was such that Death came as a welcome friend—a relief from torment.

One prayer by the priest, in the rugged and solemn form of the period, and then, bound hand and foot, she was cast as a soiled thing into her grave. Ply muttock and spade, fly earth and stones in rapid and ceaseless shower, and soon, over the the once beautiful Matilda, a mound of earth rose to mark the scene of her fate, and for a few brief years remind the passers-by of her crime and its direful penalty.

OWEN TUDOR AB MEREDYDD,

FOUNDER OF THE ROYAL ENGLISH LINE OF TUDOR.



HERE is much to be admired in the Tudor line, for, if it gave us the cholerick impetuosity of Henry the VIII., and exhibited in him thoroughly sensual traits in conjunction with those that are essentially Welsh, it gave us the reformation; and if, through the Tudors, we had a wasteful loss of martyr blood, by the action of Queen Mary, it gave us the Elizabethan era, which witnessed the crushing for ever of the Spanish navy, the exhibition of warlike renown, and the birth of some of the greatest poets and philosophers the world has ever seen.

And whence came the Royal Tudor line?

On one of the hilly slopes in Anglesey, known as the Hundred of Durdoeddwy, there is a pleasant spot, hard for pilgrims to climb, but agreeable when surmounted, called Penmynydd (the summit of the hill). There about the year 1,400, lived a widow lady, the wife of a gallant Welshman, named Meredith Tudor, who had been a brewer, Rapin says, under the Bishop of Bangor, and who fell, with other brave men, on the fatal battlefield of Shrewsbury. She had a son named Owen, and as he grew up he obtained a position at the English court of Queen Catherine, dowager of Henry V.; but how he gained this post, and what his duty, there are no records remaining. He was a handsome young fellow, but as he could not speak English at first, he was known as the dumb Welshman. In that age cliques and coteries appear to have had no existence, and king or queen was not so remote from the common ranks as the professional man is now from the ordinary tradesman.

This may be gleaned in Owen's case, from the fact that this son of a Welsh knight, whose patrimonial possessions amounted to fifteen pounds a year, yet had once danced with the Queen, and many a merry night they had of it, and very pleased must Catherine have been with so light-footed and strong a partner. And so handsome! The Queen was highly gratified with his appearance and manner, and probably sent a messenger to North Wales to find out who and what he was, and who his parents were. Mr. Hutton a tourist to whom I am indebted for several interesting facts, says that Owen was warned of what the Queen was doing, and was thus enabled to prepare his

mother for her visitor. He came, and she told him that she would not sell the table from which she ate her dinner for a hundred pounds; that she dined of roasted and boiled, and had six male and six female servants for her comfort and protection. The old lady was shrewd; she usually dined off her lap; her food was potatoes, cooked both ways; and her twelve servants were goats.

The house where this shrewd old lady lived was large and comfortable for an age which did not care so much for comfort as ours, and, from the fact that a portion of the ruins and armorial bearings are still to be seen, shows that the Tudors, small though their estate, were yet people of importance. So every tourist and writer on the matter appears to think, but is it not likely that the armorial bearings and other indications of rank came afterwards? If a retired grocer sets up a carriage he generally gets a coat of arms found for him, and so the fortunes of Owen's after life may have had a good deal to do with the fading indication of rank left in escutcheon and device.

The report of the messenger was so favourable that Owen speedily rose in favour, and in 1428 Catherine gave him her hand—the Welsh squire of low degree, as *Polychronicon* calls him, married a Queen.

For some years he seems to have had a pleasant life enough, but he was kept behind the political stage and not allowed to show himself in any position of note. By her first husband Catherine had one son, Henry VI., and during his minority, or for a portion of the time, the brother of Henry VI., the Duke of Bedford, held the reins of government.

Fifteen years of married happiness and then Owen lost his wife, and as soon as she was buried in Bermondsey, the Duke of Gloucester had him apprehended and committed to the Tower for marrying a queen contrary to a statute which was not in vogue when Owen's marriage took place.

How bitterly Owen must have regretted such a marriage with such a result! How often, cooped up in a place that was to noble and reverend simply the threshold to the scaffold or the block, did he regret leaving his native mountains and their liberty, and yearn once more to be free!

By dint of friends he managed at length to escape, but was soon captured, and then, as his enemies rightly conjectured that he had powerful friends in London, who would again assist him, he was taken to Wallingford Castle, and given to the custody of the Earl of Suffolk. There he made the friendship of a priest, through whose kindly assistance he again escaped, but, unlucky Owen, scarcely had he begun to enjoy the sweets of freedom when he was again taken, and this time by Lord Beaumont, who conveyed him to Newgate. There he disappears for a time from history, but when he re-appears it is as Royal Park Keeper.

By his wife, Queen Catharine, he had three sons, and however much he was persecuted, the sons had no annoyance, but were elevated to high posts. Edmund was created Earl of Richmond, another Earl of Pembroke, and the third, Owen, became a member of a religious order. Edmund married the heiress of the house of Beaufort, but died at the untimely age of twenty-seven, leaving his son Henry, afterwards Henry VII., still a child in arms.

Throughout the elevation of his sons little notice appears to have been paid to Owen Tudor, but after he was taken out of Newgate, and in some degree restored to his old position, it appears some other emoluments were conferred, as he is referred to as Sir Owen Tudor, and in 1459 a grant of one hundred pounds a year was made to him out of the revenues of various estates. Of the poor old mother and the family house at Plas Penmynydd nothing afterwards was recorded. What she thought of her son marrying a queen, whether she every journeyed up to the great city, a strangely-dressed old lady, wonder-stricken herself at what she saw, and an object of curiosity to everyone, no record remains. All that subsequently transpires is that in 1460 Owen, still a hale, strong man, figured in command of a division on the field of Mortimer Cross, near Hereford, was taken prisoner by Edward IV., and sent to Hereford. His ill-luck obstinately pursued him; escape was impracticable, and in Hereford, without trial by judge or jury, he was beheaded, and his body buried in the church of the Greyfriars.

Such was the ignominious ending of Owen Tudor, the grandfather of Henry VII., and the founder, indirectly, of a dynasty which well compare, with that of Plantagenet or Stuart.

A few years ago the family residence still retained some faint relics of the age of Owen, and other members of the family continued the name as late as 1657, when Richard, the last male, figured as sheriff of the county. Margaret, heiress of the house, married Coningsby Williams, of Glan-y-Gors, and after that the name vanishes except from the careful search of the antiquary.

One little incident or two remains to be told. Henry VII., who revered his grandfather's memory took considerable pains in tracing out his pedigree, and was successful, or thought he was, in deriving his descent from Cadwallader, and not only from him, but from the mythic Arthur.

In the church of Penmynydd there is a magnificent monument of white marble, which was transferred there on the dissolution of the abbey of Llanfaes. It commemorates a Tudor, and the supposition is that it was placed there by royal hands in memory of the poor Welsh squire whose beginning was so brilliant and whose end was so miserable.

His son Edmund married Margaret, daughter of the Duke of Somerset, and the issue—Henry VII.—was at first expected to result in great advantages to Wales. What he did, how Rhys Thomas figured on the scene, and the interesting course of events that followed in Wales, must be left to a succeeding chapter.

SIR RHYS AB THOMAS.

Sir Rhys ab Thomas was one of the most eminent and worthy men amongst the many who fought with Richmond on the memorable field of Bosworth. He claimed descent from Urien Rheged, and was in all things, at the social table, in the sports of the field, and in the onslaught of warriors, unmistakably a Welshman.

Rhys was born at Abermoralais, in Carmarthenshire; but on account of family

feuds his youth was passed in Burgundy with his father, and there his biographer records that he was, when yet a young man, famed for his proficiency in horsemanship and arms.

As an athlete he excelled to such a degree that the Duke of Burgundy singled him out for special distinction, and would have placed him in command of a troop, but Rhys preferred working up from the rank, and did so.

He entered the army as a private soldier, and step by step rose to the rank of a captain, when, with his father, he returned to Wales, where they were soon embroiled again in one of the old feuds, in which his father and his two eldest sons fell. Rhys, now the head of the house, did a very wise thing, but first I must explain some of the social peculiarities of the times.

Wales, in the pre-Edwardian times, and long after, was very much like Scotland before the Union. Family feuds were common, and were carried on from father to son with a fierceness that could not be content with hard words, but must on all possible occasions resort to hard blows.

The incident of the two Highlanders meeting on a narrow bridge and falling into the stream in a death struggle, rather than yield or turn back to the other, is a case paralleled in Wales in many a similar case, and some still more bloodthirsty.

Thus, upon a battle field, instances are common of two foes engaging, and then, when thoroughly exhausted, and lying side by side, of one crawling in the deathpang to his enemy's side, and with the last effort, the final pulsation of the heart, driving his dagger literally home.

Between Rhy's family and the Henrys of Court Henry, there was the same bitter animosity. No one knew well when it had begun, or what caused it; but each head of the house took the quarrel just as he did to the estates, and handed down both, again, to his successor.

Now, what did Rhys do? Fell desperately in love with Eva ab Gwilym, heiress of the house, and having the support of influential friends, the long feud was finally ended by the marriage of the two, and Rhys, was free, at least, of one powerful enemy.

Rhys showed considerable forethought in other directions. He knew the warlike character of the people, their readiness to join in any movement, as much to satisfy their restlessness as to combat for their nationality, and he freely found them occupation.

He formed a large body of men, no less, it is stated, than five thousand horsemen, whom he was able at any time to put into the field, and when not engaged in exercise he found them ample scope in out-door sports, running, leaping, quoiting, and wrestling.

He had summer-houses erected also, where men and women danced and all kinds of recreations were permitted under proper restraint.

Scarcely had Rhys time to look around him and view himself as the principal magnate in all Wales, for such he had become, when the great plot began to be laid which was in the end to crush King Richard III. on the field of Bosworth, and place a Tudor on the throne of England.

The chief mover in this plot was the Duke of Buckingham, and his first aim was to bring Richmond, who was in France, to English shores, and then rouse the people in his cause.

The Welsh coast presented a favourable place for landing, but where was the man who would aid them when the landing had been effected? The conspirators thought of Rhys, but he and Buckingham were sworn foes. There was an antagonism in their natures which nothing could soothe, so it appeared. It was certain that, at one time, no incident would have pleased Rhys better than to be in a courtyard with the duke, a free scope, a choice of weapon, and no interference.

Richard III. heard of the plot as soon as Rhys did, and, knowing the power of Rhys, he called upon him to renew his oath of allegiance, and, Duke of Gloucester-like, insisted upon having the custody of the only son of Rhys, a boy of five as hostage. Ogre like, his hand crimsoned with blood, and his soul seared and deadened to all human feeling, the royal hunchback would have made but short work of his little hostage had Rhys been foolish enough to consent. But Rhys very diplomatically answered the king, and, while pleading for the youth of his son, so stoutly assured him of his loyalty, and that whoever ventured to invade should cross over his body, that Richard was satisfied. But, in the meantime, Buckingham was not idle. He found out that there was one astute plotter, Dr. Lewis, a tutor of Rhys and confidential friend of Richmond's mother, who had considerable influence with Rhys, and accordingly the doctor was instructed to try and adjust the difficulties between the two high spirits and pave the way for Rhys and Buckingham to unite in arms against the king. This was cleverly done, and there is good reason for believing that in Brecon, where the two met, the plans were laid out for the invasion of Richmond, the march through Wales, and the final steps which resulted in the king's overthrow.

Rhys was not won over easily. It took a long time, the utmost efforts of Dr. Lewis, the Bishop of St. David's, and the Countess of Richmond to influence him. He was absolved from his oath, and not even then did he yield; but when it was shown him that the welfare of his country would be benefited by his aid, then, and not until then, did he give way, and by that time Buckingham's troubled spirit was at rest.

When the fields of corn were ripening for the harvest in the memorable year of 1485, Richmond stepped on the beach of Milford. He had a large force of Frenchmen with him, who, however badly armed, soon had all they required from Rhys, and the redoubtable Rhys was there to meet them at the head of a fine army of several thousand men, principally horse, all mounted, and all imbued with the utmost enthusiasm.

It is an old tale, but a common one, that of the landing. Tradition has it that in order to maintain his oath to Richard, namely, that no invader should land except over his body, he went down prostrate before Richmond, who gingerly stepped over him. Other, again, say that he placed himself beneath a bridge while Richmond crossed; but it is quite as likely that he

did neither, and, having been absolved from his oath, felt that he was at liberty to do as he liked. After the landing, the arrangement was made between Richmond and Rhys to meet at Shrewsbury, each taking a different course, and rousing the country.

Bright the day in August, and great the excitement, as Rhys marched out of the little shipping village, and made his way in the direction first of Carmarthen, then of Brecon. Fleet horsemen went in advance to announce the landing, and others roared themselves hoarse in calling to arms. Men poured in from all quarters, and had Rhys required double the number of men, they would have been speedily forth coming. The volunteers who crowded upon the army of Rhys were most heterogeneous—old veterans, with their scars of past battles, were side by side with men from the plough and the hedgerows.

Richmond's course lay through Cardiganshire, and when the two met at Shrewsbury the forces under arms were deemed sufficiently strong to encounter the tyrant. The eventful conflict took place at Bosworth, near Leicester, where Richard, with a much larger force than the united army of Richmond and Rhys, gave battle.

It was a fierce and stoutly contested battle. Indeed, had Stanley, instead of remaining neutral, given in his adherence to Richard, the result might have been different, and the destinies of England altered. But Stanley stood aloof, and the crowned murderer, maddened at the defection, rushed over the field in pursuit of Richmond, daring him to arms. This is the moment seized upon by Shakespeare—

What ho ! Young Richmond, 'tis Richard calls thee,
I hate thee Harry for thy blood of Lancaster,
Now if thou dost not hide thee from my sword,
Now while the angry trumpet sounds alarms,
And dying groans transpierce the wounded air,
Richmond, I say, come forth and singly face me,
Richard is hoarse with daring thee to arms.

Who cannot picture the nervous, high wrought hunchback, puny in person, but in that hour strong as a lion raging over the field? At length he saw his foe, and rushed towards him; ten gallant men, one after the other, stood between and were cut down; Brandon, Cheyne, stout and strong as they were, seemed but lads, and each fell under the sword of Richard. Now the coast was clear. There was Richmond, and alone! One spring he gave, but, alas for Richard! Rhys, burly Rhys, strong of arm, skilful of fence, an army in himself, was there too, and with a rush, he and others poured down on the king and slaughtered him on the spot.

While the tyrant yet lay upon the field with distorted face, and hand clenched in the determination to destroy, Rhys received the honour of knighthood, and not only that, but had such a shower of honours, that not even Llewelyn, the last Prince of Wales, was endowed with greater power. Amongst his titles were Chief Governor in Wales, King's Justiciary, Constable and Lieutenant of Brecon, Chamberlain of the counties of Carmarthen and Cardigan, and Seneschal of the lordship of Builth.

His biographer hints at a long absence of Rhys from his native land, from the date of the battle of Bosworth, and we are left to conclude that in attending upon the king, and in feast and harmony which followed, Wales was for a time forgotten. When he did return, it was to find great license prevailing, and such a disorderly condition of things reigning that it required extreme measures to rectify.

Rhys had the power, not only to imprison, but to pronounce sentence of death, and this he was obliged to do in cases where ruffians had resorted to assassination.

Several years were passed in carrying out active measures for the tranquilization of the country, when his aid was again solicited in England, to assist the king against Lord Lovel and the Staffords, and had the rebellion continued only a little longer he would have materially helped the king, but it was quashed suddenly and he journeyed back.

Next we find Rhys in the battle of Stoke, performing prodigies of valour. Wounds seemed to him more like promptings, or stings, than hurts, for during the heat of the battle a common Irish soldier wounded him in the hand with a dart, and instead of binding up the hand and retiring, "he flew at his enemies, doing such slaughter amongst them and performing such deeds of arms as contributed much to that day's victory."

In the wars in France, accompanied by a body of brave Welshmen, Rhys also figured. Then in the disturbances attending Perkin Warbeck's rebellion he was fighting as usual with so much audacity, as the old historians called it, that at Blackheath he had two horses killed under him; but, heedless of this, he mounted another, and with his own hand captured the rebel leader.

In 1506 the order of the garter was conferred on Rhys, with the lordship of Narberth, and in return for this special distinction our noble Welshman next summer held high holiday at Carew Castle, instituting not only a grand tournament—the first ever recorded in Wales—but a succession of sports and pastimes which lasted over five days. Never had there been such a gala time in Wales. From remotest parts the people of distinction journeyed thither to partake of Rhy's hospitality, and share in the loyal ovation to Henry VII.

On through the remaining years of Henry's life we find the brave Welshman tranquilly passing, and when Henry VIII. ascended the throne he was, though now in his sixtieth year, still the same redoubtable Rhys as ever, and in the battle of Terouenne and siege of Tournay won fresh distinctions and rewards.

Rhys lived sixteen years after the accession of Henry VIII., and fortunately not long enough to hear of the worst action of Henry VIII., who, Welshman as he was, could not refrain from adding the grandson of Rhys to the list of his victims. This grandson was imprudent enough to take the designation of Fitz-urien, and thus claim a descent from Urien Rheged, and Henry naturally enough imagined that he was planning some sinister course that would again embroil him with the Principality. But with the death of the grandson the family of Rhys ab Thomas did not become extinct, and to this day the race of

the Welsh hero who helped so materially to put the Tudors on the English throne is represented by no less a personage than Lord Dynevor.

The Tudor line was continued from the death of Henry by his son, Edward VI., followed by Mary, and then by Elizabeth, and with the death of the virgin queen, and the entry of James I. of England and VI. of Scotland, the direct Welsh line in connection with the English crown became extinct.

For one hundred and eighteen years the Tudors ruled, and the impress of their vigorous sway left an abiding mark on the wealth and the literature of England. Dark shades alternate, it is true, with the sunshine, but let us select the era of the Stuarts and the annals of the Georges, and we find the comparison favourable to the race who called the little hillside in North Wales—home.

ANCIENT SPIRITUALISM IN WALES.



IN the more isolated districts of Wales, superstition once held firm root, and even some faint relics remain, just as near collieries and large colliery towns, fragments of village lanes and farm hedgerows yet meet the eye, remnants of the past.

The corpse candles or canwyll corph, was one of the most prevalent of superstitions, and one might almost deny the inspiration of Holy Writ in some quarters as question its correctness.

In connection with corpse candles there were spectral processions, and, whimsical as it may appear, spectral singing, the latter reminding one strangely of the old German legend, which narrates the spectral footstep on the stair, a step distinctly heard, as of a cloven hoof, but nothing visible!

To begin with the last, as a superstition that is more obsolete than either, a curious one is on record, and it is vouched for by a gentleman of unquestioned probity, and who, instead of being a poet and a dreamer, as the majority of spiritualists are, is a man of shrewd practical wisdom, who has worked his way up the ladder to a high standing by unwearied effort and sterling excellence of moral life.

This prelude is necessary, as such a narrative as mine, and told for the first time, would never be accepted but on the strongest evidence.

"Believe in spiritualism?" said this gentleman one day, "no, but I can tell you one curious circumstance which I have never had explained. I have tried in every possible way to account for it, but without success, and so there it is, a puzzle for you as it is to me:—

"My wife was ill, ill unto death, and her sister and myself were sitting up with her. We had left her in bed for a little time and had gone downstairs, and were there by the fireside thinking of the poor sufferer. It was midnight. The house was one of a long row, and all the neighbours had gone to bed, for no lights were to be seen, and the only sound heard was the occasional footstep of a policeman. Not a hundred yards from our house there was an old chapel, with a very old graveyard in the rear, and access to the yard was had by means of an iron gate leading from the road. Well, there we were, sitting by the fire, I resting my head upon my hand, when all at once there came the sound of distant singing, as at a funeral. At first it was faint, but gradually it increased in volume, and the steps of a great number of persons could be distinctly heard, with the rustle such as you hear when many are passing. I looked at my sister-in-law, and she as intently looked at me, and, as if struck by the same wish to see so novel a thing as a funeral procession at midnight, we both arose and went to the door and opened it, and looked out upon the street. Still we heard the singing, still we heard the rustling as of a large crowd, but not a soul was to be seen. The moonlight shone upon the street. It was as light as day, but not a human being was to be seen, and still the singing rang around, and the tramp continued up to the gate of the chapel of Bethesda, and then suddenly it ceased. We both looked at one another, and in alarm and wonderment shut the door and returned to the fireside. That night my wife died, and it was only a few days after that the funeral procession passed from the house to the graveyard of Bethesda, and the funeral chant and tramp were precisely the same as we had listened to on the night of her death."

Still going backward, let me now narrate a spectral procession that was actually seen, or said to have been.

A stout, practical-minded farmer, who had no ideas beyond that of oats and turnips, was trimming his hedgerows in the spring time, when in the distance he saw a procession coming along in the direction of the graveyard. It was no unusual spectacle, and so he went on leisurely cutting down his hedge until the procession came near. There was the coffin, covered with its pall; there were the mourners, two by two; and following them came the crowd of friends. As they passed, the old man gazed intently at the crowd, and saw many a man and woman he knew, and he even asked who it was, and was told, but as he looked, much to his surprise, they turned from the highway through a gap in the hedge, and took a short cut to the graveyard, and then the whole procession seemed, as he expressed it, to melt into the air and vanish. The name given to him as the deceased was familiar. He knew where he had lived, and though not intimate, yet knew him by sight; but he had not heard even of his illness, though their farms were not more than a mile apart. With it all he was thoroughly astonished, and returning home told his wife. She was still more startled, for, woman-like, funerals and illnesses had an interest to her, and if anyone was sick, or on the point of death, she was sure to know it. At the tea table they discussed the subject with bated breath, and directly the

tea things were cleared away, her patterns were heard ringing on the rough pavement in the back yard as she made her way to an old gossip a few fields away. When she returned home, and found her good man tranquilly smoking a pipe, her first remark was so sudden and alarming that he dropped the pipe and jumped from his chair. "Old Rees was not dead!" This was the man whose funeral the old farmer had seen, and watched passing through a gap in the hedge; and now not even dead! A few weeks passed, and then, said a veracious narration, "not only did the genuine funeral of old Rees pass the same way as described, but took the shortest way to the churchyard through a broken fence."

Explanation is of course in either case impossible, but these and similar instances invariable found a crowd of believers in the people of country districts less than fifty years ago.

But records of spectral funerals are fewer in number than of corpse candles, and so well authenticated have these been in many cases that one is compelled either to admit that the superstition is well founded, or that, by the decomposition of the body, such a change take place as to cause some phenomenon of the kind.

Jenny Jones—not the immortal Jenny Jones, Llangollen, whose representative march is one of the favourites of the British army—was the daughter of a respectable farmer some twenty or thirty miles from Cardigan town. She was the third child of a third marriage—that is, her mother having lost her first husband, married again. Then her mother died, and her father marrying again, had three children, of which she was the third. It used to be the subject of merriment amongst her friends as whose child she really was, for she was neither like father nor mother, and while both parents were remarkably sedate, she was volatile and full of merriment and fun. When in her eighteenth year she became engaged to young Thomas Thomas, of the Bedlinog farm, and everyone thought it a very good match. It was true that she liked dancing much more than milking, and could sing infinitely better than knit; but then the old people said all that would come in time. They did not care to see old heads on young shoulders. Let Jenny get a family about her, and she would find it necessary to work.

So, unrestrained, except by homely advice and sober council, Jenny had a happy and easy life, assisted in the house-work in the day, did a little fancy-work in the evening, when wet, and in the summer evenings had many a merry ramble about the lanes with her chosen friends, Jane Price and Mary Talbot, the evening ending, not unfrequently, with young Thomas seeing her home.

It was the old, old tale, not as old as the hills, but as old as Jewish patriarchal days. The tale of love, and the walk through sunny lanes around which hung the scent of new-made hay, and over which streamed the unfading radiance of summer-time. Thousands of years ago, in fields ripening for the sickle, in meadows full of fragrant clover falling under the sweep of the scythe, has the tale been told, and what if it has an afterpart of sorrow? What if stern years come, and wrinkles and grey hair, still,

blessed be the poetry of early love, and unfading its purity, for without its how matter-of-fact and often discordant would the life of the people be. Even afflictions soften the character. A young couple start in life; fair the sky, and no cloud on the horizon. They press on either in money-making or the enjoyments of life, and a family spring around. Then fades a little one, and the young mother realises for the first time in its awful intensity the meaning of death. Her little one, whose prattle had been a joy, and whose toddling steps she had directed with so much love, taken away. Ever afterwards there is a touch of sadness in the tone of voice, a slight shade clings for all time, and the mellow laughter is never so mellow again. Years may pass, and many a boy and girl be added to the list, but little George, dear little George, with the curly hair, he who sleeps in the old churchyard, will never be forgotten, and will always have a place in father and mother's heart.

The season came and went. Thomas sowed in the spring and reaped in the autumn, and at every fall seriously thought it was quite time that the wedding took place. He was quite ready, but Jenny loved her freedom, and told him so, and then it came to pass that she was in her twentieth year before any really practical steps were taken to bring the courtship to an end.

The ring was bought. O, joyful day for Thomas! A proud man as he went into Cardigan-town, and selected, guided thereto by a tiny piece of thread, not only the ring, but a keeper as well.

He felt several inches taller, and, rebuked by his gravity the smile that crept around the saucy young apprentice's mouth. He tried the ring on at the first opportunity, and the fond emotion, strong and pure he then felt, was worth a jew's ransom.

All other matters of detail were soon arranged. He was to have a farm at Cwmdy, and a nice little sum of several hundred pounds would be transferred from her father's account in the old bank and put to that of young Thomas.

It was all settled. One month again would see them united, linked for weal or woe, and the young couple and the old couples were both agreed that it would be for weal.

Every night now, Thomas went over the fields to his intended wife's house, and there in the roomy kitchen, or, if favourable weather, out in the trim garden and under the yew, they planned over and over again, with a minuteness that would have been tedious to a third person, but to them was full of inexhaustible interest, their little plans and projects.

Three weeks only remained of bachelor and spinster life. The weather, from being sultry, had become stormy, and great thunderstorms had filled rivers and brooks, sweeping away bridges and doing a great deal of mischief. Singularly enough, the only road to Jenny's house from that of Thomas was connected by a bridge, except by making a long detour, and, much to the annoyance of the lover, on reaching the bridge one evening he found it gone. He returned home and saddled his horse, thinking to ride around the other way, and told his mother that he was going to do so, and would be back early.

She never saw him again alive.

"Where can Thomas be to night?" said Jenny's father. "Has the storm kept him away?"

Jenny did not know, but she pouted, "If she were a man no storm would hinder her."

She said little, and, as the gloaming faded into the night, sat in the window looking out upon the black clouds, still full to bursting, and the gradual darkening of the landscape. As she looked she saw a faint glimmer in the distance.

"Ah! 'twas Thomas," and he had a lanthorn with him, and she began preparing some pretty speeches wherewith to greet her dilatory lover.

Nearer and nearer came the light until it reached the window, and there it stood about three or four feet from the ground, and so peculiar in its character that she at once called out to the rest of the family "A canwyll corph, a canwyll corph" and rushed to the door. She was followed by others, and the light was seen distinctly by all, and so near that it was evident no person held it; but as they moved towards it more faintly became its lustre, and in another moment it was gone. Great was the excitement now at the farmhouse. Nothing would pacify Jenny, she must at once go and see if any mishap had happened to her lover, and it was only by her father's positive commands that she was prevented. He and a servant started out instead, and made their way to the bridge, where they saw for the first time that it was down, and along the bank they wandered, peering here and there without success. Nothing could be seen. When they returned Jenny's agitation was, if anything, greater, and the servant mounted one of the horses and rode around, returning in a few hours with the ominous news that Thomas had left early in the evening on horseback, and had not returned. Morning broke, and parties from each farm, with many of the neighbours, were in active search, and continued so until midday, when the terrible fact was made known.

Many miles away the bodies of man and horse were found, that of Thomas so bruised that it was only recognisable by his clothing. The unfortunate man, to whom fear was unknown, had to all appearances boldly dashed through the river at an old ford, and his horse, frightened by the roar and rush of water, must have stumbled, and then—one mad fight for life, dear life and Jenny, and the poor fellow was swept away.

Jenny never married, though many a good offer was made to her. It was years before she recovered anything like her old cheerfulness, and thirty years after, as the sole living member of the family, she managed the farm, and was noted for one of the closest dealers, one of the hardest buyers in the county. Neighbours said she was very rich, and those who did not know her, thought her as harsh as she was stingy, but underneath the crust which deep sorrow had made, there was a genuine feeling and sympathy, and many worse women could be found than Mistress Jenny Jones.

A SKETCH AMONGST THE WELSH HILLS.



IT had been one of the sunniest of days. The heavens smiled upon earth, earth upon heaven; but about the evening time a few strange clouds began to make their appearance, and when the night came the change from sunshine to gloom was remarkable. And yet there was not a breath of wind stirring, and if a slight puff did occasionally shake the branches, it was gone in a moment. The wandering zephyr had been recalled, the truant gathered home. Night came—silence and the night—and a little past midnight the listener heard a faint, far-off sound like to that of an angry wave breaking against a distant shore. What could it be? Then it sounded more distinctly—a low, monotonous roar, such a roar as Livingstone heard in the African wilds as the lion prowled around for a victim. Crash! It was thunder! And the lightning, leaping down from a dense cloud, began to play vividly in the valley; every glare followed by a loud roll, which came travelling rapidly nearer and more near. There was now no pause, no hesitation. It was a war of the Homeric gods. Ajax and Achilles plied their flashing darts, and the huge mountain heaps, tossing against massive shields, gave back roar for roar.

Now it was as if a thousand of the war chariots of Biblical days swept by; then a hideous clang of utter confusion and ruin. Now a startling shock, like to the breaking in of the great concave, then the fall as of some tower surpassing even that of Babel.

How wondrously did the glare light up the vale! One moment the surroundings were wrapt in darkness most impenetrable; then the white-washed farm on the hillside, every meadow, every road and stream, the tilled acres, the furrows of growing corn—work of the sleeping farmer—came out with the sharp distinctness of a photograph; but only for a moment. Flash upon flash, roar upon roar, and then the darts fell more feebly, as from tired hands, and the chariots of iron wandered away, and the war of heaven was ended.

There was a pause. The dawn faintly broke, and out came a thrush to warble his solo, and long and sweetly did the soloist chirp and sing. Other soft chirpings, the quiet awakings of birds, were now added, and the solo became a duet, to which now and then a wandering rook added accompaniment. So, swelling from simple notes and faint into the full-measured

irregularity and irregular harmony of nature, did her choir greet the day, even as the rainbow, we are told, was a sign placed by God that no flood should again engulf the world, so did the tuneful minstrels preach of nature's revival, and that even as the night has its morning, so has the tempest its recurring quietude, and the war of elements its calm.

HOW TURBERVILLE, THE NORMAN KNIGHT, WON HIS WIFE.



COURTING, or winning a wife, in the early days of our history, was a very different thing to what it now is. Now, the rule is to take a leaf out of the book of Todleben, the defender of Sebastopol. You approach by sap, you throw up outworks, you strengthen your position at every step, and when your mine has been run sufficiently near, then one grand charge, and the citadel is won—or lost, as it often is.

I had a friend once who adopted this method. He was desperately in love. He first won the regard of the brother, then of the father and mother; but when he began to make his approaches to the daughter he found that he had been too long circumventing; the enemy had got into the camp, and the prize was another's.

In those early days of ours when the passions were unrestrained, and the law had not the power it has now, marriages, left-handed or right, were matters very quickly settled. Might was right, and that same iron grasp which seized on the land of a neighbour was equally ready in appropriating the wife or the daughter.

The refinements of life, the amenities between men, and the tender regard for women, have come in with our civilisation. The pages of the past annals only exhibit exceptional instances to the contrary. One of the readiest cases of winning a wife occurred shortly after the conquest of Glamorgan. It had no prelude of love making, but was done off hand, and in the most expeditious manner.

Robert Fitzhamon had conquered Glamorgan. Before the armour-clad host native valour had been ineffectual; he had won the day. Glamorgan, fair Glamorgan, was his. To reward his knights and secure his conquest he had, as a matter of policy if not of justice to his followers, given to them freely of the

spoil. Le Esterburg, De Granville, De Londres, Berkrolles, and the most of the knights who had linked their fortunes with Fitzhamon, had their reward in castles and lands; but there was one doughty knight who had been overlooked, and, in modern parlance left out in the cold. This was Pain Turberville, and whether the omission rose from the modesty of the Norman—a rather exceptional characteristic though—in preferring his claims, or from the fact that Fitzhamon had given all the castles away that he had conquered, is not stated, but the fact is undeniable that Turberville saw that all his brethren were well housed, and he was still left only with his sword.

Fretting and fuming at this, he appears to have formed a sudden resolution, for one day he presented himself before his chief at Cardiff Castle, and said:

“Eleven of your knights have been rewarded. I have had nothing.”

Robert true to his principles, replied:

“Here are men and here are arms; go, get your reward where you can.”

Turberville took the men and the arms and sallied forth, and it is evident by what followed that the crafty knight knew pretty well where to go, for without loss of time he made his way to Coity Castle, where lived Morgan, a valorous old Welsh lord, and his fair daughter Sara.

Taking post opposite the castle, he sent his esquire with the startling message that the castle should be given up to him. Morgan, too, it is evident, knew his foe, for, coming forth from the castle with his sword in his hand, accompanied his daughter, he said:

“If you will marry my daughter, and so come like an honest man into the castle, it is yours, and I will yield it up quickly; but if not, let not the blood of any of our men be lost, but let this sword and right arm of mine, and those of yours, decide who shall call the castle his own.”

Stirring the picture! On the heights of Coity Castle stood the Welshmen ready, prepared to defend to the last, and in front the strong host flushed with conquest, who only awaited the signal to peril limb and life in adding another laurel to the many gained. Turberville looked at the stern old Welsh warrior.

His blade was keen, and his arm strong. He looked at the daughter. Very fair and buxom was Sara, and there was a merry twinkle in the eyes which told Turberville that he was not disliked, so like a gallant and politic man, he presented his sword to Morgan, and with the other arm embraced the damsel, and forthwith the Norman and Welsh soldiers had a merry making, and fraternised to their hearts content, and Holy Church quickly made the Norman knight and the Welsh lady one. The marriage was a happy one, and bluff Turberville was so gratified at his success that he was not content to be regarded simply as the husband of a Welsh heiress, but must needs even go out of the way to show that by the union he had imbibed Welsh views and native prejudices. He was found even defying the Norman rule, and with his two thousand soldiers, whom he kept at his castle, he must have been regarded as a good friend and an ugly enemy. The tenacity of his grip, and that of his descendants, on the Welsh lands and castles was such that eleven generations succeeded him at Coity, and then the blended Norman and Welsh family disappeared.

The name is found still in the district, and is owned by one county family, who do not, however, trace their descent from Coity. Lately it figured again in a police case not far distant from the neighbourhood of the castle, when an innkeeper answered to the name, and made many a reader of the report wonder whether, even as one of the Plantagenet race had been found cobbling boots, so possibly had a descendant of the Lord of Coity come down even to the serving of thirsty colliers !

[In the Iolo MSS. it is stated—and with the statement we can dismiss conjecture with respect to legitimate descent—that the possessions (Coity) having thrice descended by distaff, that is, by right of a daughter, the royal lordship of Coity became alienated, and went as an escheat to Sir Richard Begam, as the law required.]

THE VICAR'S DAUGHTER.

IN walking through old baronial picture galleries, the eye is refreshed by meeting occasionally with a modern painting or engraving. Vandyke pictures, gems of Sir Joshua Reynolds, even Lely's charmers weary. One is tired of doublets, and mail, and ruffs of the Elizabethan time. Variety, in fact, is the great charm of life, and with this dogma laid down I propose alternating the series of Welsh sketches and blending the modern with the antique.

My next sketch, therefore, refers to the stern, somewhat Puritanical, days of only fifty years ago.

In Pembrokeshire, fifty years ago, the vicar of an old-fashioned Welsh-English place was, to all appearance, made for the spot. He also was old-fashioned, and he also was Welsh and English. Grave, grim, like a wrinkled old apple tree, the wonder was that anything green or verdant should be connected with him. One would have thought that the Fates had always reserved him in single blessedness, to go on his way quietly through life, and at the end to drop away, and be forgotten by everybody directly afterwards.

But the odd thing about the old man was that he had not only in the past years been a social jolly fellow, but had married a pretty maiden, and had been surrounded with loving duplicates, both of the genial father and the pretty mother. Then the sunshine faded. One rarely gets it all through life. An extremely sunny morning often has its boisterous night, and equally true, as borne out by the experiences of men and women, the morning ushered in with

tears and gloom has its gleams of happiness ere falls the eventide. With John Morgan it was different. Into the sunniest, the cosiest of little vicarages, there looked one day a dusty musty traveller, one who is incessantly on the tramp through life ; who, instead of bundle and stick, has a scythe ; whose bones never knew the covering by a tailor's art, and whose grim face is incapable of a smile ! In a word it was Death. The grim one looked at the genial father, who was then laughing heartily, glanced at the various rosy pledges of love perched around the table, wandered to the buxom dame, on whose face was the reflection of her husband's joke in the form of a dimpled smile ; and Death said "h'm !" It was a pity, but then what was to be must be, and touching the last and prettiest of the flock with his dart, the far travelled one, with his dusty bones, boots he had not, walked up the squire's mansion, and disappeared.

There was great sorrow in the vicarage, for the lost child was a dear little toddling thing, and it made the hearts ache of the worthy couple, as they looked day after day at the vacant chair.

This, however, was not all. Death seemed to have been so pleased with the precious morsel that he came again, and again. One by one, as if under a blast, the children withered away, all save one, the eldest girl, and, finally, borne down with watching, and care, and sorrow, the buxom wife, buxom no more, the pretty wife, pretty alas ! no more, withered too, and the vicar stood, with the exception of one child, stood in the world alone !

That, reader, is often how the sternness and the grimness of life come. Smooth is the brow of young manhood, and clear the eye, and dark the hair ; watch, and you shall note the brow wrinkled, and crow's feet gather about the eye, and snow sprinkle the hair. Wrinkles, crow's feet, snow, are the records of sorrows, of bereavements, of trials—index letters to the solemn entries in the ledger of life.

This it was which took away the geniality of the the vicar, which made him stern and crusty ; which caused him to frown at fat little boys, and to turn away, as if disliking, apple-faced girls. But it was this, too, which made him cling with all the love that man is capable of to his only daughter, which made him note with jealous eye the ardent looks of the young men of the village, and to turn sick at heart at the thought that some day she would, in all human probability, go forth from the old vicarage a bride, never to return, and then, indeed, his hearth would be desolate. Margaret deserved all his love and watchfulness, for she was not only the belle but the best girl of the district. No better housekeeper could be found within a circle of twenty miles, no more dutiful daughter, so loving and solicitous in attending to the wishes, and often the whims, of, at times, an exceedingly grumpy old man. Many were the suitors who came, and many the rejected who went from the presence of the fair woman, mad with themselves, but more than ever in love with her.

Age is selfish. The old vicar actually hugged himself as he saw the years go by, and Margaret still remain unwed. Indeed, he thoroughly believed that she had decided to stay single all her life, when a little bit of news came to

his ears. The lord of the manor was, like himself, an old man. He, too, had but one child ; but that child was a son, and from the age of eighteen this son had been away in the army, only coming at long intervals and for brief periods to the quiet Pembroke neighbourhood. The people were not sorry for this. Though a fine young fellow on the sunny side still of thirty, he was noted for his dissolute habits, and whenever he came home there was always some scene of reckless folly or other. Some prank played at the expense of a villager ; some rough practical joke which gave him the laugh and another the pain. And the worst of it was that there was no remedy. Everyone was afraid to complain, for he was a lusty fellow ; and the old squire, a worthy man himself, was not only ground landlord of the whole place, but J.P. as well. So the young women kept out of the way, and the young men grinned and bore it as well as they could.

Morgan, the vicar, stick in hand, stood counting the apples on a small tree in his garden. They looked promising if the boys would only leave them alone ; but he was almost sure there had been ten yesterday, and now he could only make eight. " Fine ribstone pippins they were ; too good for boys. How was it that there was such an affinity between boys and apples ! Had this liking been handed down from Eden ? " The old man was philosophising, when a neighbour, looking over the garden hedge, said :

" Mister Morgans, can I speak to you a minute ? "

" Yes, Jones, I'll come now," and the vicar slowly walked towards him, saying, " Won't you come in ? "

No, Jones would rather not, adding in a whisper, " he had something private to say."

" Well now," said the old man, " what is it ; no misfortune I hope ? "

" It's about your daughter," said Jones.

" My daughter ; what of her ? "

" You know the young squire is down ? "

" Yes," the vicar did.

" Well, believe it or not," added Jones, " he's courting your daughter."

" What said the vicar, "that scoundrel ? No, no, whoever has told you this has lied, sir, lied," and the old man gripped his stick convulsively, and brought it to the ground with a thud. No, no, sir."

" Well, I beg your pardon, vicar, but 'tis true, as you can satisfy yourself any day. I was told so privately a day or two ago, and since then I have watched for myself, having no thought," he added, appealing, for there was a storm gathering on the vicar's face, " no thought I assure you, but for the happiness of yourself and Miss Margaret, whom I have known from a child, and loved as long."

The old man was thunderstruck.

" Was he quite certain ? " he asked.

" Yes, quite. He had seen young John, Captain John some called him, go to the vicarage when all was dark, and the light in the study window, which all the village knew was also his bedroom, showed that the vicar had retired

for the night. And he had seen young John creeping up stealthily to the kitchen door, and had once seen Margaret herself with a light open the door and let him in."

What the old man's feelings were he kept to himself, but he assumed a smiling face, and said "Well, thank you, friend Jones, thank you much. I shall always be in your debt for your kindness to me; but be assured of this, I will give the young squire a lesson he'll never forget. Leave him to me, and tell no one about it."

Jones departed in fear and trembling. What if there would be a terrible murder, or, supposing it was a love match and a wedding followed, what would all concerned think of his playing the spy? He half regretted what he had done, but it was now too late. As for the vicar, the moment his friend left him the old sternness crept over his face, and his musings were not of the happiest character. Strange that his Margaret, so gently bred, should make the acquaintance of a rake; a man whose life was the byword of the place; and it was evident that his intentions were dishonourable. Otherwise why these midnight meetings. God spare his only girl, and give him strength in the coming trial. He would save his daughter or die.

The night came and went, and the next. The old vicar was more hollow-eyed and haggard, for his nights were sleepless. Margaret's face, too, was a trifle thinner, and paler than it was wont to be. Still not a word had passed. Night came again, and stealthily as night ever comes, dark as it ever falls, came the young squire with sombre designs in his heart, but with a frank smile on his face, and fox-like crept into the fold. Margaret received him with a flush of pleasure. She was alone. The servant girl had retired, and her father was in bed hours ago. So, seated side by side on the quaint settle by the fire, the captain told her his tale of adventure and stirring action; pictured the life he had led in barracks or in the field, and described with all a lover's passion how gladly he would throw aside his sword and end his days at the old manor house if only Margaret would be his bride. Excited, tearful, picturing the joyful prospect of one day being the lady of the manor, Margaret listened, love and respect for her father warring in her heart with this new strange feeling, aroused by her lover's ardent pleading, when the latch of the door from the bedroom stairs was raised, and while both looked up in alarm the old vicar, lamp in hand, came gently into the kitchen and said: "Well, John, how are you? How is the squire? I am very glad to see you, John?" Margaret could scarcely believe her senses. John wished the ground to open beneath his feet; but the old man looked so benignant, so kind, that all suspicion vanished, and when the vicar held out his hand he shook it heartily. Things were getting pleasanter he thought. "And, John," said the old man after a little gossip, "I've long wanted to have a chat with you. You won't mind coming to my room for a bit." "No, indeed," John had no objection, none in the world. "Well then, come John. Margaret don't you wait. John can see you again, you know. Then I'll lock the kitchen door. You go to bed, dear, and leave me to see all safe." So saying, and lighting John up to his

bedroom, the two disappeared, and Margaret in a maze, wondering, half suspecting, went to bed.

Entering the bedroom and study, where there was a clear fire burning, the vicar first placed the table in such a position that the door could not be opened without his consent, and then seating himself and putting John comfortably by the fire, he said, "You can't think how glad I am to have your company ; how wishful to have a nice little chat alone. And, John," he added, with a nice paternal air about his expressive face which looked even to John quite fatherly, "You wouldn't mind if I read a chapter to you?"

"Not in the least," said John, but wishing in his heart that he could have a pipe and some boon companions instead, "not in the least."

Very slowly and very gravely the vicar took his old friend of many years, the friend he loved above all else on earth, for there was no change or decay there—the Bible, in his hand, and after turning over pensively many pages, till, as John phrased it, "he thought the old buffer would never begin," he said, "Oh, John, have you any particular chapter that you like?" "No, John had none in particular" (aside, he didn't care about any of them). "Well, in that case," still more prosily and slow, the vicar would select a good one. The chapter chosen was the longest of the Psalms, and in a clear, earnest voice, the vicar began and read, and as he read he commented and expounded. Warning with the theme he would take down musty commentaries to clear up a doubtful point, and like a trained dog upon a scent, heedless of the worn and wearied look, the furtive glances at his watch, and the listener kept on and on. There was no opportunity to put in a word of entreaty. If he began, as he did repeatedly, to plead the time, on went the vicar, tireless himself, earnest, and sometimes passionate in his accent, and reproving, and again lingering over the words of holy counsel as a miser would over his gold. At length the awful ordeal came to an end. The chapter was brought to a close.

Eagerly the captain jumped to his feet, but the table was still before the door, and the old man did not rise, "I must go, vicar," he said, "I must indeed ;" and his voice almost rose to a shriek, so nervous and high-strung had he become.

"Well, John," said the old man, rising slowly, "are you sure you won't have another chapter?"

"No, not for the world ! I beg pardon—not now, please."

"Well, John," the old man continued, moving the table, and lighting him down the stairs, "let this be the first of many visits. Come again and again. It will do me good, and it will do you good."

The captain muttered something uncommonly like ham and ration, but the old man heard not ; but, chattering in his old friendly way, took him to the kitchen door, shook hands warmly again, and, opening the door, let him out. Then quietly back, dreamily up the stairs, good old man, talking still aloud, "Do good to you, and to me," went into his bedroom, and laid him down and slept, slept quietly, dreamlessly, till the morn.

The fox never entered the fold again !

It was years before Margaret met him. Then she was the dearly-loved wife of a neighbouring clergyman, and he too was married, and happily, and all the wild oats had been sown. Strange has been the remembrance of that night, a night of horror to him, but, invidiously, wonders have been achieved, though for years he recoiled from all thought of the vicar and his daughter.

And the old man ?

Yes, the old man slept a deeper sleep in the rural graveyard by the river side, amongst the loved and the lost.

The stick was heard no more sounding on the garden walk ; village boys gazed without reproof at the ribstone pippins ; a chubby youth perched himself at times in poor old grandpapa's chair, and—how soon we are forgotten !—the familiar old hat he had worn, which after death had dignified the pate of the half gardener, half-groom, did duty for many a day in keeping the birds away from the vicarage peas !

AN OLD WELSH FAIR.

A "SKETCH FROM THE LIFE."



TO see one of the old fashioned Welsh fairs, which are rapidly dying out, or becoming so modernised that William Shon of half a century ago would scarcely recognise them, it is only necessary to visit Builth, and a Builth fair is well worth going fifty miles to see.

Long before the clouds of dust rise in the distant highways and lanes, there is animation in every house and shop. The barrels are put on tap, cigar cases on counter filled, for your young farmer has an idea for one half-hour of being a gentleman ; carpets taken up in parlour ; ordinaries laid out, and shop windows filled with everything tempting in the shape of toys, eatables and substantials. Some of the arrangements are eccentric enough. A man with a bag deliberately places a canvass on the ground, and as deliberately pours out of his bag a wonderful collection of laces, pin papers, combs, and trinkets of every description, which the public pick out greedily, as from a lucky bag, at one penny each. Other worthies pitch their barrows full of apples or pears, and get the suffrages of the crowd by occasionally throwing a handful amongst them ; and all this time from highways and byeways come in sheep, pigs,

heifers, cows, and horses, driven by excited individuals, who yell, and jump, and extend their hat and stick to the widest compass to keep their charges from going up wrong streets. Some of the herds march placidly enough. They go so tranquilly, in such measured time, with a quiet old-fashioned driver behind, that you think of the soldiers on a board, moved "scissors" fashion, in your youth; but let one of the herd go astray, and you shall see the old-fashioned one moved into galvanic and uncommonly brisk movements, until the lost sheep is back again, when he subsides.

The custom in Builth is to keep the cattle in the street in droves extending to the gate, and to place the sheep in folds of a rustic character before the cottages. The cottage yard is utilised for the purpose, and help the cottager to pay his rent. In front, too, of some of the public-houses folds are placed, a part being reserved under a shelter—a rustic verandah—for a bench or two and a table, whereat sit the farmers, and the farmers' wives, and farmers' sweethearts, the men smoking long pipes, and all discoursing beer or cider, just as their rustic brethren in Holland did schnaps in the days of Potter and Sneyder and Cuyp. I note that the old and, to my thinking, pernicious custom remains of keeping salesmen "on the deal." Here, for example, is a cow and calf owned by a widow. She has a little stick taken from the hedge with which she keeps them in order, and there she stands, doleful enough, occasionally talking to Farmer Jones, or Rees, or Llewelyn—old acquaintances of her late husband, who for fifty years had attended fair, and sold or bought, and went merrily, if not discreetly, home. To her comes a buyer, and asks the price. He demurs; its a pound too much. There is a little wrangling, and he saunters off; but he is "on the deal," and she cannot sell until he says decidedly he won't buy. He comes back again and again, until the best buyers are gone, and the buyer then buys at his own price. I have heard of one who sent an agent in advance to pick out a good horse, make an offer, get "on the deal," and then just before the fair was over the buyer would come and get a bargain.

At Hereford this custom is disappearing, and is substituted by a sale by auction, which offers many advantages and benefits which the old usages of fairs do not allow.

Here, against a wall, is a character without which a fair would be imperfect. He is a man in an ancient coat of undressed wool, by the side of a standing, whereupon lie halters, horse combs, whips, and the various small etceteras of a farmer's requirements. I noted the old man as a curiosity. Some venerable Welshman, I thought, who had traded thus for half a century, and seen the youthful driver of sheep relapse into the sedate owner of cows. Conceive my surprise when the ancient man spoke. He was an Irishman! The last fair was not a good one for him, so he gathered up his wares, and putting them on the back of a brother Pat, marched away in any thing but a good frame of mind.

The public-houses of Builth—"Harts," "Ploughs," "Lions," "Crowns"—which in the morning are visited by a few thirsty souls only, soon begin to

look business-like. The first sale effected necessitates a visit to a public-house for the purpose of writing out a receipt, and of course for treating the buyer with a pint. Thus, the casual dropping in rapidly becomes a stream, and by mid-day the energies of landlord and wife and her young maids are taxed to the uttermost, and loud and jovial is the harmony.

