

JONATHAN CEREDIG DAVIES

FOLK-LORE OF WEST AND MID-WALES

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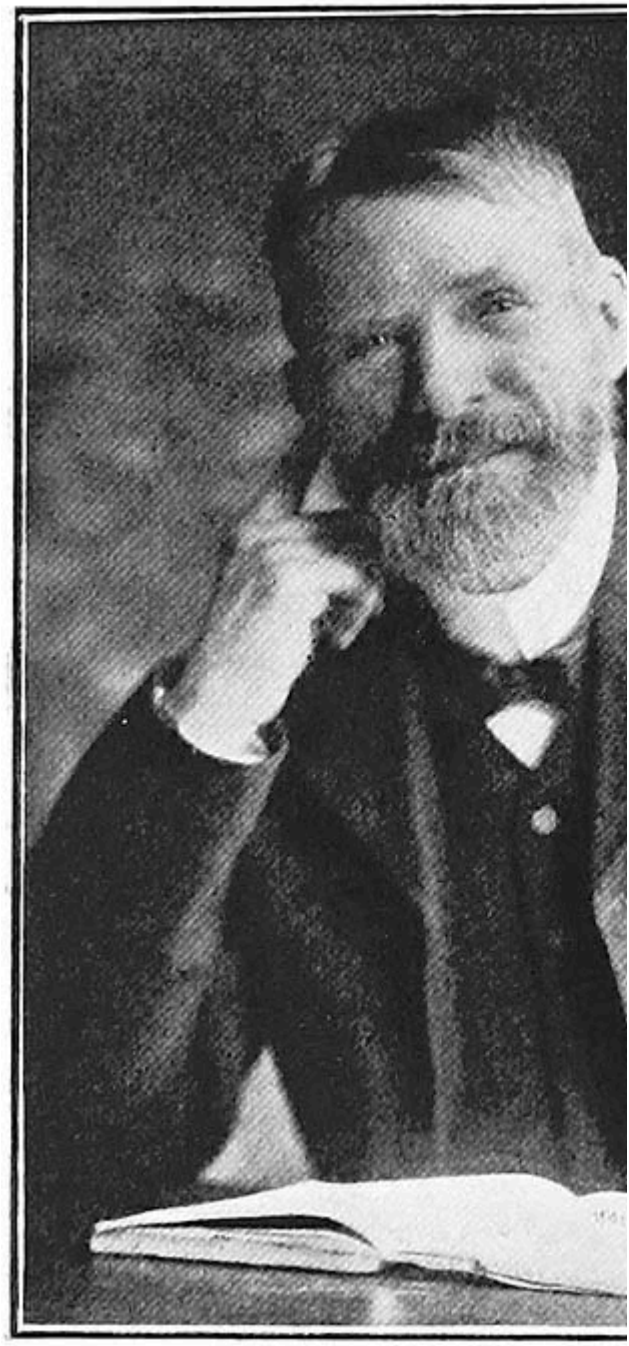
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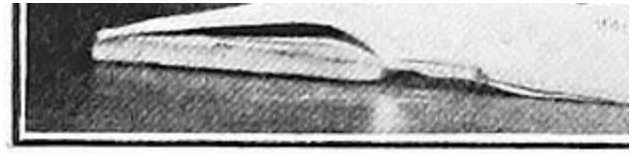
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FOLK-LORE

OF

WEST AND MID-WAL

BY

JONATHAN CEREDIG DAVIE

Member of the Folk-Lore Society, Author of "Ad in the Land of Giants," "Western Australia,"

With a Preface

BY

ALICE, COUNTESS AMHERS

"Cared doeth yr encilion."

ABERYSTWYTH:
PRINTED AT THE "WELSH GAZETTE" OFFICES, BRIDGE STRE
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"*Cared doeth yr encilion.*"

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PRINTED AT THE "WELSH GAZETTE" OFFICES, BRIDGE STREET.

1911.

This book is respectfully dedicated by the Author

to

COUNTESS OF LISBURNE, CROSSWOOD.
ALICE, COUNTESS AMHERST.
LADY ENID VAUGHAN.
LADY WEBLEY-PARRY-PRYSE, GOGERDDAN.
LADY HILLS-JOHNES OF DOLAUCOTHY.
MRS. HERBERT DAVIES-EVANS, HIGHMEAD.
MRS. WILLIAM BEAUCLERK POWELL, NANTEOS.

PREFACE

BY
ALICE, COUNTESS AMHERST.

he writer of this book lived for many years in the Welsh Colony, Patagonia, where he was the pioneer of the Anglican Church. He published a book dealing with that part of the world, which also contained a great deal of interesting matter regarding the little known Patagonian Indians, Ideas on Religion and Customs, etc. He returned to Wales in 1891; and after spending a few years in his native land, went out to a wild part of Western Australia, and was the pioneer Christian worker in a district called Colliefields, where he also built a church. (No one had ever conducted Divine Service in that place before.)

Here again, he found time to write his experiences, and his book contained a great deal of value to the Folklorist, regarding the aborigines of that country, quite apart from the ordinary account of Missionary enterprise, history and prospects of Western Australia, etc.

In 1901, Mr. Ceredig Davies came back to live in his native country, Wales.

In Cardiganshire, and the centre of Wales, generally, there still remains a great mass of unrecorded Celtic Folk Lore, Tradition, and Custom.

Thus it was suggested that if Mr. Ceredig Davies wished again to write a book—the material for a valuable one lay at his door if he cared to undertake it. His accurate knowledge of Welsh gave him great facility for the work. He took up the idea, and this book is the result of his labours.

The main object has been to collect “verbatim,” and render the Welsh idiom into English as nearly as possible these old stories still told of times gone by.

The book is in no way written to prove, or disprove, any of the numerous theories and speculations regarding the origin of the Celtic Race, its Religion or its Traditions. The fundamental object has been to commit to writing what still remains of the unwritten Welsh Folk Lore, before it is forgotten, and this is rapidly becoming the case.

The subjects are divided on the same lines as most of the books on Highland and Irish Folk Lore, so that the student will find little trouble in tracing the resemblance, or otherwise, of the Folk Lore in Wales with that of the two sister countries.

ALICE AMHERST.

Plas Amherst, Harlech,
North Wales, 1911.

INTRODUCTION.

elsh folk-lore is almost inexhaustible, and of great importance to the historian and others. Indeed, without a knowledge of the past traditions, customs and superstitions of the people, the history of a country is not complete.

In this book I deal chiefly with the three counties of Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, and Pembrokeshire, technically known in the present day as “West Wales”; but as I have introduced so many things from the counties bordering on Cardigan and Carmarthen, such as Montgomery, Radnor, Brecon, etc., I thought proper that the work should be entitled, “The Folk-Lore of West and Mid-Wales.”

Although I have been for some years abroad, in Patagonia, and Australia, yet I know almost every county in my native land; and there is hardly a spot in the three counties of Carmarthen, Cardigan, and Pembroke that I have not visited during the last nine years, gathering materials for this book from old people and others who were interested in such subject, spending three or four months in some

districts. All this took considerable time and trouble, not to mention of the expenses in going about; but I generally walked much, especially in the remote country districts, but I feel I have rescued from oblivion things which are dying out, and many things which have died out already. I have written very fully concerning the old Welsh Wedding and Funeral Customs, and obtained most interesting account of them from aged persons. The "Bidder's Song," by Daniel Ddu, which first appeared in the "Cambrian Briton" 1822, is of special interest. Mrs. Loxdale, of Castle Hill, showed me a fine silver cup which had been presented to this celebrated poet. I have also a chapter on Fairies; but as I found that Fairy Lore has almost died out in those districts which I visited, and the traditions concerning them already recorded, I was obliged to extract much of my information on this subject from books, though I found a few new fairy stories in Cardiganshire. But as to my chapters about Witches, Wizards, Death Omens, I am indebted for almost all my information to old men and old women whom I visited in remote country districts, and I may emphatically state that I have not embellished the stories, or added to anything I have heard; and care has been taken that no statement be made conveying an idea different from what has been heard. Indeed, I have in nearly all instances given the names, and even the addresses of those from whom I obtained my information. If there are a few Welsh idioms in the work here and there, the English readers must remember that the information was given me in the Welsh language by the aged peasants, and that I have faithfully endeavoured to give a literal rendering of the narrative.

About 350 ladies and gentlemen have been pleased to give their names as subscribers to the book, and I have received kind and encouraging letters from distinguished and eminent persons from all parts of the kingdom, and I thank

them all for their kind support.

I have always taken a keen interest in the History and traditions of my native land, which I love so well; and it is very gratifying that His Royal Highness, the young Prince of Wales, has so graciously accepted a genealogical table, in which I traced his descent from Cadwaladr the Blessed, the last Welsh prince who claimed the title of King of Britain.

I undertook to write this book at the suggestion and desire of Alice, Countess Amherst, to whom I am related, and who loves all Celtic things, especially Welsh traditions and legends; and about nine or ten years ago, in order to suggest the "lines of search," her Ladyship cleverly put together for me the following interesting sketch or headings, which proved a good guide when I was beginning to gather Folk-Lore:—

> (1) Traditions of Fairies. (2) Tales illustrative of Fairy Lore. (3) Tutelary Beings. (4) Mermaids and Mermen. (5) Traditions of Water Horses out of lakes, if any? (6) Superstitions about animals:—Sea Serpents, Magpie, Fish, Dog, Raven, Cuckoo, Cats, etc. (7) Miscellaneous:—Rising, Clothing, Baking, Hen's first egg; Funerals; Corpse Candles; On first coming to a house on New Year's Day; on going into a new house; Protection against Evil Spirits; ghosts haunting places, houses, hills and roads; Lucky times, unlucky actions. (8) Augury:—Starting on a journey; on seeing the New Moon. (9) Divination; Premonitions; Shoulder Blade Reading; Palmistry; Cup Reading. (10) Dreams and Prophecies; Prophecies of Merlin and local ones. (11) Spells and Black Art:—Spells, Black Art, Wizards, Witches. (12) Traditions of Strata Florida, King Edward burning the Abbey, etc. (13) Marriage Customs.—What the Bride brings to the house; The Bridegroom. (14) Birth Customs. (15) Death Customs. (16) Customs of the Inheritance of farms; and Sheep

Shearing Customs.

Another noble lady who was greatly interested in Welsh Antiquities, was the late Dowager Lady Kensington; and her Ladyship, had she lived, intended to write down for me a few Pembrokeshire local traditions that she knew in order to record them in this book.

In an interesting long letter written to me from Bothwell Castle, Lanarkshire, dated September 9th, 1909, her Ladyship, referring to Welsh Traditions and Folk-Lore, says:—"I always think that such things should be preserved and collected now, before the next generation lets them go! ... I am leaving home in October for India, for three months." She did leave home for India in October, but sad to say, died there in January; but her remains were brought home and buried at St. Bride's, Pembrokeshire. On the date of her death I had a remarkable dream, which I have recorded in this book, see page 277.

I tender my very best thanks to Evelyn, Countess of Lisburne, for so much kindness and respect, and of whom I think very highly as a noble lady who deserves to be specially mentioned; and also the young Earl of Lisburne, and Lady Enid Vaughan, who have been friends to me even from the time when they were children.

I am equally indebted to Colonel Davies-Evans, the esteemed Lord Lieutenant of Cardiganshire, and Mrs. Davies-Evans, in particular, whose kindness I shall never forget. I have on several occasions had the great pleasure and honour of being their guest at Highmead.

I am also very grateful to my warm friends the Powells of Nanteos, and also to Mrs. A. Crawley-Boevey, Birchgrove,

Crosswood, sister of Countess Lisburne.

Other friends who deserve to be mentioned are, Sir Edward and Lady Webley-Parry-Pryse, of Gogerddan; Sir John and Lady Williams, Plas, Llanstephan (now of Aberystwyth); General Sir James and Lady Hills-Johnes, and Mrs. Johnes of Dolaucothy (who have been my friends for nearly twenty years); the late Sir Lewis Morris, Penbryn; Lady Evans, Lovesgrove; Colonel Lambton, Brownslade, Pem.; Colonel and Mrs. Gwynne-Hughes, of Glancothy; Mrs. Wilmot Inglis-Jones; Capt. and Mrs. Bertie Davies-Evans; Mr. and Mrs. Loxdale, Castle Hill, Llanilar; Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd, Waunifor; Mrs. Webley-Tyler, of Glanhelig; Archdeacon Williams, of Aberystwyth; Professor Tyrrell Green, Lampeter; Dr. Hughes, and Dr. Rees, of Llanilar; Rev. J. F. Lloyd, vicar of Llanilar, the energetic secretary of the Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society; Rev. Joseph Evans, Rector of Jordanston, Fishguard; Rev. W. J. Williams, Vicar of Llanafan; Rev. H. M. Williams, Vicar of Lledrod; Rev. J. N. Evans, Vicar of Llangybi; Rev. T. Davies, Vicar of Llanddewi Brefi; Rev. Rhys Morgan, C. M. Minister, Llanddewi Brefi; Rev. J. Phillips, Vicar of Llancynfelyn; Rev. J. Morris, Vicar, Llanybyther; Rev. W. M. Morgan-Jones (late of Washington, U.S.A.); Rev. G. Eyre Evans, Aberystwyth; Rev. Z. M. Davies, Vicar of Llanfihangel Geneu'r Glyn; Rev. J. Jones, Curate of Nantgaredig; Rev. Prys Williams (Brythonydd) Baptist Minister in Carmarthenshire; Rev. D. G. Williams, Congregational Minister, St. Clears (winner of the prize at the National Eisteddfod, for the best essay on the Folk-Lore of Carmarthen); Mr. William Davies, Talybont (winner of the prize at the National Eisteddfod for the best essay on the Folk-Lore of Merioneth); Mr. Roderick Evans, J. P., Lampeter; Rev. G. Davies, Vicar of Blaenpenal; Mr. Stedman-Thomas (deceased), Carmarthen, and others in all parts of the country too

numerous to be mentioned here. Many other names appear in the body of my book, more especially aged persons from whom I obtained information.

JONATHAN CEREDIG DAVIES.

Llanilar, Cardiganshire.
March 18th, 1911.

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CHAPTER I.

LOVE CUSTOMS AND OMEN SEEKING.

"Pwy sy'n caru, a phwy sy'n peidio,
A phwy sy'n troi hen gariad heibio."

Who loves, and who loves not,
And who puts off his old love?

ndoubtedly, young men and young women all over the world from the time of Adam to the present day, always had, and still have, their modes or ways of associating or keeping company with one another whilst they are in love, and waiting for, and looking forward to, the bright wedding day. In Wales, different modes of courting prevail; but I am happy to state the old disgraceful custom of bundling, which was once so common in some rural districts, has entirely died out, or at least we do not hear anything about it nowadays. I believe Wirt Sikes is right in his remarks when he says that such a custom has had its origin in primitive times, when, out of the necessities of existence, a whole household lay down together for greater warmth, with their usual clothing on.

Giraldus Cambrensis, 700 years ago, writes of this custom

in these words:—

> "Propinquo concubantium calore multum adjuti."

Of course, ministers of religion, both the Clergy of the Church of England and Nonconformist ministers condemned such practice very sternly, but about two generations ago, there were many respectable farmers who more or less defended the custom, and it continued to a certain extent until very recently, even without hardly any immoral consequences, owing to the high moral standard and the religious tendencies of the Welsh people.

One reason for the prevalence of such custom was that in times past in Wales, both farm servants and farmers' sons and daughters were so busy, from early dawn till a late hour in the evening that they had hardly time or an opportunity to attend to their love affairs, except in the night time. Within the memory of hundreds who are still alive, it was the common practice of many of the young men in Cardiganshire and other parts of West Wales, to go on a journey for miles in the depth of night to see the fair maidens, and on their way home, perhaps, about 3 o'clock in the morning they would see a ghost or an apparition! but that did not keep them from going out at night to see the girls they loved, or to try to make love. Sometimes, several young men would proceed together on a courting expedition, as it were, if we may use such a term, and after a good deal of idle talk about the young ladies, some of them would direct their steps towards a certain farmhouse in one direction, and others in another direction in order to see their respective sweethearts, and this late at night as I have already mentioned.

It was very often the case that a farmer's son and the

servant would go together to a neighbouring farm house, a few miles off, the farmer's son to see the daughter of the house, and the servant to see the servant maid, and when this happened it was most convenient and suited them both. After approaching the house very quietly, they would knock at the window of the young woman's room, very cautiously, however, so as not to arouse the farmer and his wife.

I heard the following story when a boy:—A young farmer, who lived somewhere between Tregaron and Lampeter, in Cardiganshire, rode one night to a certain farm-house, some miles off, to have a talk with the young woman of his affection, and after arriving at his destination, he left his horse in a stable and then entered the house to see his sweetheart. Meanwhile, a farm servant played him a trick by taking the horse out of the stable, and putting a bull there instead. About 3 o'clock in the morning the young lover decided to go home, and went to the stable for his horse. It was very dark, and as he entered the stable he left the door wide open, through which an animal rushed wildly out, which he took for his horse. He ran after the animal for hours, but at daybreak, to his great disappointment, found that he had been running after a bull!

Another common practice is to meet at the fairs, or on the way home from the fairs. In most of the country towns and villages there are special fairs for farm servants, both male and female, to resort to; and many farmers' sons and daughters attend them as well. These fairs give abundant opportunity for association and intimacy between young men and women.

Indeed, it is at these fairs that hundreds of boys and girls meet for the first time. A young man comes in contact with a young girl, he gives her some "fairings" or offers her a

glass of something to drink, and accompanies her home in the evening. Sometimes when it happens that there should be a prettier and more attractive maiden than the rest present at the fair, occasionally a scuffle or perhaps a fight takes place, between several young men in trying to secure her society, and on such occasions, of course, the best young man in her sight is to have the privilege of her company.

As to whether the Welsh maidens are prettier or not so pretty as English girls, I am not able to express an opinion; but that many of them were both handsome and attractive in the old times, at least, is an historical fact; for we know that it was a very common thing among the old Norman Nobles, after the Conquest, to marry Welsh ladies, whilst they reduced the Anglo-Saxons almost to slavery. Who has not heard the beautiful old Welsh Air, "Morwynion Glan Meirionydd" ("The Pretty Maidens of Merioneth")?

Good many men tell me that the young women of the County of Merioneth are much more handsome than those of Cardiganshire; but that Cardiganshire women make the best wives.

Myddfai Parish in Carmarthenshire was in former times celebrated for its fair maidens, according to an old rhyme which records their beauty thus:—

"Mae eira gwyn ar ben y bryn,
A'r glasgoed yn y Ferdre,
Mae bedw mân ynghanol Cwm-bran,
A merched glân yn Myddfe."

Principal Sir John Rhys translates this as follows:—

"There is white snow on the mountain's brow,
And greenwood at the Verdre,

Young birch so good in Cwm-bran wood,
And lovely girls in Myddfe."

In the time of King Arthur of old, the fairest maiden in Wales was the beautiful Olwen, whom the young Prince Kilhwch married after many adventures. In the Mabinogion we are informed that "more yellow was her hair than the flowers of the broom, and her skin was whiter than the foam of the wave, and fairer were her hands and her fingers than the blossoms of the wood-anemone, amidst the spray of the meadow fountain. The eye of the trained hawk, the glance of the three-mewed falcon, was not brighter than hers. Her bosom was more snowy than the breast of the white swan; her cheek was redder than the reddest roses. Those who beheld her were filled with her love. Four white trefoils sprang up wherever she trod. She was clothed in a robe of flame-coloured silk, and about her neck was a collar of ruddy gold, on which were precious emeralds and rubies."

A good deal of courting is done at the present day while going home from church or chapel as the case may be. The Welsh people are very religious, and almost everybody attends a place of worship, and going home from church gives young people of both sexes abundant opportunities of becoming intimate with one another. Indeed, it is almost a general custom now for a young man to accompany a young lady home from church.

The Welsh people are of an affectionate disposition, and thoroughly enjoy the pleasures of love, but they keep their love more secret, perhaps, than the English; and Welsh bards at all times have been celebrated for singing in praise of female beauty. Davydd Ap Gwilym, the chief poet of Wales, sang at least one hundred love songs to his beloved Morfudd.

This celebrated bard flourished in the fourteenth century, and he belonged to a good family, for his father, Gwilym Gam, was a direct descendant from Llywarch Ap Bran, chief of one of the fifteen royal tribes of North Wales; and his mother was a descendant of the Princes of South Wales. According to the traditions of Cardiganshire people, Davydd was born at Bro-Gynin, near Gogerddan, in the Parish of Llanbadarn-Fawr, and only a few miles from the spot where the town of Aberystwyth is situated at present.

An ancient bard informs us that Taliesin of old had foretold the honour to be conferred on Bro-Gynin, in being the birthplace of a poet whose muse should be as the sweetness of wine:—

"Am Dafydd, gelfydd goelin—praff awdwr,
Prophwydodd Taliesin,
Y genid ym mro Gynin,
Brydydd a'i gywydd fel gwin."

The poet, Davydd Ap Gwilym, is represented as a fair young man who loved many, or that many were the young maidens who fell in love with him, and there is one most amusing tradition of his love adventures. It is said that on one occasion he went to visit about twenty young ladies about the same time, and that he appointed a meeting with each of them under an oak-tree—all of them at the same hour. Meanwhile, the young bard had secretly climbed up the tree and concealed himself among the branches, so that he might see the event of this meeting. Every one of the young girls was there punctually at the appointed time, and equally astonished to perceive any female there besides herself. They looked at one another in surprise, and at last one of them asked another, "What brought you here?" "to keep an appointment with Dafydd ap Gwilym" was the reply. "That's how I came also" said the other "and I"

added a third girl, and all of them had the same tale. They then discovered the trick which Dafydd had played with them, and all of them agreed together to punish him, and even to kill him, if they could get hold of him. Dafydd, who was peeping from his hiding-place amongst the branches of the tree, replied as follows in rhyme:—

"Y butein wen fain fwynnf—o honoch
I hono maddeuaf,
Tan frig pren a heulwen haf,
Teg anterth, t'rawed gyntaf!"

The words have been translated by someone something as follows:—

"If you can be so cruel,
Let the kind wanton jade,
Who oftenest met me in this shade,
On summer's morn, by love inclined,
Let her strike first, and I'm resigned."

Dafydd's words had the desired effect. The young women began to question each other's purity, which led to a regular quarrel between them, and, during the scuffle, the poet escaped safe and sound.

After this the Poet fell in love with the daughter of one Madog Lawgam, whose name was Morfudd, and in her honour he wrote many songs, and it seems that he ever remained true to this lady. They were secretly married in the woodland; but Morfudd's parents disliked the Poet so much for some reason or other, that the beautiful young lady was taken away from him and compelled to marry an old man known as Bwa Bach, or Little Hunchback. Dafydd was tempted to elope with Morfudd, but he was found, fined and put in prison; but through the kindness of the men of Glamorgan, who highly esteemed the Poet, he was

released. After this, it seems that Dafydd was love-sick as long as he lived, and at last died of love, and he left the following directions for his funeral:—

"My spotless shroud shall be of summer flowers,
My coffin from out the woodland bowers:
The flowers of wood and wild shall be my pall,
My bier, light forest branches green and tall;
And thou shalt see the white gulls of the main
In thousands gather then to bear my train!"

One of Dafydd's chief patrons was his kinsman, the famous and noble Ivor Hael, Lord of Macsaleg, from whose stock the present Viscount Tredegar is a direct descendant, and, in judging the character of the Poet we must take into consideration what was the moral condition of the country in the fourteenth century.

But to come to more modern times, tradition has it that a young man named Morgan Jones of Dolau Gwyrddon, in the Vale of Teivi, fell in love with the Squire of Dyffryn Llynod's daughter. The young man and the young woman were passionately in love with each other; but the Squire, who was a staunch Royalist, refused to give his consent to his daughter's marriage with Morgan Jones, as the young man's grandfather had fought for Cromwell. The courtship between the lovers was kept on for years in secret, and the Squire banished his daughter to France more than once. At last the young lady fell a victim to the small pox, and died. Just before her death, her lover came to see her, and caught the fever from her, and he also died. His last wish was that he should be buried in the same grave as the one he had loved so dearly, but this was denied him.

In Merionethshire there is a tradition that many generations ago a Squire of Gorsygedol, near Harlech, had a beautiful daughter who fell in love with a shepherd boy. To prevent

her seeing the young man, her father locked his daughter in a garret, but a secret correspondence was carried on between the lovers by means of a dove she had taught to carry the letters. The young lady at last died broken-hearted, and soon after her burial the dove was found dead upon her grave! And the young man with a sad heart left his native land for ever.

More happy, though not less romantic, was the lot of a young man who was shipwrecked on the coast of Pembrokeshire, and washed up more dead than alive on the seashore, where he was found by the daughter and heiress of Sir John de St. Bride's, who caused him to be carried to her father's house where he was hospitably entertained. The young man, of course, was soon head and ears in love with his fair deliverer, and the lady being in nowise backward in response to his suit, they married and founded a family of Laugharnes, and their descendants for generations resided at Orlandon, near St. Bride's.

The Rev. D. G. Williams in his interesting Welsh collection of the Folk-lore of Carmarthenshire says that in that part of the county which borders on Pembrokeshire, there is a strange custom of presenting a rejected lover with a yellow flower, or should it happen at the time of year when there are no flowers, to give a yellow ribbon.

This reminds us of a curious old custom which was formerly very common everywhere in Wales; that of presenting a rejected lover, whether male or female, with a stick or sprig of hazel-tree. According to the "Cambro Briton," for November, 1821, this was often done at a "Cyfarfod Cymhorth," or a meeting held for the benefit of a poor person, at whose house or at that of a neighbour, a number of young women, mostly servants, used to meet by permission of their respective employers, in order to give a day's work, either in spinning or knitting, according as

there was need of their assistance, and, towards the close of the day, when their task was ended, dancing and singing were usually introduced, and the evening spent with glee and conviviality. At the early part of the day, it was customary for the young women to receive some presents from their several suitors, as a token of their truth or inconstancy. On this occasion the lover could not present anything more odious to the fair one than the sprig of a "collen," or hazel-tree, which was always a well-known sign of a change of mind on the part of the young man, and, consequently, that the maiden could no longer expect to be the real object of his choice. The presents, in general, consisted of cakes, silver spoons, etc., and agreeably to the respectability of the sweetheart, and were highly decorated with all manner of flowers; and if it was the lover's intention to break off his engagement with the young lady, he had only to add a sprig of hazel. These pledges were handed to the respective lasses by the different "Caisars," or Merry Andrews,—persons dressed in disguise for the occasion, who, in their turn, used to take each his young woman by the hand to an adjoining room where they would deliver the "pwysi," or nose-gay, as it was called, and afterwards immediately retire upon having mentioned the giver's name.

When a young woman also had made up her mind to have nothing further to do with a young man who had been her lover, or proposed to become one, she used to give him a "ffon wen," (white wand) from an hazel tree, decorated with white ribbons. This was a sign to the young man that she did not love him.

The Welsh name for hazel-tree is "collen." Now the word "coll" has a double meaning; it means to lose anything, as well as a name for the hazel, and it is the opinion of some that this double meaning of the word gave the origin to the custom of making use of the hazel-tree as a sign of the loss

of a lover.

It is also worthy of notice, that, whilst the hazel indicated the rejection of a lover, the birch tree, on the other hand, was used as an emblem of love, or in other words that a lover was accepted. Among the Welsh young persons of both sexes were able to make known their love to one another without speaking, only by presenting a Birchen-Wreath. This curious old custom of presenting a rejected lover with a white wand was known at Pontrhydfendigaid, in Cardiganshire until only a few years ago. My informant was Dr. Morgan, Pontrhydygroes. Mrs. Hughes, Cwrtycadno, Llanilar, also informed me that she had heard something about such custom at Tregaron, when she was young.

It was also the custom to adorn a mixture of birch and quicken-tree with flowers and a ribbon, and leave it where it was most likely to be found by the person intended on May-morning. Dafydd ap Gwilym, the poet, I have just referred to, mentions of this in singing to Morfudd.

Young people of both sexes, are very anxious to know whether they are to marry the lady or the gentleman they now love, or who is to be their future partner in life, or are they to die single. Young people have good many most curious and different ways to decide all such interesting and important questions, by resorting to uncanny and romantic charms and incantations. To seek hidden information by incantation was very often resorted to in times past, especially about a hundred years ago, and even at the present day, but not as much as in former times. It was believed, and is perhaps, still believed by some, that the spirit of a person could be invoked, and that it would appear, and that young women by performing certain ceremonies could obtain a sight of the young men they were to marry.

Such charms were performed sometimes on certain Saints' Days, or on one of the "Three Spirits' Nights," or on a certain day of the moon; but more frequently on "Nos Calan Gauaf" or All Hallows Eve—the 31st. of October. All Hallows was one of the "Three Spirits' Nights," and an important night in the calendar of young maidens anxious to see the spirits of their future husbands.

In Cardiganshire, divination by means of a ball of yarn, known as "coel yr edau Wlan" is practised, and indeed in many other parts of Wales. A young unmarried woman in going to her bedroom would take with her a ball of yarn, and double the threads, and then she would tie small pieces of wool along these threads, so as to form a small thread ladder, and, opening her bedroom window threw this miniature ladder out to the ground, and then winding back the yarn, and at the same time saying the following words: —

"Y fi sy'n dirwyn
Pwy sy'n dal"

which means:

"I am winding,
Who is holding?"

Then the spirit of the future husband of the girl who was performing the ceremony was supposed to mount this little ladder and appear to her. But if the spirit did not appear, the charm was repeated over again, and even a third time. If no spirit was to be seen after performing such ceremony three times, the young lady had no hope of a husband. In some places, young girls do not take the trouble to make this ladder, but, simply throw out through the open window, a ball of yarn, and saying the words:

"I am winding, who is holding."

Another custom among the young ladies of Cardiganshire in order to see their future husbands is to walk nine times round the house with a glove in the hand, saying the while —"Dyma'r faneg, lle mae'r llaw."—"Here's the glove, where is the hand?" Others again would walk round the dungheap, holding a shoe in the left hand, and saying "Here's the shoe, where is the foot?" Happy is the young woman who sees the young man she loves, for he is to be her future husband.

In Carmarthenshire young girls desirous of seeing their future partners in life, walk round a leek bed, carrying seed in their hand, and saying as follows:—

"Hadau, hadau, hau,
Sawl sy'n cam, doed i grynhoi."

"Seed, seed, sowing.
He that loves, let him come to gather."

It was also the custom in the same county for young men and young women to go round a grove and take a handful of moss, in which was found the colour of the future wife or husband's hair.

In Pembrokeshire, it is the custom for young girls to put under their pillow at night, a shoulder of mutton, with nine holes bored in the blade bone, and at the same time they put their shoes at the foot of the bed in the shape of the letter T, and an incantation is said over them. By doing this, they are supposed to see their future husbands in their dreams, and that in their everyday clothes. This curious custom of placing shoes at the foot of the bed was very common till very recently, and, probably, it is still so, not

only in Pembrokeshire, but with Welsh girls all over South Wales. A woman who is well and alive told me once, that many years ago she had tried the experiment herself, and she positively asserted that she actually saw the spirit of the man who became her husband, coming near her bed, and that happened when she was only a young girl, and some time before she ever met the man. When she was telling me this, she had been married for many years and had grown-up children, and I may add that her husband was a particular friend of mine.

Another well-known form of divination, often practised by the young girls in Carmarthenshire, Cardiganshire and Pembrokeshire, is for a young woman to wash her shirt or whatever article of clothing she happens to wear next to the skin, and having turned it inside out, place it before the fire to dry, and then watch to see who should come at midnight to turn it. If the young woman is to marry, the spirit of her future husband is supposed to appear and perform the work for the young woman, but if she is to die single, a coffin is seen moving along the room, and many a young girl has been frightened almost to death in performing these uncanny ceremonies. The Rev. D. G. Williams in his excellent Welsh essay on the Folk-lore of Carmarthenshire, mentions a farmer's daughter who practised this form of divination whilst she was away from home at school. A young farmer had fallen in love with her, but she hated him with all her heart. Whilst she was performing this ceremony at midnight, another girl, from mere mischief dressed herself in man's clothing, exactly the same kind as the clothes generally worn by the young farmer I have mentioned, and, trying to appear as like him as possible, entered the room at the very moment when the charm of invoking the spirit of a future husband was being performed by the farmer's daughter, who went half mad when she saw, as she thought, the very one whom she

hated so much, making his appearance.

The other girls had to arouse their schoolmistress from her bed immediately so that she might try and convince the young girl that she had seen nothing, but another girl in man's clothes. But nothing availed. The doctor was sent for, but he also failed to do anything to bring her to herself, and very soon the poor young woman died through fright and disappointment.

Another common practice in West Wales is for a young woman to peel an apple at twelve o'clock, before a looking glass in order to see the spirit of her future husband. This also is done on All Hallow's Eve. Sowing Hemp Seed is also a well-known ceremony among the young ladies of Wales, as well as England.

THE CANDLE AND PIN DIVINATION.

It was also the custom, at least many years ago, if not now, for a young woman, or two of them together to stick pins at midnight in a candle, all in a row, right from its top to the bottom, and then to watch the candle burning and the pins dropping one by one, till the last pin had dropped, and then the future husband of the girl to whom the pin belonged, was supposed to appear; but if she was destined to die single, she would see a coffin.

Another form of Divination, was to put the plates on the dining-room table upside down, and at midnight the spirit of the future husband was supposed to come and arrange them in their proper order.

Another custom resorted to in Cardiganshire and other parts in order to see a future husband, or rather to dream of him, was to eat a hen's first egg; but no one was to know the secret, and absolute silence was to be observed, and the egg was to be eaten in bed.

GOING ROUND THE CHURCH.

This kind of divination was perhaps of a more uncanny character than anything I have hitherto mentioned, and a custom which both young men and young women very commonly practised, even within the last 50 years as I have been told by old people. This weird practice was to go round the parish church seven times, some say nine times, whilst others again say nine times-and-half, and holding a knife in the hand saying the while:—

"Dyma'r twca, lle mae'r wain?"
"Here's the knife, where is the sheath?"

It was also the practice to look in through the key-hole of the church door each time whilst going round, and many people assert to this very day that whoever performed this mode of divination in proper order, that the spirit of his or her future wife or husband would appear with a sheath to fit the knife; but, if the young man or woman was to die single, a coffin would meet him or her. Mr. John Jones, of Pontrhydfendigaid, an intelligent old man of 95, with a wonderful memory, told me that, when a boy, he had heard his mother giving a most sad account of what happened to a young woman who did this at Ystrad Meurig in Cardiganshire about the year 1800. She was the daughter of a public house in the village, and the name of her

mother was Catherine Dafydd Evan. Mr. Jones's mother knew the family well; some of them emigrated to America.

This young woman was in love with one of the students of St. John's College, in the neighbourhood, and being anxious to know whether he was to be her husband or not, she resorted to this uncanny practice of walking nine times round Ystrad Meurig Church. Around and round she went, holding the knife in her hand and repeating the words of incantation, "Here's the knife, where is the sheath?" And whilst she was performing her weird adventure, to her great alarm, she perceived a clergyman coming out to meet her through the church door with his white surplice on, as if coming to meet a funeral procession. The frightened young woman fell down in a swoon, almost half dead, as she imagined that the one she met with a surplice on was an apparition or the spirit of a clergyman officiating at the phantom funeral of herself, which prognosticated that instead of going to be married, she was doomed to die.

It turned out that the apparition she had seen was only one of the students, who, in order to frighten her, had secretly entered the Church for the purpose. But the poor girl recovered not, and she died very soon afterwards.

I heard the following story from my mother when I was a boy. A girl had determined to obtain a sight of her future husband by going round the parish church nine times at All Hallows' Eve in the same manner as the young woman I mentioned in the above story, but with more fortunate results. This also happened somewhere in Cardiganshire or Carmarthenshire. Just as the young woman was walking round the ninth time, she saw, to her great surprise, her own master (for she was a servant maid) coming to meet her. She immediately ran home and asked her mistress why she had sent her master after her to frighten her. But the master had not gone out from the house. On hearing the

girl's account, the mistress was greatly alarmed and was taken ill, and she apprehended that she herself was doomed to die, and that her husband was going to marry this servant girl, ultimately. Then the poor woman on her death bed begged the young woman to be kind to her children, "For you are to become the mistress here," said she, "when I am gone."

It was also a custom in Wales once for nine young girls to meet together to make a pancake, with nine different things, and share it between them, that is, each of the girls taking a piece before going to bed in order to dream of their future husbands.

Another practice among young girls was to sleep on a bit of wedding cake.

WATER IN DISH DIVINATION.

I remember the following test or divination resorted to in Cardiganshire only about twelve years ago. It was tried by young maidens who wished to know whether their husbands were to be bachelors, and by young men who wished to know whether their wives were to be spinsters. Those who performed this ceremony were blindfolded. Then three basins or dishes were placed on the table, one filled with clean water, the other with dirty water, and the third empty. Then the young man or young woman as the case might be advanced to the table blindfolded and put their hand in the dish; and the one who placed his hands in the clean water was to marry a maiden; if into the foul water, a widow; but if into the empty basin, he was doomed to remain single all his life. Another way for a

young maiden to dream of her future husband was to put salt in a thimble, and place the same in her stockings, laying them under her pillow, and repeat an incantation when going to bed. Meyrick in his History of Cardiganshire states that "Ivy leaves are gathered, those pointed are called males, and those rounded are females, and should they jump towards each other, then the parties who had placed them in the fire will be believed by and married by their sweethearts; but should they jump away from one another, then, hatred will be the portion of the anxious person."

Testing a lover's love by cracking of nuts is also well known in West and Mid-Wales.

It was also a custom in the old times for a young girl on St. John's Eve to go out at midnight to search for St. John's Wort in the light of a glow worm which they carried in the palm of their hand. After finding some, a bunch of it was taken home and hung in her bedroom. Next morning, if the leaves still appeared fresh, it was a good omen; the girl was to marry within that same year; but, on the other hand, if the leaves were dead, it was a sign that the girl should die, or at least she was not to marry that year.

THE BIBLE AND KEY DIVINATION.

The Bible and Key Divination, or how to find out the two first letters of a future Wife's or Husband's name is very commonly practised, even now, by both young men and young women. A small Bible is taken, and having opened it, the key of the front door is placed on the 16th verse of the 1st Chapter of Ruth:—"And Ruth said, intreat me not

to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Some take Solomon's Songs, Chapter viii., verses 6 and 7 instead of the above verse from the Book of Ruth. Then the Bible is closed, and tied round with the garter taken off the left leg of him or her who wishes to know his or her future wife or husband's initials. A person cannot perform this ceremony himself; he must get a friend with him to assist him. The young man must put the middle finger of his right hand on the key underneath the loop, and take care to keep the Bible steady. Then the man, who does not consult the future, repeats the above verse or verses, and when he comes to the appointed letter, that is the first letter of the future wife's name, the Bible will turn round under the finger. I was told at Ystrad Meurig, that a few years ago, a young woman, a farmer's daughter, tried this Bible and key divination; and whilst the ceremony was going on, and her sister assisting her to hold the key under the Bible and repeating the words, instead of the book turning round as she expected, she saw a coffin moving along the room, which was a sign that she was doomed to die single; and so it came to pass! The farmhouse where this young woman lived is situated in the neighbourhood of Strata Florida, Cardiganshire; but I do not wish to name the house. I have myself once or twice witnessed this divination practised, but I never heard of a coffin appearing, except in the case of the young woman just mentioned.

DIVINATION BY THE TEA-CUP.

Tea-cup divination is also very much practised by young girls in Wales in order to find out some future events concerning love affairs, future husbands, etc. There was a woman, who only died a few years ago, in the parish of Llandyssul, near a small village called Pontshan in Cardiganshire, who was considered an expert in the art of fortune telling by a tea cup, at least young women and young men thought so, and many of them resorted to her, especially those who were in love or intending to marry. There was another one near Llandovery in Carmarthenshire, and there are a few even at present to whom the maidens go for consultation.

But Welsh women, who are so fond of tea, can find out many things themselves by means of the tea cup without resorting to those who are considered experts in the art. When several of them meet together to tea they help one another in divining their cups, and tea drinking or sipping is the order of the day among the females of Wales. After having emptied the cup, it is turned round three times in the left hand, so that the tea-leaves may cover the surface of the whole cup. Then the cup is placed in the saucer, bottom upwards, to drain, for a few minutes before inspection. If the leaves are scattered evenly round the sides of the cup, leaving the bottom perfectly clear, it is considered a very good sign; but on the other hand when the bottom of the cup appears very black with leaves, it is a very bad sign: some trouble or some misfortune is near. When the leaves form a ring on the side of the cup, it means that the girl who consults is to marry very soon; but if the ring is at the bottom of the cup, disappointment in love awaits her, or she is doomed to die single. When the tea leaves form a cross or a coffin, that also is considered a bad sign; but as a rule, a horse, a dog, or a bird portends good. Two leaves seen in close proximity on the side of the cup foretell a letter bringing good news. When there is a

speck floating on the surface of a cup of tea before drinking, some people say it means a letter, a parcel, or a visitor, but a young girl takes it to represent her lover, and she proves his faithfulness by placing the speck on the back of her left hand, and striking it with the back of her right hand. Should the speck or the small tea leaves stick to the back of the left hand and cling or stick fast to the right hand when striking it, it means that the young man is faithful; but on the other hand, should it happen that the tea still remain on the left hand where it was first placed, especially after striking it three times, the young man is not to be depended upon. Some women can even tell by means of the tea-cup what trade their admirer follows, the colour of their future husband's hair, and many other such things.

A lily is considered a most lucky emblem, if it be at the top, or in the middle of the cup, for this is considered a sign that the young man, or the young woman who consults, will have a good and kind wife, or husband, who will make him or her happy in the marriage estate, but on the other hand, a lily at the bottom of the cup, portends trouble, especially if clouded, or in the thick.

A heart, especially in the clear, is also a very good sign, for it signifies joy and future happiness. Two hearts seen together in the cup, the young man, or the young woman's wedding is about to take place. Tea-cup divination is well-known all over the Kingdom; and in the Colonies, especially Australia, it is by far more popular than in England.

DIVINATION BY CARDS.

Divination by cards is not so much known in Wales as in England, and this is more popular in towns than country places.

CHAPTER II.

WEDDING CUSTOMS.

In times past, Wales had peculiar and most interesting, if not excellent, Wedding Customs, and in no part of the country were these old quaint customs more popular, and survived to a more recent date than in Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire. Therefore this book would be incomplete without giving a full description of them.

When a young man and a young woman had agreed together to marry "for better for worse," they were first of all to inform their parents of the important fact. Then in due time, the young man's father, taking a friend with him, proceeded to interview the young woman's father, so as to have a proper understanding on the subject and to arrange different matters, especially concerning dowry, etc. I am writing more especially of a rural wedding among the farmers.

The young woman's father would agree to give with his daughter, as her portion, household goods of so much value, a certain sum of money, and so many cows, pigs, etc.; and the young man's father, on his part, would agree to grant his son so much money, horses, sheep, hay, wheat and other things, so that the young couple might have a

good start in the married life, “i ddechreu eu byd,”—to begin their world, as we say in Welsh. Sometimes the young man’s father on such occasions met with opposition on the part of the young woman’s father or mother or other relations, at least we read that it happened so in the case of the heir of Ffynonbedr, near Lampeter, long ago; for it seems that when he tried to secure the daughter of Dyffryn Llynod, in the parish of Llandyssul, as his bride, the reply was in Welsh rhyme as follow:—

“Deunaw gwr a deunaw cledde,
Deunaw gwas yn gwisgo lifre,
Deunaw march o liw’r scythanod,
Cyn codi’r ferch o Ddyffryn Llynod.”

Anglicised, this meant that she could not be secured without coming for her with eighteen gentlemen bearing eighteen swords; eighteen servants wearing livery; and eighteen horses of the colour of the woodpigeon.

But such opposition was not often to be met with.

After the parents had arranged these matters satisfactorily, the next preliminary and important step was to send forth a gwahoddwr, or Bidder, from house to house, to bid or invite the guests to the Bidding and the Wedding.

In connection with these old interesting customs, there were the Bidding or invitation to the wedding; the Bidder, whose duty it was formally to invite the guests; the Ystafell, or the bride’s goods and presents; the purse and girdle; the Pwython; and the Neithior.

The Bidding was a general invitation to all the friends of the bride and bridegroom-elect to meet them at the houses of their respective parents or any other house appointed for the occasion. All were welcomed to attend, even a stranger

who should happen to be staying in the neighbourhood at the time, but it was an understood thing that every person who did attend, whether male or female, contributed something, however small, in order to make a purse for the young couple, who, on the other hand, naturally expected donations from those whose weddings they had attended themselves. So it was to the advantage of the bride and bridegroom-elect to make their wedding as public as possible, as the greater the number of guests, the greater the donation, so it was the custom to send the "Gwahoddwr," or Bidder all round the surrounding districts to invite the neighbours and friends about three weeks, more or less, before the wedding took place. The banns were, of course, published as in England.

The Gwahoddwr or Bidder's circuit was one of the most pleasant and merry features of the rural weddings in South Wales in times past, and he was greeted everywhere, especially when it happened that he was, as such often was the case, a merry wag with fluent speech and a poet; but it was necessary that he should be a real friend to the young couple on whose behalf he invited the guests. This important wedding official as he went from house to house, carried a staff of office in his hand, a long pole, or a white wand, as a rule a willow-wand, from which the bark had been peeled off. This white stick was decorated with coloured ribbons plying at the end of it; his hat also, and often his breast was gaily decorated in a similar manner.

The Gwahoddwr, thus attired, knocked at the door of each guest and entered the house amidst the smiles of the old people and the giggling of the young. Then he would take his stand in the centre of the house, and strike the floor with his staff to enforce silence, and announce the wedding, and the names of bride and bridegroom-elect, their place of abode, and enumerate the great preparations made to entertain the guests, etc. As a rule, the

Gwahoddwr made this announcement in a set speech of prose, and often repeated a rhyme also on the occasion.

The following was the speech of a Gwahoddwr in Llanbadarn Fawr, Cardiganshire in 1762, quoted in Meyrick's "History of Cardiganshire," from the miscellaneous papers of Mr. Lewis Morris:—

> "*Speech of the Bidder in Llanbadarn Fawr, 1762.*"
>
> "The intention of the bidder is this; with kindness and amity, with decency and liberality for Einion Owain and Llio Ellis, he invites you to come with your good will on the plate; bring current money; a shilling, or two, or three, or four, or five; with cheese and butter. We invite the husband and wife, and children, and man-servants, and maid-servants, from the greatest to the least. Come there early, you shall have victuals freely, and drink cheap, stools to sit on, and fish if we can catch them; but if not, hold us excusable; and they will attend on you when you call upon them in return. They set out from such a place to such a place."

The following which appeared in a Welsh Quarterly "Y Beirniad," for July, 1878, gives a characteristic account of a typical Bidder of a much later date in Carmarthenshire: —

> "Am Tomos fel gwahoddwr, yr wyf yn ei weled yn awr o flaen llygaid fy meddwl.
>
> "Dyn byr, llydan, baglog, yn gwisgo coat o frethyn lliw yr awyr, breeches penglin corduog, gwasgod wlanen fraith, a rhuban glas yn hongian ar ei fynwes, yn dangos natur ei swydd a'i genadwri dros y wlad a dramwyid ganddo; hosanau gwlan du'r ddafad am ei goesau, a dwy esgid o ledr cryf am ei draed; het o frethyn garw am ei ben haner moel; dwy ffrwd felingoch o hylif y dybaco yn ymlithro

dros ei en; pastwn cryf a garw yn ei ddeheulaw. Cerddai yn mlaen i'r ty lle y delai heb gyfarch neb, tarawai ei ffon deirgwaith yn erbyn y llawr, tynai ei het a gosodai hi dan y gesail chwith, sych besychai er clirio ei geg, a llefarai yn debyg i hyn:—'At wr a gwraig y ty, y plant a'r gwasanaethyddion, a phawb o honoch sydd yma yn cysgu ac yn codi. 'Rwy'n genad ac yn wahoddwr dros John Jones o'r Bryntirion, a Mary Davies o Bantyblodau; 'rwy'n eich gwahodd yn hen ac yn ifanc i daith a phriodas y par ifanc yna a enwais, y rhai sydd yn priodi dydd Mercher, tair wythnos i'r nesaf, yn Eglwys Llansadwrn. Bydd y gwr ifanc a'i gwmp'ni yn codi ma's y bore hwnw o dy ei dad a'i fam yn Bryntirion, plwyf Llansadwrn; a'r ferch ifanc yn codi ma's y bore hwnw o dy ei thad a'i mam, sef Pantyblodau, yn mhlwyf Llanwrda. Bydd gwyr y "shigouts" yn myned y bore hwnw dros y mab ifanc i 'mofyn y ferch ifanc; a bydd y mab ifanc a'i gwmp'ni yn cwrdd a'r ferch ifanc a'i chwmp-ni wrth ben Heolgelli, a byddant yno ar draed ac ar geffylau yn myned gyda'r par ifanc i gael eu priodi yn Eglwys Llansadwrn. Wedi hyny bydd y gwr a'r wraig ifanc, a chwmp'ni y bobol ifanc, yn myned gyda'u gilydd i dy y gwr a'r wraig ifanc, sef Llety'r Gofid, plwyf Talyllechau, lle y bydd y gwr ifanc, tad a mam y gwr ifanc, a Daniel Jones, brawd y gwr ifanc, a Jane Jones, chwaer y gwr ifanc, yn dymuno am i bob rhoddion a phwython dyledus iddynt hwy gael eu talu y prydnawn hwnw i law y gwr ifanc; a bydd y gwr ifanc a'i dad a'i fam, a'i frawd a'i chwaer, Dafydd Shon William Evan, ewyrth y gwr ifanc, yn ddiolchgar am bob rhoddion ychwanegol a welwch yn dda eu rhoddi yn ffafr y gwr ifanc ar y diwrnod hwnw.

"'Hefyd, bydd y wraig ifanc, yn nghyd a'i thad a'i mam, Dafydd a Gwenllian Davies, yn nghyd a'i brodyr a'i chwiorydd, y wraig ifanc a Dafydd William Shinkin Dafydd o'r Cwm, tadcu y wraig ifanc, yn galw mewn bob rhoddion a phwython, dyledus iddynt hwy, i gael eu talu y prydnawn hwnw i law y gwr a'r wraig ifanc yn Llety'r Gofid. Y mae'r gwr a'r wraig ifanc a'r hwyaf fo byw, yn addo talu 'nol i chwithau bob rhoddion a weloch yn dda eu

rhoddi i'r tylwyth ifanc, pryd bynag y bo galw, tae hyny bore dranoeth, neu ryw amser arall.'"

Rendered into English the above reads as follows:—

"I can see Thomas, in the capacity of a Gwahoddwr,—Bidder,—before me now in my mind's eye. A short man, broad, clumsy, wearing a coat of sky-blue cloth, corduroy breeches to the knee, a motley woollen waistcoat, and a blue ribbon hanging on his breast, indicating the nature of his office and message through the country which he tramped; black-woollen stockings on his legs, and two strong leathern boots on his feet; a hat made of rough cloth on his half-bare head; two yellow-red streams of tobacco moisture running down his chin; a rough, strong staff in his right hand. He walked into the house he came to without saluting any one, and struck the floor three times with his staff, took off his hat, and put it under his left arm, and having coughed in order to clear his throat, he delivered himself somewhat as follows:—

"To the husband and wife of the house, the children and the servants, and all of you who are here sleeping and getting up. I am a messenger and a bidder for John Jones of Bryntirion and Mary Davies of Pantyblodau; I beg to invite you, both old and young, to the bidding and wedding of the young couple I have just mentioned, who intend to marry on Wednesday, three weeks to the next, at Llansadwrn Church. The young man and his company on that morning will be leaving his father and mother's house at Bryntirion, in the parish of Llansadwrn; and the young woman will be leaving that same morning from the house of her father and mother, that is Pantyblodau, in the parish of Llanwrda. On that morning the shigouts (seekouts) men will go on behalf of the young man to seek for the young woman; and the young man and his company will meet the young woman and her company at the top of Heolgelli, and there they will be, on foot and on horses, going with the young couple who are to be married at Llansadwrn

> Church. After that, the young husband and wife, and the young people's company, will be going together to the house of the young husband and wife, to wit, Llety'r Gofid, in the parish of Tally, where the young man, the young man's father and mother, and Daniel Jones, brother of the young man, and Jane Jones, the young man's sister, desire that all donations and pwython due to them be paid that afternoon to the hands of the young man; and the young man, his father and mother, his brother and sister, and Dafydd Shon William Evan, uncle of the young man, will be very thankful for every additional gifts you will be pleased to give in favour of the young man that day.
>
> "Also, the young wife, together with her father and mother, Dafydd and Gwenllian Davies, together with her brothers and sisters, the young wife and Dafydd William Shinkin Dafydd of Cwm, the young wife's grandfather, desire that all donations and pwython, due to them, be paid that afternoon to the hand of the young husband and wife at Llety'r Gofid.
>
> "The young husband and wife and those who'll live the longest, do promise to repay you every gift you will be pleased to give to the young couple, whenever called upon to do so, should that happen next morning or at any other time?"

The Bidder then repeated in Welsh a most comic and humorous song for the occasion.

Another well-known "Gwahoddwr," or Bidder in Cardiganshire was an old man named Stephen, who flourished at the end of the eighteenth, and the beginning of the nineteenth century.



THE BIDDER, OR GWAH

(Reproduced from an old picture in the "Hynafio

He was commonly known as Stephen Wahoddwr, or Stephen the Bidder, and concerning whom the celebrated poet "Daniel Ddu o Geredigion," wrote to the "Cambrian Briton," in March, 1822, as follows:—

> "There is an old man in this neighbourhood of the name of Stephen, employed in the vocation of 'Gwahoddwr,' who displayed, in my hearing, so much comic talent and humour in the recitation of his Bidding-song (which he complained, was, by repetition, become uninteresting to his auditors) as to induce me to furnish him with some kind of fresh matter. My humble composition, adapted, in language and conceptions, as far as I could make it, to common taste and capacities, this man now delivers in his

rounds; and I send it you as a specimen of a Bidder's Song, hoping that your readers will be in some measure amused by its perusal:—

"Dydd da i chwi, bobl, o'r hynaf i'r baban,
Mae Stephan Wahoddwr a chwi am ymddiddan,
Gyfeillion da mwynaidd, os felly'ch dymuniad,
Cewch genyf fy neges yn gynhes ar gariad.

Y mae rhyw greadur trwy'r byd yn grwydredig,
Nis gwn i yn hollol ai glanwedd ai hyllig,
Ag sydd i laweroedd yn gwneuthur doluriad,
Ar bawb yn goncwerwr, a'i enw yw Cariad.

Yr ifanc yn awchus wna daro fynycha',
A'i saeth trwy ei asen mewn modd truenusa';
Ond weithiau a'i fwa fe ddwg yn o fuan
O dan ei lywodraeth y rhai canol oedran.

Weithiau mae'n taro yn lled annaturiol,
Nes byddant yn babwyr yn wir yr hen bobl,
Mi glywais am rywun a gas yn aflawen
Y bendro'n ei wegil yn ol pedwar ugain.

A thyma'r creadur trwy'r byd wrth garwyro
A d'rawodd y ddeu-ddyn wyf trostynt yn teithio,
I hel eich cynorthwy a'ch nodded i'w nerthu,
Yn ol a gewch chwithau pan ddel hwn i'ch brathu.

Ymdrechwch i ddala i fyny yn ddilys,
Bawb oll yr hen gystwm, nid yw yn rhy gostus—
Sef rhoddi rhyw sylltach, rai 'nol eu cysylltu,
Fe fydd y gwyr ifainc yn foddgar o'u meddu.

Can' brynu rhyw bethau yn nghyd gan obeithio
Byw yn o dawel a'u plant yn blodeuo;
Dwyn bywyd mor ddewis wrth drin yr hen ddaear,
A Brenhin y Saeson, neu gynt yr hen Sesar.

Can's nid wyf i'n meddwl mae golud a moddion
Sy'n gwneuthur dedwyddwch, dyweden hwy wedo'n;

Mae gofid i'r dynion, sy'n byw mewn sidanau,
Gwir mae'r byd hawsaf yw byw heb ddim eisiau.

'Roedd Brenhin mawr Lloegr a'i wraig yn alluog,
A chig yn eu crochan, ond eto'n byw'n 'ysgrechog;
Pe cawsai y dwliaid y gaib yn eu dwylo,
Yr wyf yn ystyried y buasai llai stwrio.

Cynal rhyw gweryl yr aent am y goron,
Ac ymladd a'u gilydd a hyny o'r galon;
'Rwy'n barod i dyngu er cymaint eu hanghen
Nad o'ent hwy mor ddedwydd a Stephen a Madlen.

Yr wyf yn attolwg i bob un o'r teulu,
I gofio fy neges wyf wedi fynegu;
Rhag i'r gwr ifanc a'i wraig y pryd hyny,
Os na chan' ddim digon ddweyd mai fi fu'n diogi.

Chwi gewch yno roeso, 'rwy'n gwybod o'r hawsaf,
A bara chaws ddigon, onide mi a ddigiaf,
Caiff pawb eu hewyllys, dybacco, a phibelli,
A diod hoff ryfedd, 'rwyf wedi ei phrofi.

Gwel'd digrif gwmpeini wy'n garu'n rhagorol,
Nid gwiw ini gofio bob amser ei gofol;
Mae amser i gwyno mae amser i ganu,
Gwir yw mae hen hanes a ddywed in' hyny.

Cwpanau da fawrion a dynion difyrus,
I mi sy'n rhyw olwg o'r hen amser hwylus;
Ac nid wyf fi'n digio os gwaeddi wna rhywun,
Yn nghornel y 'stafell, "A yfwch chwi, Styfyn?"

Dydd da i chwi weithian, mae'n rhaid i mi deithio
Dros fryniau, a broydd, a gwaunydd, dan gwyno;
Gan stormydd tra awchus, a chan y glaw uchel,
Caf lawer cernod, a chwithau'n y gornel."

The above has been translated into English by one Mair Arfon as follows, and appeared in "Cymru Fu," Cardiff,

August 9th, 1888:—

"Here's Stephen the Bidder! Good day to you all,
To baby and daddy, old, young, great and small;
Good friends if you like, in a warm poet's lay
My message to you I'll deliver to-day.

Some creature there is who roams the world through
Working mischief to many and joy to a few,
But conquering all, whether hell or above
Be his home, I am not certain; his name though is love.

The young he most frequently marks as his game,
Strikes them straight through the heart with an unerring aim;
Though the middle age, too, if he gets in his way,
With his bow he will cover and bend to his sway.

And sometimes the rogue with an aim somewhat absurd,
Makes fools of old people. Indeed, I have heard
Of one hapless wight, who, though over four score,
He hit in the head, making one victim more.

And this is the creature, who, when on his way
Through the world, struck the couple in whose cause to-day,
I ask for your help and your patronage, too;
And they'll give you back when he comes to bite you.

And now let each one of us struggle to keep
The old custom up, so time-honoured and cheap;
Of jointly, or singly, some small trifle giving,
To start the young pair on their way to a living.

They'll buy a few things, with a confidence clear,
Of living in peace as their children they rear;
Stealing and content, out of Mother Earth's hand,

Blest as Cæsar of old, or the King of our land.

I do not consider that riches or gold
Ensure contentment; a wise man of old
Tells us men in soft raiment of grief have their share,
And a life without wants is the lightest to bear.

Once a great English King[1] and his talented wife,
Though they had meat in their pan, led a bickering life;
Were the dullards compelled to work, him and her,
With a hoe in their hands it would lessen their stir.

The quarrel arose from some fight for the Crown
And at it they went like some cats of renown;
And although we are poor, I am ready to swear
That Stephen and Madlen are freer from care.

Now let me impress on this whole family,
To think on the message delivered by me;
Lest the youth and his wife, through not getting enough,
Should say that my idleness caused lack of stuff.

A welcome you'll get there I guarantee you,
With bread and cheese plenty, and prime beer, too;
I know, for I have tried it, and everybody there
Can have 'bacco and pipes enough and to spare.

It delights me a jovial assembly to see,
For it is wiser sometimes to forget misery;
There are times for complaining and song, too we're told,
In the proverb of old, which is true as it's old.

A bumping big cup and a lot of bright men,
Bring before me the jolly old times o'er again,
And I wouldn't be angry if some one now even
Would shout from some corner "Will you have a glass
Stephen?"

Good day to you now, for away I must hie,
Over mountains and hillocks with often a sigh,
Exposed as I am to keen storms, rain, and sleet,
While you cosily sit in your warm corner seat."

Another well-known Gwahoddwr about 50 years ago was Thomas Parry, who lived at the small village of Pontshan in the parish of Llandyssul. A short time ago, when I was staying in that neighbourhood in quest for materials for my present work, I came across a few old people who well-remembered him, especially Mr. Thomas Evans, Gwaralltyryn, and the Rev. T. Thomas, J.P., Greenpark, both of whom, as well as one or two others, told me a good deal about him.

Like a good many of the Gwahoddwyr or Bidders, he seemed to have been a most eccentric character, of a ready wit and full of humour, especially when more or less under the influence of a glass of ale. Mr. Rees Jones, Pwllffein, a poet of considerable repute in the Vale of Cletwr, composed for T. Parry, a "Can y Gwahoddwr," or the Bidder's Song, which song in a very short time, became most popular in that part of Cardiganshire, and the adjoining districts of Carmarthenshire. This Parry the Bidder, whenever he was sent by those intending to marry, went from house to house, through the surrounding districts, proclaiming the particulars, and inviting all to the Bidding and the Weddings, and he was greeted with smiles wherever he went, especially by the young men and young women, who always looked forward to a wedding with great delight, as it was an occasion for so much merriment and enjoyment, and where lovers and sweethearts met. Food was set before the Gwahoddwr almost in every house, bread and cheese and beer, so that it is not to be wondered at that he felt a bit merry before night. He tramped through his circuit through storms and rain, but

like most Bidders, he was but poorly paid, so he was often engaged as a mole trapper as well.

On one occasion, he had set down a trap in a neighbouring field in the evening expecting to find a mole entrapped in it next morning. Next morning came, and off went the old man to see the trap, but when he arrived on the spot, to his great surprise, instead of a mole in the trap, there was a fish in it! The famous entrapper of moles could not imagine how a fish could get into a trap on dry land, but he found out afterwards that some mischievous boys had been there early in the morning before him, who, to have a bit of fun at the expense of the old man, had taken out the mole from the trap and put a fish in it instead.

Thus we see that the modern Gwahoddwr was generally a poor man; but in the old times, on the other hand, he was a person of importance, skilled in pedigrees and family traditions, and himself of good family; for, undoubtedly, these old wedding customs which have survived in some localities in Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire and other parts of Wales even down almost to the present time, are of a very ancient origin, coming down even from the time of the Druids, and this proves the wisdom and knowledge of the original legislators of the Celtic tribes; for they were instituted in order to encourage wedlock so as to increase the population of the country, and to repair the losses occasioned by plagues and wars. A chieftain would frequently assume the character of a Bidder on behalf of his vassal, and hostile clans respected his person as he went about from castle to castle, or from mansion to mansion.

Old people who well remember the time when the quaint old wedding customs were very general throughout West Wales, informed me that it was in some localities the custom sometimes to have two or more Gwahoddwyr to

invite to the wedding; this was especially the case when the bride and bridegroom-elect did not reside in the same part of the country; for it happened sometimes that the young man engaged to be married lived in a certain part of Carmarthenshire, whilst his bride perhaps lived some way off in Cardiganshire or Pembrokeshire.

In such cases it was necessary to appoint two Bidders, one for the young man, and another for the young woman, to go round the respective districts in which each of them lived.

An old man in Carmarthenshire informed me that many years ago a friend of his, a farmer in the parish of Llanycrwys married a young lady from Pencarreg, two Bidders were sent forth to tramp the country; one going round the parish of Llanycrwys where the bridegroom lived, and the other's circuit was the parish of Pencarreg, the native parish of the bride.

Another custom in some places, especially round Llandyssul and Llangeler, which took place before appointing the Gwahoddwr, was for the neighbours and friends to come together of an evening to the house of the bride or bridegroom's parents, or any other place fixed upon for that purpose. On such occasion a good deal of drinking home-brewed beer was indulged in, "Er lles y par ifanc," that is, for the benefit of the young couple. All the profit made out of this beer drinking at a private house went to the young man and the young woman as a help to begin their married life. At such a meeting also very often the day of the wedding was fixed, and the Bidder appointed, and should he happen to be an inexperienced one he was urged to repeat his Bidding speech before the company present, in order to test him whether he had enough wit and humour to perform his office satisfactorily in going round to invite to the wedding.

When the young people engaged to be married were sons and daughters of well-to-do farmers, it was the custom to send by this Bidder in his rounds, a circular letter, or a written note in English; and this note or circular in course of time became so fashionable that the occupation of a Bidder gradually fell to decay; that is, it became a custom to send a circular letter instead of a Bidder. The following Bidding Letter, which is not a fictitious one, but a real document, appeared in an interesting book, entitled "The Vale of Towy," published in 1844:—

> "Being betrothed to each other, we design to ratify the plighted vow by entering under the sanction of wedlock; and as a prevalent custom exists from time immemorial amongst "Plant y Cymry" of making a bidding on the occurrence of a hymeneal occasion, we have a tendency to the manner of the oulden tyme, and incited by friends as well as relations to do the same, avail ourselves of this suitableness of circumstances of humbly inviting your agreeable and pleasing presence on Thursday, the 29th day of December next, at Mr. Shenkin's, in the parish of Llangathen, and whatever your propensities then feel to grant will meet with an acceptance of the most grateful with an acknowledgement of the most warmly, carefully registered, and retaliated with promptitude and alacrity, whenever an occurrence of a similar nature present itself, by
>
> "Your most obedient servants,
> William Howells,
> Sarah Lewis.
>
> "The young man, with his father and mother (David and Ann Howells), his brother (John Howells), and his cousin (Edward Howells), desire that all claims of the above nature due to them be returned to the young man on the above day, and will feel grateful for the bestowments of all kindness conferred upon him.

"The young woman, with her father and mother (Thomas and Letice Lewis), her sisters (Elizabeth and Margaret Lewis), and her cousins (William and Mary Morgan), desire that all claims of the above nature due to them be returned to the young woman on the above day, and will feel grateful for the bestowments of all kindness conferred upon her."

The following Bidding Letter I copied from an old manuscript in possession of that eminent Antiquarian, the Rev. D. H. Davies, once Vicar of Cenarth, but who lives at present at Newcastle Emlyn:—

"To Mr. Griffith Jenkins.

"Sir,—As my daughter's Bidding is fixed to be the Eighth day of February next, I humbly beg the favour of your good company according to custom, on the occasion, which shall be most gratefully acknowledged and retaliated by

"Yours most obedient and humble Servant,
Joshua Jones.

"Penrallt,
Jan. 23rd, 1770."

The following also is another specimen of such circular, a copy of which came into my possession through the kindness of the esteemed lady, Mrs. Webley-Tyler, Glanhelig, near Cardigan:—

"February 1, 1841.

"As we intend to enter the Matrimonial State, on Thursday,

> the 11th day of February instant, we purpose to make a Bidding on the occasion, the same day, at the young woman's Father and Mother's House, called Llechryd Mill; When and where the favour of your good company is most humbly solicited, and whatever donation you will be pleased to confer on us that day, will be thankfully received and cheerfully repaid whenever called for on a similar occasion,
>
> "By your obedient humble Servants,
> John Stephens,
> Ann Davies.
>
> "The young man's Father and Mother (John and Elizabeth Stephens, Pen'rallt-y-felin), together with his brother (David Stephens), desire that all gifts of the above nature due to them be returned to the Young Man, on the said day, and will be thankful for all favours granted.—Also the Young Woman's Father and Mother (David and Hannah Davies, Llechryd Mill), desire that all gifts of the above nature due to them, be returned to the young woman on the said day, and will be thankful for all favours granted."

The day before the Wedding was once allotted to bringing home the "Ystafell," or household goods and furniture, of the young couple; but these customs varied considerably in different parts of the country. The furniture of the bride, as a rule, consisted of a feather bed and bed clothes, one or two large oaken chests to keep clothes in, and a few other things; and it was customary for the bridegroom to find or provide tables, chairs, bedstead, and a dresser. The dresser was perhaps the most interesting relic of family property, and is still to be seen in Welsh farm-houses, and is greatly valued as a thing which has been an heirloom in the family for generations. It consists of two or more stages, and the upper compartments, which are open, are always decked with specimens of useful and ornamental old Welsh ware,

which are getting very rare now, and people offer a high price for them as curiosities.

It was also customary on the same day for the young man and the young woman to receive gifts of various kinds, such as money, flour, cheese, butter, bacon, hens, and sometimes even a cow or a pig, also a good many useful things for house-keeping. This was called “Pwrs a Gwregys”—a purse and a girdle. But these gifts were to be re-paid when demanded on similar occasions; and, upon a refusal, were even recoverable by law; and sometimes this was done.

About a hundred years ago, and previous to that date, the day before the wedding, as a rule, was allotted to the “Ystafell,” or bringing home of the furniture, etc.; but more recently it became the custom to appoint a day for that purpose at other times in some districts, that is, it took place whenever the young married couple went to live at a house of their own; this would be perhaps three or six months after the wedding. In Wales it is very common to see a young married couple among the farmers remaining with the parents of the young man, or with the young wife’s parents until it is a convenient time for them to take up a farm of their own.

I have already noticed that these customs varied in different parts of the country. In some districts, the day preceding the Wedding was a great time for feasting, whilst in other localities people came together to drink for the benefit of the young couple, and when cakes were prepared for the Neithior which was to follow the wedding on the next day.

THE WEDDING DAY.

At the present time, Welsh people marry on any day of the week, but about fifty years ago Wednesday was a favourite day in some places, and Friday in other places. I am writing more especially, of course, of West Wales. Indeed, in some parishes old men informed me that when they were young they did not remember any one marrying, except on a Friday. This fact, undoubtedly, is likely to surprise many English readers, who regard Friday as an unlucky day for anything.

Meyrick, writing about one hundred years ago in his History of Cardiganshire, says Saturday was the Wedding Day, and other writers mention the same thing, and it is evident that Saturday was the day on which most people did marry, except in a few districts, about three generations ago, as well as in older times. Whether this day, that is, Saturday, was commonly fixed upon from a belief that it was a lucky day for marriage, or from the convenience of Sunday intervening between it and a working day, is rather difficult to know, but it seems that the following old English Marrying Rhyme was either unknown to the Welsh, or that they did not give heed to it:—

To marry on
"Monday wealth, Tuesday for health,
Wednesday the best day of all;
Thursday for crosses, Friday for losses,
Saturday no luck at all!"

THE HORSE WEDDING.

The rural weddings in South Wales until very recently were Horse Weddings; that is, it was the custom of the whole party, both men and women to ride, and generally at full speed. Poor people generally managed to obtain the loan of horses for the happy occasion from their richer neighbours. On the wedding morning the invited guests, both men and women, married and unmarried, came on their horses and ponies, some of them from a long distance. The men proceeded to the bridegroom's house, about a hundred or a hundred and fifty in number and honourably paid their pwython; whilst the women at the same time went to the house of the bride, and paid to her their pwython.

"Pwython" was the term used in connection with these weddings to denote the gifts presented to the young bride and bridegroom respectively, in return for what the invited guests themselves had received on the occasion of their own weddings from the young man and the young woman, or their relations or friends. Of course, a large number of those who gave gifts were young and unmarried, so that they were not all under an obligation to give; but still they gave, and they were expected to give to help the young couple, and by so giving, they were placing the latter under an obligation to them in the future, that is, in such cases, the giver gave under the expectation of receiving back gifts of equal value, whenever his or her own, or one of his or her relations' wedding took place, even should that happen on the very next day.

After depositing their offerings and taking something to eat, it was then the custom for ten, twelve, or sometimes even twenty young men, headed by a bard, a harper, or some fluent speaker, to mount their horses, and drive away full speed in the direction of the bride's house to demand her in marriage for the bridegroom. But on the morning of the wedding, the young woman, that is, the bride-elect,

was not to be got possession of without much trouble and argument, and searching. When the bridegroom's procession halted at the house of the bride's parents, the leader of the party, finding the door barred against their entrance, would formally demand the bride, generally in rhyme appropriate to the occasion, delivered something as follows:—

"Open windows, open doors,
And with flowers strew the floors;
Heap the hearth with blazing wood,
Load the spit with festal food;
The "crochon[2]" on its hook be placed,
And tap a barrel of the best!
For this is Catty's wedding day!
Now bring the fair one out, I pray."

Then one of the bride's party from within made a reply as follows, with the door still closed:—

"Who are ye all? ye noisy train!
Be ye thieves or honest men?
Tell us now what brings you here,
Or this intrusion will cost you dear?"

Then the one from without rejoins:—

"Honest men are we, who seek
A dainty maid both fair and meek,
Very good and very pretty,
And known to all by name of Catty;
We come to claim her for a bride;
Come, father, let the fair be tied
To him who loves her ever well."

The one within again answers:—

"So ye say, but time will tell;
My daughter's very well at home
So ye may pack and homeward roam."

Again the one without exclaims in resolute tones:—

"Your home no more she's doomed to share
Like every marriageable fair,
Her father's roof she quits for one
Where she is mistress; wooed and won.
It now remains to see her wedded,
And homeward brought and safely bedded.
Unless you give her up, we swear
The roof from off your house to tear,
Burst in the doors and batter walls,
To rescue her whom wedlock calls."

Another of the bridegroom's party then calls aloud, in a voice of authority:—

"Ho! peace in the King's name, here, peace!
Let vaunts and taunting language cease;
While we the bridesmen, come to sue
The favour to all bridesmen due,
The daughter from the father's hand,
And entertainment kindly bland."

The above rhyme appeared in "Adventures of Twm Shon Catty." There are a good many such verses composed for, or at such occasion, still extant in the Welsh language.

The party without and the party within feigned to abuse one another in such rhymes for an hour, more sometimes, till their wit was exhausted, but the whole performance was nothing but innocent fun, and the doors are opened in the end, and the bridegroom's party are admitted into the house; but even then the trouble is not always over, for it

was the custom for the bride to hide herself, when search would be made for her everywhere under the tables, beds, behind the doors and every corner in the house, and at last found, perhaps, under the disguise of a young man smoking his pipe, or of a "granny" knitting in the corner.

Whoever discovered the bride received a pint of beer and a cake as a prize in some places. All these things were done for fun or amusement, but I heard of one young woman at least, who was hiding in real earnest, and could not be found.

An old farmer near Carmarthen, Griffiths, of Rhenallt, who is 96 years of age, informed me about five years ago, that he once heard his father mention of a man called "Dafydd y Llether," a butcher near Alltwalis, who was disappointed in this manner. This happened about 100 years ago. This butcher was engaged to be married to a farmer's daughter who lived in the parish of Llanllwni, about eight miles off, and had made all preparations for the wedding. When the wedding morning dawned, Dafydd and his neighbours and friends, about one hundred in number, mounted their horses at Alltwalis, and galloped away full speed to Llanllwni, and having arrived at the house of the young bride's parents, search was made for her everywhere, but she was nowhere to be found. At last the young man and his friends had to return home without finding her in great disappointment! The young woman's parents had prevailed upon her not to marry the young man, "because" added the old man to me "he was too much of a jolly boy." So they had contrived between them to hide her where she could not be found on the wedding morning.

But, to proceed with our account of the old wedding customs, it was the practice after finding the hidden bride, and partaking of a little refreshments, for the wedding party to mount their horses, and they were joined by the

bridegroom and his friends, and made their way towards the church. The young woman was mounted on a fine and swift horse; but often she had to be content to be mounted behind her father, or a brother or a friend; and when the latter was the case, she had to sit on crupper without any pillion, and holding fast to the man. Then the whole cavalcade would gallop off to church. But during the procession the bride was seized suddenly by one of her relatives or friends, stolen away and borne off to a distance. However, this feigned attempt to run away with her was done only in sport. Then a chase ensued, when the bridegroom and his friends drove after her like madmen till they caught her and took her to church. The driving was so furious on such occasions that legs and arms were sometimes broken. Mr. D. Jones in his interesting Welsh book on the History of the Parish of Llangeler, says that in the year 1844, at the wedding of Dinah, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Jones, Saron, one James Evans, the groom of the late Colonel Lewes, drove so furiously that his horse struck against a wall with the result that both the animal and its rider were killed on the spot, near Llangeler Church! In consequence of such a melancholy event the Horse Wedding was discontinued in that part of the country, through the influence of the Vicar, the Rev. John Griffiths, who preached against the practice from II. Kings, chap. IX. verse 20 ... “And the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously.”

The following account of a Horse Wedding appeared in “The Folk Lore of North Wales” by the late Rev. Elias Owen, F.S.A., whose informant was the Rev. Canon Griffith Jones, who witnessed the wedding, which took place at Tregaron, Cardiganshire. We are told that “The friends of both the young people were on horseback, and according to custom they presented themselves at the house of the young woman, the one to escort her to the

church, and the other to hinder her from going there. The friends of the young man were called "Gwyr shegouts." When the young lady was mounted, she was surrounded by the "gwyr shegouts," and the cavalcade started. All went on peaceably until a lane was reached, down which the lady bolted, and here the struggle commenced, for her friends dashed between her and her husband's friends and endeavoured to force them back, and thus assist her to escape. The parties, Mr. Jones said, rode furiously and madly, and the struggle presented a cavalry charge, and it was not without much apparent danger that the opposition was overcome, and the lady ultimately forced to proceed to the church, where her future husband was anxiously awaiting her arrival."

The Lord Bishop of Huron, a native of Cardiganshire, writing to me from Canada, November 17th., 1909, says: —"I remember a wedding once when all the guests were on horse-back and there was a hunt for the bride. There could be no wedding till the bride was caught, and, Oh the wild gallop over hill and dale till she was taken captive and led to the altar! The last wedding of that kind to which I refer took place about 45 years ago. The daughter of Mr. Morgan (I think) of Maestir, near Lampeter, or his intended wife being the bride. A very severe accident happened to the bride and that ended the custom in that neighbourhood."

Although such things as I have already said were done for sport, yet I have heard of a few cases in which the bride was borne away in earnest, and disappeared willingly in company of an old lover of hers, to the intense astonishment and disappointment of the bridegroom, who happened to be her parents' choice, and not her own. In this case, the custom of a feigned attempt to run away with the bride had in some respects served its original purpose; for, undoubtedly, the origin of the custom of hiding,

running away with, and capturing the bride could be traced back to those barbarous times when marriage by capture was a common practice. Thus in the Mabinogion, we find that when a King named Kilydd, after being for some time a widower, wanted to marry again, one of his counsellors said to him, “I know a wife that will suit thee well, and she is the wife of King Dogel.” And they resolved to go and seek her; and they slew the King and brought away his wife. When his son also named Kilhwch wanted a wife, he went to demand her from her father Yspaddaden Pencawr, the Giant, and obtained her at last after many adventures, and the help of Arthur and his men. It is probable that when the Celtic Tribes had settled in Britain that they often obtained a wife by capturing her from the Aborigines.

This calls to mind the strategy of Romulus to secure wives for his soldiers by directing them at a given signal to seize Sabine maidens and run off with them whilst the men were busy in looking at the games.

Another singular instance of wife snatching in ancient times is to be found in the Book of Judges, for when the men of the tribe of Benjamin were in difficulty in obtaining wives for themselves, their elders commanded them to “go and lie in wait in the vineyards; and see, and behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin,.... And the children of Benjamin did so, and took them wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught.” Judges XXI., verses 20, 21, and 23.

It seems that some kind of Horse Weddings is in vogue among the Calmucians, even at the present day, the young woman is first mounted on her horse and drives off full speed, then the young man, who is her intended, mounts

and chases her, and when he catches her he can claim her as his wife on the spot; but should she escape him, he cannot claim her. I well remember when I lived in the Welsh Colony of Patagonia, about 20 years ago, that it was a very common custom for a young man and a young woman when in love, to mount their steeds and take a long ride of 20 miles or more in each other's company, and whilst driving along together in such manner words of love were often whispered. Also when a wedding took place, the guests went to it on their horses, but the old custom of driving after, and capturing the bride was not observed.

Horse Weddings were very general in West Wales about sixty years ago, and even twenty years ago in some districts, but I doubt whether the custom has been continued at the present day in any part of the country. In the chase after the bride it was supposed that whoever caught her would be married without doubt within a year from that date, so it is not to be wondered at that young men drove so furiously on such occasions.

As soon as the marriage ceremony was over in church, it was once the custom for a harper in the churchyard to play "Merch Megan," "Mentra Gwen," "Morwynion Glan Meirionydd," or some other beautiful old Welsh Air appropriate to the occasion.

It was also customary in some places, especially in the Northern part of Cardiganshire, for a certain number of young men to mount their steeds immediately after the ceremony, and drive off full speed, for the first who reached the house of the newly-married couple was to receive a quart of beer and a silk pocket handkerchief, especially if the young husband and wife were well-to-do.

The ceremony at the Church being over, all the company joined and returned to the young couple's house, where

dinner was provided. On their return journey again, as in going to Church, they drove fast. Indeed, it was often the custom to have a regular horse race on the way home from Church on the wedding day.

The Rev. D. G. Williams gives the following amusing story of such a race, in connection with a rural wedding which took place not far from Newcastle Emlyn. There lived a genial old country gentleman in the north-eastern part of Pembrokeshire, known as Mr. Howells, Glaspant, who had sent three of his horses to the wedding referred to, one of them was a pony, considered among the swiftest in the district; but there was one drawback in connection with the animal. He would go whichever way he pleased, especially when he was excited. The wedding procession went along from a house called Gilfach Gweision to Capel Evan, where the "knot was tied," and as soon as the ceremony was over the homeward race began in real earnest. The Squire felt confident that his "Comet," as the pony was named, would be sure to prove victorious in the race, if the animal could be kept to follow the road which led on to Cwm Cuch, instead of turning to another road which led to Mr. Howells' own house, Glaspant. To make sure of this, the enthusiastic old gentleman in due time, sent all his servants, both men and women, with walking-sticks and brooms in their hands to stand where the two roads met, so as to prevent the pony turning to the one that led to the house. Onward came the wedding cavalcade at last, the pony taking the lead as Mr. Howells expected, and when "Comet" saw a rowdy crowd shouting with all their might, and with brooms and sticks, the animal was glad to pass forward in the right direction and soon proved himself the hero of the day, and the old man felt as proud of his pony as the young husband was of his wife.

Another common practice in connection with the weddings in Wales, and still prevails in some places, was known as

Chaining or Halting the Wedding. As the young husband and wife were driving home from Church at the end of the wedding ceremony they would find the way obstructed by ropes stretching the road, covered with flowers, and ribbons, and evergreens, or sometimes blocked up entirely by thorns. It is said that this was intended as the first obstacle in married life. Ropes in some cases were made of straw, and the young couple were not allowed to pass without paying a footing to the obstructors, and then the barrier was removed amidst a general hurrah. This chaining or halting the wedding was known in many parts of West Wales as "codi cwinten," or to set up a quintain.

In ancient times Guintain seems to have been some kind of a game of skill in vogue among several nations; it consisted of an upright post, on the top of which a cross bar turned on a pivot; "at one end of the cross hung a heavy sand bag, and at the other was placed a broad plank; the accomplished cavalier in his passage couched his lance, and with the point made a thrust at the broad plank, and continued his route with his usual rapidity, and only felt the "gwyntyn," or the "air" of the sand bag, fanning his hair as he passed.... The awkward horseman in attempting to pass this terrific barrier was either unhorsed by the weight of the sand bag, or by the impulse of the animal against the bar found his steed sprawling under him on the ground."

In some parts of the country, when the bride or the young wife reaches home after the wedding ceremony, she buys some small trifle, a pin or anything from her bridesmaid; and by taking the opportunity of buying something before her husband has a chance, she'll be master over him for life! Sometimes the young newly-married couple resorted to a Wishing Well, and the first to drink the water became the master in their wedded life!

In Wales, it is considered unlucky to marry on a wet day. It was considered unlucky for the wedding party to go and return from the church exactly on the same path, so sometimes it was customary to go out of the way a bit so as to avoid ill-luck.

It is still customary to decorate the roads where the wedding party is to pass with arches and bannerettes, bearing mottoes appropriate to the occasion. This was done in February, 1906, at the wedding of Mr. David T. Davies, of Penlan, Llanwrda; and at the marriage of Mr. D. Barlett of Carmarthen in the same month, Llanboidy Parish Church was tastefully decorated with palms and evergreens, and the village was gay with bunting and festoons. Such decorations are very common, especially in connection with a country gentleman's marriage, when tenants adorn their houses with garlands, and children strew flowers in the bride's path. It was formerly the custom to pelt the bride and bridegroom with flowers, and it is still very general to throw rice at them. I remember this rice-throwing three years ago at Llanilar, Cardiganshire, at the wedding of a sister of Dr. Rees. Sometimes old boots were thrown, and I have heard that grains of wheat served the purpose once. Such things were done to ensure "Good Luck."

In former times the bridal flowers were roses, gentle lady, lady's fingers, lady-smock, pansy, prickles and furze, and, in order to encourage the young wife in industry, red clover bloom was strewn in her pathway.

NEITHIOR.

When the ceremony at the church and the horse racing which followed were over, the guests proceeded to the young married couple's house to partake of some food, and in the afternoon and the evening they paid their "pwython" to the newly married couple, that is those of the guests who had not paid already. Others again gave fresh presents. There was much consumption of beer and cakes on such occasions always, and the sale of which was a further source of income to the young couple, so that between everything they were provided with the means for a good start in their married life. Very often such a large crowd attended the Neithior, that the house was often too small to accommodate them all; so a party of the men resorted to the barn or any other convenient place to drink beer.

It was also customary for the young men to treat the young maidens with cakes; so there was a good deal of love-making, and often of rivalry, especially should there be a very pretty girl among the merry company. Those young maids who were fortunate enough as to be in favour with the young men had their aprons full of cakes and biscuits, etc., to take home with them in the evening. Such festivities as a rule were very merry and kept up till a late hour, and there was a good deal of singing, harp-playing and dancing, for the Welsh were expert dancers in former times; but at the present day dancing is almost unknown, at least in country places.

On such occasions, it was customary, as a rule, to secure the presence of a harper, for the harp was from time immemorial a favourite musical instrument among the Welsh people; for Giraldus Cambrensis writing 700 years ago, says:—"Those who arrive in the morning are entertained till evening with the conversation of young women and the music of the harp; for each house has its young women and harps allotted to this purpose ... and in each family the art of playing on the harp is held preferable

to any other learning." During the last three generations, however, the dear old instrument with its sweet and melodious sounds gradually declined in popular favour in Wales, and at the present, there are but very few who can play on the harp at all, indeed, in many districts the instrument has entirely disappeared, giving place to the modern piano. This is to be greatly regretted, and every patriotic Welshman should do his best to encourage playing on the harp.

It happened once that a "Neithior" or wedding festivities took place, strange to say, without a wedding! This was about two generations ago in the Parish of Llandyssul. A man of the name of B. T. Rees, in that part of the country was engaged to be married to a young woman who was known as Sally. Two Bidders had been sent round the country to invite people to the wedding, and all other preparations had been made ready for the joyful occasion, and everything appeared most promising. But when B. T. Rees, a few days before the appointed time for the wedding ceremony, went to visit his bride-elect, she would neither receive him nor speak to him, but ordered him to depart immediately from her presence, to the great astonishment and disappointment of Rees, the bridegroom, and his friends. He endeavoured to reason with her, but to no purpose. Afterwards some of his friends were sent to speak to her, but nothing availed; it seemed as if she had suddenly made up her mind to banish him entirely from her heart.

The wedding was to take place at Henllan on a certain morning, and the "Neithior" in the afternoon at Llandyssul. When that morning arrived, the bridegroom and his friends, decided to seek the bride once more, but she had hidden herself and could not be found anywhere. Rees and his party were in a strange predicament, and did not know what to do; but they returned to Llandyssul, and in the

afternoon the wedding festivities were kept up just as if the wedding had actually taken place; and when night came, Rees had come into possession of large sums of money from the sale of beer, and donations, or wedding gifts and the sincere sympathy of the guests, but he had failed to secure a wife after all! Rees and Sally were married ultimately, however.

In the last century, the Neithior took place on the wedding day; in former times, however, the festivities were continued on the Sunday, which followed. Sir S. R. Meyrick, writing about one hundred years ago says: —"Sunday being come, the bride and bridegroom's business is to stay at home all day and receive good-will and pwython. This is called "Neithior." They receive more money this day than Saturday, and all are written down as before, whether fresh presents, or those repaid."

It seems from what I have been informed by old persons, that such doings on Sundays had almost disappeared, if not completely so, in Meyrick's time, at least in most places, but it is evident that Sunday observances of the kind were common about the middle of the eighteenth century; and in the old Church Register of the parish of Llanfihangel Geneu'r Glyn, in Cardiganshire, the following record is found:—

"11 June, 1745. Whereas the parish has been notorious hitherto in upholding and continuing a wicked custom of keeping Biddings or meetings upon the Sabbath day to the dishonour of God, and contempt of religion, to prevent such irregularities for the future, it is this day ordered by the consent of a vestry legally called and kept that the said custom shall stop and be discontinued entirely hereafter, and whosoever within our said parish encourages or practices and obstinately refuses to obey this our order, we do unanimously consent and join to punish him to the

utmost rigour of the law.—W. Williams, Clerk, etc."

Such Sunday customs were by degrees discontinued entirely in every part of Wales, and the Welsh have been for some generations now, and to their credit still are, the most strict Sabbatarians in the world with the exception perhaps of the Scotch. The Methodists Revivalists in the eighteenth century, who greatly inveighed against Sabbath breaking, contributed towards bringing about this satisfactory state of things.

The curious old Welsh Weddings, which I have endeavoured to describe in this book do not prevail now; the only surviving feature of them is perhaps what is known in some parts as "Ystafell," and in other parts as "Cwyro Ty." "Ystafell" is rather popular now in some districts, especially between Tregaron and Lampeter, but instead of a Gwahoddwr or Bidder an aunt or some other near relative of the bride goes round the houses inviting the neighbours to bring wedding gifts so as to give the young couple a good start in life.

I have been informed that similar old wedding customs to those of the Welsh were once in vogue in Cumberland, a county where the Celtic element is very strong, and also in Brittany, another Celtic province, and the present custom of wedding gifts which is so common in connection with fashionable weddings at the present day, is only a survival of the old Welsh customs.

It seems that in China also it is customary for the friends and relations of the bride and bridegroom to present them with wedding gifts, and in Ancient Peru a dwelling was got ready for the newly-married pair at the charge of the district, and the prescribed portion of land assigned for their maintenance, and the ceremony of marriage was followed by general festivities among the friends of the

parties, which lasted several days.

1

King George and Caroline. ↑

2

A pot for cooking. ↑

CHAPTER III.

FUNERAL CUSTOMS.

s the Wedding Customs differed, the Funeral Customs also differed, and still differ in many respects in Wales from those of England. In Wales funerals are public, and the day and the hour on which they are to take place are always announced both in church and chapel, and in some places the day was made known by sending a man or a woman round the houses. One or two from almost every house in the neighbourhood in which the deceased lived attend his funeral, so that funeral processions are very large, even in districts where the population is small and scattered. Both men and women come, many of them from a long distance, the majority of them on foot, others in their traps, and some on horses, and even wet and stormy weather does not prevent them, for they have a profound reverence for the dead and death from time immemorial; and the night before the funeral a prayer meeting is held in the room where the corpse is lying, and pious appeals to Heaven are made in which strong emotions are expressed, the deceased is referred to in stirring sentences, and his death made a theme for warning on the brevity of earthly life, and the importance of the future life of the soul.

This prayer meeting is called Gwylnos (wake-night), and it

is the only surviving feature of the various customs which were once in vogue in connection with watching the corpse in the house, or keeping vigil over the dead.

In Wales in former times when any one died, candles were always lighted every night in the room where the corpse was, and it was customary for friends or relatives to sit up all night to watch it, and even at the present day the custom is observed by some. Some are of the opinion that this custom had its origin in pre-reformation times. But it seems more probable to have been a Pagan custom, and much older than Christianity.

The original design of the lighted candles, undoubtedly, was to give light to the spirit of the dead on its way to the other world. This is done for that purpose at the present day in China.

It was once the custom in some parts to open the windows when a person was dying. Principal Sir John Rhys, Oxford, says that he well remembers this done in the neighbourhood of Ponterwyd, in North Cardiganshire, and that a farmer near Ystrad Meurig, in the same county, informed him that when his mother (the farmer's) was dying, a neighbour's wife who had been acting as nurse tried to open the window of the room, and as it would not open, she deliberately smashed a pane of it; and the learned Professor remarks that "this was doubtless originally meant to facilitate the escape of the soul."—Celtic Folk-Lore.

It was once customary in the neighbourhood of Llangennech, Carmarthenshire, to cover with muslin the looking glass in the room in which the corpse lay. But to return to the Wake Night, or keeping vigil over the dead, I have already mentioned that the only feature of the old customs in connection with it still observed is the Prayer

Meeting on the night before the funeral, and even this has been almost discontinued in Pembrokeshire, though still popular in Cardiganshire and parts of Carmarthenshire, but the custom is very injurious to the health of those who attend these meetings, as people crowd together in large numbers into the room—often a small one—where the coffin is. It was once the custom for every person on entering the house to fall devoutly on his knees before the corpse, and repeat the Lord's Prayer, or some other prayer, and then a pipe and tobacco were offered to him, but is not done now; but it was done in former times in many districts before the commencement of the prayer meeting.

The manner of conducting this prayer meeting also differs at the present day to what it used to be once. In former times, before the Nonconformists became strong in Wales, it was the custom for the clergyman to read the common service appointed for the burial of the dead, and at the conclusion of which Psalms were sung; but at the present day the custom is, as a rule, for three or four persons to offer extemporary prayers, and an address delivered on the melancholy subject by the Clergyman of the Church of England or a Nonconformist minister, and hymns are sung. And afterwards the crowd depart for their homes.

Formerly when it was customary to keep vigil over the dead, young men and women were glad to volunteer their services to watch the corpse during the night in order to enjoy the society of each other, and on some occasions, it seems, from what I have been told by old persons, some of the young men were rather merry before morning, and often went as far as to drink beer, and in order to pass the time good many stories were related about Corpse Candles, phantom funerals, etc., but the old Welsh Wake nights were never so rowdy as the Irish ones.

In Pembrokeshire, about hundred and fifty years ago there

was a most curious, strange, and mysterious custom performed during the Wake Night, known as "Hir-wen-gwd" (long white bag, or shroud). The corpse was drawn up through the chimney, and the process was as follows:—A certain number of young men took out the corpse from the coffin and moved it, clad in a long white shroud, to a convenient place near the fire. Then a rope was tied round to the upper part of the body, and when this was done securely, the other end of the rope was passed up the chimney by means of a long stick for that purpose; and the next step was for a party of the men to go up to the top of the chimney from the outside of the house by means of a ladder, and take hold of the rope which had been sent up inside, and when they were ready for the ceremony, they gave a sign to those who were inside the house with the corpse, by crying in Welsh, "Hirwen-gwd," and those who were inside the house would answer by saying, "Chware'n barod," or we are ready. Then the party who were on top of the house pulled up the corpse slowly through the chimney by means of the rope, and brought it to the very top and lowered it again, and eventually re-placed it in the coffin. An aged person, named Mrs. Mary Thomas, Bengal, near Fishguard, told me that she had heard a good deal from her mother about this strange old custom, "Hirwen-gwd," and that the last of such ceremonies took place at a house called Pantycnwch, in the parish of Bridell, about a hundred and forty years ago. According to Mrs. Thomas, it was customary to put a living man in the coffin whilst the ceremony of drawing up the corpse through the chimney was going on, and this was done in the case referred to at Bridell; but when the party at the end of the game approached the coffin in order to take out the living man so as to replace the corpse in it, they found him dead. This sad incident caused people after this to put an end of the old custom. When in Pembrokeshire, I enquired everywhere from very old persons as to the origin and object of such

strange and mysterious ceremony, and in reply some of them informed me that it was only a game indulged in by those who were keeping vigil over the dead, to pass the time, whilst others said that there was once a superstition that another death would soon follow the funeral in the family or in the district unless the ceremony was duly performed. Hirwen-gwd, whatever might have been the origin of it, seems to have been confined to Pembrokeshire, at least I have not found any tradition of the custom among the old people of Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire, except in one district in the latter county, situated on the very border of Pembrokeshire.

It is, however, possible that such custom was once known in other parts of South Wales, but discontinued at an earlier date.

In a series of spurious letters, known as "Llythyrau Anna Beynon," bearing the date 1720, and pretending to give an account of the old rural customs of two hundred years ago in the Parish of Llandyssul and the surrounding districts, I found the following strange story in connection with "Hirwen-gwd," but I cannot vouch for the truth of the account, as it is evident that the "letters" referred to are not authentic:—

"GWYLNOS.

"Fe fu farw Shann, Ty Clai yn ddiweddar, yn 90 oed. Nid oedd ganddi yr un plentyn yn y byd i alaru ar ei hol, ond yr

oedd Abel ei hwyr, bachgen 18 oed, yn llefain yn dost ar ol yr unig ffrynd oedd ganddo yn y byd. Fe fu yno ryw wylnos ryfedd ar ei hol. Cafwyd cwrw yno o dafarn Nani Dan-yr-Allt, a buwyd yn adrodd hanes Twm Shon Cati, ac yn yfed hyd haner nos. Yna gollyngodd rhyw rai raff yn ddistaw i lawr trwy y simnau, tra yr oedd eu cyfeillion tu mewn yn canu can 'Ysgyfarnog pen Crug y Balog.' Yr oedd Abel druan, yn eistedd yn bendrwm yng nghornel yr aelwyd, a'i law dan ei ben, ac yn llefain wrtho ei hunan, ac Evan Blaen Cwm ar ei bwys, ac yn ei gysuro, a'i law dros ei gefn, gan dd'weyd, 'Paid llefan Abel bach; yf lymaid eto; rhaid i ti ymroi i fod yn dawel, a ni a wnawn ninau ein goreu drosof ti. Gwnawn nas cyffrwy i, Abel!' Ar yr un pryd yr oedd yr hen andras yn cylymu y rhaff am ganol yr hogyn tlawd. Yn y man dyna y cymdeithion o'r tu maes yn gwaeddi, 'Hirwen gwd,' ac Evan o'r tu mewn yn gwaeddi, 'chwareu yn barod.'

"Gyda hyny, dyna Abel yn araf esgyn i fyny i'r simnai, ac Evan yn gofyn, 'Pa le yr wyt ti yn myned, Abel bach?' ac yntau yn ateb, 'Wn i ddim b'le mae'r d——l yn myned a fi.' Tyn-wyd ef i maes trwy y simnai. Hen lwfer gul ydoedd, yn llawn o huddugl, ac yr oedd golwg ofnadwy arno wedyn....

"Mae nhad a'r dynion goreu yn teimlo i'r byw fod y fath beth wedi cymeryd lle yn yr ardal, ac na fu y fath beth o'r blaen er ys pymtheg mlynedd."

Translated into English the above reads as follows:—

"WAKE-NIGHT.

"Shann, Ty Clai died lately, at the age of 90 without leaving a child to bewail her loss, except Abel, her grandson, a lad of 18 years of age, who was crying sorrowfully after the only friend he had in the whole world. There was there a very strange Wake-night kept at the house. They got some beer there from Nanny Dan-yr-Allt's Inn, and the time was spent until midnight in telling stories about Twm Shon Catty, and in drinking. Then a rope was let down secretly through the chimney by some fellows, while their companions inside were singing 'Ysgyfarnog pen Crug y Balog.' Poor Abel was sitting in the corner of the hearth in sorrow, with his hand under his head, and crying by himself, and Evan, Blaen Cwm, close by him comforting him and saying, 'Don't cry, dear Abel; drink a drop more; you must try and be calm, and we will do our best for thee. Yes, by jove, we shall!' At the same time the old rascal was tying a rope around the poor lad's waist. Then, suddenly, the party outside cried 'Hirwen-gwd,' and Evan from within, cried, 'Chwareu yn barod.'

"Almost instantly, Abel found himself being dragged up the chimney, whereupon Evan asked 'Where are you going, dear Abel?' The latter answered, 'I don't know where the d——l takes me to.' He was pulled out through the chimney—a narrow old luffer as it was, full of soot, and there was an awful sight on him afterwards....

"My father and the best men feel to the very life that such a thing has taken place in the district, and they say that no such thing has taken place before for 15 years."

It seems that many strange and mysterious events took place sometimes at the Wake-nights in Pembrokeshire, if all the stories we hear are true. Miss Martha Davies,

Fishguard, informed me that her late uncle, Mr. Howells, Cilgwyn, vouched for the truth of the following account of an event which happened about a hundred years ago or more. Saith she:—An old gentleman farmer, who was a notorious ungodly man, lived at a farmhouse called Dolgaranog, in North Pembrokeshire. He at last died, and was placed in his coffin, and the candles were lighted, and people came together to the house and the 'gwylnos,' or wake-night went on in the usual manner, according to the customs of those days. Some of the young men and young maidens were talking together, whispering words of love to each other, and were rather merry, it seems. As these things went on, they were suddenly surprised by hearing the sound of horses' feet, as if a large concourse of people were approaching the house on horses and driving full speed. The next moment the sound of men's footsteps was heard entering in through the door and into the very room where the wakenight went on; but nothing could be seen.

The invisible intruders, as they passed into the room where the dead man lay, put out all the candles. At last the same sound of footsteps could be heard departing from the house, and as this mysterious sound passed out through the room, people heard the bustle, and even felt the crush, and on leaving, the strange visitors re-lighted the candles, but nothing was to be seen, but the sound of horses' feet was heard as if a large concourse of cavaliers were driving away from the house, in the same manner as they had approached it, and gradually the sound died away. Then the relatives and friends and others who were present at the 'gwylnos,' keeping vigil over the dead, were anxious to know what this sound of invisible footsteps meant, and what had happened, so they entered the room where the coffin was, and when they opened it, to their great alarm, they found that nothing but an empty coffin, for the corpse was gone, and was never found again. The people of the

neighbourhood really believed that the body was taken by the Devil, or evil spirits, as the man had lived such a bad life. The coffin was afterwards filled with stones and buried.

Another strange old death custom, if it ever existed, was the "Sin Eater."

It seems that the first to refer to the subject was Mr. John Aubrey, in 1686, who asserted that there was such a custom in Herefordshire and also in North Wales, and at the annual meeting of the Cambrian Archæological Association, which was held at Ludlow in August, 1852, Mr. Matthew Moggridge, of Swansea, made the following observation:—"When a person died, his friends sent for the Sin-eater of the district, who, on his arrival, placed a plate of salt on the breast of the defunct, and upon the salt a piece of bread. He then muttered an incantation over the bread, which he finally ate, thereby eating up all the sins of the deceased. This done, he received his fee of 2s. 6d. and vanished as quickly as possible from the general gaze; for, as it was believed that he really appropriated to his own use and behoof the sins of all those over whom he performed the above ceremony. He was utterly detested in the neighbourhood—regarded as a mere Pariah—as one irredeemably lost." The speaker then mentioned the Parish of Llandebie, in Carmarthenshire, where the above practice was said to have prevailed to a recent period. Mr. Allen, of Pembrokeshire, said that the plate and salt were known in that county, where also a lighted candle was stuck in the salt, and that the popular notion was that it kept away the evil spirit.

A few years ago, one Rhys read at Tregaron an interesting paper on that town and district, and after referring to the custom of keeping vigil over the dead, he makes the following statement: "There was also an old custom in the

town (Tregaron) connected with the ‘Sin-eater.’ Where there was a corpse in the house the ‘Sin-eater’ was invited. The relatives of the dead prepared him a meal on the coffin, he was supposed to eat the sins of the dead man so as to make the deceased’s journey upward lighter.”

The late Chancellor D. Silvan Evans, and other well-informed Welshmen, have denied that any such custom as that of the Sin-eater ever existed in Wales, and Wirt Sikes, after diligent searching, failed to find any direct corroboration of it, and I may add that, though I venture no opinion of my own upon the subject, I have never come across in any part of Wales any old persons, either men or women, who had heard any tradition about it. On the other hand, the celebrated Welsh Novelist, Allen Raine, informed me a short time ago, that she knew a man at Carmarthen who had seen a “Sin-eater”; and the Rev. G. Eyre Evans showed me a portrait of a man that had seen one long ago in the Parish of Llanwenog.

Perhaps the following, which appeared in Volume 15 of “Folk Lore,” may prove of interest in connection with the subject. The writer, Mr. Rendel Harries, who had visited Archag, an Armenian village, where he attended service, says as follows in his “Notes from Armenia:—“At the evening service, to my great surprise, I found that when the congregation dispersed, a corpse laid out for burial was lying in the midst of the building. It had, in fact, been brought in before we came, and was to lie in the Church in preparation for burial next day. I noticed that two large flat loaves of bread had been placed upon the body. Inquiry as to the meaning of this elicited no other explanation than that the bread was for the Church mice and to keep them from eating the corpse. I did not feel satisfied with the explanation. Some months later, on mentioning the incident to some intelligent Armenians in Constantinople, they frankly admitted that in former days the custom was

to eat the bread, dividing it up amongst the friends of the deceased. Whether this is a case of Sin-eating, I leave Mr. Frazer and Mr. Hartland to decide."

The question of the alleged Sin-eater in Wales and the Borders has several times been discussed in "Bye-Gones," Oswestry, and whether there was at any time such strange custom in vogue in the country, there are at least ample proofs that it was customary in Pembrokeshire, if not in other parts of the country, to place a plate of salt on the breast of the corpse, and it was believed by some that this kept the body from swelling, and by others that it kept away the evil spirits.

Pennant, a very keen observer, noticed a similar custom in the Highlands of Scotland 140 years ago, where "the friends lay on the breast of the deceased a wooden platter containing a small quantity of salt and earth separately and unmixed; the earth an emblem of the corruptible body; the salt an emblem of the immortal spirit."

There are several superstitions in West Wales concerning salt, but shall refer to the subject in another chapter.

It was once the custom in Wales to make the sign of the cross on the dead body or a cross was placed at or near his head; and though the ceremony was discontinued long ago, we even now occasionally hear the old saying, "Mae e dan ei grwys" (he is under his cross), when a dead body is in the house.

As a rule in West Wales, coffins are made of oak, but poor people are satisfied with elm, and the corpse is placed in it, covered in a white shroud, but good many are buried in their best clothes, both at present and in the past, and a writer in "Bye-Gones," 1888, says that in an old book in Tregaron Vestry, dated 1636, he found that it was the rule

of the Parish at that time to bury paupers without a coffin, and they were to wear their best apparel, and best hat; the charge for burial was two-pence; if any were buried in a coffin they also were to don their Sunday best, and the charge for their burial was 2s. 6d.

To bury the dead in their best clothes instead of a shroud is a custom that has been continued in Wales till the present day by some, but not without a coffin; but it seems to have been a common practice to bury paupers, and those who were in very poor circumstances, without a coffin till about 200 years ago and even at a later date, as the registers of some of the old Parish Churches prove. It was also customary in former times to "bury in woollen"—that is, in a shroud made of woollen material, and the eminent Antiquarian, Mr. John Davies, of the National Library, has found out "that this was the practice in the Parish of Llandyssul in the year 1722. Undoubtedly, burying in woollen was in vogue for some generations and a statute of the time of Queen Elizabeth provided that it should be done in order to encourage the flannel industry; and an Act of Parliament was passed in the reign of Charles the Second to promote the sale and use of English wool, and there was once a penalty of £5 for burying in a shroud not made of wool.

On the appointed day for the funeral, a large concourse of friends and neighbours come together at the house of the deceased, and all are welcomed to partake of food, as the Welsh people have always been remarkable for their hospitality on melancholy as well as joyful occasions.