After dinner the scene becomes still more hilarious. Look in at the "Crown" about two p.m. The smoke is somewhat dense, and, to a non-smoker, trying. There is not a vacant seat. All is talk, drink, and animation. Here a couple talking Welsh, there a group speaking unmistakeable Radnorshire. The specialities of the fair, the value of stock are discussed with vigour, and though there is an occasional argument held and somewhat stormily maintained, it rarely degenerates into a row. At an English fair it is remarkable not to have at least half a dozen fights in the course of the day, but not so with our men of Brecon and Radnor. They may be a little boisterous over their cups, but look at the startling thing a fair is to the solitary and peaceful character of their every-day life. For days, weeks, months, there has been no change from working in the field, from driving the cattle to the fields, and gathering the sheep from the hills. In a mile or two of landscape you will see a lone white speck hedging or ditching. Put that lone white speck with a hundred others into the fun and life and bustle of the fair. Let old friends meet and the beer flows freely, and no wonder that honest Jones or plodding Rees become excited and talkative, and wax red in the face, and demonstrative with the pint on the table!

But it is when they are "trucking" sheep or cattle that the greatest animation is shown. A flock of sheep brought from the neighbourhood of Talgarth has been bought by a farmer of Rhayader. They are to be taken in a truck on the "Mid Wales," and with them another purchase of the Rhayader man, in the shape of a sow and litter of pigs. Every available porter is pressed into service, and to see the farmers jumping deliriously, to hear their frantic calls upon "Moss," the sheep dog, when the sheep bolt by the side of the truck, and make down the line, is one of the most whimsical of pictures. When the sheep are at length secured, and the heavy perspiration wiped away with the old cotton handkerchiefs, how unctiously go the farewell pints at the Llanelwedd Arms, wherein porters join, and are content. The disposal of stock begins soon after mid-day and a class of men is called into action by large buyers, who seem to the manner born. A queer class, half imbecile to look at, but shrewd enough to do their business. Here is one, and he is a sample of the rest. He is a nondescript; appears never to have washed. He has Farmer Jones's cast off coat, and Farmer Rees's delapidated breeches. The hat has done duty as a scare-crow, but the boots are a caution. They are so big and holey that the water has great access and liberty, and makes islands of his stockingless feet. He has a rough dog, who shares liberally with him the hard crusts of life and the kicks. They are both far more accustomed to sleep under ricks or by the wayside than in shelter. 'Tis four o'clock, and they have to take a flock of sheep twenty miles away into

Breconshire, and they will do it with fidelity. Driver is beery when he starts, but he knows what he is about, and the morning will see him at his destination. There he receives his recompense, which he disdains to lay out in boots or clothes, but devotes to consolatory drinks until all is spent, when he turns up at next market day or fair.

There is another frequenter of the old Welsh fair, without whom my sketch would be incomplete. It is the old Cardy rhymster, the descendant of the ancient bard. Uncombed and unwashed, and delighting in old and ragged clothes like the drover, he is yet a distinct and superior being. He sings about the streets some well-known Welsh song, or cries out details of a tragedy; or in the winter shouts forth in stentorian tones "Moor's Almanack," or "Almanach Newydd." Everyone knows him, and he knows everyone: He is red of nose from its frequent porings into pints of Burton; he is fluent of speech, and in his rhymes mixes up Welsh and English to the delight of his listeners, who carry away at a penny apiece the songs or narratives, which enliven the farm-houses in the dingles and on the mountain top for months to come.

Would you make closer acquaintance with one of those farms, with a model farm, the very type of what a Welsh farm should be. Then, go with me to Maesyrynis, a little way from Builth. There on his own freehold is a stalwart and sturdy Welsh farmer, with his ten children, hale men, and comely women. His fields are well tilled, his hedges well trimmed, and all the surroundings of the farm indicate care and prosperity. Before his substantial farm house, in the well-kept garden, there is a box-tree, well worth the journey to see. It is made into an alcove, and has a door to it, and therein the farmer sits with his long pipe, and listens to the music of herd and sheep.

But the church is a ruin, and I commend the fact to the Bishop of St. David's.

Dated from the fifteenth century, it is a relic which the Cambrian Archaeological Association should exert themselves to preserve. But for all purposes of religious worship it is a ruin, and the churchgoers have no alternative but to go to a neighbouring parish.

So beautiful is the district, that a London artist not long ago, bought an estate in the valley for a thousand pounds more than its marketable value, and though he has not carried out his intention of building a mansion thereon, he has pitched his tent there, and I have no doubt but that many an exquisite bit of country life which rivets the attention of visitors to the Royal Academy, has its inspiration in the glens, or on the slopes and uplands of the Honddu.

CAERLEON AND KING ARTHUR.



HAT a place Caerleon is—that is, to anyone versed in the history of his country. Let such a one go there and think he stands over the grave of departed greatness. It will take some little trouble to do so, for the grave is hidden by modern trifles, just as from Caesar's grave might spring a buttercup. In the place local politics are all absorbing, and men's idiosyncracies and women's whims come to the front there as elsewhere. Petty dislikes, gentility, squabbles, jealousy, mingle with broader and more generous aims just as they do anywhere else. The halo of a past grandeur may gleam around, but it does not scatter the modern life and everyday struggles that go surging in their little way around the grave of Caerleon as, in a more pretentious form, they do over and around a city churchyard.

Choose a summer's day for Caerleon. The place is picturesque, and one can see why Roman generals liked the spot, and why, too, King Arthur held his court there. It was near enough to the Welsh mountains for aggressive purposes, and it was beyond the reach of the storms which seem born amidst the solitudes of gorse and heather.

There, in Caerleon, if one can deaden the sound of modern voices and close the eyes to modern life, the mind will recall grand scenes and stirring times. That King Arthur held his court there is enough alone to give it prominence over all other places, for around Arthur how much romance has been woven ! And not alone romance. The name of Arthur is linked with the achievements of the subtlest antiquary, is twined with the poesies of most gifted poets, and throughout our literature gleam records of daring, of courtly grace, of skill and fair fame associated with the knights or the ladies who graced the court of Arthur.

The grim antiquary does not accept all that is told of Arthur and his round table, his knights and his ladies ; and as we know that delicacy and refinement are twin shoots from the stem of civilisation, doubtless much that transpired in the early days of Welsh history would shock our notions of morality. Feats of strength are common to all ages, and the brute courage which alone impels a man to rush into any danger was as common when Caesar landed as when the Fusiliers streamed up Alma. But the modest

bearing, the wifely delicacy, which now characterise our courts, and render that of Queen Victoria illustrious in British annals—this is of a later age.

An amusing tale is told of Arthur's court, which throws a great deal of light on the foibles, possibly vices of the time. By some it has been derived from French sources, and the scene laid in France; but it is just as likely that it applied to Arthur's court as well as to that of France, and owes its birth to some rigid moralist who taught a grave lesson in the form of a pleasant story. Just in the same manner the legend of Llewelyn and his dog is located in various countries, in the East especially, where a snake takes the place of a dog. It was in this way that wandering tale-tellers, harpists, troubadours, acted in their wanderings, suiting the complexion of their tale to the country, and making it more acceptable, just as a titbit of slander about one's neighbour is more palatable than that referring to a person in another town.

I cannot do better than give the tale in verse, as bequeathed by Percy in his "Reliques of Ancient Poetry." The incident is as follows:

King Arthur, his gallant knights, and their fair ladies are assembled. The sheen of a glorious summer's day is around them. All is animation. Never were gallants so gallant, never had soft whisperings in ladies' ears been so soft and melodious, and into this picture of love and loveliness comes a stranger; but Bishop Percy shall tell the tale in his own way:—

In Caerleon dwelt King Arthur, a prince of passing might,
And there maintained his table round, beset with many a knight,
And there he kept his Christmas, with mirth and princelie cheer,
When lo! a strange and cunning boy before him did appear. .

A kirtle and a mantle this boy had him upon,
With brooches, rings, and owches full daintilie bedorn,
He had a sarke of silk, too, about his middle meet,
And thus with seeming curtesy he did King Arthur greet.

"God speed thee, brave King Arthur, feasting in thy bowre,
And Gwinever, thy goodlie queen, that fair and peerles flowre,
Then straightway from his bosome a little wand he drew,
And with it eke a mantle of wondrous shape and hue.

"Now have thou here, King Arthur, now have thou this of me,
And give unto thy comelie queene all shapen as you see;
No wife it shall become e'er that once has been to blame;
Then ev'ry knight in Arthur's court glanced slylie at his dame.

Then first came Lady Gwinever, the mantle she must trye.
This dame she was new fangled, and of a roving eye;
When she had tane the mantle, and with it all was cladde,
From top to toe it shivered, as though with sheers bestradde.

One while it was too long, for another one too shorte,
And wrinkled on the shoulders in most unseemly sorte ;
Now green, now red, it seemed, then all of sable hue,
"Beshrew me," quoth King Arthur, "I think you be'est not tru."

Then down she threw the mantle, no longer would she stay,
But, storming like a fury, to her chamber flung away ;
She curst the rascal weaver who had the mantle wrought,
And doubly curst the forward imp that here the mantle brought ;
"I'd rather live in desarts beneath the greenwood tree,
Than here, base king, among thy grooms, the sporte of them and thee."

Sir Kay called forth his lady, and bade her to come neare,
"Yet, dame, if thou be guilty, I pray thee now forbear."
This lady pertley giggling with forward step came on,
And boldly to the little boy with fearless face is gone.

When she tane the mantle with purpose for to wear,
It shrunk up to her shoulder, and left her nearly bare ;
The king and ev'ry gay knight that was in Arthur's court
Gibed, and laughed, and flouted, to see that pleasant spört,
Soon down she threw the mantle, no longer bowld or gay,
But with a face all fierce and wan, to her chamber slunk away.

Then forth there came an old knight a pattering o'er his creed,
And proffered to the little boy five nobles to his mead ;
"And all the time of Christmas plum porridge shall be thine
If thou wilt let my ladye within the mantle shine."

A saint this ladye seemed, with step demure and slow,
And gravelic to the mantle with mincing step both goe.
When she the same had taken that was so fine and thin,
It shrivelled all about her, and shrew'd her dainty skin.

Ah, little did her mincing or his long prayers bestead ;
She had no more hung on her than a tassel and a thread ;
And down she drew the mantle with terror and dismay,
And with a face of scarlet to her chamber hied away.

Sir Caradoc call'd his lady and bade her to come neare,
"Come, lady, win this mantle, and do me credit here ;
Come, win this mantle, lady, for now it shall be thine
If thou hast never done amiss since first I made thee mine."

The lady, gently blushing, with modest grace came on,
And now to try the mantle courageously is gone.
When she had tane the mantle and put it on her back,
About the hem it seemed to wrinkle and to crack.

“Lye still,” she cried, “O mantle, and shame me not for naught,
I’ll freely own whate’er amiss or blameful I have wrought ;
Once kiss’d I Sir Caradoc beneath the greenwood tree,
But once I kissed Caradoc’s mouth before he married mee.”

When thus she had her shriven and her worst fault had told,
The mantle strait became her right comlie as it shold ;
Most rich and fair of colour, like gold it glitt’ring shone,
And much the knights of Arthur’s court admired her everyone.

Then towards King Arthur’s table the boy he turned his eye,
Where stood a boar’s head garnish’d with bayes and rosemarye,
When thrice he o’er this boar’s head his little wand had drawne,
Quoth he, “There’s ne’er a cuckold’s knife can carve this head of brawn.”

Then some their whittles sharpened on whetstone and on hone ;
Some threw them under the table and swore that they had none ;
Caradoc had a small knife of steel and iron made,
And in an instant through the skull he thrust the shining blade—
He thrust the shining blade in right easily and fast,
And ev’ry knight in Arthur’s court full plenty had to taste.

The boy brought forth a horn then, all golden was the rim ;
Saith he, “No cuckold ever can set mouth unto the brim ;
No cuckold can this little horn lift fairly to his head,
But he on this or that side will full quick his liquor shed.”

Some shed it on their shoulder, some shed it on their thighe,
And he that could not hit his mouth was sure to hit his eye ;
Thus he that was a cuckold was known to every man—
Sir Caradoc lifted easily and won the golden can.

THE DARK ROOM.



WOULDN'T try it for the world !

" Why ? "

" I should die of fright ! "

" Oh, nonsense. "

Such was the fragment of a dialogue overheard by a sedate gentleman, not very long ago, just as he was entering a room in the neighbourhood of Llanvabon, and the speakers were two ladies, the daughters of farmers in the locality. They were friends of old standing, and it seems that one of the ladies had just returned from a visit to an old mansion not twenty miles away, which, in addition to a reputation for great antiquity, possessed the ill-repute for being haunted.

The sedate gentleman inquired, why the speaker thought she should die of fright, and this brought forth the narrative, and it was a strange one.

At the very top of the old mansion there was a room unlit by any window. Once it had figured, so people thought, as a place for storing the fruits of the earth, in the form of oats and wheat, and apples and potatoes as well ; but long ago it was allowed to remain unused, for the tale went that it was haunted, and no servant, man or woman, would venture up there. The haunting was of a peculiar kind. It did not take the form of ghostly sprite, robed in the clothes of the grave ; but amounted simply to this, that if anyone took a candle into the mysterious room, some body or thing blew it out !

Years ago, a venturesome girl, a fresh arrival in the capacity of servant, from Machen, laughed boisterously at the tale, and said if no one would play any trick with her, would stay behind some night, and wait for her on the stairs, she would venture. All agreed to this, and upon a certain night Betsy, candle in hand, mounted the stairs and disappeared from the little crowd of gazers into the haunted room. But she had not been away a second or two before a loud shriek was heard, and down the stairs, leaping more than running, came Betsy, and it took more than one dose of brandy and water to bring her round.

" She had no fear," she said, " on going into the room. It was very dark, awfully dark, she thought, and a kind of ring began to gather around the light. She fancied two small keen eyes swept around, and there was a hum like that of voices in the distance. Then she distinctly heard something brush quickly by her, and in a moment a sound as of a puff of breath, and

she was in the dark." Fortunately for her she had only stepped within the threshold, and thus flight was easy, but no inducement would make her attempt to venture again.

It was astonishing how from that day the room was placed under a ban. Thomas Jones, who would face the bull of Craig Evan Leyshon, and William Phillips, who any hour of the night would make his way to Mountain Ash—a risk that townsmen with the advantages of public lamps and lighted streets cannot appreciate—wouldn't venture into the dark room. Put danger before them in a tangible shape, and they would dare; but the keen piercing eyes, the hum as of distant voices, and the rustling dress! No; that they would not, could not dare.

"Humph!" growled the sedate man, who was stout withal, and, like stout men generally, philosophically inclined, "You see, my dear, there is a cause for everything. Ghosts have no breath to puff out candles with, and, being a ghost, begging your pardon, it doesn't want dress, so it can't rustle. Then, as for eyes, what is the use of eyes to a ghost? Can you imagine a gnat getting into a ghost's eye, or a cinder ash from a train, and for the ghost to rub it, as I have many a time? No, again; ghosts don't require eyes, so if the keen, piercing eyes were seen by Betsy, they must belong to a—to, let me see—why, to a bat to be sure—and there you have the whole secret of the matter. Bats prefer darkness to light, and naturally resent any intrusion of a lighted candle. Bats, bats, my dear," and the old boy took a pinch of snuff with audible relish, and patted his leg as if he had made a very sage discovery. But the lady who had returned from a visit was not to be reasoned so easily out of her pet haunted room, and she declared that "times, and times, and times again," getting quite "Frenchified" in backing up her statement, "people had tried, and they had seen things, O such things, and heard noises like groans and scuffling about, just as if some people were struggling. And more than that; in the front of the stable there was a large stone, so big that two men could scarcely lift it, and as it was wanted out of the way to make a better road to the stable, the men had lifted it, and there underneath was a square hole, and in the hole a peculiar clay-baked vessel, with figures of ferns upon it, and inside a skull!"

"And what is your deduction from all that, my dear?" said the old gentleman. "Do you think that ghost at the top of the house lost his head, and is kicking up all the row to get it back again?"

"Now, you're making fun of me, uncle," said the lady, "and I won't tell you anything again."

"No, really, 'pon honour," was the reply. "All that I want to find out is a legitimate cause for all this haunting. I must confess I don't believe in ghosts, and if somebody was murdered and buried in Ll——h farmyard, the fact of the clay vessel would date the event some thousand or more years ago, and I am sure that the ghost would have been tired of stopping up at nights for such a long period!"

"There," said the lady, "now I won't tell you another word," and with a

pout, half in earnest and half in fun, she ran to the piano and rained down such a flood of quadrilles that the old gentleman took his hat and disappeared, while the strong-minded lady, who had remained silent throughout the conversation, threw back her head and laughed heartily.

The result of a second discussion on the subject of the ghost was that the uncle, accompanied by both ladies, who were further chaperoned by two ardent admirers, pupils at B——'s, the eminent mining engineer at Cardiff, took an autumnal trip to the pleasant spot where stood the ill-noted farm.

Now, farms in Wales are very different to the mass of small English farms. The latter are simply substantial or picturesque homes, generally of men who have begun life as crow-boys, risen to the dignity of driving horses, graduated in ploughing, and finally attained to the dignity of having a farm of their own. If not so, then the English farmer is a retired merchant, horse dealer or the like. But about many a Welsh farm there is a maze of antiquity and tradition, and the original holder is in many cases descended from one who formerly held great state, and was lord of a considerable tract of land. This has been one of the results of the law of gavelkind, estates becoming split up and divided until the remains of the fine old oak that towered aloft above its fellows exists only in the form of saplings.

The old farm, with its haunted room and its ancient grave in the front of the stable, has its history. The prefix *Llan* and the existence of sombre yews hinted at some ecclesiastical or even druidical enclosure in olden time; but of church, or even remains, no traces could be found. Then the walls were immensely thick, and the windows narrow, and the place could have stood an assault, and doubtless had stood many in the days when the chief weapons of offence were bows and arrows and strong arms.

There was a stream that ran pleasantly near, and a background of mountain land, from whence distant view of many districts, and even counties could be obtained, so the spot was just the one for a picnic; and when hospitality was meted out, as it always was at the farm, in the shape of cream cake, oatmeal cake, mint cheese, fragrant tea and eggs, and home-cured bacon, it gave that practical relish to the foreground of sentiment which everybody likes to enjoy, and none more so than the cosy old gentleman, the ladies and the embryonic mining engineers.

Their welcome was a cordial one, and though the farmer was obliged to hurry away early, for he was busy harvesting, the wife did the honours of hostess with all that homely freedom that made the visit pleasant.

Soon after tea, the young lady brought about the subject of the haunted room, to the amusement of the wife, who endeavoured to laugh it all away as a fancy; but, pressed by the old gentleman, she admitted that there was a dark room at the top of the house; that they never used it; and that no one cared to go into it.

"But really, she said, 'what with getting the meals ready, and attending to the children, making butter and cheese, and going to market, there was no time to think about such things.'"

Whereupon one of the young men asked if she had any objection to show them the room, and to give them a candle.

"Not a bit; a dozen if you like."

But the young lady said it was only proper to take one, and that if they did not act properly there might be danger, at which there was general merriment.

The candle having been forthwith brought and lit, for it was now getting dusk, the gentlemen proceeded on their adventure, the young ladies remaining in the roomy kitchen with the farmer's wife, who only left them there a few minutes to point out the way.

The sequel to the visit must be given from the lips of the youngest of the party.

"We were three, and the old boy had the candle, so that there should be no practical joking. He went first, V———next, and I followed, and after we had left Mrs.———, we wound around and around a staircase, that was for all the world like going up a church tower. There was a 'fusty' smell about, as there is most farm-houses; farm people, having so much pure air about them, don't trouble much to open windows. We had lots of fun going up, for once or twice the old boy slipped, and was near bringing all of us to grief. By-and-bye we reached the door opening into the dark room, and a stout thick door it was, all old oak.

"Now," said the leader, "you open it while I stand on one side with the light; the pent up air may put out the candle."

This was done, and all three entered. Talk about a darkness that could be felt. That was thick, and it could be smelt too. We stood about a foot within the doorway, and looked and listened. Not a sound was to be heard, nothing seen. The candle was held up high, but even then only long cobwebs could be seen that seemed to sway about,

"Ah!" said the old gentleman, "here's nothing. Where are the keen piercing eyes, where the hum and, above all, where the rustling of the garments and the mysterious puff?"

He had scarcely spoken this when B———cried out:

"By George I see something, and it's like eyes?"

"Where," said I.

"There, in that corner!"

We all looked, and even advanced a yard in the direction, when, as sure as I'm a living man, we all saw a pair of strange wild eyes that had a gentle movement of their own, as if something there was rocking itself to and fro!

"Strange," said the old man, "the eyes seem more like sparks of fire, and bother it, they are coming towards us!"

I looked keenly, and yes, there they were slowly moving in our direction, and as they did so, a faint, far off moaning, not the hum of voices, but the sound of one in pain, was heard, and instinctively we backed in the direction of the door. I don't believe there was a coward amongst us, but there was a strange, supernatural kind of feeling about that took away one's courage. It was worse than if we had entered a cave in Africa, and some stealthy panther

or tigress was coming at you. That we should have met with strong arms or rifles, but this—!

“Don’t like it,” said the old gentleman. “Let’s go. Thank the Lord we have got the light.”

But we had not reached the doorway when, with an audible rustle, something swept over us, and—puff, away went our light. We bolted forthwith, and once outside the door, not only secured it, but struck a light, and then looked at one another.

“Shall we try again?” said B——

“No,” was the reply, “we won’t try it again. There’s something uncanny in that room, as a Scotchman would say, and we are better off where we are.”

So we descended the stairs, and only felt comfortable when in the bright light of the kitchen fire, and in the presence of the ladies.

Of course we were overwhelmed with enquiries, the old gentleman especially. But he was not very communicative.

“It was a strange room, unwholesome, he should say, and the light was blown out; how, by whom, or what, he did not know, possibly an owl, probably a bat. Ghosts he did not believe in. If ghosts could appear they ought to be employed in something better than frightening people.” Moral by old gentleman: “If he had the farm he should put some windows in the dark room, and ventilate it.” Advice to farmer: “Take off the roof, do something; not healthy to keep such a place.” Answer to enquiry by medical gentleman in neighbourhood: “Would he again go into dark room?” “No. Would rather not. Was too old now to have nerves shaken. Couldn’t account for some things. Didn’t like the appearance of the eyes. A human, and yet not human character about them. Didn’t like the puff against the light. Never heard that birds, owls, and bats could do such things. Strange very.”

And so I leave the dark room of the haunted farm as an unsolved problem. Let the spiritualist or the scientists settle the difficulty.

Old, very old, the farm stands within a few hundred yards of a great railway, and collieries of an extensive character are equally near. The practical is on every side in form, voice, and action. Has the ideal located itself in the mysterious chamber?

THE PRACTICAL JOKERS OF LLANDOVERY.

ANY years ago, when the lead mines were worked to a large extent on the hills between Llandovery and Llanwrtyd, the peaceful calm of Llandovery was subject to be frequently broken by the descent of the "Randy Mwynites." These were the lead miners, who, having no scope amongst the mountains for spending their money, were necessarily obliged to live moral and discreet lives until the pay-day came round, and they could run into the town. What a terror they were to quiet people; what an acceptable invasion they were to innkeepers and tradesmen as long as their money lasted; and then, when it had all been spent, they were as great a nuisance as the militia is of present days.

When money was scarce they would make forays into the district, and if a farmer lost any fowls, or suffered depredation of any kind, it was generally put down to the miners.

I have a strong impression that the familiar term applied to a ragged, disreputable fellow of being a rodney is a corruption of the phrase randy, for the term exactly suits, and never could have been taken from the gallant naval officer. They excelled in mischief, as they did in merriment, and if a combination of the two could be effected, and booty be obtained and fun provoked at the same time, they were happy.

A sample of some of these practical jokes may be novel to the world outside Llandovery.

An old woman had put a neck of mutton into the pot and gone into the garden to gather some savoury herbs. Unhappy old lady; a couple of miners were watching behind the hedge, and while one kept a sharp look-out the other pounced in, popped one of her clogs into the pot with one hand, while he abstracted the mutton with the other, and before she returned the couple of worthies were making their way to a spot where the cooking could be finished, and the eating thereof, in safety.

An incident related in connection with English navvies on the other side of the Bristol Channel really occurred near Llandovery. Several of the miners having a gallon jar came to one of the public-houses and asked for half a gallon of gin. They were served, under the impression that the pence would be forthcoming, but when the landlord knew it was to be a case of trust he insisted upon emptying the half gallon back. Much loth, the miners consented,

but before it was done they told the landlord that another publican had trusted them with half a gallon, so he must only take his half back. This was done, and the landlord was left with half a gallon of gin and water, the miners carrying off the same beverage ! I need hardly add that the jar had been half filled with water before.

Packing earth up as sugar, with just a sample of sugar at the top, was another ruse by which indiscreet publicans lost beer and tobacco.

One of the landladies in the neighbourhood fared better than some of the friends, and not infrequently did she receive a pheasant which had been shot down or a hare wired without the squire's authority. Roamers on the hills in search of anything convertible, there was no resisting power in the Randy Mwyn's nature when he came in sight of any game. He darted at it instinctively, as a cat does upon a mouse, and in some way or other he would get his prey. Then having a hare or pheasant, he was not troubled with any special liking for the same. His taste was not cultivated sufficiently. Where could he hang his pheasant to keep the prescribed time, until it had acquired the piquant taint so relishable by the connoisseur ; where obtain the jelly with which to flavour the hare ? No ; as a rule he had lowly tastes. He luxuriated in bread and cheese and onions ; something strong and relishable ; a good piece of beef, a "rib of mutton," so the custom was to exchange the pheasant or the hare for drinkables or eatables, and the barter was always acceptable to both parties.

The landlady I have referred to one evening told a loafing customer, whose special dexterity in abstraction was remarkable, that she should dearly like a pheasant the next night, as she was going to have a few friends. Loafer thought he could manage it, but it would take a lot of beer. That the landlady was prepared for.

"Put a good pheasant in my cellar to morrow night, and there shall be a gallon of beer on the table in the kitchen the same time."

"Done !" said loafer.

Early in the evening of the next day the landlady saw her customer at the door, but he had no pheasant.

"How is this ?" she said. "Where's the bird ?"

"Hush ?" whispered the man ; "we have got him. A mate of mine 'll be here in an hour ; 'twas too light to bring it in ; and he's such a fine bird."

The confiding landlady looked rather doubtful, but at last consented to put an instalment of the beer on the table, and waited in hope. As it grew darker the fellow went to the little bar and said :

"He'll be here directly, but dursn't come in for fear of showing himself ; so I shall go and fetch the bird from him, and you must give me a shilling more, as he'll want something"

But the landlady was firm. No beer or money until the bird was put in the cellar. So out went Randy, and in less than half an hour returned with the bird surely enough under his coat, and a fine one. The landlady dare not trust it into the bar, for prying eyes were about ; so she simply felt how

plump it was, and told him where to place it; and straight down the man went groping, and hung the pheasant to the roof. Then groping back he finished the remainder of his beer, and, getting the shilling, he departed.

Next morning there was a hue and a cry about the neighbourhood. Thieves had been to——farm again. A foreboding seized the landlady when she heard it, a strange presentiment darted to her mind. Yet, steeling her nerves, she lit a candle, and step by step, with tolerable calmness, descended into the depths. She held up the light. Yes, there was the bird, but it was one which had crowed many a time on the dunghill!

The fact of a landlady being so dexterously outwitted reminds me of an incident told by a former inhabitant of the Llandovery district, showing that landlords also can “do.”

A certain farmer in the neighbourhood used to journey Llanwrtyd way once a year on foot, to pay his ground rent to the agent, and every year, with un-failing regularity, he carried a bag with him, and in the bag a good fat hare.

The old farmer's habits were very regular. Midway on his journey was a public-house, at which he always halted, and quaffed his pint of ale, putting his bag down by his side, with his hat and stick.

The landlord was occasionally treated with a peep at the hare, but the old farmer would never part with it, and the landlord had to be satisfied with a peep.

After many trips, the agent, upon a certain occasion met him as usual with great urbanity—wonderful is the fascination of game to agents—and with a cheery smile, and a direction to go into the kitchen and have his dinner, he added “the hare as usual,” airily, and showing his teeth in the bland effort to smile. As he spoke, he took the bag, and opening it said, as he took out the hare.

“A fine one, I see. Ah!” he added, “whatever is this,” for there, before agent and farmer, hung a very good sized defunct Thomas cat.

“What do you mean by this practical joke?” exclaimed the agent.

“Really, sir,” interposed the old farmer, “I brought you as good a hare as could be had, but I know how it is. I stopped an hour at a public-house on the way, and the rascal of a publican, he changed it. He must have done it. I saw him feeling the bag once or twice and saying what a good hare I had.”

The agent was soothed by the evident distress of the farmer, and they parted good friends. The old man took his bag and the cat and journeyed homewards. That night he slept at Llanwrtyd and the next morning, Sunday, continued his journey and arrived at the wayside inn when the family had gone to church. Only the girl was at home, and it was with some difficulty the farmer gained admittance. She knew nothing of the trick played by her master, and, serving him with a pint of beer, hastened on with her cooking. Watching his opportunity the farmer peeped into the pot on the fire and saw his hare, and to put the Thomas cat in and abstract his own property was easily done during the girl's absence for the second pint. Then the farmer

went on his way rejoicing, and not only completed the boiling of the hare but ate it, to his own satisfaction and that of his family.

At the next journey to the agent he heard the sorrowful tale of the publican. That worthy and his wife returned from church, and as soon as he had heard who had called he hurried to the pot. He skimmed the surface, it was full of hair; alarmed he put in a strong fork, and out came his own familiar cat. It spoiled his Sunday dinner, and ever after that there was always an amusing scene of banter between the farmer and publican about the wonderful transformation, the hare in the bag becoming a cat and the hare in the pot changing to a mouser.

DR. EMLYN JONES.

A SKETCH.



NOW Dr. Emlyn Jones? said an old friend of ours many years ago, when the worthy doctor attracted thousands of persons every Sabbath day to the Tabernacle at Merthyr, "know him! yes, and knew him when he was boy, and know how he began his path in life, and—"

"Well," I quietly interrupted, "let me hear of his youth."

So, with eloquent pauses, for the old gentleman smoked as he chatted, he touched upon one striking incident or two, which I will do my best to recapitulate.

Dr. Price of Abergavenny, the Carnhuanawe of historic fame, was a singularity, quite as eccentric as his namesake of Pontypridd, but with broad and deep literary predilections, which found their fruit in, amongst others, one of the best histories of Wales we possess.

Unlike most abstracted philosophers, buried in yellow toms, and cobwebbed from the world of light and love and sunshine, the grave historian was particularly partial to boys. Nothing pleased him better than to rub a boy's chin, and commend him for any good trait he had exhibited, and if the boy showed diligence and love of books then in Dr. Price he had a staunch friend.

One day, young Jones, with book in hand, strolled by the river, so rapt in the page that river and road were forgotten, and the passer-by unheeded.

Dr. Price was there. It was his favourite walk. There he built up fancies mythological, and "heard the Arthurian horn." He noticed the grave little

boy, and accosted him with, "What are you reading boy?"

The boy looked up and showed his book, which was of an advanced kind for his age, Carnhuanawc questioned him closely, and soon saw that the lad was one of hopeful promise. He told him to come to his house, and there showed him a mine of intellectual wealth, which broke upon his yearning mind like a vision, and from that day the boy became the protege of the doctor, and was aided on the track to fame.

One illustration of Price's eccentricities must be given in connection with Emlyn Jones's youth.

Emlyn wanted a book.

"Take it," said the doctor, "I'll lend it to you, but, mind, not a spot of dirt on any leaf, or I'll not lend you another. Buy a paper knife, and turn over every leaf with that. You may not see the spot, but I shall. Your thumb is full of pores and you cannot avoid marking the leaf."

When Emlyn Jones would bring back a book he was subjected to a rigid cross-examination, but in all cases and at all times the pupil fulfilled the hopes and realised the anticipations of the master.

Years ago, so far away—the intermediate time so full of change and incident that the year is forgotten—we looked in one Sunday evening at the Tabernacle just to hear the doctor, and find out for ourselves the secret of the charm he held. The chapel is filled; below stairs and above every seat is crowded. There are the usual aspects of chapel life; women troubled with restless children pace up and down the aisles, patting vigorously the backs of the restless ones; men of chewing propensities spit audibly, and is only when the formalities are over, and the minister is regularly warmed up to the subject and in the "hwyl," that he is able to get undivided attention—that the crying child is silenced and the man of expectorating habits improved.

The scene is impressive. Perched high above his listeners, tall of form, stout of build, big of brow, with the inevitable lock of dark hair tossing over his brow, he sways his congregation with eloquence and with power. You listen to no cold, carefully-drawn-out, logical discourse, the structure of an unimpassioned, reasoning mind, but to pertinent thoughts, forcible illustrations, anecdotes of books and men, and a torrent of impulsive declamation which sweeps aside doubt and criticism, and needs only cheers and knocking of hands and feet to complete an effect. True it is, that just as the vigorous stalk rises up erect after the torrent has swept down, some analytic minds, reviewing statements and ideas of the worthy doctor, are inclined to criticise them, and to object when the voice is heard not and the service is over. Still, the mass of men bow to his power, and the religious influences and moral sentiments given forth from the Tabernacle are for good.

We write this in a different tense, for the chapel has another minister, and the doctor sleeps, and the drama of his life is over. But we are proud that friends have placed a memorial over his grave, and that a thoughtful Government have recognised his services by giving the widow a position from the national dowry.

OLD SUPERSTITIONS OF THE WELSH PEASANTRY.



HERE can be no doubt but that the Welsh people were, as late as fifty years ago, a superstitious race. Whether they tilled the ground, or worked in the sunless harvest field of coal, it was all the same; the one in the broad sunshine had his occasional gloomy death's candle and spirit funerals, varied by faries, music, and elfish mirth and laughter; but the miners' phantoms were all of the same solemn character, befitting the scene where it was always night, and the very drip of the ceaseless droppings, had something weirdlike.

The neighbourhood of Neath was a famous place for the fairy tribe, and the Dinas Rock their great resort.

There, up to the verge of our own generation, fairies were earnestly believed in, and their capers and jokes recorded with the utmost seriousness.

Rambling one day, many years ago, in the valley, I came across a singularity, one of the most singular of the strange beings whom it has been my good luck to meet on the road of life. He was old and bent, smoked a pipe calmly, looked calmly, talked calmly.

He was to all intents and purposes a philosopher of nature's make. Not one who aped Diogenes, or followed scholastically in the steps of Thomas of Chelsea; but a student of the world, of nature, a reader of the moods of nature to whom the great vault above was an open page, wherein he read the heralds of spring and sunshine, and matronly summer, even as he did the tokens of the night or the dawn. To whom the lark's uprising, and the sound of the wind, and the bending of leaf or closing of flowers, were all full of quaint wisdom, in the retailing of which, between the puffs of his pipe, our philosopher was perfect.

Talk of the Oriental story-teller, who must always soar into second or third heavens, who makes the rubbing of a lamp necessary for the approach of genii, and to whom almond-eyed houris and streams of gems and the lustre of gold are essentials. How pale all this gaslight morbid fancy before the genial and the natural? Hear our philosopher and take the lesson home!

"I mind me, years and years ago, of my old grandmother, who died fifty

years past in her eighty-fourth year. She believed in fairies, she did; and had often seen one. When she was a little girl, going down with her pail to the spring she saw them first. She put her pail under the spout and was singing one of her own sweet songs, just the sort Miss Williams (Aberpergwin) loved to hear, when all at once there was a sound like a distant song, so far away that it only came to me like a bee's hum. Oh, how perfect; 'twas grand. It rose and fell and wound round and round as if whoever was singing was dancing as well, and then it came clearer and clearer, sobbing like one in pain and prayer, and then again full of fun, until a little bird-like voice close by her said, 'there, dear, how do you like it.' Maggy, that was my grandmother's name, turned round, frightened, and there, close by her pail, sitting on the edge, and kicking his legs in the water, for it was full and running over, was a little man—such a little man. His face was an old face, and his eyes were bright, but though his face was old, his legs were young, for they capered about at a fine rate. Maggy was too startled to say anything for a bit, but she mustered courage at last, and said, 'Sing again, Mr. Fairy.' 'Yes, I will, dear,' he said, 'just give me a kiss.' But Maggy put up her apron to her face, and said, 'I'll scream out if you do.' But he did. He was in her lap, and sprung up to her cherry cheeks, and she felt a pair of very soft lips upon hers, and then he was down again, nimbly avoiding the slaps which Maggy tried to give. Then he said, 'There now, I'll sing again,' and away he sung, and it was just the same bee-like hum as before, but very sweet and very pretty, and while she was listening and just beginning to nod her head, for it was so soothing and beautiful, there was a distant 'Maggy!' and a shrill fierce cry sounded from the farm. Then Maggy hurried up her pail, for she knew and dreaded her mother's voice, and looking around to say good-bye, the fairy was gone."

"Dreams," I suggested. "No, she saw him again and again. Once after that she was at the spring, and just when the sunshine crept down into the hollow, and Maggy thought afterwards that this was the exact time selected by the fairies—she heard the old distant music, and he was there. She bent down to him, for she was a hearty girl, and knew little fear, and said, 'Where do you live, little fairy,' just as she might to a doll, and he said, 'Give me another kiss and I'll tell,' and without waiting for a reply he was in her lap again and snatched a kiss. Then taking hold of her dress, for he could not reach her hand when he stood up, he pulled her gently, as if to lead her towards the road, but she was frightened then, and forcibly releasing herself, ran home."

"The last time she ever saw him after was at night. She and young Jenkins, of Maesrhyd, were courting then, and they were coming home at midnight through a field that was always known as the haunted, when they both saw such a merry little crew going round and round, and dancing so gracefully. They both stopped and looked, and one of them ran out and again took Maggy by the dress, while the others crowded about them. Young Jenkins was for laying about him with a stick, but he thought better of it,

and so when the fairies had teased them a bit, they let them go, and went back to their dance." "And do you seriously think that there were fairies; that they danced at nights; that here in the Glyn Neath Valley they kid-napped children, and brought them home, and all that sort of thing?" "Believe i ! of course I do," said the old man, "come here!" and following him he led the way to a deep but sunlit hollow, where the grass was greener than anywhere else, and the sense of calm was greater, where the sunshine, as if carried through softened air, was rendered more chaste and soothing, and great trees bent their heads as if in prayer and reverence over so much beauty. "There!" said the old man, "look!" I looked, and in a great belt of the sunshine were a thousand gnats in a ceaseless dance, whirling about in motions of the most graceful kind. It was certainly a pretty sight. "Gnats," I said. "Exactly," was the answer, "so we call them, but if gnats here, why not fairies once." The logic of the old man was strange and bold. There was no answering it. "Look again," he said, "and through this," giving me a large eye glass. What had been simply pretty was now most beautiful. There was not a motion which was not severely geometrical. Imagine waving lines of beauty, circles opening out, then contracting, but always retaining perfect beauty of form, enlarge the gnats to the size of a large fly, tip every wing at its margin with a subdued sunset, and there was the scene." "Grand," I exclaimed. "Exactly," said he, "and who shall say that from the same wondrous hand which gives us so much of beauty, hidden by ignorance from the world, could not also be bestowed on the fairies, to haunt the dells and people the mines, and even amuse and teaze people." I hastened to express my belief in there being ample power, but it was strange that there was nothing of the sort now. "Ages change," said the old man. "The world grows and alters. It had its play-things; it has had its miracles; now it has its steam engines, and its telegraphs. We don't go back."

I ventured to suggest that spiritualism was an exception. That at Cardiff and other large towns men and women of respectable standing believed in being able to call back and speak with the dead.

But the old man only shook his head. "It may be," he added, "and if so, it is not going back so much as going forward in another direction. No one believes but that the soul is immortal, and being so cannot rest when the covering decays." As to whether the soul of the past could converse with the soul of the present, he didn't know. It was possible. It was all possible; but the age of the steam engine and of science was a practical age, and it was just as well, perhaps better, that the curtain between the two worlds was kept down.

Another old worthy, of a scientific turn of mind, who made astronomy and botany especial objects of study, was also a believer in fairies. He lived in a large town in Wales, and was known for his austere habits and philosophy. Speaking to him on the subject one day, he said, "I know a flower, a beautiful flower, upon which the sunshine seems to rest with more love than it does anywhere else. It is a rare flower, and yet common. If you can stoop down

to it, and put your ear near it without interfering with the rays of the sunshine, you will hear the most beautiful harmony in the world. It is spirit music. There is a softness, a dreaming stillness and beauty about it that is not of earth. Now take a large magnifying-glass, and place it in the same manner, so as not to interfere with the sun, and you will see the soft down on the flower take the form of vistas of trees, and in the long avenues, walking down twos and twos, fairy-like beings, always whispering of love !”

Poor old Norbury, for he was my informant, was a strange mixture of the philosopher and the dreamer. He had at one time been subject to fairy influence. He was in the habit of walking the mountain, of communing with nature and noticing lovingly all the objects of interest, whether bird or flower.

“Once upon a time,” said he, “I found every morning a bright half-crown. I picked up the first and looked about, thinking some poor fellow had dropped it, but it was in a place where there was no traffic, only that of the shepherd. I put it in my pocket, and on getting into the town gave it to a poor old pensioner of mine. The next morning there was another half-crown, and next, and next. I wondered much, but said nothing. At last the fancy took me to keep the money. I had given it all away, and, no doubt, done good, but I thought, let’s see how much I can save for some other purpose. So I took a child’s money box and screwed it down, and put in my half-crowns. Then something or other prevented my going up the mountain, and it was a week or two before I went there again, and the half-crown came no more. I went home after failing, the second or third day, to find any, and opened the box. There was no money in it. Only one or two dry leaves !”

One might well moralise on the lesson : the bright money, so beautiful to look upon, so useful in action, so soothing to the weary, so comforting to the distressed, yet hoarded were only dry leaves, from which the sunshine has gone, and would return no more.

Poor thoughtful student of the stars and of the flowers ! whose rugged face disclosed no faith in fairy lore, yet whose mind was crowded with poetic forms and visions. Fairest of all was the vision that placed the wreath around thy grave, and raised a stone to perpetuate and to honour.

THE DEATH CRY.



COMMON with most of the Celtic family the Welsh believed in the warning death cry, a solemn, thrilling scream heard just before death; the Irish have their Banshee; but the Welsh had no distinct belief in seeing anyone at the time the scream was heard, but the sound was rendered the more alarming from being unaccompanied by any spectral visitant, so that the imagination was left to run riot and to picture all kinds of demoniacal forms. Only one appearance is on record. A man working in a field towards the dusk of the evening heard the death cry sounding close to him, and filled with alarm he hastily gathered up his tools and hurried for the gate. Here, to his horror, he found his way barred by a strange shrouded being, who waved him away. He hurried as wildly to the other outlet, and was met there again by the same form. This was too much for his nerves and he swooned away, and was found in that condition by one of his family who came to see what had detained him at his work.

It would be cruel to suggest that it was a case of cider, as some of the suspicious might; and against this must be placed the fact that the man bore an excellent character. Of the death cry many more instances can be given but the following must be accepted as sufficient to illustrate this phase of the national character.

In a little hollow in Radnorshire was the whitewashed farm of John Lewis, and a prettier spot could rarely be seen, even in that favoured district. In the hollow you were shut out from the world. There was no gleam of iron-works, no digging for coal, not even the sound, much less the presence, of a steam engine. True, by climbing the high range, some glimpse of the world and its activities might be had; but descend again, and it was—Sleepy Hollow.

It was so far off from church, that only on rare occasions of drought or extreme rain, did the old farmer go there, and his only intercourse, the only time that he had any news of the world, knew what Parliament was doing, what the county was doing, what the local magnates were doing, was when he went to Builth fair. To the fair he journeyed with his wool, with his stock; from it he came mellow, and with such a fund of gossip that he was an entertaining and a travelled man to his family for the next month or two. Lewis's family was a large one.

He had seven children, and none of them were educated even to the point of being able to write their names. "It was a mistake to learn to write," said the old man. "It made children lazy, and kept them from work. A cross was all that was wanted, and anyone could do that." So in the hollow the family thrived and vegetated, until it seemed as if like an ancient owner of Court Coleman in Glamorganshire, the old man would never die.

The Court Colman possessor, it seems, lay sick unto death, and to him came the old parson who had rarely darkened the doorway, for as the old man said, "Thank God, we never had any sickness, and there was no occasion for bibles or physic." To him, I repeat, came the "parson" who talked to the possessor of the mutability of earthly things, and said, that like the leaf, he must fade and die; like water be spilled upon the ground, and gathered not up again. "But," said the clergyman, "you have no reason to regret. You exchange this place, pleasant though it be, for one infinitely more beautiful, where the reward await the saints, and the streets are of gold and the gates of jasper." "Don't want to," said the quaint old man, "don't want to leave; want to stay at Court Colman all my life!" So just-like this old worthy was our farmer, and it seemed really as if the hollow had been overlooked by the reaper, for while many a farm-house one of the family, and the villages were periodically visited, the hollow was exempt. But there came a strange series of misfortunes. First the old man, then close upon his ninetieth year, died; then in a few months the old woman; then, one after the other, three of the children. Neighbours began to look at one another. No one but the old doctor, who came to the place with difficulty, thought of the stagnant pond which was close the house. He spoke of fever, but was not attended to, and as for filling up the pond, that would have been folly. Still death continued his visits. Another of the "children," as they were called, but in reality an old man, upwards of fifty, died; next a favourite horse, and other animals, and then, and not until then, did the ravages cease. Of the "children" left, one a woman of forty-five, went way to manage as housekeeper, at the farmhouse of a widower. The two left—brother and sister—stayed, and together, with a little aid, managed the small farm. They had grown up together. They had heard of marriages and being given in marriage; but it had never been the lot of the "girl" to be wooed, or the "boy" to go wooing. It was a strange family. It is not surprising that in a place of such extreme isolation and strangeness, that strange sounds should be heard. For here the death-cry warning was sounded time after time, according the sister, who had heard it previous to every death. She told the clergyman of the parish about it the last time that he read the solemn rites over the dead, in the primitive graveyard of Llanbadadarn Vaur; but the good man only looked askance and courteously said "Indeed."

To his duties as clergyman were added, and it was a common feature in those times—that is fifty years ago, those of a lawyer. He would give advice, of course not accepting fee, but taking what was given, and he further made the wills of the whole parish. It was in making out the will of the surviving brother, that he had the first and last hearing of the death cry.

He had journeyed upon his old horse to the farm in the afternoon of a day in autumn, and having finished the will, and getting the signature attested, had tea, and a long comfortable chat with the brother and sister. Then, just before leaving, a bottle of gin, held as a great treat amongst the hills, was brought out, and a stiff glass brewed for the brother and himself. This had been partially drank, and the brother had, as is usual with men of his class, working most of their time in the open air, gone to sleep, when clear upon the air came a strange and solemn sound.

"Good God!" said the clergyman, dropping his pipe and springing to his feet, "what is that?"

"There," said the woman, "that's the sound I always hear before a death!"

"Tush," he rejoined, "I don't believe in such things. It must be an owl, or stop, have you got a horse that is ill. I have heard something like it from a horse when in great pain."

Again came the warning cry, no horse's scream, no cry of owl, but a wail of an indescribable character that seemed, as the clergyman afterwards expressed it, "to thrill his very marrow to the core."

"Can't stand it," said he, going to the door, "excuse me; please tell the girl to get my horse around," and resisting all entreaties both of the sister and brother, who was by this time fully awake, he started away and never felt secure until the homely parsonage was reached.

It was a singular coincidence that in a few weeks the funeral of the brother took place. The sister did not accept it as singular; she expected it. Not so the good clergyman, who for a long time kept aloof. Afterwards he would occasionally find his way to the hollow, but it was always early in the afternoon, and he never on any pretence stayed until dusk. The impression caused by the uncanny sound, whatever it was, never left him, and whenever he rode out of the farmyard on his homeward way, he made his old steed wonder at the infliction of the whip, and as he plied he said *sotto voce*, "Couldn't stand it, couldn't stand it."

Even better attested than this are records of "spectral funerals," but the clan who attest are dying out fast, and soon there will be none to bear testimony or check the laughter which a practical age accords to all such visions.

THE RETURNED SOLDIER, OR THE WELSH TICHBORNE CASE.



THE numerous cases of mistaken identity and personification which have occurred from time to time, culminating in the Tichborne case, have reminded an old inhabitant of the Neath Valley of an extraordinary case which came under his notice some years ago, which I now give under the name of

THE RETURNED SOLDIER.

Penry Jones was the eldest son of a farmer in the Neath Valley, and just as names are not unfrequently, in themselves, indexes to the date when the owner first appeared on the scene, so Penry had his name at a period of great revivalism—when Penry was a name and an object of reverence in Wales. Alma reminds one of a brilliant episode in history, when the Welsh Fusileers earned their fame. Albert takes back the memory to the lifework of one whose life, unhappily, was too brief for the nobleness of his character ; and to fall from women and men to boots, however grotesque it may appear, yet Wellington and Blucher recall the time when the world rang with the prowess of the British and Prussian heroes, and men resorted even to articles of daily use to perpetuate the memory of those they admired.

So Penry's father may, without further introduction, be regarded as an admirer of Penry, and a man of religious convictions and moral life.

But good, pious men not unfrequently have sons who are the very opposite. Nature is full of such eccentricities. The miser has a spendthrift son, and the profligate parent has often a prudent child.

The old farmer loved peace, and all discord, whether of house or parish, was hateful. Penry, on the other hand, was a turbulent boy, always in mischief, and with a better repute for orchard robbing, fighting, or expertness in sports than any other lad in the village. He was a strong, hearty youth, and as he grew up became very useful to the old man ; but, as if the wildness in his character suited or adapted itself to the change of life and advance in years, so, as he grew older, his wildness, as the gossips called it, led him into occasional rounds of dissipation, which sadly fretted his parents ; and during one of these bouts he took King George's shilling, and was hurried off amongst a

batch of recruits to the seaport, and thence to Bristol. An effort was made to get him off by paying smart money, but he refused to be bought off. The sergeant, a shrewd fellow, had inflamed his mind with notions of foreign travel, wine flowing like water, and all the enjoyments of life to be had for the asking. Young Penry saw only a drudging life before him if he stayed in the Neath Valley. Trim hedges in the winter and spring, and manure the fields, sow and reap and sow again. Such would be the round, and even if he succeeded as a farmer, which was doubtful, what great ambition would that be in such a corner of the world; gaiters and shining boots on Sundays; the beehive chair and forty winks in the evening. No, his mind was made up—in the ranks to win fame and fortune, or lie riddled, as many of Cambria's bravest sons have been, in the trampled battlefield.

The old people saw Penry but once, and that was when he was going to embark. The mother was very much affected. Mothers, strangely enough, love best the black sheep of the flock. Nature seems to rouse in them more love for the erring, as if giving greater power to reclaim, and often with no good result. Old Penry was grieved, and yet, religious man as he was, he was rather proud of his boy, and pictured him coming back, perhaps a general, with medals on his breast, and a bright sword by his side.