In former times great preparations were made, for the day of the funeral was in reality a regular feasting day for those who attended. Meyrick, in his "History of Cardiganshire," writing about a hundred years ago, observes:—"A profuse dinner, consisting principally of cold meat, fowls, tongues,

etc., is spread on several tables, and a carver placed at the head of each, whose sole business is to carve for different parties as they alternately sit down. As the company are too numerous to be all accommodated within, the poorer people are seated on stools round the outside of the house, and are presented with cakes and warmed ale, with spice and sugar in it."

It was once customary to prepare a special kind of drink known as a "diod ebilon," which contained the juice of elder tree and Rosemary, in addition to the ordinary substances of ale. The custom of giving beer and cake at funerals continued in some districts till very recently, and the Rev. D. G. Williams, St. Clear's, says that this was done at the funeral of an old gentleman farmer in the Parish of Trelech, in Carmarthenshire, about 30 years ago. Though it is not customary to give beer at the present day, but food, especially in a way of tea and cake, is given to everybody in rural districts, not only to those who have come from a distance, but even to near neighbours. The nearest relations make it a point of sitting in the death chamber, and before the coffin is nailed up, almost everybody present in the house enters the room to see the body and look on it with a sigh. Then Divine Service is conducted, at the close of which, the body is borne out of the house, by the nearest male relatives of the deceased, a custom introduced, undoubtedly, into Wales by the "Romans during their residence in this country, for the coffins of Roman citizens held in high esteem were borne by senators, but those of enemies were borne on the other hand by slaves."

According to Pennant's Tours in North Wales, there was formerly an old custom to distribute bread and cheese over the coffin to poor people who had been gathering flowers to decorate it. Sometimes a loaf of bread was given or a cheese with a piece of money placed inside it, and a cup of

drink also was presented. Cakes were given in South Cardiganshire to those who attended the funerals of the wealthy.

I found that in Pembrokeshire in the present day, it is customary to place the coffin on chairs before the door outside before placing it on a bier. In most districts of West Wales, hearses have been until a few years ago, almost unknown, and such is the case even at the present day with few exceptions, except in those places adjoining the towns, but no doubt they are continually becoming more general every day. It is still the custom, especially in out of the way places where the funeral procession wends its way graveward on foot, to bear the corpse alternately, four men at the time, and sometimes even women carry as well as men.

In the old times when the roads were bad, especially in the mountainous parts of the country, it was customary to make use of a what was known as “elorfarch” (horse-bier). The elorfarch was carried by horses, and it consisted of two long arms or shafts into which the horses were placed, with transverse pieces of wood in the centre, on which the coffin was placed.

Before the funeral procession leaves the house, a hymn is sung, and in former times it was customary to sing on the way, especially when passing a house, and sometimes the singing continued all the way from the house to the churchyard without ceasing; and this singing along the lanes was undoubtedly one of the most beautiful of all the old Welsh funeral customs, and it is a pity that it has been discontinued.

During my recent visit to St. David’s, an old gentleman named Evans informed me that he well remembered the funeral processions singing on the way to the churchyard

of St. David's Cathedral; and that it was also the custom to march round the old stone cross, which I noticed in the centre of the town, before entering the churchyard.



The old stone cross at St. David's, around which funeral processions marched in former times.

When a funeral takes place at Aberystwyth, in Cardiganshire, it is customary for the Town Crier to go through the streets tolling a small hand-bell, a short time before the funeral procession. This is a survival of a very ancient custom which was once very general throughout Wales, and in pre-Reformation times this corpse-bell which was known as "bangu," was kept in all the Welsh Churches, and when a funeral was to take place, the bellman took it to the house of the deceased. When the procession began, a psalm was sung, and then the sexton sounded his bell in a solemn manner for some time, and

again at intervals, till the funeral arrived at the Church.

Giraldus Cambrensis, writing 700 years ago, mentions of such bell at "Elevein, in the Church of Glascwm, in Radnorshire; a portable bell endowed with great virtue, called Bangu, and said to have belonged to St. David. A certain woman secretly conveyed this bell to her husband who was confined in his Castle of Raidergwy (Rhaiadyrgwy) near Warthreinion (which Rhys, son of Gruffyth, had lately built), for the purpose of his deliverance.

"The keepers of the Castle not only refused to liberate him for this consideration, but seized and detained the bell; and in the same night, by divine vengeance, the whole town, except the wall on which the bell hung, was consumed by fire."

Formerly, in all parts of Wales, the Passing Bell was tolled for the dying, just as the spirit left the body. In ancient times there was a superstition among the Welsh people that the evil spirits were hovering about the sick man's chamber, waiting to pounce upon the soul as it left the body, but that the sound of a bell frightened away the fiends.

According to "Cymru Fu," an interesting Welsh book published by Hughes and Son, Wrexham, another old custom in connection with Welsh funerals in former times, was to set down the bier and kneel and repeat the Lord's Prayer, whenever the procession came to a cross road. The origin of this custom, as given by the Welsh, is to be found in the former practice of burying criminals at cross-roads. It was believed that the spirits of these criminals did not go far away from the place where their bodies lay, and in repeating the Lord's Prayer was supposed to destroy and do away with any evil influence these spirits might have on

the soul of the dear departed.

The Venerable Archdeacon Williams, Aberystwyth, informed me that he was told by the late Principal Edwards, University College of Wales, that there was once an old custom in the Parish of Llanddewi Brefi for funeral processions to pass through a bog instead of proceeding along the road which went round it. Those who bore the bier through the bog, proceeded with much difficulty and often sank in the mud. The ceremony of taking the corpse through the bog was, at least, in Pre-Reformation times, supposed to have the effect of lessening the time or suffering of the deceased's soul in Purgatory, but the custom was continued in the said Parish for many generations after the Reformation, if not until recent times.

It was once customary at Rhayader, in Radnorshire, for funeral processions to carry small stones which were thrown to a large heap at a particular spot before arriving at the church.

When the funeral procession was nearing the churchyard a hymn was again sung. The custom was, and still is, for the clergyman, arrayed in his surplice, to meet the corpse at the entrance of the churchyard, as directed in the Prayer Book, and placing himself at the head of the procession, they proceed into the body of the church, and the bier is placed before the Altar. It was once customary for all the relations of the deceased to kneel around it until taken from the church to the place of interment. After the body has been lowered into the grave, and at the close of the funeral service one or more hymns are sung, generally those that were favourites of the deceased. When the deceased who is buried in the churchyard of the Parish Church, happened to have been a Nonconformist, it is sometimes customary to have services both in chapel and in church; in the former first, and in the latter before the

interment. This was done in connection with the funeral of the late Mr. John Evans, Pontfaen, Lampeter, a few years ago, when I was present myself.

It was once customary to give the shoes of the dead man to the grave-digger, a vestry at Tregaron in Cardiganshire, about 200 years ago passed that this should be done in that place. There is no such practice at present in any part of Wales. There was once a curious old custom known as "Arian y Rhaw" (spade money) which survived in some districts of West Wales until a comparatively recent date, especially in the Northern parts of Cardiganshire, and that part of Carmarthenshire which borders Breconshire.

Mr. John Jones, Pontrhydfendigaid, an old man of 95, informed me that the custom was observed at Lledrod, a parish situated about nine miles from Aberystwyth, about eighty years ago. It was something as follows:—At the grave, the grave-digger extended his spade for donations, and received a piece of silver from each one of the people in turn.

The following account of the custom by an eye-witness appeared in the Folk-Lore Column of the "Carmarthen Journal," July 7th, 1905:—"It was in the summer of 1887, if I remember well, that I had occasion to attend the funeral of a young child at Llangurig Church, situated on the main road leading from Aberystwyth to Llanidloes, and about five miles from the latter. After the service at the graveyard, the sexton held up an ordinary shovel into which all present cast something. The cortege was not large, as the child buried was only eight months old. When all had contributed their mites, and the sum had been counted, the sexton in an audible voice, declared the amount received, saying twenty-eight shillings and sixpence, many thanks to you all."

Another curious old custom at Welsh funerals was the "Offrwm," or Parson's Penny, which was as follows: After having read the burial service in the Church, the Clergyman stood near the Altar until the nearest relation went up first to him and deposited an offertory on the table, then the other mourners, one and all followed, and presented a piece of money, and the money received by the Parson in this manner amounted sometimes to a very large sum, especially when the mourners were wealthy.

The Author of Cradock's account of the most romantic parts of North Wales, published in 1773, makes the following observation concerning the custom: "Many popish customs are still retained in Wales; particularly offering made to the dead. These offerings must, of course, vary according to the rank of the persons deceased, as well as the affection that is borne to their memories. I was at a pauper's funeral when the donations amounted to half-a-crown, and I met with a Clergyman afterwards who had once received 90 guineas." This has not been practised in Cardigan and Carmarthenshire within the memory of the oldest inhabitant, but the custom was observed in former times, we have not the least doubt, and it has survived even until the present day in some form or other, in some parts of the Principality, especially in parts of North Wales, as the following correspondence which appeared in the "Oswestry Advertiser" in July, 1906, proves:

"OFFERTORIES AT FUNERALS IN

WALES."

> "Sir,—A correspondent in your columns, about a fortnight ago, called attention to this subject, and expressed disapproval of the manner in which the offertories are taken in some Churches at funeral services—by laying the plate on the bier near the pulpit, and the congregation in a disorderly manner laying their offertory on the plate. I regret to observe that this practice is still pursued in two parishes in this neighbourhood, and I should like to call the attention of the proper authorities to the desirableness of changing the custom, and adopting the system suggested by your correspondent, that the offertory should be taken at the gate, or that two or more plates should be taken around the congregation. The parish clerk, too, might be instructed not to announce the amount of the offertory."

Undoubtedly, this custom has survived from Pre-Reformation times, and was originally intended to compensate the Priest for praying for the Soul of the departed in Purgatory, but at present it only means a token of esteem towards the officiating Clergyman, or perhaps a tribute of respect to the departed. It was formerly customary in Wales to throw a sprig of rosemary into the grave on the coffin. The custom has been discontinued now, but it was done in the Vale of Towy, in Carmarthenshire as late as sixty years ago.

An excellent old Welsh Magazine, the "Gwyliedydd" for May, 1830, makes the following observation concerning the custom: "In ancient times, it was customary for all who attended a funeral to carry each a sprig of rosemary in his hand, and throw it into the grave as the minister was reading the last words of the funeral service"; and a writer in the Cambrian Quarterly Magazine, in the following year

adds that a custom analogous to this prevailed amongst the ancient heathens; who used to throw cypress wood into the grave in the same manner. The reason why they made choice of the cypress was, because its branches do not bud when thrown into the earth, but perish altogether; it was thus an expressive symbol of their opinion, that the bodies of the dead would never rise again. On the other hand, the Christians threw the rosemary into the graves of their brethren to express that hope of a joyful resurrection with which their faith had inspired them.

It was once customary to read the will of deceased over the grave. Sir S. R. Meyrick mentions this in his History of Cardiganshire, a hundred years ago, and the custom has been continued to a more recent date. The Rev. T. D. Thomas, Vicar of Llangorwen, near Aberystwyth, informed me that this was done by him at Llangadock, Carmarthenshire, about the year 1897, when officiating in the absence of the Vicar of that Parish.

There was also an old custom of burying one who had been murdered, in a coffin covered with red cloth. The Rev. D. G. Williams, in his collection of Carmarthenshire Folk-Lore, says that one William Powell, of Glan Areth, Vale of Towy, was so buried in the year 1770.

In Wales in pre-Reformation times, it was sometimes the practice to bury a rich man in the garments of a monk, as a protection against evil spirits; but this could not be done without paying large sums of money to the priests.

The custom of covering the coffin with wreaths is very generally observed at the present day throughout West and Mid-Wales. The coffin of the late Sir Pryse Pryse, Bart., Gogerddan, who was buried at Penrhyncoch, Cardiganshire, April 23rd, 1906, was covered with wreaths of most beautiful flowers, sent by Dowager Lady Pryse, Sir

Edward and Lady Webley-Parry-Pryse, Countess Lisburne, Viscountess Parker, Lady Evans, Lovesgrove; Mr. and Mrs. Loxdale, and many other relations and friends, as well as the tenants and servants.

In times past the Welsh always carried the association of graves and flowers to the most lavish extreme, and Shakespeare, alluding to this in "Cymbeline," the scene of which tragedy is more especially in Pembrokeshire, says:

"Arv. With fairest flowers,
Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave. Thou shalt not lack
The flower, that's like thy face, pale primrose; or
The azur'd harebell, like thy veins; no, nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
Outsweeten'd not thy breath."

It is more generally the case at the present day to cover the coffin with wreaths than with loose flowers, and occasionally the graves are lined with moss and flowers. To decorate the graves of the departed with flowers is a very old custom amongst the Welsh, especially on Palm Sunday, which is known in Wales as "Sul y Blodau"—Flowering Sunday. The custom is very generally observed even at the present day in Glamorganshire, where the churchyards and other burial places present a very beautiful appearance; but it is to be regretted that in West Wales, during the last sixty years, the practice to a very great extent has been discontinued, at least in rural districts. But it is reviving at the present day, and likely to grow as years go on. A correspondent from Aberaeron, in one of the papers noticed that on Palm Sunday, of the year 1906, many of the graves of Henfynyw, in that district had been cleaned and flowers placed upon them, whilst on others flowers grew. Whilst staying for a short time in the Parish of Cilcennin, about five years ago, I took particular

notice, that the planting of flowers and plants on the graves is renewed every year about Easter or Spring time, and that they are kept blooming through the loving care of the descendants of the departed. An old man named Jenkin Williams, a native of Llangwyryfon, a parish in the same County, who is 89 years of age, informed me that he well remembered the custom observed in his native parish, about seven miles from Aberystwyth, many years ago; but it is rarely observed at the present day. There are many parts of the country nowadays, where the practice is unknown, but there are evident signs that the beautiful old custom is reviving in parts of Carmarthenshire, Cardiganshire, and Pembrokeshire. In Glamorganshire, as I have already observed, the custom is very general.

The custom of placing tombstones on the graves is very generally observed, but very few of the stones are in the form of a cross. Indeed, crosses are remarkable for their absence in Welsh Churchyards. The Welsh people in rejecting what they consider as a too Popish a practice, have gone into the opposite extremes of adopting as monuments for their dear departed, the polytheistic obelisk of the ancient Egyptians; the Greek and Roman urns, and the chest-stone of the Druids. It has been the custom in some places to whitewash the small inscribed stones at the head and feet of poor people's graves. Several English authors who have written about Wales remark that in nearly every churchyard in the country, the mountain ash is to be seen. It seems to me that this is a mistake; for, as far as my experience is concerned, it is rarely seen in Welsh churchyards, at least in the present day, and I have seen a good many of the churchyards; but it must be admitted that the Welsh have regarded the tree as sacred, and there are a good many superstitions in connection with it, so that it is possible that the custom of growing it in churchyards was more common in former times.

The most common tree in the churchyards of Wales is the Yew, and the Welsh people from time immemorial, have always regarded the tree with solemn veneration, probably owing to its association with the dead. The Yew is famed in Welsh song, for the poets of Cambria in their elegies for their dead friends, often mention "Ywen Werdd y Llan" (the Green Yew of the Churchyard), and the poet Ioan Emlyn in his "Bedd y Dyn Tlawd"—"The Pauper's Grave" says:

"Is yr Ywen ddu gangenog,
Twmpath gwyrddlas gwyd ei ben."

In former times the yew was consecrated and held sacred, and in funeral processions its branches were carried over the dead by mourners, and thrown under the coffin in the grave. With rosemary, ivy, bay, etc., branches of the trees were also used for church decorations. The following extract from the Laws of Howel Dda, King of Wales in the tenth century, shows that the yew tree was the most valuable of all trees, and also how the consecrated yew of the priests had risen in value over the reputed sacred mistletoe of the Druids:—

"A consecrated yew, its value is a pound.
A mistletoe branch, three score pence.
An oak, six score pence.
Principal branch of an oak, thirty pence.
A yew-tree (not consecrated), fifteen pence.
A sweet apple, three score pence.
A sour apple, thirty pence.
A thorn-tree, sevenpence half-penny.
Every tree after that, four pence."

The planting of yew trees in Churchyards in Wales is as old as the Churchyards themselves; and it is probable that

they were originally intended to act as a screen to the Churches by their thick foliage, from the violence of the winds, as well as a shelter to the congregation assembling before the church door was opened. The first Churches in Wales were only wooden structures, and needed such screens much more than the comfortable stone Churches of the present day.

Another important object in planting the yew was to furnish materials for bows, as these were the national weapons of defence. The Churchyards were the places where they were most likely to be preserved, and some authorities derive the English word "yeoman" from yewmen, that is, the men who used the yew bow. The yew bow was very common throughout Wales in the old times, and skill in archery was universal in the country; and as late as Tudor times, the Welsh poet, Tudur Aled, asks, in lamenting the death of a squire:—

"Who can repeat his exploits to-day?
Who knows so well the strength of yew."

In the memorable Battle of Cressy, three thousand five hundred Welsh archers followed the Black Prince in the attack on France in the year 1346, and as many more came from the Welsh lordships, and bore such distinguished parts, for the success of this war was due to the skill of the Welsh Archers, and at the end of the battle the Prince adopted the motto, "Ich Dien," which has been the motto of the Princes of Wales ever since.

Evelyn's opinion is "that we find it (the yew) so numerously planted in Churchyards from its being thought a symbol of immortality, the tree being so lasting and always green." There are at the present day in the Churchyards of Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire, some fine specimens of the yew tree, and some of them hundreds

of years, if not nearly a thousand years old. In former times when Churchyards were resorted to for recreation, seats were fixed round the trunk of the tree.

Many of the Churchyards in Wales in ancient times, before the introduction of Christianity, had been Druidical circles. This is evident from the oval form of the ground of many of them, which often resemble small embankments, or mounds. Such is the case as regards Tregaron Church, in Cardiganshire, Llanddewi Brefi also is on elevated ground, as well as several other Churchyards.

How early the practice of enclosures near the Churches or Monasteries for burial of the dead began in Wales is quite uncertain. It seems that the practice was introduced into England by Archbishop Cuthbert about 750; but the origin of Churchyards in Wales was of a much earlier date, in all probability about two or three hundred years earlier than in England. Some of the best authorities assert that a few (but few only) of the Welsh Parish Churches and consecrated Churchyards can be traced to the days of St. Garmon, or Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, who paid two visits to this country about A.D. 429, and 447 respectively. It is possible that there were few Christians in Britain even in the first century; but Parochial Churches did not belong to the earlier ages of Christianity, and the clergy lived in towns, and undertook missionary journeys about the country, under the direction of their bishops.

Prior to the introduction of enclosures round Churches for the purpose of burial, it was customary (as it is in China to-day), to bury on high places, such as hills and mountains. Cremation had also been practised as it is evident from the urns for the preservation of the ashes of the dead, which are being discovered in various parts of Wales, from time to time. Perhaps the most recent and interesting discoveries of such urns were those found near Capel Cynon, in

Cardiganshire, containing ashes and portions of small calcined bones. A labourer named John Davies, came across them accidentally in an old mound on a hill, whilst working for Evan Thomas, a contractor under the County Council of Cardiganshire, in digging out stones for road-mending. (See Archæologia Cambrensis for January, 1905.)

The introduction of Christianity put an end to the practice of cremation.

Carneddau, or cairns, and tumuli, or mounds of earth, have been preserved till the present day in different parts of Wales, but it is to be regretted that many of these interesting monuments of antiquity, which the Welsh in ancient times erected in honour of their great men have been destroyed. That Wales has been celebrated for its Carneddau, is evident from the words of Taliesin, the chief poet of King Arthur's time, who calls the country "Cymru Garneddog" (Cairn Wales), and one the most interesting "Carnedd" is what is known as "bedd Taliesin"—Taliesin's grave, about eight miles north of Aberystwyth, where, according to tradition, Taliesin himself was buried.

Such monumental heaps over the mortal remains of the dead were of two kinds, according to the nature of the country. In stony districts, a cairn of stones was heaped, but where stones were scarce, a mound of turf of a circular construction, called tomen (tumulus), was deemed sufficient.

In ancient times this mode of burial was considered a most honourable one, and in passing the tomb of a warrior or some great man, it was customary for every passer by to throw a stone to the cairn, out of reverence to his memory. There was a similar custom among the Indians of Patagonia, which was still observed a few years ago. A

Patagonian Chief in passing the grave of an eminent chief or a great warrior, would dismount from his horse, and search for a stone to throw on the cairn.

Monumental Cairns were also common in Scotland, for in Ossian's Poems, Shibric, in Carricthura says: "If fall I must in the field, raise high my grave, Vinvela. Grey stones, and heaped earth, shall mark me to future times." To erect mounds seems to have been a very ancient custom, for Herodotus, in giving a full and most interesting account of the strange practices of the Ancient Scythians, in connection with the burial of their Kings, observes amongst other things, "Having done this, they all heap up a large mound, striving and vieing with each other to make it as large as possible."

When the custom of burying in churchyards became general in Wales, in course of time, to bury in cairns and mounds, which formerly had been an honourable practice, was discontinued, and even condemned, as fit only for the great criminals; and, as Dr. Owen Pugh, observes: "when this heap became to be disgraced, by being the mark where the guilty was laid, the custom for every one that passed, to fling his stone, still continued, but now as a token of detestation"; hence originated the old Welsh sayings "Carn lleidr (a thief's Cairn), "Carn ar dy wyneb." (Cairn on thy face). Even at the present day throughout Wales, when any one is guilty of robbery or swindle, it is customary to call such a man a "Carn leidr" (A cairn thief). In the parish of Llanwenog, six miles from Lampeter, there is a spot called "Carn Philip Wyddyl." an old farmer, named "Tomos, Ty-cam," informed me that according to the traditions of the district, this Philip was a "Carn leidr," or the ringleader of a gang of thieves, who, in an attempt to escape, jumped down from Llanwenog Steeple, and broke his leg. His pursuers stoned him to death, and buried him beneath a carn.

CHAPTER IV.

VARIOUS OTHER CUSTOMS.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S DAY CUSTOMS.

hristmas at the present day in Wales is not so important as it used to be in former times, though it is still the beginning of a holiday season, and also a regular feasting-day. Morning service is conducted in the Parish Church, but is not so well-attended as in former times. It is often the custom to have an Eisteddfod or a concert in the evening in Nonconformist Chapels. In towns, the children hang up their stockings the night before Christmas, expecting to find some gifts in them next morning. Christmas is also an important day for the young maidens to kiss and be kissed. A girl places a mistletoe to hang over the chair in which a young man, whom she wishes to catch, is likely to sit. Then when he comes under the mistletoe, she kisses him suddenly, and whenever she succeeds in doing so, she claims from him a new pair of gloves.

The favourite observance for a young man to kiss a girl under the branches is also well known, and it was once supposed that the maiden who missed being kissed under the mistletoe on Christmas would forfeit her chance of matrimony, at least during the ensuing twelve months. These superstitions and favourite observances have come down from the time of the Druids.

The most interesting feature of Christmas in Wales in times gone by was undoubtedly the "Plygain" which means morning twilight. The "Plygain" was a religious service held in the Parish Church, at three o'clock on Christmas morning to watch the dawn commemorative of the coming of Christ, and the daybreak of Christianity. The service consisted of song, prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, and there was at that early hour a large congregation even in remote districts, as many came from long distances, often three or four miles on a frosty night, or through snow. It was customary for each family to take their own candles with them to this early service. These candles were of various colours, and should any remain after the service was over, they became the property of the clerk. Carols were sung, and it was customary for anyone who claimed to be a bard to compose a carol; indeed, a poet was not considered a poet unless he could sing a carol. Some old people informed me that in connection with these early services there was a great deal of disorder on account of men under the influence of drink attending the Church after a night of revelry, and that this put an end to the "Plygain" in some places. In course of time the hour was changed from three to four or five, and such service is still continued in Llanddewi Brefi and other places in Cardiganshire.

After beginning Christmas morning so devoutly with Divine Service at early dawn, it was the custom in old times to spend most of the day in enjoyment, especially

hunting the hare, the woodcock, but the chief sport was in connection with the squirrel.

There was a custom once at Tenby, in Pembrokeshire, for the young men of the town to escort the Rector, with lighted torches from his residence to the Church to the early service on Christmas morning. They extinguished their torches as soon as they reached the porch, and went in to the early service in the Church, and at the conclusion of it, the torches were re-lighted, and the procession returned to the Rectory, the chimes ringing till the time of the usual morning service. Lighted torches were also carried through the streets by a procession on Christmas Eve, and cow-horns were blown, and windows of houses were decorated by evergreens.

In North Pembrokeshire the holidays commenced, especially amongst the farmers, on Christmas Day, and were continued for three weeks, viz., till Epiphany Sunday. The Rev. O. Jenkin Evans, writing in "Pembrokeshire Antiquities," page 47, says:—"On the 25th day of December, the farmers with their servants and labourers suspended all farming operations, and in every farm the plough was at once carried into the private house, and deposited under the table in the 'Room Vord' (i.e., the room in which they took their meals), where it remained until the expiration of "Gwyliau Calan." During these three weeks, parties of men went about from house to house, and were invited into the "Room Vord," where they sat around the table, regaling themselves with beer, which was always kept warm in small neat brass pans in every farm-house ready for callers. But the peculiar custom which existed amongst these holiday-makers was that they always wetted the plough which lay dormant under the table with their beer before partaking of it themselves, thus indicating that though they had dispensed with its service for the time, they had not forgotten it, and it would again, in due course,

be brought out on the green sward and turn it topsy-turvy. These bands of men would sometimes carry with them the "Wren," singing simple popular ditties. On Christmas Day, a sumptuous dinner was prepared at the principal farms in every neighbourhood to which all the others, including the cottagers, were invited. The repast consisted of geese, beef, pudding, etc."

One of the most curious customs which was once in vogue about Christmas time was the procession known as "Mari Lwyd Lawen" ("the Merry Grey Mary"), which was a man wearing the skeleton of a horse's head decked with ribbons and rosettes.

The man was enveloped in a large white sheet, and proceeded round the houses, followed by a merry procession, singing songs and playing merry pranks, collecting Christmas boxes:

"Mari Lwyd lawen,
Sy'n dod o Bendarren," etc.

(Merry grey Mary,
Who comes from Pendarren.)

When a real skeleton could not be got, it was customary to make one of straw and rags. It seems that "Mari Lwyd" belonged more especially to Glamorganshire, yet it was well-known in Carmarthenshire also, not only in those places bordering on Glamorgan, but also in the Vales of Towy and Cothy. Mr. T. Davies (Eryr Glyn Cothi), and others, informed me that the "Mari" procession visited Llanegwad, and other places between Llandilo and Carmarthen only a few years ago. The curious custom was not known in Pembrokeshire, nor indeed in Cardiganshire, though I was informed that "Mari Lwyd" on one occasion

at least did visit the latter county from Glamorganshire, and tramped across from Llandyssul, in the Vale of Teify, to New Quay, on the sea coast, calling at Lampeter and other places on the way.

According to the excellent Magazine, named "The Cambrian Journal" published 50 years ago, there was an old custom once at Tenby in Pembrokeshire, sometimes before, and sometimes after Christmas Day, for the fishermen to dress up one of their number, whom they called the "Lord Mayor of Penniless Cove," with a covering of evergreens, and a mask over his face; they would then carry him about, seated on a chair, with flags flying, and a couple of violins playing before him.

Before every house, the "Lord Mayor" would address the occupants, wishing them "a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year." If his good wishes were responded to with money, his followers gave three cheers, the masquer would himself return thanks, and the crowd again give "three times three," hip, hip, hurrah!

There was also in vogue once the barbarous practice of "holly beating." This was on the day after Christmas, St. Stephen's Day, which consisted in a furious onslaught being made by men and boys, armed with large bushes of the prickly holly, on the naked and unprotected arms of female domestics, and others of a like class.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

In Pembrokeshire, to rise early on New Year's morning will, it is considered, bring good luck. On that morning

also it is deemed wise to bring a fresh loaf into the house as it is considered the succeeding loaves throughout the year will be influenced by that performance.

In most places throughout West Wales, even at the present day, people are very particular as to whether they see a man or a woman the first thing on New Year's morning. Mr. Williams in his "Llen-gwerin Sir Gaerfyrddin," says that in parts of Carmarthenshire in order to secure future luck or success during the coming year, a man must see a woman, and a woman a man. And the Rev. N. Thomas, Vicar of Llanbadarn Fawr, informed me that he has met people in his Parish who consider it lucky to see a woman first. As a rule, however, the majority of people both men and women deem it lucky to see a man, but unlucky to see a woman.

Even now in various parts of the country, good many object to the entrance of a woman before the in-coming of one of the other sex, this is particularly the case in the central parts of Cardiganshire, especially in the Parish of Llanddewi Brefi and surrounding districts between Lampeter and Tregaron. This is also true of some parts of Pembrokeshire.

According to the late Rector of Newport, Pembrokeshire, the man must needs bear one of the four lucky names—Dafydd, Ifan, Sion and Siencyn. "Supposing the man was not called by one of these names, the person first seen might as well be a woman, if she only bore one of the lucky names—Sian a Sioned, Mair a Marged. Then all would go well for that year at least. A hare or a magpie must not cross one before twelve, and the cock must not crow before supper on New Year's Day, or some dire calamity might befall one after all."

There was everywhere a general desire to see "the Old

Year out and the New Year in." In South Pembrokeshire some danced the old year out; some drank it out, and many walked it out. I was informed at Talybont, that once those who desired to see "the New Year in "crowded to each other's houses in North Cardiganshire to pass the time in story-telling and feasting. The children especially, looked forward to New Year's morning, with the greatest interest, as it was, and still is in some places, customary for them to go about from house to house, asking for "calenig," or New Year's gift. The children on such occasions often repeated something as follows:—

"Rhowch galenig yn galonog,
I ddyn gwan sydd heb un geiniog,
Gymaint roddwch, rhowch yn ddiddig,
Peidiwch grwgnach am ryw ychydig.

"Mi godais heddyw maes o'm ty,
A'm cwd a'm pastwn gyda mi,
A dyma'm neges ar eich traws,
Set llanw'm cwd a bara a chaws.

"Calenig i fi, calenig i'r ffon,
Calenig i fytta'r noson hon;
Calenig i mam am gwyro sane,
Calenig i nhad am dapo sgidie.

"Chwi sy'n meddi aur ac arian,
Dedwydd ydych ar Ddydd Calan,
Braint y rhai sy'n perchen moddion,
Yw cyfranu i'r tylodion,
'Rhwn sy a chyfoeth ac ai ceidw,
Nid oes llwyddiant i'r dyn hwnw."

"Os gwelwch yn dda ga'i g'lenig?—
Shar i 'nhad a shar i mam,
A shar i'r gwr bonheddig."

The following is from an old song for New Year's Day, heard at Tregaron in Cardiganshire:—

"Rhowch i mi docyn diogel,
Fel gallo mam ei arddel,
Neu chwech gael cwart,
'Dwy'n hidio fawr,
Waeth fi yw gwas mawr Trecefel."

In the English districts of West Wales, such as South Pembrokeshire, such verses as the following were repeated:—

Get up on New Year's morning,
The cocks are all a-crowing;
And if you think you're awake too soon,
Why get up and look at the stars and moon.

"The roads are very dirty,
My shoes are very thin,
I wish you a happy New Year,
And please to let me in."

The following is another specimen from North Cardigan:—

"Mae rhew a'r eira yn bur oeredd,
Awel fain yn dod o'r gogledd,
Ambell gybydd oddi cartre,
Yn lle rhanu rhai ceinioge,
A rhai eraill yn eu caban,
Yn gwneyd eu cilwg ar Ddydd Calan."

When boys and girls knocked at the doors of misers who refused to give anything, they went away disappointed, repeating

"Blwyddyn newydd ddrwg,
A llond y ty o fwg."

"A bad New Year to you,
And a house full of smoke."

But as a rule the farmers were very kind to all comers, both in Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, and Pembrokeshire, unless they had been disappointed by seeing a girl first that morning, which was, as I have already observed, considered an unlucky omen. Even at the present day this superstition is very strong in Llanddewi Brefi, Cardiganshire, and, indeed, many other parts of Wales, for I have taken particular notice that the first boy who comes to the door on New Year's morning, if he happens to come before a girl is seen, he is warmly welcomed into the house and even taken upstairs and into the bedrooms so that those who are in their beds might have the satisfaction of seeing a male the first thing on New Year's Day, to secure good-luck. Before the boy departs some money is given him, about sixpence as a rule at the present day, but in former times he got a loaf of bread instead. At the present day boys and girls, and occasionally a few poor old women continue to go round from house to house from early dawn till mid-day collecting alms, when each of the children receive a copper, in former times, however, it was more customary to give them some bread and cheese, which they took home to their parents in a bag which they carried on their backs, or a basket under their arms.

When the children had more than they could carry, they would leave some of it at a certain house and return for it the following day. In some places it was customary to keep on to collect alms in this manner for two days, but only those who were in very poor circumstances were allowed to go about on the second day.

It was once customary to carry an orange, with oats stuck in it, placed on a stick, round the houses. The visitors sang at the door and expected something to eat and drink.

Another interesting custom observed, especially in Pembrokeshire, on New Year's Day was for children to visit the houses in the morning about 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning with a vessel filled with spring water, fresh from the well and with the aid of a sprig of evergreen, sprinkled the faces of those they met, and at the same time singing as follows:—

"Here we bring new water from the well so clear,
For to worship God with, this Happy New Year;
Sing levy dew, sing levy dew, the water and the wine,
With seven bright gold wires, and bugles that do shine;
Sing reign of fair maid, with gold upon her toe,
Open you the west door and turn the old year go;
Sing reign of fair maid, with gold upon her chin,
Open you the east door and let the New Year in."

When the children entered into a house, it was customary for them to sprinkle every one of the family even in their beds with this fresh spring water, and they received a small fee for the performance.

There was a ceremony among the Druids and others in ancient times, of throwing spring water over the shoulder in order to command the attention of elemental spirits.
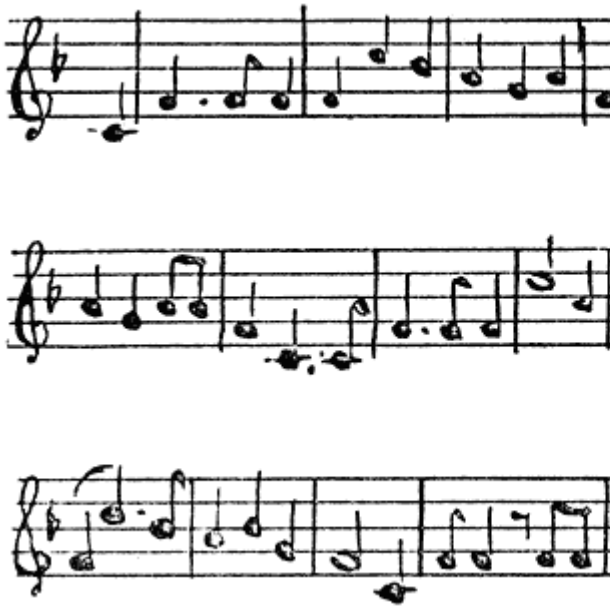
It is customary in some places, especially in parts of Carmarthenshire, for young men to sprinkle the young girls with water in their beds, and the young maidens in their turn sprinkle the young men, and this is sometimes done when the one upon whom water is thrown is fast asleep.

It is still customary for young men with musical instruments to visit the palaces of the gentry at early dawn, and play some of the beautiful old Welsh Airs, when they receive warm welcome and generous gifts.

Among Twelfth Night Custom, none was more celebrated in Pembrokeshire in the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth than the “cutty wren,” though there are hardly any traces of the custom in Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire. The custom was something as follows:

Having procured a wren, the bird was placed in a little house of paper with glass windows, sometimes a cage or a lantern, or a box was used for that purpose, and often decorated with coloured ribbons, and “every young lady, and even old ladies, used to compete in presenting the grandest ribbon to the “wren.”

The cage or the lantern thus decorated with the little bird in it, was hoisted on four poles, one at each corner, and four men carried it about for the purpose of levying contributions, singing a long ballad or ditty such as follows on the following tune:—



“Where are you going? says Milder to Melder,
O where are you going? says the younger to the elder;
O I cannot tell says Festel to Fose;
We’re going to the woods said John the Red Nose.
We’re going to the woods said John the Red Nose.

“O what will you do there? says Milder to Melder,
O what will you do there? says the younger to the elder;
O I do not know, says Festel to Fose;
To shoot the cutty wren, said John the Red Nose,
To shoot the cutty wren, said John the Red Nose.

“O what will you shoot her with? says Milder to Melder,
O what will you shoot her with? says the younger to the elder
O I cannot tell, says Festel to Fose;
With bows and arrows, said John the Red Nose,
With bows and arrows, said John the Red Nose.

“O that will not do! says Milder to Melder,
O that will not do says the younger to the elder;
O what will you do then? says Festel to Fose;
With great guns and cannons says John the Red Nose,
With great guns and cannons says John the Red Nose.

“O what will you bring her home in? says Milder to Melder,
O what will you bring her home in? says the younger to elder;
O I cannot tell, says Festel to Fose;
On four strong men’s shoulders, said John the Red Nose.
On four strong men’s shoulders, said John the Red Nose.

“O that will not do, says Milder to Melder,
O that will not do, says the younger to the elder;
O what will you do then? says Fester to Fose;
On big carts and waggons, said John the Red Nose,
On big carts and waggons, said John the Red Nose.

“What will you cut her up with? says Milder to Melder,
What will you cut her up with? says the younger to the elder;
O I do not know, saith Festel to Fose;
With knives and with forks, said John the Red Nose,
With knives and with forks, said John the Red Nose.

“O that will not do, says Melder to Milder,
O that will not do, says the younger to the elder;
O what will do then? says Festel to Fose;
With hatchets and cleavers, said John the Red Nose,
With hatchets and cleavers, said John the Red Nose,

“What will you boil her in? says Milder to Melder,
What will you boil her in? says the younger to the elder;

O I cannot tell thee, says Festel to Fose;
In pots and in kettles, said John the Red Nose,
In pots and in kettles, said John the Red Nose."

For more on this interesting subject see "Manners and Customs of the People of Tenby" in "The Cambrian Journal," Vol. IV., page 177.

I may add that I heard the above ditty sung in Welsh in several parts of South Wales, especially when I was a boy.

Another such custom was called "tooling," and its purpose was beer. It consisted in calling at the farm-houses and pretending to look for one's tools behind the beer cask. "I've left my saw behind your beer cask," a carpenter would say; "my whip," a carter; and received the tool by proxy, in the shape of a cup of ale. It was also customary for the women to practice what was called sowling, viz., asking for "sowl," that is cheese, fish or meat.

It was also customary in parts of the counties of Pembroke and Carmarthen for poor people to proceed round the neighbourhood from house to house with their "Wassail bowls," and singing outside each door something as follows—

"Taste our jolly wassail bowl,
Made of cake, apple, ale, and spice;
Good master give command,
You shall taste once or twice
Of our jolly wassail bowl."

People who partook of the contents of the bowl were of course expected to pay, so that the invitation to "taste our jolly wassail bowl," was not always accepted. In such cases the bearer of the bowl sung the following rhyme in disappointment:—

"Are there any maidens here,
As I suppose there's none
Or they wouldn't leave us here,
With our jolly wassail bowl."

"The huge bowl was on the table, brimful of ale. William held a saucepan, into which Pally and Rachel poured the ale, and which he subsequently placed upon the fire. Leaving it to boil, the party seated round the fire began to roast some of the apples that Pally had just put upon the table. This they effected by tying long pieces of twine to their stems, and suspending them from the different "pot-hooks and hangers" with which the chimney corner abounded, twisting the cord from time to time to prevent their burning.... By the time they had all completed their trials the ale was boiling and the apples were roasted. The tempting beverage went smoking hot into the bowl, and was joined by the contents of a small, suspicious-looking, tightly-corked bottle, which I strongly suspect, contained what the French call the "water of life," and a very strong water it undoubtedly is. Next there was a hissing and splutting greeting between the ale and the roasted apples, which was succeeded by the introduction of some of the "nices," with which Pally's table was covered. Different masculines of the party added to the treat by producing packets of buns, raisins, or biscuits, which they dropped singly into the bowl until it was full to overflowing. With a sufficient proportion of spices and sugar, the wassail bowl was finally prepared, and, as if by instinct, just as it was completed, in popped three or four of Pally's ancient cronies, all dying to partake of it. The cups and glasses were speedily filled, when William proposed Pally's health, which was cordially drunk by the whole party." (The Vale of Towey, pages 83–87).

It was customary also, especially in parts of Carmarthenshire, on "Calan Hen" (Old New Year's Day)

to make a feast for those who had helped them with the harvest.

It was also once customary on Epiphany Night in West Wales to visit the houses of those who had been married since the Epiphany before. Those who went round the houses in this manner requested admittance in rhyme and expected food and beer to be given to them by the inmates. Epiphany, known in Wales as "Gwyl Ystwyll," was formerly closely associated with Christmas.

Many of the old customs and festivities in connection with the New Year are of great antiquity; it was then that the Druids went to seek the mistletoe on the oak. To the Druids the oak and the mistletoe were objects of veneration; and one of the most imposing ceremonies was the cutting of the latter, some days before the New Year, with a Golden Knife, in a forest dedicated to the gods; and the distributing its branches with much ceremony as New Year's Gifts among the people.

On the day for cutting the mistletoe, a procession of Bards, Druids, and Druidesses was formed to the forest, and singing all the while. The Arch-Druid climbed the tree and cut down the mistletoe, the other Druids spreading a sheet to receive it.

This scene was enacted with great success at the Builth Wells Pageant, August, 1909—(see illustration)—which I witnessed myself with interest.

The Romans had also their festival in honour of Janus and Strenia about the same time of the year. It is interesting to add that in England in the days of King Alfred a law respecting Feast Days was passed, in which the twelve days after the birth of Christ were made a season of holidays.



ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.

The custom of sending a pretty Valentine, or an ugly one,

of love, or from mere mischief, as the case might be, was very common once in Wales. We do not hear much of Valentines at the present, however, since the Picture Post Cards have become so common.

ST. DAVID'S DAY.

St. David is the Patron Saint of Wales, and strange to say the only Welsh Saint in the Calendar of the Western Church (Canonized by Calixtus II.) more than five hundred years after his death.

His day is celebrated on the 1st of March throughout the world where Welshmen are. In Wales there are in some places grand dinners, and speeches are made and songs sung, and at present it is customary to conduct Divine Service on the day even in St. Paul's Cathedral, London. But perhaps the most characteristic feature of the day is the wearing of the Leek, though it must be admitted that wearing the Leek on St. David's Day is not very general in the country districts of Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire at the present day, but the interesting old custom is reviving, especially in the towns, and every true-born Welshman ought to wear on the 1st of March the Welsh National Emblem which is dedicated to St. David.

The origin of the custom is not known, there are many who positively assert that it originated in the days of St. David himself; that is, according to some traditions, during a memorable battle against the Saxons the Welsh obtained a complete victory over their enemies. During the engagement the Welsh had leeks in their hats on the occasion for their military colour and distinction of

themselves, by persuasion of the said prelate St. David.

According to other traditions, the battle of Poictiers has been named; also that of Cressy, when the Welsh archers did good service with the English against the French, under Edward the Black Prince of Wales, and Shakespeare alludes to this in Henry V.:—

Fluellen says to Henry: "If your Majesty is remembered of it, the Welshmen did good service in a garden where leeks did grow, wearing leeks in their Monmouth caps; which your Majesty knows, to this hour is an honourable badge of the service; and, I do believe, your Majesty takes no scorn to wear the leek on St. Tavy's Day."

King Henry: "I wear it for a memorable honour; for I am Welsh, you know, good countryman."

It seems that there was a custom in London 250 years ago of hanging effigies of Welshmen on St. David's Day; for Pepys says:—

(March 1, 1667). In Mark Lane I do observe (it being St. David's Day), the picture of a man dressed like a Welshman, hanging by the neck upon one of the poles that stand out at the top of one of the merchants' houses, in full proportion and very handsomely done, which is one of the oddest sights I have seen a good while.

SHROVE TUESDAY.

Shrove Tuesday, which is called in Welsh Dydd Mawrth Ynyd, was formerly kept as a holiday; but not much notice

is taken of the day now, except that the old custom of pancakes eating still survives in most places.



Making and Eating Pancake

(From an Old I

“Deuwch heno, fy nghyfeillion,
Merched glan a’r bechgyn mwynion,
A chydunwn heb un gofyd,
Wneyd Crammwythau ar Nos Ynyd.”

Come to-night my friends,
Fair young maidens and gentle young men;
And let us join without sorrow
To make pancakes on Shrove Tuesday.

The day was once also noted for foot-ball kicking in some districts, and also for throwing at cocks, that is hens which had laid no eggs before that day were threshed with a flail as being good for nothing.

Mr. Williams in his excellent Welsh essay on the Folk Lore of Carmarthenshire, says that he had been informed by a middle aged person of a curious old custom of playing with eggs. Mr. Williams's informant when a child and other children with him, had been taught by an old woman how to play some peculiar game with eggs on this day, which was something as follows:—Eggs were boiled for two or three hours till they were as hard as stones. The children used to colour their eggs for the prettiest by boiling them in coffee with certain herbs, etc., then for half of the day, they kept throwing the eggs at each other. This curious kind of play reminds me of a similar practice which I noticed in South America many years ago, more especially in the Argentine Republic, where it was customary for the first half of the day for people to throw eggs, water, etc., at each other, and this was done even in the sheets of Buenos Ayres. The custom was known as "El Carnival," that is giving way to the flesh before the beginning of Lent or Fasting Time.

In the North of England boys play with eggs on Easter Eve, and centuries ago eggs were blest by the Priest and preserved as Amulates.

It was once customary for the tenants of Nanteos, in North Cardiganshire, to give to their landlord Shrove Hens and Eggs (ieir ac wyau Ynyd). This was undoubtedly a survival of the old custom of paying rent, or a portion of it, "in kind."

To render in kind ducks and geese, loads of coal, etc., was continued yearly, both in Cardiganshire and

Carmarthenshire within living memory.

LENT.

There was an old custom once in Wales of taking an egg-shell, filled with water, little meat, flour, etc., to a house of a neighbour, and leave it on the outside of the window while all the family were having their supper, and then run away, for if they were caught in doing it, they were obliged to clean old shoes as a punishment. The egg-shell used on the occasion was called “Crochan Grawys” (Lent Cauldron). Some old people remember this in Carmarthenshire.

PALM SUNDAY.

I have already, in my Chapter on Funeral Customs, referred to the beautiful old Welsh Custom of decorating the graves on Palm Sunday.

GOOD FRIDAY.

Good Friday in Welsh is called “Dydd Gwener Groglith (The Lesson of the Cross Friday).

Not much notice is taken at present day of the day, and the services conducted in the Parish Churches in country places are as a rule poorly attended. In former times there were many interesting customs and strange superstitions in connection with the day, especially in the South of Pembrokeshire, where there was once a custom called "Making Christ's Bed," which was done by gathering a quantity of long reeds from the river and woven into the shape of a man. Then this was stretched on a wooden cross, and laid in a field.

It is said that it was customary in that particular part of West Wales, especially at Tenby, to walk barefooted to Church, and that such Pre-Reformation custom continued till the close of the eighteenth century, which was done so as not to disturb the earth! In returning from Church the people regaled themselves with hot cross buns, and after reaching the house they were eaten. But a certain number of them were tied up in a bag, and hung in the kitchen, where they remained till the next Good Friday, for medical purposes, for it was believed that the eating of one of them cured diseases. They were also used as a panacea for the diseases of animals, as well as serviceable to frighten away evil spirits and goblins. These hot cross buns which figured in such a peculiar manner in South Pembrokeshire, nothing is known of them in the adjoining counties of Carmarthen and Cardigan, among the country people; it is possible, however, that they were known there prior to the Reformation or even after. But perhaps the bun custom was unknown in those two counties, and it had been introduced into South Pembrokeshire (where the people are not of Welsh origin), from England or some other country. Some writers trace the origin of hot cross buns to the cakes which the pagan Saxons used to eat in honour of their goddess Eostre, and that the custom dates back to pre-historic times, and that their connection with the Cross of

our Saviour is only by adoption. How far this is true it is impossible to know with certainty; but it is evident that the early Christians adopted many pagan rites and customs. According to Hone's Year Book, the hot cross buns are the ecclesiastic Eulogiae or Consecrated Loaves bestowed in the Church as alms, and to those who could not receive the Host. It was once the custom in Wales to express abhorrence of Judas Iscariot, and the curious custom of flogging him is still in vogue in South America. In former times Good Friday was the day on which rings were blessed by Kings and given away as remedies for the cramp.

EASTER.

It is deemed essential by many people to wear some new article of dress, if only a pair of gloves or a new ribbon; for not to do so is considered unlucky, and the birds will be angry with you. It is probable that the origin of this custom is associated with Easter baptism, when a new life was assumed by the baptised, clothed in righteousness as a garment. In former times people had such respect for this day that many kept their children unbaptised till Easter Sunday, and many old men and old women went to Church to receive the Communion who were hardly to be seen in the Lord's House on any other Sunday during the year.

There was once an old fancy in Wales that the sun used to dance for joy when it rose on Easter morning, and great care was taken in some places to get up the children and young people to see such sight of the sun dancing in honour of the rising of our Lord. The sun was sometimes

aided in this performance by a bowl of clear water, into which the youth must look and see the orb dance, as it would be dangerous to look directly on the sun while thus engaged. The religious dance of the ancient Druids is believed to exist in modern times in a round dance wherein the figures imitate the motions of the sun and moon. See "British Goblins," by Sykes, page 274.

FIRST DAY OF APRIL.

April fool, known in Wales as "Ffwl Ebrill," was observed as in England, and still observed to a certain extent.

MAY.

The old customs and superstitions in connection with May Day are unknown in Wales in the present day, once, however, May-day dances and revelling were most popular, especially in Pembrokeshire, as the following interesting account which appeared in the "Cambrian Journal" proves:—

"On May-eve, the inhabitants would turn out in troops, bearing in their hands boughs of thorn in full blossom, which were bedecked with other flowers, and then stuck outside the windows of the houses. Maypoles were reared up in different parts of the town (of Tenby), decorated with flowers, coloured papers, and bunches of variegated

ribbon. On May-day the young men and maidens would, joining hand in hand, dance round the May-poles, and "thread the needle," as it was termed. A group of fifty to a hundred persons would wend their ways from one pole to another, till they had thus traversed the town. Meeting on their way other groups, who were coming from an opposite direction, both parties would form a "lady's chain," and to pass on their respective ways."

The May-pole was once most popular in Wales, but the old custom has entirely died out, though we still hear occasionally of a May Queen being selected in some places.



May Queen.

A PRESENT-DAY WELSH QUEEN OF MAY.

The May-pole in Wales was called Bedwen, because it was always made of birch which is called in Welsh Bedwen, a tree associated with the gentler emotions; and as I have

already observed in another chapter, to give a lover a birchen branch, is for a maiden to accept his addresses. Games of various sorts were played around the bedwen. The fame of a village depended on its not being stolen away, and parties were constantly on the alert to steal the bedwen, a feat which, when accomplished, was celebrated with peculiar festivities. This rivalry for the possession of the May-pole was probably typical of the ancient idea that the first of May was the boundary day dividing the confines of winter and summer, when a fight took place between the powers of the air, on the one hand striving to continue the reign of winter on the other to establish that of summer.

Here may be cited the Mabinogi of Kilhwch and Olwen, where it speaks of the daughter of Lludd Llaw Eraint. She was the most splendid maiden in the three Islands of the mighty, and in three islands adjacent, and for her does Gwyn Ap Nudd, the fairy King, fight every first of May till the day of doom.

She was to have been the bride of Gwythyr, the son of Greidawl, when Gwyn Ap Nudd carried her off by force. The bereaved bridegroom followed, and there was a bloody struggle, in which Gwyn was victorious, and he acted most cruelly, for he slew an old warrior, took out his heart from his breast, and constrained the warrior's son to eat the heart of his father.

When Arthur heard of this he summoned Gwyn Ap Nudd before him, and deprived him of the fruits of his victory. But he condemned the two combatants to fight for the maiden Olwen henceforth for ever on every first of May till doomsday; the victor on that day to possess the maiden.

In former times a fire of logs was kindled on the first day of May, around which it was customary for men and

women, youths and maidens, to dance hand in hand, singing to the harp, and some of the men would leap over the fire, even at the peril of being burnt. The origin of such strange custom is undoubtedly to be traced to the "belltaine" fires of the Druids.

It seems these bon-fires were lighted in some parts of Wales on Midsummer Eve, and the "Glain Nadrodd" (snake-stones) were also, according to Welsh traditions, associated with the same time of the year.

It is called Glain Nadrodd from the old Welsh tradition that it is made by snakes at some special gathering among them, when one of their number is made a kind of sacrifice out of the body of which they manufacture the stone. It is of a greenish colour and of the size of an ordinary marble. To find a "Glain Nadrodd" is considered a very lucky omen and they were anciently used as charms. It was also believed in former times that the bon-fires lighted in May or Midsummer protected the lands from sorcery, so that good crops would follow. The ashes were also considered valuable as charms.

ALLHALLOW'S EVE (NOS CALAN GAEA.)

The Eve of All Saints is known in Wales as "Nos Calan Gaeaf," and in former times there were many old customs in connection with it, most of which have now disappeared. I have already given an account of the Love Charms and spells which were performed on this eve, and amongst other strange doings, the uncanny custom of going round the Church in order to see the spirit of a future husband or wife. But there was in some places another

weird ceremony of going round the church at midnight, and look in through the keyhole in order to see the spectral forms, or to hear a spirit calling the names of all those who were to die in the neighbourhood during the year; that is during the coming twelve months from that date, which seems to suggest that the new year began at this time once in old times. Many were afraid, especially children, of going out on Allhallow's Eve as the night among the Welsh was one of the "tair nos ysprydion" (three spirits' nights) as it was supposed that the spirits were free to roam about, and a demon at large in the form of a "Hwch ddu gwta" (black sow without a tail)

"Nos Calan Gaea',
Bwbach ar bob camfa."

(On Allhallow's Eve,
A bogie on every stile.)

On this eve it was formerly the custom to kindle a bonfire, a practice which continued to a more recent date in the Northern part of the Principality than in the South.

Besides fuel, each person present used to throw into the fire a small stone, with a mark whereby he should know it again. If he succeeded in finding the stone on the morrow, the year would be a lucky one for him, but the contrary if he failed to recover it.

Those who assisted at the making of the bonfire watched until the flames were out, and then somebody would raise the usual cry, when each ran away for his life, lest he should be found last, and be overtaken by the 'bogie.'—(See "Celtic Folk-Lore," by Sir J. Rhys, page 225.)

When a boy, I well remember young men and boys who

were full of mischief, making a hollow inside a turnip, and having put a candle in it, carried it about as a bogie to frighten timid people.

Allhallow's Eve is known in many parts of West Wales as "Nos twco fale," (apple snatching night), and the game of snatching apples, has been continued in some districts until only a few years ago. Apples and candles, fastened to strings, were suspended from the ceiling and the merry-makers in trying to catch the apple frequently got the candle instead, to the great amusement of those present. Another amusing custom was to try to bring up an apple with the teeth from a tub of water.

In some parts of the country, especially Carmarthenshire, it was customary to peel the apple carefully, and throw it, that is the peel, back over the head. Then when this peel had fallen on the floor behind one's back, particular notice was taken in what form it appeared, and whenever it resembled a letter of the Alphabet, the same was supposed to be the first letter of the Christian name of the thrower's future wife or husband.

HARVEST CUSTOMS, Etc.

"Y Gaseg Fedi, or Harvest Mare."

In West and Mid-Wales there have been various harvest customs, the most interesting of which was probably the Harvest Mare, known in Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire as "Y Gaseg Fedi, or Gaseg Ben-Fedi," but in Pembrokeshire it was called "Y Wrach." This took place at the end of the harvest.

There was a large crowd of both men and women reaping on the last day; and by working at the harvest in this manner small cottagers and other poor people paid the farmer for the privilege of planting a few rows of potatoes in the land, and for the loan of a horse and cart, or for carting home coal, etc.. By working at the harvest poor people paid their debt to the farmer, and still do so to a certain extent. To each of the women who worked at the harvest was given a candle to take home with her every evening, and to the men a little tobacco was given to those who indulged in the bad habit of smoking.

An old woman 98 years of age, who lived near Crosswood, Cardiganshire, informed me about three years ago that she well recollected when a child that a farmer who lived at Penllwyn, in the Vale of Rheidol, used to give to each of the men and women a sheaf to take home with them in the evening, and that this farmer was the only one in the country who did this within her memory, and that he did it as he had seen his father doing so. The old lady also added that the custom had been general once.

It was the custom once to “dwrn fedi” (fist reaping) a very laborious work, for our forefathers had no scythes nor machines in former times, so that the sickle was everything. It was customary once for a number of farmers in the same district to arrange together not to cut their fields on the same day so that they might be able to assist each other. A few men would come together on an appointed day from each farm in the district that they might be able to cut and bind all the corn of one farm in a single day; and it is still the custom in many places to do this in connection with hay as well as shearing sheep on the mountains.

The Gaseg Fedi (harvest mare) at the end of the harvest was a small quantity of the last corn which was left

standing in the field, and tied up carefully; and great excitement existed, and much amusement was created when the last standing was reached. There was a good deal of fun in connection with cutting the mare. Each reaper in his turn was allowed to throw his sickle at the corn until it was cut, from a distance of about 15 or 20 yards. The most unskilful were allowed to try first, at last some one would succeed in cutting it down amidst cheers. After cutting it down, it was customary in some places, especially in the North of Cardiganshire for one of the men to take the mare to a neighbouring farm, where the harvest had not been completed, and where the reapers would be still busy at work. The man who took the mare in this manner was very careful to go, or crept without being observed, and stealthily stationed himself over against the foreman of his neighbour's reapers, he watched an opportunity, when within easy distance of throwing it suddenly over the hedge into his neighbour's field, and if possible upon the foreman's sickle and at the same time repeating some insulting words and took to his heels with all speed to escape the flying sickle of the reapers whom he had insulted which were hurled after him, and sometimes he was in peril of his life. In some districts in Carmarthenshire, it was sometimes the practice to be as bold as to take the Gaseg even to the very house of the neighbour, but this was considered more insulting if anything than throwing it into his field.

According to old people who remembered the custom in their younger days, they informed me that it was not considered right to throw the mare into the field of a farmer who lived in another parish, or over a river or even a brook. I was also informed by some that it was not allowable to bear it up hill to a field which stood on a more elevated ground. It was often the custom especially in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, instead of throwing it

into a neighbour's field, to convey it home to the house, that is to the house of the farmer himself who had finished his harvest that day. The honour of bearing it home in this manner belonged to the one who had succeeded in cutting it, but the difficult part of it was how to take it into the house dry, for it was absolutely necessary that it should be taken into the house without being wetted. And this was not always an easy task as the servant maids at the house carefully stored water in buckets and pans ready to throw over the man and his Caseg Fedi at his entrance; and sometimes he would have a pretty rough time of it. In order to prevent this the man tried to appear as indifferent as possible so as not to be suspected by the girls. Consequently, he carefully hid the mare under his clothes, but in spite of everything he was sometimes stripped of some part of his garment or deluged with water. But when he could succeed in bringing it into the house dry and hung it up without being observed, the master had to pay the bearer a shilling or two, or to give him plenty of beer. But the master was spared to pay the shilling if the girls could succeed in wetting the mare. These curious old customs have been discontinued, but it is still the practice with some to bring a handful of corn into the house tied up under the name of the mare. At supper that evening there was a good deal of fun. John Wright, Bailiff of Stackpole in Pembrokeshire, refers to the custom as follows when writing to his master, Mr. Pryce Campbell, August, 1736: —"Whilst I was abroad (he had been in Cardiganshire) the harvest people cut the neck, and, notwithstanding all the stones about the court (this house was being rebuilt), would have a dance. The dance was the Three Shopkins. There was a noble feast, the bill of fare was as follows:— Four quarters of mutton, a side of bacon, a piece of beef weighing half a hundred-weight, twelve gallons of Buding besides, cabotch and other greens. They seemed very well pleased with their entertainment." It was customary in

some places to have a harvest queen attired in white gown decorated with ears of wheat and roses. In other places a sheaf of wheat was decorated with ribbons and taken home to the farm on the top of the last load, when the horses were also very gaily decked.

At the close of the harvest it was an universal custom to have a harvest supper, and after the feast there was a merry time. The Rev. D. G. Williams mentions “Chware Dai Shon Goch” and “Rhibo” as favourite games on such occasions.

“Chware Dai Shon Goch” was something as follows:—

Two young men, or two young women would put on some old ragged clothes kept at the farm for that purpose, and thus attired would proceed to the barn where a walking-stick was given to each of the two. Then followed a most curious dance to the great amusement of the company of beholders. At present, however, the Welshpeople in country places know nothing of dancing; but it is evident that they were much given to dancing in former times as well as singing to the harp. Owen Tudor, the Welsh gentleman who became the grandfather of Henry VII., King of England, was invited to dance some of the dances of Wales before Katherine, the beautiful widow of Henry V. While the handsome young Welshman was dancing one of his wild reels, it chanced that he fell against the Queen, and the latter with a bewitching smile, said, “that so far from offending her, it would only increase the pleasure of herself and company, if he would repeat the same false step or mistake!” Later on, Katherine and Owen Tudor were married.

Another game on such occasions was “Rhibo” which was something as follows:—

Six young men were selected for the performance, three standing face to face to the other three, and each one taking hold of the hands of the one who faced him. Then upon the arms of these six young men, a young man and a young woman were placed in a leaning posture who were thrown up and allowed to fall again into the arms of the young men, and this ceremony continued for some time, and which appeared to be rather a rough game, but it is not practised at the present day.

In former times it was customary at some farms to blow the horn at harvest time to call the reapers both to their work and their meals. Such horn was made use of for that purpose until very recently at a farm called Eurglodd, eight miles north of Aberystwyth in Cardiganshire.

CYNNOS.

"Cynnos" was a practice among the farmers of West Wales, and particularly Cardiganshire, of taking the corn to the kiln to be dried on the night before the grinding; it was customary to sit watching it all night and carefully attend to the drying operations, that is the turning of the corn on the kiln, and the sweeping of it off, when it had been sufficiently dried. The meaning of the word "Cynnos" is unknown, according to some writers it is a form of "cynwys" (contents)—that is the contents of a stack of corn; but according to others it meant "cyn-nos" (the night before) that is the night before the grinding.

It is true that the farmers sent small quantities of corn to the mill at any time of the year; but the big annual "cynnos" was prepared, as a rule, about January or

February. This “Cynnos” was a night of great fun, especially for young people, as many of the friends and neighbours of those who were engaged in drying the corn came together in the evening. An old gentleman named Thomas Evans, Gwarallyryn in the parish of Llandyssul, Cardiganshire, who well remembered the old custom, gave me an interesting account of it. This meeting of young men and young women and others at the kiln during the Cynnos to enjoy themselves with games and story telling was known, said he, as “Shimli,” which often continued all night. Sometimes beer known as “Fetchin,” was sent for, and drank around the kiln fire. When the flour was taken home, it was put in chests. Previous to the beginning of the 19th century before kilns attached to the mills became general, many of the farm houses had a kiln for drying the corn at home, but of a very primitive sort. Mr. Price in his interesting little book on Llansawel, in Carmarthenshire, says that the last kiln of the sort for drying the corn at home in that parish was in use at a farm called Cilwenau isaf, worked as late as 1845. He also adds that the shape and the build of this primitive contrivance was something as follows:—

On a gentle-sloping ground a hollow, three yards long, two yards wide, and two deep, was cut, and two planks placed at right angles to each other, their ends resting on the surface outside the hollow. These served to support the sticks which were placed regularly over the kiln until covered. Over the whole clean straw was laid, upon which the corn was placed to be dried. Underneath all this and at the lower end of the kiln, the fire was placed, so that the heat and smoke went under the straw contrivance above. About the month of May, it was once customary in Pembrokeshire for farmers to bring their “Benwent,” that is, two or three loads of grain to the mill to be ground and milled, and young men and young women came together

on such occasions, and indulged in a sport known as "Byng," or dressing up a horse's head and carrying it about, not unlike "Mari Lwyd." The Rev. Jenkin Evans, Pontfaen, in the "Pembrokeshire Antiquities," also adds that it was customary on May Day for women and children to go round the farmhouses with their basins to receive butter, which enabled poor people to enjoy butter on their bread for some weeks.

GLEANING.

Within living memory, farmers in Cardiganshire allowed poor people to glean in the fields at the seasons of harvest and ingathering, and indeed this seems to have been a general custom once in all parts of the Kingdom, and directed by the law of Moses.

CWRW BACH.

There was once an old custom in Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire, of making what was known as "Cwrw Bach"; that is, people met at a house on a certain evening to drink home-brewed beer, and indulge in games, in order to give the profits from the sale of it to assist helpless old people and others who were in real poverty. This is not done now, but we still hear of some farmers in Pembrokeshire, making their own beer for those who work at the harvest.

PERAMBULATION.

Beating the Bounds of a Parish was a very old custom in Wales; and according to the Rev. George Eyre Evans, this was done at Bettws Ivan, South Cardiganshire, as late as May 22nd, 1819, when Banners were carried round the Parish on the Boundaries.

SHEEP SHEARING CUSTOMS.

The following extract which I translate from an introduction to a volume of Welsh Poems known as "Cerddi Cerngoch," gives an interesting account of Sheep Shearing customs in West Wales fifty years ago:—

"A great day at Blaenplwyf was the sheep shearing day, The sheep were kept for the summer at Bronbyrfe, Llanddewi Brefi, with John Jenkins. During Ffair Beder (Peter's Fair) July 10th every year there was a "cnaif" (shearing). Good many were anxious to get the "fei." The service of about half-a-dozen neighbours was secured to look after the shearing. David Davies, Rhiwonen; John Davies, Pantfedwen; Thomas Davies, Pencoed; Daniel Davies, Gelligwenin, had been doing it; and my father, and my uncles of Trecefel, Pant, Penbryn and Clwtpatrwn, were faithful year after year. To swell the company, others from time to time took a day's holiday and enjoyment, and amongst many others, Mr. J. E. Rogers, Abermeurig; Rev.

Evan Evans, Hafod; Rev. John Davies, Llandeloy; Thos. Thomas (Norton Brewery), Carmarthen; Ben. Jenkins, solicitor; Aeronian, etc.

Llwyd, Llundain, told me: "When my father failed going to the shearing, my brother Shanco, or myself, was allowed to go, and we longed to go, for it was the very thing for us. Little work and plenty of enjoyment, and you know that not one of Shencyn Grufydd's family had any objection to a thing of that kind. A start was made from Blaenplwyf at five o'clock in the morning. At first it was customary to proceed on horses through Llanfair and over the bog and meadow to Bronbyrfe. One or two young women went to look after the wool. It was brought home on horses. After that 'gist cart' and the 'long body' came in use, and lastly the 'gambo.' When going over the mountain one time (1855), and 'Cerngoch,' to be sure, among the foremost of the mounted band, Shencyn gave out the order to form into a rank as soldiers, and after getting things into order, he said:—"Here we are now like cavalry attacking the Russians." "Not quite so," said Cerngoch, "if we were in the Crimea, you my little brother, would not be so far in advance of us."

Timothy and Benjamin were in School of Parkyvelvet, under the celebrated old tutor, Rev. Titus Evans, in 1855, and both of them and their second cousin, Mr. Thomas, Myrtle Villa, Wellfield Road, Carmarthen (now) had come on their holidays, and forming a part of the company. As Mr. Thomas was a townsman, he was not acquainted with the horse and the land, so the horse went out of the path, and into the bog, and Cerngoch sang at once:—

"'Roedd mab o dre Caerfyrddin,
Yn steilus iawn a'i ferlin;
Wrth dd'od ar 'mynydd yn y mawn,
Bu'n isel iawn ei asyn."

.... After reaching Bronbyrfe, those who were responsible went in for the shearing; but the others scattered along the small brooks which were close by in order to fish; each one with his favourite tackle, hands, fly, hook and bait, etc. Hywel was by far the master. When all the others had failed with the fly and bait, Hywel would have a basketful. He was so clever with the fly—the bait according to the colour of the water.... After eating the black nourishing fish, and ending the shearing, it was customary to go home through Llanddewi. The young men of Llanddewi knew when the Blaenplwyf shearing took place, and were watching them on their homeward journey with great excitement. Then (at Llanddewi) a game of ball was played on the corner of the old chapel, near the Foelallt Arms since then. Not an air ball as at present, but a ball of yarn carefully wound up, and covered with leather as tight as possible. Four were the required number intended to take part in the game, two on each side. "After drinking the health of those who won, off goes the party, each one for the first making for Bettws, about five miles nearer home. Then a game of quoits took place on the commons, as the horses were having their breath, a good excuse for the men to get a drop of "home-brewed" at the Derry Arms. Two miles more, and they reach home at Blaenplwyf at 9 p.m., after a busy and enjoyable day. A feast waited them, my grandmother having been busy all day preparing—cawl—new potatoes—white cabbages—and gooseberry tart. She could make delicious food and taught her daughters also to do so."

TAI UNNOS (ONE NIGHT HOUSES).

In former times in Wales when the population was small, much of the land in mountainous regions was a common, and the farmers and others were at liberty to send their cattle and sheep there to graze, and people obtained peat from such places to burn on the fire. But if a poor family could succeed to erect a small rude house, or hut in one night on the outskirts of a common, or a desolate spot on the mountain side, or a dreary dingle, they claimed from ancient usage their right to the spot. Such a house was called "Ty Unnos" (one night house). If a man building a Ty Unnos of such kind was discovered in building it during the night by one of his neighbours, people would come and throw it down and scatter everything, to prevent him taking possession of a place which they regarded as belonging to all. So that any one building a Ty Unnos had to do it in one single night, and that secretly, without being detected. I recollect such a house being built on the mountain of Llanddewi Brefi many years ago when I was a boy. After securing a house in this manner the next step was to add land to it, taken and enclosed patch by patch from the surrounding common, so that quite a farm of freehold property was created in course of time, if the intrusion remained unnoticed. But it was necessary for a man to show a great deal of shrewdness to secure a farm in this manner.

In the parish of Llanarth, Cardiganshire, there is a spot known as "Mynydd Shion Cwilt." According to tradition this Shion Cwilt was a shrewd and eccentric character who built a Ty-Unnos, and secured much land from Common.

THE CEFFYL PREN.

In former times, public sarcasm and derision did much to dispel vice and reform offenders.

In West Wales “Ceffyl Pren” was resorted to when a man was supposed to have been unfaithful to his wife whom he had promised to cherish, or a woman who had broken her marriage covenant.

It was customary to make a straw man riding a straw horse, as an effigy to represent the guilty. Such effigies were carried round the most public places in order to make those who were guilty of breaking the Seventh Commandment ashamed of themselves. The procession was a very noisy one, and accompanied by men with horns and brass, etc., and sometimes a song was composed for the occasion.

Such procession went round the neighbourhood for about three weeks, and sometimes a gun was carried to shoot the straw rider.

At last the effigies were burnt before the house or houses of the guilty, and then the crowd dispersed.

It is supposed that such custom has come down from the time of the Druids when it was customary to burn evil-doers in effigies of straw as sacrifices to the gods.

In some cases people were not satisfied in carrying an effigy, but seized the guilty man and woman, and carried them publicly on a ladder for miles round the country.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF DOGS TO TURN ROASTING-SPITS.

It was customary in former times to place a dog inside a wheel which he turned with his fore-feet, the wheel being connected by a chain with the wheel end of the spit.

There was a dog employed in turning the roasting-spit in this manner at Newcastle Emlyn about one hundred years ago.

KNAPPAN.

This ancient game takes its name from the ball used, which was some hard wood, and well greased for each occasion and just small enough to be grasped in one hand. Running with the ball was the chief method, and the distance between the goals was several miles.

George Owen, of Henllys, in Pembrokeshire, gives a full account of Knappan, and how it was played in the time of Queen Elizabeth, and it seems that the ancient game survived the longest in the northern part of that county, and the South of Cardiganshire, and on Corpus Christi Day there was a regular contest between the two districts, when 2,000 came together, and some horsemen as well. The game was regarded as the best training for war.

It is thought that the great football contests between Llandyssul and Llanwenog which were popular on Good Fridays about seventy years ago, were the outcome of the ancient game of Knappan.

THROWING THE BAR.

"Cryfder dan bwysau," or displaying strength in hurling a stone, or throwing a bar, which was one of the ancient Welsh games.

Meyrick, in his "History of Cardiganshire," writing one hundred years ago, says that casting of the bar was still continued in his time, particularly in Cardiganshire, "where the people have a meeting once a year at certain Chapels, Yspytty Ystwith, Yspytty Cenvyn, etc., for this purpose. They remain in the Chapel all night to try their activity in wrestling, all the benches being removed, and the spectators, different from ancient regulations, are generally young women, and old champions, who are to see fair play."

SCHOOL CUSTOMS.

In South Wales, especially Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire, about seventy or eighty years ago, most curious customs were in vogue, which were intended to assist the Welsh children to learn English.

In many Schools in those days, English was taught in rhymes, such as follows:—

"Hearth is aelwyd, fire is tân,
Cloth is brethyn, wool is gwlan,
Ash is onen, oak is derwen,
Holly tree is pren cerdynen,
House is ty, and mill is melin,

Fiddle is crwyth, and harp is telyn,
River is afon, brook is nant,
Twenty is ugnin, hundred is cant."

THE WELSH "NOTE," OR "NOT".

In order to enforce the use of the English language in Schools the Schoolmasters of those days made use of what was called the Welsh "Note," which was a piece of stick about three or four inches long, with the letters "W.N." marked on it, and in some places it had the following words in full: "Welsh Note, a slap for every time you speak Welsh." This "Welsh Note" was in reality nothing but a devise to find out the children who spoke Welsh, as it was then thought that unless the mother tongue was banished from Schools, monoglot Welsh children could not learn English.

During the night-time, of course, the "Welsh Note" was in possession of the Schoolmaster, who, when School began in the morning, gave it secretly to one of the boys with directions to keep it until he caught some one speaking Welsh, to whom he was to hand it over, and this boy in his turn was to hand it over to another delinquent, and so forth. The "Welsh Note" might during the day perhaps pass through about twenty different hands; and at the close of the School in the evening the Schoolmaster would call for it and the boy in whose possession it was found got the first taste of the cane on his naked hand; then he returned it to the boy from whom he got it, and he in like manner was caned in his turn, and so on over the twenty, more or less, each in his turn getting a taste of the cane, until the first boy is reached, whose name is on the register. Then the

"Welsh Note" returns to the Schoolmaster, ready for use for the next occasion.

There is no "Welsh Note" at the present day, and the Welsh language is taught in many if not in most of the Schools.

CHAPTER V.

THE FAIRIES (TYLWYTH TEG).

"In olde dayes of King Artour,
Of which the Bretons speken gret
honour,
All was this lond fulfilled of Faerie;
The elf-quene with hire joly
compagnie
Danced ful oft in many a grene mede.
This was the old opinion as I rede,
I speke of many hundred yeres ago;
But now can no man see non elves
mo."

—Chaucer.

book dealing with Superstitions and popular beliefs would be incomplete without assigning a prominent place to the Fairies, or "Tylwyth Teg," as they are called in Welsh. It is true that in Wales, as in other places, the Fairies have become things of the past; but even in the present day many old people, and perhaps others, still believe that such beings did once exist, and that the reason why they are not now to be seen is that they have been exorcised.

Many of the Welsh Fairy Tales date from remote antiquity and are, in common with like legends of other countries,

relics of the ancient mythology, in which the natural and the supernatural are blended together.

ORIGIN OF FAIRIES.

Concerning the imaginary origin of the Fairies, it was once a belief in Wales that they were the souls of the virtuous Druids, who not having been Christians, could not enter into heaven, but were too good to be cast into hell!

Another curious belief was that in our Saviour's time there lived a woman whose fortune it was to be possessed of near a score of children, and as she saw our Blessed Lord approach her dwelling, being ashamed of being so prolific, and that He might not see them all, she concealed about half of them closely, and, after His departure, when she went in search of them, to her surprise she found they were gone. They never afterwards could be discovered, for it was supposed that as a punishment from heaven, for hiding what God had given her, she was deprived of them; and, it is said, these, her offspring, have generated the race of beings called the Fairies.

As to the realistic origin of the Fairies, according to the theories of the learned, they were either the ancient Aborigines, living in seclusion so as to hide themselves from their more powerful conquerors, or the persecuted Druids living in subterraneous places, venturing forth only at night. Whether ancient Aborigines hiding from their conquerors or the Druids who were persecuted by both Romans and Christians the Rev. P. Roberts, author of "Collectana Cambrica," observes that they used these means to preserve themselves and their families, and

whilst the country was thinly peopled, and thickly wooded did so successfully, and perhaps to a much later period than is imagined.

There are dwelling at the present day on the river-banks of the Congo, in Africa, tribes of dwarfs, whose existence, until Sir Harry Johnston's recent discovery had been regarded as a myth; though they must have lived there from time immemorial.

They exist in caves, and in their ways recall the fairies. "Undoubtedly," says Sir Harry, "to my thinking, most fairy myths arose from the contemplation of the mysterious habits of dwarf troglodite races lingering on still in the crannies, caverns, forests and mountains of Europe, after the invasion of neolithic man."

FAIRY NAMES.

The Fairies are spoken of as people, or folk, not as myths or goblins, and yet as spirits they are immortal, and able to make themselves invisible.

The most general name given them in Wales is "Y Tylwyth Teg," (the Fair Family, or Folk); but they are known sometimes as "Bendith y Mamau" (the Mothers' Blessing); and the term "gwragedd Annwn," (dames of the lower regions), is often applied to the Fairy Ladies who dwelt in lakes or under lakes. Sometimes such terms as "Plant Annwn," (children of the lower regions); Ellyll an elf; Bwbach etc., were applied to them, but such appellations have never been in common use. They were also known as "Plant Rhys Ddwfn" in some parts of the

Vale of Teivy, more especially in the neighbourhood of Cardigan. But the general term Tylwyth Teg, is known everywhere.

FAIRY DRESS, DWELLING, ETC.

The Fairies were small handsome creatures in human form; very kind to, and often showered benefits on those who treated them kindly, but most revengeful towards those who dared to treat them badly. They were dressed in green, and very often in white, and some of their maidens were so beautiful, that young men sometimes would fall over head and ears in love with them, especially whilst watching them dancing on a moonlight night; for the old belief was concerning the Fairies, that on moonlight nights they were wont to join hands, and form into circles, and dance and sing with might and main until the cock crew, then they would vanish.

The circles in the grass of green fields are still called "Cylchau y Tylwyth Teg" (Fairy Rings). These circles were numerous in Wales when I was a boy; and it was believed by many about forty years ago, if not later that some misfortune would befall any person entering these circles, for I well remember being warned to keep away from them. At the present time, however, I do not know of any person who is afraid of entering them; so it seems that the superstition respecting the Fairy Rings has entirely died out during the last generation.

As to their dwellings, the Fairies were "things under the earth," for they were generally supposed to dwell in the lower regions, especially beneath lakes, where their

country towns and castles were situated; and the people on the coasts of Pembrokeshire imagined that they inhabited certain enchanted green isles of the sea.

The green meadows of the sea, called in the old Welsh Triads Gwerddonau Llion, are the:

"Green fairy islands, reposing,
In sunlight and beauty on ocean's calm breast."

A British King in ancient times, whose name was Garvan is said to have sailed away in search of these islands, and never returned. Garvan's voyage is commemorated in the Triads as one of the "Three Losses by Disappearance." Southey after citing Dr. W. O. Pughe's article in the "Cambrian Biography," goes on as follows:—

"Of these Islands, or Green Spots of the Floods, there are some singular superstitions. They are the abode of the Tylwyth Teg, or the fair family, the souls of the virtuous Druids, who not having been Christians, cannot enter the Christian Heaven, but enjoy this heaven of their own. They, however, discover a love of mischief, neither becoming happy spirits, nor consistent with their original character; for they love to visit the earth, and seizing a man, inquire whether he will travel above wind, mid-wind, or below wind; above wind is a giddy and terrible passage, below wind is through bush and brake, the middle is a safe course. But the spell of security is, to catch hold of the grass. In their better moods they come over and carry the Welsh in their boats. He who visits these islands imagines on his return that he has been absent only a few hours, when, in truth, whole centuries have past away. If you take a turf from St. David's Churchyard, and stand upon it on the sea shore, you behold these Islands. A man once who thus obtained sight of them, immediately put to sea to find them; but his search was in vain. He returned, looked at

them again from the enchanted turf, again set sail, and failed again. The third time he took the turf into his vessel, and stood upon it till he reached them." Wirt Sikes, in his "British Goblins," page 8, says that there are sailors on the romantic coasts of Pembrokeshire, and southern Carmarthenshire who still talk of the green meadows of enchantment, which are visible sometimes to the eyes of mortals, but only for a brief space, and they suddenly vanish. He also adds that there are traditions of sailors who, in the early part of the 19th century, actually went ashore on the fairy islands—not knowing that they were such, until they returned to their boats, when they were filled with awe at seeing the islands disappear from their sight, neither sinking in the sea, nor floating away upon the waters, but simply vanishing suddenly. In the account I have just given, a turf from St. David's Churchyard to stand upon enabled one to behold the enchanted lands of the Fairies; but according to traditions in other parts of the country, it seems that a certain spot in Cemmes was the requisite platform, to see these mythical beings who were known in some parts as Plant Rhys Ddwfn (Children of Rhys the Deep).

In the Brython, Vol. I., page 130, Gwynionydd says as follows:—

"There is a tale current in Dyfed, that there is, or rather that there has been a country between Cemmes, the Northern Hundred of Pembrokeshire, and Aberdaron in Lleyn. The chief patriarch of the inhabitants was Rhys Ddwfn, and his descendants used to be called after him the Children of Rhys Ddwfn.

"They were, it is said, a handsome race enough, but remarkably small in size. It is stated that certain herbs of a strange nature grew in their land, so that they were able to keep their country from being seen by even the most sharp-

sighted invaders.

"There is no account that these remarkable herbs grew in any other part of the world, excepting on a small spot, a square yard in area in a certain part of Cemmes. If it chanced that a man stood alone on it, he beheld the whole of the territory of Plant Rhys Ddwfn; but the moment he moved he would lose sight of it altogether, and it would have been nearly vain to look for his footprints."

FAIRIES MARRYING MORTALS.

In some of the stories about Fairies, we find Fairy Ladies marrying mortals, but always conditionally, and in the end the husband does some prohibited thing which breaks the marriage contract, and his Fairy wife vanishes away. The most beautiful Fairy Legend of this kind is undoubtedly the

LADY OF LLYN Y VAN VACH IN CARMARTHENSHIRE.

Several versions have appeared from time to time of this story, but the most complete one is the one which appeared in Mr. Rees, of Tonn, in his interesting introduction to "The Physicians of Myddvai," published by the Welsh Manuscript Society, at Llandovery, in 1861; and this is also the version which was reproduced by Principal Sir J.

Rhys, of Oxford, in his great work on Celtic Folk-lore.

About five years ago, I came across several old persons in the parish of Myddvai, who could repeat portions of the story, but nothing new, so I give the version of Mr. Rees of Tonn, which is as follows:—

"When the eventful struggle made by the Princes of South Wales to preserve the independency of their country was drawing to its close in the twelfth century, there lived at Blaensawdde, near Llandeusant, Carmarthenshire, a widowed woman, the relict of a farmer who had fallen in those disastrous troubles. The widow had an only son to bring up, but Providence smiled upon her, and despite her forlorn condition, her live stock had so increased in course of time, that she could not well depasture them upon her farm, so she sent a portion of her cattle to graze on the adjoining Black Mountain, and their most favourite place was near the small lake called Llyn y Fan Fach, on the north-western side of the Carmarthenshire Fans.

The son grew up to manhood, and was generally sent by his mother to look after the cattle on the mountain. One day, in his peregrinations along the margin of the lake, to his great astonishment, he beheld sitting on the unruffled surface of the water, a lady, one of the most beautiful creatures that mortal eyes ever beheld, her hair flowed gracefully in ringlets over her shoulders, the tresses of which she arranged with a comb, whilst the glassy surface of her watery couch served for the purpose of a mirror, reflecting back her own image. Suddenly she beheld the young man standing on the brink of the lake, with his eyes riveted on her, and unconsciously offering to herself the provision of barley bread and cheese with which he had been provided when he left his home.

"Bewildered by a feeling of love and admiration for the

object before him, he continued to hold out his hand towards the lady, who imperceptibly glided near to him, but gently refused the offer of his provisions. He attempted to touch her, but she eluded his grasp, saying:—

"Cras dy fara;
Nid hawdd fy nala.

Hard baked is thy bread!
'Tis not easy to catch me."

and immediately dived under the water and disappeared, leaving the love-stricken youth to return home, a prey to disappointment and regret that he had been unable to make further acquaintance with one, in comparison with whom the whole of the fair maidens of Llanddeusant and Myddfai whom he had ever seen were as nothing.

"On his return home, the young man communicated to his mother the extraordinary vision he had beheld. She advised him to take some unbaked dough or "toes" the next time in his pocket, as there must have been some spell connected with the hard-baked bread, or "Bara cras," which prevented his catching the lady.

"Next morning, before the sun had gilded with its rays the peaks of the Fans, the young man was at the lake, not for the purpose of looking after his mother's cattle, but seeking for the same enchanting vision he had witnessed the day before; but all in vain did he anxiously strain his eyeballs and glance over the surface of the lake, as only the ripples occasioned by a stiff breeze met his view, and a cloud hung heavily on the summits of the Fan, which imparted an additional gloom to his already distracted mind.

Hours passed on, the wind was hushed, and the clouds which had enveloped the mountain had vanished into thin air before the powerful beams of the sun, when the youth was startled by seeing some of his mother's cattle on the precipitous side of the acclivity, nearly on the opposite side of the lake. His duty impelled him to attempt to rescue them from their perilous position, for which purpose he was hastening away, when to his inexpressible delight, the object of his search again appeared to him as before, and seemed much more beautiful than when he first beheld her. His hand was again held out to her, full of unbaked bread, which he offered with an urgent proffer of his heart also, and vows of eternal attachment. All of which were refused by her saying:—

"Llaith dy fara,
Ti ni fynna'."

(Unbaked is thy bread!
I will not have thee.)

But the smiles that played upon her features as the lady vanished beneath the waters raised within the young man a hope that forbade him to despair by her refusal of him, and the recollection of which cheered him on his way home. His aged parent was made acquainted with his ill-success, and she suggested that his bread should next time be but slightly baked, as most likely to please the mysterious being of whom he had become enamoured.

"Impelled by an irresistible feeling, the youth left his mother's house early next morning, and with rapid steps he passed over the mountain. He was soon near the margin of the lake, and with all the impatience of an ardent lover did he wait with a feverish anxiety for the reappearance of the mysterious lady.

"The sheep and goats browsed on the precipitous sides of the Fan; the cattle strayed amongst the rocks and large stones, some of which were occasionally loosened from their beds and suddenly rolled down into the lake; rain and sunshine alike came and passed away; but all were unheeded by the youth, so wrapped up was he in looking for the appearance of the lady.

"The freshness of the early morning had disappeared before the sultry rays of the noon-day sun, which in its turn was fast verging towards the west as the evening was dying away and making room for the shades of night, and hope had well nigh abated of beholding once more the Lady of the Lake. The young man cast a sad and last farewell look over the water, and to his astonishment, beheld several cows walking along its surface. The sight of these animals caused hope to revive that they would be followed by another object far more pleasing; nor was he disappointed, for the maiden reappeared, and to his enraptured sight, even lovelier than ever. She approached the land, and he rushed to meet her in the water. A smile encouraged him to seize her hand; neither did she refuse the moderately baked bread he offered her; and after some persuasion she consented to become his bride, on condition that they should only live together until she received from him three blows without a cause,

"Tri ergyd diachos."
(Three causeless blows.)

and if he ever should happen to strike her three such blows she would leave him for ever. To such conditions he readily consented and would have consented to any other stipulation, had it been proposed, as he was only intent on then securing such a lovely creature for his wife.

"Thus the Lady of the Lake engaged to become the young

man's wife, and having loosened her hand for a moment she darted away and dived into the lake. His chagrin and grief were such that he determined to cast himself headlong into the deepest water, so as to end his life in the element that had contained in its unfathomed depths the only one for whom he cared to live on earth. As he was on the point of committing this rash act, there emerged out of the lake two most beautiful ladies, accompanied by a hoary-headed man of noble mien and extraordinary stature, but having otherwise all the force and strength of youth. This man addressed the almost bewildered youth in accents calculated to soothe his troubled mind, saying that as he proposed to marry one of his daughters, he consented to the union, provided the young man could distinguish which of the two ladies before him was the object of his affections. This was no easy task, as the maidens were such perfect counterparts of each other that it seemed quite impossible for him to choose his bride, and if perchance he fixed upon the wrong one all would be for ever lost.

"Whilst the young man narrowly scanned the two ladies, he could not perceive the least difference betwixt the two, and was almost giving up the task in despair, when one of them thrust her foot a slight degree forward. The motion, simple as it was, did not escape the observation of the youth, and he discovered a trifling variation in the mode with which their sandals were tied. This at once put an end to the dilemma, for he, who had on previous occasions been so taken up with the general appearance of the Lady of the Lake, had also noticed the beauty of her feet and ankles, and on now recognising the peculiarity of her shoe-tie he boldly took hold of her hand.

"'Thou hast chosen rightly,' said her father, 'be to her a kind and faithful husband, and I will give her, as a dowry, as many sheep, cattle, goats, and horses as she can count of each without heaving or drawing in her breath. But

remember, that if you prove unkind to her at any time, and strike her three times without a cause, she shall return to me, and shall bring all her stock back with her.'"

Such was the verbal marriage settlement, to which the young man gladly assented, and his bride was desired to count the number of sheep she was to have.

She immediately adopted the mode of counting by fives, thus:—one, two, three, four, five—one, two, three, four, five; and as many times as possible in rapid succession, till her breath was exhausted. The same procession of reckoning had to determine the number of goat, cattle, and horses respectively; and in an instant the full number of each came out of the lake when called upon by the father.

"The young couple were then married, by what ceremony was not stated, and afterwards went to reside at a farm called Esgair Llaethy, somewhat more than a mile from the Village of Myddfai, where they lived in prosperity and happiness for several years, and became the parents of three sons, who were beautiful children.

"Once upon a time there was a christening to take place in the neighbourhood, to which the parents were specially invited. When the day arrived the wife appeared very reluctant to attend the christening, alleging that the distance was too great for her to walk. Her husband told her to fetch one of the horses which were grazing in an adjoining field. 'I will,' said she, 'if you will bring me my gloves which I left in our house.' He went to the house and returned with the gloves, and finding that she had not gone for the horse jocularly slapped her shoulder with one of them, saying, 'go! go!' (dos, dos), when she reminded him of the understanding upon which she consented to marry him:—That he was not to strike her without a cause; and warned him to be more cautious for the future.

"On another occasion, when they were together at a wedding in the midst of the mirth and hilarity of the assembled guests, who had gathered together from all the surrounding country, she burst into tears and sobbed most piteously. Her husband touched her on her shoulder and inquired the cause of her weeping: she said, 'Now people are entering into trouble, and your troubles are likely to commence, as you have the second time stricken me without a cause.'

"Years passed on, and their children had grown up, and were particularly clever young men. In the midst of so many worldly blessings at home, the husband almost forgot that there remained only one causeless blow to be given to destroy the whole of his prosperity. Still he was watchful lest any trivial occurrence should take place which his wife must regard as a breach of their marriage contract. She told him, as her affection for him was unabated, to be careful that he would not, through some inadvertence, give the last and only blow, which, by an unalterable destiny over which she had no control, would separate them for ever.

"It, however, so happened that one day they were together at a funeral, where, in the midst of the mourning and grief at the house of the deceased, she appeared in the highest and gayest spirits, and indulged in immoderate fits of laughter, which so shocked her husband that he touched her, saying: 'Hush! hush! don't laugh.' She said that she laughed 'because people when they die go out of trouble,' and rising up she went out of the house, saying, 'The last blow has been struck, our marriage contract is broken, and at an end! Farewell!' Then she started off towards Esgair Llaethdy, where she called her cattle and other stock together, each by name. The cattle she called thus:—

Mu wlfrech,
Mu olfrech, gwynfrech,
Pedair cae tonn-frech,
Yr hen wynebwen.
A'r las Geigen,
Gyda'r Tarw gwyn
O lys y Brenin;
A'r llo du bach,
Sydd ar y bach,
Dere dithe, yn iach adre!

Brindled cow, white speckled,
Spotted cow, bold freckled,
The four field sward mottled,
The old white-faced,
And the grey Geigen,
With the white Bull,
From the court of the King;
And the little black calf
Tho' suspended on the hook,
Come thou also, quite well home."

They all immediately obeyed the summons of their mistress. The 'little black calf,' although it had been slaughtered, became alive again, and walked off with the rest of the stock at the command of the lady. This happened in the spring of the year, and there were from four oxen ploughing in one of the fields; to these she cried:—

"Pedwar eidion glas sydd ar y maes,
Deuwch chwithau yn iach adre!

The four grey oxen, that are on the field,
Come you also quite well home!"

Away the whole of the live stock went with the Lady across Myddfai Mountain, towards the lake from whence they came, a distance of above six miles, where they disappeared beneath its waters, leaving no trace behind except a well-marked furrow, which was made by the plough the oxen drew after them into the lake, and which remains to this day as a testimony to the truth of this story.

"What became of the affrighted ploughman—whether he was left on the field when the oxen set off, or whether he followed them to the lake, has not been handed down to tradition; neither has the fate of the disconsolate and half-ruined husband been kept in remembrance. But of the sons it is stated that they often wandered about the lake and its vicinity, hoping that their mother might be permitted to visit the face of the earth once more, as they had been apprised of her mysterious origin, her first appearance to their father, and the untoward circumstances which so unhappily deprived them of her maternal care.

"In one of their rambles, at a place near Dol Howel, at the Mountain Gate, still called 'Llidiad y Meddygon,' (The Physician's Gate), the mother appeared suddenly, and accosted her eldest son, whose name was Rhiwallon, and told him that his mission on earth was to be a benefactor to mankind by relieving them from pain and misery, through healing all manner of their diseases; for which purpose she furnished him with a bag full of medical prescriptions and instructions for the preservation of health. That by strict attention thereto he and his family would become for many generations the most skilful physicians in the country. Then, promising to meet him when her counsel was most needed, she vanished. But on several occasions she met her sons near the banks of the lake, and once she even accompanied them on their return home as far as a place still called 'Pant-y-Meddygon,' (The dingle of the Physicians) where she pointed out to them the various

plants and herbs which grew in the dingle, and revealed to them their medicinal qualities or virtues; and the knowledge she imparted to them, together with their unrivalled skill, soon caused them to attain such celebrity that none ever possessed before them. And in order that their knowledge should not be lost, they wisely committed the same to writing for the benefit of mankind throughout all ages.

And so ends the story of the Physicians of Myddfai, which had been handed down from one generation to another, thus:—

"Yr hen wr llwyd o'r cornel,
Gan ei dad a glywodd chwedel,
A chan ei dad fy glywodd yntau,
Ac ar ei ol mi gofiais innau."

"The grey old man in the corner
Of his father heard a story,
Which from his father he had heard,
And after them I have remembered."

The Physicians of Myddfai were Rhiwallon and his sons, Cadwgan, Gruffydd and Einion, who became Physicians to Rhys Gryg, Lord of Llandovery and Dynefor Castles, who lived in the early part of the thirteenth century. Rhys "gave them rank, lands, and privileges at Myddfai for their maintenance in the practice of their art and science, and the healing and benefit of those who should seek their help."

The fame of the celebrated Physicians was soon established over the whole country, and continued for centuries among their descendants; and the celebrated Welsh Poet Dafydd ap Gwilym, who flourished in the

fourteenth century, says in one of his poems when alluding to these physicians:—

"Meddyg, nis gwnai modd y gwnaeth
Myddfai, o chai ddyn meddfaeth."

(A Physician he would not make
As Myddfai made, if he had a mead fostered man.)

Mr. Rees says that "of the above lands bestowed upon the Meddygon, there are two farms in the Myddfai parish still called "Llwyn Ifan Feddyg," the Grove of Evan, the Physician, and "Llwyn Meredydd Feddyg" (the Grove of Meredydd the Physician). Esgair Llaethdy, mentioned in the foregoing legend, was formerly in the possession of the above descendants, and so was Ty-newydd, near Myddfai, which was purchased by Mr. Holford, of Cilgwyn, from the Rev. Charles Lloyd, vicar of Llandefalle, Breconshire, who married a daughter of one of the Meddygon, and had the living of Llandefalle from a Mr. Vaughan, who presented him to the same out of gratitude, because Mr. Lloyd, wife's father had cured him of a disease in the eye. As Mr. Lloyd succeeded to the above living in 1748, and died in 1800, it is probable that that skilful oculist was John Jones, who is mentioned in the following inscription on a tombstone at present fixed against the west end of Myddfai

HERE
Lieth the body of Mr. David Jones, of Mothvey, Surgeon,
who was an honest, charitable and skilful man,
He died September 14th, Anno Dom. 1719, aged 61.
JOHN JONES, SURGEON,
Eldest son of the said David Jones, departed this life the
25th of November, 1739, in the 4th year of his Age,
and also lyes interred hereunder.

These appear to have been the last of the Physicians who practised at Myddfai. The above John Jones resided for some time at Llandovery, and was a very eminent surgeon. One of his descendants, named John Lewis, lived at Cwmbran, Myddfai, at which place his great-grandson, Mr. John Jones, now resides.

"Dr. Morgan Owen, Bishop of Llandaff, who died at Glasallt, parish of Myddfai, in 1645, was a descendant of the Meddygon, and an inheritor of much of their landed property in that parish, the bulk of which he bequeathed to his nephew, Morgan Owen, who died in 1667, and was succeeded by his son Henry Owen; and at the decease of the last of whose descendants, Roberts Lewis, Esqr., the estates became, through the will of one of the family, the property of the late D. A. S. Davies, Esqr., M.P., for Carmarthenshire.

"Bishop Owen bequeathed to another nephew, Morgan ap Rees, son of Rees ap John, a descendant of the Meddygon, the farm of Rhyblid, and some other property.

"Amongst other families who claim descent from the Physicians were the Bowens of Cwmydw, Myddfai, and Jones of Dollgarreg and Penrhock, in the same parish; the latter of whom are represented by Charles Bishop, of Dollgarreg, Esqr., Clerk of the Peace for Carmarthenshire, and Thomas Bishop, of Brecon, Esqr.

"Rees Williams, of Myddfai, is recorded as one of the Meddygon. His great grandson was the late Rice Williams, M.D., of Aberystwyth, who died May l6th, 1842, aged 85, and appears to have been the last, although not the least eminent of the Physicians descended from the mysterious Lady of Llyn y Fan."

Sir John Rhys mentions of another Dr. Williams also a

descendant of the Lady of Llyn y Fan, who was living at Aberystwyth in 1881.

It seems that there are several families in different parts of Wales who are said to have fairy blood coursing through their veins; and the noble Lady Bulkeley, who lived in North Wales, three or four generations was supposed to be descended from a Fairy lady who married a mortal.

There is also a tradition that after the disappearance of the lady the disconsolate husband and his friends set to work to drain the lake in order to get at her, if possible; but as they were making a cutting into the bank a huge monster emerged from the water and threatened to drown the town of Brecon for disturbing him, saying:—

"Os na cha'i lonydd yn fy lle
Mi fodda, dre Byrhonddu!"

(If I get no quiet in my place
I shall drown the town of Brecon).

so they had to give up draining the lake.

There are extant several versions of the Myddfai Legend. In the "Cambro Briton" Vol. II., pages 313–315, we have a version in which it is stated that the farmer used to go near the lake and see some lambs he had bought at a fair, and that wherever he so went three most beautiful maidens appeared to him from the lake. But whenever he tried to catch them they ran away into the lake, saying:—

"Cras dy fara,
Anhawdd ein dala."

(For thee who eatest baked bread

It is difficult to catch us.)

But one day a piece of moist bread came floating ashore, which he ate, and the next day he had a chat with the maidens. After a little conversation he proposed marriage to one of them, to which she consented, provided he could distinguish her from her sisters the day after. Then the story goes on very similar to Mr. Rees' version which I have already given in full.

In another beautiful version of the story which is given by Sikes in his "British Goblins," it is said that an enamoured farmer had heard of the lake maiden, who rowed up and down the lake in a golden boat, with a golden oar. Her hair was long and yellow, and her face was pale and melancholy. In his desire to see this wondrous beauty, the farmer went on New Year's Eve to the edge of the lake and in silence, awaited the coming of the first hour of the new year. It came, and there in truth was the maiden in her golden boat, rowing softly to and fro. Fascinated, he stood for hours beholding her, until the stars faded out of the sky, the moon sank behind the rocks, and the cold gray dawn drew nigh; and then the maiden began to vanish from his sight. Wild with passion, he cried aloud to the retreating vision, "Stay! Stay! Be my wife." But the maiden only uttered a faint cry, and was gone. Night after night the young farmer haunted the shores of the lake, but the maiden returned no more. He became negligent of his person; his once robust form grew thin and wan; his face was a map of melancholy and despair. He went one day to consult a soothsayer who dwelt on the mountain, and this grave personage advised him to besiege the damsel's heart with gifts of bread and cheese. This counsel commending itself strongly to his Welsh way of thinking, the former set out upon an assiduous course of casting his bread upon the waters—accompanied by cheese. He began on Mid-

summer Eve by going to the lake and dropping therein a large cheese and a loaf of bread. Night after night he continued to throw in loaves and cheeses, but nothing appeared in answer to his sacrifices. His hopes were set, however, on the approaching New Year's Eve. The momentous night arrived at last. Clad in his best array, and armed with seven white loaves and his biggest and handsomest cheese, he set out once more for the lake. Then he waited till mid-night, and then slowly and solemnly dropped the seven loaves into the water, and with a sigh sent the cheese to keep them company. His persistence was at length rewarded. The Lake Lady came in her skiff to where he was, and gracefully stepped ashore. The story then proceeds as in the other versions.

It was once a custom for people to go up to the lake on the first Sunday in August, when its water was supposed to be boiling; and Bishop Edwards, of St. Asaph, informed Professor Sir J. Rhys, that "an old woman from Myddfai, who is now, that is to say in January, 1881, about eighty years of age, tells me that she remembers thousands and thousands of people visiting the Lake of Little Fan on the first Sunday or Monday in August, and when she was young she often heard old men declare that at that time a commotion took place in the lake, and that its waters boiled, which was taken to herald the approach of the Lake Lady and her oxen."—Celtic Folk Lore—page 15.

A STUDENT WHO HAD FAILED TO PASS HIS EXAMINATIONS TAUGHT BY THE FAIRIES.

Mr. John Jones, of Pontrhydfendigaid, an old man of over 95 years of age, related to me the following story about seven years ago:—

In the 18th century there was a certain clergyman in North Cardiganshire, who was supposed to have been educated by the Fairies.

When he was a boy, his parents were very ambitious to see their son a clergyman, but, unfortunately, the lad either neglected his studies, or was a regular "blockhead," and always failed to pass his college examinations, to the great regret and disappointment of his father and mother. One day, however, when the boy was roaming about the country (near the banks of the river Rheidol, as far as Mr. Jones could remember the story), he suddenly met three boys, or rather three little men who were not bigger than boys, who took him into some cave and led him along a subterranean passage into the land of the Fairies. The Fairies proved very kind to him, and when they heard his story, they undertook to help him to learn his lessons, so that in course of time he acquired a considerable knowledge of the classics. After spending a certain number of years very happily in Fairy Land, the young man returned to the world of mortals, and to the great joy of his parents passed his examinations now without the least difficulty, and in due time was ordained by the bishop, and became a vicar of a parish north of Aberystwyth, either Llanfihangel, Llancynfelin, or Eglwysfach.

This tale seems to be a version of the Story of Elidorus, which Giraldus Cambrensis heard in the neighbourhood of Swansea during his "Itinerary through Wales," with Archbishop Baldwin in the year 1188, which is as follows:—

"A short time before our days, a circumstance worthy of

note occurred in these parts, which Elidorus, a priest, most strenuously affirmed had befallen himself. When a youth of twelve years, and learning his letters, since, as Solomon says, “The root of learning is bitter, although the fruit is sweet,” in order to avoid the discipline and frequent stripes inflicted on him by his perceptor, he ran away, and concealed himself under the hollow bank of a river. After fasting in that situation for two days, two little men of pigmy stature appeared to him, saying, ‘If you come with us, we will lead you into a country full of delights and sports.’ “Assenting, and rising up, he followed his guides through a path, at first subterraneous and dark, into a most beautiful country, adorned with rivers and meadows, woods and plains, but obscure, and not illuminated with the full light of the sun.” All the days were cloudy, and the nights extremely dark, on account of the absence of the moon and stars. The boy was brought before the King, and introduced to him in the presence of the court; who, having examined him for a long time, delivered him to his son, who was then a, boy. “These men were of the smallest stature, but very well proportioned in their make; they were all of a fair complexion, with luxuriant hair falling over their shoulders like that of women. “They had horses and greyhounds adapted to their size. “They neither ate flesh nor fish, but lived on milk diet, made up into messes with saffron. “They never took an oath, for they detested nothing so much as lies. “As often as they returned from our upper hemisphere, they reprobated our ambition, infidelities, and inconstances; they had no form of public worship, being strict lovers and reverers, as it seemed, of truth. “The boy frequently returned to our hemisphere, sometimes by the way he had first gone, sometimes by another; at first in company with other persons, and afterwards alone, and made himself known only to his mother, declaring to her the manners, nature and state of that people. “Being desired by her to bring a present of

gold, with which that region abounded, he stole, while at play with the King's son, the golden ball with which he used to divert himself, and brought it to his mother in great haste; and when he reached the door of his father's house, but not unpursued, and was entering it in a great hurry, his foot stumbled on the threshold, and falling down into the room where his mother was sitting, the two pigmies seized the ball which had dropped from his hand, and departed, showing the boy every mark of contempt and derision. "On recovering from his fall, confounded with shame, and execrating the evil counsel of his mother, he returned by the usual track to the subterraneous road, but found no appearance of any passage, though he searched for it on the banks of the river for nearly the space of a year. "But since those calamities are often alleviated by time, which reason cannot mitigate, and length of time alone blunts the edge of our afflictions, and puts an end to many evils, the youth having been brought back by his friends and mother, and restored to his right way of thinking, and to his learning, in process of time attained the rank of priesthood. "Whenever David II., bishop of St. David's, talked to him in his advanced state of life concerning this event, he could never relate the particulars without shedding tears. "He had made himself acquainted with the language of that nation, the words of which, in his younger days he used to recite, which, as the bishop often had informed me, were very conformable to the Greek idiom. "When they asked for water, they said 'ydor ydorum,' which meant bring water, for 'ydor' in their language, as well as in Greek, signifies water, from whence vessels for water are caller 'udriai'; and 'Dur' (dwr) also, in the British language (Welsh) signifies water.

"When they wanted salt they said, 'Halgein ydorum,' bring salt: salt is called 'al' in Greek, and 'halen' in British, for that language, from the length of time which the Britons

(then called Trojans, and afterwards Britons, from Brito, their leader), remained in Greece after the destruction of Troy, became in many instances, similar to the Greek.... "If a scrupulous inquirer asks my opinion of the relation here inserted, I answer with Augustine, 'that the Divine miracles are to be admired, not discussed.' "Nor do I, by denial, place bounds to the Divine Power, nor, by assent, insolently extend what cannot be extended. "But I always call to mind the saying of St. Jerome: 'You will find,' says he, 'Many things incredible and improbable, which nevertheless are true; for nature cannot in any respect prevail against the Lord of nature.' "These things, therefore, and similar contingencies, I should place, according to the opinion of Augustine, among those particulars which are neither to be affirmed, nor too positively denied." The above account is of the greatest interest, as it was written 700 years ago, and it also gives the opinion of one who lived in those days, of "these things, and similar contingencies." It is possible that many of the Fairy Tales throughout the Kingdom, if not throughout the whole of Europe, have been founded on the story of Elidorus, the priest.