So they parted at the dock; a great huzza, the waving of many hands, and then, as silently as the dark cloud shadow moves away over the mountain, so did the brave ship fade into the distance, and was gone!

Who cannot imagine the aching heart at such a parting? The familiar form gone; a well-known voice heard no more; the step, so customary every hour in the day, sounding not in the old farm kitchen or in the yard?

Our nature recoils at such severances, and hope is called in to picture reunions and soothe with fancies that are never realised.

For even let the emigrant come back—and how rarely comes he back!—he or she never falls into the old spot again, and takes up the thread of one's life-yarn as it was left. Father gone or mother gone, sisters married, the home broken up; change and decay written indelibly where there was nothing but the simple annals of the poor traced in the old times.

Even the christian indicates his humanity by the consolation at the grave of meeting where there will be no more parting; and faith in such moments, however visionary to the philosopher, gives a strength and comfort to which all ancient and modern philosophy is but as the cold utterances of the schoolman.

Back again to the farm, back to the quiet, plodding life, and time began to heal the wound in the heart, and to dry the tears. Only the old dame would sometimes be caught with a moistened eye, and sometimes Penry, in his armchair, would hear a quiet moan as from a heart that could not be comforted.

The passing away of seasons, the steady track of years, a quiet monotone in the Neath Valley in harmony with the placid tone of the mountain brook; with Penry, martial music, and rough, free, animal life. So passed the years. For a time the well-known soldier's letter came, with the *visé* of the captain in

the corner—a letter telling of strange scenes and adventures, and hinting at the spare diet, and how acceptable a little money would be. But after a time the letters became fewer, and then stopped. For a while the old people comforted themselves with the thought that Penry was coming home, and month after month passed with the hope. Then, just when the old farmer was thinking to consult the schoolmaster about writing to the War Office to know if his son was alive, he sickened and died. The widow made a satisfactory sale of the farm, and with her only daughter moved to another part of the village, and as the girl, as the old lady called her, though now a staid woman of nearly forty, had no predilections for married life, they lived together comfortably and tranquilly.

Many years passed, and the mother had become infirm and bedridden, and the sister as crossed-grained a woman as any in the parish. It is a singular fact that few spinsters retain the honey when their charms have faded. Whether the pictures of married bliss on every side sour them and make them dissatisfied with their lot, or that it is nature's punishment for their neglect of her laws, must be left an open question. This is certain, that in private life the spinster, as a rule—there are, I am aware, noble exceptions—is cantankerous, fidgety, and nervous. Penry's sister was eminently so—or, rather, disagreeably so—and it was better that the poor old woman was bedridden and somewhat semi-childish, and thus was indifferent to the biliousness of her daughter and clatter of her tongue.

Their house was a comfortable one, for the old farmer had done his best, and left a good round sum behind him; and in the evening time in summer, when the radiance of the setting sun gleamed on the ivy and honey suckle that covered the front, it was just such a place as a tired traveller would stop and gaze upon, and sigh to think his own life was a pilgrimage, and a hard one, and homes such as these were reserved for porcelain, china, not for common clay.

Such a traveller did pause one summer's evening, and the traveller was a veteran, and unmistakably poor. One glance showed he belonged to the class who

Begged bitter bread through realms his valour saved.

He was maimed too. One leg had been injured, and he used stick and crutch. He stopped by the house and looked long and earnestly there. He had been directed to it by someone he had met, for he claimed to be Henry Jones and—he had come home. When he entered the parish he had stopped on the little "rise" in the road that commanded a view of the old farm, a nest of leafery, from which crept up a thin wreath of smoke. 'Twas very real; that was home. He had seen marble palaces, and gilded mosques, and minarets. Strange forms of ancient architecture had met his gaze; but this old world picture, the whitewashed farm and the out-houses, and the ricks, and the lowing tone of herds, eclipsed all. Feebly he passed on to the gate, from whence the path through the yard could be seen. The same old spot, geese, pigs, and cattle; an old (not the old) white dobbin in the paddock. It only needed Penry the elder to come out of the house pitchfork in hand to bring

back the past. A yokel in the yard, seeing him trying to open the gate, came to him, and in a few minutes he knew all. Father dead, farm sold, mother and sister at the other end of the village. And it was with this information he had struggled on to the ivy-covered home of mother and sister.

Slowly walking up the pathway, he stood at length at the door, and to his summons his sister came with a waspish "Well ;"

Penry looked long and earnestly.

"Jane," he said, "don't you know me ?"

"No," said Jane, "never set eyes on you before."

"I am your brother Penry."

"Not a bit of it. You are no more like him that chalk is like cheese."

"But I am Penry ; how do you think I knew your name ?"

"Oh ! anyone in the village could give that."

"Let me see mother," said the soldier.

"No, that I won't" was the ungracious answer. "She is too ill to be troubled with any imposter."

Without any more ceremony the door was slammed in his face. This was hard treatment after so many years of absence, and it had such an effect upon him that he could scarcely drag himself away. But he did, and going to a wayside inn he made diligent inquiries about the old inhabitants, to see if any were living who might recognise him. He found a few, many had heard of him. Many knew him when he was a boy, but there was none who could swear to his identity, and the best could only express their belief. One of the latter was the neighbouring farmer to the old homestead, and with whom Penry had occasionally worked when boys together. Penry reminded him of so many things in common, that the farmer was at length fully persuaded that he was the identical Penry, and undertook to go to the mother's house with him, and insist upon an interview. They went, and despite the opposition of the sister, actually gained admittance to the mother ; but she was long past the allotted span of life, scarcely able to see, and so deaf that it was with extreme difficulty that she could hear, and only moaned and sighed, and said her boy was dead years ago. It couldn't be him. What was there in the grey-bearded, sunburnt man to remind her of the smart youth ? Nothing, even if she could see, so the task was given up as hopeless. The sister either would not or could not be convinced, and so once more, with a curse upon her, the soldier went away and soon left the place altogether, and was heard of no more. To her dying day the sister believed, or said she did, that the soldier must have obtained all his knowledge from Penry. She was satisfied that when Penry's letters ceased he too had ceased to live.

If the soldier really was Penry, and the woman in her heart knew it, the inhuman conduct of the sister is almost unparalleled. To this day the whole thing is a mystery, but the tale was told the writer by one who firmly believed that poor Penry returned home and was disowned—unacknowledged by his own mother, and driven away by the sister with whom he played in childhood, to die a beggar and an outcast.

THE WELSH CRUSADER.



IT is difficult, with modern surroundings of ironworks and collieries to imagine that from a scene now teaming with evidences of hard labour, whether of labourer or collier, and not long ago of great iron making, that at one time, very remote of course from the present, a worthy Welshman marched to the crusades! This, however, is the fact, and this brief sketch may be accepted as literally true.

Within a quarter of a mile from Cyfarthfa Works there is a place known as Tai Mawr, or, in the primitive language of the people, the Big House. It is on the road to Pontycapel, and only within the last few years have the last relics of the "capel" been cleared away. Indeed, even now some vestages may be found by the inquisitive explorer in the rear of the old farm buildings. The *capel* dates from Roman Catholic times, and was in close proximity to the residence of one whose race by marriage has been blended into that of Lord Dynevor.

Of Lewis Edward, the owner and resident, little is known but that he was a zealous Catholic, of considerable landed property and of importance in his day and generation, long ere a coal pit was sunk or a furnace put into blast. He had an only daughter, who married the heir expectant to the Dynevor title and estate. As for himself, he seems to have been more imbued with holy ardour, framed by the enthusiasm of Peter the Hermit, than to care about worldly gain. Little did he think, poor Lewis Edward, that underneath those sparsely tilled acres of his, which extended from his homestead to the mountain top, that there was a wreath, compared with which the nuggets in Australian ravines, and the diamonds amongst the Cape sands, were trifles. To go to Jerusalem, as Norman and Welsh knights had gone before, to see the sacred place around which history and tradition threw so great a halo—this was the sole object of his life, and we may be assured that the Saracen found in the strong right arm of Lewis Edward a power against which it was useless to cope.

Lewis returned, unscathed, from his pilgrimage, lived out his tranquil years, and died. He was buried in the old churchyard of Merthyr, where, prior to 1780, his tombstone was to be seen with "praye for ye sowle of Lewis Edward." When the present "old church" was renovated and restored from the quaint and antique building it was into the ugly structure it is, the tomb-

stone disappeared, and was found some years afterwards in the house of a workman, who had converted it into a hearthstone. From that time all trace of it has been lost, but very possibly it still figures in some similar state, with, in all likelihood, the inscription adroitly out of sight?

A TALE OF LANGLAND BAY.



HOW beautiful is the sea! yet how vast its power. It comes in, deferentially, to bay and harbour, creeping in, as the dog comes to its master's feet, as the willing horse bends its head for the harness, and then, freighted with a big ship and a noble cargo, it rears itself proudly and rolls away. Watch how gleefully it tosses the bather in the sheen of summer sunshine, and how it softens its harsh diapason with the mellow rippling laughter that runs over its waves.

Note its calm! its great mane is down; lordly and lion-like in its repose, no sign or sound is given forth of its awful strength, of its fury when aroused. A straw will do it. "A small cloud no bigger than a man's hand" will change the calm to riotous passion; the big ship and its noble cargo is tossed on the rock, and it seethes and foams about the crag to devour all that endeavours to escape of the crew. It takes the bather, who, a little while ago, was disporting on its bosom, and dashes him about, now here, now there, as the vengeful animal worries its prey, and leaves him not until he lies lifeless on its wave. And then from cliff to cliff, from bay to bay, it roams, and raves, roaring for more, and sending its foaming arms far up the steep to clutch the life that is beyond its grasp.

Beautiful is the sea, but in its passion the beauty is of the demon; and human love, and human hope, and sorrow and despair, no more affect it than the weeds it tosses and casts ashore.

I lay one summer evening upon the heather overlooking Langland Bay, gazing out upon the sea, thinking, as it seemed so still and calm, of the calico waves of the penny theatres of my youth—I beg their pardon they were threepenny ones—and of that vision of Coleridge, where the big fish came up to look at him, the monsters of the deep, when I noticed a grizzly old gentleman sitting near me, who sat and smoked, yet never a word said he.

"Beautiful is the sea!" I exclaimed again.

"Don't see it," he rejoined.

"If there is a beauty, 'tis of the tiger kind. I have no patience with your poets and their rhapsody.

I hastened to assure him that I was not any gifted friend of Swansea, but he went on.

"They talk and prate about the sea as a lover does about his mistress, but there is nothing in nature more cruel, more sincerely cruel and brutal than the sea."

"I am afraid," I said, "your experience has been a bitter one."

"It has," he rejoined. "The joy of my home, the light of my life was drowned yonder," pointing to a thin dark streak indicative of a current about a quarter of a mile from shore.

"She was only eighteen, one of the most loving of girls, one who had not ceased to regard her father as the dearest in the world, and to echo soft nothings, and flirt, and frequent rinks, and dream of another home besides that of her own. Her mother and father were her all, and our home circle one of the happiest.

"It is many many years ago since then. I am now an old man. Then I was in my prime, but still, year after year, I come to this spot and curse the sea that swallowed up my darling.

"It was a softer day than this, and the sky was without a cloud. We had left her mother at home, and I had gone to one part of the bay and she to another, I had no fear of her, for she could swim well, and after my bathe I went to look for her. O God! I never saw her again alive. She had gone away gleefully from amidst her friends, and out there they told me the current seized her. They heard one faint cry, saw one little hand up, and then on the rocks there, your 'beautiful sea' cast her as a demon against the prey it had destroyed, like a scrap of timber, or an old hulk."

"Years and years ago," said the grizzly old man, more to himself than to his sorrowful listener, "years and years ago, and the light of the house was never relit. Her mother dead, I left, to come here again, and again, and look out upon the sea, the 'beautiful sea,' and curse it, ay to the end."

A TRIAD OF WELSH CHARACTERS.



FIRST, the Welsh ballad-singer, who itinerates through the land, visiting towns and villages, and making his home as tranquilly in the kitchen of a public-house as in the barn of the farmer. "Last of all the bards" is he; that is, of the wandering bards, the Clerwr. With a voice husky as a razor-grinder's, he stands at the corner of a street, and will soon gather a crowd. Sometimes he even improvises, as Hood or Goldsmith, we forget which, who used to steal down into the street to hear his songs sung, for our bard not unfrequently sings his own, and, if of the jocular order, spiced with a few sly hints at the Saxon, they go readily, and the ha'pence flow in well. Three or four prominent men come to our recollection. One, a tall, thin character, with excessively round and very brassy spectacles. He was neither unshaven or shorn. No flowing beard, such as the bard of Gray luxuriated in, adorned him, nor was he clean shaven. It was a kind of compromise between the two modes, and the result was favourable to a very unkempt, slovenly appearance. Then he didn't eschew tobacco, but rather chewed it, and so profusely that it oozed out at the corners of his mouth like that of a great boy with liquorice. Add to this, patched garments, the nether ones travel stained, surmount all with an ancient hat, and there is the wandering bard. But he was no fool. He had a vien of dry wit in his composition, which, combined with the quaintness of his speech and of his appearance, provoked sallies of mirth, and kept the old man in tolerable comfort and tobacco.

The last time we saw him the ancient hat was gone; the frayed nether garments had disappeared; he sported a bowler; the intensely round and brassey spectacles were there, the unkempt chin was there, so, too, was the rusty voice; but in all else change, and for the better, had altered him; and we could but conclude that our bard had, in imitation of other degenerate sons we know, abandoned native songs and taken to last dying speeches and confessions, and "list of all the prisoners tried before my lord, &c."

Next of our notable men of the old type is

THE STOCKING-VENDOR.

Amongst the distinctive men of Wales, men whom you cannot find in any other country, is the vendor of stockings. He is generally a hale, substan-

tially-built man, a walking riddle, for, just as the Hindoo can perform a vast amount of work with the sustenance only of a little rice, so our Cardiganshire stocking-man keeps up a well-fed look, undergoes a great deal of fatigue, withstands a considerable amount of hardship and exposure, and yet lives on the plainest, simplest fare for a few pence per day. How he does it is a wonder. For long and weary hours he will trudge over the mountains laden with stockings, which he carries on a huge stick, and when his journey for the day is at an end, a large piece of bread, possibly a small piece of cheese, water or a little tea, then a sound long sleep on a chair, and he is ready for another day's wanderings.

His equipment is simple. Two sticks cut out of the hedge, one to bear the stockings in a row, the other to act as a rest; in this, well filled, and a little bundle of bread that rides on the top of the stick, constitute his requirements. If in addition he has a little plug or two of tobacco, and the inevitable pipe, he would as composedly go the round of the land as into the next county. He generally hails from Cardiganshire, where a large number of men and women gain their livelihood by the stocking trade. The stockings are of the homeliest character, with only one distinctive merit, that of being strong, and this is all that the purchaser requires. They are made by women chiefly, and sold to a wholesale dealer, who, in turn, either sells them off-hand, or employs our friends of the two sticks, the little bag of bread, and the plug of tobacco.

Note them by the country markets. For hours they will stand, sheltered by a wall, or, occasionally resting on their "cross," a little playful badinage with a fellow stocking vendor and a stray pipe their only solace. Presently, the old women come to market, and look out next for endless examinations of the stockings, and trials of their strength. Then, fully satisfied, comes the bargain. This is an awful task, and sometimes it is rendered more than usually trying by the tact of a brother vendor, who, behind the back of the salesman, tries his best by shaking his stockings, winks, implorations, and conjurations, to get the old woman to come and look at his superior and cheaper article!

Sometimes the stocking-dealer ventures to embark in another trade, and speculates in almanacs. "Almanac Moore" then becomes his plaintive cry, to us associated with cold wintry nights in the gusty wind, with the tramp of hundreds in the Welsh market-places, "Almanac Moore, pris ein ceinog, dim ond ceinog."

Though he does sell "almanacs," he still continues his trade in stockings, and in the wintry season prospers. When there was a tax on almanacs, the Stationer's-hall possessing the monopoly, numbers of smuggled almanacs, as they were called, found their way into Wales, and the medium was very often the stocking-vendor's hat. He was enabled to get rid of great quantities, and rarely suffered the penalties of the law, as his trade lay amongst a class little given to informing. An incident is on record of an attempt to bring a stocking-vendor into trouble. He was a well-known character, and made his appearance in a large Welsh town about mid-winter, just in the almanac season. Some

one who bore him no goodwill laid an information against him, and said he kept his stock of smuggled almanacs in his hat. If the exciseman would only examine the hat he would find the unstamped books. The exciseman suggested that the informer should make good his information by himself detecting the almanacs, and after some grumbling this was agreed to. Early one morning Shonny, the stocking-man, departed on his rounds, and in the High-street was met by the informer, who without hesitation, lifted his fist and knocked Shonny's hat into the road, fully expecting the coveted bundle to fall out. Unhappy informer! There was no bundle, not even a solitary almanac, and the stocking-man, not appreciating his legal zest, drubbed him within an inch of his life.

The last of our triad is the

CARDIGAN BUTTER-DEALER.

The Cardigan or Carmarthen butter-dealer is another speciality of Wales, and quite as distinctive as the stocking-dealer. Dressed in home made clothes, ruddy of look, with a cart, strong, and patched in a rustic fashion, drawn by old Dobbin, sure-footed and long-enduring—the dealer makes his periodical trips from Carmarthen or Cardigan to the more populous towns in the east. Occasionally his journeys are extended into England. Not long ago a respectable inhabitant of Merthyr Tydfil died who was formerly a dealer in Carmarthenshire, and made regular trips as far as Birmingham with eggs and butter, which he retailed in the street, at a time when Birmingham was without a market.

In former days, the dealer coming from the coast had something more attractive than butter in small kegs at the bottom of his cart. He, too, combined a little smuggling with his other trade; and being a wary customer, with an intuitive knowledge of an exciseman, whom he would either avoid or deceive, he would contrive to do a good deal of business in the illicit line. One of these has been known to receive as much as fifty pounds at a time from a spirit dealer. Another was in the habit of supplying half-a-dozen kegs of brandy now and then to a large merchant in one of the Welsh towns, and the transaction was carried on in the most careless fashion for a long time, until a narrow escape made both cautious for the future. He arrived in the town late one evening, just avoiding the exciseman, who had been on the look out for him, either having his suspicions awakened, or else had received private information respecting him. John Thomas, as we will call him, unloaded his kegs, and was going about on his butter-round, when the officer met him, and subjected his cart to a close examination. Nothing illegal was found, and John pursued his journey rejoicing. But the exciseman was not satisfied, and, having learnt that he had been with the merchant, went there and examined his warehouse. The merchant just had time to conceal the kegs in a hogshead, and fill it to the top with sugar, when the officer entered. He was too old in the service to be easily misled, and probed deep into the cask, but not deep enough, and so was again nonplussed.

Like the stocking-dealer, the dealer in butter and eggs is penurious to a degree. He is generally well-off, for he is one of the hardest bargain-drivers, and lives on the plainest fare. The respectable members of this class, though close dealers, are honest ; but there are some who resort to many expedients to increase their profits. It is astonishing to see how much water the butter sold by them will hold, and to note the skill with which an inferior article is concealed under some of superior quality. To outwit these a long butter-taster is used, which speedily reveals the fact that there are several stratas of different kinds in the same tub. Even then the dealer braves it out. His extreme penuriousness has led him to cheat ; his hardihood now spares him from the reproaches of a sensitive and refined mind, and if he cannot make a fair deal he will try another merchant, who may be without the ugly butter-taster.

Though very shrewd, and belonging to the class who are said to sleep with one eye open, the "Cardy" is sometimes done. The iron districts are his most lucrative as well as dangerous quarters. There he is likely to sell his stock at the best rates, but, primitive as he is, confined to a beer-less neighbourhood for greater part of the year, the temptations to indulge are strong. Cardy, too, is impressable to the blandishments of the fair sex, and many a time have the proceeds of his butter found their way in a lump into the pockets of the fair and frail. Cardy storms ; the police are called ; there is a case in court ; but the result generally ends in Cardy going home moneyless, to forswear all such attractions in future, and for the rest of his life be still more penurious and striving.

A member of this class once found a box of eggs disappear magically. He never made it out. On the eventful day he was jogging from one town to another, and passed a large ironworks. The roar of wheels and shrill escape of steam deafened him. A crowd of boys, always hanging about, espied him as fair game. Presto ! One was on the cart behind, unseen, unheard ; one by one the eggs which were exposed in the box were handed to the confederates, and when Cardy looked around, there was the box certainly, but the eggs were gone, and there was no appearance of the thief.

Tired at length of the road, the old man resigns his post to the son, a green youth, who has to learn the rich experience won, by trial and suffering, and in the lapse of some fifty years the "boy is so like what the father was that it seems like biography repeating itself !

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF OWEN GLYNDWR.



DRY and musty are the Inns of Court. The roar of London seems frowned away from their precincts, and in the interior it only comes faintly on the ear like the noise of a stream that is incessantly pouring onward. Still there is no stagnation there. Busy men with blue bags are constantly passing in and out. Shrewd, sharp featured men are as constantly passing out and in. Within, the impress of law's gravity and importance casts a solemnity that cannot be shaken off. There is no sound of mirth there, and if the prattle of children is heard in the precincts, it is soon chilled, and the prattlers hurry away. As it is now, so it has been from time immemorial. So it was in the fourteenth century, when, busily engaged in the rudimental duties of copying and engrossing, toiled away a young Welshman whose destiny was at a distant time to cause a ferment through the nation, to make the king of England feel that "uneasy is the head which wears a crown," and necessitate the banding together of the whole military resources of the country to vanquish and overwhelm. Little did Owen think this as he laboured away with his pen in the musty chamber; but even as the pen toiled and struggled in the work of copying dry details, with its infinity of whereases and heretofores, his mind was away either amongst the hills and glens of Glyndwrwg, or in some brisk combat when right would battle against might.

It was no pleasant task to the young mountaineer this dry legal work, but he had chosen it, and must continue. And so day after day he plodded on, passed through the period of development by which the articulated clerk becomes the barrister, and at length saw himself called to the bar, Owen Glyndwr, barrister-at-law.

One can as well imagine ordering a cask of beer of Oliver Cromwell, buying a sirloin of beef of one of the famous Marshals of Napoleon, as instructing Owen to plead a case before magistrates or judge. "Hang it," said Owen, as he threw his quill away and pitched his blue bag and its contents into the corner, "this won't do. I have friends who have influence with the King, and

the arm that my good sire thinks ought to drive a pen over this confounded parchment shall aid in his Majesty's wars with France !”

One can imagine him after such an outburst taking up the ruler, and going through an elaborate attack on an imaginary foe, the surprise of the small clerk who assisted in the work of engrossing and going messages, and the sorrow of the old lawyer, who had so patiently laboured to fit Owen for the profession.

The divinity that doth hedge a king was not so formidable a matter in those days. To use a common phrase, kings and queens were more come-at-able then than now. Kings walked down Fleet Street, and hobnobbed with courtiers. Kings then were conspicuous by their exercise of might; they gained their high station by the strong arm and shrewdness, and if they had neither one nor the other they were poisoned out of the way, or got rid of. There was none of the tranquil succession such as we associate with royalty in modern days. It was the stormy era when young princes were not allowed to develop themselves into kings on account of cruel and ambitious uncles and aunts, and near about the time when Berkeley Castle won its tale of horror, when Neath Abbey sheltered a regal fugitive, when, in fact and in short, royalty had all its work to do, first to get the throne and then to keep it.

Owen had friends at court, and such was their influence that he was appointed body squire to King Richard II. and from that day cast aside all his law, exchanged the pen for the sword, and in many a fierce conflict in France, and in Ireland, and after that in the domestic strife between the Houses of Lancaster and York, won his reputation as a gallant soldier, wary, skilful, and determined. Richard liked his gallant Welsh squire so much that he knighted him, and Owen, true to the characteristics of his country-men which impel a man to cling to his friend when the sky frowns, as well as when the sun shines brilliantly, stood by him to the last.

Even when the deposition of Richard was effected, and Henry IV. reigned in his stead. Owen did not then, as a host did, pass over to the new king. Like the stern honest warrior he was, he sheathed his sword, shook from his feet the dust of London streets, and hied away to his old house, there to live the life of a Welsh gentleman, to quaff his metheglin, to listen to the strains of his harpers, to farm his land, and see children spring up around him, and dream of the old days when the Gascon went down before his good blade and the Irish rebel succumbed to his power. The Inns of Court, the musty chamber, the endless toil; next the busy scenes of war; now the settled calm of the country gentleman. Happy the life. It was open house always at Glyndwrwg. Iolo Goch was installed as bard in chief, and the time of that worthy individual was passed either in praising the beneficence of his lord or in eulogising the merits of the ale and substantial delicacies of the tables—not forgetting the tasting of both. Iolo was supremely happy, and so was Owen. He had married a daughter of Sir David Hammer, one of the judges of the King's Bench, and the time not passed in domestic felicity was spent in the study.

He has been regarded as a superstitious man. Shakespeare describes him as exclaiming—

At my birth
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds
Were strangely clamorous in the frightened fields.
These signs do mark me extraordinary,
And all the courses of my life do show
I am not in the roll of common men.

The description of Glyndwr's residence, given in the *Cambro Briton*, is interesting, as showing the state maintained at that time.

Iolo, who takes of course, being a poet, the greatest poetic license, describes the mansion at Sycharth as being like Westminster Abbey !

There were nine halls, and in each a wardrobe full of clothes for the use of the guests and dependents. In the vicinity of the house was a park well stocked with deer ; there was also a rabbit warren, fishponds, a heronry, a vineyard, an orchard, and a mill. Iolo, worthy type of the "Holy Friar," describes, with great zest, and evidently from intimate knowledge, the quality of the ale and wine, and the cookery department is commended in the warmest manner. The picture, in fact, of the home life of Owen is one that the eye can rest upon with infinite satisfaction. the musty memories of the Inns of Court are gone, passed also the troubled scenes of conflict through which he had fought his way up to a knighthood, and our Sir Owen, then in the prime of manhood, being in fact only forty-five years of age, enjoying the happiness of domestic life, the society of numerous friends, the sports of the field, and that repose so enjoyable after activity. It seemed as if for him there was to be no more change, that, tranquilly as a leaf upon the smoothly gliding river, he was to pass down on the stream of time, and figure not in making the eventful history of his country which was to follow.

Unfortunately for Owen, he had a neighbour who was most unneighbourly, and he had to learn by bitter experience that an unfriendly neighbour is about as obnoxious an individual as a man can have near him.

In common life a man of his stamp keeps a dog that howls all night, favours wandering musicians, harbours nuisances, and, if there is no local board to protect, shuts out one's view by building high walls. In Owen's case his neighbour very coolly took possession of a large tract of uncultivated ground, which had been always claimed by Glyndwr, and the result was that the neighbour went to law, and Lord Grey de Ruthin, the unneighbourly neighbour, had to relinquish possession. This was gall and wormwood to his lordship, but he bit his lips, swore soundly, and "bided" his time.

That time soon came. With the dethronement of King Richard, Owen lost his best friend, and with him ended all influence that he had at the English Court. Like a hawk waiting for his prey, Lord Grey once more pounced down upon the land, and all that Owen could do was futile in regaining his property. Owen appealed to the house of Parliament, and here again Lord Grey's influence was paramount, and the appeal was dismissed with contempt.

Such a state of things was enough to rouse the bitterness of even a peaceful

man, but when one refers back to the military life of Owen it is sufficient to show that underneath the repose and love of social enjoyment there was a volcano. Vegetation grows, and even shrubs rear their foliage above the track where the lava has flowed, and it needs but little for the crust to be brushed away, and the fiery stream course adown its old path.

Iolo failed, we may be sure, to rouse again the hearty merriment of his master; and the endearments of home and the active pleasures of the field gratified no longer the lord of Sycharth.

The cheery smiles gave away to frowns and moodiness; he paced his halls and his lands with bent head and set lips, and could Lord Grey de Ruthin have known his man, his vast power, and indomitable energy, he would have handed over the paltry acres, and craved to be friends. But he did not. They were two antagonistic natures, doomed by their very constitution to be at war with one another; men in whom nature had placed some repellent elements, just as she often does amongst lowlier creations than humanity, and perhaps it is fortunate for lawyers that this condition of things is as common now as it has been in ages since the practice of law became a profession. Lord Grey was not satisfied even with the possession of his ill-acquired land, but sought by other means to annoy his neighbour. Thus, about the year 1400, King Henry IV. was busily engaged in making preparations against Scotland, and to do this effectually all his barons and tenants *in capite* were served with a summons to attend the King with their vassals. It is strongly suspected that Lord Grey so plotted as to obtain the summons for Owen under pretence that he would deliver it, but instead of doing so he withheld it until it was too late, and the first announcement Owen had was his being declared a traitor, and his whole property confiscated. The King's inference was that Owen purposely refrained from joining him with his forces, and the new dictum held weight, "He who is not with me is against me."

This declaration of the King was the last feather. Owen sprang to his feet, no longer moody, pondering over his wrongs, halting between his love of home and peace, and his natural desire to be avenged. He swept away with a spasm in the throat all he had loved, bared his bright keen sword, and vowed, with the help of God, that full atonement should be rendered him.

Owen even in his day was shrewd enough to know that Divine interference in personal quarrels is more a matter of tradition than history, and so instead of vowing he at once resolved on action. He seized his own land at the onset, and took also a considerable portion of his enemy's domains, and, as there seemed every indication that he would not stop at this, Lord Grey, who was at the English Court, collected a strong force, and proceeded by the most direct route, and in company with Lord Talbot, to do battle with his foe, and, if possible, to take him prisoner.

They took their measures with so much secrecy and speed that before Owen was aware the foe was upon him, and but for his superior knowledge of the locality he must have been captured. Thanks to the deep woods surrounding his mansion, he was enabled to escape, and soon to defy pursuit. This was the

culminating point. There was no longer any wisdom in concealing his intentions, the die was cast, and on the twentieth of September, 1400, he caused himself to be proclaimed Prince of Wales. News then was slow in travelling, but as it reached valley and hillside a thrill went through the native hearers, and the old spirit of patriotism that had been slumbering so long was fanned into a flame.

The first overt act of hostility was committed by him at the fair of Ruthin, a town that formed a part of the rule and territory of Lord Grey.

Fairs then were chiefly held for the purpose of commerce. There were no drapers' shops wherein rainbow-hued productions dazzled the eye; no place where gold and silver trinkets were exhibited, and art fancy taste displayed in wood, metal, china, or painting. Art was then in its youth as regarded the Welsh mountains, and could only be seen, and that in a very modest way, over the borders. The fair was the spot to which English merchants brought their wares, and it was at these places once or twice a year only that the maiden and mistress bought their little bits of finery, and the farmer and the villager, as well as the landowners of superior station, purchased the more substantial necessities and luxuries of life. Picture such a gathering of buyers and sellers, an immense crowd of lookers-on, a wandering harper and an occasional fiddler, ale and metheglin flowing freely, all excitement and hilarity, and into the midst like a mountain torrent poured Owen and his men. History, as usual, deals only in outlines, and we are left to imagine the scene that followed. To Owen all were foes; the English traders were slain as they sought to bundle up their wares, even the inhabitants did not escape, and with pillage and fire and the screams of terror-sticken women the night closed in horror. Owen burnt as much of the place down as he could, and then retreated to his stronghold among the mountains.

From that day, as soon as the tidings of the burning of Ruthin became scattered abroad, his mountain home was the goal of hundreds of warlike spirits, anxious to join his band, and help to win their country from English rule. Patriotism, we are told, was the prevailing spirit, but then, as now, it cannot be doubted many joined for the licence it gave to spoil, and the free life and booty to be won had charms of the highest order. I make no reflection that cannot be maintained. Human nature is the same everywhere, and has been so in all ages; and amongst rude and undisciplined forces one must not expect the higher sentiments of humanity to predominate. Owen was a patriot, but even in his case, at the outset he made it subservient to his personal feelings of enmity against his foe. Had circumstances remained unaltered Owen might have been a trusty baron of the King, and ended peacefully his career on his manorial lands.

It was not to be expected that such an insurrection in Wales would pass unnoticed. The King of England knew well, if not from personal knowledge then at all events by the annals of the past, that an outbreak in Wales was a formidable event, and required crushing in the bud if possible. Again every baron was summoned to aid, and Henry marched with the utmost speed,

gathering strength as he proceeded until he reached North Wales, with a force so large and so eager for the fray that Owen, adopting the tradition of his race, which enjoined retreat to the mountains when valour would have been recklessness, retired to the inaccessible heights of Snowdon, and defied his foe. Thus foiled the king was obliged to be content with having marked his track, as old chroniclers state, with blood and desolation, with making Owen an outlaw, with a price upon his head, and with giving the whole of the Glyndwr properties to his brother the Earl of Somerset.

What the king failed to effect by arms he sought to accomplish by stratagem, and on one, two, or three occasions a royal proclamation was issued and circulated extensively throughout Wales offering a free pardon to all the Welsh who would lay down their arms, excluding only the notable chieftain himself, and a few of his leading generals. The native historian records with considerable zest the fact that no one was found so lacking in true patriotism as to avail himself of the offer.

Owen continued to gather strength, and to defy. His army in addition to the weight of his own military knowledge and valour had also the advantage of aid from England—many a Welshman of renown who had figured in the wars of the past having forsaken their allegiance to Henry, and sided with their own country. Whatever Owen became ere his reign ended it must be admitted that in the early course of his rebellion he did not discriminate very carefully between people of his own race and possibly patriotic sentiments—if they dwelt in the domains of the Lords Marchers—and his undoubted foes. Thus his raids into Cardiganshire and other South Walian districts were incessant, and aroused the bitterest animosity, continuing and developing still more that feeling of antagonism between North and South Wales which has existed from ancient times, and to this day is not altogether eradicated. “A dyn o’ north” is still a term by which the South Walian sums up his estimate of his old foe, and is often used in cases when a trader has been taken in or a man’s practice found not to be in keeping with his professions.

After burning and pillaging many of the towns in North Wales, Owen and his followers made such frequent irruptions into Cardiganshire, where the king had many friends and supporters, that they assembled to the number of one thousand five hundred men, and in turn became the attacking party. Owen is stated to have had only three hundred men with him at this juncture, and being so much outnumbered there was for a time every indication that Owen’s career would be summarily ended, and that, as too often has been the case in the annals of Wales, by his own countrymen.

But there was more than a spice of the Spartan about Glyndwr. He knew the justice of his cause, and he was equally well aware that his devoted band only waited to be roused to be invincible.

He went in and amongst the ranks of his men, exciting their patriotism, and arousing their hate. He told them that they had nothing to hope from the enemy, but everything to fear. If they remained simply on the defensive

they must die from famine, and if they gave themselves up, it would simply be to be slaughtered.

"So, my noble fellows, if die you must, let it be with arms in your hands, with your front to the foe, and as men."

Such was the inspiring influence of his address that his own courage seemed to permeate the humblest soldier there; the mountain glen rang with their cries, and, seizing the favourable opportunity, Owen gave the signal, and the rush was so furious and impetuous that the men of Cardiganshire fled in wild affright and—Owen was free!

We can imagine him, a lion rescued from the trap by his own daring, leaning upon his sword and gazing back at the distant enemy, the huge sinews of his brawny arms like whipeords, his heart beating convulsively, the flush of battle and of victory on his brow, and on every hand the ringing acclaim of his heroes.

Success begets success. It is in the order of things. Even biblical authority vouches that to him that hath more shall be given, while from the almost destitute, the little they have is taken away.

Mysterious, but no less infallible order of things. Owen's victory made him a magnet of power that wooed all of kindred influence to itself.

It speedily drew a host of valiant Welshmen to his side, and so alarmed the king that he mustered a still stronger force, and re-entered Wales determined, this time, to put an end to his hateful antagonist.

This campaign he brought tact as well as force into the field, and while his army was engaged in burning and pillaging, and slaughtering all of a suspected character with whom it came in contact, the king sought to wean away some of the principal supporters that Owen had, and if the annals of the times can be relied upon with some degree of success; but again, with wonderful skill, Owen evaded him, and led him such a dance, that he was compelled to retire after an inglorious defeat. Henry is reported, but upon slender testimony, to have made another effort, supported by allies from nearly all the counties of England, and from the fact that he was again obliged to return defeated one may conclude that the army of Owen, though valiant, was still comparatively small in number, and thus could readily occupy fortresses, and climb heights inaccessible save to a mountaineer. It was a joust in fact between one of the light and one of the heavy weights, where nimbleness and dexterity proved more than a match for brute strength. And now we come to a part in this veracious history which illustrates the superstition of that age. It is like a leaf out of our great grandmother's book. We seem sitting all again in the old chimney corner, listening to tales told in the gloaming, at which little hearts quaked, and the breath came and went quickly. It was the childhood of a history. Man was then in respect of mind in his infancy, and signs in the heavens were auguries as strongly believed in as they had been in earlier days by Roman and Greek. On the eve of a successful resistance to the king, the Welsh saw with affright and then, when the bards interpreted the omen, with joy, the appearance in the heavens of a great comet, which gleamed in the

heavens, casting all the heavenly phenomena into the shade. No one, who is a stranger to the vastness and solitude of the Welsh mountains, can understand the effect such a spectacle must have had. Seen from the busy thoroughfare in a railway and scientific age it is passed by, but gleaming forth with almost lurid brilliancy on scenes of rugged and solemn majesty, and beheld by untutored and superstitious minds, the effect was wonderfully great, and when, coupled with this, enthusiastic men like Iolo Goch, Owen's own bard, went into ecstasies over the appearance, and described it as Heaven's own indication of success, it was no wonder that the hold which Owen had upon the people grew more strong. It was not man's will alone that Owen Glyndwr should reign, it was God's !

Iolo, under the influence, I fear, of an extra quantity of ale, even went to the extent of comparing the appearance of the comet with the star of Bethlehem, and in a poem of a wild character, *Cynydd y Seren*, trod very close upon the skirts of profanity. It was excusable.

Such was his attachment to his master, his faith in his prowess and in his cause, that the license always given to the poet may even now be awarded to Iolo, especially when one thinks of the metheglin !

Henry having now tried his hand several times and with the usual run of ill luck, Lord Grey de Ruthin was delegated to do what he could in the matter, and forthwith, as hirelings do, noble or common, he began to bring the military strength of the country to a point, and make that point the impalement of Owen !

Owen, however, seems to have been well off for spies, who kept him thoroughly posted with the movements of the enemy, and it was by these means that he was in a great measure enabled to outwit him. Thus, in the case of Lord Grey, Owen marched with a large force to the very neighbourhood of the castle, and placing his men in amongst the woods, he put himself at the head of a small band, and very leisurely paraded before the castle of Ruthin. The ruse was eminently successful.

Lord Grey, violently angry at seeing his opponent thus come and defy him to his face, rushed out to capture him. Owen hurriedly retreated as if in alarm to the borders of the wood, where his men lay in ambush, then, giving a signal, the attacked became the attacking, and not only were Lord Grey's men routed with loss, but he himself was taken prisoner.

What a scope for the native artist is presented in the meeting of victor and vanquished. Owen for the first time looked upon his enemy, beaten and bound. The man who had caused him to abandon the sweet delights of ease and home, and become little better than a vagrant, though he aspired to be a king ; to be incessantly on the tramp, and to know no peace ; to hear in every gust the footfall or the voice of a foe—here was the man beaten, I repeat and bound. What a temptation to end at once all hate and settle scores by sending, as the Ossian poet would phrase it, the howling soul to Hades. But no ; Owen took a loftier revenge by sparing him, and conveyed his captive to one of the Snowdonian strongholds, where he kept him prisoner for several

months. What an outcry followed throughout the kingdom ! Henry, the king, mourned his friend. He must have thought, and naturally, that Grey would have but a short shrift at the hands of Owen, and scarcely had the tidings reached the king of the capture than he made overtures to treat for a ransom. No less than eleven distinguished individuals, states Parry, were employed in the undertaking, and when the distinguished individuals reached North Wales, it was some time before they could contrive an interview with the redoubtable hero. They did at length succeed, and at this consultation it was settled that Grey should pay down ten thousand marks, observe a strict neutrality in future and marry one of Owen's daughters !

There is no single incident in the whole of Owen's life which indicates more thoroughly his acquaintance with human nature than the last stipulation "to marry one of the daughters."

Owen knew that in Lord Grey he had a valorous and determined opponent. He knew his power at the court, and that if the ransom was paid there was no dependence upon his future course. But, married to one of his daughters, she, worthy daughter of a worthy sire, with martial blood unquestionably flowing in her veins, she would keep him in order, and she did !

The ransom was paid, the daughter was wedded, and from that time Grey figured no more in the hostilities waged against Owen. Owen was his father-in-law, and Miss Glyndwr, the Lady Grey de Ruthin, effectually curbed him in.

History does not give us the slightest idea of what Miss Jane Glyndwr thought of the matter previous to her marriage. There had been no love-making, no espousals. Doubtless she had never spoken a word to the English lord before, but we may be assured that she accepted the position of his wife with a great deal of complacency. There are very few who would refuse it now.

Having effectually checkmated Grey by putting the queen to guard every outlet, Owen, feeling himself secure from any attack by Lord Grey or even the king, went about in a methodical kind of way to clear off old scores. Ieuan ab Meredydd, of Cefn-y-Van and Cesail Gy varch, suffered the destruction of all his property, and escaping with others, and retreating into Carnarvon Castle, to which Owen forthwith laid siege, he had the misfortune to fall by a chance bolt from the archers.

Next Howell Seel, his own cousin, was not only slain (but in fair combat), but his body was concealed in a tree, and there remained until the old oak was shivered by a flash of lightning.

Nor was it only chieftains and men of large landed property who fell to his revenging hand, the monks were singled out for suffering, and Bangor and St. Asaph Cathedrals were razed to the ground.

The historian Parry enters into a long justification of the conduct of Owen in warring against the religious institutions, and pleads that Bishop Trevor, of St. Asaph, had made himself particularly obnoxious to Owen by the persistent violence with which he had assailed the unfortunate successor of King Henry, Richard, Owen's friends and patron.

Trevor had not only pronounced sentence of deposition against Richard, but had journeyed to the Spanish court to support his action. Thus to assail Owen was to earn his vigorous enmity, and equally to assail his friend, a characteristic trait of our Welshman, which ought not to pass unnoticed.

It must also be noted that the higher offices of the Church were filled by the friends of the king, who were thus representatives of the English king, consequently strictly opposed to Glyndwr. And Owen saw in stately edifices, which were magnificent in comparison with the buildings of the period, simply great resorts of spies and foes, who would only too readily yield him up and exhibit their delight if he were only led forth to die.

Continuing his career of devastation, Owen came to the borders, where making his track conspicuous by flame and blood he encountered an adversary worthy of his steel, the gallant Sir Edmund Mortimer, who, at the head of a determined body of dependents, was hastening towards him in order to protect the lands and property of his nephew, the young Earl of March. The battle that ensued is historic. It was one of the most desperate in which Owen had been engaged, and for a time the fortunes of war wavered, now inclining to the side of Mortimer, and again to the standards of Owen.

Both leaders fought amongst the crowd, encouraging their men by personal displays of valour. They did not, as in battles of a later day, take their stand on conspicuous, yet remote, mounds, and direct the charge and counter charge; but wherever the tide of battle was strongest, and the roar of strife most resonant, there was either Owen or Mortimer to be found.

At length the two met; for a time there was the fierce play of steel, the rush of horseman against footman, and then Sir Edmund, by one of Owen's inimitable attacks, was thrown from his horse and taken prisoner.

This decided the day, and the men of Radnor and Herefordshire took flight, leaving according to the historian, upwards of one thousand dead on the field. Shakespeare refers to the great defeat of Mortimer and to certain acts perpetrated, it was alleged, by Welsh women on the dead as follows:—

There came
A post from Wales, laden with heavy news
Whose worst was that the noble Mortimer
Leading the men of Herefordshire to fight
Against the irregular and wild Glendwyr
Was by the rude bands of that Welshman taken,
A thousand of the people butchered
Upon whose dead corpses there was such misuse,
Such beastly, shameless transformation
By these Welsh women done as may not be
Without much shame told or spoken of.

Historic research does not clear away all the charge, and it would appear that offences were really perpetrated on the field to some extent, certainly not by Welshwomen, when the scene of action was in Radnorshire, and it was not to be expected that women would have followed in the ranks of Glyndwr, or amongst the *impedimenta*, and that the acts were done without the knowledge or consent of Glyndwr.

The charge gives an insight into the opinions held in England at that time regarding the Welsh. They were held to be rude, impulsive, valiant, and yet merciless, and the common notion evidently was that the women were of the same stamp.

One social result of the battle of Brynglas was that the incensed king issued an edict expressly forbidding any Englishman from that day forth to marry a Welshwoman, an edict which we may be sure did not long remain in force, and when love was in question was generally disregarded.

The victory over Mortimer by the now elated and successful Glyndwr was received by King Henry with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow. He was glad to see the haughty crest of his baron Mortimer lowered, but this was bought by too heavy a price, for there was no putting a limit to the progress of Owen. What if, having aroused the whole of Wales, and regained the crown, he should come even into England, with his stormy mountaineers and shake his own throne; It was within the bounds of possibility. The thought stung him acutely, and he once more began to gather his forces from all points of the compass, and make other preparations which would enable him, when the season and time seemed favourable, to strike a blow.

In the meanwhile Owen diverged from the battle-field of Brynglas, and with his troops flushed with victory marched rapidly into South Wales, having a few old scores to settle which necessitated, so he thought, an indiscriminate burning, plundering, and massacre. Abergavenny, castle and town, soon fell next Crickhowell Castle, and afterwards Tretower. Soon we find him busily engaged in burning down the town of Cardiff, destroying a great part of the castle, and doing the same with the monasteries and convents.

Still unsatisfied, he marched to Llandaff and razed the bishop's palace, and from faint records here and there, in the local history of mountainous districts, even the Rhondda Valley witnessed the progress of Owen Glyndwr.

It is worth noticing how the habits of a people remained unaltered through generations. Thus, with Owen's troops, it is stated, and handed down in sketch and legend, that, as Owen's men marched through the Welsh valleys, the people were summoned to fall into the ranks, and did so.

In like manner, during the trade riots of modern times in Wales, in the various marches from Monmouthshire into Glamorganshire, precisely the same course was adopted, and the stream of unrest, like the boisterous Taff gathered into its force all the currents by the way.

When Owen had quite satisfied his revenge on the chiefs and magnates who favoured the cause of the English monarch, then he retired by rapid stages into North Wales, to await the army which he was certain would be sent against him.

He had plunged his sword into the hornets' nest, and the foe, strong on the wing, and full of venom and power, was at his heels.

Owen was as wary as he was valorous. Upon gaining his old retreat, and finding himself for a time secure, he began gathering in all the forage and cattle near the points whence he expected an attack, so that the enemy, which

generally sought to find subsistence in the country occupied, might be driven to retire by stress of famine.

The issue proved the wisdom of his judgment. Sending his forces in three great divisions, and taking the command of one, Henry Bolingbroke once more essayed to bring the rebel to book, but with the same result as of old. He could not get near enough to his wily antagonist to chastise him, sanitary regulations in an army were all but unknown, and thus, what with disease amongst the men, short rations, and the mountain storms which seemed levelled against the invader, he was compelled again to retire.

The historic record, as given by Parry, is amusing in the highest degree, for amongst other matters, it recounts the belief of the English that Owen was indebted to supernatural aid in getting rid of his foe. It was a common refrain, so to style it, of the Homeric traditions. Providence, which we now discreetly believe to carry out great designs by natural laws, was upon the Cambrian Olympus, hurling tempests at the foreigner, waking up the mountain brooks until they roamed over the land and through the camp and directing out of pestilent marshes the shadowy emissaries of its power to stalk through the ranks, and beat them down. It is curious to trace from early eastern traditions the commonising of the mythic and the heroic, and see the transformed gods, instead of vexing Hector and impeding Achilles, dispensing a broken limb to some unfortunate husbandman, and visiting old women with fever or small-pox!

The beneficent Deity, there can be no doubt, was even believed by Welshmen of the fifteenth century, as well as by Englishmen, to take personal interest in party quarrels, and act now on one side and then on the other.

In Parry's memoir of Owen it is stated that an old historian thus alluded to the eventful retreat of the king: "That it was thought to be by art magicke, causing such foule weather of winds, tempests, raine, snow, and haile for the annoiance of the king that the like had not been heard of."

That the impression was general, and not local, is shown by the embodiment of supernatural in Shakespeare's further references to Glyndwr:

Who is he * * *
* * * * * *
Can trace me in the tedious ways of art,
And hold me pace in deep experiment?
I can call spirits from the vasty deep.

After this repulse there came, as Glyndwr protested, the fulfilment of an old Arthurian prophecy. The mole, dragon, lion, and wolf of the legend were represented by the King, Glyndwr, Percy, and Mortimer. The league of Northumberland and Douglas against the king led the way for this faction to solicit the assistance of Glyndwr, and at a meeting between the dragon, lion, and wolf, the whole kingdom was divided as follows:—Northumberland was to have all the country north of the Trent; Mortimer, on behalf of his nephew, the Earl of March, all from the Trent and the Severn to the eastern and southern limits of the empire; and Glyndwr all westward from the Severn.

Unfortunately for them, they discussed the division before getting the spoil. It was an ancient case of cooking the hare before catching it !

The meeting between the three confederates took place at the house of the Dean of Bangor, and their enthusiasm can be well imagined. This, indeed, was the culminating point in the fortunes of Owen Glyndwr. He had reached the highest pinnacle, and gazing below on river and mountain and lowland, saw himself the king of all he surveyed. At a national assembly convoked at Machynlleth he was ceremoniously crowned Prince of Wales, amidst the stentorian plaudits of his people. But amongst the crowd who assembled to do Cæsar honour was a would-be Brutus, in the guise of Sir David Gam, of Breconshire. Gam was a staunch ally of Henry Bolingbroke, and it occurred to him that as his royal friend and master was no match for Owen in the open field, perhaps it might please Henry, as well as rid his native country of a disturbing element, if he were to make short work of Owen, and put him quickly to death by the dagger of the assassin. Short-witted David Gam ! It was not in the book of fate for Gam to achieve the rôle of Brutus, nor of Owen to die as died Cæsar.

The intended assassin was detected in time, was quickly arrested, and it required all Glyndwr's influence, and even the exercise of physical strength, to prevent Sir David Gam being summarily hurried not only off the scene, but into eternity ! Owen's ideas of punishment differed from those of his friends. He liked to confine his foes, and, there is no doubt, enjoyed an occasional visit to them when undergoing their captivity. In his house at Glyndyrrdwy there was an exceedingly strong chamber, in which his special captives were kept, and to this the unfortunate Gam was taken, and there detained in durance vile, for no less than ten long years. This was not the only punishment, for on the first opportunity Owen marched to the lands of Sir David and destroyed his house. In his peculiar notions of punishing an opponent Owen held the same views as in after years were held by Oliver Cromwell, whose tendencies in the direction of razing castles and mutilating ornaments and monuments are only too well known.

Very shortly after assuming the title of Prince of Wales, the occasion came for joint action between the confederated parties, and the scene where the mole, the dragon, the lion, and the wolf met was at Shrewsbury. Rather we should say were to have met. Percy and Mortimer were there, but the dragon, Owen Glyndwr, by some unfortunate mishap, was nearly twenty miles away when the rebellious troops were sustaining the great shock of the superior masses of English soldiers, and before he could come up and retrieve the disaster the day was lost, and a fatal blow had been dealt at the fortunes and the ambitions of Glyndwr.

When a man is provoked he generally indicates it in a characteristic way, and so did Owen. Directly he had scope for his measures he began his usual course of burning and destruction, seizing everything of value that came in his progress and making his name a terror on the borders. People could not "sleep o'nights" for fear of his pillaging, and it was sufficient any time for

the cottager to hear the tramp of men to say his prayers with considerable tremor and earnestness, for there was no putting a limit to the violence of Glyndwr, and if in punishing an enemy, a friend also came in for trouble so much the worse for the friend. He could not help it! Perhaps it was these occasional raids amongst a pure South Walian district which led to Owen's name not being universally popular amongst the people.

Patriotism was a cloak that covered a multitude of sins, but it could not cover all, and hence it has followed that while the name of Llewelyn is treasured with respect by the people that of Owen is almost forgotten.

Parry's estimate, grounded principally on the battle of Shrewsbury, is that Owen was more adapted for a desultory state of warfare. He was in fact the guerilla chief, bold as a lion, subtle as a fox; but it is questionable if he could have led a great army and moved them with the skill and precision and success of the great generals of German, French or English history. Not long after the battle of Shrewsbury Owen appears to have begun a correspondence with the French court, with the idea that assistance might be had from that country, and accordingly an alliance was entered into, his brother-in-law, Sir John Hanmer and Gruffydd Younge acting as ambassadors to the French king on the occasion. The result of the interview was eminently favourable to the Welsh prince and a treaty offensive and defensive was sealed and signed on the twelfth of January, 1405.

With the opening of the year 1405 Glyndwr marched in great force against the castle of Harlech, a fortress celebrated in song and story, and the Welshmen, scaling the almost impregnable heights with the agility of their native goats, brought the proud castle to subjection. Elated with success, the Welsh Bruce, as he was now termed, proceeded next to subdue Aberystwith, the old regal house of the famous Cadwalader. There must have been a great incentive in the mind of Glyndwr to possess this stronghold. Shadowy images handed down by tradition of the illustrious dead must have flashed athwart his mental vision, and the great castle was to him an enduring reminder of a time when one of his own race ruled, not only the little mountain corner wherein he was cooped, but the whole land. Leaning upon the huge battle-axe—which Owen is stated on tradition to have used, not only fearfully in battle, but to ring on the mountain stones on his march—we may recall him with his serried line of Welsh warriors behind him, thoughtfully gazing upon tower and buttress, and then animating his own men with a spark of his own spirit as he bade them advance and conquer.

Who cannot bring back the event as they stand amidst the ruins? Unchanged the scene, mountain and sea; the sound of the surge of battle deadening the mighty surge of the waves; ocean's deep roar hushed 'neath the scream, and yell, and shout of conqueror and conquered.

It was soon over, and Owen's flag waved o'er Aberystwith, and Owen's stout hearts garrisoned the castle.

It is in the flush of success that our laurels are in greatest jeopardy; in the fullest vigour of health that the greatest care is necessitated. Apparently by

slightest fissure the foundations of honour, fortune, vigour are sapped, and the zenith of the meridian becomes also the nearest to the commencement of the downward track.

So it was with Owen. Of all the most foolish steps in the world he garrisoned the two castles with his stoutest warriors, and began his march for fresh fields of conquest with diminished, though exultant, forces.

Singularly enough, too, as if fate had prepared a trap, in his immediate neighbourhood there was a strong English army, led by one of the bravest soldiers of one of the bravest of Norman families—Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, descendant of the still more redoubtable Guy.

It will be remembered by the reader that Glyndwr had previously burnt down the castle of Abergavenny, so that the earl was naturally desirous not only of punishing a rebel to his Sovereign, but of settling also his own personal grievance.

The battle which ensued took place at Mynydd Cwmdy, and there was shown that skill and strategy surpass the most determined efforts of personal valour. The forces were tolerably equal, but from the first Owen had no chance, and his own banner was wrenched from the standard-holder by the valiant earl himself. Glyndwr's forces were scattered to the winds, and he himself had to flee. Still, the mountaineers were soon gathered again, little the worse for their discomfiture, and it did not take long for Owen to recruit his army, and prepare for the field. To show the expeditious movements of his men it was in North Wales that the defeat took place, and the retreat extended almost to the neighbourhood of Monmouth, when, and not until then, did he find himself sufficiently strengthened to resume the offensive. He had been closely followed by the earl, who must have noted with some alarm the direction he took, and only by incredible efforts did he manage to get his vassals around him in sufficient numbers or strength. Then Owen, eager to wipe out his defeat, made the attack at Craig-y-Darth, and this time with such well-planned measures that the great earl was fairly beaten and forced in turn to flee. Owen still dissatisfied with success, still feeling the discomfiture he had previously sustained, pursued the flying enemy with relentless viciousness, not only to the gates of Monmouth but to every asylum which came in their way, and wherein they sought a momentary safety. It appeared as if Owen had made up his mind to stamp out the army which had beaten him; to destroy every soul, so that not a man should live to say that he belonged to the army which had beaten Owen Glyndwr.

The frame of mind in which Glyndwr nourished this vengeance is not uncommon. Success for a long period without disaster begets an idea of invincibility, and when defeat comes it is not accepted gracefully. In the ordinary pursuits of men and in modern times the same sort of thing may be often met with. Great is the general who can tranquilly enjoy a victory, greater often in philosophic power is he who suffers a defeat with complacency. The weak and superstitious must have dated Owen's failing fortunes from this hour by the abandonment of his best friends, in the form of the mysterious powers

which had united to make storm on land or sea, famine, pestilence, and disaster inimical to the English armies. "And why did such valuable aids leave Owen?" "Because," we can hear the primitive reply, "Owen now made war become more a butchery than a gallant attempt to re-win independence."

This, however, is scarcely deserved by Owen. It was not long after one of his great successes that his army, to the number of eight thousand men, were pursuing the same vindictive policy that had been carried on for a long time, burning down all the houses of any English authorities or their friends, plundering and slaying, when a strong army, under Sir Gilbert Talbot, encountered and defeated them. Incensed at this, Owen, who was not with his men at the time, despatched a strong force under the command of his son Griffith. A more unwise step could scarcely have been imagined, as his men were broken and he was not there to encourage them. The encounter that followed took place at Mynydd-y-Pwll Melyn, and the issue was almost utter destruction of the Welsh forces, the capture of Owen's son, and the death of Tudor, Owen's brother.

The historian records that the joy of the English was indescribably great, as there was found upon the field no less a person than Owen Glyndwr. They crowded round it, they sang huzzas of victory, and manifested their excitement in a dozen different way, for there, recumbent at last, was the foe who had been so great a thorn in their flesh. Unhappily for their delight, a closer examination showed the absence of that wart which, similar to the one which distinguished Cromwell, also gave severity and a determined aspect to Glyndwr.

"When fortune wraps thee warm," said a poet of the Elizabethan age, "thy friends about thee swarm like flies about a honey-pot," and Owen found this, and also realised the sequel of the poet's lamentation that the deserted one of fortune's favourites is "left to rot."

It has always been so, as shown by the history of all times and of every country. Owen, forsaken by the fickle goddess, was forsaken also by men whom he deemed as true to the best interests of his country as he felt he was himself. The traditions of counties in North Wales, notably Carnarvon and Merioneth, record him as lurking in caves, and only daring to crawl out like the beasts of prey at night for relief in the form of the ordinary necessities of life.

The hunter of men had become the hunted, but he was not to be caught this time. There were still a few friends in high places, and when it was known that he was living and resolute upon regaining his power, troops began to muster to his standard, and at the head of ten thousand men he marched in the direction of Milford Haven, where he was to be joined by a large French contingent. The conjunction of the two forces took place in due course, and the army, numbering now twenty-two thousand strong, began its invasion of the country by the attack of Carmarthen, which readily yielded. From this place to Worcester no towns of any note as strongholds appear to have been assailed, and probably this was either from the ready submission accorded to them, or from the track of invasion being purposely laid over the wild wastes of country

towards the English border. Arriving there they appear to have continued the march to Worcester, to which they laid siege, burning down a part of the town and doing considerable damage to the surrounding country.

King Henry, being apprised of this invasion upon his own soil of French and Welsh foes, gathered a large army to meet them, and advanced also to Worcester. Owen, hearing of the approach, decamped to the heights, and for eight or ten days the allies and English remained almost in sight of each other, and neither appeared at all anxious to engage, and only did a little skirmishing. It is unknown whether the failing courage was on the part of the French or Welsh, but certain it is that after some paltry skirmishes, by which only a few men were lost, the allied armies retired silently and by night from their position on Wobury Hill into Wales.

Henry dared not follow, and the French and Welsh, having no welding characteristics, appear to have become tired of each other, the aim of the Welsh being to get back into North Wales, and that of the French to regain their ships as soon as possible. Unfortunately for them, many of their ships had been destroyed while they were tramping towards Worcester, and thus a great deal of annoyance and discomfort had to be endured by the French ere they could embark. In the slight encounter which had taken place near Worcester, when it was stated only two hundred men were slain on both sides, the French sustained the loss of three or four noblemen of distinction, and ill-luck following, transports sent out with stores and ammunition—"gunnes" having been invented about 1390—were taken by English cruisers. Eventually Hugueville, the leader of the French, managed to get his men back, and thus ended the French alliance, which, beginning with brilliant auspices, ended as the tinted bubble which burst in the hand.

To show the tardiness of the English army, and how much Wales was left to its own resources, fifteen hundred of the Frenchmen remained in Wales for nearly nine months after the retreat, and unmolested. The last detachment left in March, 1406.

After this time there was a slight promise of support from the attitude of the Earl of Northumberland and Lord Bardolf against the reigning English sovereign. They sought Glyndwr with the view of arranging some mode of action in the event of a turn to the bad fortunes of the triad coming about; but it did not, and they soon left for other quarters. Owen, besides the desertion of his French allies, had also to suffer from disaffection towards himself by his own people, and there was a great breadth of South Wales as thoroughly opposed to him as he was to the English rule.

The people were becoming tired of the incessant disturbance which Owen every now and again instigated, and were wishful for peace. It would appear that after the departure of the French, Owen's power declined so much that he had not sufficient strength for any arduous undertakings. He became, in fact, the man he was at the outset of his career, opposed with deadly animosity to the Lords Marchers, whom he regarded as his national enemies, and eagerly taking every opportunity to fall upon and punish them.

Henry the king seemed by this time to have regarded Owen as scarcely worthy of any important opposition, and was satisfied with the occasional arrest and execution of leading Welshmen who had supported Glyndwr. Amongst these figured ten whom he succeeded in entrapping, and as their names are given in old documents it may be of interest to give a list :—Howell ap Ieuan ap Howell, Walther ap Ieuan Vychan, Rhys ap Ieuan ap Rys, Ieuan Goch ap Morgan, David ap Tudor, Rys ap Merydd, Madoc ap Bery, Jenkin Backer, David ap Card, and Thomas Dayler.

These unfortunate Welshmen were taken prisoners and sent to Windsor Castle, where they were confined, and as all of them disappeared from that time the only conclusion is that they were summarily disposed of.

Even at the close of Owen's career, when old age was stealing over him, and the life of camp, adventure, and strife had told upon him, he still seems to have been sufficiently vigorous and in power, for the king sent ambassadors to to treat with him, and bring about a peace, but this was never accomplished. He died in the full possession of independence, though in obscurity, and, there is every reason to believe, tranquilly, even as the sere leaf of autumn sinks to the ground. The place of his death is claimed by Monington and Kentchurch, both places in Herefordshire, and both the homes of his children.

So the daring warrior who had strode out from the domestic circle to fight the battles of his nation returned at last, when his campaigns were over, to find amongst his children and his grandchildren sweeter solace than ever warlike renown or victory had given.

The sinewy hands which had rung martial music from his battle-axe on the rocks of Glyn-rhondda, and had swept hurriedly away to the death so many a foe, fondling his little grandchildren in their Herefordshire home, and lovingly caressed the mature matrons whom he had nurtured in their infancy.

From the eyes which had so long glared with the light of battle came back again the tender, softened gleam of love of home and child. He had not gained a throne; proud distinction and regal honours had failed him; but he had tranquil happiness. And in that soothing dream died Owen Glyndwr, a noble Welshman, possessed of the impulsive and warlike characteristics of his nation—a man, not exempt from many human failings—a warrior, sometimes led by passion to be cruel and unforgiving, but among the first his land has known for valour and success; and to the last imbued with the belief that the first of all the duties of a Welshman was to combat for land and liberty.

Let us recall his memory with respect and admiration. He was true as steel. English gold could not win him, nor could English honours entice him from the path he had selected, and though, viewed by the light of subsequent history, it would have been better for him and his race had they blended themselves earlier, as they have since, in the formation of a mingled people which, in art, science, intellect, commerce, war, equal the proudest nation upon which the sun has ever shone, still, all honour to him for earnestness and purity and honesty of aim; and on the old scroll of his nation's history no grander name should figure than that of Owen Glyndwr.

The date of his death was on the twentieth of September, 1415, and he was in his sixty-first year.

An old Welsh englyn gives the following as the date of death and insurrection:

Mil a phedwr cant nidurwy-cov ydyw,
Cyvon iad Glyndyrdwy,
A phymtheg praf ei safwy
Bu Owain hen byw yn hwy.

QUIET NOOKS IN WALES.



NE of these spots is Rhayader, known in the past time to South Walians as a remote, out of the way place, whence came, as from the interior of Africa, ancient butter carts, with perhaps the lay figure of a pig on top, and still more ancient bards, who patrolled the streets with songs; or another variety yet, who hailed from the place, and carried stockings to and fro, and said Rhayader, with such a rattling of r's that it made a Saxon jump again!

Rhayader is a town that in modern times has become famous for other things than farm produce, and it caters to other delights than simply the substantial matters for pantry and table. It is now famous for its flower-show gatherings, and it was on a flower-show day that I had the pleasure to make its first acquaintance.

Rhayader is a place where extremes meet, where the mail coach runs in from Aberystwith, heralded by its tantivy as in old mail coach days, and where spick and span locomotives run out, labelled to Chester, to Hereford, and linking, with links of smart or faded carriages, London and Liverpool, Swansea or the extreme North.

A quaint place is this same Rhayader, with its race of old-fashioned people, its short old women of apple and pear proclivities, wearing shawls crumpled and torn, which have been in queer oaken chests since last fête day; and blending with these old-fashioned people the latest designs in panniers and in knickerbockers.

Its streets appear as if intended to defy Macadam, by necessitating all the stones placed thereon to run down again.

It is the very hill up which the immortal Jack and Jill of schoolday fable

marched, and many a crown beside that of Jack's must have been broken there when the famous Radnorshire cider is to the fore.

The tents arranged for the fête were grouped in a hollow, not far from a church, from whose boundaries, like practical blessings, swept a very stream of corn and rich meadow land.

Here was the tent for the choirs, the tent for the flowers, and the inevitable tents—many in number—for the sandwiches and the bitter beer.

In a roped space quoits flourished, practised by men who seemed to have eschewed Christy's for the nonce, and in that space Aunt Sally luxuriated in a fashion uncommon and exciting. I never saw such Aunt Sallys; they looked too disreputable to retain the term of relationship. I regarded them as Sallys, slattern Sallys, ugly Sallys, only worthy of being thumped and bumped as they were by the strong right arm of young Radnor.

Flourishing conspicuously, too, was a gaunt machine which was to tell to a nicety the amount of muscle you possessed. In fact, everything was hearty and jolly and practical. Young Radnor had Miss Radnor there by the thousands, and the question to a keen, critical eye was whether the flowers within the tent or the moving flowers without possessed the greatest attraction.

Both were "highly commended." The moving flowers were no sylphs, and in their voice was no tremulous softness. They were worthy, in fact and in short, of the keen air and the grand old hills and the rough heartiness of Radnorshire; and in the tent of song showed unquestionably that up here, far North, as in South, and East, and West Wales, we have the pure soprano voices which give our Welsh choirs their charm, and pleasant it is, even among the Rhayader hills and in the streets of colliery districts, to hear soft harmonious voices which neither hard work nor poverty seems equal to restrain.

Rhaiadwyr, Rhaiadyrgwy, signifies a fall of water, and insignificant as it was in early years as regards its population, having only three hundred and seventy-four in 1801, yet it has been the scene of remarkable events, and alternately Rhys ap Gruffydd, Cadwallen ap Madawe, and other doughty warriors have figured in and about the scenes where now placid agriculture seems to brood. It has figured in the strife between Norman and Welshman; it has been the scene where the early saints have played their part, and where the black friars, or Dominicans, have flourished in the hazy days of pre-Henry the Eighth's time. Now native prince, saint, and black friar have passed away; churches and chapels flourish; and the visitor to Llandrindod Wells may pass a much more disagreeable hour than in pacing through the quaint streets and visiting the lofty ranges around Rhayader.

THE OLD COLLIER AND THE VISION.



THE old Welsh collier is a distinct man from the new. Those who can go back thirty and forty years may easily recall him to mind. He was a plodding, thoughtful man. Early in the morning all the year round he journeyed to his pit ; late at night he returned. Then there was the meal which served for dinner, tea and supper ; friends might drop in, or occasionally it would be meeting night, when he would go to his chapel, return home, a solitary smoke, and go to bed. As a rule, the old collier was a religious man, and a rigid Dissenter. His aim in life was the "scat vawr"—the big pew—and to be a deacon. The highest man in his little world was the minister of his chapel, and to be taken into confidence by him, to be able to advise him, and occasionally reprove, if the minister were a young man, formed the highest objects of ambition.

Living most of his life in the dark underworld, when it was not so thickly peopled as now, it was no wonder that he was superstitious ; and just as the tillers of the soil in his time had fancies about "canwyll corph," and fairies, and warnings before death, so he had his visions and his superstitions, which, however fanciful to the world, were very real things to him.

The tale I am about to relate may be accepted in all earnestness. It is no wonderful tale told by a novelist, but the honest narration of an unsophisticated man, a deacon in his chapel, a thoroughly conscientious, God-fearing collier.

John Jones was a representative of the better class of the old-fashioned collier. On Sundays, in his tall hat, and with his suit of blue cloth and bright brass buttons, he was a noticeable man. There was no pride about him other than that decent pride which approves of cleanly habits and sober courses, and which prompts to avoid bad company and bad habits alike.

One peculiar habit he had, and that was on a Sunday morning to take a piece of bread and cheese, and, going to an ale-house, would then and there drink a glass of beer and eat his bread and cheese. He never indulged in more than one glass, and never went there but early on a Sunday morning. I instance it to show that he was none of those sanctimonious men who carry their profession in their faces, and think that is sufficient, and also to show that he was not above the little weaknesses of life.

It is astonishing what peculiar habits some men have had. Dr. Johnson used to walk in the middle of every square on the pavement, and was unhappy if he stepped on one of the lines. Another great man used to turn a little wheel outside a ropemaker's window every time he passed, and was miserable if he neglected. And still another, an apt reasoner and orator, failed utterly if a loose button on his coat was not in its place. John Jones's habit was the uncommonly early glass of beer on Sunday mornings.

He had a dog, one of these old-fashioned collier dogs, which seem to have gone out like their masters, and the dog was as inseparable from the master as his shadow.

Long communion seemed to have established a language between them. John understood his dog, every whine, every look of the eye; and the dog understood John. Thoroughly sagacious and disciplined, it had none of those inquiring and inquisitive habits which young and ill-trained dogs possess. No running on in advance to investigate, and no loitering behind to reconnoitre. It appeared to have passed through all that; to have acquired the sum total of dog knowledge, and from that time to have devoted itself to the master.

Such was John, such the dog. Picture in the mind's eye one of the usual small cottages of the past, with decent furniture; the unfailing chest of drawers, with a looking glass on top, right in front of the door; a sanded floor, a bustling tidy housewife, some small specimens of humanity, which alternately played in the gutter in front, or ate bread and butter sitting on the sanded floor; a clock that kept measured time, and was sonorous in telling the house that it did so; a bird that sang pleasantly in the window, and had as much attention from John as his children or his dog; several samples of the saints hung up in the room, and you have a representative house, now rarely seen, of the old-fashioned respectable collier, whose labours and life resulted in the coal of South Wales being known all over the world.

John Jones had never indicated to his family or his friends that he was of a superstitious turn, but it was only natural, being of a quiet and reflective mind, working in the gloomy pit, and thinking as he worked, that he should be so. One eventful day he went as usual, accompanied by his little dog, and throughout the day he laboured with even more than his usual zeal, for the end of the month was drawing on, and he wished to make as much as possible. The colliery was simply a level, about a mile in from the light, and access to it was by a long and winding tramway, very dirty in many places, and so low that a tall man would have to keep in a stooping position to get out. He had sent out many trams that day; he had heard his fellow-workmen go out one by one, some calling to him and asking whether he meant to work all night, and, at length, a deep silence as of the grave fell upon him, no sound of tram, no voice, no heavy breathing of horse, no pick striking against coal. All was hushed, and the only sound heard was the trickling water as it ran down the sides of the pit, or an occasional splash as a rat found itself in trouble rousing the dog to make a dart in the direction, but without success. At length he paused and wiped his brow, and as he threw down the mandril his dog, which

had been attentively eyeing him, jumped to its feet and barked. The signal for giving up work was known and appreciated. Before that dog's eyes gleamed a coal fire and visions of scraps, and possibly a good home. Putting his mandril in the corner, and taking up his old coat John began his way out, and had reached the mouth of the level when the rattling of chains was heard in the distant part of the working, and the steady tramp and splash as of a horse coming out with its load of trams. John stopped. It was singular. He thought that everybody else had gone out. His stall was in the furthest part of the workings; how was it he had not seen the horse and trams? How was it he had not seen the collier working? He turned and looked back. Yes, there was a dim light approaching, a tram was coming out. There could be no mistake. He leant against a prop of pitwood to see who it was, and as the light and noise came nearer he was attracted by the attitude of the dog. It was no longer the well-behaved, placid dog. First it sprang to one side, then another, and then retreating behind him it remained in a state of absolute terror; its eyes were wild, its tail out of sight, and it seemed to wish to get into the bank so as to be away as far as possible from the coming tram. Soothing the little dog, or attempting to do so, John next heard voices, and in a few seconds a bevy of his brother toilers came by him out of the level, clustering around a tram in which, horribly maimed, was—himself!

As it passed the men looked not to the right or the left, all sound died away, and the vision, the moment he looked upon it, faded into the night, and was gone.

It was not until then that the dog recovered its composure, and as soon as it did so, with utter forgetfulness of its master, it dashed away, and reached home so long before the astonished collier, that fears for his safety had begun to dawn upon the minds of his family, and had he been a few minutes later a party of friends would have marched to the pit.

When he got home he told his tale, and for a second his wife thought of the possibility of her good man having been drinking, but a glance at his face was enough to do away with the notion. He was more grave than usual, even more sober than at his soberest moments. And no wonder, for the spectral vision seemed to be stamped in hard outlines before his eyes, and in the middle of the strange groupe was that horrible picture of himself, the blood oozing from ghastly wounds, and in the face the strange and yet never to be mistaken pallor of death.

He told a few of his old cronies about it, and they all cautioned him and counselled care. It was an omen they said; a shadow of something that was coming. For a month John never entered the pit but he thought that might be the day during which the silver cord would be loosened and the golden bowl broken. But when a month had passed, and he still found himself hale and uninjured, he began to laugh at his superstition, and to regard it as childish. On the evening of the day when he did so, a stone fell from the roof and broke his arm. He was taken out on a tram and his friend said, "the omen was not true because it was a dead body you saw in the tram;

but you will soon be well enough again to work." John comforted himself with this thought, and when his arm was healed a little, but not strong enough to use the mandril; he had rather a pleasant time of it. His club supported him. He was able to gossip a little bit more at the Glove and Shears, and to read those quaintly compiled papers which did duty for news in the days of our grandfathers. To spell over these, to skip the long words, and feel how great was the learning enshrined in them, to drink a little of the ale in the non-chemical days, ere science had stooped to the meannes of drugging—all this was good. But convalescence came, and once more, with clothes neatly patched, went John, friendly greetings meeting him at every turn, for he was a thorough favourite. He had an advantage, too, over his fellows, for he had seen a little of life, having been born at Gibraltar, where he had further lived as a boy long enough to recollect a little about the rock and the people.

Into the work went John, and from it he came no more alive. That night, while hard at work, and just before giving up for the day, a stone crushed him, and before he had time to sob forth a prayer the spirit of John had gone, and all that was left was but of the earth. Once more in the tram they bear him out; the little dog crouched close to him, human-like in its whining and its trembling. By the entrance to the drift they stopped a moment to lift the body out and place it upon a door, and in that pause they all looked at one another with the same wondering thought—"How true this is! How awfully real was John's dream?"

Such was the vision of John Jones, such the ending. I do not attempt to explain or to wander into the wide field of conjecture to make the mystery clear. To many it may appear a wild and superstitious fancy. To the men of John's neighbourhood it was accepted in all seriousness, and emphatically believed in.

With this it shall be left to the reader's solution—the forerunner of a few weired gleanings from the world a mile below the play of sunshine and wave of trees.

THE LORD OF DUNRAVEN.

PRELUDE WHICH INTRODUCES THE SUBJECT AND CHARACTERS TO MY READERS.



So prevalent was wrecking on the Cornish coast in former times, and even up to a century ago, all classes, even some of the most respectable, as regards position—character of course is secondary—joined in it. A good tale is told of an incident on that coast.

The worthy clergyman had begun his sermon in the quaint old church by the sea, and the congregation were listening to the accents of goodness, which that afternoon were heard with difficulty, so boisterous was it without, when the church door opened, and in dashed a fisherman with a shout of "ship on the beach."

In a moment there was a rush of men, women, and children, but louder than the storm came the stentorian shout of the minister, "Stop!" repeated he. They all stopped and turned around. "Stop," he continued, the while descending from the pulpit. "In the name of—let us start fair!"

A curious age my masters! The rough bark of humanity has not been tanned. A century of zealous workers, of men with big brains and indefatigable natures have slumbered since then, and some polish has been brought about by teacher and preacher.

While wrecking was so common on the Cornish coast, it may naturally be expected that the Welsh coast was not free, Monknash, especially, being notorious, and some instances are on record worthy of more than a passing glance.

One of these relate to the annals of a noble house, to the Vaughans of Dunraven, now extinct.

Let me show the skeleton of the old house, for castles have skeletons as well as two or three storied dwellings.

CHAPTER I.

Dunraven Castle had been the scene of extraordinary merriment and gaiety. The revel had been long continued, the wine had flowed freely, and

hunting parties, shooting parties in the day, and dancing at night continued so long that it seemed the old routine of quiet life at the castle would never return.

Walter Vaughan was in his element. Proud owner of a fine estate, happily married, and the possession of a host of friends. Life to him was a long holiday, and the gold in his coffers served but to purchase new and varied pleasures. He had not awakened to the necessity of improving his large tracts of land. That should be the duty of his son; as for himself—fill the glass to the brim. Fifty years hence, it would be all the same to him.

Lady Vaughan, to do her but ordinary justice, was sick of the endless round of festivity, and strove with all a woman's strength to warp her lord to a nobler life; but his was the stronger nature, and like the rock before his own castle, which hurled back the spray tossed playfully or boisterously upon its head, so did he put aside gentle entreaty or strong remonstrance. He was lord and no wife should rule him.

But at length the revels ended, and the opening of our tale shows us the little family party once more alone.

"I am glad they are gone," said Lady Vaughan.

"So you always are," remarked Walter. "If you had your way you would turn Dunraven into a nunnery. Why not take life pleasantly? 'Tis short enough."

"But we differ, Walter, in our views of what is pleasant. I like the society of friends, and I am sure you know that I was fond of dancing before our son was born; but you wish to turn night into day, and have nothing but dancing or—" and she half hesitated, "carousing."

"Carousing, madam!" said the stormy lord, rising hastily, "even from you I won't have such slander."

"You know it's no slander," she added, acquiring confidence as she went on, "and this I tell you, Walter—and it is what a wife should tell—unless you alter you will beggar us all. Hear what your steward says."

"And what does my steward say, the knave? I'll dismiss him for his prating."

"Not if you value the services of an honest man," said the lady. "He tells me that your estate is ruinously involved, that he has cut down the best timber, and that the proceeds are gone, and that there is not an acre but is heavily mortgaged."

Walter Vaughan swore loudly and stormed furiously, but he knew in his heart that what his wife said was true, and simply strove to silence her. He lacked the manliness to admit, equally as he did the moral manhood to alter, his course. His son, young Walter, just on the verge of manhood, interfered at this point, as he had many a time before, and succeeded in bringing about a truce.

And Vaughan, with a "Hang it, wife, but you shouldn't bring the rent-books and timber dealers' bills into the drawing-room," resumed his seat.

Young Walter was a well-knit youth, more adept at shooting and fishing

than with his studies, which he voted good only for lawyers, stewards, or old monks. But though addicted to sports, he possessed a more practical mind than his father, and inwardly grieved at the dissipation he saw carried on, and which promised to leave him acreless.

Quitting the room he sallied out, leaving the late disputants together, and, taking his gun, wandered to the beach, ruminating as he went.

"Storm the thousandth. I do wish my mother wouldn't take heart so. Of course she thinks of my prospects. They are getting on in years, but my life is all before me. Well, I can look after myself. Let this old castle and lands go. That's my home," looking towards the sea; "I believe that I have all our old ancestor's roving spirit, when his black raven flag flew at the mast, and it was 'ware hawk!' then for any vessel, little or big, that came in his way! Yes, that's my home," and the huge waves seemed to chant a refrain "my home" as they rose and fell, now rearing their crests in seemingly overwhelming power, only to fall in surge and surf at his feet.

A few evenings after young Walter again resorted to the coast, bearing, as he always did, his gun, when his attention was called to a rakish-looking cutter standing off the coast, from which a boat with a couple of men in it was coming leisurely in his direction. It was no uncommon event for a passing ship to send a boat to the castle, silks and brandy and choice tea there becoming articles of trade; and other commodities were often brought by rough, sea-faring men in this way, so that young Walter's roving propensities had frequently been strongly fanned by tales and records told by the tar-smelling worthies as they sold their wares. He watched the boat as it rose and fell upon the waves, and steadily nearing him, and all at once it was lost to view in a little cove. Still Walter remained, curious to know the object of the visit, and he was soon informed, for the men, having beached their boat, came towards him. He saw that they carried no bundles, but were armed, and there was a suspicious air about them that he did not like. In fact, he was turning upon his heel, thinking that it would be safer were he nearer the castle, when one of the men, evidently the leader, called out to him to halt.

"Well, fellow," said young Vaughan, "what do you want?"

"You!" said the leader.

"The——you do!" rejoined Vaughan, bringing his fowling-piece up to his shoulder.

"Put down your pop-gun!" cried the seaman, "or it will be worse for you. You might wing one of us, but the other would be too many for you."

Vaughan saw the force of his remark, and dropped his gun from the "present," exclaiming as he did so, "Well, what is your object here?"

"That's answered in a few words," said the man. "The Queen's ships are short of men, and we want all the hands we can get."

"You are pressmen, then?" said Vaughan, for he had heard of kidnappers of the name, and was now thoroughly alarmed.

"That's it exactly, was the reply, "and you are a strong, hearty young fellow, and will just suit us."

"Hands off!" shouted Vaughan, as they came on with a resolute air. "Do you know that I am Vaughan of Dunraven—that my father is lord of the manor here, and of the castle yonder, and if you advance one step I raise my voice in alarm, and fire, and long before you get your boat off a score of men will be upon you."

"There's sense in what the whelp says," muttered one to the other; "we must cajole him."

"My good sir," said the spokesman, "we couldn't think of 'pressing' a young lord, so be easy on that score; but if you are a loyal man to the Queen—and I take you to be such—couldn't you put us on the track of a couple of labourers, now, who wouldn't mind serving her Majesty, and getting more pay than oatmeal and milk?"

Vaughan was a keen shewd fellow, and had caught the glance of one to the other, so still holding his gun in a position ready to be used in a moment he stepped briskly away a pace or two and said "come on then, and I'll see what I can do for you. Perhaps there are some idlers about the castle who would not mind to go with you."

"Let's make a rush at him," said the leader of the two.

"No, hang it, cried the other, "don't you see the tide is going out. Why we should have villagers upon us like a swarm of bees, and how should we get off?"

The other looked around and said, "Tush man, do you see the cutter's nearing us, the captain has got his eye upon us, and the gun in the bow would soon demolish the villagers. Here's at him, win or lose," and without a word he sprang at young Vaughan, who, quite prepared for the onset, fired point blank at his first antagonist, wounding him severely in the arm, and clubbing his weapon brought it down with a crash on the head of the other, laying him partially stunned at his feet. The English sailor, though smarting from his wounds, yet made a fight of it, and seizing Vaughan by the collar, strove to throw him to the ground, but the active young Welshman was now more than a match for his enemy, and delivering a blow right from the shoulder sent him rolling on the sands, and, turning like a hound, fled at the top of his speed in the direction of the castle. And not a minute too soon. There was a puff of smoke at the bow of the cutter one moment, and the next a shot ploughed the sands in dangerous closeness, still another and another, ah, he was out of range. He was safe.

Terribly blown he arrived at the castle and told his tale. The squire was deeply incensed. He swore like a trooper, and ringing the alarm bell the servants crowded in, wondering faces greeting one at every turn. In a brief manner, curt as was his wont, he told them of the narrow escape young Walter had met with, and arming half a dozen he hurried with them to the shore. But with all his haste he was too late, another boat had put off from the cutter, and with the wounded men and the first boat were fast nearing the vessel. The squire could only shake his fist at them, and shout his anger. They watched the boats reach the sides of the cutter, saw the men lifted on deck, and

then all sail being made, in less than half an hour she was low down in the horizon, and but a mere speck in the distance.

CHAPTER II.

The narrow escape of young Vaughan was not only a subject of much discussion at the castle, but it was the common talk in the cottages near. For a few days everyone went to bed in fear and trembling. Doors were secured—a most unusual circumstance in Wales—and men in the fields, or in the woods, kept a close view on the sea, every hour expecting a return of the cutter on its mission of vengeance. But the cutter came no more. Some days after his encounter Walter Vaughan and his son were on the ramparts of the castle, when the young man turning to his father, said “I am tired, sir, of this inactive life. Even if we had the misfortune to loose you I never could settle down and waste my days either in hunting or sporting, or even directing the men in the fields, killing birds, seeing the men fell trees or gathering in the oats, I am sick of it. Let me go to the Indies, and make a fortune for myself.”

“Walter,” said his father, “you are the only child, and one who is to be Lord of Dunraven when I am gone. Why should you risk your life over the waters, and in a foreign country. You dead, and the race of the Vaughans become extinct. No, no, my son. Let the steward’s boy (who was a favourite companion of young Walter’s) let him go if he will, the old man will last for many a year, but I am getting old.”

“Well, well, father,” said the young man, silenced, but not convinced, “say no more.” But at his earliest opportunity he talked with his mother, Lady Vaughan, on the same theme, and though even more loth than her husband to part with him, yet she could not disguise from herself the fact that the inheritance of Dunraven was but a fiction; it was so heavily burdened that when young Vaughan came to inherit it the chances were that he would find himself then driven to seek another position in life, and work out a career with far less energy than he now possessed.

The results of discussions and confabs at length was that a reluctant permission was given to young Vaughan, and full of spirit he and the steward’s son Thomas began to prepare for their new start in life.

There was one young lady in the Cowbridge valley, Miss Johnes, who had to be apprised of this sudden change from the quiet but happy monotony of life. There were daily meetings, earnest pledges of vows, tearful partings; but firm to his purpose young Walter continued his preparations, and in early spring, after a passionate farewell, the travellers, well equipped, started for the nearest port.

What a little crowd congregated to see them leave. Tearful were the eyes that gazed upon them—two manly adventurers going to unknown lands, perhaps never to return. The iron-visaged Vaughan, the elder, worked spasmodically.

and Lady Vaughan cried herself ill, and bewailed her weakness in giving her consent. But the young men had no sentiment in their composition. Natural feeling they possessed, a slight twinge of sorrow rested upon each face, but the blood coursed swiftly through each vein. The future, big with promise, gleamed before them. India, with its gold and its glory, was the beacon, and cast all sorrows and regrets in the shade.

There was a fair young girl of seventeen summers at Dunraven that day. She had come from the Cowbridge valley to stay awhile with Lady Vaughan, whose particular favourite she was, and to whom, in that sorrowful hour, she was a consolation. The one mourned a son, the other a lover, one who promises to revive in his person, the glories of an old race, and bring back the old days that were gone.

Even as from the grim ash, hollowed, and of ancient date, we see, not unfrequently, a young branch shoot forth, and rival the best with its foliage and its fruit, so the good dame thought if fortune favoured the young squire he might return, and wedding the fair young girl by her side, renew a lustre which was now dimming fast. Tears, sorrows, that night; a huskiness in voice that was generally cold, and stern, save when the wine flowed free; but the night came with its solace, ushering in the dream world and its soothings.

Grateful and wonderful is sleep. Portal of a new world where the beggar becomes a king, and he who has striven in misery all the day, tastes to the fill of substantial happiness! where the hungry feasts on the daintiest food, and he who thirsts, laves in the choicest nectar; where the criminal finds a rest that is not disturbed, and joys that the hard practical would deny flow as if from fairy hands to your feet.

Grateful recompensation is sleep.

The morning came, the sun arose, glistening on rampart and turret, and many a road away, falling on the traveller whom the quiet round of Dunraven was to know no more.

The youngsquire was armed with an introduction to the family lawyer, and with certain important documents which authorised an addition to a slight amount, comparatively, of the burdens of the estate. The choice of the young men had fallen upon the navy, and a very short time—for the era was a stirring one, and England wanted the support of all her defenders—saw them holding positions on board one of the redoubtable wooden bulwarks of the country.

It was the age of Elizabeth, when Sir Walter Raleigh's wanderings had awakened the spirit of adventure; when Spanish gold in vast ships crossing the seas aroused the lust for possession; when the Indies, like a land of fable lingering ever in the gleam of sunsets, tempted young and old, and on the eve of that grand encounter on the high seas, which established the sovereignty of England on the seas, and shattered Spain to her inmost core.

Thus it was, that in selecting the navy, our young adventurers took the most direct course that was open to them. In the varied incidents of a naval career there was no knowing what land they might not visit, or what position attain.

Very shortly, having made a capture on the high seas, the two friends were separated!

Vaughan going home in the prize to assist the second officer, and on the progress homeward; from a passing observation of the young Welshman, it oozed out that this second officer was no other than the one commanding the cutter, when she made her inroad on a press gang expedition to the Welsh coast.

The officer, who liked Vaughan exceedingly for his daring seaman qualities, was much amused at the discovery, and laughed heartily at the near shave of pressing a lord.

"I say, Vaughan!" he said, "you almost settled my two fellows. The one you peppered is getting all right, but that crack on the head of his mate has lost the service a good man. He's still invalided. We saw you return," he added, "and had half a mind to open upon you. Who was that excited old gentleman! I saw him by the glass well; governor was it? I thought as much."

Vaughan turned the subject as soon as he could, for to him it was not a pleasant one. The practical life of the navy had not so far dulled his feelings, and it was painful for him to think that he had injured a fellow being, perhaps for life. But he consoled himself by the thought that he was not the aggressor, and dismissed it from his mind.

It was the sixth day after leaving with the prize. The wind had fallen, and they lay idly upon the sea. Not a sail was in sight, and far as the eye could look on either side was the vast "mirror of infinity." No sign was there of its tremendous power. The smallest toy ship could ride upon it as upon a mill pond; the tiniest hand could rule it. Still, even in its passiveness, it awed. There was a majesty of might even in its repose.

Vaughan was musing of absent faces as he looked forth upon the sea, and the mind picture of Dunraven, and a picture of one dearer still than the old ivied castle, flitted athwart his mental gaze, when a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder, and turning, he descried his friend the officer in command.

"What, day dreaming, Vaughan?" said Elliot.

"Yes," replied Vaughan, "I plead guilty. There is nothing now to keep one's thoughts from wandering."

"True, my boy," said his friend, "but we are nearer a change than you imagine. There is always suspicion in these striking calms that we are on the eve of trouble. Just like life, my boy, as you'll find with myself, before you are much older. Note a man reach an eminence of position or wealth, or fame. He doesn't stop there long. The truck in the mizen mast is a windy quarter, and men remain longer on the rigging than they do up there."

"Why, sir," said Vaughan, "you speak as if there was some misfortune in store. My old nurse used to tell me many a tale of Canwyll Corph presentiments, and the like, such as I am sure would find a believer in you."

"I have heard of them," rejoined Elliot. "You are not the first Welsh-

man with whom I have fallen in with, for your race make splendid sailors. Certainly your people have a collection of startling beliefs, more than I should like to pin my faith to, though we sailors are superstitious, but some I can understand."

"But there are presentiments of good, as well as of evil," said Vaughan.

"Exactly," replied Elliot, "and fear or hope may to some extent suggest either. Yet in my career, and it has been a rough one, I have known one or two cases which certainly did not come within range of that hypothesis. I'll tell you one.

"It's something like five years ago this very fall. I was then a middy, eagerly looking for my next step. My junior was a rare young Cornish fellow, unsusceptible to fear. He would take a header in any sea, shark or no shark, and for helping to cut out a vessel, for daring in boarding, I never knew his superior. One night, when standing off the coast away there to the west, the first lieutenant came to the mess room and said, 'Boys, who'll volunteer for an expedition inland?' 'I,' and 'I,' shouted half a score. 'Well, we don't want all of you. The captain wants a dozen picked men to go with the mate in command, who knows the coast hereabouts, and one of you middies to assist him!' 'What is the object said the Cornishman, whose name was Pollock.

"'Sealed orders, my boy, until you get ashore.' 'Well,' said Pollock, 'I'm your man.' I wanted to go as well, continued Elliot, but Pollock was chosen, and on the eve of starting he came to me and said:

"'Elliot, you know I am not a coward, but I am certain never to return.' I laughed at his serious face, but he added, 'Take this for me, 'tis a keepsake I have from one dearer to me than anything in life, and if I don't come back find means to send it. You will see the name and the village where she lives in the case, and say my last thought was of her, and her only.'

"I tried to laugh him out of his gloom, and failing, urged him to allow me to volunteer in his stead. I would see the captain, say he was not well, but was determined, if allowed, to volunteer and bring indirect pressure to bear against his going. But nothing would do, and when I heard the quiet splash of the oars as the boat left the ship's side, I was as serious as he."

For a moment Elliot paused, lost in thought.

"And the end?" asked Vaughan.

"I beg your pardon. The boat came back, and every man safe and sound but—Pollock. We never saw him again."

"Was he killed?"

"I never knew, but suppose so. The boat's crew had a sharp skirmish with the natives in the bush, but drove them away like sheep. The visit ended, they made for the boat, and when the roll was called Pollock was missing. There was no use searching for him, as the coast was roused, and one of our fellows saw him, as he thought, in the darkness, falling to the ground, but on rushing to the spot nothing could be seen."

"And the girl?" asked Vaughan.

"I am not a ladies' man," replied Elliot, "but still I couldn't see a poor girl breaking her heart, so sent the keepsake to her."

"Sail on our stern!" shouted the look-out.

"What do you make her out to be?" bellowed Elliot.

"Spaniard by her jib, vessel of large size."

"A stern chase is a long chase," said Elliot, as he ordered every hand to be called on deck and soon all was life and animation. The calm had disappeared, and a steady nor'-wester was blowing, and with a press of canvas the stranger was coming up at a great rate. If a Spaniard they were in great peril, for the prize was only manned by twenty men. They had double the number of prisoners on board, and their defence consisted of half a dozen ordinary guns of no great power or range. Their best weapon was a cannonade mounted on the stern, which was capable of doing mischief at a long range, but useless against a double-decker, as the stranger appeared to be.

Elliot, who had been diligently reconnoitering the stranger with his glass for the last few minutes, at last called out, "Brown is right. She is Spanish, and our only hope is in our heels."

The foe was yet a long way off, and to increase that distance was now of the first consideration. Every inch of canvas was packed on, and the little craft trembled as she dashed ahead. Elliot knew that the sailing capacity of his vessel was excellent, and as time passed, and the relative distance appeared the same, hope began to spring up, and the prospects of a Spanish prison to lessen. But there were old salts on board who shook their heads dubiously.

"Their little craft was good, but it was a furriner, and she'd never carry such a press of sail long. Her spars won't hold."

But they did hold, and escape would have been certain had the light continued much longer, but with the night came a lull, and at midwatch the boats of the enemy were upon them, and after a gallant fight against overwhelming numbers, Vaughan and a dozen of his comrades were made prisoners. Poor Elliot was amongst the slain. This reverse was purchased dearly, and such was the carnage that all of the captives were more or less wounded, Vaughan severely.

This was a bitter ending to his dreams of advancement and wealth, but youth is proverbially light-hearted, and with his recovery from his wounds he was not without hope of a speedy change of prisoners, and once more treading a British deck.

Still, though on parole, he languished a prisoner, denied even the happiness of taking part in that repulse of the Armada which secured peace, and won for England a never-fading renown. With peace, Vaughan, who had made many friends, was offered a lucrative position, which he accepted, and in the accumulation of wealth the years passed, possibly who shall say, but that with enrichment, and that in a land where soft dark eyes are memorable, and loveliness is unsurpassed, the image of the fair girl of the Welsh valley became more and more indistinct. If so, it was but human nature. The novelist strives unceasingly to picture a different state of things, but they are pictures

only, not facts. The world abounds with instances of virtue never getting its reward, of goodness going down to the grave unblest, of valour having no guerdon, of love never getting even a cottage.

And as frequently one's faith in abstract principles is shocked by seeing stars, orders, garters, bestowed where unmerited, of vice able to surround itself with every happiness, and right succumbing in the fight of life with might.

Still, let us keep the copybook principles as our guide, and aim to follow the great Teacher's precepts. It will all come right in the end.

CHAPTER III.

Years have elapsed, and there is a sterner look on the face of the Lord of Dunraven, and more grey hair in the once dark locks of his lady.

From the time of Walter's departure they had never heard a word from him. Whether living or dead they did not know. The little degree of domestic happiness which had existed when young Walter was there had flown, and the castle now was the scene either of orgies or gloom.

For a time his lady strove with all a woman's earnestness to reclaim him, to rouse him to higher duties and loftier considerations than those of selfish indulgence; but it was all in vain. Occasionally there was a break in the clouds. Miss Johnes, ever true to the absent one, would visit at Dunraven. The memory of the dear son would be revived, and the thought of his coming back laden with wealth be imagined, full of fame and honour, the mother pictured, restored something like a tranquil and happy hour. But as still no tidings came the poor mother lost all hope, and quietly faded away.

With her death came other troubles. Failing issue, the estate would go into another channel, and so far as he was concerned he was hopelessly involved. Creditors now began to look serious, and one, more determined than the rest, was threatening possession, when a lucky windfall occurred.

A vessel, deserted at sea by its crew in a sinking condition, was cast a wreck upon the coast, and as lord of the manor he seized upon the whole. The cargo was a valuable one, and its sale relieved immediate necessities, and prompted him to further dissipation. The wonder was that his health did not give way; but he seemed to bear a charmed life, and to defy disease.

Ever since the death of Lady Vaughan Miss Johnes had become a stranger. Everyone but a few kindred spirits kept aloof, for dark rumours began to spread. Wrecks, once so rare, began to be frequent upon the coast, and gossips said that there was a mysterious light of great brilliancy often burning in the turret, and it could be for no good.

One dark tempestuous night came, and the old man—he was very old now—was more than usually excited. He ordered his domestics peremptorily to bed, and yet was heard pacing to and fro in the castle, and once an eaves-dropper espied him stealing down stealthily from the turret. Midnight came,

sleepers were aroused by a distant signal gun. Again and again it sounded. Then the alarm bell of the castle rung fiercely, and pouring down half-dressed, the lord was seen by them in the hall, gesticulating wildly—

“There’s a ship on the rocks !” he said. “Make haste. Follow me every man. Bales of India silk !” he was heard to mutter ; “choice wines, perhaps Spanish gold !”

Hurriedly they all made for the shore, and there, sure enough, lured by the treacherous turret light, was a large ship beating to pieces on the iron rocks. No boat could live in the sea that was dashing around her. All they could do was to remain, and try and save any helpless mortal who was washed ashore. With the waves came bales and spars, but not a human being. They still clung to the vessel, from which, ever and anon as the wind veered, came faint cries for help and mercy. Then, amidst a wilder outburst of the storm, came a wail of agony. Everyone knew that she had gone to pieces—every eye was racked in peering over the dark waters for the struggling crew. Ah ! now they come bruised, mutilated, dead. What bronzed, noble-looking seamen ! Racked and tossed by their death agony, yet how placid the face ! A woman, too, bronzed like the rest, and evidently foreign, but beautiful even in death.

So they come waifs of the storm, borne almost to their feet, and at length it seemed as if every soul had perished ; not a being was dashed on the shore but was as lifeless as the spars and cargo that came indiscriminately mixed.

At last one, Herculean in build, and with his strong life yet unsapped, was dashed on the shore, and eagerly rescued. He was safe. Another still, and another. Grimly looked the Lord of Dunraven upon the scene of agony and wreck.

“Those bales ;” he said. “What is the use of rescuing dead men ? Mind the bales.”

As he spoke two of his domestics rushed into the sea, and, at a narrow risk of their lives, drew out a man in the prime of his stalwart manhood, and laid him down a little distance from his lordship. There was just a faint sign of life.

“Give him brandy,” said Vaughan ; “pour it down ; if there is life that will bring him to.”

Brandy was poured down the seaman’s throat, and in the grey morning he partially rose from the sand and looked around.

“Father !” he shouted, as he desisted old Vaughan busily placing bale against bale, and, with the effort, Walter Vaughan—for it was no other man than he—fell back, his form stiffened, his eyes glazed ; he was dead !

Vaughan rushed to the spot with eyes glaring and hands distended in his agony.

“My God !” he cried, and with a howl more like that of a beast than a man fell upon his son.

The Lord of Dunraven from that day plunged like a madman into every excess, eager to end a life so worthless and wretched, and it was not long before the annals of his house ended, and the estate passed into the hands of those who exercised, and continue to exercise a benignant and happier sway.

AN EVICTION THAT WAS AN EVICTION.

ET me give the plaintive story of an eviction that *was* really an eviction. It occurred twenty years ago, and came under my own observation. At the time considerable interest was awakened in the matter, especially as it preceded others which, though of a less distressing kind, were still attended with circumstances of great hardship to the evicted. Law, too, came into action, and one legal gentleman at least fought the battle of the sufferers, but the result has escaped my recollection.