THE SHEPHERD BOY AND THE FAIRIES OF FRENIFAWR.

The following story appeared in the "Cambrian Superstitions," by W. Howells, a little book published at Tipton in 1831:—

A stripling, of twelve or more years of age, was tending his father's sheep on a small mountain called Frenifach, it was

a fine morning in June, and he had just driven the sheep to their pasture for the day, when he looked at the top of Frenifawr to observe which way the morning fog declined, that he might judge the weather.

If the fog on Frenifawr (a high mountain in Pembrokeshire, 10 miles from Cardigan) declines to the Pembrokeshire side, the peasants prognosticated fair, if on the Cardiganshire side foul weather.

To his surprise the boy saw what seemed a party of soldiers sedulously engaged in some urgent affair; knowing there could not possibly be soldiers there so early, he with some alarm, looked more minutely, and perceived they were too diminutive for men; yet, thinking his eyesight had deceived him, he went to a more elevated situation, and discovered that they were the "Tylwyth Teg" (Fairies) dancing. He had often heard of them and had seen their rings in the neighbourhood, but not till then had the pleasure of seeing them; he once thought of running home to acquaint his parents, but judging they would be gone before he returned, and he be charged with a falsehood, he resolved to go up to them, for he had been informed that the fairies were very harmless, and would only injure those who attempted to discover their habitation, so by degrees he arrived within a short distance of the ring, where he remained some time observing their motions. They were of both sexes, and he described them as being the most handsome people he had ever seen, they also appeared enchantingly cheerful, as if inviting him to enter and join the dance.

They did not all dance, but those who did, never deviated from the circle; some ran after one another with surprising swiftness, and others (females), rode on small white horses of the most beautiful form. Their dresses, although indescribably elegant, and surpassing the sun in radiance,

varied in colour, some being white, others scarlet, and the males wore a red triplet cap, but the females some light head-dress, which waved fantastically with the slightest breeze. He had not remained long ere they made signs for him to enter, and he gradually drew nearer till at length he ventured to place one foot in the circle, which he had no sooner done than his ears were charmed with the most melodious music, which moved him in the transport of the moment, to enter altogether; he was no sooner in than he found himself in a most elegant palace, glittering with gold and pearls; here he enjoyed every variety of pleasure, and had the liberty to range whatever he pleased, accompanied by kind attendants beautiful as the howries; and instead of "Tatws a llaeth," buttermilk, or fresh boiled flummery, here were the choicest viands and the purest wine in abundance, brought in golden goblets inlaid with gems, sometimes by invisible agency, and at other times by the most beautiful virgins. He had only one restriction, and that was not to drink, upon any consideration (or it was told him it would be fatal to his happiness), from a certain well in the middle of the garden, which contained golden fishes and others of various colours. New objects daily attracts his attention, and new faces presented themselves to his view, surpassing, if possible those he had seen before; new pastimes were continually invented to charm him, but one day his hopes were blasted, and all his happiness fled in an instant. Possessing that innate curiosity nearly common to all, he, like our first parents transgressed, and plunged his hand into the well, when the fishes instantly disappeared, and, putting the water to his mouth, he heard a confused shriek run through the garden: in an instant after, the palace and all vanished away, and to his horror, he found himself in the very place where he first entered the ring, and the scenes around, with the same sheep grazing, were just as he had left them. He could scarcely believe himself, and hoped again, that he was in

the magnificent fairy castle; he looked around, but the scene was too well known; his senses soon returned to their proper action, and his memory proved that, although he thought he had been absent so many years, he had been so only so many minutes.

This tale bears a strange contrast as regards the time the boy thought he was away, to most of our fairy tales which represent those who had the pleasure of being with fairies as imagining they had been dancing only a few minutes, when they had been away for years.

FAIRY MUSIC AND DANCING.

The Rev. Z. M. Davies, Vicar of Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, told me that he once heard an old man in the Vale of Aeron saying that when he was out late one night, he heard the Fairies singing, and that their music was so delightful that he listened to them for hours; and we find from many of the Fairy Tales that one of their chief occupation in their nightly revels was singing and dancing, and that they often succeeded in inducing men through the allurements of music to join their ranks.

The beautiful old Welsh Air, "Toriad y Dydd" (Dawn of Day) is supposed to have been composed by the Fairies, and which they chanted just as the pale light in the east announced the approach of returning day.

The following "Can y Tylwyth Teg," or the Fairies' song, was well-known once in Wales, and these mythical beings were believed to chant it whilst dancing merrily on summer nights.

“O’r glaswellt glan a’r rhedyn mân,
Gyfeillion dyddan, dewch.
‘E ddarfu’r nawn—mae’r lloer yn llawn,
Y nos yn gyflawn gewch;
O’r chwarau sydd ar dwyn y dydd,
I’r Dolydd awn ar daith,
Nyni sydd lon, ni chaiff gerbron,
Farwolion ran o’n gwaith.

“Canu, canu, drwy y nos,
Dawnsio, dawnsio, ar waen y rhos,
Yn ngoleuni’r lleuad dlos:
Hapus ydym ni!
Pawb o honom sydd yn llon,
Heb un gofid dan ei fron:
Canu, dawnsio, ar y ton—
Dedwydd ydym ni!”

“From grasses bright, and bracken light,
Come, sweet companions, come,
The full moon shines, the sun declines.
We’ll spend the night in fun;
With playful mirth, we’ll trip the earth,
To meadows green let’s go
We’re full of joy, without alloy,
Which mortals may not know.

“Singing, singing, through the night,
Dancing, dancing, with our might,
Where the moon the moor doth light;
Happy ever we!
One and all of merry mein,
Without sorrow are we seen,
Singing, dancing, on the green:
Gladsome ever we!”

MR. EDWARD JONES, PENCWM, LLANRHYSTID, AND THE FAIRIES.

Mr. Edward Jones, Pencwm, who only died about 8 years ago, was coming home from Lampeter one moonlight night, and when he came to the top of Trichrug hill, he saw the Fairies dancing in a field close to the road. When he was within a certain distance of them he felt as if his feet were almost lifted up from the ground, and his body so light that he could almost stand in the air.

My informant, Mr. D. Morgan, Carpenter, Llanrhystid, added that Mr. Jones was an intelligent and educated man, who had travelled, and was far from being superstitious.

A FARM SERVANT NEAR TREGARON, WHO SPENT A YEAR AND A DAY WITH THE FAIRIES.

The following story appeared in "Cymru" for May, 1893, a Welsh Magazine, edited by Owen M. Edwards, M.A. It was written in Welsh by the late eminent Folk-Lorist, Mr. D. Lledrod Davies, and I translate it:—

The farm-house called "Allt Ddu," is situated about half-way between Pont Rhyd Fendigaid and Tregaron.

It is said that two servant men went out of the house one evening in search for the cattle, which had gone astray. One of the men proceeded in one direction and the other in another way, so as to be more sure of finding the animals.

But after wandering about for hours, one of the two servants came home, but whether he found the cattle or not it is not stated. However, he reached home safely; but the other man, his fellow-servant, came not, and after anxiously expecting him till a late hour of night, he began to feel very uneasy concerning his safety, fearing that the lad had accidentally fallen into some of the pits of the Gors Goch. Next morning came, but the servant came not home; and in vain did they long to hear the sound of his footsteps approaching the house as before.

Then inquiries were made about him, and people went to try and find him, but all in vain. Days past and even weeks without hearing anything about him, till at last his relations began to suspect that his fellow servant had murdered him during the night they were out looking for the cattle. So the servant was summoned before a Court of Justice, and accused of having murdered his fellow-servant on a certain night; but the young man, pleaded not guilty in a most decided manner, and as no witness could be found against him, the case was dismissed; but many people were still very suspicious of him, and the loss of his fellow servant continued to be a black spot on his character. However, it was decided at last to go to the “dyn hysbys,” (a wise man, or a conjurer)—a man of great repute in former days,—to consult with him, and to set the case before him exactly as it had happened. After going and explaining everything to the conjurer concerning the lost servant, he informed them that the young man was still alive.

He then told them to go to a certain place at the same time of night, one year and a day from the time the man was

lost, and that they should then and there see him. One year and a day at last passed away, and at that hour the family, and especially the servant, traced their steps to the particular spot pointed out by the conjuror, and there, to their great surprise, whom should they see within the Fairy Circle, dancing as merrily as any, but the lost servant. And now, according to the directions which had been given by the conjurer, the other servant took hold of the collar of the coat of the one who was dancing, and dragged him out of the circle, saying to him—"Where hast thou been lad?" But the lad's first words were, "Did you find the cattle?" for he thought that he had been with the Fairies only for a few minutes.

Then he explained how he entered the Fairy Circle, and how he was seized by them, but found their company so delightful that he thought he had been with them only for a few minutes.

THE SERVANT GIRL WHO WAS LOST IN THE FAIRY CIRCLE.

The following is another of the tales recorded in "Ystraeon y Gwyll," by the late D. Lledrod Davies:—

"There lived in an old farm house on the banks of the Teivy, a respectable family, and in order to carry on the work of the farm successfully, they kept men servants and maid servants.

One afternoon, a servant-man and a servant girl went out to look for the cows, but as they were both crossing a

marshy flat, the man suddenly missed the girl, and after much shouting and searching, no sound of her voice could be heard replying. He then took home the cows, and informed the family of the mysterious disappearance of the servant maid which took place so suddenly. As the Fairies were suspected, it was resolved to go to the dyn hysbys (wise man).

To him they went, and he informed them that the girl was with the Fairies, and that they could get her back from them, by being careful to go to a certain spot at the proper time at the end of a year and a day. They did as they were directed by the "wise man," and to their great surprise, found the maid among the fairies dancing and singing with them, and seemed as happy as a fish in the water. Then they successfully drew her out of the ring, and they took her home safely. The master had been told by the "Wise Man" that the girl was not to be touched by iron, or she would disappear at once after getting her out of the ring.

One day, however, when her master was about to start from home, and whilst he was getting the horse and cart ready, he asked the girl to assist him, which she did willingly; but as he was bridling the horse, the bit touched the girl and she disappeared instantly, and was never seen from that day forth.

THE LITTLE SERVANT BOY AND THE BARM.

The following story was related to me by Mrs. Davies, Bryneithyn, in the neighbourhood of Ystrad Meurig, where

the tale is well-known:—

An old woman known as Nancy of Pen Gwndwn, kept a little boy servant, whom she sent one evening to the neighbouring village with a bottle to get some barm for her, and as he had to pass through a field which was frequented by the Fairies, he was told by the old woman to keep away from their circles or rings. The boy reached the village, got the barm, and in due time proceeded on his homeward journey, but did not reach home. Search was made for him in all directions, and people were able to trace his steps as far as the Fairies' field, but no further, so it was evident that the Fairies had seized him. At the end of a year and a day, however, to the great surprise of everybody, the boy came home, entered the house, with the bottle of barm in hand, and handed it to the old woman as if nothing unusual had happened. The boy was greatly surprised when he was told that he had been away for twelve months and a day. Then he related how he fell in with the Fairies, whom he found such nice little men, and whose society was so agreeable that he lingered among them, as he thought, for a few minutes.

A CARMARTHENSHIRE MAIDEN WHO GOT INTO A FAIRY RING.

In the parish of Cynwil Elvet, there is a farmhouse called Fos Anna, a place which was known to the writer of this book once when a boy:—

A servant girl at this farm once went rather late in the evening to look for the cows, and, unfortunately, got into

the Fairy ring, and although she had been a long period without food she did not feel hungry.

IAGO AP DEWI AMONG THE FAIRIES SEVEN YEARS.

A Carmarthenshire tradition names among those who lived for a period among the Fairies no less a person than the translator into Welsh of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."

"He was called Iago ap Dewi, and lived in the parish of Llanllawddog, in a cottage situated in the wood of Llangwyly. He was absent from the neighbourhood for a long period, and the universal belief among the peasantry was that Iago got out of bed one night to gaze on the starry sky, as he was accustomed (astrology being one of his favourite studies), and whilst thus occupied the Fairies, passing by, carried him away, and he dwelt with them seven years. Upon his return, he was questioned by many as to where he had been, but always avoiding giving them a reply."

A district famous for Fairies long ago was the parish of Llanedi in Carmarthenshire, and Mr. Williams, says in his "Llen Gwerin Sir Gaerfyrddin," that an intelligent old man in that parish, named John Rees, gave him the following story of

A MAN WHO WAS FOUND AMONG THE FAIRIES AT CAE CEFN PANTYDWR.

This story which is similar to some of the tales I have already given as located in other parts is as follows:—

A certain man of Llanedi, on one occasion long ago, went away to another neighbourhood, leading by the "penwast" (collar) a very wild and unmanageable horse; and in order to be sure not to lose his hold of the animal, the man tied the end of the collar round the middle. So both man and horse went together and got lost. After much searching the horse was found without the collar, but nothing was heard of the man. After giving up searching for him as hopeless, they at last consulted a "Dyn Hysbys," (a conjuror or a wise man). The wise man directed them to go on a certain night into a field known as Cae Cefn Pantydwr, about forty yards from the road where the Fairies could be seen dancing, and the lost man among them, with the "penwast" still around his waist, which would enable them to know him; and the way to get him out of the Fairy Ring was to watch him coming round in the dance, and take hold of the collar when an opportunity offered itself, and drag the man out boldly. They did so, and the man was rescued. Ever since then people dreaded going to that field after dark, especially children.

In some parts of Carmarthenshire, Fairy Rings are known as "Rings y Gwr Drwg" (the rings of the Old Gentleman), suggesting that the Fairies had some connection with the evil one.

SON OF LLECH Y DERWYDD AND THE FAIRIES.

The writer of the following tale was the late Rev. Benjamin Williams (Gwynionydd), an eminent antiquarian, Folk-Lorist, and a bard, and it is to be found in Welsh in Y Brython, vol. III., page 460. It is evident that the scene of the story was West or Mid-Wales. Mr. Williams heard the tale from old people who believed in the truth of it:—

"Yr oedd mab Llech y Derwydd yn unig blentyn ei rieni, ac hefyd yn etifedd y tyddyn. Yr oedd felly yn anwyl, ie, yn ddau lygad ei dad a'i fam.

"Yr oedd y pen gwas a mab y ty yn gyfeillion mynwesol iawn, fel dau frawd, ie, fel gyfeilliaid. Gan fod y mab a'r gwas y fath gyfeillion, byddai gwraig y ty bob amser yn darpar dillad i'r gwas yr un peth yn hollol ag i'r mab. Cwympodd y ddau gyfaill mewn serch a dwy ddynes ieuainc, brydferth, ac uchel eu parch yn yr ardal, a mawr oedd y boddineb yn Llech y Derwydd; ac yn fuan ymunodd y ddau bar mewn glan briodas, a mawr fu y rhialtwch ar yr amser. Cafodd y gwas le cyfleus i fyw ar dir Llech y Derwydd. Yn mhen tua haner blwyddyn ar ol priodi o'r mab, aeth ei gyfaill ac yntau allan i hela; enciliodd y deiliad i ryw gilfach lawn o anialwch, i edrych am helwriaeth; a dychwelodd yn y man at ei gyfaill, ond erbyn dyfod yno, nid oedd modd gweled y mab yn un man. Parhaodd i edrych o gwmpas am dro gan waeddi a chwibanu, ond dim un arwydd am ei gyfaill. Yn mhen tro aeth adref i Llech y Derwydd, gan ddysgwyl ei weled yno; ond ni wyddai neb ddim am dano. Mawr oedd y gofid yn y teulu drwy y nos; ac erbyn dranoeth yr oedd eu pryder yn llawer mwy. Aethpwyd i weled y fan lle y gwelodd ei gyfaill ef olaf. Wylai ei fam a'i wraig am y gwaethaf. Yr

oedd y tad dipyn yn well na'i wraig a'i fam, ond edrychai yntau fel yn haner gwallgof. Edrychwyd ar y fan olaf y gwelodd y deiliad ef, ac er eu mawr syndod a'u gofid, canfyddasent gylch y Tylwyth Teg gerllaw y fan, a chofiodd y deiliad yn y man iddo glywed swn peroriaeth hudoliaethus iawn rywle ar y pryd. Penderfynwyd ar unwaith iddo fod mor anffodus a myned i gylch y Tylwyth, a chael ei gludo ymaith na wyddid i ba le.

"Aeth wythnosau a misoedd gofidus heibio, a ganwyd mab i fab Llech y Derwydd; ond nid oedd y tad ieuanc yno i gael gweled ei blentyn, ac yr oedd hyny yn ofidus iawn gan yr hen bobl. Beth bynag, daeth y dyn bach i fyny yr un ddelw a'i dad, fel pe buasai wedi ei arlunio; a mawr ydoedd yng ngolwg ei daid a'i nain. Efe oedd pobpeth yno. Tyfodd i oedran gwr, a phriododdd a merch landeg yn y gymydogaeth; ond nid oedd gair da i'r tylwyth eu bod yn bobl hawddgar.

"Bu farw yr hen bobl, a bu farw y ferch-yng-nghyfraith hefyd. Ar ryw brydnawn gwyntog, ym mis Hydref, gwelai teulu Llech y Derwydd henafgwr tal, teneu, a'i farf a'i wallt fel yr eira, yr hwn a dybient ydoedd Iddew, yn dynesu yn araf araf at y ty. Hylldremiai y morwynion drwy y ffenestr, a chwarddai y feistress am ben yr 'hen Iddew,' gan godi y plant un ar ol y llall i'w weled yn dyfod. Daeth at y drws, a daeth i mewn hefyd yn lled eofn, gan ofyn am ei rieni. Atebai y wraig ef yn daeog, a choeglyd anghyffredin, gan ddywedyd, 'Beth oedd yr hen Iddew meddw yn dyfod yno,' oblegid tybient ei fod wedi yfed, onid e ni fuasai yn siarad felly. Edrychai yr hen wr yn syn a phryderus iawn ar bob peth yn y ty, gan synu llawer; ond ar y plant bychain ar hyd y llawr y sylwai fwyaf. Edrychai yn llawn siomedigaeth a gofid. Dywedodd yr hanes i gyd, iddo fod allan yn hela ddoe, a'i fod yn awr yn dychwelyd. Dywedodd y wraig iddi glywed chwedl am dad ei gwr flynyddau cyn ei geni, ei fod wedi myned ar goll wrth hela;

ond fod ei thad yn dywedyd wrthi nad gwir hyny, mai ei ladd a gafodd. Aeth y wraig yn anystywallt, ac yn llwyr o'i chof eisiau fod yr hen 'Iddew' yn myned allan. Cyffrodd yr hen wr, a dywedai mai efe ydoedd perchen y ty, ac y byddai raid iddo gael ei hawl. Aeth allan i weled ei feddianau, ac yn fuan i dy y deiliad. Er ei syndod, yr oedd pethau wedi newid yn fawr yno. Ar ol ymddiddan am dro a hen wr oedranus wrth y tan, edrychai y naill fwy fwy ar y llall. Dywedai yr hen wr beth fu tynged ei ben gyfaill, mab Llech y Derwydd. Siaradent yn bwyllog am bethau mebyd, ond yr oedd y cyfan fel breuddwyd. Beth bynag, penderfynodd yr hen wr yn y cornel mai ei hen gyfaill, mab Llech y Derwydd, oedd yr ymwelydd, wedi dychwelyd o wlad y Tylwyth Teg, ar ol bod yno haner can' mlynedd. Credodd yr hen wr a'r farf wen ei dynged, a mawr y siarad a'r holi fu gan y naill y llall am oriau lawer.

"Dywedai fod gwr Llech y Derwydd y diwrnod hwnw oddi cartref. Cafwyd gan yr hen ymwelydd fwyta bwyd; ond er mawr fraw, syrthiodd y bwytawr yn farw yn y fan. Nid oes hanes fod trengholiad wedi bod ar y corff; ond dywedai y chwedl mae yr achos oedd, iddo fwyta bwyd ar ol bod yn myd y Tylwyth Teg cyhyd. Mynodd ei hen gyfaill weled ei gladdu yn ochr ei deidiau. Bu melldith fyth, hyd y silcyn ach, yn Llech y Derwydd, o blegid sarugrwydd y wraig i'w thad-yng-nghyfraith, nes gwerthu y lle naw gwaith."

The above tale translated into English reads as follows:—

"The son of Llech y Derwydd was the only child of his parents, and also the heir to the farm. He was, therefore, very dear to his father and mother, yea, he was as the very light of their eyes. The son and the head servant man were more than bosom friends, they were like two brothers, or rather twins. As the son and the servant were such close friends, the farmer's wife was in the habit of clothing them exactly alike. The two friends fell in love with two young

handsome women who were highly respected in the neighbourhood. This event gave the old people great satisfaction, and ere long the two couples were joined in holy wedlock, and great was the merry-making on the occasion. The servant man obtained a convenient place to live in on the grounds of Llech y Derwydd.

"About six months after the marriage of the son, he and the servant man went out to hunt. The servant penetrated to a ravine filled with brushwood to look for game, and presently returned to his friend, but by the time he came back the son was nowhere to be seen. He continued awhile looking about for his absent friend, shouting and whistling to attract his attention, but there was no answer to his calls. By and by he went home to Llech y Derwydd, expecting to find him there, but no one knew anything about him. Great was the grief of the family throughout the night, but it was even greater next day. They went to inspect the place where the son had last been seen. His mother and his wife wept bitterly, but the father had greater control over himself, still he appeared as half mad. They inspected the place where the servant man had last seen his friend, and, to their great surprise and sorrow, observed a Fairy ring close by the spot, and the servant recollected that he had heard seductive music somewhere about the time that he parted with his friend.

"They came to the conclusion at once that the man had been so unfortunate as to enter the Fairy ring, and they conjectured that he had been transported no one knew where. Weary weeks and months passed away, and a son was born to the absent man.

"The little one grew up the very image of his father, and very precious was he to his grandfather and grandmother. In fact, he was everything to them. He grew up to man's estate and married a pretty girl in the neighbourhood, but

her people had not the reputation of being kind-hearted. The old folks died, and also their daughter-in-law.

“One windy afternoon in the month of October, the family of Llech y Derwydd saw a tall thin old man with beard and hair as white as snow, who they thought was a Jew approaching slowly, very slowly, towards the house. The servant girls stared mockingly through the window at him, and their mistress laughed unfeelingly at the ‘old Jew,’ and lifted the children up, one after the other, to get a sight of him as he neared the house.

“He came to the door, and entered the house boldly enough, and inquired after his parents. The mistress answered him in a surly and unusually contemptuous manner and wished to know ‘What the drunken old Jew wanted there,’ for they thought he must have been drinking or he would never have spoken in the way he did. The old man looked at everything in the house with surprise and bewilderment, but the little children about the floor took his attention more than anything else. His looks betrayed sorrow and deep disappointment. He related his whole history, that yesterday he had gone out to hunt, and that now he had returned. The mistress told him that she had heard a story about her husband’s father, which occurred before she was born, that he had been lost whilst hunting, but that her father had told her that the story was not true, but that he had been killed. The woman became uneasy and angry that the old ‘Jew’ did not depart. The old man was roused, and said that the house was his, and that he would have his rights. He went to inspect his possessions, and shortly afterwards directed his steps to the servant’s house. To his surprise he saw that things were greatly changed. After conversing awhile with an aged man who sat by the fire, they carefully looked each other in the face, and the old man by the fire related the sad history of his lost friend, the son of Llech y Derwydd.

"They conversed together deliberately on the events of their youth, but all seemed like a dream. However, the old man in the corner came to the conclusion that his visitor was his old friend, the son of Llech y Derwydd, returned from the land of the Fairies, after spending there fifty years.

"The old man with the white beard believed the story related by his friend, and long was the talk and many were the questions which the one gave to the other. The visitor was informed that the master of Llech y Derwydd was from home that day, and he was persuaded to eat some food; but to the horror of all, when he had done so, he instantly fell down dead. We are not informed that an inquest was held over the body; but the tale relates that the cause of the man's sudden death was that he ate food after having been so long in the land of the Fairies. His old friend insisted on the dead man being buried with his ancestors. The rudeness of the mistress of Llech y Derwydd to her father-in-law brought a curse upon the place and family, 'hyd y silcyn ach,' and her offence was not expiated until the farm had been sold nine times."

TAFFY AP SION OF PENCADER AMONG THE FAIRIES.

The following Fairy Legend appeared in "British Goblins," page 75:—

Taffy ap Sion, the shoemaker's son, living near Pencader, Carmarthenshire, was a lad who many years ago entered the Fairy circle on the mountain hard by there, and having

danced a few minutes as he supposed, chanced to step out. He was then astonished to find that the scene which had been so familiar was now quite strange to him. Here were roads and houses he had never seen, and in place of his father's humble cottage there now stood a fine stone farmhouse. About him were lovely cultivated fields instead of the barren mountain he was accustomed to.

'Ah,' thought he, 'this is some Fairy trick to deceive my eyes. It is not ten minutes since I stepped into that circle, and now when I step out they have built my father a new house! Well, I only hope it is real; anyhow, I'll go and see.' So he started off by a path he knew instinctively, and suddenly struck against a very solid hedge. He rubbed his eyes, felt the hedge with his fingers, scratched his head, felt the hedge again, ran a thorn into his fingers and cried out, 'Wbwb' this is no Fairy hedge anyhow, nor, from the age of the thorns, was it grown in a few minutes' time! So he climbed over it and walked on. 'Here was I born,' said he, as he entered the farmyard, staring wildly about him, 'and not a thing here do I know!' His mystification was complete, when there came bounding towards him a huge dog, barking furiously. 'What dog is this? Get out you ugly brute! Don't you know I'm master here?—at least, when mother's from home, for father don't count.' But the dog only barked the harder. 'Surely,' muttered Taffy to himself, 'I have lost my road and am wandering through some unknown neighbourhood; but no, yonder is the Careg Hir!' and he stood staring at the well-known erect stone thus called, which still stands on the mountain south of Pencader, and is supposed to have been placed there in ancient times to commemorate a victory. As Taffy stood thus, looking at the long stone, he heard footsteps behind him, and turning, beheld the occupant of the farmhouse, who had come out to see why his dog was barking.

Poor Taffy was so ragged and wan that the farmer's Welsh

heart was at once stirred to sympathy. ‘Who are you, poor man?’ he asked, to which Taffy answered, ‘I know who I was, but I do not know who I am now. I was the son of a shoemaker who lived in this place, this morning; for that rock, though it is changed a little, I know too well.’ ‘Poor fellow,’ said the farmer, ‘You have lost your senses. This house was built by my great-grandfather, repaired by my grandfather; and that part there, which seems newly built, was done about three years ago at my expense. You must be deranged, or you have missed the road; but come in and refresh yourself with some victuals, and rest.’ Taffy was half persuaded that he had overslept himself and lost his road, but looking back he saw the rock before mentioned, and exclaimed, ‘It is but an hour since I was on yonder rock robbing a hawk’s nest.’ ‘Where have you been since?’ Taffy related his adventure. ‘Ah,’ quoth the farmer, ‘I see how it is—you have been with the Fairies. Pray who was your father?’ ‘Sion Evan y Crydd o Glanrhyd,’ was the answer. ‘I never heard of such a man,’ said the farmer, shaking his head, ‘nor of such a place as Glanrhyd, either; but no matter, after you have taken a little food we will step down to Catti Shon, at Pencader, who will probably be able to tell something.’ With this he beckoned Taffy to follow him, and walked on; but hearing behind him the sound of footsteps growing weaker and weaker, he turned round, when to his horror he beheld the poor fellow crumble in an instant to about a thimbleful of black ashes. The farmer, though much terrified at this sight, preserved his calmness sufficiently to go at once and see old Catti, the aged crone he had referred to, who lived at Pencader, near by. He found her crouching over a fire of faggots, trying to warm her old bones. ‘And how do you do the day, Catti Shon?’ asked the farmer. ‘Ah,’ said old Catti, ‘I’m wonderful well, farmer, considering how old I am.’ ‘Yes, yes, you are very old. Now, since you are so old, let me ask you—do you remember anything about Sion y Crydd o

Glanrhyd? Was there ever such a man, do you know?' 'Sion Glanrhyd? O! I have a faint recollection of hearing my grandfather, old Evan Shenkin, Penferdir, relate that Sion's son was lost one morning, and they never heard of him afterwards, so that it was said he was taken by the Fairies. His father's cottage stood somewhere near your house.' 'Were there many Fairies about at that time?' asked the farmer. 'O, yes; they were often seen on yonder hill, and I was told they were lately seen in Pant Shon Shenkin, eating flummery out of egg-shells, which they had stolen from a farm hard by.' 'Dir anwyl fi!' cried the farmer; 'dear me! I recollect now—I saw them myself.'

SHON AP SHENKIN SEDUCED BY FAIRY MUSIC.

Another story very similar to the one I have just given is the legend of Shon ap Shenkin, which was related to Mr. Sikes by a farmer's wife near the reputed scene of the tale, that is the locality of Pant Shon Shenkin, the famous centre of Carmarthenshire Fairies:—

"Shon ap Shenkin was a young man who lived hard by Pant Shon Shenkin. As he was going afield early one fine summer's morning he heard a little bird singing, in a most enchanting strain, on a tree close by his path. Allured by the melody, he sat down under the tree until the music ceased, when he arose and looked about him. What was his surprise at observing that the tree, which was green and full of life when he sat down, was now withered and barkless! Filled with astonishment he returned to the farmhouse which he had left, as he supposed, a few

minutes before; but it also was changed, grown older, and covered with ivy. In the doorway stood an old man whom he had never before seen; he at once asked the old man what he wanted there. ‘What do I want here?’ ejaculated the old man, reddening angrily; ‘that’s a pretty question! Who are you that dare to insult me in my own house?’ ‘In your own house? How is this? where’s my father and mother, whom I left here a few minutes since, whilst I have been listening to the charming music under yon tree, which, when I rose, was withered and leafless’ ‘Under the tree!—music!’ ‘What’s your name?’ ‘Shon ap Shenkin.’ ‘Alas, poor Shon, and this is indeed you!’ cried the old man. ‘I often heard my grandfather, your father, speak of you, and long did he bewail your absence. Fruitless inquiries were made for you; but old Catti Maddock of Brechfa said you were under the power of the Fairies, and would not be released until the last sap of that sycamore tree would be dried. Embrace me, my dear uncle, for you are my uncle ... embrace your nephew.’ With this the old man extended his arms, but before the two men could embrace, poor Shon ap Shenkin crumbled into dust on the door-step.”

It is very interesting to compare this story of Shon ap Shenkin, under the power of the Fairies, listening to the birds of enchantment, with the warriors at Harlech listening to the Birds of Rhiannon, in the Mabinogi of Branwen, daughter of Llyr.

Bran Fendigaid, a Welsh King in ancient times, had a palace at Harlech, and had a sister named Bronwen, or White Breast, whom Matholwch the King of Ireland married on account of her wonderful beauty. After a while, however, the foster brothers of Matholwch began to treat Bronwen very cruelly till at last she found means to send a message to her brother Bran, in Wales; and this she did by writing a letter of her woes, which she bound to a bird’s

wing which she had reared. The bird reached Bronwen's brother, Bran, who, when he read the letter sailed for Ireland immediately, and during a fearful warfare in that country he was poisoned with a dart in his foot. His men had been bidden by their dying chief to cut off his head and bear it to London and bury it with the face towards France. They did as they were bidden by Bran previous to his death, and various were the adventures they encountered while obeying this injunction. At Harlech they stopped to rest, and sat down to eat and drink.

While there, they heard three birds singing a sweet song, "at a great distance over the sea," though it seemed to them as though they were quite near. These were the birds of Rhiannon. Their notes were so sweet that warriors were known to have remained spell-bound for 80 years listening to them. The birds sang so sweetly that the men rested for seven years, which appeared but a day. Then they pursued their way to Gwales in Pembrokeshire, and there remained for four score years, during which the head of Bran was uncorrupted. At last they went to London and buried it there.

The old Welsh poets often allude to the birds of Rhiannon, and they are also mentioned in the Triads; and the same enchanting fancy reappears in the local story of Shon ap Shenkin, which I just gave.

Mr. Ernest Rhys in the present day sings:—

"O, the birds of Rhiannon they sing time away,—
Seven years in their singing are gone like a day."

In the region of myth and romance Rhiannon, the songs of whose birds were so enchanting, was the daughter of Heveydd Hen, who by her magic arts foiled her powerful suitor, Gwawl ap Clud, and secured as her consort the man

of her choice, Pwyll, Prince of Dyfed. In Welsh Mythology several members of the kingly families are represented as playing the role of magicians.

It may be added that it is interesting to compare both the story of Shion ap Shenkin, and that of the birds of Rhiannon, with Longfellow's "Golden Legend," originally written in the thirteenth century by Jacobus de Voragine, in which Monk Felix is represented as listening to the singing of a snow-white bird for a hundred years, which period passed as a single hour.

"One morning all alone,
Out of his covenant of gray stone,
Into the forest older, darker, grayer
His lips moving as if in prayer,
His head sunken upon his breast
As in a dream of rest,
Walked the Monk Felix. All about
The broad, sweet sunshine lay without,
Filling the summer air;
And within the woodlands as he trod,
The twilight was like the Truce of God
With worldly woe and care.
Under him lay the golden moss;
And above him the boughs of hemlock-trees
Waved, and made the sign of the cross,
And whispered their benedicites,
And from the ground
Rose an odour sweet and fragrant
Of the wild-flowers and the vagrant
Vines that wandered,
Seeking the sunshine, round and round.

"Those he heeded not, but pondered
On the volume in his hand,

A volume of Saint Augustine,
Wherein he read of the unseen
Splendours of God's great town
In the unknown land,
And, with his eyes cast down
In humility he said:
'I believe, O God,
What herein I have read,
But alas! I do not understand'?

"And lo! he heard
The sudden singing of a bird,
A snow-white bird, that from a cloud
Dropped down,
And among the branches brown
Sat singing
So sweet, and clear, and loud,
It seemed a thousand harp-strings ringing;
And the Monk Felix closed his book,
And long, long,
With rapturous look,
He listened to the song.
And hardly breathed or stirred,
Until he saw, as in a vision,
The land Elysian,
And in the heavenly city heard
Angelic feet
Fall on the golden flagging of the street,
And he would fain
Have caught the wondrous bird,
But strove in vain;
For it flew away, away,
Far over hill and dell,
And instead of its sweet singing,
He heard the convent bell
Suddenly in the silence ringing,

For the service of noonday.
And he retraced
His pathway homeward sadly and in haste.

“In the convent there was a change!
He looked for each well-known face,
But the faces were new and strange;
New figures sat in the oaken stalls.
New voices chanted in the choir;
Yet the place was the same place,
The same dusky walls
Of cold, gray stone,
The same cloisters and belfry and spire.

“A stranger and alone
Among that brotherhood
The monk Felix stood.
‘Forty years,’ said a Friar,
‘Have I been Prior
Of this convent in the wood,
But for that space
Never have I beheld thy face!’
The heart of Monk Felix fell:
And he answered with submissive tone,
‘This morning, after the horn of Prime,
I left my cell
And wandered forth alone.
Listening all the time
To the melodious singing
Of a beautiful white bird,
Until I heard
The bells of the convent ring
Noon from their noisy towers.
It was as if I dreamed;
For what to me had seemed
Moments only, had been hours!’

”‘Years!’ said a voice close by,
It was an aged monk who spoke,
From a bench of oak
Fastened against the wall;—
He was the oldest monk of all.
For a whole century
He had been there,
Serving God in prayer,
The meekest and humblest of his creatures,
He remembered well the features
Of Felix, and he said,
‘One hundred years ago,
When I was a novice in this place
There was here a monk, full of God’s grace,
Who bore the name
Of Felix, and this man must be the same.’

“And straightway
They brought forth to the light of day
A volume old and brown,
A huge tome bound
In brass and wild-boar’s hide.
Wherein were written down
The names of all who had died
In the convent, since it was edified.
And there they found,
Just as the old Monk said,
That on a certain day and date,
One hundred years before,
Had gone forth from the convent gate
The monk Felix, and never more
Had he entered that sacred door
He had been counted among the dead!
And they knew, at last,
That such had been the power
Of that celestial and immortal song,

A hundred years had passed,
And had not seemed so long
As a single hour!”

In the stories I have already given those who fell into the hands of the Fairies were rescued or returned from them after a certain period of time; but I have heard some stories in which the victim never returned. A woman at Pontshan, Llandyssul, in Cardiganshire, related to me a story of a servant girl in that neighbourhood who was captured by the Fairies and never returned home again. A few months ago another tale of this kind was related to me at Llanrhystyd:

A LLANRHYSTYD MAID LOST AMONG THE FAIRIES.

Mr David Morgan, Carpenter, Llanrhystyd, informed me that some years ago the maid servant of Pencareg Farm in the neighbourhood, went out one evening to bring home the cattle which were grazing some distance away from the house. A boy employed to look after the cattle in the day-time known as “bugail bach,” saw the Fairies dragging the maid into their circle or ring, where she joined them in their dances. Search was made for her everywhere, but she was never seen again.

SHUI RHYS AND THE FAIRIES.

"Shui was a beautiful girl of seventeen, tall and fair, with a skin like ivory, hair black and curling, and eyes of dark velvet. She was but a poor farmer's daughter, notwithstanding her beauty, and among her duties was that of driving up the cows for the milking. Over this work she used to loiter sadly, to pick flowers by the way, or chase the butterflies, or amuse herself in any agreeable manner that fortune offered. For her loitering she was often chided, indeed, people said Shui's mother was far too sharp with the girl, and that it was for no good the mother had so bitter a tongue. After all the girl meant no harm, they said. But when one night Shui never came home till bed-time, leaving the cows to care for themselves, dame Rhys took the girl to task as she never had done before. 'Ysgwaetheroedd, Mami,' said Shui, 'I could not help it; it was the Tylwyth Teg,' (the Fairies). The dame was aghast at this, but she could not answer it—for well she knew the Tylwyth Teg were often seen in the woods of Cardigan. Shui was at first shy about talking of the Fairies, but finally confessed they were little men in green coats, who danced around her and made music on their little harps; and they talked to her in language too beautiful to be repeated; indeed she couldn't understand the words, though she knew well enough what the Fairies meant. Many a time after that Shui was late; but now nobody chided her, for fear of offending the Fairies. At last one night Shui did not come home at all. In alarm the woods were searched; there was no sign of her; and never was she seen in Cardigan again. Her mother watched in the fields on the Tair-nos ysprydion or three nights of the year when goblins are sure to be abroad; but Shui never returned. Once indeed there came to the neighbourhood a wild rumour that Shui Rhys had been seen in a great city in a foreign land—Paris, perhaps, or London, who knows? but this tale was in no

way injurious to the sad belief that the Fairies had carried her off; they might take her to those well-known centres of idle and sinful pleasure, as well as to any other place."[1]

FAIRIES COMING INTO THE BEDROOM OF A HOUSE NEAR ABERYSTWYTH.

One Robert Burton, in his "History of the Principality of Wales," published 215 years ago, says:—"John Lewes, Esq., a Justice of Peace at Glankerrig, near Aberystwyth, in this county, in the year 1656, by several letters to Mr. B. A., late worthy divine deceased, gives an account of several strange apparitions in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, and this county (Cardiganshire), about that time, confirmed by divers persons of good quality and reputation the substance of whereof are as followeth. A man and his family being all in bed, he being awake about midnight, perceived by a light entering the little room where he lay, and about a dozen in the shapes of men, and two or three women with small children in their arms following, they seemed to dance, and the chamber appeared much wider and lighter than formerly. They seemed to eat bread and cheese all about a kind of a tick upon the ground, they offered him some, and would smile upon him, he heard no voice, but calling once upon God to bless him, he heard a whispering voice in Welsh bidding him hold his peace. They continued there about four hours, all which time he endeavoured to wake his wife but could not. Afterwards they went into another room, and having danced awhile departed. He then arose, and though the room was very small, yet he could neither find the door, nor the way to bed again until crying out his wife and

family awoke.

"He living within two miles of Justice Lewes, he sent for him, being a poor honest husbandman and of good report, and made him believe he would put him to his oath about the truth of this Relation, who was very ready to take it."

A SERVANT OF PERTHRHYS, LLANDDEINIOL, AND THE WHITE FAIRIES.

A very old man named John Jones, who lives at Llanddeiniol, about six miles from Aberystwyth, informed me that many years ago, when he was a young man, or a lad of 18, he was engaged as a servant at a farm called Perthrhys, in that neighbourhood. One evening after supper he went to the tailor who was making him a suit of clothes; but as the clothes were not quite ready he had to wait till a late hour before returning home, but it was a delightful moonlight night. As he proceeded along a lonely path across a certain moor known as Rhosrhydd, and happened to look back he was suddenly surprised by seeing two young men or boys as he thought, coming after him. At first he thought they were some boys trying to frighten him; but after they had followed him for a short distance till they came within about 30 or 40 yards of him, they turned out from the path, and began to jump and to dance, going round and round as if they followed a ring or a circle just as we hear of the fairies. They were perfectly white, and very nimble, and the old man informed me that there was something supernatural both in their appearance and movements; and that he is convinced to this day that they

could not have been human beings. When he arrived home at the farm, and related his adventure, every one in the house was of the opinion that the strange beings he had seen were the Fairies.

NANCY TYNLLAIN AND HER SON SEEING FAIRIES ON HORSES.

A man named Timothy in the parish of Llanarth, Cardiganshire, told me that an old woman known as Nancy Tynllain and her son, Shenkin Phillips, had seen the Tylwyth Teg (fairies) on one occasion. Nancy died over sixty years ago. She and her son one day left home rather early in the morning, as they were going to Cynon's Fair, and had some distance to go. As they proceeded on their horses in the direction of Wilgarn, they saw the Fairies, mounted on small horses, galloping round and round as in a circle round about a certain hillock, and Nancy took particular notice that one of the Fairy women had a red cloak on. As the old woman and her son were looking on, watching the movements of the Fairies, Nancy remarked, "That Fairy woman over there rides very much like myself." This was at early dawn.

ELIAS, FORCH Y CWM AND THE FAIRIES.

Elias, Forch y Cwm, who was a servant man in the same neighbourhood, was one day ploughing on the field, but

when he happened to look about he perceived the Fairies on Bank-Cwmpridd, and coming towards him. The man ran home in terror from the field, and this was in broad daylight.

The late Mr. T. Compton Davies, Aberayron, an eminent Folk-Lorist, related to me the following two stories, and informed me that he had already written them in Welsh for "Cymru," in which excellent periodical they appeared, September, 1892, page 117.

THE CARDIGANSHIRE PAINTER AND MUSICIAN, WHO PLAYED HIS FLUTE TO THE FAIRY LADIES AND NEARLY SECURED ONE OF THEM AS A WIFE.

About the year 1860, a builder from Aberayron, in Cardiganshire, was erecting a Vicarage at Nantcwnlle, about nine miles from Aberayron, not far from Llangeitho. There was a certain man there employed as a painter, whose name was John Davies, a harmless and superstitious character, who once had been an exciseman, afterwards a carpenter, and at last became a painter, though he did not shine in either of the two trades. He was however, a brilliant musician, and belonged to a musical family. He was acquainted with the works of Handel, Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, whilst one of his favourites was the song of the Witches in "Macbeth," He also always carried his flute in his pocket. Whilst this Nantcwnlle Vicarage was in course of construction, John was sent one day on a message to Aberayron. He went there in due time, and in the afternoon left the town and started on his return

journey, having the choice of two roads—either returning through the Vale of Aeron, or across the hill—country of Cilcennin, The latter was a very lonely route, but he chose it as it was about two miles shorter. So John hurried on his journey so as to reach his destination before night. When he came to the little village of Cilcennin, he had a good mind to enter the public house known as the "Commercial," to see his old friend Llywelyn, when he remembered that it was getting late and that he had to pass by the ghosts of the moors and the Fairy circles on the top of the mountain. After walking on again about a mile, he arrived at another public house, known as "Rhiwlas Arms." He was now within three miles to the end of his journey, and it occurred to him that it would be a splendid thing to have one pint of beer to give him strength and courage to meet the ghosts. So in he went into the Public House, where he met with many old friends, and drank more than one pint. After taking out his flute from his pocket, John obliged the merry company with many of the old Welsh airs, such as "Ar Hyd y Nos," "Glan Meddwdod Mwyn," "Llwyn on," etc. It was 8 o'clock p.m., and in the middle of October. John started from the house, boasting to those who were present that he was not afraid, but poor fellow, as soon as he went out into the darkness and the stillness of the night, his heart began to beat very fast. Nevertheless, he walked forward from the cross-road towards Hendraws, and turned to a road which led direct to Nantcwnlle. For a considerable distance, there was no hedge except on one side of the road, and nothing but a vast open moor on the other side. John knew that he was to pass a small cottage called Ty-clottas, and expected every moment to see the light of the old woman who lived there, who was known as Peggi Ty-clottas. Unfortunately, John had somehow or other wandered away from the road into the bog; but seeing light before him, he went on confidently. He followed the light for some distance, but

did not come to any house, and he noticed that the light was travelling and giving a little jump now and again.

At the early dawn next morning, old Peggi Ty-clottas, when she was half awake, heard some strange music, more strange than she had ever heard before. At first she thought it was the "toili" (phantom funeral), which had come to warn her of her approaching death; for to believe in the "toili" was part of Peggi's confession of faith. But when she listened attentively, Peggi found out that the music was not a dead march, but rather something light and merry. So it could not have been the "toili." Afterwards she thought it was the warbling of some bird. Peggi had heard the lark many a time at the break of day singing songs of praises to the Creator. She had also heard the lapwing and other birds, breaking on the loneliness of her solitary home; but never had she heard a bird like this one singing, singing continually without a pause. At last she got up from her bed and went out into the moor in order to see what was there. To her great surprise, she saw a man sitting on a heap, and blowing into some instrument, who took no notice of Peggi. Peggi went quite close to the man and asked him in a loud voice, "What do you want here?" Then the man stirred up and ceased to blow, and with an angry look, said,—"Ah you,—you have spoiled everything; it nearly came to a bargain." It proved that the man whom Peggi came upon was John Davies, the painter, who had been playing his flute to the Fairies, and had almost made a bargain with them to marry a Fairy lady, when old Peggi came to spoil everything.

When Mr. T. Compton Davies, heard about John among the Fairies he went to him and begged him to tell him all about it; and he did so. According to John's own account of his night adventure it was something as follows:—When he got lost in the bog, he followed the light, till presently, he came to a Fairy ring, where a large number of little Fairy ladies danced in it, and to his great surprise, one of them took his arm, so that John also began to dance. And after a while, the Queen of the Fairies herself came on to him, and asked him, "Where do you come from?" John replied, "From the world of mortals," and added that he was a painter. Then she said to him, that they had no need of a painter in the world of Fairies, as there was nothing getting old there. John found the Fairies all ladies, or at least he did not mention any men. They were very beautiful, but small, and wearing short white dresses coming down to the knees only. When he took out from his pocket his flute and entertained them by playing some Irish, Scotch, and English airs, the Queen informed him that they (the Fairies) were of Welsh descent. Then John played some Welsh airs from Owen Alaw to the great delight of the Fairy ladies, and they had a merry time of it. John soon became a great favourite, and asked for something to drink, but found they were "teetotals." Then he fell in love with one of the Fairy ladies, and asked the Queen for the hand of the maiden, and informed her that he had a horse named Bob, as well as a cart of his own making. The Queen in reply said that they were not accustomed to mix with mortals, but as he had proved himself such a musician, she gave her consent under the conditions that he and the little lady should come once a month on the full moon night to the top of Mount Trichrug to visit the Fairies. Then the Queen took hold of a pot full of gold which she intended giving John as a dowry, but, unfortunately, at the very last moment, when he was just going to take hold of it, old Peggi TyClottas came to shout

and to spoil the whole thing; for as soon as the Fairy ladies saw old Peggi, they all vanished through some steps into the underground regions and John never saw them again. But he continued to believe as long as he lived that he had been with the Fairies.

TWO MEN WHO SAW THE FAIRIES IN CARMARTHENSHIRE DANCING IN BROAD DAYLIGHT.

Mr. Compton Davies, also informed me that there were two men in his neighbourhood who had seen the Fairies about 45 years ago, and he directed me to go and see them so as to hear everything from their own lips. One of them, David Evans, Red Lion, lives at Aberayron, and the other Evan Lewis is a farmer near Mydroilyn, in the parish of Llanarth. I went to see both of them, and they gave me a full account of what they had seen which was something as follows:—

In August, 1862, David Evans and Evan Lewis, went from the Coast of Cardiganshire with their waggons all the way to Brecon for some timber for ship-building, which was going on at New Quay. On their return journey, through Carmarthenshire, they stopped for a short time at a place called Cwmdwr on the road leading from Llanwrda to Lampeter. It was about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and the two men and their horses and waggons were standing opposite a farm known as Maestwynog, where the reapers were busy at work in a wheat-field close by. As they were looking in the direction of a hillside not far off, David Evans saw about fifty small wheat stacks (sopynau

bychain), as he at first thought. On second sight, however, he noticed that they were moving about, he took them for reapers. They were all dressed exactly alike, and walked fast one after another up the hillside footpath. David Evans now called the attention of his companion Evan Lewis, whom he asked who the men could have been; but before he had time to make any further remarks, the first of those who were climbing up along the winding footpath had reached a small level spot on the top of the hill. The others quickly followed him, and each one in coming to the top, gave a jump to dance, and they formed a circle. After dancing for a short time, one of the dancers turned in into the middle of the circle, followed by the others, one by one till they appeared like a gimblet screw. Then they disappeared into the ground. After awhile one of them reappeared again, and looked about him in every direction as a rat, and the others followed him one by one and did the same. Then they danced for some time as before, and vanished into the ground as they had done the first time. The two men, David Evans and Evan Lewis were watching them from a distance of about 400 yards and were more than astonished to see men, as they thought, acting in such a strange and curious manner on the hill. They continued looking for some time but the dancers did not appear again. At last the two men proceeded on their journey till they came to an old man working on the road whom they asked whether he knew anything about the men they had seen dancing in a circle on the hill behind Maestwynog. The old man replied that he had not the least idea, but had heard his grandfather say that the Tylwyth Teg (Fairies) used to dance in his time, at which explanation our two friends smiled.

In the above account we see that the hill near Maestwynog was a special haunt of the Fairies, even in modern days. There are certain spots here and there all over Wales,

pointed out by old people to this day, as having been frequented in former times by the Fairies to dance and to sing. An old man named James Jones, Golden Lion, Llanarth, informed me that when a boy he heard from the lips of old men, many a tale of Fairies seen on Bank-rhydeiniol; and that they were mounted on horses, riding and playing; and the late Rev. J. Davies, Moria, mentions that there were traditions of them appearing on Bannau Duon in the same parish. In the northern part of Cardiganshire, the people of Talybont showed me a spot a few miles to the east of that village, where these supernatural beings appeared long ago, more especially to dance. The neighbourhood of Aberporth, in the southern part of the same county, was also a favourite spot according to an old woman in the village. Pant Shon Shenkin in the neighbourhood of Pencader was a famous place for Carmarthenshire Fairies, of which district we have already given the reader more than one story.

Gwynionydd in the Brython for 1860, remarks that in former times the Fairies were fond of the mountains of Dyfed, and that travellers in Cardiganshire, between Lampeter and the town of Cardigan often saw them on Llanwenog hill; but after arriving on that spot they would be seen far away on the mountains of Llandyssul, and expecting to find them there, they would be seen somewhere else, both deluding and eluding the traveller.

THE FAIRIES OF CWM MABWS, SEEN DRIVING IN THEIR CARRIAGES.

In the interesting small valley of Cwm Mabws, near

Llanrhystyd, nine miles from Aberystwyth, there is a rocky spot known as Craig Rhydderch. Even within the memory of some who are still alive, the caves of Craig Rhydderch were the favourite haunts of the Fairies, where these mysterious beings were thought to dwell, or at least pass through to the underground regions. The Fairies of this part were, it was supposed, some kind of spirits or supernatural beings, and were often seen in the Valley of Mabws going about in their phantom carriages and horses. About fifty years ago when Fairies were still to be seen in this neighbourhood, the eldest son of Penlan farm, and some of the men servants one evening just before dark, took their horses down to the little river which runs through the bottom of the valley in order to give the animals water, as there was no water near the farm-house which stood on high ground. As they were on their way to the river they heard some noise on the road quite near them, and the farmer's son said to the servants, "It is the noise of the Fairies on their journey, and they are coming from the direction of Craig Rhydderch; let us stand one side of the road to make room for them to pass." And sure enough, just as he spoke, a number of Fairies appeared on the scene and passed by as if they were on a journey. They were little men with little horses and carriages, but my informant could not tell me the colour of their dresses nor the colour of their horses

After taking their horses to the water and turning them into a field, the men went home to Penlan; and as soon as they entered the house and related what they had seen, another son of the farm had just arrived home from Aberystwyth with a horse and cart, and he also had seen the Fairies, just as he was turning to the road which led up the hill.

The above story was related to me by Mr. David Morgan, Carpenter, Llanrhystyd, who vouches for the truth of the account as he was well acquainted with the persons who

saw the Fairies, and one of them was a friend of his.

FAIRIES AND FOOTBALLERS.

There is a curious tradition that early one Easter Monday, when the parishioners of Pencarreg and Caio were met to play at football, they saw a numerous company of Fairies dancing. Being so many in number, the young men were not intimidated at all, but proceeded in a body towards the puny tribe, who perceiving them, removed to another place. The young men followed, whereupon the little folk suddenly disappeared dancing at the first place. Seeing this, the men divided and surrounded them, when they immediately became invisible, and were never more seen there. This was in Carmarthenshire.

Other places frequented by Fairies were Moyddin, between Lampeter and Llanarth, in Troed yr Aur, in Cardiganshire.

FAIRIES MARKETING.

It was formerly believed in some parts of West Wales, especially by the people dwelling near the sea coast, that the Fairies visited markets and fairs, and that their presence made business very brisk. I have already referred to the "Gwerddonau Llion," or the enchanted "Isles of the Sea," inhabited by Fairy Tribes. These Fairies, it was believed, went to and fro between the islands and shore, through a

subterranean gallery under the bottom of the sea, and regularly attended the markets at Milford Haven, in Pembrokeshire and Laugharne in Carmarthenshire. ("British Goblins," page 10.) They made their purchases without speaking, laid down their money and departed, always leaving the exact sum required, which they seemed to know, without asking the price of anything. Sometimes they were invisible, but they were often seen by sharp-eyed persons. There was one special butcher at Milford Haven upon whom the Fairies bestowed their patronage, instead of distributing their favours indiscriminately.