Amongst the old superstitions of Wales there was one held tenaciously until corrected by the determined stand taken in South Wales, and in the neighbourhood of the large ironworks, by the landowners. The superstition, or rather belief, was that if a house could be built in a night on any waste plot of ground the house became the rightful freehold of the person building it. So long as these Tai-y-Nos were rare of occurrence little notice was taken, but the example set by simple minds was not long wanting imitators who were more shrewd than foolish, and the consequence was proceedings by law and wholesale evictions, in which the innocent-minded suffered with the rest. One of the saddest cases that came under my notice occurred on the South Walian mountains about the year 1855.

In my ramblings I came one day on the site of an exhausted quarry. In this spot, sheltered from the rude easterly gusts, a little community had literally pitched their tents. An old world place it seemed, tenanted by an old world people. Two rows of houses, forming an angle, all cosily built, with small gardens in front, formed the primitive hamlet. The houses were quaintly raised, many little superior to thatched huts, and in most the ground floor was well beaten earth, as hard and as enduring as a floor of cement. The peculiarities of the inhabitants showed themselves at every turn; odd little contrivances for improving the comfort were devised, and as every man was his own builder, the result was a picturesque diversity, more quaint and homely even than an old rural village in England. The inhabitants were chiefly colliers, working in a distant coal-pit owned by a large iron company; but such another community as this it would have been difficult to find. Colliers, as a rule, are more reflective than the mass of men engaged in the ironworks, and more religious. Especially so, when, as in this case, they were

cut off from the active life—the excitement and vicious amusements—of the town. Living aloof from this, with the advantage of having a zealous Christian in their midst, it was no wonder that a strongly marked religious bent began to characterise them, and that religious pursuits were the sole relaxation of the people. They had no chapel, the nearest was several miles away; and thus, thrown upon themselves, they started prayer meetings, beginning at the first house in the row, and going on Sunday after Sunday until all the little tenements had been sanctified by as earnest devotion as it was possible to witness.

One Sunday, out of many, in company with a dear lover of unaffected piety, now no more, I visited the hill side and entered the house where prayers were being delivered. The usual custom, it seems, was to hold a kind of Sunday-school first—the Bible and a few children's books constituting the lesson-books. The place of meeting was filled. Thirty or forty persons of all sexes and ages were congregated, infants learning their A B C, and venerable men and women gravely spelling out sentences in their Bibles. The character of a man's or woman's pursuits and thoughts soon trace legibly unmistakeable markings on the features. Vice carves its deep lines, and gives its peculiar gleam to the eyes, and grossness to the mouth. Simple piety softens, chastens, ennobles. There were old grey-headed men there on whose faces the blue seams, annals of coal-pit explosions, were strongly marked, but the calm light of the eyes, the innocent expression yielded by them elevated the rugged features, and inspired confidence and respect. One old man in particular, the sage of his tribe, particularly attracted our attention. Like an old warrior who had passed through each stirring epoch of border life, and now in his grim grey years stood aside the spectator of contest and effort in which he could no longer share, so our old man seemed as if for him all active part in ministration, in teaching, or in prayer was over. He was a listener now, simply waiting "to be called." As he stood there during the utterance of a fervent prayer by one of the unlettered, but pious colliers, his lifted head and closed eyes were a study. The inward light of a man's purified life seemed to gleam out over face and brow. Never before, and but once since, have I seen the sunny glow of goodness lighting up so tenderly the human face. Those prayer meetings exercised a gentle influence on the life of the colliers. There was no brawling, no disturbance of any kind. In quiet monotony, time passed by; old men fading away, and sons and daughters taking their place, and then the blow fell.

It seems an imperative rule of destiny that in this life no unalloyed happiness should fall to the lot of man. At one stage or other ties are rudely broken, hopes sternly crushed, or prospects withered. We have the foretaste of what perfect bliss is—a sip of the cup, and then it is shattered!

It was so with the community on the hill-side. One day in summer time, an official looking man made his appearance there; such a comer they had never seen before; and as he descended the eminence towards the dwellings, every good housewife, with child in arms, came to the doors, and the interest was intense as he stopped talking with the occupier of the first. From the first he went to the second, and so on to the end. His message was brief.

By such a date rent must be paid to a certain agent, or they would be ejected. They knew nothing of manorial rights, and it seemed to them a cruel wrong that the waste of an old quarry should be treated as if good building land. Partly in their simplicity and partly in their ignorance of law, they took no step, and allowed the day of warning to pass unheeded. Then came the blow. A strong force was marched to the place, and, without heeding protestation or appeal, one by one the inhabitants was ejected—old and young, the pious greybeards and tottering infants, all were summarily driven out, and the household gods as recklessly thrown after. Then all were removed, amidst sobs, wailings, and the strong expostulations of sturdy men. The only force exerted was on the side of the law. Where there appeared any reluctance it was construed into obstinacy, and forthwith the strong arm did its work. When the old residents were without the houses the final act in the drama was played—the officials began to level the walls. This was a torment of the cruellest kind to the bystanders; to see the familiar hearth-place trampled on, the old corners—here, where the grandame put the china; there, where the old man kept his bible, with spectacles on top, all crushed down by axe and crowbar. As the work of destruction increased, and mothers beheld the scenes where they had reared their families ruthlessly destroyed, the wail of mourning deepened, the anguish became almost insupportable. But steadily went on the havoc; timbers were burnt, houses levelled, and then the scene was left to the wretched, houseless, crowd who sought shelter how and where they could, some happily finding hospitable friends in the upper districts of the large town, where they were received with open arms. The mainstay of the Christian community lived long enough to see a neat schoolroom built wherein the old friends again gathered on the Sabbath; but anxiety and extra labour did their work, and Humphrey Ellis sleep the sleep of the just.

Many months after the eviction we visited the old place—there, on the eastern hill side, where the sound of Sabbath harmony used to linger in the air. But what a contrast! The scene was one of utter ruin. The razed pile of some old historic spot might be invested with rarer interest, but could not be linked with such true pathos as this humble scene. We pictured the youth who left years ago for Australia, his manhood nerved, and every good quality raised into noble action by the impressions of home, by the recollections of the old and the true; pictured him leaving father, mother, perhaps one still nearer, dearer; saw him mentally stand on the height commanding, and wave his last good bye; pictured the lapse of weary years—years of toil, care, gradually of success—and then his homeward return. What a stride up the hill side! His native air gives him new life; he could sing his joy. Now another hill to mount, a few more steps, and there he is on the old mound, looking, his heart in his eyes, on the waste and the ruin that were his home!

Let me tell a tale of the eviction and call it

THE SHADOW ON THE BLIND.

Early on the morning of the eviction two young fellows, scarcely, one would

imagine, over twenty years of age, were seen stealing around one of the doomed cottages. It was in early May, when nature has not yet decided whether to continue the bluster of her April month or to grant a foretaste of queenly June. On this particular morning the air was soft and balmy, and even on the mountain side there were faint signs in sheltered spots of the spring that was already in its fulness in the valley below.

The "boys" had each a bundle and a strong stick. One looked up wistfully at the bedroom window, but the blind was down, and there was no sound or sign of life. The other seemed more anxious to be away, and on tip-toe they passed quickly down the lane; there was a click of the garden gate, one last look upon the slumbering community, and they were gone.

Watch the settlement still as the hours crept by; the blue smoke rising from the chimneys, the opening doors, the sweet voice of a girl ringing out pleasantly in the summerlike air, the bark of a dog, then the going forth to the labour that is man's heritage, even as is sorrow.

Before the night fell the cottages were level with the ground, great beams half charred lay crushing down the garden trees, budding with promise, and instead of the balmy air, and the quietude of the morning, a noisome smell of burning rubbish was around, and cries of sorrow and of lamentation were to be heard.

Years passed. Many years.

The cottagers had found homes in villages near or in the outskirts of the town; some few had died from exposure, they said, some had gone naturally the way of all flesh, and only one or two of the most venerable dwellers of the old settlement were living. There was one in particular, and he had been the patriarch. He was a grand old man, and blind.

The fine expansive brow, just slightly fringed with silvery hair, bore a mark, which, to the initiated, reveals a man's calling.

He had been a collier, and the trace of the explosion, which cost him his sight, still remained like a sabre cut, won in the battle field. This was in his prime. After that, unable to work, and thrown upon himself and his own thoughts, his mind became elevated and chastened.

The boys who left on the May morning were his own, and his chief support. The mother had long since found rest in some little enclosure attached to Salem, or Zoar.

But he had other boys, one, in particular, who afterwards became a minister, and thus the old man knew no want, his children earned fair wages, and there was comfort and contentment in the humble dwelling.

The old man, now past three-score years and ten, was a general favourite in the hamlet, and such was his wonderful memory, and his striking aptitude in discussion of controversial subjects that the dwelling was rarely without friendly visitors.

To see him sitting by the doorway, the sightless eye directed upwards, was a picture that rivetted many a passer by. Even his utterances in their rich cadence of, "Arglwydd anwyl, and Yspryd Glan," given with fullness, had a charm for the ear.

From the day of the eviction, no tidings had come to hand of the eldest boy William, only that he was enlisted and had gone out of the country. The other day, James, who also intended becoming a soldier, took instead to the merchant service, finally went to America and there died. When the news came the old lips quivered and for a time the voice was broken. The sorrowing father recalled the early days of little "Jimmy"; boyish freaks and misfortunes passed before the mind with the memory of the dear mother that was gone. There was a shade after this for a time upon the brow, a little more hollowness about the eyes; but resignation came at last blended with the hope of the meeting hereafter, when the broken home circle should be reformed, and all that had been loved and lost would meet again.

"Old Thomas is sinking fast," neighbours began to say, but there was strength in the old trunk yet, and he still paced down the garden walk.

It was nearing Christmas time and a genial Christmas of the old type. Snow lay upon the ground and covered as with a cap the mountain heights. Cold, sterile and bleak was the landscape. Leafless trees, like grim sentinels over buried leaves, and flowers met the eye, yet within, in every cottage, the fire flashed ruddily, and the humblest bore their sprays of holly berry just as in the early age.

Before the waning daylight necessitated the lighting of candles, a stranger entered the hamlet, and the stranger was a soldier! Everyone was out of doors in a trice for there is no visitor who arouses so much interest as a soldier. Everybody was asking eagerly who he was; "mab pwy" echoed here and there, and when it was known that he was the son of old Thomas, enthusiastic friends actually capered, and would have rushed forthwith to old Thomas to convey the welcome news. But they did not. There was an instinctive feeling amongst them that it was better for the soldier himself to go first, and not a few watched him as, with erect gait, he marched up the little street, narrowly scanning house after house, until he stood before the one to which he had been directed. It was a small, humble house, with a garden in front. The blinds were down, and on the blind was the shadow of an old man's face. Long and thoughtfully the soldier looked at the shadow. He knew whose it was. There was no mistaking the clearly-defined features. It was his father! He opened the gate, and as the latch clicked the shadow on the blind lifted its head in the attitude of listening. Step by step the soldier strode to the door and knocked. It opened, and he entered. There was his father, and one of his brothers, and his brother's wife and children, and they all looked up as the stalwart man stood in the doorway.

"Does——live here?" the soldier inquired.

"My boy, my boy!" cried the old man, making his way tremulously towards the speaker. "The voice is enough, my dear boy," and he wound his feeble arms around him, and cried as pitifully as a child.

"Yes, father," said the soldier, "I am come back, God bless you."

What a gleam of light there was on the old man's brow as he drew his hands over the face of his firstborn, and then down on the manly chest feeling the medals there which, with pardonable pride, the "boy" wore.

What a night that was in the little cottage ! How everyone eagerly listened to the tale of adventure that was unfolded. He had been in the Crimea. Amongst the first ranks of the Welsh Fusiliers he had dashed up the heights of Alma, and won his medals by heroic acts which he himself only hinted at.

It was Christmas-time and never was there such merry making in the cottage before. Old Thomas was miserable without his boy, and was never tired in listening to the long narratives of his life from the time when he stole away in the May morning, the day when old Thomas was evicted from the birthplace of his boys.

Old Thomas sleeps under a little mound by the side of his wife, and the mother of his boys, and the soldier is a soldier still, bearing a more thoughtful mien, but a gallant man, and one of the "gallant hearts" of old England.

CHEATING THE "OLD GENTLEMAN."



HERE are numerous legends in the rural districts of England and Wales having reference to the intimate relationship which once existed between the people and the devil. On the banks of the Severn peculiar flowers are found, said to be his favourites ; fossils in the rocks are regarded as his toes ; huge rocks, left high and dry on shore, the quoits that he played with ; and mountains rifted in two the relic of his strength and his passion.

Then in the legendary lore, many a tale is told of transactions in which sometimes he is successful, and at other times outwitted.

One well known is that of the man who, in his old age, was trying to make atonement for a mis-spent life by reading the Bible at all times and seasons. One evening, busily engaged at his task by the light of a small candle which was nearly burnt out, the old gentleman came and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Time was up."

He pleaded long and earnestly, but the fiend was obstinate. At length seeing that the candle was coming to an end, he said he would give him just as much time as the candle lasted. The sinner saw his opportunity ; blowing out the candle with sudden inspiration, he put it between the leaves of the Bible, and with a howl of despair the devil flew away.

Science has done much to drive away superstition, and extraordinary occur-

rences in nature are now duly placed, even by the most obtuse, to the operation of those natural agencies, which have been steadily at work since the beginning. Thus, when a tourist looks out at sea, and is told that half a mile away a church once stood with a village surrounding, but that the sea had swept all away, he accepts it, and won't believe the devil did it; that the action of pre-Adamite ocean in casting huge boulders along the mountain tops; of the acids and alkalis of the earth producing convulsions and lifting hills; of frost and sudden thaw, casting a thousand tons of quarry into a ravine during a night, all are taken as amongst the actions of nature, that wonderful power which in the wintry morn can send a tracework of lace and marvellous trimmings of leafery on the humblest pavement, which paints flowers and gilds wings, and is as marvellous in its perfection of the minute world as it is when engaged in vast designs.

But if the "old gentleman" has been driven, perforce, out of the natural world, he has still a hold on the spiritual, and if he comes in ancient costume and with the inevitable hoof and tale he is supposed by a great many to exercise an unseen influence, to whisper into ears, to turn footsteps into broad paths, to create bad feelings, to rouse antagonisms, and to glory in adroit and diplomatic action which culminates in war. As for the old legends of selling one's soul to him, those are exploded; but that these did exist, there can be no doubt. Here is one proof. In a rural district in Carmarthenshire, which is, and has been, thinly populated, there is an old church with an ordinary but strong wall around it, and close by the side of the gate, for a few feet in width, the masonry appears at one time or another to be distinct from the rest, as if of later age. In fact, many would suppose that a gateway had been there, but had been walled up.

Let the curious traveller meet with an old gossip of the village and make an inquiry, and this is what the gossip will do. He will point to a substantial house in the neighbourhood and say "come with me," and taking him silently, as if on a solemn duty, he will, on arriving at the house, direct his attention to a similar piece of different walling in the side of the house, as if there, too, had been an ancient doorway, which years ago had been filled up, and then the tale would be told.

Years ago Rhys Thomas the squire lived there, a man who, like the English king, spared no woman in his lust and no man in his wrath. He was a hard drinker, a stout rider, fearless in the field, and a glutton at the table. No one knew him do a good thing. The poor were snarled at and derided, and in every possible way he made himself hated. Yet, such was the power of his wealth that the gentry did not shrink from his society, and he was tolerated on the bench and in all social movements. Liked he was not. There was a something about the man which made everybody, poor and rich alike, recoil even in his society. His voice was loud, his jests coarse, and the general opinion of him was that if he was bad when drunk, which was often, he was worse still when sober, for then he was open to do anything that was mean or low.

He had a wife, and the wonder was they lived together so long. As an instance of his brutality it was said that one day when they were quarrelling, as usual, her parrot, of which she was very fond, made some mocking reference to him, upon which, seizing the unfortunate bird, he threw it into the fire, and, daring anyone to rescue it, watched with the glee of a demon the death of the poor thing, which screamed like a child as it was dying.

No other instance is necessary to show the character of the man. But time corrects all this, and the vilest character of history comes to his shrift, be it long or short. It may be like a Duke of Gloucester on the battlefield, or like Burke on the gallows, or, as many a rogue does, in his own bed surrounded with his family. It is only necessary to wait, and so it was with Rhys. But his death-bed was a fearful one, and appalled everybody. One thing he did before the breath left his body, and that was to tell his wife and children that he had sold himself to the devil, and so hard and fast had the contract been that there was no escape. So long as the body remained in the room it was to be safe, but if taken through the door or window of the bedroom it was to be his; if taken out of the front or back door it should be his; and if taken through the gate or over the wall of the churchyard, or buried in any part of the then existing ground, then it was to be his.

With many a groan of horror the wretched man died, and when he was dead wise men were called into council to see how the arch enemy could be outwitted. Imagination conjured up the arch enemy sitting patiently in the corner waiting for his own, his lurid eyes now gloating over the dead, and then turning to one and another of the council, amongst whom was the good old rector, and if they did hear a chuckle now and then, as they were perplexed, or were startled by a playful whisk of a tail, it was no wonder.

At length a plan was devised. The body was put into a coffin, and a hole was opened in the side of the house, through which it was placed, lowered on to a cart, then transferred to a hearse in the road. Next the procession bore it to the churchyard, and a portion of the wall having been cleared away next to the gate, the service was read over it, and the body taken back to a grave which was made precisely under the old wall, which was then restored.

This plan was carefully carried through, and in the opinion of the council of friends then, and of the old people of the village now, the old gentleman was successfully cheated of his prey.

A RUN UP THE RHONDDA.



REMEMBER well when the first excitement arose in England of the gold diggings; when the clerk left his desk, the mechanic his shop, and broken-down men, and men who had got into trouble, made for the El Dorado.

What bright dreams had the adventurers, what a mania went through all the land. Even ships when they got into the port of the famous land were left sailorless, Jack feeling it impossible to remain rocking idly at anchor, when his passengers were perhaps loading themselves with gold.

So I thought the other day, going up our golden valley, the far-famed vale of the Rhondda. It is but a narrow valley, and if there is anything like cultivation, it is over the ridge out of sight. The specimens of agriculture seen are comprised in the A, B, C of farming, namely, planting cabbage, plants, and putting in potatoes. So, unfretted by the tooth of arrow, or the knife of plough, the old hills soar away in grand scenes until Treherbert is reached, where they seem to have ranged themselves rugged and majestically at the end of the vale, closing it in from the north, but not from the winds, which, whenever they do blow, take especial delight in running down the slopes, and sporting themselves in the streets of Treherbert.

From one end of the valley to the other, the evidence of hasty colonization are visible, and one settlement is just the type of another.

Take an instance: At one of the elbows in the vale, say coal is struck, not found or discovered, for the seams and their positions are now well known throughout the district. Men have been sinking for a time, and little shanties are about the place, and a green field begins to show the result of the sinking, in the gradual accumulation of "tips," composed at first of earth and boulders, but gradually becoming tinged with coal.

When coal is struck, there is an addition of new planks, oil, and tar barrels. The place is fenced around, new trams begin to show themselves, and in the little office on top, which yet smells of spruce pine, grave-looking men ponder over maps, and there is much discussion and conversation. Outside of the ring fence, where a bank with old thorns has stood since time immemorial, a foundation is laid: adjoining meadows are marked out for streets, and soon contractors are at work, running houses up with the utmost rapidity. Very soon painters and glaziers made their appearance, and before the house has had

time to settle, or the mortar to dry, families are gathered there, and domestic arrangements are all around. Ten to one the corner house, which will have been made larger than the rest, will be opened as a public, and an enterprising collier so manages matters that his wife shall draw beer while he is in the pit, he taking the duty on his return home. Another enterprising collier will fill his window with the advance guard of groceries, in the form of sweets and blacking, blacklead and starch, which his wife will also vend when he is away; and a huckster will figure somewhere about the place, a widow, it may be, who will make rapid and periodical runs to Pontypridd market, and will return with oranges and rhubarb, cabbages and the like. Soon after a window will be taken out, and hooks placed there. 'This is the sign of a butchery, but the butcher, also extemporised from the collier ranks, is content at first to import from Pontypridd, and if he goes to the extent of getting American beef from Cardiff he has more speculation in his eyes than most of his brethren.

Time goes on, and the colony, like the houses, settle down. More "pubs," regular grocers' shops, a church, a chapel or two, a *Western Mail* agent; actually a chemist, who prescribes for complaints from toothache to rheumatics, may be seen, and the works doctor, in addition to attending the colliers and their families, has a private practice, which is remunerative. All the while, amidst this primitive settlement, grain by grain society has been formed, and from a nebular condition it comes forth at length, the little upper class which is to rule the place, is to be exponent of public opinion; discuss affairs of State, Eastern or Western questions; patronise concerts; set the fashions, and is the example to the ambitious of the better class of colliers, colliers' wives, and colliers' daughters.

The manager of the pit—and who, in most cases, is one of the owners—is a broad, powerful-looking personage, with a great amount of decision in his face and manner. In his "evening dress," or when he is visiting Cardiff, there is a spice of the sea captain about him, as if, in producing the sea coal, he had instinctively dropped into nautical ways and appearances. A blue serge jacket and dress generally, with a heavy gold chain, and all capped with a bowler, and completed at the extremities with well-fitting kids, give us the type of one of the better class of managers, and a shrewder, more conversational, or intelligent class of men it would be difficult to meet.

In the brisk times of 1873—4 the Rhondda was a scene of mirth and conviviality, but now a degree of placidity seems to have settled down, showing that, if the youth of the valley was rather a wild and boisterous one, its mid-age is more staid and decorous, and should another run of good times take place, the experience of the past, duly paid for, and heavily, by the genii of the pits, will be turned to account.

One of the great features of the Rhondda of to-day is a concert or an eisteddfodd; the first, under the patronage of the doctor or the minister, is sure to take, and the heartiest interest is shown in it throughout. What a flood of Johns and Marys comes streaming in from all parts. John with Albert chain warranted to wear equal to gold, and sold with "charm" for two and

sixpence, and Mary with bright-patterned shawl, and face red as peonies, and glistening after all the rubbing it has had. They have concerts in the train coming up. They will have refrains in the street going to the chapel, or hall, where the concert is held. Everything is hearty and open and noisy; there is no underground feeling except of a genuine and modest character, and, mixing as they do in the freest manner, the moral tone is everywhere as high as in the best conducted district. But the eisteddfod is the gathering. Bards meet in conclave, bards who retain as much hair about the face as modern usages will warrant, and there, amidst demonstrations of humour, and some amount of pipes and ales, draw out the draft of an eisteddfod. The chairman is selected, judge appointed, subjects chosen, and all arrangements are made, and when the day does come it is the red-letter day of the year. A great man is Ab somebody as he walks from the train, which he has been to meet, with the Rev.—Thomas, Roberts, Williams, or Rowlands, Glan ap something else, the chairman of the day. And Ap somebody as he meets his friends in the street walks more uprightly, and can scarcely notice his friends, so absorbed is he in the conversation of the Rev. Chairman, who, to do him justice, is in all likelihood a very decent fellow, able to tell a joke, and to laugh at it, and who does not consider himself half the big man that Ab somebody thinks he is. But Ab somebody is the real hero of the day, in his own opinion. It is he “blows the organ,” he keeps the key of the chapel, he pulls the strings and makes the puppets dance, and a most necessary man is he. Probably his own part before the audience will be to give an impromptu englyn or two; to wave his hand impressively when the audience get too noisy, to shout “elweh” when is pleased with the chairman’s remarks, and to nod his head patronisingly to successful candidates, as if to say “You have done well, we think you have done well, we do.” Innocent egotism! Ab somebody, by his artless and innocent conceit, identifies himself with chairman and judges. He is a part of the critical element of and belonging to the ruling power, and there is no hurtful or harmful result following. Indeed the eisteddfod, though it does abound with colour, and is not unfrequently allied with exaggerated eulogy, and fulsome compliment, is, on the whole, an excellent thing.

It conserves literature and song; it prompts to innocent ambitions; manliness, love of country, love of home; and is far more efficient than any university in the first training up of young men to become ministers of religion in the country and the colonies.

Thus one can afford to smile at the little extra flattery which one bard showers upon another bard, and if eisteddfodau were only made progressive, and become a school for intellectual effort as well as for singing powers, the Saxon would have every occasion to praise, and not libel the institution of Wales.

The riches of the Rhondda are marvellously great, and in comparison with them the grains of gold found in Cape sands, or the nuggets in the Australian mines, are nothing. In the year 1877 no less than three million and a half tons of coal were sent down from this one valley to Cardiff!

Such a drain, while it shows the riches of the place, also arouses the fear that exhaustion must in a few years follow.

A friend of ours stood by an Australian creek: merry the groups around in hut and shanty, the "cradles" were at rest for the day, the labours over, the gold dust weighed and concealed, and song and tale occupied some, while others looked through the blue smoke from their pipes, and thought of dear old England and of home.

He went there again, and the rush of the stream was the only sound, and where camp fires had been, only the scattered embers. No voice, no sound of the busy camp.

They were gone!

Will it ever be so in these coal valleys of ours?

We have stood in ravines sacred to Nature, where pine trees waved their psalm, and the brook in summer seemed to pour forth its song to God. We have seen shanty and hut rise, and pits pour forth their coal, and villages and towns spring up, and civilization stand forth, expressed in a hundred shifty artificial ways, where once the only thing human seen had been farmer or tourist.

Will the time come when even this camp will be deserted, and the fires be scattered, and the last pillar shall have been worked back, and the last ton sent forth?

Who shall say? The farmers of the district may till land over deserted collieries, but what of the thousands who have been gathered in these valleys to cut the coal which some day will be all worked out? The question is a serious one. Perhaps not important to this generation; but a generation will come, to whom it will be of vital importance, unless new industries are developed in time.

DAVID LEWIS THE CHARTIST :

A TALE OF THE NEWPORT RIOTS.



DAVID LEWIS was a collier, and he lived at Dowlais. To be a collier is not to occupy a distinguished position, though a great deal might be said of the services such men render in periling their lives, day after day, by going down a quarter of a mile into the earth. And going down too in order to get the material that gives comfort to thousands of homes, and aids the workshop, no matter what the work, and the steamer on the sea and the locomotive on the rail. Nor again is it a distinguished position to live at Dowlais, that bleak hill side, which is exposed to the blast from the Beacons, and the sulphur from the works ; a place from which nature in the form of leafy trees and green fields instinctively retreats, disliking the glare of iron making, and the thunder of the rolls.

David was a peaceable, god-fearing man. He made a good husband, and a good father, and he was also a regular attendant, but not a member of a Baptist Chapel. Occasionally he had visited a public-house in the neighbourhood (Baptists are said by Independents to be given that way !) which was the resort of colliers and ironworkers imbued with Chartist notions, and insensibly had fallen into their way of thinking. He was a Welshman, and the love of liberty was strong in him. He was a Welshman, and he was full of impulse. He was a Welshman, and he was imaginative, and dreamt of a time when all men should be equal, and property should be freely distributed, and there should be no great riches, and no great poverty. The chartists at Dowlais had no distinct head. They were followers rather of the Merthyr Chartists, where there was not only one head, but many ; an editor who advocated the five points of the charter with power, a chairman who preached physical force, and a vice-chairman who as strongly counselled moral force.

Every now and then David Lewis and his Dowlais friends would find their way down to Merthyr and attend these meetings, and after a length of time, when the brotherhood had thoroughly reasoned themselves into the belief that they were a much wronged body of men ; that the laws were framed for the rich, and that the poor were regarded as simple parts of a great machine,

whose operation was to enhance the wealth of a few, a section of them began to think with the advocate for physical force that for a severe disease severe remedies were imperative, and that it was useless to talk, but manly to act.

Very stealthily it oozed out than an effort was on the eve of being made at Newport; that from all parts of the colliery and ironworks district a number of armed men were to make their way, and, reaching Newport, were to seize the place, crush the authorities, and set an example which, like a beacon fire, should put the whole country into action. All this was very cautiously talked about, but not so quietly, but that the late Earl Russell, then Lord John, had tidings, and it is shrewdly suspected, and has since been openly said, made arrangements to fan the embers of the rebellion and then extinguish them. The earl's notion was the old medical one, not even yet extinct from practice to allow a disease to grow to its full development under careful watching and then effect a cure when at the head by quietly aiding the restorative powers of nature. Our old rulers were not averse to the employment of spies in such matters, and those men, who were generally very carefully selected, made it their business to enter thoroughly into the business, so as to help the actors in deeds for which in due course the actors were either hanged or transported.

Time went on while treason was ripening. The authorities made little stir, but they were well posted up with information, and at the close of every meeting a burly collier, red of hair and addicted to intolerable smoking, was to be seen seated in the kitchen of old Dr. Thomas, of the Court, Merthyr. The doctor did not object to smoking, but he preferred it in the kitchen, and it looked less like business for the collier to go there than into the parlour or library. There by the fireside with a large jug of beer before him, and a short black pipe the spy, for such he was, sat at his doling out bit by bit little scraps of information which the doctor eagerly received and noted. Sometimes the spy was not well posted, as happened on one occasion when he heard a mysterious reference made about a box that was on its way from London, and wonder expressed that it had not arrived. The authorities heard the same night about the strange box, and the canal was forthwith carefully watched, and every barge laden with goods as carefully examined. At last, after long watching, the box arrived, and down swooped the constables upon it and carried it away. It was terribly heavy, and the task was no light one to convey it to the Court; but conceive their disgust in finding, that though the box contained lead, it was manufactured up into type! They thought of bullets, but it was bullets intended only for the editorial hand of the "Udgoru Cymru."

The house of assembly was a long room at the back of a street in a neighbourhood so dense that strangers had some difficulty in finding their way about; but they did find their way, and now and again a noted smithy in the district was visited by strange men, colliers or ironworkers, to all appearance, who would lounge in, and gossip with the smith. The strangers thought of pikes and other ugly weapons of offence, but could only see the fashioning of

harmless horse shoes, or making of grates and screens, and railings. One day a rather officious spy, wishing to get up the rebellion more quickly than it seemed to be going, asked the old smith why he didn't get a few pikes made up. The smith was wary, and taking a long, red-hot bar out of his forge, said, with a fierceness that made the fellow jump to the door, "If you don't get out this moment I'll run you through!"

Such was the state of affairs while David Lewis—harmless, inoffensive David—was making his periodical journeys to Merthyr. David was no advocate of physical force, but he was a man easily led, and the sample is not extinct. "My friends!" roared the speaker of the evening, "we must be up and doing. They are feeding upon our blood; they are devouring our wives and our children. Shall we let that continue, or act like men and crush them?" and David felt that it was manly at once to go out against the pictured ogre that was doing such terrible deeds, and forthwith destroy him. "My friends!" would urge another, "do not be led away to acts of violence; by doing so you play into the hands of the enemy. Give him no excuse for depriving you of your liberties; protest, reason, petition, urge in the strongest way you can and by moral means, and depend upon it sooner or later the victory will be your own." "Hear, hear!" shouted David, who felt that to bear, and endure like a man, and to do all things by reason and argument, and nothing by violence was, after all, the best course.

One evening the sentiment of the meeting was decidedly strong, and the leading speaker was so furious in his denunciations that the meeting was carried away, and it needed but a little to lead at once to speedy action. A strong faction protested against it, and exerted their voices against such folly, but the flood was overwhelming; and but for the after influence of a few men who worked arduously through a greater part of the night in pouring oil upon the waves, mischief must have resulted, and the march upon Newport would have been strengthened by the accession of a large force from the collieries and ironworks.

It was, in fact, only two nights before that singular piece of madness was enacted. There were men present at the Merthyr meeting who knew well what was to happen the next day or two, and now that the actors are in their graves, it may be added that some of these figured in the *melee*.

As David was going out from the meeting, he stopped a minute to chat with a friend with whom he had often sat, and they adjourned together to a public-house, and had a pint of the home brewed before starting.

His friend lived in the neighbourhood of Merthyr, and, like himself, was a collier. His name was Philip Lewis, and in disposition he was the very reverse of his friend. Impulsive, rash in resentment and action, he had, from the first, counselled physical force, for, as he said,

"So long as the people act like sheep, and submit to all sorts of injustice, so long will the Government continue its tyranny."

He had been a bit of a reader, too, and was a clever reasoner in his crude way "Government," he said, "is maintained by physical force, and is only

altered by physical force. Look at the wars we have had in past times, one dynasty fighting against another, and the strongest getting the reins. Here is William the Conqueror coming over to a strange country, just as we might go to France, and fights a battle or two, and takes the whole country. What became then of the Saxon landholders? why, all but a few lost every acre. Then look how Governments deal with the property of subjects; in the subsequent wars, look at the immense numbers of noblemen, who were charged with treason one time, and lost sometimes their heads, and often their lands. Who had the lands then? why the Government of course, who either kept them or gave them to a favourite."

David once mildly objected to such a treasonable flow, and quoted the Bible, in his innocent way, remarking that those who took to the sword would have to perish by the sword, but was so ridiculed that he did not attempt again.

On the night in question he drank a little more than usual, and was accompanied up the road by his friend, who told him privately that "a move was up," everything settled, and that the next night there was to be a large meeting from all parts of the hills, and, arriving at a given spot, the next course would be to march upon Newport. It was well for David's courage that he had taken a little too much beer; as it was the news sobered him. Would David join, Philip said "he was one," and had his gun ready.

David thought of his wife and children, and struggled for a time against his tempter; but when his manhood was impeached, and he was accused of not acting as a Welshman would, then his scruples fled and he promised to fall in with the conspiracy.

He had no gun; what should he do for a weapon? Stop, he had it. At one time of his life he had worked, as a boy, in the smithy near the coal-pit, where all sorts of colliery requisites had been made, and there he had, more for playing at soldiers than anything else, made a pike, and still kept it on the ceiling over his kitchen.

"The very thing," exclaimed Philip; "sharpen him up and bring him, and woe to the tyrants from this day forth and for ever."

Stimulated by his comrade, David walked home in more valiant spirits than he had ever been. His gait was more erect, he kept measured step, a soldier-like feeling seemed to come over him, and the old thorn stick which he carried gave an occasional flourish as if it were a broadsword doing its work upon the foe. Everything was quiet when he reached home, all were sound asleep; so for more than an hour that night David worked assiduously away furbishing up his pike, and with a piece of grinding stone striving to give it some amount of point. While he was hard at work, upon his hands and knees, the door of the inner room was cautiously opened, and out peeped a round, good-natured-looking face, in which, however, some amount of alarm was visible, and the next instant she said, "Why, David, man, whatever are you about?"

David was no diplomatist, or he wouldn't, like a detected schoolboy, have sprung to his feet, throwing the pike at the same moment into the corner, nor

would he have said, "Oh, nothing," and tried to look the most innocent of men. This was the way to make Betsy the more curious, and to bring her out from the bedroom to see what had been thrown aside.

When she found the pike, and saw that it was polished, and was altogether a dangerous-looking weapon, her fear smote her. David had told her about the Chartists, and she knew he attended their meeting, and he had also asked her on occasions for some amount of credit in having defended the moral force policy against the outrageously violent physical force. So she knew that some of the Chartists were for mischief. All this ran through her simple mind with the wonderful celerity that most things do through a woman's brain, and she faced David, and said, "Why, man, what are you going to do?"

"Lord bless the woman!" said David, "Whatever do you mean?"

"Now, David, was the rejoinder, and she held the pick up, "There is no use trying to make a fool of me. You are doing this up to join the 'Charters,' and you are going to fight, and, O dear me! you'll get took and be hanged," and with as near an approach to hysterics as woman of the people (not of the period) could do, she fainted away in his arms.

It was a strange position for an ordinary and usually well-behaved collier to find himself in at the dead of night, a lamp on the floor, his wife in a dead swoon in his arm, and a brilliant-looking but murderous pike in her hands. He had to take her into the bedroom, and lay her on the bed, and bathe her face, and some time elapsed before he brought her around; but when she came to herself and had a good strong cup of tea, for David always kept the fire lit and the kettle "on the boil" in his house, as most colliers did, she felt better and reasoned more calmly. David confessed—he always did to his wife, she being of a stonger nature—that the pike was meant for mischief, and told her with a great deal of reserve, that vast events were brewing, and that he had promised to take part.

He had no sleep that night, or rather morning, until he had promised faithfully to abandon all such mad doings, and when he did sleep it was to dream of the night march, the attack, and to find himself standing in the beautifully clear summer morning on the wall of a large gaol, with Jack Ketch on one side of him and a clergyman on the other, and below a dense crowd that yelled and hooted without ceasing. He arose early, and went to work as usual, fully intending not to have any more Chartism, and never to go near the Merthyr meetings again. That transaction on the gaol walls was in his mind a fore-warning.

"Never any more," said David, quite aloud at intervals, but the echo seemed to say "more," and even as he went his resolves began to thaw correspondingly.

Timid men have not unfrequently a blending in their nature of the brave: at one moment rash, the next yielding to doubts and fears. David was naturally a timid man, and with him it was almost a result of constitution. He was known as a weak man, and from his being so frequently away from work he was called "collier gwyn," or the white collier, the term being a

sarcastic reflection upon his want of energy. Well, David, after a few hours' working, quite recovered his courage, and when he thought of men marching to Newport, and of Philip Lewis waiting for him at the big pond, and Philip's banter when they again met, he forgot his promise to his wife, forgot his fears, and resolved he would be there.

At his proper time he returned from his work, and his wife was very pleased to see him, for she knew him well, and his irresolute character, and was afraid that in his present state of mind he would get drinking, and be led away in his working clothes, as he was. So they had the usual blending of dinner and tea, which colliers used to enjoy when times were better, and after this was over, David, on some excuse of seeing a neighbour about a pig, made off. His conscience smote him keenly as he left the house, having kissed the last born even more lovingly than ever, and he actually turned once or twice to look back, half-inclined yet to abandon the movement; but a friend hailed him, and a glass or two of beer settled the matter. He had no pike. His wife had taken care of that; but he consoled himself with the thought that either a pike or a gun would be found for him; so when the public-house closed for the night David left, and made his way to the top of Dowlais, where he was to meet Philip. As he reached the pond a voice called out, "So you are come; I was almost giving you up," and there stood "Phil," with a belt around him, and a powder-flask, and bearing a gun in his hand. Philip noticed the absence of the pike, and heard of its loss. "It was serious," he said, "but something would be found, and there was no time to wait." By this time a little cluster of men, all bent for the same point, was gathered around, and without any more delay a rapid march over the hill, as the crow flies, was made. After a steady tramp for an hour or two, they fell in with other bodies of men, most of them armed with something or other, the most humble being pikes and pitchforks, and not a few reaping hooks and scythes, the latter roughly tied to sticks, and making formidable-looking weapons.

They were now under regular leadership, and as they tramped in the early morning by cottages or farms many a time a window was opened and heads looked out into the dusky light, noting with alarm the dense crowd that hurried by without sound or voice, but with an ominous clink of steel and iron. David tramped side by side with Phil, who made himself as busy as possible, and was anxious to see how many there were he knew. Presently they came to one of the cross roads, leading from Blackwood into Newport, where a compact body of men, under a leader on horseback, was waiting; and then, to David's alarm, he lost his friend; but he thought he would soon fall back again into his old place, "he had met a friend he knew." Within a short distance from Newport a halt was called, and the course of action pointed out, and then when David heard of the various attacks that were to be made, and that, too, upon posts that were sure to be held by trained soldiers, he saw only too quickly the gravity of the position he was in. All that he had was a stout stick cut from a way-side tree, for Phil had not provided him with a weapon, and what was that to assail men armed with gun and bayonet? He determined to slip away. He

had had enough, he was weary of his tramp of twenty miles. His heart was with his wife and children, and at all hazards he would escape.

The plan soon presented itself. He began to limp, and with a cheery voice he said to those near him :—

“ Well, boys, I must take off my boots and go on with you bare-footed,” and so saying he sat down, and, assuming an eagerness he did not feel, began to unlace his boots, and only managed to get them off as the last straggler passed out of sight. Then, to spring to his feet, and to shake off the weariness of travel was the work of a moment ; the next, like a hunted stag, he retraced his steps, hiding now and then as other stragglers came in sight, and again getting into the road and hurrying on. Hark ! upon the morning air came the sound of gunshots. It was very faint, but it added strength just at the time when it was failing, and many a weary mile he passed, until, completely exhausted, he lay down in a barn, heedless what became of him, and there slept. He did not wake for many hours, but was much refreshed, and taking to the mountain he came across a lonely farm, where he had some bread and cheese and milk. They had no beer, and for this humble repast he paid liberally and again journeyed on. It was night when he came in sight of the Dowlais fires, and nothing had ever been so welcome to him. When he reached the top of Dowlais he felt that he must be cautious, so taking the most out-of-the-way track he reached his house unperceived, and, finding the door on the latch, slipped in and securely fastened it. Even as he did so his wife, crying fearfully, was clinging to him, and her mingling of chiding and love quite broke him down and he, too, cried like a child. She told him that the past day had been the bitterest one of her life, that, fearing what had happened, she had told no one about his being away, so he was not suspected ; but a neighbour had come in and said that a lot of people had gone to Newport ; that there was a riot there, and that a few hours before he came in messengers on horseback had come to Mr. Guest with news that there had been a great riot, that several places had been attacked, but that the mob had been beaten off and many killed.

David felt he was in danger, and that, footsore as he was, it would not do to remain, for many of the rioters had seen him and spoken to him, and there was Phil, too. “ Had Phil retreated as he did ? ”

David had a brother, a small farmer in Breconshire, and it was agreed between husband and wife that his best course was to hurry away there and hide himself for a time, and it was well that he did so, though the parting was a hard one. On the third day after the memorable attack on the Westgate Hotel, a constable and a man whom the wife did not know came to the house and said David was wanted. She called her neighbours in to witness that David had gone away several days and had not returned, and with tears in her eyes, and all the unsophisticated dramatic acting which love and fear prompted, said she was sure he had run away and left the country, or was dead. The neighbours glibly confirmed her, and the constable, seeing that there was nothing to be done, that the bird was flown, exclaimed with an oath,

"Come along, Phil," and disappeared. In due time a letter, that was a marvel of composition, that began with the statement that the writer was very well, for which he thanked God, and continuing with an expression of hope that the same happy condition of things was enjoyed by the wife, reached the poor woman, and after this usual formula David went on to state that he was suffering from severe illness, and that his brother was the writer, and that she had better sell all the furniture, and come down to —— with the children. The wife wrote back instantly, and told the news (she had been to a Sunday School where they taught writing), and mentioned about the constable and Phil. David knew when he received it that he had been, alas! only too easily led away by an informer, and counselled the greatest caution, advising that she should stay with her mother awhile until the storm blew over. This was faithfully carried out, and though Phil made another visit, ostensibly of condolence, he gleaned nothing, and eventually the long-separated pair were again united, but it was on the other side of the mighty waters. David retreated to America, which then was deemed an asylum, where equal rights, and universal suffrage, and vote by ballot, and the other wondrous panaceas of our fathers flourished in full practice, and it is not unlikely that the descendants of David Lewis learn in their American home that England has advanced step by step to be indeed worthy of the great poet's eulogium—

——A land of great renown,
Where Freedom settles broadly down,
From precedent to precedent.

Such is a leaf out of the social annals of the Wales of thirty years ago, and what a lesson to the thoughtful, which must, alas! only too often be learnt by suffering nature, teaching us by analogy of the growth and development and fruition of all things in due time, and the more slow, the surer, and more lasting. In a night the gourd greets the sight and by the evening time it is gone, while the vast oak, spreading its great arms over many a hundred feet, grows slowly, yet last even while dynasties fade.

ON THE MOUNTAINS.



LONGFELLOW must have had a mountainous experience ere he could have written :—

If thou art worn, and hard beset
With sorrows that thou wouldst forget,
If thou wouldst learn a lesson that will keep
Thy heart from sinking, and thy soul from sleep,
Go to the woods and hills ; no tears
Dim the sweet look that nature ever wears.

To the Welshman these thoughts strike home. Born in the

Land of the mountain and the flood,

they arouse the recollections of a happy character ; of youth, of innocence, of rambles when a boy in search of that much-loved “ winberry,” which, when taken in combination with milk, puts strawberries and cream into the shade ; of jauntings

With one fair spirit for the minister,
And a grand pie gathering the gaol.

Prominent objects to his boyish eyes, they remain to the end prominent objects of his affection, and if it should be his destiny to leave for America, or Australia, they are the last landmarks which meet his gaze, the last object of his yearning, as he looks backward to the mist gradually hiding old Mynydd Mawr from view.

It was our lot, a few days ago, to wander once more on the hills of Glamorgan, and this time midway between Merthyr and Aberdare. The great mountain which rises between is anciently known as the Irishman's Hill, a name commemorative to some old raid of the Gwydhelians in the early annals of the neighbourhood. On the highest part there is a circular “ remain,” locally known as the Roman Camp. It is evident at the merest glance that the position was chosen by a military eye, as both vales are commanded, and even the winding way leading to Neath and Swansea. It was impossible for any foe to come near without giving sufficient time for the enemy to receive them, and the entrenchment, even now, after the lapse of two thousand years, looks a strong and formidable defence. But what a change No woods, save

those which fringe the noble castle of the Crawshays, no foe lurking in the coverts, no gleam of steel, no armed bands. Instead we see two large iron and coal working communities, collectively inhabited by one hundred thousand people.

Let us, from the vantage post of the mountain, survey each in turn, and first, Aberdare.

Far to the north-west a broad common meets the eye—historic ground, for on this was decided the fate of Glamorgan. The tale is well-known. Rhys ap Tewdwr here met the Normans in a stoutly contested battle, and falling, with him fell the independence of his country.

The great tract of country over which the battle raged is yet but thinly inhabited; there is Hirwain, which at one time bade fair to be a town of large proportions; but extinct iron-works and crippled coal speculations have retarded its growth, and we see only a large village, with an expanse of country around bearing none of the villas which usually fringe the iron-working districts. One can imagine the scene there played out; the dense masses of Welshmen in stern conflict with the mailed Normans; the long contest, as monotonous, and as seemingly unending as the strife of ocean waves; then the final charge, when the hosts of Fitzhamon put forth all their power, and hapless Rhys fled, hotly pursued, to the Rhondda hills, where after one more effort, he was slain.

In that neighbourhood of the Rhondda, tradition tells of a fugitive king, of a struggle for dear life, of his losing his head, and of a monastery being founded there in his memory. But we hasten away from these scenes, and look on the present only.

The route traversed by Rhys, then mere mountain land, has proved to be of incalculable value, but it took a long time for the stores of mineral wealth to make themselves known.

Farmer after farmer plodded on, building his dry mountain walls, tending his sheep, gathering his fern, and carting it away on vehicles fashioned after the old Roman chariot—and farmer after farmer died, and still only scant grass grew, and poor crops of oats and wheat were raised.

But as we look down on flourishing Aberdare, extending almost in one unbroken line for six miles, we bethink ourselves of the event, and the man who thenceforward gave the district an impetus which has made it second to none in the coal industries of the world.

The history is a striking one, and has far more of interest in it than any connected with warfare.

In Cyfarthfa Works, as petty manager under the first Crawshay, was a Mr. Wayne, who, having by judgment and economy bettered his position and his purse, left Cyfarthfa, and embarked with Joseph Bailey, afterwards Sir Joseph, in an iron speculation in Monmouthshire. This succeeded, but he sold out and came to Aberdare, where he started an ironworks and collieries. Both paid, but his progress was comparatively slow, until it occurred to him that a species of coal, of which he had abundance, might be useful for steam vessels,

as it gave forth so little smoke. Carefully packing up a fragment of about a pound weight, he sent it to London, where it was subjected to careful experiments, and the result was, one fine day an agent came down from London to see about this same coal. To the Londoner's gratification he found there was abundance of the black diamond, and forthwith bargeloads left for Cardiff, and in course of time reached the City. What followed was marvellous. Mr. Wayne began to drive a splendid trade; then other coal proprietors found that they, too, had steam coal; agencies became numerous, the demand increased, the Taff Vale Railway began to send its rails up into the cwms and dingles to aid in the development; Cardiff began to boast of its forest of masts; Aberdare to extend and broaden itself from a village into a town, and the inhabitants to multiply until the old valley became a great hive of labour and prosperity.

We remember these things as we gaze down from the mountain on the striking spectacle of a large town, busy ironworks, and numerous "towers along the steep," which tell not of human conflict man with man, but of man with the sometimes inert and often active forces of nature.

The coal and iron industries yield us to the view substantial creations—streets after streets, mansions, church spires; but there are records attendant on that progress which, but for the fact that every year beholds them decrease, would modify our enthusiasm. Side by side with success there has been disaster; progress has been accompanied with ruin; death to the few. Aberdare valley has its annals of explosions; the bright picture has its shadows grim and grave; and for the few wealthy coal masters who have gone in their sere leaf to the grave, hundreds of young and stalwart men have been cut down in their prime.

From our eminence we can just see the tall shafts of Lletty Shenkin and Duffryn, with their surroundings of black mounds. The shafts are like so many memorials, the sculptured shaft, obelisk, monument, which mourners erect to the memory of the beloved and lost, but these soar typical of industry, of skill, of human daring, and also of disaster and of death.

THE LONDON DOCTOR;

OR,

MAKING LOVE BY PROXY.

(FROM THE ANNALS OF THE GWYNNE FAMILY).



ALBAN THOMAS, the ancestor of the Gwynnes, of Monachty, Cardiganshire, was the son of the Rev. Alban Thomas, of Rhos, Aberporth, and in his youth a fair sample of the intelligent and enterprising young Welshman. As soon as his school education was finished he was sent to London to study the healing art, and the contrast between Rhos and London impressed him beyond all expression. This was in the last century, when verdant fields had not their load of brickwork, and humanity, with its hopes, fears, sorrows, and happiness, had not intruded into spots where blackbirds sang and hedge-sparrows built their nests. Still, even then, London was the great "wen," the huge world, the Babylon of the Calvinistic Methodist, who, as he wandered through the hills preaching in fervid language of the sinner and of the torment, not unfrequently referred to the great city as furnishing the home of vice in every conceivable form and horror. Alban appears to have escaped the temptations of the metropolis, and not only did so, but applied himself with such diligence to his profession that he passed with credit, and, having gained his diploma, took up his residence in the city. There he had friends, countrymen of his own, and life passed tranquilly for some years, without bringing about any other change than a steady advancement in position, and in the regard of those who knew him. Amongst his chief friends was an old playmate of his, Moses Williams, who had always been of even a more studious bent than Alban, and while one of the friends had chosen the medical profession the other had selected the church, and was so wrapped up in divinity and creeds as to pay little heed to the ordinary course of life. Moses passed a great deal of life in the British Museum, and took much more interest in the study of a past life, with its quaintness and learning, than the moving, active present. Still bookworm as he was, dusty and cobwebbed with

old lore, even into his dry soul stole a ray of light, and this came from the flashing orbs of a young lady whom he met, it is supposed, at Sir Hans Sloane's residence, a place, one of the few, which knew him as visitor. From the first moment that young lady smiled upon him, Moses lost his heart.