According to Gwynionydd in the "Brython," for 1858, page 110, these Fairies also came to market to Cardigan, and it was thought they raised the prices of things terribly whenever they came there. In that part of the country they were known as "Plant Rhys Ddwfn." No one saw them coming there or going away, only seen there in the market. When prices in the market happened to be high, and the corn all sold, however, much there might have been there in the morning, the poor used to say to one another on the way home, "Oh! They were there to-day," meaning "Plant Rhys Ddwfn," or the Fairies. These Fairies were liked by the farmers who had corn to sell, but disliked by the poor labourers who had to buy corn and give higher price for it. Gwynionydd also says that: "A certain Gruffydd Ap Einon was wont to sell them more corn than anybody else, and that he was a great friend of theirs. He was honoured by them beyond all his contemporaries by being led on a visit to their home. As they were great traders, like the Phœnicians of old, they had treasures from all countries under the sun. Gruffydd, after feasting his eyes to satiety on their wonders was led back by them loaded with presents. But before taking leave of them, he asked them how they succeeded in keeping themselves safe from invaders, as one of their number might become unfaithful,

and go beyond the virtue of the herbs that formed their safety. “Oh!” replied the little old man of shrewd looks, “Just as Ireland has been blessed with a soil on which venomous reptiles cannot live, so with our land; no traitor can live here. Look at the sand on the seashore; perfect unity prevails there, and so among us.” Rhys, the father of our race, bade us even to the most distant descendant to honour our parents and ancestors; love our own wives without looking at those of our neighbours, and do our best for our children and grandchildren. And he said that if we did so, no one of us would prove unfaithful to another, or become what you call a traitor. The latter is a wholly imaginary character among us; strange pictures are drawn of him with his feet like those of an ass, with a nest of snakes in his bosom, with a head like the Devil’s, with hands somewhat like a man’s while one of them holds a large knife and the family dead around him Good-bye!” When Gruffydd looked about him he lost sight of the country of Plant Rhys, and found himself near his home. He became very wealthy after this, and continued to be a great friend of Plant Rhys as long as he lived. After Gruffydd’s death they came to the market again, but such was the greed of the farmers, like Gruffydd before them, for riches, and so unreasonable were the prices they asked for their corn, that the Rhysians took offence and came no more to Cardigan to market. The old people used to think that they now went to Fishguard market, as very strange people were wont to be seen there.”

FAIRY CHANGELINGS.

Mr. B. Davies in the II. Vol. of the “Brython,” page 182,

gives the following tale of a Fairy Changeling in the neighbourhood of Newcastle Emlyn, in the Vale of Teifi, and on the borders of Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire: —

"One calm hot day, when the sun of heaven was brilliantly shining, and the hay in the dales was being busily made by lads and lasses, and by grown-up people of both sexes, a woman in the neighbourhood of Emlyn placed her one-year-old infant in the "gader" or chair, as the cradle is called in these parts, and out she went to the field for a while, intending to return when her neighbour, an old woman overtaken by the decrepitude of eighty summers, should call to her that her Darling was crying. It was not long before she heard the old woman calling to her; she ran hurriedly, and as soon as she set foot on the kitchen floor, she took her little one in her arms as usual, saying to him, "O my little one! thy mother's delight art thou! I would not take the world for thee, etc." But to her surprise, he had a very old look about him, and the more the tender-hearted mother gazed at his face, the stranger it seemed to her, so that at last she placed him in the cradle and told her sorrow to her relatives and acquaintances. And after this one and the other had given his opinion, it was agreed at last that it was one of Rhys Ddwfn's children that was in the cradle, and not her dearly loved baby. In this distress there was nothing to do but to fetch a wizard, or wise man, as fast as the fastest horse could gallop. He said, when he saw the child that he had seen his like before, and that it would be a hard job to get rid of him, though not such a very hard job this time. The shovel was made red hot in the fire by one of the Cefnarth (Cenarth) boys, and held before the child's face; and in an instant the short little old man took to his heels, and neither he nor his like was seen afterwards from Abercuch to Aberbargod at any rate. The mother found her darling unscathed the next moment. I remember also

hearing that the strange child was as old as the grandfather of the one that had been lost."—"Celtic Folk-Lore" by Sir J. Rhys.

There are many such stories in different parts of Wales and Scotland, and in both countries Fairies were believed to have a fatal admiration for lovely children, and credited with stealing them, especially unbaptized infants.

A Welsh poet thus sings:—

"Llawer plentyn teg aeth ganddynt,
Pan y cym'rynt helynt hir;
Oddiar anwyl dda rieni,
I drigfanau difri dir.

The Rev. Elias Owen's translation of the above is as follows:—

"Many a lovely child they've taken,
When long and bitter was the pain;
From their parents, loving, dear,
To the Fairies' dread domain."

Another popular mode of treatment resorted to in order to reclaim children from the Fairies, and to get rid of ugly changelings was as follows:—The mother was to carry the changeling to a river, and when at the brink, the wizard who accompanied her was to cry out:—

"Crap ar y wrach"—
(A grip on the hag.)

and the mother was to respond:—

"Rhy hwyr gyfraglach"—
(Too late decrepit one);

Then the mother was to throw the changeling into the river, and then returning home, where she would find her own child safe and sound.

It was believed that the Fairies were particularly busy in exchanging children on St. John's Eve.

HOW TO DETECT CHANGELINGS.

One way of finding out whether children were Changelings or not was to listen to them speaking. If suspected children were heard speaking things above the understanding of children, it was considered a proof that they were changelings. This was a wide-spread belief in Wales.

Fairies did not always come to steal children, however, for they were believed in some places to enter the houses at night to dance and sing until the morning, and leave on the hearth-stone a piece of money as a reward behind them, should they find the house clean; but should it be dirty, they came to punish the servant girl. The good Fairies known as "Bendith y Mamau," were supposed to rock the infant's cradle and sweep and clean the house whilst the tired mother slept. And one way of securing their good luck was to leave a little milk for them upon the kitchen table at night.

FAIRY MONEY.

An old man named Evan Morris, Goginan, informed me that a farmer in the Vale of Rheidol one day found a sixpence on the top of a gate-post. On the next day he found a shilling there, and on the day after two shillings, the sum was doubled every day till the man was beginning to get rich. At last, however, the farmer told his family or his friends about his good luck, and after this he got no more money, as the Fairies were offended that he did not keep the thing secret.

FAIRY MOTHERS AND HUMAN MIDWIVES.

The following story is to be found in Welsh in an interesting little book entitled "Ystraeon y Gwyll," by the late Mr. D. Lledrod Davies; and in English by Sir John Rhys in his great work "Celtic Folk-Lore":—The locality of the tale is Swyddffynon, near Ystrad Meurig, in Cardiganshire.

"It used to be related by an old woman who died some thirty years ago at the advanced age of about 100. She was Pali, mother of old Rachel Evans, who died seven or eight years ago, when she was about eighty. The latter was a curious character, who sometimes sang "Maswedd," or rhymes of doubtful propriety, and used to take the children of the village to see fairy rings. She also used to see the "Tylwyth" (Fairies), and had many tales to tell of them. But her mother, Pali, had actually been called to attend at the confinement of one of them. The beginning of the tale is not very explicit; but, anyhow, Pali one evening found herself face to face with the Fairy lady she was to attend

upon. She appeared to be the wife of one of the princes of the country. She was held in great esteem, and lived in a very grand palace. Everything there had been arranged in the most beautiful and charming fashion. The wife was in her bed with nothing about her but white, and she fared sumptuously. In due time, when the baby had been born, the midwife had all the care connected with dressing it and serving its mother. Pali could see or hear nobody in the whole place, but the mother and the baby. She had no idea who attended on them, or who prepared all the things they required, for it was all done noiselessly and secretly. The mother was a charming person, of an excellent temper and easy to manage. Morning and evening, as she finished washing the baby, Pali had a certain ointment given her to rub the baby with. She was charged not to touch it, but with her hand, and especially not to put any near her eyes. This was carried out for some time, but one day, as she was dressing the baby, her eyes happened to itch, and she rubbed them with her hand. Then at once she saw a great many wonders she had not before perceived; and the whole place assumed a new aspect to her. She said nothing, and in the course of the day she saw a great deal more. Among other things, she observed small men and small women going in and out following a variety of occupations. But their movements were as light as the morning breezes. To move about was no trouble to them, and they brought things into the room with the greatest quickness. They prepared dainty food for the confined lady with the utmost order and skill, and the air of kindness and affection with which they served her was truly remarkable. In the evening, as she was dressing the baby, the midwife said to the lady, “You have had a great many visitors to-day.” To this she replied, “How do you know that? Have you been putting this ointment to your eyes?” Thereupon she jumped out of bed, and blew into her eyes, saying, “Now you will see no more.” She never afterwards could see the fairies,

however much she tried, nor was the ointment entrusted to her after that day."

There is a version of this story located in the neighbourhood of Llanuwchllyn, Merionethshire, and indeed in several other parts of Wales.

FAIRIES PLAYING TRICKS WITH THE OVEN.

Miss Evelyn Lewes, Tyglyn Aeron, in the "Carmarthenshire Antiquities" says, "Should the dough not rise properly, but present a stringy appearance, the Cardiganshire housewife announces that "Mae bara yn robin," and forthwith orders the sacrifice of an old slipper, presumably to propitiate the fairy folk who are inclined to play tricks with the oven.... A native of Montgomeryshire tells me that in her youth no loaf at her home was ever placed in the oven unless a cross had been previously signed upon it."

FAIRY GLOVES.

Mrs. A. Crawley-Boevey, of Birchgrove, Crosswood, a lady who is greatly interested in Folk-Lore, informed me that it is believed in Gloucestershire that the Fairies live in Fox Gloves. I have not so far discovered this belief in Wales, but Fox Glove is called in some part of the

Principality Menyg y Tylwyth Teg (Fairy Gloves). Also Menyg Ellyllon (Elves Gloves).

FAIRY KNOCKERS.

Knockers were supposed to be a species of Fairies which haunted the mines, and underground regions, and whose province it was to indicate by knocks and other sounds, the presence of rich veins of ore. That miners in former times did really believe in the existence of such beings is quite evident from the following two letters written by Lewis Morris (great grandfather of Sir Lewis Morris the poet) in October 14th, 1754, and December 4th, 1754. They appeared in Bingley's North Wales, Vol. II., pages 269–272:

"People who know very little of arts or sciences, or the powers of nature (which, in other words are the powers of the author of nature), will laugh at us Cardiganshire miners, who maintain the existence of "Knockers" in mines, a kind of good-natured impalpable people not to be seen, but heard, and who seem to us to work in the mines; that is to say, they are the types or forerunners of working in mines, as dreams are of some accidents, which happen to us. The barometer falls before rain, or storms. If we do not know the construction of it, we should call it a kind of dream that foretells rain; but we know it is natural, and produced by natural means, comprehended by us. Now, how are we sure, or anybody sure, but that our dreams are produced by the same natural means? There is some faint resemblance of this in the sense of hearing; the bird is killed before we hear the report of the gun. However, this

is, I must speak well of the "Knockers," for they have actually stood my good-friends, whether they are aerial beings called spirits, or whether they are a people made of matter, not to be felt by our gross bodies, as air and fire and the like. "Before the discovery of the "Esgair y Mwyn" mine, these little people, as we call them here, worked hard there day and night; and there are honest, sober people, who have heard them, and some persons who have no notion of them or of mines either; but after the discovery of the great ore they were heard no more. When I began to work at Llwyn Llwyd, they worked so fresh there for a considerable time that they frightened some young workmen out of the work. This was when we were driving levels, and before we had got any ore; but when we came to the ore, they then gave over, and I heard no more talk of them. Our old miners are no more concerned at hearing them "blasting," boring holes, landing "deads," etc., than if they were some of their own people; and a single miner will stay in the work, in the dead of night, without any man near him, and never think of any fear of any harm they will do him. The miners have a notion that the "knockers" are of their own tribe and profession, and are a harmless people who mean well. Three or four miners together shall hear them sometimes, but if the miners stop to take notice of them, the "knockers" will also stop; but, let the miners go on at their work, suppose it is "boring," the "knockers" will at the same time go on as brisk as can be in landing, "blasting." or beating down the "loose," and they are always heard a little distance from them before they come to the ore.

"These are odd assertions, but they are certainly facts, though we cannot, and do not pretend to account for them. We have now very good ore at "Llwyn Llwyd," where the "knockers" were heard to work, but we have now yielded the place, and are no more heard. Let who will laugh, we

have the greatest reason to rejoice, and thank the "knockers," or rather God, who sends us these notices."

The second letter is as follows:—

"I have no time to answer your objection against 'knockers'; I have a large treatise collected on that head, and what Mr. Derham says is nothing to the purpose. If sounds of voices, whispers, blasts, working, or pumping, can be carried on a mile underground, they should always be heard in the same place, and under the same advantages, and not once in a month, a year, or two years. Just before the discovery of ore last week, three men together in our work at "Llwyn Llwyd" were ear-witnesses of "knockers," pumping, driving a wheelbarrow, etc.; but there is no pump in the work, nor any mine within less than a mile of it, in which there are pumps constantly going. If they were these pumps that they heard, why were they never heard but that once in the space of a year? And why are they not now heard? But the pumps make so little noise that they cannot be heard in the other end of "Esgair y Mwyn" mine when they are at work. We have a dumb and deaf tailor in the neighbourhood who has a particular language of his own by signs, and by practice I can understand him and make him understand me pretty well, and I am sure I could make him learn to write, and be understood by letters very soon, for he can distinguish men already by the letters of their names. Now letters are marks to convey ideas, just after the same manner as the motion of fingers, hands, eyes, etc. If this man had really seen ore in the bottom of a sink of water in a mine and wanted to tell me how to come at it, he would take two sticks like a pump, and would make the motions of a pumper at the very sink where he knew the ore was, and would make the motions of driving a wheelbarrow. And what I should infer from thence would be that I ought to take out the water and sink or drive in the place, and wheel the stuff out. By parity of reasoning, the

language of "knockers," by imitating the sound of pumping, wheeling, etc., signifies that we should take out the water and drive there. This is the opinion of all old miners, who pretend to understand the language of the "knockers." Our agent and manager, upon the strength of this notice, goes on and expect great things. You, and everybody that is not convinced of the being of "knockers," will laugh at these things, for they sound like dreams; so does every dark science. Can you make any illiterate man believe that it is possible to know the distance of two places by looking at them? Human knowledge is but of small extent, its bounds are within our view, we see nothing beyond these; the great universal creation contains powers, etc., that we cannot so much as guess at. May there not exist beings, and vast powers infinitely smaller than the particles of air, to whom air is as hard a body as the diamond is to us? Why not? There is neither great nor small, but by comparison. Our "knockers" are some of these powers, the guardians of mines.

"You remember the story in Selden's Table-Talk of Sir Robert Cotton and others disputing about Moses's shoe. Lady Cotton came in and asked, 'Gentlemen, are you sure it is a shoe?' So the first thing is to convince mankind that there is a set of creatures, a degree or so finer than we are, to whom we have given the name of "knockers" from the sounds we hear in our mines. This is to be done by a collection of their actions well attested, and that is what I have begun to do, and then let everyone judge for himself."

We do not hear of "Knockers" in Cardiganshire now; in Cornwall, however, it is said that they still haunt the mines, and sometimes, with a sound of knocking and singing, they guide a lucky miner to find good ore. The "Knockers" were, it was once thought, "the Souls of the Jews who crucified our Saviour." At least it seems that that was the belief in Cornwall. Perhaps it would be of interest

to add that there were Cornishmen among the miners of Cardiganshire when Mr. Lewis Morris wrote the two letters I have just given.

A STORY OF PONT EINION (EINION BRIDGE) TREGARON.

Mr. John Jones, Pontrhydfendigaid, who is now about 95 years of age, related to me the following tale seven years ago:—

Long ago, when much of the land where now stand the farms of Ystrad-Caron, Penylan, and Penybont, was a Common, a gentleman named Einion, and his wife, came from Abergwaun (Fishguard) and settled in the neighbourhood of Tregaron. Einion inclosed much of the land on the banks of the river Teivy in that part, and built a fine mansion which he called Ystrad-Caron, and soon became a most influential man in the neighbourhood, especially as he was well-to-do, and had generously constructed at his own expense, a bridge over the river for the convenience of the poor people of Tregaron and the surrounding districts. He also loved above everything his wife, and his harp, and was considered one of the best players on that instrument in Wales; but, unfortunately, as time went on, he failed to derive any pleasure from his surroundings and soon became subject to "melancholia," imagining that the place was haunted by some evil genius.

At last, he was persuaded by his medical adviser to seek a change of scenery by going to stay for a while in Pembrokeshire, his native place. Soon after his arrival at

Fishguard, he took a short sea voyage from that port, but after some adventures, he and others of his fellow passengers were taken prisoners by a French Man of War.

After spending many years of his lifetime inside the strong walls of a French prison, he at last succeeded to escape, and soon found his way once more to the neighbourhood of Tregaron in Cardiganshire; but to his great astonishment, as he neared his own house, Ystrad-Caron, after so many years' absence, he heard some music and dancing.

Clothed in rags he knocked at the back door, and pretended to be a tramp. One of the maid servants took compassion on the "poor old tramp," and allowed him to come in and warm himself near the kitchen fire.

"We are very busy here to-day," said she to him, "our mistress who has been a widow for many years is about to get married again, and the bride and bridegroom and a party of invited guests are now in the parlour, but, unfortunately, not one of those present is able to tune the harp, a fine old instrument which belonged to the lady's first husband who went away from home and got drowned at sea many years ago." "Please ask them to allow me to tune the harp," said Einion to the maid. The girl then went to inform her mistress that there was an old man in the kitchen who could tune the harp for them.

Einion now entered the parlour, and to the astonishment of the bride and bridegroom and the guests, soon tuned the harp; and as soon as he began to play an old favourite tune of his:

"Myfi bia'm ty, a'm telyn, a'm tân,"
(My house, and my harp, and my fire are mine).

The lady of the house recognised him at once as her husband.

Then turning to the young bridegroom to whom she was engaged to be married, addressed him thus:—"You may go now, as my husband has come home to me once more."

A short time after my visit to Mr. J. Jones, Pontrhydfendigaid, I went to Tregaron, where I found out from Mr. Jenkin Lloyd (formerly of Pant), and others, that the story of Pont Einion (Einion Bridge) was well-known in the neighbourhood, but that Einion during the many years he was away from home, was not in prison but among the Fairies.

It seems probable that the above story is a modern local version of a tale which is to be found in the Iolo MSS. entitled:—"Einion Ap Gwalchmai and the Lady of the Greenwood," which I introduce here for comparison:—

Einion, the son of Gwalchmai, the son of Meilir, of Treveilir in Anglesey, married Angharad, the daughter of Ednyved Vychan.

As he was one fine summer morning walking in the woods of Treveilir, he beheld a graceful slender lady of elegant growth, and delicate features; and her complexion surpassing every white and red in the morning dawn, and the mountain snow, and every beautiful colour in the blossoms of wood, field and hill. He felt in his heart an inconceivable commotion of affection, and he approached her in a courteous manner, and she also approached him in the same manner; and he saluted her, and she returned his salutation; and by these mutual salutations he perceived that his society was not disagreeable to her. He then chanced to cast his eye upon her foot, and he saw that she had hoofs instead of feet, and he became exceedingly

dissatisfied. But she told him that his dissatisfaction was all in vain. “Thou must” said she, “follow me wheresoever I go, as long as I continue in my beauty, for this is the consequence of our mutual affection.”

Then he requested of her permission to go to his house to take leave of, and to say farewell to his wife, Angharad, and his son Einion. “I” said she, “shall be with thee, invisible to all but to thyself; go visit thy wife and thy son.”

So he went, and the Goblin; and when he saw Angharad his wife, he saw her a hag-like one grown old, but he retained the recollection of days past, and still felt extreme affection for her, but he was not able to loose himself from the bond in which he was. “It is necessary for me” said he, “to part for a time, I know not how long from thee Angharad, and from thee my son Einion,” and they wept together, and broke a gold ring between them; he kept one half, and Angharad the other; and they took their leave of each other, and he went with the Lady of the Wood, and he knew not where; for a powerful illusion was upon him, and saw not any place, a person, or object under its true and proper appearance, excepting the half of the ring alone. And after being a long time, he knew not how long, with the Goblin, the Lady of the Wood, he looked one morning as the sun was rising upon the half of the ring, and he bethought him to place it in the most precious place he could and resolved to put it under his eyelid; and as he was endeavouring to do so, he could see a man in white apparel, and mounted on a snow-white horse, coming towards him, and that person asked him what he did there; and he told him that he was cherishing an afflicting remembrance of his wife Angharad. “Dos’t thou desire to see her,” said the man in white, “get up on this horse behind me”; and that Einion did, and looking around he could not see any appearance of the Lady of the Wood, the

Goblin; excepting the track of hoofs of marvellous and monstrous size, as if journeying towards the north. “What delusion art thou under?” said the man in white. Then Einion answered him and told everything, how it occurred betwixt him and the Goblin. “Take this white staff in thy hand,” said the man in white; and Einion took it. And the man in white told him to desire whatever he wished for. The first thing he desired was to see the Lady of the Wood, for he was not yet completely delivered from the illusion. And she appeared to him in size a hideous and monstrous witch, a thousand times more repulsive of aspect than the most frightful things seen upon earth. And Einion uttered a cry from terror; and the man in white cast his cloak over Einion, and in less than a twinkling Einion alighted as he wished on the hill of Treveilir, by his own house, where he knew scarcely anyone, nor did anyone know him. After the Goblin had left Einion, the son of Gwalchmai, she went to Treveilir in the form of an honourable and powerful nobleman elegantly and sumptuously appareled, and possessed of an incalculable amount of gold and silver, and also in the prime of life, that is thirty years of age. And he placed a letter in Angharad’s hand in which it was stated that Einion had died in Norway more than nine years before, and he then exhibited his gold and wealth to Angharad; and she, having in the course of time lost much of her regret, listened to his affectionate address. And the illusion fell upon her, and seeing that she should become a noble lady higher than any in Wales, she named a day for her marriage with him. And there was a great preparation of every elegant and sumptuous kind of apparel, and of meats and drinks, and of every honourable guest, and every excellence of song and string, and every preparation of banquet and festive entertainment. And when the honourable saw a particularly beautiful harp in Angharad’s room, he wished to have it played on; and the harpers present, the best in Wales, tried to put it in tune, but were

not able. And when everything was made ready for to proceed to Church to be married, Einion came into the house and Angharad saw him as an old decrepit, withered, gray-haired man, stooping with age, and dressed in rags, and she asked him if he would turn the spit whilst the meat was roasting. “I will,” said he and went about the work with the white staff in his hand after the manner of a man carrying a pilgrim’s staff. And after dinner had been prepared, all the minstrels failing to put the harp in tune for Angharad, Einion got up and took it in his hand, and tuned it, and played on it the air which Angharad loved. And she marvelled exceedingly, and asked him who he was. And he answered in song and stanza thus:

“Einion the golden-hearted, am I called by all around;
The son of Gwalchmai, Ap Meilir
My fond illusion continued long,
Evil thought of for my lengthened stay.”

“Where has thou been?”

“In Kent, in Gwent, in the wood in Monmouth, in Maelor Gorwenydd;
And in the Valley of Gwyn, the son of Nudd,
See the bright gold is the token.”

And he gave her the ring.

“Look not on the whitened hue of the hair.
Where once my aspect was spirited and bold;
Now gray, without disguise, where once it was yellow;
The blossoms of the grave—the end of all men.
The fate that so long affected me, it was time that should alter me;
Never was Angharad out of my remembrance,
Einion was by thee forgotten.”

And she could not bring him to her recollection.

Then said he to the guests:—

"If I have lost her whom I loved, the fair one of the polished mind,
The daughter of Ednyved Vychan;
I have not lost (so get you out)—
Either my bed, or my house, or my fire."

And upon that he placed the white staff in Angharad's hand, and instantly the Goblin which she had hitherto seen as a handsome and honourable nobleman, appeared to her as a monster, inconceivably hideous; and fainted from fear, and Einion supported her until she revived. And when she opened her eyes, she saw there neither the Goblin, nor any of the guests, or of the minstrels, nor anything whatever except Einion, and her son and the harp, and the house in its domestic arrangement, and the dinner on the table, casting its savoury odour around. And they sat down to eat; Einion and Angharad and Einion their son; and exceeding great was the enjoyment. And they saw the illusion which the demoniacal Goblin had cast over them. And by this perchance may be seen that love of female beauty and gentleness is the greatest fascination of man; the love of honours with their vanities and riches, is the greatest fascination of woman. No man will forget his wife, unless he sets his heart on the beauty of another; nor woman her husband, unless she sets her heart on the riches and honour of lordly vaingloriousness and the pomp of pride. And thus it ends."

Ednyved Vychan, whose name is mentioned in the beginning of the above story as Einion's father-in-law, was Lord of Brynffenigl in Denbighshire, and flourished seven hundred years ago. He was a most powerful chieftain, and

from him descended in the male line Henry VII. King of England, an ancestor to nearly all if not all the present monarchs of Europe.

MERMAIDS.

It seems probable that the tradition of Mermaids is of the same origin as that of fairies.

In Campbell's Superstitions of the Scottish Highlands, it is stated that a man in North Harris, caught a mermaid on a rock, and to procure her release, she granted him his three wishes. He became a skilful herb-doctor, who could cure the King's evil and other diseases ordinarily incurable. This reminds us of the Fairy Lady of Llyn y Fanfach in Carmarthenshire, revealing to her sons the medical qualities of certain herbs and plants, thus enabling them to become eminent doctors.

In the Welsh tales the mermaid is described as half woman and half fish: above the waist a lovely woman, but below the waist like a fish. There are several mermaid stories on the west coast of Wales, or perhaps, different versions of the same tale.

It was believed that vengeance overtook those who showed cruelty to these beings, and there is a tradition still extant in Carmarthenshire, that a man who killed one of them in the neighbourhood of Pembrey, or Kidwelly, brought a curse upon himself, his family and his descendants until the ninth generation.

In times gone by, it seems that Cardiganshire with a sea-

coast of about fifty miles, was noted for its mermaids; and according to Dryton, at the Battle of Agincourt, the county had "a mermaid sitting on a rock," as armorial bearings.

THE MERMAID AND THE FISHERMEN.

Mr. Lewis, Henbant, an old man who lives in the neighbourhood of Llanarth, Cardiganshire, told me the following tale five years ago, though I am indebted for some particulars to the Rev. D. Lewis, Vicar of Llansantffread:—In times gone by a mermaid was often seen on a rock known as Careg Ina, near New Quay. One day this sea creature became entangled in the nets of some fishermen who were out fishing some considerable distance from the land. She entreated the men to disentangle her, and allow her to return to the water. Her request was granted, and in gratitude the mermaid warned them of a coming storm, and advised them to make for the shore without delay. This they did hurriedly, and as they were nearing the land a terrific storm came on suddenly, and it was with difficulty that they managed to land safely. Other fishermen in another boat on the very same day, not having the advantage of being warned by the mermaid, were caught by the storm and met with a watery grave.

I have also discovered a version of this story at Aberporth, a seaside village some distance to the South of New Quay.

It was formerly believed that there were mermen as well as mermaids, though I have no Welsh tale of a merman.

THE FISHERMEN OF LLANDUDOCH AND THE MERMAID.

The following tale appeared in Welsh fifty years ago in "Y Brython," Vol. I. page 73; and the writer was the late eminent Welshman Gwynionydd, father of the present Vicar of Lledrod:—

"On a fine afternoon in September in the beginning of the last century, a fisherman named Pergrin proceeded to a recess in the rock near Pen Cemmes, (Pembrokeshire), and found there a mermaid doing her hair, and he took the water lady prisoner to his boat. We cannot imagine why the lady had not been more on her guard to avoid such a calamity; but if sea maidens are anything like land maidens, they often forget their duties when engaged in dealing with the oil of Maccassar, and making themselves ready to meet the young men. We know not what language is used by sea maidens ... but this one this time at any rate, talked, it is said, very good Welsh; for when she was in despair in Pergrin's custody weeping copiously, and with her tresses all dishevelled, she called out "Pergrin, if thou wilt let me go, I will give three shouts in the time of thy greatest need." So, in wonder and fear he let her go to walk the streets of the deep and visit her sweethearts there. Days and weeks passed without Pergrin seeing her after this; but one hot afternoon, when the sea was pretty calm, and the fishermen had no thought of danger, behold his old acquaintance showing her head and locks, and shouting out in a loud voice: "Pergrin! Pergrin! Pergrin! take up thy nets! take up thy nets! take up thy nets!" Pergrin and his companion instantly obeyed the message, and drew their nets in with great haste. In they went, passed the bar, and by the time they had reached the Pwll Cam, the most terrible storm had overspread the sea, while he and his companion were safe on land. Twice nine others had gone

out with them, but they were all drowned, without having the chance of obeying the warning of the water lady.

A version of the above story is to be found also in Carnarvonshire, North Wales.

A MERMAID SEEN NEAR ABERYSTWYTH.

The following tale appeared in the interesting Welsh Magazine "Seren Gomer," for June, 1823:—

"Yn mis Gorphenaf, 1826, ffarmwr o blwyf Llanuwchaiarn, yn nghylch tair milltir o Aberystwyth, ty anedd yr hwn sydd o fewn i 300 llath o lan y mor, a aeth i wared i'r creigiau, pan yr oedd yr haul yn cyfodi ac yn pelydru yn hyfryd ar y mor, a gwelai fenyw (fel y tybiai) yn ymolchi yn y mor, o fewn i dafliad carreg ato; ar y cyntaf efe o wylder a aeth yn ei ol, ond ar adfyfyriad meddyliodd na fuasai un fenyw yn myned allan mor bell i'r mor, gan ei fod yr amser hwnw yn llifo; ac hefyd yr oedd yn sicr fod y dwfr yn chwe' troedfedd o ddyfnder yn y fan y gwelodd hi yn sefyll. Wedi meddwl felly, efe a syrthiodd ar ei wyneb, ac a ymlusgodd yn mlaen i fin y dibyn o ba le y cafodd olwg gyflawn arni dros fwy na haner awr. Wedi edrych digon arni ei hun, efe a ymlusgodd yn ei ol, ac a redodd i alw ei deulu i weled yr olygfa ryfeddol hon; wedi dywedid wrthynt yr hyn a welsai, efe a'u cyfarwyddodd o'r drws pa fan i fyned, ac ymlusgo i ymyl y graig fel y gwnaethai efe. Aeth rhai o honynt heb ond haner gwisgo, canys yr oedd yn foreu, a hwythau ond newydd gyfodi; ac wedi dyfod i'r fan, gwelsant hi dros o gylch deng mynyd, tra bu y ffarmwr yn galw ei wraig a'i blentyn ieuangaf. Pan ddaeth y wraig yn mlaen, ni

syrthiodd hi i lawr, fel y gwnaethau y rhai eraill, ond cerddodd yn mlaen yn ngolwg y creadur; eithr cyn gynted ag y gwelodd y For-Forwyn hi, soddodd i'r dwfr, a nofiodd ymaith, nes oedd o gylch yr un pollder oddiwrth y tir ag y gwelsid hi ar y cyntaf; a'r holl deulu, y gwr, y wraig, a'r plant, y gweision, a'r morwynion, y rhai oeddynt oll yn ddeuddeg o rifedi, a redasant ar hyd y lan dros fwy na haner milltir, ac yn agos yr holl amser hwnw gwelent hi yn y mor, a rhai gweithiau yr oedd ei phen a'i hysgwyddau oll y tu uchaf i'r dwfr. Yr oedd carreg fawr, dros lathen o uchder yn y mor, ar ba un y safai pan welwyd hi gyntaf. Yr oedd yn sefyll allan o'r dwfr o'i chanol i fynu, a'r holl deulu a dystient ei bod yn gymwys yr un fath o ran dull a maintioli a dynes ieuanc o gylch deunaw oed. Yr oedd ei gwallt yn o fyr, ac o liw tywyll; ei gwyneb yn dra thlws; ci gwddf a'i breichiau fel arferol; ei bronau yn rhesymol, a'i chroen yn wynach nag eiddo un person a welsant erioed o'r blaen. Plygai yn fynych, fel pe buasai yn cymeryd dwfr i fynu ac yna yn dala ei llaw o flaen ei hwyneb dros oddeutu haner mynyd. Pan blygai ei hun felly, gwelid rhyw beth du, fel pe buasai cynffon fer, yn troi i fyny y tu ol iddi. Gwnaethai ryw swn yn fynych tebyg i disian, yr hwn a barai i'r graig i adseinio. Y ffarmwr, yr hwn a gafodd gyfleusdra i edrych arni dros gymaint o amser, a ddywedai na welodd ef ond ychydig iawn o wragedd mor hardd-deg yr olwg a'r For-Forwyn hon. Y mae yr holl deulu, yr ieuengaf o ba rai sydd yn un ar ddeg oed, yn awr yn fyw, a chawsom yr hanes hwn, air yn ngair, fel ei rhoddir yma, oddiwrthynt hwy eu hunain o fewn y mis diweddaf."

I have translated the above tale as literally as possible, almost word for word, and in English it reads as follows:—

In the month of July, 1826, a farmer from the parish of Llanuwchaiarn, about three miles from Aberystwyth, whose house is within 300 feet of the seashore, descended

the rock, when the sun was shining beautifully upon the sea, and he saw a woman (as he thought) washing herself in the sea within a stone's throw of him. At first, he modestly turned back; but after a moment's reflection thought that a woman would not go so far out into the sea, as it was flooded at the time, and he was certain that the water was six feet deep in the spot where he saw her standing. After considering the matter, he threw himself down on his face and crept on to the edge of the precipice from which place he had a good view of her for more than half-an-hour. After scrutinizing her himself, he crept back to call his family to see this wonderful sight. After telling them what he had seen, he directed them from the door where to go and to creep near the rock as he had done. Some of them went when they were only half dressed, for it was early in the morning, and they had only just got up from bed. Arriving at the spot, they looked at her for about ten minutes, as the farmer was calling his wife and the younger child. When the wife came on, she did not throw herself down as the others had done, but walked on within sight of the creature; but as soon as the mermaid saw her, she dived into the water, and swam away till she was about the same distance from them as she was when she was first seen. The whole family, husband, wife, children, menservants and maid-servants, altogether twelve in number, ran along the shore for more than half-a-mile, and during most of that time, they saw her in the sea, and sometimes her head and shoulders were upwards out of the water. There was a large stone, more than a yard in height, in the sea, on which she stood when she was first seen. She was standing out of the water from her waist up, and the whole family declared that she was exactly the same as a young woman of about 18 years of age, both in shape and stature. Her hair was short, and of a dark colour; her face rather handsome, her neck and arms were like those of any ordinary woman, her breast blameless and her skin whiter

than that of any person they had ever seen before. Her face was towards the shore. She bent herself down frequently, as if taking up water, and then holding her hand before her face for about half-a-minute. When she was thus bending herself, there was to be seen some black thing as if there was a tail turning up behind her. She often made some noise like sneezing, which caused the rock to echo. The farmer who had first seen her, and had had the opportunity of looking at her for some time, said that he had never seen but very few women so handsome in appearance as this mermaid.

All the family, the youngest of whom is now eleven years old, are now alive, and we obtained this account, word for word, as it is given here, from them themselves within the last month.

1

"British Goblins," page 67. ↑

CHAPTER VI.

GHOST STORIES.

he belief in the existence of Fairies in Wales has almost died out, but we still find many people who are more or less superstitious with regard to ghosts, spirits, etc., and the belief in death omens is rather popular, even among educated people.

The majority of the Welsh ghosts were supposed to be the spirits or shades of departed mortals, re-appearing on account of some neglected duty, and in many cases to point out some hidden treasure; for it was thought that if a person dies, while his money (or any metal) is still hidden secretly, the spirit of that person cannot rest until it is revealed. It was also supposed that the spirits of the murdered haunted the place where their unburied bodies lay, or until vengeance overtook the murderer, “and the wicked were doomed to walk the earth until they were laid in lake or river, or in the Red Sea.” It was also thought in former days, if not at present, that the evil one himself appears sometimes in some form or other; but good spirits are seen as well as bad ones. I have heard it said by some that only those who have been born in the night time have the power to see spirits; others say that spirits take more fancy to some persons than others. It was also thought that

if two persons were together, one only could see the spirit, to the other he was invisible, and to one person only would the Spirit speak, and this he would do when addressed; for according to the laws of the Spirit world, a Spirit or a ghost has no power of speech until first spoken to.

"Its persistency in haunting is due to its eager desire to speak, and tell its urgent errand, but the person haunted must take his courage in both hands and put the question to the issue. Having done so, he is booked for the end of the business, be it what it may. The mode of speech adopted must not vary, in addressing a Spirit; in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it must be addressed, and not otherwise. Its business must be demanded; three times the question must be repeated, unless the ghost answer earlier. When it answers, it speaks in a low hollow voice, stating its desire; and it must not be interrupted while speaking for to interrupt it is dangerous in the extreme. At the close of its remarks, questions are in order. They must be promptly delivered, however, or the ghost will vanish. They must bear on the business in hand; it is offended if asked as to its state, or other idle questions born of curiosity. Neglect to obey the ghost's injunctions will lead to much annoyance, and eventually to dire results. At first the Spirit will appear with a discontented visage, next with an angry one, and finally with a countenance distorted with the most ferocious rage." "British Goblins," page 148.

Men sometimes were transported by the spirits through the air, and the Fairies did this also as well as ghosts. About two years ago, an old man at Llansadwrn, Carmarthenshire, gave me a remarkable account of the transportation of a well-known character who lived in that parish some years ago known as "Evan y Gweydd" (Evan the Weaver). A version of the story had appeared in Welsh twenty-five years ago, in an interesting little book entitled "Lloffion Adgof," by T. Edwards.

THE WEAVER OF LLANSADWRN TRANSPORTED THROUGH THE AIR BY A SPIRIT.

One night Evan y Gweydd found himself speaking with a Spirit who appeared to him in the form of a gentleman outside the house. The gentleman asked him whether he would do one thing at his request. "Yes, if I can," said Evan, in reply. "That is a promise which must be kept," said the spirit, "and thou shalt have no peace until thou hast performed it; name the time and sooner the better." Evan said, "three weeks to to-night." "Very well," said the Spirit, and off it went. Poor Evan by this began to feel very sorry for making such a promise, and when the time came round when he was to fulfil his promise, he barred the door of the house and went to bed; but he was not there long before he was thrown down on the floor, and found himself pushed out through the wide open door, unceremoniously, hardly having time to put on his clothes. After going out he saw the same gentleman as before, or rather the spirit which assumed the form of a gentleman who ordered Evan to follow him without delay to a place called Glan-ty-Bedw, where there was a very large stone, with an iron chest concealed beneath it. Then the spirit ordered him to take hold of the box and carry it and throw it into the Fanfach Lake many miles away. On Sunday morning as they passed through the village of Myddfe on their way to this lake, Evan noticed the people going to Church, some of whom he knew, but it seems that they did not see him, and his companion, or at least they did not seem to notice them. After reaching the lake and throwing in the chest, there came thunder and lightning, and Evan was carried

through the air in a kind of half trance. When he came to himself he found himself on the banks of the river Towy, between that river and Llansadwrn, and not far from his home. When he reached the house he went to bed, and was very ill for some time. According to some versions of the story, the spirit compelled him to throw an iron into the Cothy river near Edwinsford, as well as a chest into the Fan Lake.

In aerial journey of this kind, the spirit generally gives the mortal the choice of being transported "above wind, amid wind, or below wind." The man who chooses to go above wind is borne to an altitude somewhat equal to that of a balloon, so high that he is in danger of being frightened to death. But choosing the below wind is quite as bad and even worse, for the hapless mortal is then dragged through bush and briar. The safest way is always to remember to select the middle course (amid wind), for this ensures a pleasant transportation at a moderate elevation equally removed from the branches and the clouds.

There was a certain man in the neighbourhood of Pontyberem, in Carmarthenshire, to whom a spirit appeared almost every night, and offered him an aerial journey of this description, giving him the choice of above wind, amid wind, or below wind, and on one occasion he was dragged by the ghost through bush and briar that his clothes were all in rags.

SPIRITS THROWING STONES.

An old man named John Jones, who lives at Pontrhydfendigaid, informed me that a ghost which

haunted a farm between Pontrhydfendigaid and Tregaron, was engaged in the dangerous game of stone-throwing to the great discomfort of the family. There are several such stories in different parts of the country.

I found the following strange tale in an old Welsh book entitled, "Golwg ar y Byd," written by the Rev. D. Lewis, Vicar of Llangattwg, Glamorganshire, and printed at Carmarthen in 1725:

CHWEDL AM YSPRYD.

"Yn mhlwyf Llangeler, yn Sir Gaerfyrddin, Mai 21ain, 1719, y dechreuodd yspryd yr hwn a barhaodd dros hir amser, i daflu ceryg at rhai oedd yn y maes yno. Dydd Iau y Sulgwyn y dechreuwyd dyrnu, oddeutu wyth y boreu, ac y dechreuodd yntau daflu ceryg. Un o'r dyrnwyr yn gyntaf a welodd y gareg yn disgyn ar y llawr dyrnu. Yr ail gareg a ddisgynodd ar glin morwyn y ty, nes ydoedd clais arni; ac yn mhen ychydig llanwasant y llawr dyrnu a'r twyn oddiamgylch, yr hyn a wnaethant wedi hyny. Y dyrnwyr a roisant heibio eu gwaith, ac a aethant i edrych pwy oedd yn eu taflu hwynt, ond ni allasent weled neb.

"Dydd Gwener,—Y forwyn, pan yn yr ardd, a darawyd dair gwaith. Tarawyd amryw o'r plant, nes iddynt fyned allan o'r ty. Daeth llawer yn nghyd i weled y rhyfeddodau hyn, ac yr oedd pawb ag oedd yn dyfod yn cael gweled y ceryg yn disgyn.

"Dydd Sadwrn,—Tarawyd y forwyn ac un o'r dyrnwyr. Yr oedd rhai ceryg yn chwyrnu, ac megys cleisiau ar amryw o honynt. Y ceryg ni welid nes byddent yn disgyn, a phan

godid hwynt byddai eu hol ar y llawr, megys pe byddent yno flwyddyn o'r blaen. Daeth pawl mawr yn groes i'r ffenestr, heb neb gweledig yn dyfod ag ef. Rhai ni chredent nes danfon cenadon i weled, ac i gyrchu rhai ceryg adref i'w tai. Cyfodwyd cyff mawr o bren o'r croch i ben y ty, ac a ddisgynodd mewn man arall.

"Dydd Sul,—Daeth llawer iawn yn nghyd i weled, ac amryw o honynt yn tyngu ac yn rhegu, ac yn siarad yn gableddus ac yn ysgafn. Disgynodd ceryg mawrion ar y lloft yn y ty, ond ni welwyd hwynt nes disgynent. Tarawyd bar haiarn allan o'r ffenestr, a phlygwyd un arall fel bach ysdarn; a'r ffenestr a dorwyd yn friwion man. Wedi'r nos daeth ceryg i'r gwelyau, a chloriau'r ffenestri a aethant i'r llofft; a gorfu ar dylwyth y ty gyfodi o'u gwelyau a myned i dy cymydog. Nid oedd ond y ceryg yn llawn yn y ty ac oddiamgylch iddo.

"Nos Fercher,—Llosgwyd yr ysgubor a'r llafur, a llawer o bethau eraill; yr oedd ef bob dydd yn taflu ceryg, ond nid bob awr. Yr oedd weithiau yn taflu mor gynted ag y gellid eu rhifo, a'r rhan fwyaf o honynt yn geryg afon, a rhai o honynt yn chwech pwys neu ragor o bwysau.

"Daeth cymydogion yn nghyd un noswaith i weddio ar Dduw yn y ty, ac ni fu yno fawr o stwr y noson hono. Llawer o bethau yn rhagor a wnaeth efe, ond o'r diwedd efe a ddarfu ac a beidiodd."

For the benefit of those who are unable to read Welsh, I give the following translation of the above account:—

A STORY OF A GHOST THROWING

STONES AT LLANGELER.

In the parish of Llangeler, Carmarthenshire, May 21st., 1719, a spirit, which continued for some time, began to throw stones at those who were in the field. On Thursday in Whitsun week, at eight in the morning, the thrashing began (at a farm) and at the same time he (the spirit) began to throw stones. At first it was one of the men who were thrashing that noticed a stone descending on the thrashing floor. The second stone fell on the leg of the housemaid, wounding her; and after this, very shortly, they filled the thrashing floor and the place around. The men who were thrashing gave up their work, and went to see who were throwing them, but could see no one.

Friday.—The servant maid in the garden was struck three times. Several of the children were struck till they went out of the house. A large number of people came together to see these wonders, and all who came were allowed to see the stones descending.

Saturday.—The servant maid and one of the thrashers were struck. Some of the stones were rattling, and something like marks on several of them. The stones were not seen till they fell, and when they were taken up marks of them were on the floor as if they had been there from the year before. A large pole came right across the window without any one visibly bringing it. Some people believed not, till they sent messengers to see, and to bring home some of the stones to their houses. A big stump of wood was taken up from the boiler to the house top, and fell in another place.

Sunday.—A large number of people came together to see, and several of them cursing and swearing, and speaking lightly and blasphemously. Big stones fell on the loft of the house, but were not seen till they had descended. An iron bar was struck out of the window, and another one bent as

a packsaddle's hook; and the window was broken all to pieces. After dark the stones came into the beds, and window frames went to the loft, so that the family of the house were obliged to get up from their beds and go to a neighbour's house. Nothing but stones could be seen filling the house and surrounding it.

Wednesday Night.—The barn and the corn as well as many other things were burnt; he (the spirit) was throwing stones every day, though not every hour. Sometimes the stones were thrown as fast as one could reckon them, most of which were river stones, and some of them weighing about seven pounds or more. Neighbours came together to pray to God in the house, and there was not much noise in the house that night. Many other things were done by the spirit, but he at last ceased.

There was a troublesome ghost of this kind now recently in the Vale of Towy, Carmarthenshire.

SPIRITS AND HIDDEN TREASURE.

In some of the places supposed to be haunted there are often traditions of buried treasures in connection with such spots. In some of the stories the ghost haunts some particular person only, and never gives him rest till its purpose is accomplished.

Mr. Hall, in his most valuable and interesting "Book of South Wales" gives a tale of:

A CARPENTER WHO WAS HAUNTED BY A "WHITE LADY."

This man had no peace night or day, for the "White Lady" appeared to him with an agonizing expression of countenance, at unexpected times, and unexpected places. Once in a field to which there were several entrances, she appeared and opposed his exit. Trembling, he sought another, but there, too, was she. He fainted, and did not leave the field, till he was found there by persons who happened to pass. At last some considerable amount of jewels and other valuables were found by the man, in the secret drawer of an old escritoir, which he was repairing for a family that resided near. The valuables were immediately handed over to the owner of the escritoir and the "White Lady" did not appear afterwards.

Another remarkable story of this class is told in the northern part of Cardiganshire; and I found the following version of it in a "Scrap Book" of Mr. William Davies, Talybont, an eminent Folk-Lorist:—

THE "WHITE LADY" OF BROGININ, OR A GHOST REVEALING HIDDEN MONEY TO A YOUNG LOVER.

Broginin is a farm house where the famous Welsh Bard, Dafydd Ap Gwilym was born, and situated six miles from Aberystwyth in Cardiganshire. Some years ago the respectable and industrious family who lived there at the time, were often disturbed by some unearthly being who

generally made his appearance in the depth of night, as it is the case with spirits. This unwelcome visitor aroused the whole family by walking up and down the stairs, or from one room into another. Sometimes he closed the doors behind him, making such noise as to strike terror to the hearts of all in the house. At times, he lighted up the whole house at once with gleaming light, and the next moment vanished as suddenly as he came, leaving behind him utter darkness. Occasionally, the same ghost was seen by some of the servantmen, who had been out courting, walking across the farmyard in the form of a "white lady," appearing as a tall handsome lady attired in lustring white dress, and her face covered by silken veil. This "White Lady" walked towards the young men, and suddenly disappeared in a tremendous ball of fire. People were so terrified by such sights, that several families, one after another moved away from the house. One Sunday evening, however, about the beginning of winter, when all the family as usual had gone to chapel, except the servant maid, who did not feel well, her lover came to keep her company. Naturally, the young man and the young woman began to talk about the ghost, and Evan (for that was the young man's name) laughed, and boasted what he was going to do should the disturber appear. But the next moment, without the least notice, a lady in her white dress stood right in the middle of the room, with her face uncovered, and her brown curly hair down over her shoulders. She held in one hand a comb and in the other a roll of paper, but she did not whisper a word. The servant maid, and her young man who had just been boasting shuddered in terror, and dared not move or utter a word. The "lady" walked round the apartment several times; then suddenly stood; and having opened the door through which she had entered without opening, beckoned the young man to follow her. As he dared not disobey, he followed her up stairs, into a dark back room, but which was now lighted

up in some mysterious way. With her finger she pointed out a particular corner under the low roof, at which place the young man with his trembling hand found some hard parcel carefully tied in an old woollen stocking. When he opened it he found it full of money, and at the same moment the "White Lady" vanished and never disturbed the house again.

A GHOST REVEALING HIDDEN TREASURE TO A FARMER IN THE PARISH OF LLANAFAN.

Crosswood Park, the fine residence of my esteemed young friend the Earl of Lisburne, is situated about nine miles from Aberystwyth. About two miles from the Park is a bridge over the river Ystwyth, known as Pont Llanafan (Llanafan Bridge).

This bridge is supposed to be haunted, and I have been told that a ghost has been seen there lately by a gentleman who lives in the district.

Mr. John Jones, an old man of 95, who lives at Pontrhydfendigaid, informed me that the origin of this ghost is to be traced to some former days when retired pirates lived in a house near the Bridge, and who were supposed to have hidden some treasure in the spot. Mr. Jones also gave me the following story of a farmer named Edwards, who lived in a small farm house near the bridge two or three generations ago:—The poor farmer worked very hard, but for some time he was continually molested by a mischievous ghost day and night. In the evening when

Edwards sat down in the corner eating his supper, which consisted of bread and milk, stones came down through the chimney, or ashes were thrown into his milk by some invisible hand. At another time the ghost was heard thrashing in the barn, or meddling with something continually. One day when the man was engaged in making a new fence round his field, the troublesome visitor from the other world kept with him all day, and threw down both the fence and the gate. Edwards at last decided to address the spirit in these word:—"Yn enw Duw, paham yr wyt yn fy aflonyddi o hyd?" which means in English, "In the name of God, why doest thou trouble me continually?" We are not told what was the reply of the spirit, but it was generally believed by the neighbours that he revealed to the farmer some hidden treasure in an old wall not far from the house. Edwards took down this wall and built a new house with the stones and greatly prospered. It was also said that he had been comparatively poor once, but ever since his conversation with the spirit, his cattle and his horses soon increased and fortune and good luck smiled on him all round. About two years ago when I related this story to a friend of mine who lives at Pontrhydfendigaid, to my great surprise, his wife informed me that the account is quite true. "Yes," said she, "and I got £500 of the Ghost's money." The lady, strange to say, happened to be a descendant, or at least a near relation of the Llanafan farmer to whom the ghost revealed the hidden treasure.

Not far from the same Llanafan bridge there is a rock known as "Craig yr Ogof" (Rock of the Cave). Countess Amherst, (now Dowager) informed me that there is a tradition in the neighbourhood that the Romans buried treasures there.

THE GLANFREAD FAWR GHOST REVEALING HIDDEN MONEY TO THE HOUSEMAID.

Glanfread is a respectable farm house, but in former days it was a mansion of some note, situated in the North of Cardiganshire. In connection with Glanfread there is a ghost tale, and I found the best version of it in a Welsh manuscript kindly lent me by Dr. James, Lodge Park, Talybont:—

Once upon a time there lived at this house an old gentleman whose two nieces on one occasion came to spend with him their Christmas holidays at Glanfread. One evening, the two young ladies, who were sisters, and the housemaid sat down late playing cards. As they kept on playing till a very late hour, the fire was going out, and they began to feel cold; so the maiden went out of the house for some firewood in order to warm themselves before retiring to bed. For some reason or other, however, she was very long in returning with the wood to put on the fire, and when she did return, she fell on the floor in a swoon, that they were obliged to carry her to bed. Next morning when they asked what had caused her to faint, she declined giving any reply; and even when her master, gun in hand, threatened to take her life unless she confessed what had happened, she still persisted in keeping all the mystery to herself. The fact of it was, the girl kept company to one of the farm servants, if not engaged, and very soon they were married, and took a very large farm—a farm which is well-known in North Cardiganshire. All their acquaintances were very greatly surprised how could a poor servant man and servant woman afford to begin farming on such a large scale, when it was known that they had but very little money to start on such an undertaking. And the general opinion was that a spirit had revealed to

the servant woman some hidden treasure on the night she fainted.

A GHOST APPEARING TO POINT OUT HIDDEN TREASURE IN RADNORSHIRE.

There is a story in Radnorshire, that a palace not far from the neighbourhood of Abbey Cwm Hir, was once haunted by a Spirit, which appeared in various forms and made such terrible noise that no one cared to live in the house for a long time. At last, however, a young gentleman who had newly married had the courage to face the ghost, and discovered most valuable treasures which had been hidden in the ground near the house. The spot where the gold had been buried was pointed out to the young man by the Spirit, and the house was never haunted after this.

It is a well-known fact that a Spirit revealed hidden treasure to a Baptist Minister, who lived in a respectable old mansion somewhere not far from Nevern in Pembrokeshire. I met with several persons at Eglwyswrw and other places, who vouched for the truth of the fact. The treasure had been hidden, so it is said, in the time of Cromwell.