Books no longer had any fascination ; he began to contrast the swathed mummies and queer Egyptian figures with the perfect grace and form of his beloved. He heard her dulcet accents in the mingled wail and cry and song of the city roar, and her pretty face came to him on the pages of his book, in his newspaper, at every corner. He was, in truth, desperately in love, and much to Alban's amusement, who thought such case one of the most unlikely to happen, told his story to his friend, and sought advice. Alban was a friend of the young lady's family, and was in the habit of attending there, so he was doubly interested, and seeing, from the symptoms of the disorder, that Moses was suffering from a very severe form of the malady, he counselled him to break the ice at once, and literally go in and win. But the studious old-fashioned Moses could not screw up his courage to the sticking point ; he could neither make known his love by voice or pen. If he started on his way to the house, a glance at the building was sufficient, and he doubled, turned up another square, and got back again. If he sat down to write it was only to waste quires of paper with "Madam, my adorable," and other extremes of epistolary modes and customs. At length, in his desperation, he begged his friend to make love for him, and it required all the facial power Alban had to resist breaking out into a fit of uncontrollable laughter when Moses told him ; but so earnest was poor Moses, so plaintive in his expressions, so eloquent in reminding Alban of the early life and of their strong attachment, that eventually, after several interviews, Alban consented. He would do the deed.

One can picture the frightful state of nervousness in which Moses felt on the eventful day when he knew "his case was on." In imagination he was there ; he could see his friend pleading, could hear her soft responses. Were they favourable ? Would they give him hope or consign him to despair ? That was the question. Some day he should be Rector of Llanwenog, that sylvan nook amongst the hills, that little green oasis amongst the stern storm-haunted mountains, and she, his wife, the presiding goddess, the light of his home, the charm of his life, the kind almoner to village poor, the gentle guardian of the village school.

So did Moses dream, and great was his nervous decrepitude as the day waned, and the hour came for Alban to make his appearance.

"Did he succeed ?" inquires the reader.

No !

How is it that invariably we get more of the storm than of the sunshine ; that the brightest hopes are rarely ever realised ; that when success and misfortune, sorrow and joy are put into the scales, those of misfortune and sorrow fall to our lot more frequently than the other ?

A weird fate seems to prowl about the lives of many, and at a fitting moment to pounce upon and devour. Fragrant is the orchard in early summer-

time, with its wealth of bloom and glorious blossom. The farmer gazes on the scene with delight, the blossom is "nitting" well; August will see the fruit sunny-hued, ready for the basket. Fragrant is the orchard, and in the quiet summer days who would dream of storm?

But it comes; the wind and rain play havoc in the night, and gone is the substantial dream of yesterday in broken branch and scattered blossom.

A fine brave ship sails out to sea. There is the boom of a gun, the waving of a hundred hands, the murmur of farewells, and out upon the treacherous ocean she passes, the blue sky, the wind in favour, and as day follows day, and the new home of the emigrant comes nearer, what hopes arise of the new life, what resolves are fashioned, what changes determined upon to live down the old life and carve out the new!

How blue the sky, how soft the wind; becalmed the brave ship lies almost motionless, and the quiet lift of a sail or splash of wave are the only sounds. A distant cloud, small as a man's hand; a furious rush; smashing of masts; splitting of sail and cordage; the sky one dark black frame, pitiless as that of a demon; and the noble ship gains no haven, but lies miles below the angry wave, the fair hair of emigrant ebbing to and fro just as the seaweed amongst which it lies.

Still once more. 'Tis sunshine and calm in the valley of Ferndale, and the air has that buoyancy which makes the distant shepherds cry and the sound of labour resonant. A mother stands by the cottage door, pleasantly chatting with neighbour; the garden is looking well. Soon the boys will be home from the distant pit. How clear the sky! Ah! a roar from the underworld as of distant thunder. They look in the direction of the colliery, from whence streams up a strange cloud. That night two hundred men and boys are lying low, and Rachel weeps, and will not be comforted.

How comes it, I repeat, that a weird fate seems to dog the steps of many; that so few realise hopes; that to the lot of most, sorrow and misfortune fall?

Moses was one of the unfortunates. Alban darted in upon him and told him all. He had asked for a private interview with the lady, which was readily granted, and then with serious face had told of his friend's love, but she would not entertain it for a moment; it was foolish, ridiculous. She actually laughed outright, and Alban even allowed a grim smile to steal over his face; but this he speedily brushed away and renewed the attack. He parried her objections, or tried to do so, and again and again pressed the suit of Moses, enlarging upon that modest young man's virtues even while he deplored his bashfulness. But nothing would do, and when all hope was given up, and the doctor was about to retire from her presence, expressing his regrets and his sorrow, he shook hands very cordially, and hoped that he, at all events, might retain his post of friend, though he had been an unsuccessful ambassador. "Of course," the lady said, "nothing that has taken place lessened her high approval of Mr. Thomas, and, ahem! had Mr. Thomas only pleaded so well on his own behalf as he had on that of his friend there might have been a different ending,"

and so saying, the little gipsy, with a very scarlet face, ran away and was no more seen.

What Alban thought he kept to himself, but he related manfully the whole story to his friend, who, with a great gulp, swallowed his love and his misfortune at the same time, and after some rueful faces, as if the potion had been almost too much for him, told Alban, with a sublime spirit of self-denial, to take her at her word.

It is astonishing with what calmness one can resign chances that are to ourselves hopeless. Moses regarded his lot as settled, and quite buoyantly pressed his friend to go and fight his own battle; but Alban reviewed in a very philosophic spirit the position he was in. He was a young man—a very young man—who had his way to make in the world. He had no means to keep a wife, especially one who had been brought up as Miss —— had been, and then, he added, with more foresight than his years warranted, “To marry young is to sink into a third-rate position as regards one’s profession, and he should have finally to dismiss all hopes of great advancement.” If Moses couldn’t make love he gave convincing proofs that he could reason with great force and logical power, and so effectually that at the end Alban was tempted, as Moses expressed it, to go in and win.

It was some little time before he had the next interview with the blushing lady, for she managed with a good deal of cleverness to keep out of his way; but at length she was caught, and then Alban in pleading his own case, quite excelled himself. She was, however, not to be won so easily as Moses had predicted, for on his pressing her to confirm the promise she made him, were he to advocate his own case, she said:

“Ah, but, Mr. Thomas, much as I respect you, and perhaps a little more, I couldn’t think of marrying a man who had not the right to bear arms.”

“And is that all?” said he.

“Yes.” She hesitated a little. “If you can show me your coat of arms, and prove that you are entitled to bear the same, I will be your wife.”

Alban adopted the course usual on such occasions expressive of his delight, at which there was some little playful skirmishing, and then he took his leave.

“Happy Alban!” Not so happy; he knew he was the son of an old country vicar, but as regarded the family coat-of-arms, or even the right to bear them, he had not the remotest idea, and in his own inner consciousness he did not believe he had. I need not repeat that he was a young man, or he would have known how easy it is for a Welshman to trace his descent from some Ap Somebody who was famous, and produce a pedigree that should be as reliable as it was lengthy.

In his perplexity as to the next step, he wrote to his father like a prudent son, and explained everything, and in the course of a week or two was delighted to receive from the old man, who was not only a worthy divine but a sound antiquary, a beautifully executed pedigree, tracing the descent of the Thomas family from the lords of Towyn! This, which bore the coat-of-arms, was at

once taken to the lady, who joyfully received him, and a few months only elapsed before Mr. Alban Thomas led to the altar one who possessed both grace of person and a long purse.

The union proved, say old authorities, a most happy one, and many years did the attached pair reside in one of the favourite London squares, until she fell a victim to a disorder which neither his skill nor that of the highest in the profession could combat, and then, a saddened man, he retired into Wales. Time, we find (and only time, can in the most cases heal) soothed his sadness, and he married again, this time to Miss Jones, of Tyglyn. Then he took the name of Jones until Monachty fell into their hands, when the name was again altered to Gwynne.

The subsequent career of the other young Welshman, Moses Williams, the unfortunate lover, would appear to be in strict conformity with his studious inclinations, as in after years he was discovered vegetating very tranquilly as rector of Llanwenog, cultivating turnips, and in his leisure hours literature, as country parsons not unfrequently do. And this also must be stated, that if he did not succeed in love he did with his pen, and attained a niche in the literary records of his country.

OUR COLLIER.



NE of our surest and bitterest teachers is suffering. Old pedagogues aver it. They learnt from observation, and the facts that came under their notice in their day and generation have come under our notice in our day and generation. Especially is this the case with a class who are beyond all other modes of teaching, such as our colliers. These invaluable aids to our civilisation, our conquests, may be divided into two great classes—the seacoal and the house collier. The seacoal collier is a wanderer. He may be a Somerset or Devon man; as likely from Gloucestershire as North Wales. In any case he is rarely indigenious, as it were, to the soil; cares little about anything but earning freely and spending freely; is not over and above religious, and in some instances has an unhappy knack of swearing in a flippant but euphonious manner, that reminds one more of the Staffordshire ironworker than any one else. As a rule he earns good money, but employment is uncertain, for the seacoal collieries are supported on the

fit and start principle—a good order for a foreign port, and in go the empty trams merrily, and the men can get them as often as they like, and fill as many as they can get; but a dearth of orders, and the trams which should be entering the level, or going down the pit, are ahead, filled with coal, and waiting on some siding or other, at Cardiff or Swansea, for the lagging customer or the loitering ship.

A very different man is the house collier. Taking the highest aspect first, he is the best type of the primitive reverential kind we can meet. Lacking the buoyancy and physical energy of the seacoal collier, he is disposed to melancholy, or to a contemplative turn of mind; fills his Sabbath with an incessant course of religious duties: school in the morning, chapel, school, chapel in the evening, and prayer-meeting at the close. You may distinguish him amongst the crowd. Like the old Briton he bears a tinge of the *wood* on his face. Look nearer, and you see it is the blue seam, emblem of an old Gethin or Ferndale tragedy, and this he will carry to the grave. If you could know more of him, the painful signs of depression that seem to linger about those advanced in age would be explained. From the earliest age, when he began to labour, he has known little of the enjoyments of life. It has been a weary round of work, compared to which, with its attendant danger and horrors, the seamstress of Tom Hood is in clover. Stitch, stitch, stitch, she may, and we pity her, but it is in a well-lighted room, within sight of the blue sky, and of the waving tree, and within the hearing, it may be, of the stream and the song of birds; but our collier—down three or four hundred yards in the caverns of the gloomy deep, where there is a darkness that can be felt; and there, in a hole a foot, or even leg, deep in water, exposed either to a strong draught, or a strong sulphureous smell, he has to labour from morning till night, from one week's end to the other, very often with only dry bread in his pocket, and when pay comes getting a pittance ranging from ten shillings to sixteen a week.

The house collier is a more settled workman than his brother the seacoal digger. His pit is connected with the ironworks, and he knows pretty well to a shilling what he shall earn. Each week he sends up the same quantity of coal, if a steady man. If otherwise, and there are many exceptions, Saint Monday, and all other well observed but not canonised periods, are observed with a fidelity that sadly interfere with his earnings. He does not know the height of prosperity which the seacoal collier attains, nor does he know the depths of their occasional misery. With more regular work, and as a sequence regular habits, the house collier has not that nomadic life of the other. If he does move from his old quarter, the wrench is a violent one, and the change most startling, either to America or Australia. But generally speaking, unless the time are very bad with him, as at present, he does not migrate, but plods on tranquilly through the vale of years, as he does through his Welsh valley, and when too old for work is thrown first on his club, if he has one, and it is not broken up, as is too often the case just when needed, and eventually he becomes an inmate of the work-house.

In the course of a lengthy experience, dozens of such men have come under our observation, and whenever they do, they form a study of most interesting and painful characters. They have fought with the fire-fiend, they have struggled against the deadly gases, they have been bruised by falling stones, and acquired a deep-seated rheumatic affliction by working in the wet. Passing through these trials, there they stand, at the close of life uninvested with even a solitary gleam of sunset. Scarred, time-worn, time-beaten veterans, unmedalled, undecked with cross or ribbon, heroes of conflicts in the deep dark mines, leaders of forlorn hopes, rescuers of the wounded and the slain of battles—fought noiselessly, unaccompanied by the stirring strains of martial music, and cheered only by the hoarse groan of brother toiler; and then, unpensioned, unrewarded, left to eke out life on the pauper's pittance, and die the pauper's death. The last sad scene of all is a common picture in most of our Welsh towns:—the black box on wheels that is driven rapidly to a town cemetery, where a coffin, rude to a degree, followed by no mourner save an official from the workhouse, is lowered with hasty formality into the grave. Not a sound of regret, not a tear, and the only consolation of the stranger looking on to say "Thank God, there is a resurrection and a future." Such then is a hasty outline of collier life, and its closing record brings us naturally to the consideration of the ordinary nature of that life, of its dangers, and sufferings, and remedial influences which might be brought to bear.

A great portion of the dangers attendant on coal working may honestly be regarded as due to the workers' rashness or ignorance. We will give two illustrations in point. An old collier told us some time ago of a fellow-workman who was considered, amongst a multitude of rash and reckless men, the most foolish of all. It was his habit, on arriving at the pit in the morning, to adopt a very summary method of descent. If the carriages were not going down the instant he came, he would jump on to the chain, and hand below hand go down, actually sliding rapidly by these means until he reached the bottom. He gloried in this feat, and was never better pleased than when he found that in order to go down by the usual method he must wait a few minutes. Another case was brought under our notice, that of a man in the Aberdare coal pits, with leaving a door open and smoking in a dangerous part of the pit. Now the most ignorant man living must know, on beginning work in a coal mine, that the doors, as they are called, are of most vital importance—that on their being carefully attended depends the safety of all employed; yet not only did he leave the door open, but lit his pipe and smoked in a forbidden part. The result of his gross thoughtlessness, to apply the simplest term to it, was an accumulation of gas in the headings, and, had it not been observed in time, a dreadful catastrophe must have occurred before that of Ferndale. Time after time similar incidents are recorded; time after time great explosions have taken place, and cut down hundreds in the prime of life; and still the causes go on, and the dread lesson is unheeded.

How shall this be remedied? This general recklessness and disregard of life must be prevented. Anyone who has visited the scene of an explosion will

bear us out in saying that the lookers-on, as a rule, betray a sad lack of feeling. We have seen nearly forty dead bodies brought up singly or in pairs, and laid on the heap of straw while Marshall Hall's plan of resuscitation was tried. We have seen them taken away dead, hopelessly dead, and beheld only curiosity, eager interest, exhibited by the spectators. We have seen this heap of dead taken on a tram to the town, and then only, when the wives and mothers and sisters thronged around, heard the wild and passionate accents of grief, which such a scene loudly called for. The fact cannot be denied, that amongst the male population of a colliers' community the greatest unconcern is shown at these spectacles. Hosts of men will throng to see and hear, and on the morrow will be found perilling their own and fellows' lives either by carelessness or bravado.

Such men are, as the poet terms them, children of a larger growth, and must be treated accordingly. We must prevent them by a more vigilant sub-inspection of collieries, by a more rigid carrying out of the regulations, and when, despite of all human foresight, accidents do happen, and they will to some extent as long as the coal evolves such immense quantities of deadly gas, then a fund must be ready, gained by a small tax on coal, so that the widow and the orphan, the poor old father and the helpless mother, shall fall back on a secure provision, and not depend on the chance generosity of the world.

These are the lessons of Ferndale ; let us take them not only to heart, but act up to them, prompted by humanity, which cries out to us alike from the collier's life, and the tragedies of the collier's death. Written in '72, and the Permanent Fund is still '78, only "a dream of the wise."

THE "BOHEMIAN" ON THE WELSH MOUNTAINS.



PICTURESQUE village in Breconshire, where everybody knew every man and woman's business, received one autumnal evening a strange visitor; a most unusual circumstance, for the village was an isolated one, far away from the broad highway, and at the time of which we write its quietude had never been disturbed by even the horn of the mail coach, much less the shriek of the locomotive. The stranger was a man in the prime of life, well-built, and of gentlemanlike bearing. But there was a perceptible carelessness about his dress which told the most ordinary observer either that his fortunes had faded, or that he was singularly inattentive to personal appearances. He was not exactly shabby, but so near that point that it only needed another wrong turn of fortune's wheel to land him in that condition. He sauntered slowly down the little street, eyeing the cosy cottages with interest, and on reaching the solitary ale-house known as the "Brown Cow," entered, and sat down in the bar. A glass of ale was soon brought at his request, and in the intervals of sipping it he chatted with the landlady, who, curious as all villagers are, was not sorry to have an opportunity of gazing at him to her heart's content.

"This is a quiet village, I should think," said he.

"Very," was the reply, "except on fair days."

"Oh, you do have a little life here, then?"

"Yes, there is plenty of noise and bustle at that time."

"How do you get your letters here?" was the next question, and he was informed that once a day a man came from the next post town and brought them, taking away in the evening all that were to go away.

"So far well," said he, "and would it be possible now for a single man like me to get a comfortable lodging in the place?"

She thought it might; there was Widow Jones, of Cowley's Elm Farm, had an invalid lady for many months staying with her.

"And where is Cowley's Elm?"

Just a quarter of a mile away. He could not miss it by going up the village

and turning to the right, and it was by the road-side, and the only red-bricked farm near.

He thanked her, drank his ale, paid her from a tolerably well-filled purse and quietly walked away. He was there again a day or two after, for, as he said, her ale was wholesome, and tasted more of the hop than of the chemist's shop. He had found Cowley's Elm Farm, and was fortunate enough to get very comfortable lodgings there.

"The place suited him," he said; "it was so quiet; no whirr of wheels, no children."

"Bless their dear little hearts, exclaimed the woman; "I wouldn't be without 'em for the world."

The stranger smiled at this exhibition of pure womanly, motherly, feeling, and, noticing a curly-headed youngster by her side, patted him kindly on the head, remarking,

"You women excel Job in patience, not only enduring the fret and vexation of life, but even partial to it."

Well, she would admit they tried her patience sometimes, but they must take the bitters with the sweets.

The conversation flagged then, for the stranger's mind evidently wandered away from the subject. Some remark of hers had touched an old string, and reverberating memories thrilled his heart. Had he ever known a woman's love, or the sweet joy of childish affections? Was this homeless man a wanderer, not unacquainted with the delights of home? In her rustic way she must have thought so, as she left him musing in the bar. Once or twice a week it became his habit to frequent the village inn, but he always restricted himself to one glass, and invariably chattered a little with Mrs. Williams, the landlady.

Comparing notes one time with Widow Jones, who dropped in on market day, they found their impressions of the stranger very much alike. He was reserved, yet stern, seemed always in a thoughtful mood, but when disturbed was not fretful, much less angry.

"As for children," said Widow Jones, "he don't like them to make a great noise, but he is very fond of 'em. There's that young nephew of mine, Billy, he's spoiling him as fast as possible, and the young rascal, I am losing all control over him."

"Has he much money, do you think?" said the landlady.

"Well, he never stints himself," rejoined the widow.

"What is he?" added the questioner; "who is he?"

But Mrs. Jones could not satisfy her on either point, only that letters came addressed "Wm. Clegg, Esq.," many of them covered with postmarks. She could tell her friend also that he had a large correspondence, for he was always writing.

"Bless you," she said, "if you was to see him sometimes you would think he wasn't quite right in his mind. I go in with his tea, and very soon after he goes into the garden with his pipe and sits in the little bower; then he

will get up, smoking quickly, and walk up and down the path talking a good deal to himself, and swaying one of his hands about. Then he'll go in, and when I take his candle he is writing as fast, and has got no end of sheets of paper, just written, before him."

So the old gossips talked, but the landlady has another bit of information in store.

"And, would you believe it, he is constantly wandering about amongst the mountains, and raves so about them. He says nothing delights him so much as to be on the Beacons during a storm."

This last fact seemed a conclusive proof of his being "touched," as one remarked, and with this the gossip ended.

For a wonder, gossip was right about the stranger. He was a strange being. Familiar with many countries, a far travelled man, familiar with many tongues, extensively read, accustomed to society, its refinements, and its charms, he yet sought gladly this solitude amongst the Welsh mountains, and studiously avoided all but the most unsophisticated of the villagers. He was an angler, too, and in following this pursuit had once or twice come in contact with a gentleman who had seen service in a medical capacity in the Crimea. Gladly would this gentleman, also a far travelled and well-read man, have commenced an acquaintance; but every overture was firmly but kindly repulsed. So with the doctor and the minister of the parish he seemed to have some morbid Byronic feeling, tempting him away from the haunts of men into the most complete solitude; but he was not of that school. Incidents of the past had carved their deep furrows in his very soul. Years, many years, in the dim perspective, he could see himself a gay merry lad, prone to all mischief, full of an energetic, buoyant life, which, must find its food in a playful wickedness that brought him into many a punishment. Still again he would look mentally on the past, and, as the man just entering on the sober duties of life, see little change; abundant still was the flow of animal spirits, and with this a keen desire to see all and know all; a thirst for information and variety; the old stone book with its memorials, worn like the chancel monument with the passing of generations, yielded its lessons to him; the leaf told its tale, and the plant its record; the history of an illimitable past was faintly shadowed by these things, and the present lived in man and his biography of a few thousand years. Such he saw himself, the learner, the reader, of these things in the long ago, possessing earnest faith in human nature, and confident reliance in human kind. Then, as he looked, he came to the borderland—to the eventful epoch of life; passing through which altered his character, changed his destiny, and produced causes which, in due and successive order, eventually transformed him into the hermit without a religious aspiration, the man without a home, and, so far as this life was concerned, without a hope.

Calmly and uneventfully passed the years. He had become a part of the hamlet. The shepherd knew he would meet him somewhere amongst the hills, and was not startled to see his tall form dashing by, or hear his voice blending with the shriek of the gale. The children of the village were not

alarmed when, coming suddenly upon him in their excursion amidst the ravines, they found him so rapt in thought as to be insensible to their presence; the tap of his geological hammer on the fossil-laden rock was a familiar sound; the figure laden with heaps of rare plants was a familiar sight. Rarely speaking otherwise than of the most ordinary topics, but with a kindly smile for every familiar face, so passed his village life; and when it was known that sickness had overtaken him, that he lay prostrate in his temporary home, there was not a villager who did not mourn, nor one who failed day after day to ask one another about him, and whether his illness was dangerous or not.

It was dangerous. The good doctor of the village found himself unable to cope with it, and wished an eminent practitioner from a distance to be sent for. "But," said the stranger, one evening to him, smiling at the same time, "my good friend, do all you can, I am afraid my ailment is beyond your probe. You can't minister to a mind diseased." Unwise exposure had aroused an old complaint, and, with no love of life such as the youthful, and hopeful possess, there seemed every likelihood that his days were numbered. He had maintained relations with the outer world so far as to be often in receipt of letters, newspapers, and books; and once a month, good Widow Jones remarked afterwards, a little roll of writing was sent off by him to the post, but no friend from a distance had ever been to see him. His landlady, by direction of the doctor, asked him one day whether he would not like some one to be sent for, and he promised he would think about it. Not long after she was startled by his remarking that a bed had better be prepared for a visitor, a lady, who was coming in a day or two. She promised all should be done, and the next day a hired vehicle from the nearest town brought the lady. The stranger calculated on her staying with him, but the orders given for the carriage to wait pointed to his visitor's resolution. Widow Jones never even saw her face. That she was a lady, still young and beautiful, could easily be discerned by her, for rare is the penetration of a woman's eye. They were closeted alone for a long time. Once the widow heard his voice ringing out passionately, followed by soothing, loving tones. When they parted he managed to walk as far as the door, and there, with infinite tenderness, they bade farewell; she weeping—he prostrate, overwhelmed. When the doctor came on the morrow, he at once ordered him to bed, and bade the widow admit no more visitors; another such a visit and there would be no hope. Nor was there hope as it was. Day after day the features became more hollow, and the eye keener and brighter. It seemed as if the spirit within was supported and strengthened by the decay of the body. The gentle humidity of his gaze, woman-like in its soft tenderness now, the placid voice, free from every taint of the rich man's querulousness, the ready yielding of the grave thoughtful man to his doctor and his nurse—these were the last characteristics, and as fades day into twilight, and the eventime sinks into the night, so faded he, and so died.

The villagers mourned for him as for a near and dear friend. Scarcely an inhabitant was absent from the funeral, and deeper, grander, with a fullness that few had known before, was the anthem for the dead sung as they passed

through the little street and by the winding lane to the House of God. There were two gentlemen from London at the funeral, sent for by him in his last illness. They saw everything done, disposed of his little property, sent away his books and manuscripts, and settled all claims. Grave men, mournful but not affected, it needed not their assurance to satisfy the widow and others that they were no relations, merely friends. At the grave the doctor entered into conversation with one of them, and gave him many reminiscences of the stranger.

"So like him," remarked the other, as they turned away from the graveyard. "He was eccentric from his youth. Few men have seen more of life, tasted of greater delights, endured stranger vicissitudes."

"And his name?" asked the doctor, his voice faltering in his anxiety to learn.

"Will never be rightly known other than as Clegg, such he must be commemorated in your churchyard. It was his wish that neither name or lineage should transpire; that a sad history, on the whole, and a sadder attachment unattended with nought but sorrow, should be buried with him. But this," continued the Londoner, "I may tell you he was a literary man of great eminence, and in harness to the last."

He was turning away, leaving the kindly questioner wrapt in thought, when it seemed as if a new revelation had entered his mind.

"You have been very good to him all of you. Do not take it as unkind that we are so reserved about his name. You would be none the better; we should have the unpleasant reflection of having broken faith. He was a very good and a very wise man; in his later years most unhappy; further, he was one of the most distinguished and valued contributors to *Blackwood*, and I represent old Maga, and over the grave of one of her sons place lovingly the wreath he earned so well."

This was all that was ever known. *Blackwood* has recorded in euphonious sentences the passing away of many of the gifted phalanx who have gained her a name and fame, but never referred specially to the one who, in the dingle amongst the Welsh mountains, sent her many a loving delineation of nature and thought, and was at last laid in a nameless grave that has never borne other than the wild flowers he loved so well.

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN EMINENT WELSHMAN.



*R*E was an eminent Welshman, and he lived and flourished about a quarter of a century ago. Strong of frame, with massive brow, and strongly marked features, no one with any penetration could pass by him without being struck by his appearance, and without feeling that he was in the presence of a superior mind. Unlike many a thoughtful man who walks with bent head, our friend directed his skyward, not that the blue sky or the changing aspect of the clouds interested him. He looked beyond, through ether and vapour, and if he was not engaged in working out a poetic thought he was brooding over early Druidic mysteries and fashioning out a philosophic and intellectual faith which, I am afraid, was beyond the mental compass of the most advanced thinker of early British days.

He has been known to come home wet through with his umbrella under his arm unopened, to sleep with his hat on, and make a respectable beaver worthy of St. Giles! A distinguished friend waited upon him one day, and a walk was proposed. He consented, and went to change his coat, and he did change it with a vengeance. The distinguished friend happened to look at his back and said:

"Look, I say, I won't walk another step with you. What in the world made you wear that coat for?"

"The coat! why, what is the matter with it?"

"Matter!" said his friend, "come back home and see."

He had taken a coat from the back of which a respectable square had been cut to repair another!

He had an order to read at the British Museum, and took with him to London a whole bundle of letters of introduction, all of which he brought back unopened in his carpet bag. He had not presented one!

While on his way to London he drifted off to Oxford, and disappeared. His friends expected to hear from him and daily looked for a letter from London, but none came. Eventually his friends found him fraternising amongst professors and dons, who made much of him, but chiefly was he delighted with the Bodleian.

Arrived in London one of the principals of the Museum who knew him intimately gave a dinner party in his honour, and said to one of the guests, "My

friend whom you will meet is a distinguished man of considerable local celebrity, but he has one weakness, and I am surprised at this. He is ashamed of his country. Do not on any account refer to his being a Welshman."

His friend promised this, and in his eagerness to oblige overdid it. At the party, turning to the local celebrity, the guest said, "You are an Englishman, I believe?"

"No, thank God!" was the startling rejoinder, and it was difficult to tell which face, that of host or inquiring guest, looked the most confused.

He was not allowed to leave London without seeing Macready, and coming from the play the throng was so dense that it was almost impossible to get away. A friend of the Welsh party, now a sculptor of eminence, in the impulse of the movement adopted a capital ruse. Rushing to the front he waved his hands and cried out, "Room for the Welsh Ambassador!" In a moment the crowd opened, the party entered their carriage, and it was only when they were driving off that the people discovered that they were done, and hooted accordingly.

He had a weakness for tea had our friend and it was customary to bribe him to visit at some of the country residences by promising him an unlimited quantity. At one house, his first visit, the hostess said, "How much tea do you drink, Mr. ———?"

"Two cups," was the stolid rejoinder.

When he had had a dozen she reminded him of the first statement.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "I said two, but I did not say that I took no more than two."

The late Mr. Bruce Pryce once took him around some of his farms, and, coming to one of the farmers, said to the old worthy, "Did you ever hear of Mr. ———?" referring to the eminent Welshman who stood by his side.

"Yes," said the farmer, "I was hear of him."

"Well, what have you heard?"

Well, I was not hear anything good. He was write poetry!"

"Yes," rejoined Mr. Bruce Pryce, with infinite gravity, "depend upon it, a man who writes poetry is no good. You look out for your locks and bars if he comes this way."

The dignified composure of Mr. ——— all the while was a treat to witness.

Living an unselfish life, loving his literature—and he had a literature, though a sealed book to the majority of Englishmen—loving his language, yet not despising the strength and fluency and power of the stranger's; so he lived, doing a practical service to the community, leaving his mark upon his generation, and dying, known thoroughly by few, hated by none.

"And who was he?"

That remains untold. Some day the outlines may be filled in, and the story of an earnest hard working and blameless life recorded in full.

THE LAST FRENCH INVASION OF WALES.



HAVE referred in these sketches to an invasion of Wales by Frenchmen in the time of Glyndwr, when they acted in conjunction with the Welsh troops against their mutual enemy the English, and also proceeded as far as Worcester, and after a slight skirmish returned to the Welsh coast and took ship for home.

This narrative has to do with the last French invasion, feebly attempted and soon ended.

On Tuesday, the twentieth of February, 1797, the people of Pencaer, a little fishing village near Fishguard, were attracted by seeing three large vessels standing in from the channel. The impression was that they were Liverpool merchantmen becalmed, and their intention seemed to be to anchor until the return of the tide or a change, of wind. The rustics were on the point of resuming their duties, when boats were seen putting off in such numbers, so full of men, that all doubt disappeared; they were Frenchmen, and, of a certainty, enemies.

The villagers were right, the vessels were frigates, the men were French soldiers, one thousand five hundred in number, and under the command of a general named Tate.

As soon as they landed the villagers left their houses and esconced themselves amongst the rocks, from whence the most valiant and curious of them could see the unloading of arms and ammunition casks, all of which were taken up the cliffs in places so precipitous that it was a wonder how the men clambered up there even without their burdens.

The alarm spread to Fishguard, and there the panic was, if possible, greater, and the whole of that night was taken up with the removal of all valuables, even the furniture, to places of security. No one slept that night; fire, rapine, plunder, destruction, were on the lips of every man, and never was daybreak awaited with greater anxiety.

But the Frenchmen were in no hurry, they were hungry on landing, and cooking was the order of the night. Seeing cottages, a systematic visit was made to them, and their foreign natures must have been upset by the discovery that in such a poor shipping village, where humbleness was written everywhere, a keg of good wine was stored!

The real explanation of this was that not long before a wreck had occurred on the coast of a vessel laden with wine, and this was the *flotsam* and *jetsam*, which the villagers had taken care to appropriate to their own use.

Gluttony, says an old writer, was followed by intoxication. The intemperate use of this article raised the men above the control of discipline, and rendered even the officers negligent of command. What less than this could be expected from men commissioned to confound and desolate, for that this was the nature of their instructions appeared evident from papers afterwards found in one of the frigates?

If the French really did act in such a riotous manner it was most unusual for them, for their temperate habits both in eating and drinking are generally admitted. Perhaps the exposure on sea, and some degree of privation to which raw recruits had not been accustomed, had something to do with it. This is certain, that when day dawned they remained where they had landed and so on until the next day, by which time, the fears of the people having lessened, a strong force of local militia and a still smaller body of regulars marched down to the scene, and with an air so determined that the invaders were in turn almost panic-stricken. The leader of the local force sent a peremptory message to the French general to yield. He was further told that a force equal to his own was before him, that the whole country was aroused, and that nothing but a surrender could save him from destruction. The French are a brave people, but what could bravery do in such a position? and, as if to strengthen the demand of the Welshman, on the hills adjoining could be descried a great cluster of red-garbed soldiers. This far off detachment were in reality women in red mantles or cloaks, but they answered the purpose admirably, and made the Frenchmen surrender at discretion.

Such was the last French invasion of Wales. But the writer has been assured, by an aged gentleman who once lived on the coast between Penarth and Cowbridge, that when Napoleon threatened to invade England an agent, or spy, came into his locality gleaning a great deal of information about the coast and roads, but in so guarded a manner that it was not until he had disappeared that the real secret of his mission dawned upon the minds of those he had questioned. And to this day it is the opinion of the aged gentleman, not only that Napoleon had an idea of landing on the Welsh coast, but that a lugger seen beating about was the vessel which had brought the spy to the coast and taken him away again.

Poor Napoleon! he had dashed himself against the British bayonet only to be shattered, and much more rapidly would his ruin have been effected had he ventured to assail any part of the iron-bound coast of Britain.

Now invasion is a physical impossibility. Our wooden bulwarks are preserved in immortal song, but our ironclads are stern practical facts of to-day.

CRAIG EVAN LEYSHON.



MANY a reader of fiction has been struck with the fancy picture drawn of a raven, brooding over a chest of gold, in some secret cavern. Of the dungeon of Morlais Castle, near Merthyr, for example, there has always been a tradition of this sort. You enter the crypt, and proceeding out of it is a secret passage, wherein, saith this said tradition, a raven is perched, the weird guardian of the chest of gold. The idea occurred to me lately when at the Navigation, a well-known place near Pontypridd. Towering above the valley, grandly, solemnly, its huge front wrinkled by the storm, is Craig Evan Leyshon, guardian of the vast, almost incalculable riches of the centre of the great South Wales coal basin.

How petty the raven and the chest after this. How pales fancy before fact. Millions of tons of the famous four feet steam coal rich in its strength for commerce and the thousand aims and purposes of civilisation nestling beneath the grey-worn mountain. That it towers to a great height is perceptible, as from it on a clear day you get glimpses of Monmouthshire, Breconshire, Carmarthenshire, as well as a great tract of Glamorgan. A sea of hills is before you, so far removed in the distance that only a great chain of haze is to be seen, and it is only when the eye falls upon the nearer view that the special peculiarities of a Welsh landscape can be noted. Here and there, winding through valleys, are the mountain streams, and by their side, sinuously and glistening snake-like, the iron or steel rail, then the gliding train and the long trail of smoke from massy and bustling locomotives. You know that underneath those mountains, in many places half a mile beneath, are thousands of men toiling in their large stalls; that trams are passing and repassing in dark heading, and a constant stream of coal is sent to the bottom of the shaft, and then whirled up into the light of day. Next in rapid succession it is poured down the screens into trucks, and the trucks, fifty to seventy at a time, hurried away to the ship or steamer idly lying in dock for its cargo, which in due time will be in Egypt or India.

All this goes on under the shade of the great hill, which still bears traces on the vast crags which line it of the primeval sea that at one time or other coursed down, surging up over the mountain that is now only marked by sheep tracks, or in the summer time the resting-place of the picnickers from the distant towns

and villages. Far below under the heights of Craig Leyshon are miles of virgin coal, some day to be brought up to the surface by our enterprising capitalists, but of this and of the present workings the Craig and its neighbouring hills give no sign; and if the steps of the tourist are directed from the outlook over the valley, every yard takes one away more and more from the empire of coal into a district purely agricultural, to old world farm-houses, and quaintly walled off fields, and antique outhouses, very little altered, we should imagine from what they were in the days of Hywel Dda. Beyond this margin of farm lands was soon come to the house coal neighbourhood of Llanvabon and Llancaiach, but our steps for the present must not go far. They must pause at the farm of Garth Fawr, the residence of Mr. William Lewis.

The worthy farmer is not a representative man. The Welsh farmer as a rule, ploughs as his fathers ploughed, and his idea of culture is confined to his lands, and that only in a spare degree. Our farmer is a thoughtful, studious man; and takes an interest, and a lively one, in all matters pertaining to antiquity.

Strange "whorls" and other stones, used hundred of years ago in grinding corn, and found many feet below in the soil, have been arranged on the garden wall with boulders, once washed by the sea up to the mountain level, and cinders from Waun y Tinker. These are his treasures, and they are suggestive ones. With regard to the cinders which are turned up by the plough, they are a relic of antiquity in themselves, as they date unquestionably from the time of the Sussex venturers, who first made iron in South Wales, and they are also eminently suggestive.

To explain, the place where found is called the tinkers' field, and as tinkers it is not unlikely that the early ironmasters were known. For the making of tin Britain was famed even in the days of the Phœnicians, and what more natural than the slight deviation of the craft to iron, was continued for a long time, and in the estimation of a primitive people was regarded as the same pursuit? This is our explanation of various tinkers fields in the parish of Merthyr. If anyone has a better, let him supply it.

Our farmer is both able and energetic in the working of his farm; and his good wife boasts, and with justice, the production of cheese, which in size and goodness would compete with that of any farm in Glamorgan.

One is reminded of old times by the common rights enjoyed by him and neighbouring farmers. Thus you can turn on the common as many sheep as the land will keep in winter time, but you must not buy in order to increase the number on the common. In driving the sheep on the farmer is only permitted to go himself one hundred yards from the farm walls or gates. Furze can be cut for one's own use on the common, but not sold; and when timber grew there, it might be cut for ploughs, yokes, or for cymmod (stiles).

In the neighbourhood of the farm, or the heights of Craig Evan Leyshon, are unmistakable remains of a Druidic character, showing that here, as on many of our most prominent heights, the old altars of worship were erected.

Just as in modern times, amongst modern men, let their avocations or

pursuits be what they may, the spectacle of the vast and the sublime arouses our deepest reverence, so, in great solitudes, such as this of Craig Evan Leyshon this scene, by day and at night, must have aroused the fullest admiration of the cave worshipper. In the day, as far as eye could scan, the great range of untrodden and unfenced hills. At night, the great lights of heaven, the illuminable expanse studded with star worlds. Well can we understand and believe that it was not in copse or ravine, but on the noblest mountains that the old Druid held spirit communion with his God.

A sagacious friend suggests that "Evan Leyshon" is a corruption of Evan Lewis John. But this cannot fairly be accepted. In the first place as we have no other instance of two names having been corrupted into one, as Davrichard, ThoJones, Wilgriffiths, and in the second place as Leyshon, Lyshon, or Leishon is an old Welsh surname, and as such is to be met with in early annals. One more note about our model mountain farm, and we have done.

To this place came, not very long ago, a Londoner, with the glisten of London shops in his eyes, and in his ears the thunders of Cheapside. He came by rapid route to Wales, mounted the height, and stood as one entranced, No sound of wheel or roar of a million voices, all as hushed as placid in tone as in the springtime of the world's history : and around, vastness and rugged grandeur such as imagination had never in its highest moods conceived.

"There was no getting him away," said the farmer, a dear lover of the mountain view himself, "here he would come again and again, and when he left it was with sorrow."

What must have been his feelings at night, utter stillness, the extreme darkness. Far away, as if part of the starry world, the twinkling lights of Merthyr and Dowlais, occasionally a great glaring light from the works ; but in the immediate neighbourhood all darkness and silence, now and then faintly broken by a restless "Moss," answering another equally wakeful guardian of the night. What a contrast all this to the life in London, the glare, bustle, riot, and wreck constantly going on. How grateful the calm of one, after the unrest of the other. Like a pleasant interlude ; the rest between the acts of the drama of life. Let others try, and they will thank me for directing them to Craig Evan Leyshon.

THE MYSTERY OF THE NEATH VALLEY.

WAS HE GUILTY?



HAVE often thought what a world of interest there is shut up in the compartments of a railway carriage, but, like the ciphers of a secret language, few possess the key. We take our tickets, form one of a dozen, or less, exchange the usual conventional remarks, or do not, just as the humour suits, and one by one we leave knowing nothing, and wrapt up in our own pursuits, hopes, and efforts, caring nothing about anyone but ourselves. What if we knew all about that cosy old gentleman in the corner, that young widow who sits opposite, the thoughtful bookish youth who reads all the way, or the faded gentleman who sits lost in thought, picturing, perhaps, that past summer of his life which on this earth will never be his again. Sometimes the key to the cipher is given, and a returned emigrant openly and honestly tells his tale to a fellow traveller, and such was the case a few years ago, on the Great Western line.

He was an old man, and his destination was to one of the small stations near Neath, and so delighted was he at being again in the midst of old scenes that, seeing the interest awakened in the mind of his companion, who alighted with him at the same station, he told him the tale of his life.

I repeat he was an old man. He was not a gentleman. He looked more like an old farmer than anything else, and such he said he was. He had been a farmer in South Wales forty years before, and since then he had been a farmer in Australia; had lived a regular active life, had saved money, and was now come home, as the Israelite travels to Jerusalem to see again the scenes of youth, to linger awhile where youth had played, and manhood had striven, and there return—to die.

I will tell his tale in my own way. The facts are his, if the reflections are mine, and the tale is worth more than passing glance or a momentary thought:

Forty years back saw him a stalwart young farmer living with a widowed mother, in one of the picturesque woods in the Neath Valley. He was plodding and industrious, and though no scientific farmer, still having good land to culture, and feeling an interest in his work, he farmed to some account, and his mother was such an excellent dairy-woman, so careful with her poultry,

and so particular with her cheese and butter, that at the market her produce was always the first to be cleared away. Thus it followed that mother and son were prosperous and happy.

The young farmer, with all his attachment to farming, yet allowed his thoughts, when at plough or harvest time, to wander, and upon one person more than another, and this was Ellen, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, who, in addition to good looks, possessed good sterling qualities.

It was natural that such a prize should be coveted by more than one, and the young farmer had considerable difficulty in winning the first place in her affections. But he succeeded, and, but for an event, the two would have been united, and the prosy tale of their married life would have contained no incident out of the common worth recording.

John would have expanded into the burly farmer, tending his sheep, cultivating his land, visiting fairs and markets, and returning from both with more of the home-brewed than was good for him; and the fair Ellen would have been lost in the mother of stalwart sons and hopeful daughters.

It became known in the neighbourhood that John was the fortunate man, and while some of the neighbours, with the usual charity exercised on such occasions, said that she was too good for him, others regarded the match as likely to be a happy one. True, they said, John is rather an excitable man and one easily led astray, but his wife "to be" would keep him in order, and when a family grew up around him his jaunty ways would subside.

One evening, in the full period of their courtship, they were out walking in one of the pleasant and wooded spots, so abundant in the valley.

They were seen together, talking rather loudly, and that night John returned to his home more thoughtful than his wont. But his mother attributed this to the foreshadowing of home cares, and the natural anxiety of a man who was wishful to get a farm of his own to which he could take his wife, so she said little, and, after a frugal supper, both retired to bed.

Scarcely, however, were both asleep, when a violent knocking was heard at the outer door. John was first awakened, and, putting his head out of the window, he inquired what was the matter.

"Matter enough," called out the constable of the hamlet. "Come down at once. Ellen has been found murdered in a wood close by her house."

"Murdered!" shrieked, rather than shouted John; and nervously dressing himself he hurried down. His mother was by this time aroused and, scantily dressing herself, she reached the house door just as her son had opened it, and there stood the constable with a bevy of followers armed with sticks and pitchforks.

The officer's tale was soon told.

Ellen had gone out for a walk that evening, and as she did not return her family had concluded that she had gone to visit the mother of her intended husband, but as night came on and she did not make her appearance, one of the servants was sent through the wood on the way to John's house. The messenger, a young girl, had not gone many yards when she saw a heap of something, as

she described it, by the side of the path, and with her heart in her mouth she hurried to the spot and fainted dead away by the body of her young mistress. When she came to herself she hastened back, and soon the lifeless remains of the poor girl who had left her home in all the lightheartedness of youth and innocence were brought in. She had been brutally murdered. There was a huge gash across the throat, almost severing her head from the body, and the fair long hair was matted with blood and with earth. The most stoical who gazed upon it felt a thirst for vengeance; the oldest seemed nerved with new vigour for revenge upon the foul murderer. No wonder, then, that immediately the body was placed upon the bed there was a rush to the house of the constable, and that worthy was in a short time at the farm, and in deep consultation. First a visit was paid to the scene of the murder, and a curious spectacle was that which the old lanterns lit up feebly in that wooded path, as constable, farmer, servants, and neighbours pried about to see if anything could be found belonging to the murderer. But all search was fruitless. There were only the beaten down wayside flowers, upon which poor Ellen had fallen, and the pool of blood. There were no marks as of a struggle, and the opinion was general that the hapless girl had been suddenly pounced upon and destroyed. No one had heard a sound, and yet the place was not far from habitations. No scream had sounded shrill and weird-like above the quiet fall of waters on that silent night, and sorrowing men and women pictured some foul being, murder in his heart, murder in his eyes, murder in his steps, dogging the poor girl as the tiger would its victim—then a spring, a sob, and all was over.

I am thus minute in my reflections in order to show that from the first so well was the young farmer known that no one believed that he was the guilty man. Yes, there was one, the usual exception, and he was the constable. That prosaic man, always mixed up in offences, always "charging" somebody, and whose knowledge of mankind was confined to its dark side, at once, as he phrased it, "spotted the evil doer." "It's young so and so." And so strongly did he impress his belief upon the crowd that after a few minutes' hesitation a rush under his directions was made to the widow's farm with the result as I have stated.

When John heard the evil tidings he appeared distracted.

"If 'twas shamming," said the constable afterwards, "it was well done."

"Where is she?" he cried, springing away half dressed as he was into the night. "At the house," and before a hand could be laid upon him he was gone, wildly, madly in that direction, followed by constable and crowd, the poor widow remaining with her hand upon her breast half dead, speechless in her horror.

Constables in the old days were fat men, as their lives were generally easy. The familiar spot in village life was the alehouse corner, where they were oracles, and to treat them was a favour highly approved of by the rustic whether he was John Jones or John Bull.

So our constable was left a long way behind and came puffing in some time after John had reached the place. When he did enter John was there holding

the poor girl's hand in his own, and lost in despair. The violence of his feelings had subsided ; now he seemed either in the deepest mood of repentance supposing him to be the guilty man, or planning revenge.

"Well, Mister John," said the constable, "pretty job this of yours."

"What do you mean?" said John, springing up with the agility of a panther, and confronting the constable with so fierce a gaze that the official subsided into a—

"Well, do you see, John, don't take it amiss, but you was the last seen in her company, and needs must, you know, come and clear yourself before the justices."

John protested indignantly that he knew nothing, but the father added his voice to that of the constable's, and said :—

"If he was innocent, which he hoped to God he was, he could soon clear himself."

John, half dazed, wanted to go home to dress himself, but this the old farmer said was useless, as he would lend him a coat, and his things might be fetched ; so at an early hour in the grey morning the *posse* again made their way through the fields, this time taking the direction of the "Big House," where lived the old justice of the valley. Here the case was stated in the library, and the appearance of things looked so suspicious against John in the magistrate's view, that the constable was ordered to hold him in custody and bring him before the bench that morning.

Midday there was a great excitement in the little town of Neath. All around the room where the justices met gossips gathered, men with hands in their pockets, and women with aprons over their arms ; everybody was there who could possibly spare the time, and as, one by one, the "justices" drove up, never before had they assumed such importance. They marched up the little pathway with bent head and a stoop, as if the burdens of justice were almost too weighty to be borne. As they passed by, the crowd were hushed, and if urchins kept on at play, or called out to one another, the seniors looked around at them with a frown. Laugh, indeed ! while such great men, lost in seeming thought, went into the workshops' room !

John had a fair trial, but everything was against him. He had been to the father's house at a certain hour, together they had gone for a walk ; they had been seen out in the fields walking ; they had actually been met in the little wood in earnest conversation, and the man who met them, one Parry, said he thought there was something amiss, as both looked grave, as if they had had some words. After that Ellen was not seen alive. John had not taken her to her home, as he had been in the habit of doing. According to his own defence, "he had left her in the wood," and was this natural for a couple plighted, and engaged, in fact, to be married ? What was John's excuse ?—"that he was anxious to talk to his mother before she went to bed, and arrange the marriage, and whether she would approve of their all living together, or whether, again, it would be better to take a farm which was to be let in the neighbourhood. So eager was he, and knowing that there was only one field for her to go

through to the house, that he left her almost at the edge of the wood and ran home." Such was his tale, and the justices shook their sage heads, after pulling them together, that the concentrated intellect might give forth a spark of more than ordinary wisdom, and after shaking them again the senior committed John to take his trial at the next assizes.

It was a long time before the little parish got back to its old quietness. For days and weeks there was no subject spoken of but the murder, and the all prominent question was, is John innocent or guilty? Chief of places for assemblage and discussion was the village inn. There the topic was gossiped about from every point of advantage, and if a new light was put upon it by anyone it was astonishing what a buzz of interest arose, and continued until, flat and stale as the lees of ale in the pints, the subject dropped again.

John was a favourite in the parish, and this told in his favour, but the dominant opinion was unquestionably that the lovers had had a tiff; she may have said in a pet that she wouldn't have him; one word led to another, and then, in a fit of madness, just such as John showed when he darted away from the house, he drew out his knife and killed her. Such was the prevailing opinion.

Before the assizes able counsel were retained, and every scrap of evidence in his favour was brought to light. No one, for instance, had discovered the knife which had done the deed, and John's knife, without a stain, was found in his pocket. Then his mother and the servants deposed to his returning in haste, it is true, but not as a murderer, and she, with all a mother's love for her son, quaint and rugged as was her nature, testified to the conversation that evening as bearing out John's statement. Then his character in the parish. He was no alehouse frequenter; did not excel as a ball player; but, instead, was noted for the straightness of his furrows, for the well-trimmed hedges, and the successful raising of stook.

Well, at length the day of the assizes came, and very much to the surprise of the judge, who looked over his spectacles at the jury, and frowned awfully the while, a verdict of "Not guilty!" was returned.

John was free, but he was an altered man. He had got off, as the village constable said, by the skin of his teeth, and though many were glad, yet not a few eyed him askance and doubted.

The girls, true to their nature, in hating one accused of injury to their sex, shunned him. Even the poor old mother found that her friends had fallen off. The nicely trussed fowls, the dainty golden butter, the snowy eggs wouldn't command the attention they used to. Plump housewives hastened by as if saying to themselves "lead us not into temptation;" for, nice as the things looked, didn't they know that young John had handled them, and were his hands clean from that poor girl's murder?

One imaginative lady, indeed, went so far as to say, with an expression of disgust, "Ugh! who could eat a fowl which, perhaps, was killed with the same knife as that which destroyed poor Ellen!"

So the widow's trade declined, and as the trade fell away so did her health,

and in less than twelve months after the acquittal she was where the weary are at rest, beyond the fog of the misty land, of doubt and sorrow, and John was left in the world, alone !

So, very soon, the snug little farm was for sale, everything was cleared off, and with the proceeds John made his way to the new world, whence faint tidings of golden discoveries beyond all the dreams of imagination had wandered, even down into the ingle nooks and glens bordering the Neath Valley.

But John did not go out as a digger for gold. Farming was his vocation, and it was not long before he had large flocks of sheep in his possession, and in driving these to the seaboard, or the markets, with the usual rough life and license of the Australian wilds, the anguish and the sorrow for the past faded somewhat; die away they never would. But rough physical vigour, active open air exercise are no encouragements of melancholy. One must brood in closets according to the novelist's directions to get the dull eye, and ashy face, and sinking heart.

John did not forget, but the feelings became weakened. Like a picture exposed to wind and weather, all but the outlines became dim, and faded. He loved again, married, and when the brown hair had more than a suspicion of grey lurking amongst it, a number of sturdy boys and dimpled girls called him father. In his old age when the care of his farms and of his flocks were taken off his hands by his boys, and the partner of his life had become like himself more wrinkled, and more fond of Bible and spectacles than of worldly pleasures, he journeyed to his old home. "He couldn't rest," he said, "until he did." He must go there once more, that the old man might stand and think where the boy had stood, see where the poor old mother had been laid to her eternal sleep, then back, never more to return.

Such was the tale of the old emigrant and it was of more than passing interest to meet him, here and there, looking wistfully at scenes that were of interest to him, nearly half a century ago.

In the tall yet still stalwart form, with browned face and long silvery hair, no one remembered John, nor could he trace in wrinkled features and pursy forms the boys and girls he knew. "All strange," said he, "all the old faces gone," and new men and women on the scene, familiar spots changed as by magic. The rail rioted in its sinuousness near the track of the old highway; collieries had sprung up near the farm, and half a mile in the earth, beneath the scene where he had trudged to plough, miners delved and dared !

All changed ! Even the old ale-house was burnished up, and looked gay and attractive with its gilt bar, and its gay bottles. Sitting in there one day, as I heard from him afterwards, smoking a tranquil pipe, and talking to old men whom he thought he knew, though he was not certain, and he did not like to reveal himself, a heavier step than usual grated upon the sandy floor, and looking up John saw a face, strangely altered, though it was one that he should know everywhere—the old village constable, long past three score and ten, but retaining much of his old manner and habits about him. Thus it

was that he scanned with bleared eyes, somewhat closely, the stranger John—and, with a “Good day to you,” took his seat. John was undetected.

After a time the new comer said, “Stranger in these parts I see.”

“Yes,” said John, “and a stranger to the whole country.”

“Oh,” was the reply, “where may be your home now?”

“The other side of the deep waters.”

“Mericky?”

“Guess again,” said John.

“Stralia?”

“Yes.”

“Ah, many a good fellow’s gone from these parts to that country,” said the constable.

“Did you ever meet, now,” he continued, and talking of Australia as he would of a village, “with a man named John.”

“No,” John feigned ignorance, “what was he?”

“A farmer,” said the constable, “I’ve tried everybody I came across, and got notices in the papers, and did everything to get a clue to him.”

John pricked up his ears, and, sitting by the constable’s side in friendly chat, while the brown ale went rather too fast for their good, John heard the tale of his life once again, the early career, the murder, the trial, the escape, and the departure.

But he heard more, he heard, with a tremor, such as he had not felt for many a year, that fifteen years ago, old Parry, as he was called, was on his death-bed, a man he knew intimately in his young manhood, and whom he had thought a rival of his in Ellen’s affections, and while the man was dying, and the waves of life were ebbing fast, he told a tale that froze the listeners to the spot.

It was this, that he had been in the wood when John and Ellen had parted on the fatal evening; that he had hurried after Ellen, once more to beg her to be his, that she laughed scornfully, and told him that it was her husband who had just left her, and then, mad with love, and frenzied with passion, he took out his knife and murdered her, she screamed once, faintly, but he never halted a moment when the deed was done, but ran like a demon from the spot. No one saw him. He buried the knife, washed the stains of blood from his person, and was never even suspected.

Yet, free from the grasp of the law, there had been a more hideous grasp on him ever since. It was that which caused him to yell in his sleep, until he was a bugbear to his neighbours, and made him shun the dark always like a frightened child.

Parry died tranquilly. Great is the soothing power of the Church! and since then many a one had endeavoured to find poor John, who had been driven from his home by the suspicions of his neighbours, and the horrid charge.

All this John heard, and he heard his name coupled with virtues such as are given to departed worth, and mentally, through the gossip of his friend, he saw himself, as if another, like the *doppel ganger* of the German, and had to express sympathy for himself and his fate.

He did not then reveal himself, but he did before he left to the old constable, and then, one fine morning, before the little world knew who had been, and who was going, John looked his last over meadow and hill-side, and was gone.

Gone over the mighty waters, whither have wandered so many of our children, to the great country they have founded, there to think pleasantly over his voyage, and its results, to give a sigh, perhaps, for Ellen's memory, then, amidst the prattle of grandchildren, to fall asleep, and see no dawn break softly again over the Australian home.

LLANSTEPHAN CASTLE.

A HOLIDAY SKETCH.

INTRODUCTORY.



WE live in a travelling age, and while the Welshman now finds himself wandering by the Avon at Stratford, sailing on the lakes of Killarney, or climbing Ben Lomond, Englishmen are locating themselves at all places on the coast from Llantwit Major to Barmouth. You may meet them settled down in out-of-the-world places enjoying the freshness of the breeze that comes right off from the Atlantic, and not a few relish exceedingly the mixture of pastoral and sea life which is denied to the coasting resorts of England. Town bands, ethereal parties of ladies who look as if a strong south-wester would sweep them away, yachts, the photographer, and the man who frames pictures of seaweed, all these are unknown to the rural coasting villages which extend from Gowerland to Llanstephan. But if such "attractions" are not there, one has instead that delicious feeling of intense calm and perfect isolation. You are glad at being many miles away from a railway station where, though butcher's meat only comes once a week, and though linked, and necessarily, to the "post," yet a telegram is never seen. Then tales and legends abound in one district. Only a generation has passed away since the pixies frequented the same localities, fairies were welcome guests, and mysterious beings walked the land. Then, here and there, crumbing heaps—over which the ivy festoons itself, and moss luxuriates—meet the eye; and you hear of Welsh daring and Norman spoil mixed up strangely enough in the narrator's mind, and given to you in scattered portions just a

a child gets its toys or its sweetmeats. It is concerning one of these castles and its remarkable history that we are now to do, and forthwith, without further prelude, we tell for the benefit of the holiday rambles,

THE TALE OF LLANSTEPHAN CASTLE.

The antiquary has an idea that so prominent a position as that upon which the castle stands was occupied by some fortress or other in very early times. It is likely that the British had a fort there; probably that the Romans held it; but certain, from evidences of an architectural character, that the famous castle building race, the Normans, raised the imposing structure which, though now in ruins, shows still, evidences of skill on the part of the builders, and the estimation in which they held the native inhabitants.

In the time of Gruffydd ap Rhys, and his warlike sons Anarand, Cadell, Merydd, and Rhys, a determined attempt was made by them against the Normans who garrisoned the castle. They had started out on a castle-besieging expedition, with colours waving, and arrived full of excitement and flushed with success at the castle, which was at once invested. The Normans, securely posted in their strong castle, seemed more amused than alarmed at the strange medley of men—some wearing the spoils of old battle-fields—who swarmed like bees around them, and, according to their manner, rang out defiance and threat. Once invested, a summons was sent to the Normans to surrender, which was contemptuously refused. Cadell, who seems to have been the animating spirit of the Welsh army, acted up to his usual tactics, which were not that of slow siege, but vigorous onslaught. He knew that it was in this that his countrymen excelled, and so, leading them on with a total disregard of his own life or that of others, and well aided by his brothers, he carried the castle by storm, and put a large number of the enemy to death. There is a tradition that stratagem as well as force was used in gaining possession, but about this there is nothing reliable to be gleaned.

The Normans who escaped carried the news of the defeat quickly to the Norman legions beyond the frontier, and so highly was the possession of the castle valued that instant preparations were made to gather in men from all adjacent districts, and a march upon Llanstephan Castle was at once directed. Merydd, one of the sons of Gruffydd, was in charge, with a strong body of men; and from the hour of their conquest a pleasant time had been passed in looking after the spoil—armour, lances, bright swords, pennons, *gages d'armour*, and many reliques of the old and summer land from which the Norman had come, It must have been a spectacle of rare interest—that picture of gaunt, bearded, leather-jacketed Welshmen turning over and admiring the properties, personal and otherwise, of their foe; and we can imagine, though there is no historical warrant for it, that it was while so engaged that the sentinel reported the glitter of steel in the distance. Soon many an anxious face must have been turned to the spot, as winding down came men and horse in compact and threatening array, and never halting from the moment they were seen, till in due course they settled within a short distance of the castle,

At first the Normans made no show of anxiety about the re-capture of the castle. They proceeded deliberately with the siege, and having completed all arrangements of ladder making, selected a passive evening when the Welsh did not appear to be on the alert, and swarmed up the walls. Mereydd, by one account, is said to have skilfully arranged a mass of unhewn rocks on the top, which could easily be displaced by levers; by others, that the mass of rocks had to be loosened by a wedge driven in. At all events the result was the same, and the avalanche of rock upon the Normans was so fearful that the shouts of victory and sounds of attack were changed as if by magic, and on every side broken ladders and crushed men could be seen, groans of the wounded heard. Taught caution by this unexpected repulse, the enemy retired a little distance, to change their tactics, and make more elaborate preparations. What these preparations were we know from stray records in Welsh annals. "Machines" were employed that could propel large stones into the castle. Immense trunks of trees were also so arranged that they acted as battering rams, before which the strongest walls crumbled. Other devices were also resorted to of similar character, but the chief one employed on this occasion was the ram, which night and day battered against the ramparts until they shook again, and ever and again huge pieces were forced out until an opening large enough for the entrance of the foe was made, and then in swept the Norman tide. In defending a breach the Welsh could only rely upon their valour. Mines and countermines, and elaborate arrangements of *chevaux de frise*, or else for a rain of death, were the inventions of later days. So, as the enemy rushed in, all veterans, armoured and armed at all points, they carried everything before them. Bravely did the Welsh resist, but it was bravery against equal bravery, and rude strength against skill. Through the night the battle raged; no quarter was asked, and none was given. The slaughter was terrific; from point to point the Welsh retired, now rashly attempting to make a forward movement and to hold it, and again driven back hopelessly and helplessly from their positions. And thus, in the words of Dr. Beattie, was the strife ended, "and long before sunrise the Norman banner waved on the Castle of Llanstephan."

It required more than a generation to pass away before the effects of this re-conquest were forgotten, and so far as dates are to be relied upon, for seventy-three years the Norman power was dominant, and the castle remained in their hands.

With the beginning of the thirteenth century changes began to be wrought which made the position of the invader, even upon isolated spots, most insecure, and the crowning effort by Llywelyn ap Iorwerth ended the Norman sway on the huge cliff which overhangs the Bay of Carmarthen. Llywelyn assailed the Castle of Llanstephan with an imposing force, and in a very short space of time the castle was taken, and the Normans were scattered to the wind.

Llywelyn was resolved that so strong a position should not again be held by the enemy, and as an effectual means of preventing what the fortunes of war might again give to the foe, he dismantled the walls, broke down the gates,

and converted a fortress into a ruin, which time has made the picturesque haunts of summer tourists.

Such is the tale of Llanstephan, and the busy imagination, by even these faint details, can transform a scene now stamped with indications of peace and rural progress and improvement into the picture of the past, as the visitor wanders where cattle graze tranquilly in spots once "dinted with the mark of Norman steel."

Of the after fate of the principal actors little is known. Mereydd is stated to have died by poison, and Cadell disappeared from warlike scenes, and, like many a noble Welshman and Norman, sought peace by wandering devoutly to the Holy Land.

PONTYPRIDD AND THE DRUID.

A SUMMER SKETCH AND REVERIE.



ONCE a week Pontypridd wakes up from its somewhat tranquil condition, and there flows into the quaint market-house a stream of eatables and wearables as varied as the people who flock thither from all parts of the district. Every conceivable thing that delighteth the taste of collier, tin-plate worker, or farm labourer, is there. A man might go into the market not only hungry and thirsty but ragged and bare-footed, and come out gratified with his compound of faggots and rice puddings, and in an attire which, if old-fashioned as regards cut, would be at all events comfortable. It is really an interesting study to go through the old market, and note the variety of things, for it carries back the mind to the time when those important institutions, shops, were in their infancy, and he who took to shop-keeping was regarded in the public mind with contempt. Then the fairs and markets were the places whereat the "girl of the farm" bought her ribbons, the boy his knife, the old farmer his halter, and the dame her bit of crockery. Whatever literature was had, it was obtained there, even if it did not rise above the ordinary rank of an almanac or a monthly magazine. Shoes for the children, stockings, flannel, of which large quantities were sold; and there, too, came the famous Cacerphilly cheese and butter, and the unmistakable Israelite with his attractive show of jewellery, spectacles, and watches. It was there that Israel laid the foundation of the prosperous condition he enjoys, for his profits

were fabulous, only surpassed by those now realised in tiding over the evil day of the clerk and the tradesman. The market-house is still a great resort, but it is altered, and like a mirror it gives a representation of the simple habits of the people, and also, like a mirror, indications of the march of progress. More ambitious and valuable articles are to be found there. The taste of the people for flowers is being educated, and even ornamental shrubs are vended for the front of the collier's house. The remains of the old primitive simplicity are still there; the yokel or the haulier from the pit may still have his faggots and rice pudding; but there is more of the surface, of the veneer of life than there used to be, and the changing stream of life which flows quietly down, and turns corners, and ebbs hither and thither, has also its corresponding change on the stalls that line the way. Passing on our way to the Druidic-hill, the great attraction to visitors, a striking picture of old times, side by side with the view, is given in the once famous bridge of Pont-y typridd. Turn over any old tourist book amongst the hundreds once published, and the reader will be sure to read something like the following:—"Here is situated a remarkable bridge, built by a self-taught mason, and which is conspicuous as having a larger span than any other bridge in the world."

Poor bridge; poor Edwards, the builder. It is still there, but only as a picture, a modern bridge having been built by the side, over which any load can be taken with safety, which would not be the case with its ancient companion.

We are now on the track of the Druid, but the modern aspect of things does not much incline one's thoughts that way. Corn-flour and salt-stores are by no means Druidic, nor is the Taff Vale porter carrying a parcel of drapery from London to a neat little villa at the side; this certainly is not Druidic; but presently we come to a mountain land, from which, far away, gleams from the top of a still loftier hill one of the old white-washed farms of Wales. That looks more like the thing, and away we trudge; but, alas; this mountain land, sacred to Druidic mystery is doomed; one tooth of that utilitarian monster, civilization, has been already put into it, for a square plot has been appropriated for a garden; and at the next gathering of the bards it is possible that peas, French beans, and other modern innovations will greet them on their way to the Serpent's Coil; and if one tooth has been put in and allowed to stop there, what may we not expect? Modern utilitarianism will say this is good land, the aspect is good, it would make good potato ground; and forthwith, bit by bit, it would be encroached upon, possibly a house be built, and the "circle" form an attractive background upon which the resident of the mansion can gaze on summer evenings, as he sits with his pipe or cigar, not at all displeased that his scenery included, Folly on the top, and the Druidic Castle down in the bottom. Approaching closely to the circle we see a pretentious announcement carved on a huge stone. It begins with—"Stranger, stop!" and forthwith the stone, taking to itself serpent qualities, adds, "I am placed here to commemorate the virtues and abilities of" [rubbed out]—This was sacrilege!—"who after managin (*sic*) the chain work on my side—(the stone retains its

individuality well)—for the space of twenty-one years, much to the benefit of all mankind, died and was buried here.”

We are apt to philosophize upon the dust of a Cæsar turned to clay, which forms a bung to keep the air away; but that a man who was a benefit to all mankind should rest underneath a humble stone, upon a desolate hill, surpasses belief.

Gray, discoursing upon the inmates of a churchyard, wonders at the possibility that in the neglected spot are laid, not only hearts pregnant with celestial fire, but even hands that might have wielded the rod of dynasties or waked to harmony those soft melodies given forth by the celestial lyre. But what would they be, what would the village Hampden be, or the yokel Cromwell, innocent of the fate of the Stuart which hung so grievously about the conscience of the illustrious namesake? What we repeat, were all these to the man who, directing the operations of a chain mill still actively and unmistakably “blessed mankind.” We uncover our head to departed greatness; we walk tenderly over the mountain carpet, spangled with its daises and heather, and think such is the fate of all men descended from the great mother Eve.

A little more tramping over the mountain and a Druidical circle is reached, and we sit down in peace. Perched on a table land, we command a fine prospect of bold mountain scenery, with the rapidly-increasing little town beneath, and winding by it the Taff line, down which, every few minutes, go the large coal trains from the Rhondda, snake-like twisting around with their black cargo, train following train, until the wonder is where all the coal comes from, and where is the insatiable appetite for it.

The contrast between the old stones of an ancient religious worship and the signs of life and modern progress on every hand is remarkable. The new is trenching fast upon the old, and even as the old castles, where troubadours sang songs of love for an absent lord, and knights in armour strode—that is the novelist’s word—are now haunts of picnicians, and Joneses, Williamses, and Davieses amuse themselves after their own peculiar bent, so we shall not be surprised in time for a house of refreshment to come as near as possible to the circle, where in summer time ginger beer and other modern likings can be had.

We are thinking of these things, of the change that time brings about, when, climbing up from the steep hill overlooking the chain works comes a familiar form.

“Never,” I say, half aloud, “surely; yes, ’tis.”

The figure approaches nearer, the long, white dress, the wand, the beard. It comes close.

“Where are the rest of you?” I ask.

“I am alone,” is the reply of the ancient Druid.

“But the procession?” I ask, “has it started from the lodge?”

“Yes, in the grey dawn of man’s life.”

I begin to be in doubt about his sanity.

“Do you meet to-day, or what?” is my next question.

"I often come here, but only at times when no human eye can see me."

"Stay!" I exclaim with some degree of emphasis. "Am I right or not in concluding that this is your annual feast; if so, where is the lodge, for I should like to see the procession?"

The figure comes with inaudible tread closer still, and in the bardic manner, as painted by the late W. E. Jones, who had his idea from Gray, the elegist, says, "I am of the past, belong to the age of the grey river stones, before nations began their histories, when languages were forming, and the men of the world were like children starting out in life from school!"

"This is uncommonly good," said I to myself, "What wouldn't Morien give for this treat, interviewing a genuine Druid!" With all reverence, such as is due to the great moral teachers of old, I make a place for him near me, and from our vantage ground, sitting as representative of a tribe, we discourse without interruption.

"A great deal of history," says my friend, "is conjecture, and there is little that is reliable. In your own knowledge and time, get two men to describe the scene and note how different will be the narrative. So in history the writer's own characteristics, his specialities, his moods, his feelings, are all blended in, and a kernel of fact, and a small kernel too, has generally a great deal of husk and shell. Your history is unwritten: when written it will be as thrilling as that of Rome. Your wise men say you must look for your history in your poems; that it is built up in your language. That is only partly true. Many a fact of interest may be found in Homer relative to your nation. The key is lost. Some day it will be found. You were not the first to people the island, There was a race here before you came from the East. All human life sprang from that quarter where the highest development of the physical was, and as men multiplied and the circle became too full they wandered away, living as they could, fighting when occasion demanded, and it was this age of unrest of the world's vigorous infancy that the poets and fable-makers of earliest time write, concealing under fiction the true."

"And the religion, Father?" I said reverentially.

"Of whom?"

"Our people."

"It had its infancy. Stream, mountain, and grove, vast sky, bright star, moon, sun; we bowed to all in our poetic age, for they were unlike us, and the power or beauty attached to them we could not understand. We saw the stream leap like a thing of light and love from the mountain side, and course down, now tumbling over rocks in sportive fun and again winding by with a calm, measured flow, singing as it went. We beheld the mountain gather around it a veil of mist, and from its folds saw the lightning dart and the thunder roll. We stood in the deep silence of groves, wherein no light strayed, but in faint pencil gleams, and from out of the silence came murmurs as of tongues speaking low, and we understood them not. To all these we bowed the knee. Night followed, and a thing more glorious than a dewdrop came into the dark-blue of the sky, and there remained looking down upon us like a far-off

wondrous eye of the unknown. Up from the mountain side came a broader line of light, and soon, full and round the moon looked down, calm, chaste. Was it a grand chariot wherein the mysterious rode over space? Again we bowed the knee. Then the dark, moonless night, the utter blackness and horror, out of which rose exultant the sun, driving away the shadows, lighting up the stream, making the earth glad and rich with growth and plenty. To it we bowed the knee, and in high places worshipped it, erecting an altar."

"And our religion?" I asked.

"Still the same question," was the grave rejoinder. "Each nation has had its form; and fancies and tradition originating from the same source have been altered by change, time, and travel, so that in the lapse of years the likeness is almost obsolete."

"Then would this stone," I asked, pointing to the centre, "represent the ark of the covenant, and the stones around it the twelve tribes of Israel?"

"Some of your people think," said the Druid, with a decided attempt to evade my question, "that the stone you point to means the sun, and so placed as to represent motion, which, to them, appeared certain; and the circle round, the circle it takes, and the tail the cometary influences that appear in the sky. But what do you say? Religion has its growth even as man. The tree in its growth bears not fruit, nor has the child wisdom. The Westerns are children of yesterday, yet they have the love of the east and the wisdom of their own times. The gods of old were physical, the God of the Hebrew not excepted. The God whom you worship is a spirit, and only as a spirit can be comprehended. His voice sounds not in the storm, nor do His lightnings flash from infinity to infinity. These are childish relics of old times when the gods amused themselves with inflicting pestilence, or using rain—clouds and storms of wind in their anger."

"Then the religion of the western is the most perfect."

"It is the highest conception of purity."

"But is any more true than that of the Druid?"

"He had his grey stone on the mountain for an altar, you have your cathedral. Ours were times of primitive simplicity, yours of advancement and luxury. Schools change, scholars go, but the lessons remain!"

Yes, but"—

"Another time" I hear a voice say, but can see no form; a thin wreath of smoke seems to unroll and expand, and fade into space—I am alone!

"Dream or reverie," I exclaim aloud, jumping up, and down the hill I go to hear again from the slope of the mountain side the whirl of the train, and see the heavenward pointing spire of the church, which tells us that the Druid is irrevocably gone, and will come back no more upon the world's stage to play his part.

As well might we expect to see any character of the social, religious, or political life of the past, come forward with his views and opinions. The world takes no backward turn; but none the less should we admire all that was pure of each phrase of the world's kaleidiscopes; admire the great men of the past

whether in Druidic garb or monkish cowl. As the world is built up from its granite basis, and fashioned of layers of various soils which yield us beauty, variety, and plenty, so is the world's wisdom of the same accumulated character, and he is an ingrate who doesn't acknowledge it.

A HAUNTED HOUSE IN WALES.



TALES such as mine, of haunted houses, generally supply the denouement with the narrative. Mine does not. It has no ending in the exposure of deception, nor does the ghost become quieted, and all go on smoothly ever after. My ghost still remains at unrest. My mystery is yet to be explained.

Near one of the most flourishing towns in Wales there is an old country residence, very substantially built, and surrounded by as pretty a frame-work of wood and river as one would wish to see. It was occupied, when I saw it last, by a retired gentleman, whose family consisted of himself, wife, and three or four children. These, with two servants, and a gardener, who also acted as coachman, constituted a small and cosy household. Mr. Davies, the resident, though a Welshman, had lived so long in England that no one would have taken him for other than a well-trained agreeable Englishman. He was religiously bent, and a thorough Dissenter. Probably had his early bias been consulted he would have taken to the ministry; but as that was not done, he became, when he grew to manhood, the next thing, a deacon, and was looked up to as the leading man of the little place of worship he not only patronised, but in greater part supported. It was so small a building, with so little chance of ever becoming an important flourishing institution, that few, except aged ministers, cared to accept the position, of minister; and thus it happened that very often the congregation was obliged to depend on "supplies," as they were called, friends from neighbouring towns, generally local preachers. Sometimes at anniversaries, or so, the larger towns would contribute their regular minister, and a more important gathering be the result.

I am thus particular, so as to account for the singular circumstance that a Dissenting minister of London, who had never preached out of the hearing of Bow Bells, should be found one autumnal Sabbath day occupying a village

pulpit in Wales. There was a good attendance on the day of his visit, both in the morning, and still better at night. Let him now tell his tale.

Mr. Davies was my host, and in his society, and that of his agreeable family, a very pleasant day was passed. At night my host said to his wife, "Is Mr. Santry going to the blue room?" She said he was, and I noticed that he cast down his eyes in seeming thought, and continued for a moment in a reverie, apparently; but it was so slight that the next instant we were both chatting fast and furiously on ministerial experiences, and the incidents of pulpit life.

An anecdote of his, I well remember, made me laugh immensely, for it must be noted that it is not customary after services to confine the conversation purely to theological subjects. Occasionally, indeed, I must admit the conversation is almost of too secular a character. He had a fat friend, had Davies, a Dissenting minister, and so enormously bulky that the process of getting into, and out of, a pulpit generally provoked the smiles of his congregation. One day there was a gathering at Bristol, and among a large number of ministers there, was Williams, the Daniel Lambert of his time. Services ended, Davies, Williams, and a few others made for the Packet, then on the point of leaving Bristol for South Wales; but the day was hot, no carriages were to be seen, and poor Williams showed signs of giving in. It was clearly a bad case, unless some conveyance could be obtained, and, said Davies, "You may conceive the strait to which we were reduced when I tell you that an empty donkey-cart coming along was hailed with delight." Would the donkey driver convey our friend to the Packet?—then half a mile off. The driver looked Daniel up and down, and "thought," somewhat reluctantly, he might do it. So the cart was backed up to the kerb, and Williams, going to the tail end, pulled out his bandana, and having arranged it, slowly sat down. We roared! the moment his kerseymere reached the cart, up went the donkey, high in the air, kicking with every leg, and horrified at his unnatural position, and it took the driver and several others to pull at the shafts and restore it to *terra firma*. This done, Daniel was pushed up into the cart, and away went the load, hip, hip, hurrah'd, by a crowd of boys.

I laughed very heartily at this narrative, as I knew Williams well, and withdrew to my bedroom in that comfortable state of mind which promises a good night's rest.

"The blue room." This was it. And a very nice room indeed; but rather too large. A large room admits of shadows in corners; of a feeling of somebody being in besides one's self. So I had found in nervous moods; but I had no nervous fancies then, and simply looked under the bed, as is my habit, and locked the door. Then, a quiet undressing, a leisurely arrangement of the bedclothes, a hazy retrospect of the day, and I was asleep. Oh, land of Nod, delightful reverser of the conditions of life, where a pauper rules a prince, and the sick are restored, and the miserable made happy.

What ever had disturbed me? I did not usually wake up until the morning; but there I was, at midnight, bolt upright in the bed, looking, wondering.

There was somebody in the room, too ! My first thought was of thieves, and I am afraid that when I did call out and ask, "Who's there ?" some reference was made to a pistol, which could not have been substantiated in case of need. There was no response ; but a chair was moved ! I groped for my candle, and being an old bachelor, and a smoker he it known, soon had a light. But the light revealed nothing amiss. No one was in the room. I sprung out of bed, and looked under it. Went to the door, and saw that it was still locked, examined every corner, but no, all was right. Yet I could have sworn I heard a chair move. Had I put the chair by the bedside before retiring ? If so it was odd. I was not in the habit of doing such a thing. Yet there, by the bedside, just where a doctor seats himself when visiting a patient, was a chair. I got into bed again, "pooh, poohed," my fancies, and was going off, when, yes, no, by George, the chair was moving. What farce was this ? In a moment the candle was lit for the second time, and a glance at the chair showed that it certainly had been moved. I arose, and carefully examined it. Were any of the youngsters of the house playing me a trick ? fish hooks set down from holes in a room above can play strange games of the kind. But no, I could discover nothing. This time I determined to keep my candle lighted, and for a while watch the mysterious chair. "My God !" the exclamation was forced from me. Close to my bedside I heard a firm step, and the rustling of silk. I strained my eyes in the direction, but saw nothing, yes, there, passing to and fro, like one in weary watching by a sick bed, was the faintest possible shadow of a lady ! Again I spoke, but still no reply, and no halting of that strange weird tread. Roused to a pitch of the acutest nervous dread, I hastily scrambled into my clothes, and seizing the candle, left the room. To remain would have been to court madness. so I sought the supper room, and lying on the sofa, did eventually gain a little, but broken, rest. There was, however, another fright in store. I was wakened by the opening of the door, and a young girl startled me by flashing a light on my temporary bed. I sprang up alarmed, and she screamed so violently, that the whole household was roused ; down came Davies in a garment or two, and the rest of the family crowded on the top of the staircase, wondering what was the matter.

"Hullo !" he exclaimed, entering the room, looking first at me and then at the girl. "Santry, what is this ?" and there was just a suspicious gleam in the corner of his eye for a moment, but my explanation speedily removed all doubt, and he could do nothing but sympathize and regret, and equally, too, did his good wife grieve, as over the breakfast table I gave them an account of the horrors of that mysterious night.

"Was it possible," I asked, "that any of the servants had played me a trick ?"

Davies "could not understand the matter. He had never seen, or heard anything himself, but his wife fancied she had, and as for the servants, it was a long time before they could get one to stay. Whether it was their fancies or not, one and all vowed that the house was haunted."

Davies looked "strong minded" as he said this, but I noticed that Mrs. Davies wore a thoughtful countenance, and in the few minutes we had in private she gave me her impressions and the little that was known of the matter. On taking to the house at first, they had considerable difficulty in getting a servant girl to remain with them. Repeatedly a young lady dressed in a light silk dress had been met on the staircase, chairs had been moved, beds shaken. Much of this was put down to excited imagination, "But at length," said Mrs. Davies, "I was convinced that it was more than fancy. My daughter Maud was going to school, and having left the packing of her boxes until the last moment before going to bed, I was busily occupied in getting them ready, so as to leave as little to be done as possible in the morning. I do not know what my thoughts were, but suddenly a rustling caught my attention, and there, standing at the open door, was the same figure I had heard my servants describe. A sickening horror seemed to grasp me, and I fainted; and for more than three months was a sad invalid."

Further, the good old lady, told me that, on the first appearance of the young lady to her servants, she had made inquiries as to whether *it* had been seen previous to their taking the house, and learnt that a shocking case of suicide of a young lady answering the description of the apparition had taken place there. The mansion was at that time in the occupancy of an old gentleman and his daughter. Amongst their friends there was one gentleman who paid her especial attention, and in course of time they were engaged. The suitor was a man of position, but of a speculative turn of mind, and it seems that he became mixed up in some money matters that necessitated the assistance of a friend. The father of his "intended" readily gave his name. The speculation failed, and both were beggared. The poor girl took this terribly to heart, and there is every reason to believe, became deranged. She made three attempts to commit suicide, every time with determination, and at length succeeded in her aim, and was buried in a suicide's grave.

Such was the narration to which I listened with the acutest interest. From an early age everything of the supernatural possessed extreme interest for me, and now, at length, I was in a position to test the matter thoroughly—solve, possibly, a problem linked with subjects of profoundest interest. What should I do? I mentally cogitated the matter, and then asked my good friend's permission to stay another night, and sleep another night in the haunted room.

Davies looked very amused, and laughed boisterously; but his wife scolded him rather severely, and begged he would take things more in earnest. This brought him round, and we then talked the matter over gravely. Both endeavoured to dissuade me, but I was firm, even with the experience of my previous night's suffering, and so it was agreed at length that I should try and find out the mystery. My requirements were confined to a book and a lamp that not only gave a good light, but which would last until the dawn. The supper table that evening was not so lively a scene as the evening before. Even Davies seemed nervously expectant, and though occasionally he would indulge

in a smile and a joke yet both would be ended summarily, curbed in quickly as it were. "Keep up your spirits, my boy," he said, as he shook hands with me at the door, "the one inside included," and he laughed, coughed, and disappeared.

"Had I been wise," I thought "to go through the ordeal?" However, it was too late to retract, so I sat down, opened his book, which happened to be discursive essays, but for a time the eye was not particularly attracted, much less the mind. There were noises in the house; the closing and opening of doors; the pacing along the landing near; childish laments and grievances that had to be soothed; but one by one all sounds ceased, the last lingering servant crept to her bedroom; all was at rest. I looked out of the window. The mansion was in a secluded spot, surrounded by an old fashioned garden, and lawn, and woody grove. Tall trees, yet covered with dense foliage, nodded like sable plumes. It was a dark solemn night, with just a weird light lingering along the horizon, and on the ear came the sigh of distant winds. No noisy rattle such as my ear was accustomed to, no merry midnight song, no dash of fire engine, or any of the exciting turmoil of London life; but all hushed to intense solemnity. I withdrew to my book, and my tread was painfully distinct. I sat down and began to read; weighty thoughts, grave thoughts arrested my attention, and soon I became interested, every fancy and fear which I might have had, disappeared. I was actually beginning to take objection mentally to some of my author's views, when, slowly, all my confidence, my invigorated turn of mind began to fade, to fall from me, leaving me powerless; and a sense of something not of earth came to me instead. Hush! there was a rustling of silk near me! I began to pace the room, but it walked as I walked, measuring its step with my step, stopping when I stopped!

I sat down to think, to listen. There was a moment's pause, and then the footsteps began again. I followed the sound with my eyes, and looked so long and intently that the imagination, it could not have been any sense of sight, began to form a misty outline, so slight that only now and then did it seem present to my gaze. Once more I rose from my chair, and as I did so, in the clear light thrown by the lamp, well defined and unmistakably clear, was an outline that, from almost an impalpable character, grew denser, and there, gazing at me with eyes of wild brightness, having a look not of earth, nor of heaven, was a young lady! She was dressed precisely as Mrs. Davies had described, and looked fixedly at me, pressing her hands convulsively, and with seeming anguish. I spoke, but there was no answer. Walked close to it, and met no resistance, but I heard the rustling pass by me, and when I looked at the place where the form had been, it had vanished. When I took my lamp in hand I must confess to a trepidation about the hands and knees such as I never felt before.

Once more I passed hastily out of the room, and reaching the landing forgot my manhood, the peace of my host and hostess, everything, and screamed out with a power and a horror that absolutely made even myself start back against

the wall. There was a crowd around me in a moment, but I was myself again. My terror had vented itself, and I was able, with slight assistance, to seek the supper room. There was no more sleep for anyone that night. Early next morning I was on my way to London, and it was only the other day I heard that Davies was going to give up his old house ; that a servant girl had been cruelly frightened since, and that the mystery is mystery still.

RAMBLES IN AND AROUND BRECON.

CHAPTER I.



THE way to Brecon, by rail, or foot, from the great ironworks, reminds one very strongly of the old ballad, "Here we go up, up, up ; there we go down, down, down !" Up the steep gradients the locomotive pulls you, down the decline it flashes with you ; but there is no danger. The steed, high mettled as it unquestionably is, has a strong curb, and a good rider, and once through the tunnel of our Welsh Alps, away you speed through a landscape as picturesque as any in the land.

Close to the mouth of the tunnel, on the Brecon side, you have the brown mountain, undelved—unfringed by hedgerow. No tree strikes its root within it. No ploughman worries it. Free as the air that toys with it, there it stretches away—type of the freedom-loving people who nestle in the hollow ; but close up to its storm mark, some daring invader has built himself a hut ; a little lower down a farm perches itself, and up the slope man has even tried to bind the old Beacon with his chains and fetters of whitethorn. And he has succeeded ; brown heath, and shaggy wood—if ever there was the latter—have been replaced by wheat and meadow grass, and the old farmer, hands deep in pockets, can look up at his handiwork, and smile his satisfaction. From thence down, "no more brown heath ;" Nature's fertility and man's perseverance show themselves everywhere ; glimpses of white-washed farms ; a curious sort of chapel-of-ease, that in the distance looks as if built purposely for one Dean Swift, and, perhaps, Jonathan, his clerk !—and such a pleasing arrangement of hedgerow, so different to the square Dutch pattern of modern iron fenced lands, that the artist has his attention kept incessantly active and gratified. The contrast, too, between the land south of the tunnel is surprising.

It is evidently rich and deep; the trees soar higher; the grass look richer; and farewell to tip and tram-plate, and dark-faced damsel—less than twenty miles have sufficed to give us quite another world. More big trees; more snug seclusions; more visions of promising corn; more pictures of hopeful gardens, of great breadths of turnips, and we are at Talybont—the road by the river, or the river road, as it clearly is. There anglers dismount, and through the intensely quiet place there is, for a moment or two, a hum and a bustle, and the next we are off, and its quietude is resumed.

We should say the station-master has a famous opportunity for studying metaphysics there, or, better still, poetry, if troubled with the *Awen*.

Another pleasing run through an agricultural district, equally rich and well tended, and we are at Tal-llyn, the road by the lake, a livelier station, and are where a few minutes' leisure is given to the traveller. This cannot be better disposed of than by patronising the refreshment-room, and the benevolent will do so when they learn that it is kept by the widow of a station-master who met with his death on the rails not far away.

At Tal-llyn, you have a variety of shunting which ends in unfixing your ideas as to the points of the compass; and then with a gentle sweep through a tunnel, and still fairer scenes, a notion begins to dawn on the mind that you are getting near a town; a broad white and little travelled road comes near the rail of sober rivalry, and to see what all the noise is about; a small canal, of an old-fashioned kind comes nearer still; Nature's regularity and brushed-up appearance begins to have a blending of the untidiness of man and his works; by trucks of coal, and—we apostrophise Jingo (a departed and lamented saint)—trucks of flour! Ah, that is better!—a decent station, with no pretention but to be homely and useful, and we are in Brecon, or near Brecon we should say, for there is a long dusty walk, or a long climbing drive to get up into the town.

'Tis a dusty day, a hot day as we enter. A strong force of soldiers pass by, going for their exercise drill, or what not, in coats out of which the sun, in jealous rivalry of anything more stiking than itself, has taken all the colour. We, too, march by, past old-fashioned shops, and policemen in white continuations—for a wonder—past substantial dwellings, and antique church, and the inevitable Wellington statue, looking gloomily away from the scene of creature comforts—mine inn, and we are in the heart of Brecon, a town where the old and the new meet, and modern and old world-life blend, and “change” is everywhere discernible. Nowhere is there a more striking illustration of “change” than in entering Brecon from another direction—by the castle.

Cast back the mental gaze eight or nine centuries, and we see the castle in its glory. Newmarch, or some other doughty descendant, is there. The tall towers frown on the swift-running Houddu and the scattered town; cannon, pointed at various directions, warn the ancient citizens to be on their good behaviour; any contumacy, any opposition to baronial commands, and—these not sufficient—the portcullis is lifted, and forth ride a host eager to obey their god, experienced in slaying, burning, and devastating.

How altered now ! A substantial and even elegant hotel, one of the first in Brecon, is built on the site of the castle, and one of the old towers is retained as a pleasant addition, affording as it does a capital retreat for the enjoyment of a fragrant Havannah. There one can perch, like the philosopher in "Sartor Resartus," and gaze on the ebb and flow of human life below, and unlike him feel more like yourself. John Jones or Thomas Williams, note the beautiful panorama of wood, and upland, and cosy villas stretching away in circles beyond the tower with the grander undulation and final lofty peaks of Cader Arthur, and the view ! A pleasant spot is this same tower. Attached to a large hostelry you feel every minute how the modern life has brushed away or overlaid the old. Where Bruse, or Jenan-ap-Somebody or other with an unpronounceable name, "speered" from a port hole, the gardener attached to the castle piles his flower-pots in thoughtful foresight of the wintering of his geraniums ; and where the armed heel of the sentinel clanked in measured tread, the modern drinks his bitter beer, and solaces himself by chatting soft nothings to his lady love.

So it is with life ! Not more swiftly do the clouds and sunshine chase each other on the long reaching mountains there than generation succeeds generation, and habits habits, and customs become obsolete, and other men stand in the shoes of the old trudgers in the meadows, or in the quaint old-fashioned streets.

As we look from the castle there is a picture formed for us by a gentleman and his family, in the other portion of the castle grounds, which immeasurably surpasses the old one by Landseer with the lamb lying by the cannon. There, too, is a cannon, and a grim one. As we look at it the idea of its knocking at one's door with a heavy pounder occurs to the mind, and we are thankful we live in a cannonless age. But see, a lady appears ; she is accompanied by a gentleman, and behind them are fair and pure olive branches. In loving concord they are reclining on the lawn ; the *posé* is artistic, and of course natural. There is gentle by-play between the group. Sweet is the contrast between this picture of home happiness and the grim cannon and the ruined wall ; between peace, sunny peace, and glory, lurid glory !

A famous place is the Castle Hotel—large, roomy, substantial ; elegant and spacious its ball-room, wherein in its coffee-room metamorphosis, you can recall the brilliant evenings past, when the county families thronged therein ; when there was an incessant rush to the door of high-mettled steeds and handsome carriages. Such visions of beauty and manliness ! Bright scarlet blending with soft silken robes ! And then the harmonious strains of music ; the gliding step of houris ; the pleasing hum of intervals. Change again ! There "Sacred to the memory of—" There a vacant spot in heart and home for the gallant officer who fell at the head of his regiment ! There a matronly dame, long past the years of waltz and polka ! There a sturdy, aged veteran, who numbers amongst the days of old, delightful, Castle *réunions* !

It may appear morbid, but we cannot help linking the pleasant with the

sad ; and even as we think of "the bright spring time of morning," involuntarily comes the evening's "sadness and its tears." "Oh, God!" exclaimed one of the first preachers of Wales, "this earth sounds hollow under our tread. It is full of graves."

Reviewing the past history of any place, we are naturally led to such reflections—to think of the brief duration of the happiest life, the transient character of its pleasures. For such reflection the old priory church of Brecon affords ample scope. Tho worthy Breconians should be proud of this old relic, which, with many other notes and records of Brecon, we reserve for another day.

CHAPTER II.

Ere passing onward from noticing the castle, it may interest some of our readers who lack the ponderous and now rather scarce work of Jones's History of Brecon, to give some few details of its annals.

It was first built by Bernard de Newmarch, the Norman knight, who played a similar part in Breconshire to that performed in Glamorgan by Robert Fitzhamon. Though a strong castle, it was more conspicuous for its rugged grandeur than its beauty—more calculated to frown away than attract. Bernard astutely strengthened his position in the county by marrying into the family of Gruffydd ab Llewelyn, but unfortunately his wife proved anything but loyal, and through her misdeeds the castle passed into other hands. The tale told by the translator is as follows :—

Bernard had a son and daughter by this marriage. The son's name was Mahael, a high-spirited youth. He discovered that his mother was unfaithful, and carrying on an intrigue. This incensed him, and he warned her of her infamy, and that not succeeding called her knight out and wounded him. The mother's passion was so great that all maternal feelings were destroyed, and in order to be revenged on Mahael she swore that he was not her lawful son. This was credited ; he was disinherited, and the entire estate given to Milo, with the sister's hand ; Milo was afterwards created Earl of Hereford. He had five sons, all of whom were successively lords of Brecon. By marriage the castle became the property of Humphrey de Bohun, one of the stoutest knights who ever fought at Bannockburn. He it was who gave the castle its fullest extensions and enrichments. Afterwards we find the castle held by a Plantagenet, and a Duke of Ormond, and note the prominent feature of contest in the busy times of 1217 and 1233. Its strength may be conjectured from the fact that though Llewelyn ap Iorwerth besieged it for two months, he was obliged to be content with burning the town. Time, more unrelenting and certain than ever was Welsh or Norman warrior, has effected what he failed to achieve, and the castle is now only a picture.

The Priory of Brecon is one of the few timeworn relics spared in this locomotive age. Grim and gaunt, reminiscent of black friars, of masses for troubled

souls, of cowed figures moving slowly in the shadow of umbrageous trees, its old walls now ring with the shriek of the engine, as with a load of human life and human necessities, it dashes by and scares the silence, and scatters the fancies that troop to the mind in the Priory graveyard.

From Williams's account of the monasteries in Wales published in 1834, in the transactions of the Cymrodorion Society, we glean the little that is known respecting this and other religious houses in Brecon.

It appears to have been founded in the time of Henry I., by Bernard de Newmarch, for six Benedictine Monks, and made subservient to Battle Abbey, in Sussex. The statement is "that it was dedicated to St. John the Evangelist, and so liberally endowed by him and his connection that at the dissolution (twenty-sixth year of Henry VIII) it was valued at one hundred and twelve pounds, fourteen shillings and twopence per annum, according to Dugdale, but according to Speed at one hundred and thirty-four pounds, eleven shillings and fourpence." Critical readers may from this infer that the endowment was by St. John, but the meaning of the old writer is of course that Newmarch was the liberal donor. When it was dissolved it was first granted to the Bishop of St. David and his successors, but possibly from some pique or other the gift was revoked, and John ap Rice made the happy man.

Leland refers to it as simply a cell of black monks:—"The parish church was built where the Priori was, and was afore the Priori was made, and yet is (Poor old Leland is rather unintelligible here), and again, In all the Lordship of Brekenac was not in time of memory, but the Priori of Blake monkes in Brekenok, a Celle to Bataile Bernardus *de novo mercatu* was founder of uit.

Further, we learn that Pycarll, one of the knights who came into Breconshire after its reduction by the Normans, was a benefactor to the monks, and was himself indebted to Newmarch for the Manor of Scethrog in this county.

In connection with the Priory there yet remain two attractions, which remind us, the one of old superstition, and the other of that love for seclusion which was so marked a feature in monastic life. The first of these is the well, still noted for its delicious water, once accompanied with healing virtues, or believed to deserve such a reputation by the weary pilgrims; the next the Priory Walk, a delightful resort, now more patronised by those who are on the eve of fighting the battle of life in wedded bonds than by the recluse. Once the calm mind therein dwelt only on abstract virtues and future bliss. Within its sanctum came no sound of busy life. The warrior cast away his sword, and there donned the cowl and gown, and mused on mundane glory and its hollowness and unsatisfying character, and yearned for the lustre of uncorruptible gold and the tranquillity of the future state.

Notices of other "religious houses" in Brecon appear in Cymrodorion transactions as follows:—

"By the west gate in said town was formerly a house of Black Friars, which was converted by Henry VIII. into a college by the name of Christchurch, and which he united to the college of Abergwili in Carmarthen."

This college still remains, and, adds our authority, "consists of the Bishop

of St. David's, who is the dean thereof; a precentor, treasurer, chancellor, and nineteen prebendaries."

The Dissenters (Independents) also have not been behind in raising an important institution of a collegiate character. This is exceedingly ornate in its architecture and substantial in its appointments, and is of late erection.

Another of the lions of Brecon is the house of the Gans, a noted member of which, *the Gam*, figured in the rebellion of Owen Glyndwr. This place "lives from afar" by its antique character. It is seen by the merest glance to be a genuine relic of antiquity, little altered from the time when Gam wandered forth on his mission to entrap Glyndwr, a plot frustrated like most of those that were essayed against the hero who was believed to be protected by "uncanny powers," and whose destiny was foretold by comets and stars—*vide* Shakespeare.

But Gam's house is now simply a farm; honest scythes and moral reaping-hooks gleam where doughty blades flashed. Hobnails ring on the very pavement where once sounded the armed heel, and in place of warrior carried home wounded, of grim, grave faces, such as were wont every now and then to rush in with tidings of some disaster or other, now stream the harvest gatherers, open peaceful countenances, not unlit with satisfaction, as well they might, seeing the ruddy gold that is now swaying to and fro in harvest fields, in this summer day of our visit.

Brecon has many other places worthy of a visit. Its cemetery, well placed on the hill-side, numerous mansions of interest, lovely scenes by the Usk—its numerous windings are all worthy of more than a passing glance. Enshrined amidst the hills Brecon was, until lately an old wild town, seemingly left out in this railway age, but now it is coming forth into the light again, and if to antiquarian interest and scenic beauty commercial prosperity be allied, in coming time, favoured and beloved will be the town of Brychan most unquestionably.

Its position near its brother Merthyr, is of mutual benefit. Brecon is the sister, the fair dairymaid who has abundance of cream and butter, and all the many delicacies that make harmony in barn yards, or form pictures in sweet-smelling larders. Merthyr is the brother, harder, sterner, dealer in iron and coal, but never fond of these luxuries, and always ready to brush his black face and open his swarthy hand to welcome Madame Brecon, as she comes in to town personified by the neatest, daintiest of basket-bearing damsels.

CHAPTER III.

Approaching Brecon this time from the Builth side, and stopping a few minutes at Erwood, a beautiful little country place, let us tell a tale which will make this sequestered nook a pilgrims' haunt in coming years.

On the confines of Erwood there was, perhaps is, a little wayside inn, just

the place where the wanderer with dust-whitened boots likes to enter, and out of the rustic jug in the scorching summer day take the deep draught of nut-brown ale. In no other place in the world is there a greater sense of repose than at such inns. Boniface is away in the meadow carting his hay, and there is only a girl to attend, and she goes about her work with a pleasant song, and you hear her trotting away down to the pigs, who salute her plateful of scraps with noisy welcome.

Some years ago the De Wintons, as usual, had their sporting friends from London, visiting them at Maesllwch Castle, and delightful were the dinners, and pleasant the reunion. There came, amongst many others, the gentleman *blasé* with London life; the worn-out professor from his college, with exhausted nervous system, and who would gladly give up his Greek, of which even a Porson would have been proud, could he exchange his shattered nerves for the quiet mind of the holey-jacketed veteran on the stone heap. There, too, came the editor from his sanctum, delighted to be away from his everlasting correspondence, cyclopædia, and criticism, and to be free. Many and varied were the friends that met at that particular time of our story, and every morning shooting parties sallied out, returning towards eve with laden bags, and though jaded often, yet intensely happy.

Now it happened that our wayside inn was just far enough to be a most acceptable dropping-in place for the sportsmen, and as the landlord soon found that he had a superior class of customers, who not unfrequently wanted something piquant and substantial to eat as well as drink, he had the tact to get a capital larder and cellar, and thus made his little hostelry famous.

One day two London gentlemen met there. Whom they were he never knew, but he placed an excellent dinner before them, very much to their astonishment, and still more were they surprised when it was followed with a sample of rare wine, old, full-bodied. They were amazed. The hour that followed was one long to be remembered. The soft southern wind that had stole in through the open window; the picture of woodland and meadow; their buoyant sport; the capital wine—they were charmed. The rust of London life was rubbed away; more sparkling than the wine was the flow of wit; and in the course of that after-dinner meeting a bowl was brewed which, tasted afterwards by a few kindred spirits who then leagued themselves in the undertaking to make their brewing famous, soon became celebrated in every part of the civilized world.

Reader, this was the birthplace of *Punch, the London Charivari*, and at the little wayside inn in Breconshire were the first arrangements made for ushering our jovial god into the light of day!