Some of the ghosts who reveal hidden money are not always generous. According to the Rev. Edmund Jones, the ghost of one Anne Dewy, a woman who had hanged herself, compelled a young man in the Vale of Towy, Carmarthenshire, to cast into the river a bag of money which had been hid in the wall of a house. Instead of keeping the money himself, the young man obeyed the

ghost against his better judgment, and the sum concerned was "£200 or more."

THE POWIS CASTLE GHOST STORY.

The following ghost story is recorded in the autobiography of the grandfather of the late Mr. Thomas Wright, the eminent Shropshire antiquary:—

It had been for some time reported in the neighbourhood that a poor unmarried woman, who was a member of the Methodist Society, and had become serious under their ministry, had seen and conversed with the apparition of a gentleman, who had made a strange discovery to her. Mr. Hampson (a preacher among the Methodists about the end of the 18th century) being desirous to ascertain if there was any truth in the story, sent for the woman, and desired her to give him an exact relation of the whole affair from her own mouth, and as near the truth as she possibly could. She said she was a poor woman, who got her living by spinning hemp or line; that it was customary for the farmers and gentlemen of that neighbourhood to grow a little hemp or line in a corner of their fields for their own consumption, and as she was a good hand at spinning the materials, she used to go from house to house to inquire for work; that her method was, where they employed her, during her stay, to have meat, and drink, and lodging (if she had occasion to sleep with them), for her work, and what they pleased to give her besides. That, among other places, she happened to call one day at the Welsh Earl of Powis's country seat, called Redcastle, to inquire for work, as she usually had done before. The quality were at this

time in London, and had left the steward and his wife, with other servants, as usual, to take care of their country residence in their absence. The steward's wife set her to work, and in the evening told her that she must stay all night with them, as they had more work for her to do next day. When bedtime arrived, two or three servants in company, with each a lighted candle in her hand, conducted her to her lodging. They led her to a ground room, with a boarded floor, and two sash windows. The room was grandly furnished, and had a genteel bed in one corner of it. They had made her a good fire, and had placed her a chair and a table before it, and a large lighted candle upon the table. They told her that was her bedroom, and that she might go to sleep when she pleased. They then wished her a good night and withdrew altogether, pulling the door quickly after them, so as to hasp the spring-snech in the brass lock that was upon it. When they were gone, she gazed awhile at the fine furniture, under no small astonishment that they should put such a poor person as her in so grand a room, and bed, with all the apparatus of fire, chair, table, and a candle. She was also surprised at the circumstance of the servants coming so many together, with each of them a candle. However, after gazing about her some little time, she sat down and took a small Welsh Bible out of her pocket, which she always carried about with her, and in which she usually read a chapter—chiefly in the New Testament—before she said her prayers and went to bed. While she was reading she heard the door open, and turning her head, saw a gentleman enter in a gold-laced hat and waistcoat, and the rest of his dress corresponding therewith. I think she was very particular in describing the rest of his dress to Mr. Hampson, and he to me at the time, but I have now forgot the other particulars. He walked down by the sash-window to the corner of the room and then returned. When he came to the first window in his return (the bottom of which was nearly breast high),

he rested his elbow on the bottom of the window, and the side of his face upon the palm of the hand, and stood in that leaning posture for some time, with his side partly towards her. She looked at him earnestly to see if she knew him, but, though from her frequent intercourse with them, she had a personal knowledge of all the present family, he appeared a stranger to her. She supposed afterwards that he stood in this manner to encourage her to speak; but as she did not, after some little time he walked off, pulling the door after him as the servants had done before. She began now to be much alarmed, concluding it to be an apparition, and that they had put her there on purpose. This was really the case. The room, it seems, had been disturbed for a long time, so that nobody could sleep peaceably in it, and as she passed for a very serious woman, the servants took it into their heads to put the Methodist and Spirit together, to see what they would make of it. Startled at this thought, she rose from her chair, and knelt down by the bedside to say her prayers. While she was praying he came in again, walked round the room, and came close behind her. She had it on her mind to speak, but when she attempted it she was so very much agitated that she could not utter a word. He walked out of the room again, pulling the door after him as before. She begged that God would strengthen her and not suffer her to be tried beyond what she could bear. She recovered her spirits, and thought she felt more confidence and resolution, and determined if he came in again she would speak to him. He presently came in again, walked round and came behind her as before; she turned her head and said, “Pray, sir, who are you, and what do you want?” He put up his finger, and said, “Take up the candle and follow me, and I will tell you.” She got up, took up the candle, and followed him out of the room. He led her through a long boarded passage till they came to the door of another room, which he opened and went in. It was a small room, or what might be called a large closet. “As

the room was small, and I believed him to be a Spirit," she said, "I stopped at the door; he turned and said, 'Walk in, I will not hurt you.' So I walked in. He said, 'Observe what I do.' I said, 'I will.' He stooped, and tore up one of the boards of the floor, and there appeared under it a box with an iron handle in the lid. He said, 'Do you see that box?' I said, 'Yes, I do.' He then stepped to one side of the room, and showed me a crevice in the wall, where he said a key was hid that would open it. He said 'This box and key must be taken out, and sent to the Earl in London' (naming the Earl, and his place of residence in the city). He said, 'Will you see it done?' I said, 'I will do my best to get it done.' He said, 'Do, and I will trouble the house no more.' He then walked out of the room and left me. (He seems to have been a very civil Spirit, and to have been very careful to affright her as little as possible). I stepped to the room door and set up a shout. The steward and his wife, and the other servants came to me immediately, all clung together, with a number of lights in their hands. It seems they all had been waiting to see the issue of the interview betwixt me and the apparition. They asked me what was the matter? I told them the foregoing circumstances, and showed them the box. The steward durst not meddle with it, but his wife had more courage, and with the help of the other servants, lugged it out, and found the key." She said by their lifting it appeared to be pretty heavy, but that she did not see it opened, and, therefore, did not know what it contained; perhaps money, or writings of consequence to the family, or both. They took it away with them, and she then went to bed and slept peaceably till the morning. It appeared afterwards that they sent the box to the Earl in London, with an account of the manner of its discovery and by whom; and the Earl sent down orders immediately to his steward to inform the poor woman who had been the occasion of this discovery, that if she would come and reside in his family, she should be comfortably provided

for, for the remainder of her days; or, if she did not choose to reside constantly with them, if she would let them know when she wanted assistance, she should be liberally supplied, at his Lordship's expense as long as he lived. And Mr. Hampson said it was a known fact in the neighbourhood that she had been so supplied from his Lordship's family from the time the affair was said to have happened, and continued to be so at the time she gave Mr. Hampson this account.

To touch or dig for buried treasures guarded by a ghost without the ghost's consent always brings thunder and lightning. Such is the tradition in connection with "Carreg y Bwci" on the top of Craig Twrch, on the borders of Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire.

Many of the tales displaying the motive, on the ghost's part of a duty to perform—sometimes clearly defining, sometimes vaguely suggesting it, as in the story of Noe.

The evening was far gone when a traveller of the name of Noe arrived at an Inn in Pembrokeshire, and called for refreshments. After remaining sometime he remarked that he must proceed on his journey. 'Surely,' said the astonished landlord, 'You will not travel at night for it is said that a ghost haunts that road,' crying out, 'The days are long and the nights are cold to wait for Noe. O, I am the man sought for,' said he, and immediately departed; but, strange to say, neither Noe nor the ghost was ever heard of afterwards.

An old woman in Pembrokeshire informed me that the scene of the above tale was a house in the neighbourhood of Letterston.

Another story of this class appeared in an interesting little Welsh book entitled "Ysten Sioned," published by Hughes

and Son, Wrexham.

There was a farmhouse in a certain part of West Wales, in which a large and respectable family lived. But there was one room in the house haunted by a troublesome spirit which often cried out in a mournful voice, “Hir yw’r dydd, a hir yw’r nos, a hir yw aros Arawn” (long is the day, and long is the night, and long is waiting for Arawn). Things went on in this manner for a long time, and not one hardly ventured to open the door of that room. But one cold winter evening when every member of the family sat around the fire, before supper, somebody called at the door of the house, and a stranger was welcomed in to warm himself by the fire. The stranger asked for some food and a bed for the night. He was told he was welcomed of food, but that they were sorry they could not offer him a bed, as all the beds were hardly enough for themselves, and that the only spare bed-room in the house was haunted. Then the stranger begged to be allowed to sleep in that room, as he felt sure that there was nothing to do him harm there. The man appeared very tired, and spoke but little except in reply to questions, and when it was found out that his name was “Arawn,” all the family looked into each’s face in great surprise. The stranger presently went to bed in the haunted room, and strange to say everything was quiet in that room that night, that is, no spirit was heard as usual crying and moving things about. When the family got up next morning, the first thing was to find out what kind of night the stranger passed in the haunted room, but to the surprise of all the man was gone, and the ghost was also gone, for the room was never haunted afterwards.

THE SPIRIT OF A LIVING MAN.

Good many people in Wales who laugh at the idea of a ghost, readily admit the possibility of the appearance of a living man's spirit (Yspryd Dyn Byw).

THE SPIRIT OF A LIVING MAN APPEARING TO A LITTLE GIRL AT PONTSHAN.

An old lady named Miss Pergrin, who lives at Pontshan, Llandyssul, informed me about five years ago, that when she was a little girl of about eleven years of age, a certain man who lived in that neighbourhood had gone from home, for some months, and just about the time when he was expected to return the little girl was one day walking along the road near the village, about two o'clock in the afternoon. She suddenly met the man coming home. He was coming along the road towards her, and looked at her, and then suddenly disappeared through a gate into an adjoining field. She was very much surprised, as the man was not expected home till next day. The next moment two sisters of the man appeared on the scene, and the girl informed them that she had just seen their brother, and inquired whether they had met him as they passed along the same road about the same time. But they in reply positively affirmed that they had seen no sight of him on the road or anywhere else since he left home, and that the girl must have been dreaming or inventing some idle tale, for their brother was not returning home till to-morrow. About 2 p.m., the next day, the man did come home, and, strange to say, it was found out that the day Miss Pergrin

had seen him, he was far away from the district, so it was concluded that she had seen his spirit, and that in broad daylight. Miss Pergrin did not like to give the man's name.

SPIRIT OF A LIVING WOMAN SEEN ON A MOONLIGHT NIGHT, NEAR LLANYBRI IN CARMARTHENSHIRE.

A woman named Mrs. M. Davies, who lives in the small village of Llanybri, in Carmarthenshire, informed me that her mother when a young woman, was going home one evening to Llanybri, on a moonlight night. As she walked along, to her great surprise, she saw an old woman known in the neighbourhood as Rachel Y Gweydd, or the weaver, sitting by the roadside and busily engaged in knitting a stocking. The young woman ran home as fast as she could and told her mother what she had seen. "Och y fi" said her mother, "something strange is sure to take place after this." Within a few days a man named Thomas Davies, of Cwmllan-wybryn, died, and was buried at the Capel Newydd. As the funeral procession passed along, there was Rachel Y Gweydd sitting by the roadside, and knitting her stocking at the very same spot where her spirit had been seen by the young woman on the moon-light night. The old woman had gone to sit by the roadside in order to watch the funeral procession passing.

A sister of the above Mrs. Davies, Mrs. Weekes, of Llangynog, also gave me the following account of her mother's experience of seeing "Yspryd dyn byw."

SPIRIT OF A REJECTED LOVER APPEARING TO A YOUNG WOMAN.

Mrs. Weekes's mother, when a young girl, living with her parents near Llanybri, Carmarthen, went out one evening to fetch some water from a well close by, and she saw, as she thought, Thomas of Felin Gwm standing near the hedge. "Thomas?" says she, "what do you want here?" The man vanished into nothing all at once, and so she perceived that it was his spirit she had seen. Thomas was in love with her, but she had refused to have anything to do with him.

TALE OF A DOCTOR.

The following tale appeared in "Welsh Folk-Lore," page 296 by the late Rev. Elias Owen, F.S.A., who had obtained the story from the Rev. Philip Edwards:—

"At Swyddffynnon, in Cardiganshire, there lived a Mrs. Evans, who had a strange vision. Mr. Edwards's father called one evening upon Mrs. Evans, and found her sitting by the fire in company with a few female friends, greatly depressed. On enquiring as to the cause of her distress, she stated that she had had a strange sight that very evening.

"She saw, she said, in the unoccupied chamber at the further end of the house, a light, and, whilst she was wondering what light it was, she observed a tall, dark, stranger gentleman, who had a long, full beard, enter the house and go straight to the room where the light was, but before going in he took off his hat and placed it on the

table; then he took off his gloves and threw them into the hat, and without uttering a single word he entered the lit-up room.

"Shortly afterwards, she saw the stranger emerge from the room and leave the house, and on looking again towards the room she saw that the light had disappeared. It was, she said, this apparition that had disconcerted her.

"Some time after this vision, Mrs. Evans was in a critical state, and as she lived far away from a doctor, my informant's father was requested to ride to Aberystwyth for one. He found, however, that the two doctors who then resided in that town were from home. But he was informed at the inn that there was a London doctor staying at Hafod. He determined, whether he could or could not, induce this gentleman to accompany him to Swyddffynnon, to go there. This gentleman, on hearing the urgency of the case, consented to visit the sick woman.

"Mr. Edwards and the doctor rode rapidly to their destination, and Mr. Edwards was surprised to find that the doctor did everything exactly as it had been stated by Mrs. Evans. There was also a light in the chamber, for there the neighbour had placed the still-born child, and it was the providential help of the London doctor that saved Mrs. Evans's life.

"I may add that the personal appearance of this gentleman corresponded with the description given of him by Mrs. Evans."

SPIRIT OF A LIVING MAN IN A FIELD.

I heard the following story in the neighbourhood of Llanddewi, about my own grandfather, the late Mr. John Evans, of Gogoyan, who died about fifty-five years ago. (The "Hiriaid Gogoyan" were descended from Gruffydd Hir o Llanfair, great-great-grandson of Gwaethfoed); so saith Gwynionydd, in his book on "Enwogion Ceredigion." But now for the story:—

Mr. Evans one day had gone to Aberystwyth, either riding or driving as this was in the days before the introduction of railways into that part, the distance was over twenty miles.

Early in the afternoon on the same day one of his servants who was ploughing in the field, saw Mr. Evans walking about quite close to him in the field.

The servant was quite surprised at this, as he knew that his master had gone to Aberystwyth early in the morning. When the master came home that night from Aberystwyth, the servant told him that he had seen him in the afternoon in the field.

"Well," said Evans in reply, "if you saw me you only saw my spirit, for I have been away all day; now to see the spirit of a living man is not a bad sign."

It is rather curious that a story very similar to the above is given by Mr. T. Lloyd, Dinas Powis, in "Cymru Fu" ("Weekly Mail" reprints) for November 16th, 1889, which is as follows:—

"YSFRYD DYN BYW.

"Many years ago at a farm called Ystradteilo, near the pretty village of Llanrhystyd in Cardiganshire, the servant girl was sent to the field to fetch home the cows for milking, and while in the field she saw her master doing something there. The master's name was Williams, and he was a near relation to the eminent scholar Rev. E. Williams, M.A., of Lampeter. When, however, the servant girl returned home, she was astonished to find her master in the house. 'How in the world did you come home so quick?' she asked. 'Just now I saw you in the field.' He replied that he had not been from the house during the afternoon, and added, 'look here, girl, that was not a bad sign at all but if you will see me like that after my departure you may depend that I shall be in a place of torture.' It was a general belief that of the dead the ghosts of the wicked only were to be seen."

SPIRIT OF A LIVING MAN THROWING STONES.

Mr. Thomas Stephens, an intelligent old man in the neighbourhood of Mydroilyn, in the Parish of Llanarth, Cardiganshire, informed me that between 60 and 70 years ago his father, John Stephens, when a young man, was coming home late one evening after spending a few hours of pleasant time with the young woman of his affection at a neighbouring farm. As he was walking along a lonely lane, to his great surprise, he heard the sound of some one throwing stones about in a field which he was passing by. When he looked around, he beheld the spirit of a man of his acquaintance who was well and alive, throwing stones with all his might in a field where stones were not to be

found.

Spirit of a living man was sometimes heard without being seen, of this I was informed by an old man at Llanddewi Brefi.

In some ghost stories we find the spirits of the departed appearing to comfort the living.

THE SPIRIT OF A DEAD MOTHER APPEARING TO HER BOY-SON AT LLANGYNOG, CARMARTHENSHIRE.

A very old man named Thomas Ticker, who lives at the small village of Llanybri, gave me the following remarkable account:—

Many years ago when one William Thomas, Pengelly Isaf, Llangynog, was a little boy of ten or twelve years of age, his mother died. One day the boy in great sorrow went out into a field which was quite close to the house, and wept bitterly, almost breaking his heart. Suddenly, the spirit of his dead mother appeared to him in a white dress, telling him not to cry, "because" saith she, "your crying gives me pain, and you need not be in trouble about the future, as there is plenty of food for thee." The child was on the ground when she spoke, and when he looked up he beheld his mother vanishing suddenly.

This W. Thomas who saw his mother's spirit, died when a comparatively young man, but his son, from whom my informant obtained the account of the vision, lived till

eighty years of age, and died about sixty years ago.

THE SPIRIT OF A DEAD DAUGHTER APPEARING TO THE MOTHER.

About ninety years ago one Mrs. D. Thomas, Llanfair, Llandyssul, had a daughter who was very promising, and her mother was so fond of her. She was sent to the well-known school of the celebrated Mr. Davis of Castell Howell. Unfortunately, however, the girl died, to the great sorrow of her poor mother who bewailed her loss day and night. But one day when the old lady was out in the potato field, the spirit of her dead daughter appeared suddenly to her, and spoke to her mother with severe looks: “Don’t cry after me, for I am in a much better place.” The above account I heard from the lips of Mr. Rees, Maesymeillion, parish of Llandyssul, about three years ago, to whom and his brother I am indebted for several other stories.

THE SPIRIT OF A DEAD MOTHER APPEARING TO HER CHILDREN.

The following story was related to me by Mr. Brutus Davies, who died at Aberystwyth about two years ago, and who vouched for the truth of the account:—

About seventy years ago a certain man who was working on the Estate of Col. —— in the parish of Llangeler,

Carmarthenshire, had buried his first wife and had married again. He had several children from his first wife, but not one from the second. One particular day, the children went out to play as they often did. When they came to a certain spot which served them as a playground, they found some small cakes on the ground, which were very tempting to children; but just as they were going to eat them, the spirit of their dead mother appeared on the scene and addressed them as follows:—"My dear children, don't eat those cakes, for there is poison in them!" When this strange occurrence became known in the neighbourhood, people suspected the step-mother of having intentionally and secretly placed the cakes on the children's playground.

Sometimes we hear of the appearance of the ghost of a child, especially if a baby has been ill-treated or murdered, and the following story is well-known in the Northern part of Cardiganshire.

ALLT Y CRIB GHOST, NEAR TALYBONT.

About sixty years ago, the dead body of a little baby was found in a hole or an old mine shaft, known till the present day as "Shaft y plentyn" (the child's shaft), and as the people of the neighbourhood of Talybont guessed who its mother was, there was a rumour that both she and her family were haunted by the child's ghost. This ghost also, it is said, wandered about at night, and its bitter crying disturbed the whole neighbourhood, till many timid people were afraid to go out after dark. My informant was the late J. Jones, Bristol House.

There is a similar story of a child's ghost in the parish of

Troedyraur, South Cardiganshire. This spirit always appeared as a child dressed in yellow clothes, and on that account the unearthly visitor was known as “Bwci Melyn Bach y Cwm.”

THE GHOST OF PONT-Y-GWENDRAETH, NEAR KIDWELY IN CARMARTHENSHIRE.

It was an old belief among the Welsh people in former times that the spirit of a suicide was doomed to walk the earth as a punishment. Several versions of the well-known Kidwely Legend have already appeared, but a book of West Wales Folk-Lore would be incomplete without it.

Sir Elidir Ddu was a Lord of Kidwely. He had two sons, Griffith and Rhys, and one beautiful daughter named Nest.

The Crusades had been proclaimed, and this Elidir Ddu was preparing to depart, and accompanied by his youngest son Rhys; but the eldest son Griffith and Nest, the only daughter, remained at home in Kidwely Castle, as well as another fair young lady whose name was Gwladys, a niece of Sir Elidir, and cousin to Nest. Nest was in love with a handsome young Norman named Sir Walter Mansel, her cousin Gwladys also was in love with him, but the young man was true to Nest. Griffith loved Gwladys, but she did not like him as she wanted Sir Walter Mansel. This complicated matters very much. Nest’s father before he had left to the Holy Land, had forbidden the young Norman the house, and now the young lady’s brother, Griffith, guarded the place against him; but the sanguine lover (Sir W. M.) found means of meeting the fair Nest in

the country round, and many stolen interviews were held. But the jealous Gwladys watched Nest, and found out her place of meeting with her lover, which was Pont-y-Gwendraeth, and she informed Griffith of it. Griffith was in love with Gwladys, but she had snubbed him hopelessly. Now, however, in order to use him as an accomplice in her revenge, she flattered his hopes with feigned kindness, and wrought him up to such a pitch of fury against the Norman, that he agreed to join her to destroy the young lover by fixing upon a bad fellow called Merig Maneg to carry out the evil deed. The next trysting place of the lovers was, by some means ascertained to be a bridge over the tidal portion of the Gwendraeth, and as Sir W. came forward to greet his lady-love an arrow whistled from a reed bed and pierced his side. The villain Merig, then rushed from his hiding place, and before the very eyes of Nest, hurled Walter's body into the rushing tide. The young lady overcome with horror, gave a wild shriek of despair and plunged in after the hapless knight. After this, the villain Merig was haunted by Nest's spirit, and on one occasion, she told him that her spirit was doomed to walk the earth as a punishment for her suicide unless a marriage should take place between one of her father's descendants and a member of the Mansel family, and that until that did occur she would appear on Pont-y-Gwendraeth to give warning of the approaching death of every member of the family. From that day the Bridge became known as Pont-yr-yspryd-gwyn, and for generations a white lady occasionally appeared, giving utterance to a wild unearthly shriek and vanish.

Mr. Charles Wilkins in his "Tales and Sketches of Wales," gives the following sequel to the story:—

In 1775, Mr. Rhys, a lineal descendant of Rhys Ddu, of Kidwely Castle, a magistrate, 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. His horse trembled and refused to go on. Mr. Rhys thought of the Ghost Story and prediction, and riding towards Kidwely, noticed a large crowd and heard that a shocking murder had been committed upon a poor old woman. He entered the cottage and discovered a small portion of a man's coat sleeve lying upon the bed. By inquiry, found it belonged to "Will Maneg." Will was arrested, confessed, and 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 R.N., who was drowned at sea; and also of his wife's mother's death, Lady Mansel, of Iscoed, who was burnt to death at Kidwely.

HAUNTED MANSIONS OF LLANELLY, CARMARTHENSHIRE.

Mr. Innes, in "Old Llanelly," page 145, says:—

"The ghost of Lady Mansel 'walked' and haunted Old Stradey House," and "Llanelly House probably had had ghosts for it is certain that spirits may be found there even now; and an old man has recently made a statement that when a boy he slept in the Stepney Mansion; but as he ascended to his room he heard the rustling brocade of a lady's dress in an apparently empty corridor.

"This lady during the night played upon an organ built up

in one of the thick walls."

A GHOST HAUNTING A YOUNG LOVER WHO WAS OUT LATE AT NIGHT, NEAR ALLTWALIS IN CARMARTHENSHIRE.

An old man named Griffiths, who is 96 years of age, and lives at 'Renallt Farm, near Carmarthen, gave me the following ghost story concerning his own father.

William Griffiths (my informant's father), when a young man, nearly a hundred years ago, was engaged as a servant at a farm called Pontiauar, in the Parish of Llanpumpsaint. William had been out late one night to see the young woman of his affection, and having enjoyed the pleasure of love for some hours, he returned home about three o'clock in the morning. He had some miles to go through a lonely district, and worse than that he had to pass the Haunted Red Gate of Glynadda, a place famous for its ghosts in former times.

On he walked as fast as he could, but to his great terror, when he came to the Red Gate the ghost appeared in the shape of a big man. William passed on and ran, but the Ghost followed him all the way to the village of Llanpumpsaint, till the young man was terrified almost to death. When he arrived at the house of Dafydd Llwyd, the Blacksmith (who worked even at that early hour), he entered the house or the Blacksmith's shop, and fell down near the fire half-fainting, and they had to take him home to the farmhouse in a cart.

A PEMBROKESHIRE GHOST HAUNTING A SHIP.

Sometimes we hear of ghosts at sea, and the following account of a Ghost on board H.M.S. “Asp,” which was written by Capt. Alldridge, R.N., Commander of that vessel, appeared in the “Pembroke County Guardian,” February 16th, 1901.

March 15th, 1867.

My dear Sir,—I herewith readily comply with your request as far as I am able, respecting the unaccountable “apparition” on board my ship. Call it ghost or what you will, still I assure you that which I am going to relate is what really did take place, and much as I was, and am, a sceptic in ghost stories, I must confess myself completely at a loss to account by natural causes for that which did actually occur. Many years having elapsed since I retired from active service I am unable to recollect all the dates with exactness, but I will give them as far as I can remember them.

In the year 1850, the “Asp” was given me by the Admiralty as a surveying vessel. On taking possession of her, the Superintendent of the Dockyard, where she lay, remarked to me, “Do you know, Sir, your ship is said to be haunted, and I don’t know if you will get any of the Dockyard men to work on her.” I, of course, smiled, and I said “I don’t care for ghosts, and dare say I shall get her all to lights fast enough.”

I engaged the shipwrights to do the necessary repairs to the vessel, but before they had been working in her a week they came to me in a body and begged me to give the

vessel up as she was haunted and could never bring anything but ill-luck. However, the vessel was at length repaired, and arrived in safety in the river Dee, where she was to commence her labours. After my tea in the evening, I generally sat in my cabin and either read to myself or had an officer of mine (who is now master of the 'Magician') to read aloud to me: on such occasions we used frequently to be interrupted by strange noises, often such as would be caused by a drunken man or a person staggering about, which appeared to issue from the after (or ladies') cabin.

The two cabins were only separated from each other by the companion ladder, the doors faced each other, so that from my cabin I could see into the after one. There was no communication between either of them and the other parts of the ship, excepting by the companion ladder, which no one could ascend or descend without being seen from my cabin. The evening shortly after our arrival in the Dee, the officer I mentioned was reading to me in my cabin when all at once his voice was drowned by a violent and prolonged noise in the aft cabin. Thinking it must be the steward he called out "Don't make such a noise, steward," and the noise ceased. When he began to read again the noise also recommenced. "What are you doing, steward—making such a—noise for?" he cried out, and taking the candle rushes into the next cabin. But he came back quicker than he went, saying there was nobody there.

He recommenced reading, and once more began the mysterious noise. I felt sure there was some drunken person there whom my officer had overlooked, and accordingly rose and looked myself, and to my very disagreeable surprise found the cabin empty!

After this evening, the noises became very frequent, varying in kind and in degree. Sometimes it was as though the seats and lockers were being banged about, sometimes

it sounded as though decanters and tumblers were being clashed together. During these disturbances the vessel was lying more than a mile off shore.

One evening I and the above-named officer went to drink tea at a friend's house at Queen's Ferry, near Chester, the vessel at the time being lashed to the lower stage opposite Church's Quay. We returned on board together about 10 p.m. While descending the companion ladder, I distinctly heard someone rush from the after cabin into the fore cabin. I stopped the officer who was behind me at the top of the ladder and whispered to him, "Stand still, I think I have caught the ghost." I then descended into my cabin, took my sword, which always hung over my bed, and placed it drawn in his hand saying "Now ——, allow no one to pass you; if anyone attempts to escape cut him down, I will stand the consequences. T then returned to the cabin, struck a light and searched everywhere, but nothing could I find to account for the noises I had heard, though I declare solemnly that never did I feel more certain of anything in my life than that I should find a man there. So there was nothing to be done but to repeat for the hundredth time, "Well, it is the ghost again!" Often when lying in my bed at night have I heard noises close to me as though my drawers were being opened and shut, the top of my washing stand raised and banged down again, and a bed which stood on the opposite side of my cabin, pulled about; while of an evening I often heard while sitting in my cabin a noise as though a percussion cap were snapped close to my head; also very often (and I say it with godly and reverential fear) I have been sensible of the presence of something invisible about me, and could have put my hand, so to say, on it, or the spot where I felt it was; and all this occurred, strange to say, without my feeling in the least alarmed or caring about it, except so far that I could not understand or account for what I felt and heard.

One night, when the vessel was at anchor in Martyn Roads I was awoke by the quartermaster calling me and begging me to come on deck as the look-out man had rushed to the lower deck, saying that a figure of a lady was standing on the paddle box pointing with her finger to Heaven. Feeling angry, I told him to send the look-out man on deck again and keep him there till daybreak, but in attempting to carry my orders into execution the man went into violent convulsions, and the result was I had to go myself upon deck and remain there till morning.

This apparition was often seen after this, and always as described with her finger pointing towards Heaven.

One Sunday afternoon while lying in the Haverfordwest river opposite to Lawrenny, the crew being all on shore, and I being at church, my steward (the only man on board) whilst descending the companion ladder was spoken to by an unseen voice. He immediately fell down with fright, and I found his appearance so altered that I really scarcely knew him! He begged to be allowed his discharge and to be landed as soon as possible, to which I felt obliged to consent as he could not be persuaded to remain on board for the night. The story of the ship being haunted becoming known on shore, the clergyman of Lawrenny called on me one day and begged me to allow him to question the crew, which he accordingly did. He seemed very much impressed by what he heard; he seemed to view the matter in a serious light and said that his opinion was that "some troubled spirit must be lingering about the vessel."

During the years that I commanded the "Asp" I lost many of my men who ran away on being refused their discharge, and a great many others I felt forced to let go, so great was their fear, one and all telling me the same tale, namely, that at night they saw the transparent figure of a lady pointing

with her finger up to Heaven. For many years I endeavoured to ridicule the affair as I was often put to considerable inconvenience by the loss of hands, but to no purpose. I believe that when the officers went out of the vessel after dark none of the crew would have ventured into the cabin on any account. One night I was awoke from my sleep by a hand, to all sensations, being placed on my leg outside the bedclothes. I lay still for a moment to satisfy myself of the truth of what I felt, and then grabbed at it, but caught nothing. I rang my bell for the quartermaster to come with his lantern, but found nothing. This occurred to me several times, but on one occasion as I lay wide awake a hand was placed on my forehead. If ever a man's hair stood on end mine did then. I sprang clean out of bed: there was not a sound. Until then I had never felt the least fear of the ghost or whatever you like to call it. In fact I had taken a kind of pleasure in listening to the various noises as I lay in bed, and sometimes when the noises were very loud I would suddenly pull my bell for the look-out man and then listen attentively if I could hear the sound of a footstep or attempt to escape, but there never was any, and I would hear the look-out man walk from his post to my cabin when I would merely ask him some questions as to the wind and weather. At length in 1857, the vessel requiring repairs, was ordered alongside the dockyard wall at Pembroke. The first night the sentry stationed near the ship saw (as he afterwards declared) a lady mount the paddle box holding up her hand towards Heaven. She then stepped on shore and came along the path towards him when he brought his musket to the charge "who goes there?" But the figure walked through the musket, upon which he dropped it and ran for the guard house. The next sentry saw all this take place and fired off his gun to alarm the guard. The figure then glided past a third sentry who was placed near the ruins of Pater old Church, and who watched her, or it, mount the top of a

grave in the old churchyard, point with her finger to Heaven, and then stand till she vanished from his sight. The sergeant of the guard came with rank and file to learn the tale, and the fright of the sentries all along the Dockyard wall was so great that none would remain at their post unless they were doubled, which they were, as may be seen by the "Report of guard" for that night. Singularly enough, since that, the ghost has never been heard of again on board the Asp, and I never heard the noises which before had so incessantly annoyed me. The only clue I could ever find to account for my vessel being haunted is as follows:—Some years previously to my having her, the "Asp" had been engaged as a mail packet between Port Patrick and Donaghadee. After one of her trips, the passengers having all disembarked, the stewardess on going into the ladies' cabin found a beautiful girl with her throat cut lying in one of the sleeping berths quite dead! How she came by her death no one could tell and, though, of course, strict investigations were commenced, neither who she was or where she came from or anything about her was ever discovered. The circumstances gave rise to much talk, and the vessel was remanded by the authorities, and she was not again used until handed over to me for surveying service. Here end my tale, which I have given in all truth. Much as I know one gets laughed at for believing in ghost stories you are welcome to make what use you please with this true account of the apparition on board the "Asp."

A SPIRIT ON HORSEBACK.

Rhosmeherin, in the neighbourhood of Ystrad Meurig, in

Cardiganshire, was formerly well known for its ghost. An old man named John Jones, who lives at Pontrhydfendigaid, informed me that when a boy he heard of many belated persons who were terrified in passing the haunted spot by seeing a ghost which appeared sometimes in the shape of a cat, at other times as a man on horseback.

Mr. Jones also added that a poor old woman had been murdered there in the old times, which was supposed to account for the spot being haunted. I have heard several ghost stories in connection with this spot, but the best is the one which appeared in an interesting Welsh book entitled, "Ystraeon y Gwyll," written by the late Mr. D. Lledrod Davies, a promising young man, and a candidate for Holy Orders, who died 20 years ago. Mr. Davies obtained the story from a person who had seen the ghost; so I give a translation of the Belated's own words:—

"I was going home one evening from my work from Ros y Wlad, and had to go through Rhosmeherin. "That place, you know is a terrible spot for its ghosts. People say that they are seen there in broad daylight. As to myself I did not see them in the daytime, but many a time was I kept there all night by Jack-a-Lantern.

I saw a ghost in the form of a cat there also, and when I began to strike him he disappeared in a blazing fire. But now for the gentleman. I was near the spot where I had seen the cat, when I heard the sound of a horse coming after me. I jumped one side to make room for him to pass; but when he came opposite me he did not go forward a single pace faster than myself. When I went on slowly, he went slowly; when I went fast, he went fast. "Good night," said I at last, but no answer. Then I said it was a very fine night, but the gentleman on horseback did not seem to take any notice of what I said. Then thinking that he might be an Englishman (the man was speaking in Welsh), I said in

English “Good night,” but he took no notice of me still.

By this I was beginning to perspire and almost ready to fall down with fright, hoping to get rid of him, as I now perceived that he was the Devil himself appearing in the form of a gentleman. I could think from the sound of the saddle and the shining stirrups that the saddle was a new one. On we went along the dark narrow lane till we came to the turnpike road, when it became a little lighter, which gave me courage to turn my eyes to see what kind of a man he was. The horse looked like a soldier’s horse, a splendid one, and his feet like the feet of a calf, without any shoes under them, and the feet of the gentleman in the stirrups were also like the feet of a calf. My courage failed me to look what his head and body were like. On we went till we came to the cross-road. I had heard many a time that a ghost leaves everybody there. Well, to the cross road we came. But ah! I heard the sound of the ground as if it were going to rend, and the heavens going to fall upon my head; and in this sound I lost sight of him (the Spirit). How he went away I know not, nor the direction he went.”

A SPIRIT IN A CAVE.

Sometimes we hear of haunted caves, where spirits are said to be seen or heard. One of such places is the Green Bridge Cave, near Pendine, Carmarthenshire.

There is a story in the neighbourhood that long ago an old fiddler entered once into this cave with his fiddle and a lighted candle to see his way, and that his candle went out when he was in, so that he failed to find his way out of the cave again. He is heard there sometimes, so it is said,

playing his fiddle.

A SPIRIT IN A RIVER.

Near Llandyssul, in Cardiganshire, and the borders of Carmarthenshire, there is a pool in the River Teivi, known as the "Pool of the Harper." When I visited the village a few years ago I was told that it is said that an old harper was drowned there long ago; and that it is still believed by some that on a fine summer afternoon, one hears his spirit playing his harp in the pool.

APPARITIONS OF GOOD SPIRITS.

It is not, often we hear in Wales of Good Spirits appearing; but the Rev. Edmund Jones in his "Relation of Apparitions," a curious old book published some generations ago, gives the following narrative of Apparitions of Good Spirits:—

——"There lived at a place called Pante, which is between Carmarthen and Laugharne towns, one Mr. David Thomas, a holy man, who worship the Lord with great devotion and humility; he was also a gifted brother, and sometimes preached. On a certain night, for the sake of privacy, he went into a room which was out of the house, but nearly adjoining to it, in order to read and pray; and as he was at prayer, and very highly taken up into a heavenly frame, the

room was suddenly enlightened, and to that degree that the light of the candle was swallowed up by a greater light, and became invisible; and with, or in that light a company of Spirits, like children, in bright clothing, appeared very beautiful, and sung; but he recollected only a few words of it, 'Pa hyd? Pa hyd? Dychwelwch feibion Adda' (How long? How long? Return ye sons of Adam.) Something like Ps. xc. 3. After a time he lost sight of them: the light of the candle again came to appear, when the great light of the glorious company was gone. He was immersed in the heavenly disposition, and he fell down to thank and praise the Lord; and while he was at this heavenly exercise the room enlightened again; the light of the candle became invisible, and the glorious company sung; but he was so amazed at what he saw and heard that he could remember only the following words, 'Pa hyd? Pa hyd yr erlidiwch?' (How long? How long, will ye persecute the godly Christians?)

"After a while, they departed, and the candle light appeared. Any Christian who enjoyed much of God's presence will easily believe that D. T. was now lifted up very high in the spiritual life by this extraordinary visitation from heaven."

SPIRITS REMOVING CHURCHES.

There are several legends in West and Mid-Wales, especially in Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire, in which spirits or some other mysterious powers, play a prominent part in the removal of Churches from one site to another.

LLANDDEUSANT (CARMARTHENSHIRE).

I am indebted for the following to the Rev. H. M. Williams, Vicar of Lledrod:—

There is a tradition in the parish of Llanddeusant, that the parish church was to have been built at first at Twynllanan, in the centre of the parish; but the stones that were put up during the day were removed in the night, to the spot where the church now stands.

LLANBISTER CHURCH (RADNORSHIRE).

The Rev. Professor Tyrrell Green, St. David's College, Lampeter, writes to me thus:—

"Jonathan Williams in his History of Radnorshire, p. 194, ed., 1859, says that near Llanbister Church is a piece of land on which it was originally intended to have erected the Church, but tradition reports that the accomplishment of this design was prevented by the intervention of supernatural agency. "The tradition that a supernatural being carried away in the night whatever was built of the church during the day, is still kept alive, because the warden claims an annual rent of 2s. 6d. for the vacant and unconsecrated site of the originally intended church." In the same book mention is made of an old custom prevailing in this parish, viz., the payment of a certain tax or tribute called "Clwt-y-Gyllell," or Knife Money, imposed on a certain corner of a field on some estates, consisting of a certain number of groats.

PENBRYN CHURCH.

For the following legend, I am indebted to Mr. Prys Williams, Y. Wenallt, an eminent antiquarian in the southern part of Cardiganshire:—

The intended original site of the Church of Penbryn, according to tradition, was Penlon Moch, near Sarnau, where now stands St. John's Mission Church; but all the materials they brought there, and built in the course of the day, were removed during the night by invisible hands to where it now stands. There is a similar tradition concerning Bettws Ifan.

LLANWINIO (CARMARTHENSHIRE).

When the attempt was first made to build this church, everything put up in the day fell down in the night, till at last the builder threw his hammer into the air.

The church was then built on the spot where the hammer fell and the work progressed without further hindrance.

In this story we do not hear of a spirit removing the material, but it is evident that it was believed that the falling down in the night of what was put up in the day, was caused by some supernatural agency.

LLANGAN (CARMARTHENSHIRE).

In the middle of the parish there is a field called Park y Fonwent, where, according to local tradition, the church was to have been originally built, but the stones brought to the spot during the day, were removed by invisible hands during the night to the spot where the present church now stands, accompanied by a voice saying, "Llangan, dyma'r fan," (Llangan, here is the spot).—See Arch. Cam., 1872.

MAROS.

Not far from Pendine, Carmarthenshire, is a field called Church Park, a short distance to the west from the church. In this field it was intended at first to build the church, but invisible spirits during the night removed both stones and mortar to the spot where the church now stands. There is also a tradition that two giants were buried in the field.

LLANGELER CHURCH.

Llangeler parish is in Carmarthenshire, and on the borders of Cardiganshire. There is a tradition in the district that it was at first intended to build Llangeler Church on a spot known as "Parc-y-Bwci," but what had been built during the day, was transported in the night to the site of the present church. There is no mention here that the agency was a spirit; but the name of the spot is very suggestive,

for Parc-y-Bwci means the Goblin's Park.

LLANFIHANGEL GENEU'R GLYN.

The parish church of Llanfihangel Geneu'r Glyn, is situated about five miles north of Aberystwyth, and it is seen from the train. About a mile from the church and the village, there is a respectable farm house, named Glanfread, or Glanfread-fawr which belongs to the Gogerddan Estate. It is evident that Glanfread was a place of importance once, and long ago gentry lived there, and it was the birthplace of Edward Llwyd, the author of Archæoligia Britanica. It is also believed that the house received its name from St. Fraed, a devout woman who, according to local tradition, came over from Ireland to build a church on the spot.

There is a legend still extant in the neighbourhood that when the work of erecting the church on the spot was actually commenced, the portion built during the day was pulled down during each night. At last a voice from the spirit world was heard to speak as follows:—

"Glanfread-fawr sy fod fan hyn,
Llanfihangel yn ngenau'r Glyn.

"Glanfread-fawr is to be herein,
Llanfihangel at Genau'r Glyn."

What the spirit meant by these words was that the church was to be built at Genau'r Glyn, and that Glanfread-fawr farm or mansion was to occupy the spot they were then

trying to build the church; and in accordance with the Spirit's direction the church was after this built where it now stands instead of at Glanfread.

The above tradition was related to me by Lady Hills-Johnes, of Dolaucothy, an intelligent lady who has been a friend to me for nearly twenty years. The late Bishop Thirwall wanted Lady Hills-Johnes to write a book on the Legends of Wales.

Llanfihangel, of course, is the Welsh for St. Michael, or rather Michael's Church; but as the early Welsh Christians generally dedicated their churches to Welsh Saints, it seems probable that the ancient name of this church was Llanfread; and the name of the farm Glanfread, where it was first intended to build the church seems to suggest this. Perhaps the church was re-dedicated to St. Michael by the Normans, for we know that William the Conqueror seized some lands in the neighbourhood, and that particular part of the parish is known to this day as "Cyfoeth y Brenin," (the King's wealth).

St. Michael was a favourite patron of churches with the Normans, as it was believed that an apparition of the Archangel had been seen by Aubert, Bishop of Avranches, directing him to build a church on Mount St. Michael in Normandy.

LLANWENOG.

From a paper read before the Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society, by the Rev. J. Morris, Vicar of Llanybyther, I find that there is a tradition still extant that Llanwenog Church

was also removed by supernatural agency from one site to another.

These popular legends are, undoubtedly, very old, and are current not only in Wales, but in parts of Scotland also as the following from Sir Walter Scott's Notes to the Lay of the Last Minstrel prove:

——"When the workmen were engaged in erecting the ancient church of Old Deer, in Aberdeenshire, upon a small hill called Bissau they were surprised to find that the work was impeded by supernatural obstacles. At length the Spirit of the River was heard to say:

"It is not here, it is not here,
That ye shall build the church of Deer;
But on Taptillery,
Where many a corpse shall lie."

"The site of the edifice was accordingly transferred to Taptillery, an eminence at some distance from where the building had been commenced."

As to the origin of these legends or traditions of the mysterious removal of churches, it is not easy to arrive at a correct explanation. Some writers are of the opinion that they contain a record, imaginative and exaggerated, of real incidents connected with the history of the churches to which each of them belongs, and that they are in most cases reminiscences of an older church which once actually stood on another site. Others see in these stories traces of the antagonism, in remote times, between peoples holding different religious beliefs, and the steps taken by one party to seize and appropriate the sacred spots of the other.

That some of these tales have had their origin in primitive

times, even anterior to Christianity, is probable.

APPARITIONS OF THE DEVIL.

In many of the Welsh Ghost Stories, the spirit or ghost was supposed to have been none other than the evil one himself.

The visible appearance of his satanic majesty was quite as common in Wales as in other countries, though, strange to say, he is often depicted as an inferior in cunning and intellect to a shrewd old woman, or a bright-witted Welshman, as the following two curious stories show:—

THE LEGEND OF THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE IN CARDIGANSHIRE.

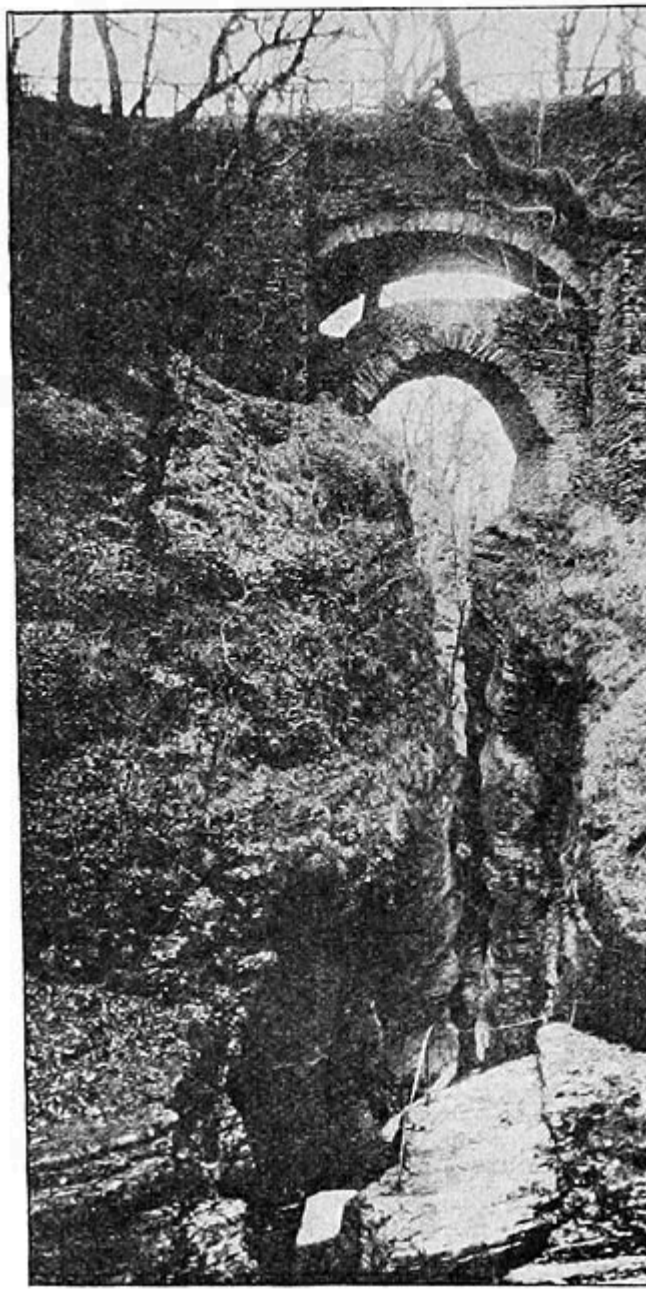
The Devil's Bridge in the northern part of Cardiganshire is so called from the tradition that it was erected by him upon the condition that the first thing that passed over it should be his. The story which is well-known is something as follows:

An old woman called Megan Llandunach had lost her cow, and espied the animal across the gorge. When bewailing her fate, the Devil appeared and promised to build her a bridge over the gorge under the condition that the first living thing which crossed should be surrendered into his

hand, “and be beyond redemption lost.” Megan agreed, the bridge was completed; she took from her pocket a crust of bread and threw it over the bridge, and her hungry dog sprang after it. So the Devil was balked in his design after all his trouble in erecting the bridge.

PENTRE-CWRT FOLK AND THE DEVIL.

Once upon a time the devil was offended with the people of Pentre-Cwrt, in Carmarthenshire, and decided to drown them. One day in order to do this mischief the Evil One was seen going along with a big shovelful of mound; and when he came to the parish of Llandyssul in Cardiganshire, which was only about two miles from Pentre-Cwrt, he met with a cobbler who carried a very large bundle of old shoes. After saluting the devil the cobbler asked him to where did he intend taking the shovelful of mound? “To the mouth of Alltcafan,” was the reply. “For what purpose?” asked the cobbler again. “To dam the River Teivy so as to drown the people of Pentre-Cwrt,” said the devil. Now the cobbler was a very shrewd man, and in order to frustrate the evil design of the Old Gentleman, he told him that the place where he intended to dam the river was very far away. “How far is it?” asked the devil. “I cannot tell you the exact distance,” replied the cobbler, “but in walking from there I have worn out all these shoes.” “If that is so,” said the devil, “it is too far, for I am already tired,” and down did he throw the shovelful of mould, and the shovelful which the devil threw down is to be seen to this day, and known as Cnwc Coedfoel.—See Hanes Plwyf Llangeler, gan D. Jones.





DEVIL'S BRIDGE.

Sometimes the devil manifests himself in a ball of fire, at other times in the form of a pig, mouse, calf, dog, or headless horse, and even as a gentleman on horseback, as we have already seen in the Rhosmeherin ghost story.

When I was in North Pembrokeshire a few years ago, I was told by several old people in the village of Eglwyswrw that the Evil One sometimes was to be seen at Yet Wen in that neighbourhood; occasionally as a "white lady," but more often as a white cat.

The people of the same village informed me that Yet Wen, Pen'rallt, was also a favourite resort of the devil, and that a woman once in passing the spot at night, shouted "Come out you d——l," and the next moment a white cat appeared.

Nags Head, in the same county was once haunted by the devil, as it seems from the following story of long ago:—

THE EVIL ONE APPEARING AT NAG'S HEAD IN THE FORM OF A DOG.

"As Mr. David Walter, of Pembrokeshire, a religious man, and far from fear and superstition, was travelling by himself through a field called the Cot Moor, where there are two stones set up called the Devil's Nags, which are said to be haunted, he was suddenly seized and thrown over a hedge. He went there another day, taking with him for protection a strong fighting mastiff dog. When he had

come near the Devil's Nags there appeared in his path the apparition of a dog more terrible than any he had ever seen. In vain he tried to set his mastiff on; the huge beast crouched, frightened by his master's feet and refused to attack the spectre. Whereupon his master boldly stooped to pick up a stone thinking that would frighten the evil dog; but suddenly a circle of fire surrounded it, which lighting up the gloom, showed the white snip down to the dog's nose, and his grinning teeth, and white tail. He then knew it was one of the infernal dogs of hell."

"THE OLD GENTLEMAN" APPEARING IN PEMBROKESHIRE, AS A BLACK CALF.

A black calf was supposed to haunt a stream that flowed across the road that leads from Narberth in Pembrokeshire to the adjacent village Cold Blow. People returning late that way were sure to get frightened as they passed and, as a consequence, they would go a long distance out of their way to avoid the haunted stream. One night, or rather early morning, two villagers were going home from a fair caught the terrible calf and took it home, locking it up safely with some cattle, but it had vanished when morning came.

A GHOST SEEN IN THE FORM OF A CALF IN CARDIGANSHIRE.

Rhosygarth, between Llanilar and Lledrod, was a well-

known haunted spot in former times. This demon often appeared on the road to travellers late at night in the form of a calf, but with a head much like that of a dog. Many years ago, Mr. Hughes, of Pantyddafad, was going home one night on horseback; but just as he was passing Rhosygarth, the ghost appeared, and passed across the road right in front of the horse. My informant, Thomas Jones, Pontrhydfendigaid, was a servant at Pantyddafad, heard the old gentleman often speaking about the ghost he had seen at Rhosygarth, and that Mr. Hughes was great-grand-father to Dr. Hughes, of Cwitycadno, Llanilar. Mr. Jones also added that he knew a young man who always laughed when people talked about seeing ghosts; but one night, a man (as he at first thought), followed him for about a mile, and after coming close to him, vanished into nothing. The young man nearly fainted, and after this never doubted the reality of the world of spirits.

A DEMON ASSUMING THE FORM OF A HORSE.

Sir John Williams, Bart, now of Aberystwyth, informed me that when a boy in the neighbourhood of Gwynfi, Carmarthenshire, he often heard some of the old people speak of a ghost which haunted the road in that part of the country in former times. This ghost was known as “Bwci,” and always assumed the form of a horse. It is an old belief of the Celts that demons assumed the form of horses, and one of these mythic beings was the Water Horse, so well-known in North Scotland. It was also known in Wales once.

THE GWYLLGI, OR DOG OF DARKNESS.

The Gwyllgi was a frightful apparition of a mastiff with baleful breath and blazing red eyes. In former times, an apparition in this shape haunted Pant y Madog, in the neighbourhood of Laugharne, Carmarthenshire. A woman named Rebecca Adams, passing this spot late one night, fell down in a swoon, when she saw the spectral dog coming towards her. When within a few yards of her it stopped, squatted on its hounchers, "and set up such a scream, so loud, so horrible, and so strong, that she thought the earth moved under her." I was informed at Llangynog five years ago, that Spectral Dogs still haunt that part of Carmarthenshire; and more than one of my informants had seen such apparitions themselves.

A spirit in animal form was not always a demon; sometimes the Spirit of a mortal was doomed to wear this shape for some offence.

It was once believed that the Evil One, either from lust, or from nefarious designs, assumed the form of a young man or a young woman.

The following two stories, the first from South Pembrokeshire, and the other from Gower, have reference to this belief.

"A DEMON STEWARD."