And now for Brecon. One of the places left with a scant notice was the house of Sir David Gam. So little has been the change wrought in the neighbourhood of the house, that the old roadway to it can easily be traced, and the site of the avenue of trees discerned. At the first glance, one can see that it was just formed for a warrior chief and his stout bowmen, and little imagination would be required to picture him wending along with his

retainers, intent on that punishment of some old foe—the razing of his castle, and the destruction of his household gods—in which those old warriors so excelled, Desirous of seeing the interior of the house, we made our way to the back, which is modernised considerably, and then tapped at the door, and, after some delay, were admitted, but there was little to see, and for once the genial Welsh hospitality, which is often to be met with, was not extended. Perhaps the stout Londoner and stouter Breconian who accompanied us made them loth even to tender a bowl of milk. Whatever the reason, the reception was not cordial; but the character of Breconshire geniality was amply redeemed ere we left the old town by one of the truest and best-hearted friends it has ever been our lot to meet. The old farm-house kitchen, with its lofty roof and oaken wainscoting, and the fireplace decorated with the arms of Gam and his ancestors, was a study, and the only one. Farm-house necessities had modified every other part. The front door, retained, by its massive characters, an ancient aspect, but the chinks, caused by time made the place very cold, as the farmer said, with a shrug of his shoulders. Evidently he thought antiquity associated with discomfort. Sir David Gam, as we all know, figured conspicuously in the era of Owen Glyndwr, but, unlike Owen, he took part with the king, and though captured by Glyndwr and imprisoned for several years, eventually gained his release, and fell gloriously at Agincourt.

But this few know, that in modern times illustrious descendants have exhibited the old Gam valour on well foughten fields; one especially, Colonel Charles Wood, an English officer, lately deceased, who was in the great battle of Leipsie. His elder brother, Colonel Wood, represented the county of Brecon for forty successive years previous to 1847. In addition, he was aide-de-camp to King William IV., who appointed him his executor; commanded the Royal East Middlesex Militia from 1813 until his death; and had the satisfaction of persuading two thousand of them to volunteer into the line between 1807 and the termination of the Peninsular War, in 1814. If to these we link the eminent Sir David Williams, one of the justices of the Crown in the Court of Queen's Bench, who died 1613, we supply a chain from the Gam of the fifteenth century to the present, full of interest to the antiquary and the public generally.

In too many cases the ancient houses of our land are simply represented by memorials and by memories; but in the present case we retain in living usefulness and ability and well-trying courage, a reminder of one who shone conspicuously in events that are now historic, and inseparable from our annals.

And now for the *amende*. It was the Prince Regent who was guest at the Priory in 1821. Instead of Lloyd Vaughan Watkins being the donor of the one thousand pounds to the poor, it was George Price Watkins, who was in addition the founder of the Infirmary, and to him the monument in the Priory Church was erected.

And respecting the monument to Sir David Williams, visitors will find it on a lean-to of the Priory Church, having been removed from the chancel by the

late Lord Camden to a situation which does not admit of its original canopy being placed.

With this we conclude our notice of Brecon, which alike for its antiquity and its signs of mental progress, is interesting and important. Old days and modern days grasp hands together, Not far removed is an ancient alms-house which tells of a good man's philanthropy, and the other an institution destined by intellectual effort and perseverance to become renowned amidst the kindred establishments of the land.

Thus would we have it; prompters to good deeds and lofty aspirations, blending with the everyday commercial and progressive life, heart, hand, and brain symbolised, and in unison labouring for the common weal.

MONEY IN THE GROUND.



MORGAN JENKINS was the type of a substantial Welsh farmer. He was broad of back, sinewy of arm, and with a face tanned by the mountain storms of half a century. In his homespun suit, with gaiters and heavy boots, he was to be seen at market fairs, or in his meadows, always the same cheerful, hale, and jolly fellow, with a good word for everyone, and nobody had ever seen Morgan out of temper.

"He was too big for that," said the vicar of the parish, a philosopher, and, in consequence, a far-seeing, thoughtful man. "It's your small, thin men, with disordered livers, who do that."

He had read Shakespeare, had the vicar, and believed in the immortal bard in respect of fat men.

Morgan brought up a large family of tall sons and fair daughters, and there was not one who did not know how to put his or her hand to some of the necessary duties of farm life, and did it well.

But, strong and able as Morgan was, there came a time, as it always comes to the best of us, when age crept over him, and he lay silently, waiting for the phantom hand that was to beckon him away, as it had the sire, and the grandsire before him.

He knew that his time was come, and when the sand in his hour-glass was almost run out, he called his sons to him and wished them all good-bye. His wife, an aged woman, sat by the bedside passively resigned to the inevitable, but the sons, and daughters, some called from distant farms were inconsolable

in their grief. They never thought that even at eighty years so strong a man should be summoned away.

"Now, my sons," he said, feebly, "don't trouble about me. I feel I am all right. I have never done any harm to my knowledge, and no one has had a bad word for me."

The sons sobbed their thorough belief in this.

"I don't leave you much," he added. "Take care of your mother, she will soon join me. Let everything remain on the farm as it is, as long as she is here, and then you will find by my will that I have left everything to be fairly divided between you."

He paused. They crowded around the bed, till he waved them back, crying out, "Air, more air."

"Boys," he said at length, with all his force of speech. "Boys, I don't leave you much money."

He gasped for breath.

"What I have is—in—the—ground," and falling back, Morgan ceased to breathe, and the wail of mourning rang through the house.

There was a great funeral a week afterwards, carried on according to ancient customs; and in the little graveyard that lay upon an upland, not far from the Eppynt hills, they laid him to sleep, the last sweet sleep that precedes eternity.

An aged woman sitting by the kitchen fire. Busy maids running out and in; stalwart sons in the field, or with the sheep on the mountain. Huge cunklrons on the fire with savoury content. Great gatherings at the kitchen table; quiet evenings; the girls knitting, chatting; some of the sons asleep; one spelling over a newspaper a week old; and the old dame musing over the stout old husband, whose step and voice in the homestead would be heard no more.

Weeks passed, and said Thomas, the eldest son, to David:

"Did ye mind what poor old father said about money in the ground?"

"Yes, I did," said David. "What did he mean, do you think?"

"Well," replied Thomas, "you know father was thought to have money, but beyond sixteen pound ten, there wasn't a penny more as you know, and he had none in the bank."

"I'm thinking," he added, "that father hid it. You know he was very saving. Depend upon it, 'tis somewhere on the farm."

"But," said David, "what made him hide it? He wasn't afraid anyone would steal it."

"I don't know," was the reply; "he never liked banks, and ever since these navvies came to cut the line betwixt here and B——, he was always fearful that some night they'd break in."

The two brothers talked long and earnestly about the matter, and a day or two afterwards one remembered an incident that seemed to confirm the belief about the hiding.

A heifer had been sold to the butcher of the village, and the money paid.

Thomas, the next day, was to go to the market to buy some shéep, and the old man, instead of going up to his room to bring down the money, told him to wait, and went out into the fields, and when he came back put his hand into his pocket and gave him the gold that was required.

Without saying a word to the mother, the "boys" determined on making a good search, and they began in the nearest field to the house, and, instead of ploughing, dug in a systematic manner, much to the amusement of the neighbouring farmers.

But nothing daunted, either by failing to discover anything, or by the chaff of their friends, they persevered, and wherever there was any likely spot they searched it well and thoroughly. The land had never been tilled so well before.

At length they gave up the search and began to sow. The idea of hidden money was abandoned, and the old routine of daily life was pursued.

The harvest that year was bountiful. Never before had there been such crops, and when gathering in the golden corn, and thinking of the substantial results of all their labours, Thomas, a thoughtful man, turned to his brother, and said :

"I have hit the mark. Poor father was right. We ought to have known what he meant. He had made the land rich, and it only wanted working.

A NIGHT AT LLANDRINDOD.



NIGHT at Llandrindod. Such a night ! Even upon the lofty hills not a leaf moving ; all calm and hot. Hot and calm in the hollows of the "Rock" pleasure grounds ; hot and calm even amongst the gorse. The place was full. An ancient worthy, who seemed to be the chief custodian of the place, the mayor, high constable, and registrar of everything, from births to deaths, with the delectable intervening--marriages--assured us that there were six hundred strangers in the place.

They were located at the "Pump," "Rock," "Llanerch," and other hotels. Every farm house was full, and just before church time, as I drove in from Builth, the streets were full. This fullness seemed to be a prevailing condition. It did not rest with the hotels, the houses, and the streets ; but it extended itself to the chapels and the churches, and to the old church in particular to

such an extent that the minister, Archdeacon Griffiths, of Neath, after the prayers, adjourned to the churchyard, and there, like Whitfield, held forth from a tombstone, while the congregation were grouped picturesquely around. It was novel sight, I was told, and added powerfully to the singularly able sermon of the archdeacon. I went to hear Kilsby, the oracle, and was disappointed. Kilsby affects the philosopher, but it ends with his beard. His prayer is a conversational one with the Almighty. No fervency, no outpouring of the spirit, but a dialogue. And the sermon, which was on "Vanity of Vanities," was of the same character. His forte is the inspirational. He is no logician. Dull, insipid, small platitudes are relieved occasionally by bursts of genuine poetry. "Those stars," he said, "what are they, shining down in their eternal calmness, but sweet lamps on the high road to the metropolis?"

"Life without the after part of immortality," he voted a huge blunder," and his illustrations not unfrequently were very touching and poetic. But after all the influence was that of the lecture-room and not of the chapel, and this idea was strengthened by the pointed references made by the minister to the collection.

I admit the necessity of the preacher being paid, just in the same way as the labourer is worthy of his hire; but it is a reflection upon the generosity of visitors at the Wells so pertinaciously to remind them that the collection should consist of something bigger than threepenny bits.

One Sunday lately the Rev. gentleman remarked that it was a rank imposition to clothe the miserable matter of threepence in silver. But the Rev. gentleman also remarked some years ago that "if you searched the pockets of Christ and his Apostles you would not find three-halfpence!" Where is the consistency, friend Jones? It will be better not to bring forward so obtrusively the collection box. Kilsby, with all his defects, is a man of original thought, but original thoughts can be expressed without leaning profoundly upon the Bible and closing the eyes to the fullest extent. There needs no waving of the snowy beard to enhance the beauty of an idea. Mannerisms like these detract. One gets an idea of the actor and loses that of the Christian.

Kilsby's get up is eccentric. It is a mixture of white waistcoat, knickerbockers, and straw hat. Surmount the body with a finely developed forehead and long snowy beard and you have Kilsby. The eyes are defective; in what way I leave to those who, like myself, have studied men. As an effective preacher, when thoroughly in the "hwyl," when he throws off the artificial and is the man, I know of few that can equal him; but he was not in form on Sunday, and the necessity of a good collection seemed to be predominantly in his mind.

Out from the crowded chapel into the streets, and then another glimpse is obtained of Llandrindod. On the same principle as men of thirsty failings journey a sufficient number of miles to constitute themselves travellers, so many come here simply to drink.

Though the evening was beautiful, and the grandeur of the sunset over the

sea of hills too magnificent for a description, yet every hotel was full, and beardless men and men in years hobnobbed together, and filled the rooms with smoke. Nor was this all. While nature was enacting one of her superb scenes, and limning upon the blue of infinity a picture of rarest splendour, these beardless men and old men talked insipidity or licentiousness. Drink and loose talk, which plays with the honour of woman as the heedless wind with the straw, form too conspicuous a feature of Llandrindod to be passed over in silence, and thus, while commending the salubrity of the place, the excellence of its waters, and the general attractiveness of the district, these darker tints must be also included.

I saw an old man at one of the hotels, said to be above seventy years of age, not deficient in sense, shrewd, and tolerably well read, but who revelled in dirt, and was made the butt of giddy boys. It was a lamentable spectacle.

One scene at an hotel was very touching. An old blind man was discoursing upon the trials of life, and the duties of men.

"Never give way," he said, "to despair. Let not sorrow or trial enervate you. If you fall to the ground and bruise your knee, do not cry. It is the act of a child, for the wound cannot be brushed away as you would the dirt. I had made up my mind to bear all trouble, had steeled my heart against all suffering. But one day," the old man's voice faltered, "my boy, my brave boy—he was only nine—was drowned in the river yonder." There he broke down, and with a sob as of a strong man wrestling against agony, said, "But I bore it; I was brave!"

The old blind man, passing his handkerchief across his sightless eyes, with his lips nervously pressed as if to defy all that man or demon could do, was a picture that will haunt me many a day.

THE BATTLE OF ST. FAGANS.

A MAY-DAY SKETCH.



LITTLE way out of the atmosphere, so to state, of Cardiff, in a place where you lose the sight of seagoing men, and odoriferous reminders of shipping and the sound of tram cars, traffic and general bustle in the scene where eighty thousand people are struggling in life's battle, is quiet, rural St. Fagans. All is calm and pastoral there. The broadening leaves in this May-day are untouched by the dust of highways ; and lilac and laburnum blend their purple and their gold in frames of purest green. The fragrance of fields nestles around ; cows stand in the meadows, lazily chewing the cud, and anon whisking away an intruding fly ; and in the summer air there is a softened resonance

“As when a bell no longer swings,
And faint the hollow murmur rings
O'er meadow, lake, and stream.”

Fitting place for reflection, and for recalling the past, to think of Cardiff as a fishing village on a par with the present Mumbles, and the elegant retreat of St. Fagans simply a cluster of undersized thatched cottages in perfect keeping with the old church that has long ago been replaced by one of modern character. Churches change with the times, and the lapse of nearly two hundred and fifty years since the battle of St. Fagans was fought has so changed place and scene that, pastoral as the district is, it requires a strong exercise of the imagination to bring back Royalist and Roundhead, and see the battle lost and won.

In all the external and internal strifes of England Welshmen bore a part, and not a humble one, and whether in France or in the wars of the Roses, or in the Civil Wars, always left some practical record of their bravery on the roll of battle. Singularly, too, though so adverse to England up to the time of Edward I., yet after the union between the two countries took place, Welshmen became loyal in their tendencies, and the gentry especially began to show that leaning towards law and order, which has characterised them ever since.

In the Civil War, Charles found many supporters in Wales, and came hither once as a fugitive does to a retreat, as a sorrowing man to his friends. The

narrative of his visit to Wales may fitly precede the battle of St. Fagan's, and with it, I do so.

CHARLES THE FIRST IN WALES.

In 1645, an illustrious visitor journeyed along the old Roman road from Cardiff to Gellygaer, and thence by Merthyr Tydfil to Brecon. This was no other than King Charles I., after the fatal battle of Naseby. An old manuscript of the unfortunate king's wanderings gives the following items:—

"July 20th, 1645, Cardiff; dined the governors at my own expense." It is evident that there was something wrong afloat; the governors must have been disloyal, for the next day we find that the king appointed Sir H. Stradling, of St. Donat's, governor of Cardiff Castle; and then, as if this had rectified matters and rendered the district acceptable to royalty, he stopped there seven nights. No item of expense appearing, this must have been "at the governor's expense."

The next entry brings him nearer to us:—"August 5th, dinner, Glanceyach." And where is Glanceyach? A few hundred yards from Llancaiach station, Gelligaer, there is a large old mansion, which at the very first view impresses the spectator with the fact of its antiquity. Several years ago we visited the spot, and by the kindness of the tenant walked through the building. It is a large stone erection of ancient date. The walls are immensely thick; the doors strongly made, studded with large iron nails; the top rooms loopholed for the crossbow or "musquet;" and the whole building capable of sustaining a siege. There lived the Prichards, an ancient family connected with Merthyr by intermarriage with the descendants of Ifor Bach. The connection is as follows:—

Thomas Lewis, of the Van, formerly of Merthyr, sheriff of Glamorgan in 1569, married Margaret Gamage, of Coity, and had seven children. Anne, the fourth, married John Thomas, Llanbradach. and secondly, Edward Prichard, of Llancaiach, esquire. The descendant in the time of Charles I. was Colonel Prichard, of the parliamentary army, and governor of Cardiff during the Protectorate. At the period of the king's visit Prichard had not, we assume, declared himself, but the reception evidently was not a warm one, as the record indicates that Charles simply remained a short time, supped there, and the same day reached Brecon. So long the mountain-top from Gellygaer, by the Waun—noted for its fairs—over the site of Dowlais (then a treeless common and a furnaceless solitude), through Pant and Ponstickyll, passed the most unfortunate of Stuarts just as the clouds were darkening over his fortunes, and the end of a sad reign, that might have been nobler and happier but for a weak-minded woman, was coming to its tragic close.

The monarch's lonely ride over the Welsh mountains that skirt the present line of the Taff Railway must have been a thoughtful and a sad one. He could have little love for the grandly beautiful, for the fine sweep of hills which, after undulating over a great extent, finally soared up into the majestic Beacons, over whose bold front only Time has ploughed its furrow. By these

he passed, and reached Brecon, and the tenor of his thoughts may well be imagined by the relics left us. Arriving at Brecon, he wrote a letter to Prince Charles, who was then in Cornwall, advising him to quit the kingdom and fly to France. As for his own fate, he seems to have foreshadowed this. Such, then, vivid memories of that grim Naseby fight when Cavalier bent down before gaunt psalm-loving Ironside, and dread ponderings on the future must have occupied the king's mind as he rode by the lonely and secluded village of Merthyr. Charles Stuart remained one night in Brecon; he passed on through Radnor, and wandered but a little further ere his liberty was gone.

And now for the

BATTLE OF ST. FAGANS.

Just as, after the tranquilization of Wales by the union, certain warlike spirits were obliged to find a vent, either in Wales or in foreign countries, for their belligerent proclivities, so when the first Civil War was ended, there remained a large number of Parliamentary leaders and Royalists in Wales who were strongly opposed to sitting down tranquilly under the rule of Cromwell. There was Colonel Poyer, Colonel Powell, Major Stradling, Major Laugharne, Captain Tuberville, Major Evan Thomas, and many others; and as the recreant Parliamentary leaders, as Poyer and Powell were called, retained a strong body of men under them which received constant accessions from the Royalists, it was necessary that some decided step should be taken by Cromwell. The situation was becoming serious, as we glean from Carlyle. "Wales," he says, "has been full of confused discontent all this spring. Colonel Poyer, full of brandy and Presbyterian texts of Scripture, refusing to disband until his arrears be better paid, as indeed until the king be better treated. To whom other confused Welsh colonels, as Colonel Powell, Major-General Laugharne, join themselves. There have been tumults at Cardiff, tumults here, and also there, open shooting and fighting. Drunken Colonel Poyer, a good while ago in March last, seized Pembroke; flatly refuses to obey the Parliament's orders when Colonel Fleming presents the same. Drunken Colonel Poyer, in Pembroke's strong castle, defies the Parliament and the world. New colonels, Parliamentary and Presbyterian-Royalist, are hastening towards him. The gentry are all for the king; the common people understand nothing, and follow the gentry Country is all up. Smiths have all fled, cutting their belows before they went; impossible to get a horse shod Cromwell has had leave of Fairfax, and must go. Starts on Wednesday, May 3 Cromwell marches by Monmouth, by Chepstow, May 11th; takes town; next by way of Swansea and Carmarthen to Pembroke." The route taken by Cromwell is clearly traced out from old Itineraries, dated 1724, giving the road from London to St. David's, *via* Maidenhead, Gloucester, Cardiff, Cowbridge, &c., so that at a time, not very remote from each other, Charles I. traversed one ridge from Cardiff to Brecon, and Cromwell the other from Cardiff to Swansea.

But it is not with Cromwell we have to do. In advance of him, and pressing

on at great speed, went Col. Horton, who had been especially selected by Cromwell to proceed in the direction of Cardiff, while he took a course towards Chepstow.

One of the greatest errors in warfare is to under-value your opponents. Horton was wiser in his day and generation, and chose veterans to accompany him who had proved their valour on many a well-fought field. Yet even had they been aware of this, it would not have affected the Royalists, who, journeying from Pembroke, Carmarthen, and Cardigan shires, fell into the main stream of Glamorgan men that began steadily to make their way in the direction of Cardiff. There was scarcely a village that was not represented; Aberdare men were there, and we may infer that as Lewis, of Pontygywaith Iron Works, a place near Nixon's Colliery, in the Merthyr Valley, was a staunch Royalist, his men fell in with the rest, and so, too, many a stout old farmer from the hills, where, singularly enough, a love for the unfortunate king existed.

Previous to the eventful battle which took place on the 8th, the two parties, when they came into the same neighbourhood, were content to feel one another, and very skillfully was this played off on the part of the Welsh, who took every advantage of their hills and rivers, and punished severely without getting punishment in return. But at length, early in the morning, as early as eight o'clock, and on one of the most beautiful of May mornings, as stated in the records, the Welsh, eight thousand in number, came into closer quarters, and offered the Roundheads battle, and followed it up with such a vigorous onslaught that the Puritans were driven out of St. Fagans, where they had stationed themselves, into the outskirts. For a minute or two Horton hesitated as to whether it would not be better to retreat upon a little hill in the neighbourhood, but he managed to make good his ground and reform his army.

The onslaught seems to have "breathed" the Royalists, for Horton not only had time to secure himself and reform his army, but to make an advance, and this was his arrangement. A forlorn troop of horse and dragoons, under the command of Lieutenant Godfrey, and another "forlorn hope" of foot, under the command of another lieutenant, whose name is not stated were drawn up. Then marched one hundred and sixty firelocks under the command of Captain Garland. On the right wing was Captain Okey with three troops of horse, and three of dragoons; in the centre Colonel Horton with a strong force, and on the left flank Major Barton's troop of horse, accompanied by a body of dragoons.

In this order, with the forlorn hope of horse in advance, they marched, and at once entered into a field where five hundred of the Royalist foot and horse were well posted. These Godfrey charged, and with such vigour that they fell back, whereupon Colonel Okey, seeking an opening, directed Captain Garland and his firelocks, Captain Mercer and his dragoons, and a body of horse, to complete the overthrow, which they did to some extent, but not decisively, as a smart hedge fire was kept up, and the Welsh, driven out of one field, lined the hedges, and maintained a brisk fusillade, until another

charge of horse sent them into another enclosure. Field after field was passed, and bravely did Stradling and Laugharne fight.

There was no recreant soul there that day, and had the foot only been as well disciplined as the leaders, another issue would have been recorded. Many of the Royalists were simple farm labourers, who had never handled anything more dangerous than a bird gun or a pitchfork, and though these could use clubs effectually, and some fire well at their adversaries, still, when it came to close quarters, and a grim Puritan came swooping down with, "Have at thee, son of Belial!" the course taken was literally to turn tail and get behind another hedge.

Field after field, reddened with stains never known before, was held and lost, and the great heart of Stradling and his friends began to give way. They came to a large park in the retreat, and there held ground for some time, but on came the determined Puritans, and though banners waved, and cheery voices rang out words of encouragement, and battle cries came ever and again like a trumpet blast, back, step by step, with face to the foe, they retired, until, gathering all reserves, and posting themselves on the banks of the river, they finally took their stand. Horton allowed no respite.

Flushed with success, seeing the prize now within his grasp, he dashed at the foe, but it was to be hurled back again and again, and yet, still, like the waves of the sea at the full which no rock stems back, on came the ceaseless charge.

Well might Roundhead and Royalist leader, surveying the scene, cry, "well fought;" but making their stand good on the Royalist side of the river, the foes became blended together, and the fight, from that of troops, became that of sections and of individuals. For an hour it raged, and many a brave man went down, but in the end, the superior weight of horse and better firing decided the battle, and the Welshmen fled. At least, they attempted to do so, but by far the greatest number of them were taken prisoners.

The list of captives numbered three thousand, and with these a great quantity of arms and ammunition, fifty colours and standards, three hundred and sixty horses and all the baggage. The prisoners included Major-General Stradling, Quarter-Master Laugharne, Colonels Harris, Gamage, Grime, Gamis, Lieut.-Col. Wogan (of Pembroke), Lieut.-Col. Lewis, Lieut.-Col. Hodskin, Major Phillips, Major Dawkins, Major Steadman, Major Christopher Matthew (of St. Anall), Captain Matthew, Captain Batton, and Captain Caradoc.

A list given in an old record, evidently written by a Puritan hand, adds: "Eighty colonels and other officers, and seventy inferior officers, were taken; also Doctor Lloyd and several other malignant men; Mr. Marmaduke Lloyd (Sir Marmaduke Lloyd's son), of Maesyfelin, Llampeter; Mr. Hugh Lloyd, Mr. Walcott, Sir W. Lloyd, Mr. George Anderson, Mr. Roger Gamis, Mr. Walter Powell, Mr. Gamis, Mr. Roger Williams, Mr. Devereux Grafton, two hundred and fifty gentlemen and reformado officers, two thousand six hundred common soldiers, and four thousand club men, dispersed to their several habitations."

Both Captain Powell and Colonel Poyer, of brandy-loving fame, according to Cromwell, escaped with a troop of horse each ; but the battle was a decisive one, and the rout complete.

On the side of the Puritans the loss of life was serious, and many of the principal officers had narrow escapes. Captain Nicholetts (we presume this should be Nicholas) was shot through the hat in very close proximity to his cranium, and Cornet Okey also had a similarly close shave.

The slaughter, however, was principally on the side of the Royalists and their followers. It is stated that in the parish alone of St. Fagans there were sixty-five widows left, and seven hundred in the county of Glamorgan, and that in the following summer men were so scarce that the hay was mown and the corn reaped by women.

Iolo Morganwg said that he conversed with some old women who remembered the battle, and that the river Ely was reddened with human blood from St. Fagans to the sea.

Perched upon a gate near the Ely banks, the tourist can think of these things, and fight the battle over again, and, if conversant with the neighbourhood, may trace in many an old family, names which figured either on one side or the other in the momentous strife. Traditions are current in several villages of fugitives who settled down to peaceful pursuits, and in their obscurity were overlooked and forgotten.

Who knows but that many a smith in old village annals pounded more heartily on his anvil when he recalled the stirring fight of his young manhood, and the radical village cobbler—relict of the men of Biblical words and hard blows—stormed more boisterously in the little alehouse when memory brought back the day of St. Fagans !

A WELSH JACOBITE.

IF one could soar up with the lark and view the fair county of Glamorgan from a lofty altitude the scene would be one of the most novel and pleasing in the land. Here and there, bulwarks between the North, great volcanic-looking mountains would be seen towering high with their storm-scarred heads, dark and sinister in the gloomy winter time, and torn into ruts by the multitude of torrents, but in the autumnal days, sunny with gorse and fragrant with heather. From these lofty mountains, striking south and west, the hills are seen, lying towards the sea; great waves of sterile land, waves that we can almost believe rolled hugely in some vast scene of pre-Adamite darkness and chaos, but at Creation's dawn were stilled into repose and calm. The hollows formed by these mountain ridges are the pleasant vales of Glamorgan, here dotted with ironworks, there with coal pits, yonder devoted to agriculture. You hear the roar of the furnace in one vale, and listen to the sounds of farm labour and rustic industry in the next. Here a clustering of human hives, and a denser covering of smoke show where the great Welsh towns lie, with their fringe of black tips as at Merthyr, and their vast swarms of life, affording a great and fruitful scope for the mental labourer. And there, nestling down towards the sea, quaint agricultural towns such as Cowbridge, innocent of ironworks, innocent of railroads until very lately, and just the same culm country village, as it was when Sterling passed his boyhood there, and dreamed by the quiet stream and the grey ruin.

The scene everywhere is one of rare and peculiar interest. The mountaineers of Wales, like the mountaineers of all other lands, have retained their love of liberty to the last, and here every plain and mountain ridge has its history; cairns, cistvaen, Roman roads, Irish settlements, old Roman Catholic institutions, and the etymology of a great number of places tell of a succession of intestine wars, of foreign influences, of incursions, of conquests, and the subjection of a warlike race. Subdued themselves, the Welsh have ever shown a tender interest in the fate of nations which once were free.

At the present day the mention of Poland and Hungary will bring a gleam into the eye of the Briton, and the muscle of the arm will tighten as anything but affectionate regards for the oppressor pass athwart the mind.

The interest awakened amongst the people of Wales for the fallen Stuarts

was very strong and lasting, and on the coast between Cardiff and Swansea there is a tradition to the effect that in the war of the revolution in France the Emperor tried to revive the interest of the Stuarts of Bute in the attempted invasion, and French spies and French money abounded here.

In 1745 the interest taken was more marked, and one Welsh Jacobite, at least, perished on the scaffold. From Llewellyn's notice, *History of Merthyr*, various antiquarian works, and the traditions of the district, we glean the narrative, hitherto confined to antiquaries.

On one of these same lofty mountain ridges David Morgan was born in the close of the eighteenth century. The place of his birth is a whitewashed farm, perched high on the mountain, an oasis of trees and cultivation in a desert of untilled mountain land. Far beneath surges the river Taff, and its monotone scarcely ascends to this pleasant solitude.

At the present day the ear can detect the sound of the mighty Babel at Merthyr, the eye trace the denser stratum overhanging. But in the time of David Morgan there were no ironworks more ambitious than a smithy, and appurtenances for the making of a little iron, and so the scene of birth and boyhood was of singular seclusion. The storm and the dash of angry Taff made the hearthside happy, in the winter; and in the summer time the bird's song, the waving tree, and chaunt of placid flowing rivers soothed and gladdened.

It was David's fortune to pass his boyhood amongst these influences, but as he grew up his parents sent him to London, for they were well off in the world's goods, and there he was trained and educated for the law. He passed through each grade and practised at various law courts, and there he not only wooed and won the lady who became his wife, but fell into the conspiracy to reinstate the Stuarts on the throne. Occasionally he retired into Wales, and amidst his old neighbours in the parish found many kindred minds who would gladly hail the Pretender, and the appearance of French soldiers among them. Counsellor Morgan, as he was now called, brooded over the rapidly forming plot, and in his mountain eyrie there can be little doubt was one of the most forward in prompting the hapless Stuart to land.

It is certain that he was aware of the exact time when the landing took place, and at once made his way into Scotland and joined Charles Edward. There he took high rank as the Pretender's councillor, rode by his side, and had a voice in the direction of the march, and the proceedings in Derby. But his policy was that of rapid decision. "Onward to the capital, was the only possible hope;" so that when the Prince wavered, and finally turned back, Morgan left him, and, in disgust, turned his horse's head in another direction, hoping, ere it was too late, to gain a haven of refuge.

He was a gallant Welshman, and it sickened him to leave his friends on the highway to certain destruction. But there was no alternative, the die was cast. We hear of him next at a little village called Ashbavier, and here his liberty came to an end. He was captured on suspicion of being one of the Pretender's army, and thrown into gaol. There for many a long month he

remained, and when the gaol delivery came, his transfer was to the justice-hall, and thence to the gallows.

He was charged with being the councillor of the Pretender; with having aided in the rebellion, and taken a conspicuous part. For this he was condemned, with many other misguided friends, and in a few short days the sentence was carried out, even to the barbarous decapitation of head, burning of bowels, and division of members. The poor wife of Morgan attended him in goal, and at the execution: but we do not hear that he was a loving husband. Traditions, in fact, of the neighbourhood of his house, credit him with living too much in keeping with the court of Charles II. for the rigid morals of his neighbours. Still, woman-like, she clung to him, soothed his last moments, and then sorrow-laden at heart, returned to the Welsh mountains and to her home, henceforth desolate.

Any day the traveller from Merthyr to Cardiff can espy the whitewashed farm a few miles below Troedyrhiew. It often gleams in the sunshine from a rift in the blue sky, while the other part of the mountain is covered with a frown. Yet, on no spot of the whole range, is there one that has a history so saddening as this pleasant oasis, so far above the noise of the stream, the busy highway, and the still busier rail.

THE "SIGNAL BOX" IN THE WELSH MOUNTAINS.



PROMISED you," said the signalman, at one of my interviews with him, "to tell you what led to my exile here. Somewhere I have read that most, if not all, the great events of a man's life can be traced to the action of a woman, and an Eastern king, once said that a woman was the cause of every misfortune. Whether that is true or not I do not know, but a woman was the cause of mine.

"It was a year or two after my close shave that I made the acquaintance of a young woman named Jane. It's no use telling her maiden name, for that is changed, and I hate the sound of the other. Her father had been in the excise, and was pensioned after thirty years service. They lived near me, and from constantly passing by, a nodding acquaintance was struck up, and this continued for a time until one eventful Saturday, when I was returning home and chanced to join her coming from the train. She had come from the next town, and I told her with a laugh that if I had only known who was amongst the passengers I should have been more than usually careful. She smiled at

this, and blushed a bit, and I was encouraged to ask, as it was my Sunday off the next day, whether she would mind taking a walk with me. She promised she would, and an intimacy sprung up which steadily ripened until we had almost arranged the wedding day. The old man, too, who was fond of his pipe and a chat, was pleased with my company, and always gave me a hearty welcome. In fact my course of true love was as smooth as a gradient of one in a hundred. The old man had seen a lot of coast service, and was full of anecdotes, and many a pleasant evening we had after the last train had been run, Jane sitting near me when it was too wet to go out, and the old man spinning his yarns. The old woman was dead, and the only son was in some important post at the next port. I rarely saw him, and when I did I must confess I didn't like him. I overheard him say one day to his sister. 'Well Jane, you didn't look very high, I should have thought that you might have fixed upon some one better than a common engine-driver.' Jane answered back rather hotly, and gave me for the first time a notion that she had a temper, but as it was in my behalf I didn't notice it. Another time as I was leaving he pulled down the window before I had got quite out of the house, and said, 'Faugh, how I do detest cotton, wick, and oil !'

"You can imagine from this that I was no more a favourite with him than he was with me. The fellow never laughed. I don't think he could laugh. His face was covered with hair, and though he would tell smart things, and fancy things sometimes, he never laughed himself though he made everybody else.

"The old man and his daughter were very fond of him. He was the gentleman of the family and seemed to have no end of money, and was always well dressed, with rings and jewellery about him, quite a swell in fact. I had my doubts of him, however. Perhaps it was from knowing that he didn't like me that I was doubtful of him and suspicious of every movement.

"It was one morning in spring that these suspicions were strengthened. I had brought him from the shipping town to the one where his father lived, and as he passed me to go out by crossing the line, I noticed two gentlemen looking at him, and when he had crossed one said to the other :

"Isn't that so and so !"

"Yes," was the reply.

"He is playing a risky game I am told."

"And I have heard, too," said the other, "that he gambles fearfully. How the dickens he keeps up his style is a mystery to me."

"They both walked way out of my hearing. So, so, my gentleman, I thought, you are living above your means, and doing it extensively in horse-racing and betting to keep things square. When I was at the town where he lived I made some cautious inquiries of a mate, and heard that there was a good deal of whispering about. Still I didn't say anything to Jane. I was afraid of vexing her, knowing how proud she was of him. At this time I was going once or twice a week to their house and always met with the warmest welcome, but one evening I noticed for the first time a change. The old man kept pulling his pipe and reading a newspaper, and I could see that

he was put out by the way he blew his smoke. You can always tell that by a smoker. If he is content and happy his puffs are measured and gentle, but if anything is wrong doesn't he puff fiercely! So did the old man. Jane, too, was distant, as if pre-occupied, and her face looked troubled. I thought at once there was something wrong, and asked bluntly if there was, but both protested there wasn't, and tried to be more amiable; but it was forced, and I left, anything but in a good mood, and half determined not to go again. I put all of it down to the young fellow, who, I thought, had so run me down before them that they were getting tired of my acquaintance.

"I didn't go there again for a whole week, and then matters were worse. Jane was distant and reserved, and the old man scarcely spoke more than half-a-dozen words. I cut my visit short, but with a heavy heart. My life seemed to go out of me. Then when the mood turned I felt as if I could murder. It would have been dangerous to rile me then. I drank furiously to drown my thoughts, and had a narrowness of being reported.

"When I recalled events the next morning, and thought how foolish I had been, I was disgusted with myself. I, known as the studious, thoughtful driver, for whom everyone had a good word, to throw away my good name because of a jilt? No! a thousand times no! and I vowed a vow to forget her, and never be drawn into the whirlpool of passion again.

"I saw Jane occasionally at a distance, and that was all. She made no sign, nor did I. It was enough to me that, whatever the cause, our natures were different, and it was better as it was.

"But one evening a little girl brought me a note begging me to come and see her, and my resolves faded just like a snowflake in the sun. I brushed myself up and went there. Jane met me at the door, and, putting her arms around my neck, asked how I could be so cruel and cold. Good Lord! I had a choking in the throat, and thought myself the meanest scamp that ever lived to treat such a dear girl so shamefully. Then after she had lectured me a bit for being such a monster, she told me that perhaps she had been a bit distant in appearance, but it was not intended, and it was all on account of her brother. She and her father were in great trouble about him. Some whisper had reached them about his mode of life, and her father had sent for him, and there had been some stormy scenes, all owing, he had said, to that engine driver of hers, who, he believed, was no friend of his.

"I admitted to Jane that I had no faith in him, and did not care for him; but as he was her brother I could tolerate him for her sake. Jane rather bridled up at this, but we made friends, and for a month or two all went smoothly. Then came the crash. I heard it first. Everyone was talking about it. Young —— had committed forgery for a large amount, and was missing; detectives were had from London, and as the firm offered five hundred pounds for his capture, every policeman in both towns was on the *qui vive*. As soon as I heard it I went to Jane's house. They were in a sad state. The old man sat in a sort of muse. He didn't even smoke, and as for Jane, she had made herself quite a fright with her crying. I soothed her, or

tried to do so, but it was a hard matter, and the worst of it was, they didn't know what had become of him. He was evidently ashamed to come home, and she was afraid that instead of getting abroad, he had made away with himself. This I suggested was not likely, he was not the sort of man to do it, more likely he was in hiding near, and might turn up any day.

"Every day after that I noticed one of the London detectives meeting every train; still no capture was made. I failed, too, to see Jane quite so often, having to relieve a driver in taking the Irish express down to Milford. The run was divided, the regular driver being ill, and it was only about once a week I could see her. One thing I noticed as very suspicious, and that was, Jane would keep me at the door on some pretence or other, and from that and a distinct cough I heard one evening in the little parlour when we three were sitting in the kitchen, satisfied me that somebody was in the house that I wasn't to see, and who that somebody was I guessed could be no other than the brother.

"After a time I was taken into their confidence; the brother was secreted in the house. It had been searched well by the local police before he came, and it was only by a close disguise as a female that he managed to get in. Now the difficulty was how to get him out, and they relied upon my help. How to do this was a mystery. I told Jane, however, that for her sake I would try, and my plan, rapidly matured, was this. First to induce my mate the fireman to get a day off, and then the brother, disguised in an old suit of mine, would stoke my engine to Milford, and there it would be easy to get to Ireland. The plan in the rough didn't look very promising, but it was soon brushed up. The fireman, Dick, a willing young fellow, was the same height as the brother, and it was they that first suggested the scheme. He could be induced for a few pounds to smuggle himself in a previous train to Milford, and on my arrival with the brother would take his place for the return trip, and no one would be any the wiser. The brother agreed to it readily.

"In the dead of the night he came to my house by the back way, and before it was light went with me and got into the yard without notice. Once there and put to load the engine with coal, he became thoroughly disguised, and we steamed away unsuspected. Everything turned out well. The brother passed under the very nose of the policeman. Dick, my own, fireman, rejoined me and nothing was ever known by our people of the part I had taken in the escape of a felon.

"Well, you would have thought that Jane couldn't be grateful enough for my help. Not a bit of it. There was a thriving young tradesman in the same street where they dealt, and he paid her such attention that I was soon forgotten. There was no coal tar or cotton wick and oil smell about him, and it was something to be the wife of a flourishing tradesman instead of being coupled with a driver. She told me eventually all about it. She liked me, but she thought our natures were different, and besides that, she should always be in fear when I was absent lest I might be brought back dead; 'and so, and so,' it was the old tale, I had served her purpose, had enabled the scamp of a

brother to get away, and now, off with the old love, on with the new. Do not think that my love for her had cooled.

"I would have died for her. If I touched her hand, a strange thrill ran through me, one smile of her soft brown eyes sent me mad with delight—anything I would have done to retain her, but it was not to be. I tried every effort, but she was immovable, and in desperation I dashed out of the house. It was well the grocer kept out of my path that night. I would have risked my soul to have destroyed him !

"Two months afterwards, the busybody neighbours told me that they were to be married. I had become a little tranquil then. Consoled myself somewhat by thinking that I had loved a picture only ; that a woman who could throw aside the earnest pure love of a man for a passing fancy would never have made a good wife.

"Still, at times the past would come back like a dream, I pictured her then as true and good ; a woman amongst women ; a prize worthy of being fought for to the death.

"Have you ever seen a man mount a horse in a passion and drive away ? So, often I would get on my engine, and in such a mood frighten everybody. Drive ? Yes, at any pace, sharp curves ; facing points. It was only in the mad rush and the measured roll of my train that I could get relief. That hateful rival's face smiling before me would haunt me everywhere. It would gleam a little in advance of my engine, and I would put on all steam to crush him down. Visions of the two standing by the altar would rise up out of the mist, and again I would dash onwards, and only slacken when the delirium passed. All this of course became talked about. Passengers grumbled, guards complained, some of the travellers indeed, became so frightened that it became a question whether it was Dare Devil——'s train or not, and if it was, they wouldn't ride with me.

"I was cautioned, then warned, but it was no use. The leading director travelled with me one day, when a new fancy was on. I had seized Jane, had ran away with her in my arms, held her tightly while I stood on the engine putting it to its fullest speed. Behind me, in another engine came the grocer, who was coming at a desperate rate to rescue her. How I yelled in derision and told him to keep to his grocery, and all the time, out of a first-class window, there was a round bald head, and the owner, a puffy little man, was saying, 'God bless me, most extraordinary, really not safe, shocking accident, some thousands to pay, less dividends, never do.'

"I was told afterwards that my fate was resolved upon. Consideration only for long service and careful driving kept them from giving me a prompt dismissal. Still, go I must, and the last week of my driving life had come. Troubles generally come in a lump. The very day before the last (it was on a Friday), Jane was married to the grocer. I saw the carriage at the door as I went by in my plain fustian suit. I tried to smile at the neighbours as they looked sadly at me, but the smile was a wrench of pain more than anything else. Inwardly I swore and raved.

“And to think that the jilt should actually start on the honeymoon on my own train! If she had had one thought, one trait of a good woman, she would have gone in a donkey cart rather, or by any train than mine. But no. When I steamed into the station to be coupled on to the train I saw the party entering, saw the flutter of lace, noted the band boxes and travelling trunks that were to accompany them on their travel, and still my pulse beat evenly, and I kept my gaze back upon the station master watching only for the signal. It was given, and away we went at a sober pace, gradually increasing to the usual rate. I was surprised at myself. I tried even to rouse my old passion. Jane was in the train. She was now a wife. Was I going to let the rival bear her off? What use to me was life. How easy to have a glorious crash. Here was the place! We were running by the mountain side. Far below was a valley dotted here and there with whitewashed farms, little squares of pasturage and ploughed land. All so calm and tranquil. What a thing it would be to thunder down and strew a hundred dead about the meadows. What a thing for the vacant rustics to talk about. Thus I would go on, but I couldn't get up the steam, and fully half the journey was accomplished in the most common place manner. Even the head guard, as we stopped at a station to waste time, came up to chat and said, ‘Not so lively as usual—Don't you feel well?’

“It was that did it. That man's sympathising look did the mischief. I never could bear sympathy.

“The next run was the longest, and a good deal of it was down a smart gradient. I whistled twice in going down, our signal to put on brakes, and it was duly obeyed, and as we went presently the brakes were taken off, and we dashed on, rapidly increasing the pace, until we flew rather than rolled. The guards whistled furiously, they dared not put on the brakes. My mate stood aghast, and begged me to slacken. Not a bit of it. The telegraph poles whirled so incessantly as to seem a close row of posts. On, on, I felt the madman rising in me. Careless of the present, heedless of the future, all past recklessness was surpassed, every head was out of the windows, signal men on the road dropped their arms in affright. Still onward I pressed, and then gradually slackening, my mood seemed to sober me down too, and when we pulled up at the terminus, I was as rational as any man. One thing, I had given Jane a fright. I was sure of that, and this seemed to soothe me. Next day I gave in my notice, and having a friend amongst the directors to whom I told my tale, this post was given me. It suits my mood. Here I can revel in a world of my own, and be out of the reach of the wayward and the deceitful. Books I have, and I have my pipe. My wants are few, and time goes by without change. I have been in the storm and the whirlwind, the howl of the tempest has been around me, and the demon murder has tried to lure. Here I am in the calm; the harbour has been reached, the sails are furled, and I can look and picture and laugh at the trials, changes, ups and downs, the cry of the child for its toy, and the passion of man for his ambition, whether love or wealth, are to me nothing now.

PENRY WILLIAMS, THE EMINENT PAINTER.



ON the site of a place that is now a coal-yard, near a canal that is unlike anything poetic or classic, there was at Merthyr Tydfil many years a cosy house with well-stocked and substantial garden ; there lived William Williams, a house painter, a genial man, perhaps more famous for his social than his artistic qualities. He had a son named Penry, who, when a boy, was noted for his aptitude in sketching. When quite a youth he was fond of drawing heads, and the likeness was invariably marvellously good for so young an artist. In his schoolboy days he was sent to the academy of Taliesin Williams, and it is interesting to note that amongst the clever men who were his schoolmates was no other than the Vice-Chancellor, Sir W. M. James.

Many anecdotes are disclosed of those early days. He was a slim, rather delicate youth, very often troubled with sore eyes, and yet vivacious and pleasant tempered. Even in the school hours, when youth was prone to delight itself in ball, hide-and-seek, and other games more or less active in their nature, his delight was to amuse himself with his beloved pencil. As soon as the boys were spread over the ground, he would exclaim to a school-mate, "I'll get up into the tree and sketch them," and forthwith he would mount the old medlar with its curved trunk, and there ensconced amongst the branches hit off accurate groups. His genius for caricature was then well displayed ; anything grotesque or that had any fun-exciting quality about it he was enabled to strike off well and happily ; but this ability to caricature was never developed, but diverged into another channel, and left the grotesque amongst the foibles of youth.

When we are tracing the annals of a great man it is well to know how his youth was employed. It may happen that another endowed with similar special traits, getting into the same track, would arrive not far distant from the same goal. You may have seen a rocket hurled into the dark night by a powerful arm ; swiftly it soars, and the instant it has left the hand another flies in its track, and nearly arrives at the same point.

Penry's delight in his youth was to ramble over the mountains, far away over gorse and heather, where the wild thyme cast its fragrance, and the wild

bee its song ; he loved to roam, free as the wind that blew around him ; without a purpose, save but to gaze at the wild luxuriance of nature, and in it feel intense enjoyment. Grave, square-faced men, spectacled and habituated to put hands into breeches pockets, chink money, and gaze abstractedly at rows of figures, may say " this was all nonsense, sheer idleness, folly—humph."

Very good, but how many a man, curbed down to a dry and dull routine of life, is tempted to exclaim in answer :

O for a voice of old,
And the dream of a Southern sea !
O for a sweet return
Of boyhoods days to me !

Those idle, happy days ! luxuriate in them, O Youth, ere the world claim thee, ere the fair tempt thee, or its duties chain thee ; bask in the sunshine for the brief hour of boyhood ; look into blue skies, stray beside still waters, listen to the monotone of the sea ; hear the voice and the songs of the woodlands ; all too soon comes the harsh command, " Fall in ! " and never again this side of the stars of heaven will the old dreams and pursuits be thine.

Out upon the hard faces that would make old men of our youth, that would spectacle boyhood in order to make its young eyes serviceable, and even twist its toys and games into usefulness.

Such was the routine that made our poets and our painters, and when the dominant era of that routine begins, farewell to any more ! Finished becomes the long and illustrious list.

Penry revelled on the mountains, and from his wanderings brought back many a choice little sketch which, seen by competent judges, prognosticated success. The landlord of the " Lamb and Flag," in the Glyn Neath Valley, was one of his admirers and supporters, and bought many a gem.

Then he became known by the Aperpergwm family, and made a lasting friendship with those who have long passed away. Next he came under the notice of Mr. Crawshay, and Sir John Guest, and Sir Joseph Bailey, who all saw the unmistakable gleams of rare promise, and, to their honour be it stated, came forward frankly with liberal encouragement, and by their generous aid he was enabled to enter on a course of studies, first at the Royal Academy, and afterwards at Rome, which soon showed that his patrons had not been deceived.

In London he had the advantage of Sir Thomas Lawrence's direction, and an anecdote illustrative of the soundness of the master's instruction will not be out of place at this point of his career.

He had made some sketches for a lady, and previous to parting with them showed them to Sir Thomas. The able painter examined them with attention.

" Yes," he said, " very good, but a little too gaudy in colour."

" The lady wished to have them so," remarked the youth.

" Did she," rejoined the master ; " but you must not deviate from the true principles of art to gratify any such wish ; always be led by your own better judgment."

The pupil bowed, and never forgot the excellent lesson.

Examined from the distant epoch of time at which we review his achievements, supplied only with leading incidents of his career, that career seems a series of prominent and well-marked successes following each other with rapidity ; but the path of fame was then, as it is now, a rocky and a difficult one. The genius of man has been unable to place any locomotive thereon ; by no swift car can the youth or the man ascend. He must toil and struggle, with bleeding feet and gasping breath ; he must mount alone to win the laurel and the bay from the tardy, half-consenting hand of Fame. So by slow stages, after a world of minute study of nature by flood and fell, on mountain and in plain, amidst the wildest and most picturesque scenes of his own Wales, and of classic Italy, did he gradually attract notice, and won around him at Rome the *élite* of art and of the Roman and English nobility. While he was thus eminently successful, a brother named John, who had the misfortune to be both deaf and dumb, was following rapidly in his steps. Old inhabitants of Merthyr say that the brother had a remarkable facility in taking a likeness. He had only to see a face, and forthwith was enabled to give a faithful representation either with pencil or scissors. The merest glance was sufficient. John, too, went to London, and studied at the Royal Academy, startling even the seniors with his great abilities ; but, like too many of the sons of genius, who scorn and fret at the strong curb and the weary round, John forsook his hopeful scholarship and returned to Merthyr, there to dazzle with the fervid and fitful gleams of his genius, showing themselves even amidst the dark thunderclouds of his fate. And then—

Peace to his memory. Sir Thomas Lawrence, speaking of him, said, “That man, if properly trained, would have made the first portrait painter in the world !”

Ceaselessly energetic the while, were the labours of Penry Williams ; every year added to his fame, and his studio was thronged by the highest personages, members of our Royal family, and other crowned heads who visited the Imperial city. Then it became a proud honour to possess one of his works, and the pinnacle was gained. By the side of Wilson, and Gainsborough, by the English Claude (Turner), and Stanfield, were placed the paintings of Penry Williams. He had won his right to rank with these illustrious men, and to be spoken of in the same breath with Lorraine, Michael Angelo, Rubens, or any other of the galaxy who have gained imperishable names in the world of art. And, happily, we can yet speak of him as amongst us. He is an active present, not a memory ; and distant, far distant, be the day when we gaze on his achievements as *in memoriam*.

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