Giraldus Cambrensis in his Itinerary through Wales

(Bohn's edition, page 110) says:—

"In the province of Pembrock (Pembroke), another instance occurred, about the same time, of a spirit's appearing in the house of Elidore de Stakepole, not only sensibly, but visibly, under the form of a red-haired young man, who called himself Simon. First seizing the keys from the person to whom they were entrusted, he impudently assumed the steward's office, which he managed so prudently and providently, that all things seemed to abound under his care, and there was no deficiency in the house. Whatever the master or mistress secretly thought of having for their daily use or provision, he procured with wonderful agility, and without any previous directions, saying, "You wished that to be done, and it shall be done for you." He was also well acquainted with their treasures and secret hoards, and sometimes upbraided them on that account; for as often as they seemed to act sparingly and avariciously, he used to say, "Why are you afraid to spend that heap of gold or silver, since your lives are of so short duration, and the money you so cautiously hoard up will never do you any service?" He gave the choicest meat and drink to the rustics and hired servants, saying that "Those persons should be abundantly supplied, by whose labours they were acquired." Whatever he determined should be done, whether pleasing or displeasing to his master or mistress (for, as we have said before, he knew all their secrets), he completed in his usual expeditious manner, without their consent. He never went to church or uttered one catholic word. He did not sleep in the house, but was ready at his office in the morning. He was at length observed by some of the family to hold his nightly converse near a mill and a pool of water; upon which discovery, he was summoned the next morning before the master of the house and his lady, and, receiving his discharge, delivered up the keys,

which he had held for upwards of forty days. Being earnestly interrogated, at his departure who he was? he answered, “That he was begotten upon the wife of a rustic in that parish, by a demon, in the shape of her husband, naming the man, and his father-in-law, then dead, and his mother, still alive; the truth of which the woman upon examination, openly avowed.”

A DEMON TEMPTING A YOUNG MAIDEN IN GOWER.

For the following tale I am indebted to Mr. T. C. Evans (Cadrawd) the eminent antiquarian and folk-lorist of Llangynwyd:

“Once upon a time there lived a fair and gentle maiden in the neighbourhood of the Demon’s Rock, who often wandered out in the sunset and balmy summer evenings to meet her lover, and would return with her countenance radiant with joy, and the bright light of inexpressible rapture beaming in her love-lighted eye. Evening after evening would she stray out alone to the trysting place to meet her lover, and seemed as happy as a bird that warbles its morning song when the early sun gladdens the earth. However, it chanced that one of her companions followed her one moonlight night—saw the maiden go to a widespreading oak, and heard the whispering soft and low. She was surprised that she could not observe anyone, neither could she hear any reply to the maiden’s sweet and loving voice. Affrighted, she hastened back and said that a mysterious dread had crept over her while listening and watching her companion; they kept it secret, but

questioned the maiden on her return. She said that her lover was a gentleman, and that she had promised to meet him the next evening in the same spot. The next evening they followed her again and saw her addressing the empty air—they felt assured now that it must be the Spirit of Darkness that was tempting the girl. Her companions warned her and told her how she had been watched, and that they could not see who or whom she spoke to.

"She became alarmed, but yet could not refrain from meeting her lover, (as she supposed), once again, as she had made a vow and bound herself by a solemn promise to meet him in this valley in the dead hour of the night. She was also bound to go alone. It was a fearful trial. The night came, the moon hid itself, and dark clouds swept hurriedly across the sky. With blanched cheeks and trembling steps the maiden approached the appointed place. She held (firmly grasped) in her hand a Bible, and as the traitor approached, a straggling gleam of moonshine revealed his form; and oh! horrible to relate, she saw the cloven hoof! With one long piercing cry for protection from heaven she fled; at the same instant the valley was filled with wild unearthly shrieks. The roar of the deafening thunder shook the hills to their foundations; wild and blinding lightnings, together with yells and howls from the legions of baffled fiends rushed by on the startled air.

"The bewildered whirlwinds dashed through the woodlands, snapping the oaks of a century like fragile reeds, or hurling them like feathers down into the brook—now a boiling torrent that swept all before it. In the morning a strange scene of devastation presented itself, and the woods seemed crumbled up; the valley was a chaotic mass of confusion, while in the centre of the hamlet was this huge stone which they say the vengeful demon tore from its firm bed on the hillside, and flung at the flying maiden as she evaded his grasp. It remains in the

spot where it was cast, and is known as the Demon's Rock."

There is also a story all over Wales of the Evil One appearing to a young man as a lovely young lady.

SATAN AND SABBATH BREAKERS; OR THE "OLD GENTLEMAN" APPEARING IN MANY FORMS TO A MAN WHO TRAVELLED ON SUNDAY.

The late Rev. Elias Owen, "Welsh Folk-Lore," page 152, Vicar of Llanyblodwel, received the following tale from his deceased friend, the Rev. J. L. Davies, late Rector of Llangynog, who had obtained it from William Davies, the man who figures in the story:—

"William Davies, Penrhiw, near Aberystwyth, went to England for the harvest, and after having worked there about three weeks, he returned home alone, with all possible haste, as he knew that his father-in-law's fields were by this time ripe for the sickle. He, however, failed to accomplish the journey before Sunday; but he determined to travel on Sunday, and thus reached home on Sunday night to be ready to commence reaping on Monday morning. His conscience, though, would not allow him to be at rest, but he endeavoured to silence its twittings by saying to himself that he had with him no clothes to go to a place of worship. He stealthily, therefore, walked on, feeling very guilty every step he took, and dreading to meet anyone going to Chapel or Church. By Sunday evening he had reached the hill overlooking Llanfihangel-

y-Creuddyn, where he was known, so he determined not to enter the village until after the people had gone to their respective places of worship; he therefore sat down on the hill side and contemplated the scene below.

"He saw the people leave their houses for the House of God, he heard their songs of praise, and now he thinks he could venture to descend and pass through the village unobserved. Luckily, no one saw him going through the village, and now he has entered a barley field, and although still uneasy in mind, he feels somewhat reassured, and steps on quickly. He had not proceeded far in the barley field before he found himself surrounded by a large number of small pigs. He was not much struck by this, though he thought it strange that so many pigs should be allowed to wander about on the Sabbath Day. The pigs, however, came up to him, grunted and scampered away. Before he had traversed the barley field he saw approaching him an innumerable number of mice, and these, too, surrounded him, only, however, to stare at him, and then disappear. By this Davies began to be frightened, and he was almost sorry that he had broken the Sabbath Day by travelling with his pack on his back instead of keeping the day holy. He was not now very far from home, and this thought gave him courage and on he went. He had not proceeded any great distance from the spot where the mice had appeared when he saw a large grey-hound walking before him on the pathway. He anxiously watched the dog, but suddenly it vanished out of sight.

"By this, the poor man was thoroughly frightened, and many and truly sincere were his regrets that he had broken the Sabbath; but on he went. He passed through the village of Llanilar without any further fright. He had now gone about three miles from Llanfihangel along the road that goes to Aberystwyth, and he had begun to dispel the fear that had seized him, but to his horror he saw something

approach him that made his hair stand on end. He could not at first make it out, but he soon clearly saw that it was a horse that was madly dashing towards him. He had only just time to step on to the ditch, when, horrible to relate, a headless white horse rushed passed him.

"His limbs shook and the perspiration stood out like beads on bis forehead. This terrible spectre he saw when close to Tan'rallt, but he dared not turn into the house, as he was travelling on Sunday, so on he went again, and heartily did he wish himself at home. In fear and dread he proceeded on his journey towards Penrhiw. The most direct way from Tan'rallt to Penrhiw was a pathway through the fields, and Davies took this pathway, and now he was in sight of his home, and he hastened towards the boundary fence between Tan'rallt and Penrhiw. He knew that there was a gap in the hedge that he could get through, and for this gap he aimed; he reached it, but further progress was impossible, for in the gap was a lady lying at full length, and immovable, and stopping up the gap entirely. Poor Davies was now more terrified than ever. He sprang aside, he screamed and then fainted right away. As soon as he recovered consciousness, he, on his knees, and in a loud supplicating voice, prayed for pardon. His mother and father-in-law heard him, and the mother knew the voice and said, "It is my Will! some mishap has overtaken him." They went to him and found he was so weak that he could not move, and they were obliged to carry him home, where he recounted to them his marvellous experience. The late Rector of Llangynog, who was intimately acquainted with William Davies, had many conversations with him about his Sunday journey, and he argued the matter with him, and tried to persuade him that he had seen nothing, but that it was his imagination working on a nervous temperament that had created all his fantasies. He, however, failed to convince him, for Davies affirmed that it was no

hallucination, but that what he had seen that Sunday was a punishment for his having broken the Fourth Commandment.

"Davies ever afterwards was a strict observer of the Sabbath."

THE DEVIL AND LLANARTH CHURCH.

A writer in the Arch. Cam., 1850, page 73, says:—

In the Churchyard of Llanarth, near Aberaeron, on the South side of the Church, there is an inscribed stone (not hitherto published) of the twelfth century. It bears a cross covering the stone with four circular holes at the junction of the arms. The inscription is on the lower limb of the cross; but as it is made of a micaceous sandstone, part has been split off, and the inscription is much mutilated.... The current tradition of the place concerning it is, that one stormy night, some centuries ago, there was such a tremendous shindy going on up in the belfry that the whole village was put in commotion. It was conjectured that nobody but a certain ancient personage could be the cause of this, and, therefore, they fetched up his reverence from the vicarage to go and request the intruder to be off. Up went the vicar with bell, book and candle, along the narrow winding staircase, and, sure enough, right up aloft among the bells there was his majesty in person! No sooner, however, had the worthy priest began the usual 'conjurate in nomine, etc.' than away went the enemy up the remaining part of the staircase on to the leads of the tower. The Vicar, nothing daunted, followed, and pressed the intruder so briskly that the latter had nothing else to do

than to leap over the battlements. He came down plump among the gravestones below; and, falling upon one, made with his hands and knees the four holes now visible on the stone in question.

Another writer in "Y Brython" for 1859, says, that the Devil's purpose in troubling Llanarth Church was to rob it of one of its bells and carry it to Llanbadarn Fawr Church, near Aberystwyth, twenty miles distant, as the latter, though once a cathedral, had only two bells, whilst the former, only a parish church, had four. And an old story still lingers in the neighbourhood of Llanarth that the Devil whilst thus engaged in carrying the bell, put it down and rested and re-arranged his heavy load at the very commencement of his journey, and a particular spot between the church and the river on a road known as "Rhiw Cyrff," is pointed out as the place where the D——l put down the bell. Moreover, it is added that from that day forth, the sound of Llanarth bells cannot be heard from that spot, though it is only a few yards from the church tower.

The Llanarth legend is the only story in Wales that I know of in which the Spirit of darkness carries a church bell, as it was believed in old times that the Evil One was afraid of bells, and fled away at the sound of them.

There are, however, traditions of churches troubled by the Devil in other parts of Wales besides Llanarth, and in the old superstitious times the north door of a church was called "Devil's Door."

It was thought that as the priest entered the church through the south door, the Evil Spirit was obliged to make his exit through the north door.

It might also be added that in former times no one was buried on the north side of a churchyard, as it was known

as the “Domain of Demons.”

HOW TO GET RID OF GHOSTS, SPIRITS, GOBLINS, AND DEVILS, ETC.

In some parts, especially on the borders of Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire, it is believed that any one carrying a knife in his hands, will never see or be troubled by a spirit, even when passing a haunted spot in the depth of night.

When staying for a short time in the parish of Llandyssul about five years ago, I was told that there lived a few years ago a certain man in the village of Pontshan in that parish, who, when coming home late one night, saw a ghost on the roadside whilst passing a well-known haunted spot in the neighbourhood. The man took out his knife from his pocket, and the ghost vanished. After this, whenever he passed a haunted place the man held a knife in his hand, and never saw a ghost again. In South Pembrokeshire, a V-shaped twig of the mountain ash was considered a protective against spirits.

It was also believed once in all parts of Wales that to wear body-linen inside out, and to nail a horseshoe against the door kept away both evil spirits and witches. Even in the present day people all over the world think that there is some “good luck” in finding a horseshoe, and to a young girl it means a new lover.

When a spirit troubled a house in Wales, it was sometimes customary to call together the most godly persons in the parish to hold a prayer-meeting; at other times a conjurer,

or a priest was sent for, for it was formerly thought that a clergyman had the power to "lay" or exorcise spirits. There were particular forms of exorcising. When the Devil was in the belfry of Llanarth Church, Cardiganshire, the Vicar went to drive away the Evil One, with "Bell, Book, and Candle."

Until the time of Henry VIII., it seems that it was customary to curse mortals, as well as to exorcise fiends "with bell, book and candle"; for in an old book called "Dugdale's Baronage," published in 1675, it is said that in the 37th. year of Henry III., "a Curse was denounced in Westminster Hall against the violation of Magna Charta, with bell, book and candle."

And in Fox's account of the ceremony of excommunication, we are told that three candles were carried before the clergy, and that as each candle was extinguished prayer was made that the souls of malefactors and schismatics might be "given over utterly to the power of the fiend as this candle is now quenched and put out."

YSPRYD PENPOMPREN PLAS OR A SPIRIT "LAID" IN A BOTTLE.

Penpompren Plas is a small mansion near Talybont in North Cardiganshire. The late Mr. John Jones, Bristol House, informed me that there was a spirit there once troubling the family, and the servants, and especially the head servant who had no peace as the ghost followed the poor man everywhere whenever he went out at night, and often threw water into his face. At last the servant went to

a wise man or a conjurer. The Conjurer came with him to Penpompren Plas to "lay" the Spirit, and transformed it into an insect, in a bottle, which was securely corked. Then the bottle was thrown under the river bridge close by.

There are many such stories in different parts of the country; and it is said that under the Monument Arch of Old Haverfordwest Bridge in Pembrokeshire, a spirit has been laid for a thousand years, and that at the expiration of that time it will again be free to roam the earth to trouble people.

About 60 years ago, a spirit which appeared in all forms, pig, mouse, hare, etc., at Alltisaf, Llanfynydd, in Carmarthenshire, was "laid" by the celebrated wizard, Harries, of Cwrtycadno. I was told of this by two old men in the village of Llanfynydd about five years ago.

THE "LAYING" OF THE HAVOD UCHTRYD GOBLIN.

Havod Uchtryd is a large mansion a few miles from Devil's Bridge, in Cardiganshire, and there is a tradition in the neighbourhood that in the time of the celebrated Colonel Johnes about the beginning of the last century the place was haunted by a mischievous goblin. Fortunately, however, there happened to be a wizard nor far off, and the squire, so it is said, sent for him to Havod to lay the ghost. The conjurer came and when he arrived at the spot where the haunting usually took place he surrounded himself with an enchanted circle which the spirit could not break through. Then he opened a book and went through various

incantations to invoke the spirit, which presented himself in various forms; first it appeared as a bull, secondly as a bulldog; and at last as a fly which rested on the wizard's open book. In an instant the enchanter closed the book, and thus caught the evil one in a trap, and was only allowed to go out under the conditions that he should betake himself to the Devil's Bridge, and there with an ounce hammer and tintack cut off a fathom of the rock. But notwithstanding this "laying" of the spirit one hundred years ago, there is a rumour still throughout the whole North of Cardiganshire, that Hafod is still haunted.

THE MONACHDY GHOST DOOMED TO CUT THE ROCK NEAR LLANRHYSTYD.

About 70 or 80 years ago, Monachty, a fine mansion in the neighbourhood of Aberaeron, was rumoured to be haunted. My informant is an old man named James Jones, Golden Lion, Llanarth. Jones said that when he was a boy at Pantycefn, he often felt almost too terrified to go to bed, as it was reported that the Monachty ghost was so small that it could go through even the eye of a needle; and his father's humble cottage was not without holes especially the window of his bedroom.

At last, however, Students from Ystrad Meurig College were sent for to Monachdy to lay the ghost, which they did, so Jones said, and they doomed the unearthly being to cut a rock near Llanrhystyd, which proves that students, as well as Clergymen and ministers, had the reputation of being able to lay spirits.

THE "LAYING" OF THE STACKPOLE GHOST.

Stackpole Court, the beautiful residence of the distinguished Earl of Cawdor, is famous for its legendary lore. "Seven hundred years ago, Giraldus Cambrensis tells the story of Sir Elidur de Stackpole's demon steward, whose name was Simon; and in the more modern times the neighbourhood was haunted by the spirit of an old lady. This ghost appeared in the form of a party consisting of two headless horses, a headless coachman and a headless lady in her carriage.

At last the ghost was "laid" by the Parson of St. Patrox, who doomed it to empty a pond with a cockle shell for a ladle, so that the phantom is not seen now.

There are several versions of this ghost story, and Col. Lambton, of Brownslade, who is much interested in Folk-Lore and Antiquities, informed me that the headless lady was known as "Lady Mathias."

The idea of giving employment to a spirit is most ancient, and in Grecian and Roman Mythology we find that the Danaides, or the fifty daughters of Danaus, who all, except one, slew their husbands on their wedding night, were doomed in Tartarus to draw water in sieves from a well until they had filled a vessel full of holes.

It seems from the following story, which I obtained from the Rev. J. Jones, Brynmeherin, near Ystrad Meurig, that a ghost will not follow one through water:—

SHAN AND THE GHOST.

About 35 years ago, there lived at Ynysfach, near Ystrad Meurig, an old man and an old woman known as “Shon and Shan.”

Shon was working in North Wales, for he was a quarryman at the time, but he came home occasionally to spend his holidays with his wife, especially about Christmas time.

On one occasion, however, when Shan expected her husband home the day before Christmas as usual, Shon came not. Nine o’clock in the evening she went out to meet him or to search for him and to prevent him spending his money on beer at a public house which his friend, a saddler kept at Tyngraig. But her husband was not at the public house, nor was he seen anywhere, so the old woman had to return home in disappointment. It was a cloudless moonlight night, almost as light as day, but the road was lonely and the hour late, and when she had walked some distance, to her great terror, she noticed a ghost in the field making his way nearer and nearer to her till at last the strange object came to the hedge on the roadside quite close to her. Frightened as she was, she struck the ghost with the strong walking-stick which she held in her hand, saying “D——l! thou shalt follow me no longer.”

When Shan struck the ghost her walking-stick went right through the head of the strange object, but she did not “feel” that it touched anything—It was like striking a fog; but the spirit vanished into nothing, and Shan walked on. The ghost was now invisible, but the old woman “felt” that it still followed her, though she could not see it; but when she was crossing a brook she became aware that her pursuer left her.

TWO YOUNG WOMEN AND THE GOBLIN.

Two young women, daughters of a farmer in the parish of Llandyssul, were walking home one night from Lampeter Fair. After reaching the very field in one corner of which the house in which they lived stood, they wandered about this field for hours before they could find the building, though it was a fine moonlight night.

It seemed as if the farm house had vanished; and they informed me that they were convinced that this was the doings of the Goblin, who played them a trick.

The Welsh word for Goblin is Ellyll.

CHAPTER VII.

DEATH PORTENTS.

Among the most important of the superstitions of Wales are the death portents and omens; and this is perhaps more or less true of every country. About a generation or two ago, there were to be found almost in every parish some old people who could tell before hand when a death was going to lake place; and even in the present day we hear of an old man or an old woman, here and there, possessing, or supposed to possess, an insight of this kind into the future.

Mrs. Lloyd, Ffynnonddagrau, Llangynog, Carmarthenshire, told me five years ago that there lived at Ffynnonddagrau, an old man named Thomas Harries, who always foretold every death in the parish as he possessed second sight. John Thomas, Pentre, who worked about the farms, called with my informant one day on his way home; he was in good health then, but on the very next day he was very ill and soon died. Harries had foretold the death of the poor man some days before he was taken ill. He had also foretold the death of one Howells, who was buried at Ebenezer Chapel, and of an old woman known as Rassie of Moelfre Fach, as well as the death of one Thomas Thomas about 35 years ago. People were almost frightened to see Harries as he so often foretold the death of someone or

other, and his predictions were always correct. My informant also added that Harries only died about 20 years ago.

THE "TOILI" OR PHANTOM FUNERAL.

With the exception of Corpse Candle, the most prominent death portent in West and Mid-Wales is the "Toili" or spirit funeral; a kind of shadowy funeral which foretold the real one. In the very north of Cardiganshire, such apparition is known as "teulu" (family); but throughout all other parts of the county it is called "toili." Toili, or Toeli is also rather general in Carmarthenshire; in North Pembrokeshire, however, it is called "Crefishgyn."

There are tales of phantom funerals all over the Diocese of St. David's, and the following account of a Twentieth Century Phantom Funeral in Pembrokeshire is interesting, as my informant himself was the man who witnessed the strange apparition, or a foreshadowing of a funeral which actually took place soon afterwards.

A PRESENT DAY PHANTOM FUNERAL.

A young man who lives in the Gwaun Valley, between Pontfaen and Fishguard informed me in the beginning of November, 1905, that he had just seen a phantom or a spirit funeral only a few weeks previously.

A friend of his, a young porter at a Railway Station in the neighbourhood of Cardiff, had come home ill to his native place in Pembrokeshire, and his friend, my informant, one night sat up by his bedside all night. About three o'clock in the morning the patient was so seriously ill that my informant in alarm hurried to call the father of the poor sufferer to come to see him, as the old man lived in a small cottage close by. As soon as he went out through the door into the open air, to his great astonishment he found himself in a large crowd of people, and there was a coffin resting on some chairs, ready to be placed on the bier; and the whole scene, as it were, presented a funeral procession, ready to convey the dead to the grave. When the young man attempted to proceed on his way, the procession also proceeded, or moved on in the same direction, so that he found himself still in the crowd. After going on in this manner for about a hundred yards, he managed to draw one side from the crowd and soon reached the house of his sick friend's father, and nearly fainted. Three days after this vision the seer's friend died; and on the day of the funeral the young man noticed that the crowd stood in front of the house and the coffin resting on chairs exactly as he had seen in the apparition. I may add that my informant who had seen the phantom funeral was so terrified even at the time when I saw him, that he was too much afraid to go out at night. It so happened that I was staying in that part of Pembrokeshire at the time, so I went to see the man myself, and a clergyman accompanied me.



AN APPARITI(

I obtained the following account of a phantom funeral from the Rev. John Phillips, Vicar of Llancynfelyn, North Cardiganshire. The scene of the story was Cilcwm, Carmarthenshire:—

A PHANTOM FUNERAL.

Though more than thirty years have run their course since the incident which is to be described here occurred, still the impression which it left on the writer's mind was so

vivid and lasting that he finds not the slightest difficulty in recalling its minutest details at the present moment. Some experiences are so impressive that time itself seems powerless to efface them from the memory, and of such the following appears to be an instance:—

It happened in the early Spring, just when the days were perceptibly lengthening, and a balmy feeling was creeping into the air, and a glad sense of hope was throbbing throughout the whole of nature. A boy of ten, or may be a couple of years younger, tired out after a hard day of play and pleasure, sat resting on a log near a lonely house, in a sparsely populated district. As he sat, he gazed down a long stretch of white and dusty road leading away past the house. As a rule, few and far between would be the travellers who used that unfrequented road. The sole exception would be on a Sunday, when perhaps a dozen or more of the neighbours might be seen wending their way, to or from the nearest place of worship. Intense, therefore, was the boy's surprise, when on this week-day, his eyes discerned a goodly company turning the corner in the distance, and proceeding in an orderly procession along the stretch of straight road which his vantage ground commanded. He watched it keenly, and wondered greatly. Never had he before seen such a crowd on that particular road. As the people drew nearer and nearer, something of solemnity in their orderly and silent manner struck on the watcher's imagination, but no sense of anything akin to the supernatural obsessed his mind for a second, still he failed not to mark, that for so large an assemblage, it was remarkably noiseless. Twenty yards, more or less, from where the youthful watcher sat, a footpath leading over a piece of wet and barren land joined the road. This path, which could be traversed only in dry weather, terminated half a mile away, at the door of a solitary cottage inhabited by a farm hand named Williams, who dwelt there with his

wife and several young children. When the crowd arrived at the spot where the path ran on to the road, there seemed to be a momentary hesitation, and then the procession left the road and took to the footpath. The watcher strained every nerve, in an effort to recognise some one or other in the crowd, but though there was something strangely familiar about it all, there was also something so dim and shadowy, as to preclude the possibility of knowing anyone with certainty; but as the tail end of the procession curved round to gain the path, something he did observe, which caused a thrill, for the last four men carried high on their shoulders a bier,—but it was an empty bier. Soon as the multitude was out of sight, the boy rushed to the house, and related his curious experience. No thought of anything weird and uncanny had so far crossed his mind, and his one desire at the time was to gain some information as to where the people were bound for. Neither could he just then understand the manifest consternation, and the hushed awe, which fell upon his hearers as he unfolded his tale. Amongst these there happened to be a visitor, an old dame of a class well known in many parts of rural Wales in those days. It was her habit to stroll from farm to farm along the country side, regaling the housewives with the latest gossip. In return she would be sure of a meal, and also something to carry home in her wallet. Naturally, such a character would be shrewd and keen, knowing well not only what tales would suit her company, but also the truth, or otherwise, of any tales which she herself might be a listener to. In addition, the old dame in question was generally supposed to be immune from all fear, and cared not how far from home she might be when the shades of night overtook her. On the present occasion, although a few minutes before, she had been on the point of starting, and was indeed only waiting to be handed her usual dole of charity, no sooner had she heard the lad's strange tale, than she flatly declared that no power on earth could move her

to travel an inch further that evening, and so at the expense of much inconvenience to the household a bed had to be prepared for her. However, she started early on the following morning, and long before noon, owing mainly to her assiduous diligence, the news had travelled far and near, that a phantom funeral had been seen on the previous evening. Her tale made a deep impression throughout the country-side. Those prone to superstition,—and it must be confessed, they were many,—lent a ready ear. A few,—and these prided themselves on their commonsense,—doubted. The latter class were not slow to point out, what they considered to be, a fatal flaw in the evidence. The supposed funeral was travelling in a direction, which led away from the churchyard. Had it been going down the road instead of up, they argued, that there might be something in it. Then again, it took the footpath, and it was pointed out, not only that funerals kept to the high roads, but that this particular path, could not by any stretch of imagination be said to lead to any burial ground. This seemed a reasonable view to take, and as one day succeeded another, without anything unusual happening, the excitement cooled down. However, within a few weeks Williams, who lived in the cottage across the marsh was taken ill. At first, it was thought that he had contracted a chill, and it was hoped that he would soon be well again. The nearest medical man lived six miles away, and that caused further delay. On the fifth day the doctor came, but he came to find that it was too late for his skill to be of any avail. A glance at the patient had satisfied him that it was a case of double pneumonia, and that the end was rapidly approaching. A few hours later and Williams had drawn his last breath. Three days more and the funeral took place. As is the custom in country places, the neighbours from far and near attended, and on their way a group of men called at the burial place for the bier. This group was joined by others so that long before the house of mourning was

reached the procession was a large one. It travelled up the long stretch of road where the lad had watched that mysterious crowd, in the twilight six weeks before. The same lad watched again, and when the procession reached the point, where the footpath branched away across the fields, the man who acted as leader stopped, and raised his hand, while the procession hesitated for a moment, then looking at his watch, the leader spoke in low clear tones, "men," said he, "it is already getting late if we go round by the road, it will get very late; we will take the path." He led the way and as his followers swept round the curve, the lad saw that the last four men carried on their shoulders an empty bier. It was being taken to fetch the body.

THE NEUADDLWYD "TOILI."

John Jones, Coed-y-Brenin, near Neuaddlwyd, was going home one evening from Derwen-gam; and as he walked along he found himself suddenly in a phantom funeral, and was so pressed by the crowd of spirits that he nearly fainted. At last he managed to escape by turning into a field. He then noticed that the phantom funeral proceeded towards Neuaddlwyd, and soon there was a light to be seen in that chapel through the windows. A few weeks after this a real funeral took place. The above J. Jones, who had seen the apparition only died about twelve years ago. My informant was Mr. Thomas Stephen, near Mydroilyn, in the parish of Llanarth.

A HORSE SEEING A "TOILI" OR PHANTOM FUNERAL.

The following tale was related to me by Mr. Jones, Bristol House, Talybont:—

A farmer's wife, who lived in the northern part of Cardiganshire, had gone to Machynlleth Market one day riding a pony. On her journey home that evening she met a "toili" on the road. The pony was the first to notice the spirit-funeral, and the animal refused to go forward, but turned back and stood trembling under the shelter of a big tree till the "toili" had passed. The woman was quite terrified, and as soon as she reached home she rushed into the house and asked her husband to go out and put the pony in the stable, and stated that she felt unwell that night. Soon after this, one of the family died.

Some persons have such clear vision of a phantom funeral, that they are able even to recognise and give the names of the persons that appear in the spectral procession.

Owen Shon Morris, of Pant'stoifan, Llanarth, who died 85 years ago, saw a "toili" passing his own house in the direction of Llanarth, at 1 o'clock in the morning. He even discovered that among the crowd was his own friend, Evan Pugh, the tailor, and a woman wearing a red petticoat. When the "toili" had gone as far as a certain green spot on the road, after passing the house, the tailor and the woman with the red petticoat left the procession, and returned to their homes. Twelve months after this a funeral took place, and in the procession were the tailor and the woman with a red petticoat, both of whom returned home after accompanying the crowd as far as the green spot.

My informant was an old farmer, named Thomas Stephens,

near Mydroilyn.

SPIRIT FUNERALS CARRYING PEOPLE TO CHURCHYARDS.

I obtained the following account from an old man in North Pembrokeshire:—

About seven o'clock one winter evening, David Thomas, Henllan, Eglwyswrw, went to the village shop to get some medicine for a sick animal. When he was returning home, it was a fine moonlight night. All of a sudden, however, he found himself in utter darkness, being carried back to Eglwyswrw almost unknown to himself by a "Crefishgyn" as such an apparition is called in North Pembrokeshire; and when he got his feet on the ground once more, he discovered himself taking hold of the iron bars of the Churchyard Gate. In his adventure with the apparition he had passed a blacksmith's shop, where several men were working, without seeing or noticing anything.

A farm servant, named David Evans in the parish of Llandyssul, Cardiganshire, had visited his brother who was ill one night, but whilst going home at two o'clock in the morning, a "toili" carried him all the way to Llandyssul Churchyard. My informant was Rees, Maesymeillion.

I have also heard of an old woman at Cilcennin, near Aberaeron, who was also carried by force to the churchyard by a "toili," and there are such tales all over the country.

AN OLD WOMAN WHO SAW THE APPARITION OF HER OWN FUNERAL.

Miss Martha Davies, a housemaid, at Fishguard, Pembrokeshire, informed me that her family possessed the peculiar gift of second sight, and that her mother had seen the phantom of her own funeral before she died.

When she was out walking one night, the old woman was terrified by seeing a funeral procession meeting her on the road and which passed on towards Caersalem, a Nonconformist Chapel close by. The Rev. Jenkin Evans, Vicar of Pontfaen, was walking behind the procession, and she even took notice of his dress and what kind of hat he had on his head. She was taken ill the very next day, and in a very short time died, and every one in the neighbourhood believed that she had seen an apparition of her own funeral. The deceased was buried at Caersalem; and as her daughter, Martha, was at the time a maid-servant at Pontfaen Vicarage, the Vicar accompanied the girl to her mother's funeral in his carriage. When he arrived in the neighbourhood where the funeral was to take place, he left his horse and trap at a public house, and proceeded to the house of mourning on foot, as the distance the funeral procession had to go from Melin Cilgwm to Caersalem burial place was very short. Strange to say, when the funeral did proceed, it so happened that the Vicar of Pontfaen walked behind the procession, and his clothes, and even his very hat were in exact accordance with the description which had been given by the dead woman of the vision.

A PHANTOM TRAIN.

A few years ago an old man named James, 75 years of age, living at Nantgaredig, in Carmarthenshire, told me that he had seen a phantom train on one occasion.

Some years ago when he happened to be out about midnight once, he saw a train passing, which came from the direction of Carmarthen, and went towards Llandilo, and as no train was to pass through the station of Nantgaredig at that hour he enquired of the Stationmaster next morning what was the special train that passed at midnight. In reply, he was told he had been either dreaming or had seen the spirit of a train, as no train had passed at that time of the night.

A few days after this a special train passed through the station conveying a large funeral from Carmarthen to Llandilo; and James and his friend were convinced that the train he had seen in the night was nothing but an apparition of the real train with the funeral!

A "TOILI" SEEN IN THE DAY-TIME.

Like every other apparition a "toili" is supposed to be seen in the night time only; but according to the late Mr. Lledrod Davies, people working at the harvest near Llangeitho many years ago, saw a "toili" at mid-day in the churchyard of Llanbadarn Odwyn; and a funeral took place soon afterwards.

The following story of a phantom funeral in the day-time

was related to me by an old woman in Pembrokeshire, a farmer's wife in the Parish of Llanycefn:—

An old man named John Salmon saw an apparition of a funeral in the day-time, and he even recognised most of those who were in the procession, but was surprised to find that the minister was not amongst them.

A few days after this the funeral took place, and the minister was prevented from being present as he had been called away from home at the time.

Sometimes a "Toili" is heard without being seen.

An old woman who lived in a little cottage at Dihewid, in Cardiganshire, forty-five years ago, heard every phantom funeral that passed her house; she could tell even the number of horses in the apparition.

An old woman who only a few years ago lived close to Llanafan Churchyard, in the same County, heard from her bed one night the Vicar's voice, the Rev. W. J. Williams, reading the burial service quite distinctly, and soon after a funeral took place.

The Vicar was informed of this by the old woman herself.

SINGING HEARD TWELVE MONTHS BEFORE DEATH.

About sixty years ago, the mother of one David Hughes, Cwmllechwedd, was one day standing outside the house, when all of a sudden, she heard the sound of singing. She

recognised the voice of the singer as the voice of the Curate of Lledrod, but when she looked round she could see no one anywhere. The maid servants also heard the same sound of singing.

Twelve months after this her son, David Hughes, a young man of 22 years of age died, and on the day of the funeral, the Curate of Lledrod, standing near the door, gave out a hymn, and conducted the singing himself, just as the funeral was leaving the house.

My informant was Thomas Jones, Pontrhydfendigaid.

A woman at Aberporth, informed me that she had heard a "Toili" singing:

"Gwyn fyd v rhai trwy ffydd,
Sy'n myn'd o blith y byw."

Three weeks before the death of her aunt.

Mr. John Llewelyn, Rhos-y-Gwydr, somewhere on the borders of Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, when he went to the door of Rhydwilym Chapel one evening, he was surprised when he listened, to hear his own voice preaching a funeral sermon.

A DAY-DREAM.

Another remarkable instance of second-sight seeing appeared in "Notes and Queries" for July, 1858. The contributor, Mr. John Pavin Phillips, gives the following account of what occurred to him himself in the year 1818,

upon his return home to Pembrokeshire, after many years' absence:—

"A few days after my arrival, I took a walk one morning in the yard of one of our parish churches, through which there is a right of way for pedestrians. My object was a twofold one: Firstly, to enjoy the magnificent prospect visible from that portion; and secondly, to see whether any of my friends or acquaintances who had died during my absence were buried in the locality. After gazing around me for a short time, I sauntered on, looking at one tombstone and then at another, when my attention was arrested by an altar-tomb enclosed within an iron railing. I walked up to it and read an inscription which informed me that it was in memory of Colonel ——. This gentleman had been the assistant Poor Law Commissioner for South Wales, and while on one of his periodical tours of inspection, he was seized with apoplexy in the Workhouse of my native town, and died in a few hours. This was suggested to my mind as I read the inscription on the tomb, as the melancholy event occurred during the period of my absence, and I was only made cognisant of the fact through the medium of the local press. Not being acquainted with the late Colonel ——, and never having seen him, the circumstances of his sudden demise had long passed from my memory, and were only revived by my thus viewing his tomb. I then passed on, and shortly afterwards returned home. On my arrival my father asked me in what direction I had been walking, and I replied, in —— Churchyard, looking at the tombs, and among others I have seen the tomb of Col. ——, who died in the Workhouse. 'That' replied my father 'is impossible, as there is no tomb erected over Colonel ——'s grave.' At this remark I laughed. 'My dear father,' said I, 'You want to persuade me that I cannot read. I was not aware that Colonel —— was buried in the Churchyard, and was only informed of the fact by reading the

inscription on the tomb.' 'Whatever you may say to the contrary' said my father, 'What I tell you is true; there is no tomb over Colonel ——'s grave.' Astounded by the reiteration of this statement, as soon as I had dined I returned to the Churchyard and again inspected all the tombs having railings around them, and found that my father was right.

There was not only no tomb bearing the name of Colonel ——, but there was no tomb at all corresponding in appearance with the one I had seen. Unwilling to credit the evidence of my own senses, I went to the cottage of an old acquaintance of my boyhood, who lived outside of the Churchyard gate, and asked her to show the place where Colonel —— lay buried. She took me to the spot, which was a green mound, undistinguished in appearance from the surrounding graves.

Nearly two years subsequent to this occurrence, surviving relatives erected an Altar-tomb, with a railing round it, over the last resting place of Colonel ——, and it was, as nearly as I could remember, an exact reproducing of the memorial of my day-dream. Verily, 'there are more things in Heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'

THE CORPSE CANDLE.

The "Canwyll Corph" or Corpse Candle, was another death portent often seen in West and Mid-Wales, about a generation or two ago. Indeed there are several persons still alive who have told me that they had seen this mysterious light themselves. It was a pale light moving

slowly and hovering a short distance from the ground. Some could tell whether a man, woman, or child was to die. The death of a man was indicated by a red light, that of a woman by a white light, and a faint light before the death of a child. If two lights were seen together, two deaths were to take place in the same house at the same time. If the light was seen early in the evening a death was to take place soon, but if late it was not to take place for some time.

Like the "toili" or phantom funeral, the Corpse Candle also was seen going along from the house—where death was to take place—to the churchyard along the same route which a funeral was to take, whether road or path.

Sometimes the light was seen carried by a spectral representation of the dying person, and it was even thought possible to recognise that person by standing near the water watching the apparition crossing over it. Another way of recognising the dying person was to stand at the church porch watching the candle entering the building. There are some instances of people seeing their own corpse candle.

There was an old woman living at Llanddarog, in Carmarthenshire, named Margaret Thomas, who always saw every light or Corpse Candle going to the churchyard before every funeral. She only died about 27 years ago.

Another old woman who also saw the same death portents was Mary Thomas, Dafy, who lived close to Llandyssul churchyard in Cardiganshire. She was buried sixty years ago.

There is a tradition that St. David, by prayer, obtained the Corpse Candle as a sign to the living of the reality of another world, and according to some people it was

confined to the Diocese of St. David's, but the fact of it is there are tales of corpse candles all over Wales.

A CORPSE CANDLE SEEN AT SILIAN.

Owen Evans, Maesydderwen, near Llansawel, Carmarthenshire, who is over 90 years of age, gave me the following account of a Corpse Candle which had been seen at Silian, near Lampeter.

When Evans was a boy, his father lived in an old house close to the churchyard walls, and kept the key of the church door. At that time singing practice was often conducted in the church, especially during the long winter evenings. One evening a certain young man entered the churchyard with the intention of going to the church to attend this singing-class, though it was a little too early; but he could see light in the church through one of the windows. So on he went to the church door thinking that the singing had commenced, or at least that some one was in the church. But to his great surprise he found the door closed and locked, and when he looked in through the key-hole there was not a soul to be seen inside the church. The young man then went to the house of Owen Evans's father and informed the old man that there was light in the church, but that he did not see anyone inside. "You must be making a mistake," said my informant's father to the young man, "there cannot possibly be any light in the church; no one could have entered the building to light it, for the door is locked, and I have the key here in the house." "But I am positively certain," said the young man again, "that there is light in the church, for I took particular

notice of it." Both of the two men now went to the church together, and as they approached, they noticed a light coming out from the church. This light moved slowly towards a certain part of the churchyard, and the two men followed it and watched it until it suddenly disappeared into the ground. That it was a corpse candle they had no doubt in their minds. The young man had a walking stick in his hand with which he made a mark or a hole in the ground on the spot where the light had sunk. Soon after this a death took place in the neighbourhood, and the dead was buried in the very spot where the corpse candle had sunk into the ground.

My informant told me also that he had seen a corpse candle himself before the death of an adopted son of one Mr. John Evans, who lived at Glandenis, in the same neighbourhood.

A CORPSE CANDLE SEEN TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AGO.

There is a tradition at Llanilar that a young woman got drowned long ago in attempting to cross the river Ystwyth during a flood; and that a short time before the melancholy event took place, people in the neighbourhood had seen a corpse candle hovering up and down the river. According to the Rev. Edmund Jones, the young woman had come from Montgomeryshire to see her friends at Llanilar.

There is also a tradition in Carmarthenshire of a three-flamed corpse candle which had been seen on the surface of the water near Golden Grove a short time before three

persons were drowned near the spot.

A CORPSE CANDLE SEEN NEAR CONWIL.

An old man named James, living at Nantgaredig in Carmarthenshire, gave me an account of how he himself and his father and others had seen a Corpse Candle in the parish of Conwil Elvet.

When James was a boy, he was sent one day by a farmer's wife on a message to Llanpumpsaint, about three miles off, to fetch a pair of clogs from the blacksmith, and a few small things from a shop in the village. When he arrived there he went first to the blacksmith, but he had to wait there as the clogs were not ready. Then he went to the village shop, but, unfortunately, the woman who kept the shop was not at home, and he had to wait several hours; so that when he returned to the farm with his message it was quite dark. But the farmer's wife gave him plenty to eat and a present of a waistcoat. Then he went home to Nantglas, where his father and mother lived. It was now getting late in the evening, and he was only a boy going along a lonely road. When he was between Yetyffin, and Cwmgweren, he noticed some light coming after him nearer and nearer, and it even passed him at last. It hovered within about two feet from the ground as it went slowly along. The boy, who was a little bit frightened, now knocked at the door of a house he was passing and called the attention of the inmates to the strange light on the road.

On he went again, and he even passed the light on the road; but when he reached home and told his parents about it, his father would not believe that he had seen a light. But

the boy opened the door just as the light was passing and he called his father to come out and see it. The whole family now came out, and both his father and the other children saw the light, but his mother and one of the children did not see it—not possessing second sight.

Soon after this, a child died at a house called Yet-y-ffin; and my informant's father and his neighbours were convinced that the light which they had seen was his corpse candle.

Sometimes a corpse candle was seen coming into the chamber of the person about to die.

A woman, who was a native of Gwynfi in Carmarthenshire, told me about five years ago that when her child was dying, she took particular notice of a pale bluish light coming in through the window and standing right over the bed. I have also heard several other persons saying things of this kind.

A PEMBROKESHIRE TALE OF A CORPSE CANDLE.

The following story was contributed to the "Pembrokeshire County Guardian," May 11th., 1901, by Mr. Joseph Davies, Glynderwen:

"It happened not many miles from Tenby where a certain young school mistress lodged at a farm house where she was very happy in every respect. One night after retiring to rest, the light having been put out, and she was lying awake, she suddenly noticed a peculiar greyish light like a

little star moving towards the foot of her bed from the doorway. The light came to a stand-still by her bed and gently lowered to her feet. Almost paralysed with fear, she called with all her strength for help, and in a few minutes the whole of the household were together in the room listening in amazement to the frightened girl's story, and all sorts of means were used to pacify her and to induce her to go to sleep, but without avail. She would not stay in that room for the world, and her bed had to be removed and fixed on a temporary bedstead in the room where the mistress slept. Time passed, and the story spread abroad; some made light of it, and some looked serious, and all tried to get the young lady to shake off all thoughts of it. But to no purpose—let them laugh or chaff, she bore the same sad expression, and said something would certainly follow to clear up the mystery. About six weeks or so had passed, and one night the mistress, who was a strong healthy woman, suddenly took ill, and quite unexpectedly died. The young schoolmistress happened at the time to be away on her holidays, and on hearing of the sad news she hurried back to attend the funeral. When she arrived at the house she was taken upstairs to see the body, she again became almost paralysed on finding that the corpse had been laid out on the spare bedstead on the very spot where she had six weeks previously pointed out where the light had lowered and disappeared. No one had thought of the incident until reminded of it. The body had been laid out there for convenience at the time; no one ever thought of the young lady's fright until she now pointed it out herself.

"So after that it can be easily imagined the whole neighbourhood became convinced that there was something in it after all, and the old superstition got strengthened in the minds of the young people that it remains to a great extent to the present time."

A LLANGATHEN TALE.

The following appeared in “Apparitions in Wales” by Rev. Edmund Jones, and it is a story of long ago:

“Some years ago one Jane Wyat, my wife’s sister, being nurse to Baronet Rudd’s three children, and his Lady being dead, his house-keeper going late into a chamber where the maid servants lay, saw five of these lights together: while after that chamber being newly plastered, a great grate of coal fire was kindled therein to hasten the drying of it. At night five of the maid servants went there to bed as these were wont, and in the morning were all found dead, and suffocated with the steam of the new tempered lime and coal.”

This was at Llangathen, in Carmarthenshire.

THE CORPSE BIRD.

The most common death prognosticator throughout Wales in the present day is a peculiar bird known as “Deryn Corph” (Corpse Bird)—a bird flapping its wings against the window of the room in which there is a sick person. This was considered an omen of death. Even in the present day most people dread to see or hear a bird flapping its wings against the window when there is a sick person in the house; but every bird is not a corpse bird.

An old woman in Pembrokeshire, Miss Griffiths, Henllan, near Eglwyswrw, told me this bird is a little grey one and that it came flapping against her own window before the

death of her father, and also before the death of each of her three uncles.

I have met with people in almost every district throughout the country who have heard the flappings of this mysterious bird before a death.

A BIRD COMING INTO A HOUSE BEFORE A DEATH.

Mr. Rees, Maesymeillion, Llandyssul, informed me that many years ago there lived in that part of the country an old woman known as Nell Gwarnant. The old woman at one time had an only son, a young lad who was very dear to her. One day a certain bird came into the house quite suddenly, and descended on the rim of the Spinning Wheel, flapping its wings. The old woman feared that the bird was a precursor of death, and to her great sorrow her only son soon died. A bird coming into the house is also a sign of a storm.

Birds as precursors of death seem to follow Welsh people to all parts of the world. A few years ago a Corpse Bird appeared in Perth, Western Australia, before the death of a Welsh lady in that city; and this reminds me of a strange incident which happened in Patagonia, 30 years ago, when I was there. Two Welsh gentlemen, Mr. Powell, who was known as “Helaeg,” and Mr. Lewis Jones, a friend of the late Sir Love Jones Parry, M.P., were returning to the Welsh Colony, from Buenos Ayres, in a sailing vessel. When the ship came within a few miles of the mouth of the river Chubut, the captain found it necessary to remain in

the open sea that day, as the tide was too low to enter the river over the bar just then. Mr. Jones and Mr. Powell, however, left in a small boat manned by Italian sailors; but when they were within a certain distance of the land the sea was very rough, and a certain bird appeared suddenly on the scene. Mr. Powell pointed out the bird to his friend and said, "Do you see that bird, that's the Bird of Biam! We shall be drowned this very moment." Just as he spoke, the boat suddenly turned over, and the unfortunate speaker got drowned on the spot. The other men were saved. Mr. Powell, who, unfortunately, got drowned, was a gifted Welsh Roman Catholic gentleman, who knew about twelve languages, and was a friend of the President of the Argentine Republic.

It was reported in the "Aberystwyth Observer" twenty-two years ago, that before the death of Mrs. Fryer, Lady Pryse (now Dowager), noticed a bird hovering around Gogerddan, and at times flapping his wings at the windows.

BIRD SINGING HEARD BEFORE DEATH.

In the excellent Welsh Magazine "Y Brython" for January, 1860, page 40, the following remarkable incident is given in connection with the death of the famous poet and clergyman, Tegid, which, being translated is as follows:—

"In his absence from Church, when lying on his death-bed, in the morning of the Lord's Day, whilst a neighbouring clergyman was taking the service for him in Llanhyfer Church, the voice of the reader was suddenly drowned by the beautiful song of a thrust, that filled the whole

church.... It was ascertained on leaving the church that at that very moment the soul of Tegid left his body for the world of spirits."

MUSIC OF ANGELS HEARD BEFORE DEATH.

It is stated in the "Cambro-British Saints," page 444, that previous to the death of St. David "the whole city was filled with the music of angels."

The Rev. Edmund Jones in his "Apparitions in Wales," says that at the death of one Rees David in Carmarthenshire, "a man of more than common piety," several persons who were in the room heard "the singing of angels drawing nearer and nearer; and after his death they heard the pleasant incomparable singing gradually depart until it was out of hearing."

CYHYRAETH: OR DEATH SOUND.

The Cyhyraeth was another death portent. It has been described as a wailing or moaning sound heard before a death, and it was thought to be a sound made by a groaning spirit. This spirit was never seen, only its sound was heard.

According to "British Goblins" by Sikes, one David Prosser, of Llanybyther, heard the Cyhyraeth pronouncing

the words “Woolach! Woolach!” before a funeral.

According to the same book “this crying spirit, especially affected the twelve parishes in the hundred of Inis Cenin, which lie on the south-east side of the river Towy, ‘where some time past it groaned before the death of every person who lived that side of the country! It also sounded before the death of persons ‘who were born in these parishes, but died elsewhere.’

“Sometimes, the voice was heard long before death, but not longer than a quarter of a year. So common was it in the district named, that among the people there is a familiar form of reproach to any one making a disagreeable noise, or children crying or groaning unreasonably was to ejaculate ‘Oh’r Cyhyraeth!’ A reason why Cyhyraeth was more often heard in the hundred of Inis Cenin, was thought to be that Non, the mother of St. David lived in those parts where a village is called after her name Llanon.”

THE TOLAETH.

The Tolaeth is also a sound heard before death or a funeral.

It is represented as superstitious rappings, or knockings, strange noises, or sounds of footsteps or of carriages, etc.

This superstition is common in all parts of the country at the present day; and I have met and heard of many carpenters who always know when they are to have an order for a coffin, as they hear strange knockings in their workshops resembling the noise or knockings made by a

carpenter when engaged in coffin-making. An old lady who lives at Pontshan, Llandyssul, told me three years ago, that when she was a young woman, she and two other young women were on one occasion sitting near the fire all night watching and nursing a sick old woman of 80 years of age. About four o'clock in the morning, to their great surprise, they heard the door open, and the sound of someone or something entering the house and going about the room, but nothing was visible, nor did the door open as a matter of fact. The aged patient also heard the sound and enquired who had come in. At four o'clock next morning the old woman died. The same woman also told me that before the death of a prominent Esquire in Carmarthenshire, she remembered hearing the sound of a carriage before the front entrance of the mansion, when no carriage was near.

Sound of carriages before the death of one of the gentry is a thing that we often hear of even at the present day everywhere in West and Mid-Wales.

Sir Edward W. P. Pryse, Gogerddan, informed me that he was told that people had heard the sound of carriages before the death of his grandfather, who died in 1855, and was a member of Parliament for Cardigan. Nanteos, another ancient family in the same county, has, or had, not only a phantom coach, but even a tutelary guardian; but whether this Welsh "Banshi" was a woman under enchantment, or a fairy, is not known.

It was formerly believed that the church bell was tolled by a spirit or some other supernatural agency, before a death in certain families. I wonder if the word "Tolaeth" is derived from toll?

THE TOLLING OF BLAENPORTH CHURCH BELL BEFORE A DEATH.

Several old persons living in the parish of Blaenporth, South Cardiganshire, informed me that it is a fact that in former times a death in certain families in that parish was always foretold by the church-bell in the steeple tolling three times at the hour of midnight unrung by human hands. One old woman gave me the following tradition concerning the origin of this tolling:—

Once upon a time a spirit came at midnight and knocked at the door of a farmhouse known as Tan-yr-Eglwys, which is close to Blaenporth Church. "Who is there?" enquired the farmer from his bed. "Mair Wen (white Mary) of Blaenporth," was the reply; "the silver communion cup has been stolen from the church." Then the spirit begged the farmer to get up from bed and proceed at once on a journey to the town of Cardigan, as the man who had committed such sacrilegious act was resting that night on a sofa in a certain public house in that town with the silver cup under his waistcoat. The farmer went to Cardigan, and when he arrived at the public house named by the spirit, and entered a certain room, a strange man who was lying on the sofa got up, and the stolen cup from under his waistcoat fell to the floor. The farmer took it up in an instant, and returned with all speed to Blaenporth, and placed the sacred vessel in the church once more. For his kindness and trouble in thus restoring the sacred cup, the good spirit or guardian angel of Blaenporth Church told the farmer that the bell would toll three times before his death, and before the death of his descendants till the ninth generation.

A REMARKABLE ACCOUNT OF KNOCKING AND WAILING BEFORE DEATH.

A few miles from Newcastle Emlyn there is a farmhouse called Pen'rallt-hebog, which is situated in the parish of Bettws-Evan, in Cardiganshire.

Besides Pen'rallt-hebog there is also—or there was—another house on the same farm known as Pen'rallt-Fach. And there lived at this Penrallt-fach about 25 years ago a tailor named Samuel Thomas, and his wife.

About that time a very strange incident occurred, and the following account of it was given me by Mr. S. Thomas himself an intelligent middle-aged man who is still alive I believe.

One morning, very early, Thomas beard a knocking at the door of his bedroom, and he enquired from his bed "who is there?" but there was no reply, and everything was quiet again.

The next morning again he heard knocking at the door, though not the bedroom door this time, but the front door of the house. My informant exclaimed from his bed, "Alright, I am getting up now." But when he did get up, and opened the door, not a single soul could be seen anywhere. Thomas was quite surprised, and perplexed as to who could have come to disturb him at five o'clock in the morning, two mornings one after the other, and disappear so mysteriously. No voice had been heard, nor the sound of footsteps, only a knocking at the door. After this there was no further knocking for some time.

Twelve months to the very day after this a brother of

Thomas who lived in some other part of the country came on a visit, and to spend a day with him, and this was in the first week of January, 1883. Some day during this week the two brothers went out with their guns to shoot some game, but soon returned to the house again, and in the evening Thomas went to his workshop to do some "job"; but as he was busily engaged in making a suit of clothes, he heard a knocking at the window quite suddenly—two knocks. He thought that some friend outside wanted to call his attention to something; but when he looked at the window there was no one to be seen After a while the knocking went on again, and continued for about ten minutes.

The second night the knocking at the window continued as the previous evening between ten and eight o'clock, but nothing was to be seen.

On the third night there was a knocking at the window several times, and it was much louder or more violent than it had been on the two previous evenings. The tailor and the young man who was his assistant decided now to keep their eyes on the window, and as soon as they did so there was no more knocking; but the moment they ceased looking and resumed their work, the knocking was heard again. There were several young men present in the room this evening, and they heard the knocking, and even the wife heard it from another apartment of the house.

These "spirit knockings" had been now noised abroad everywhere, and amongst others who went there in order to hear them was the farmer on whose land the tailor lived. The farmer did not believe in superstition, but when he heard the knocking he was convinced that there was something supernatural about it.

On the fifth night a very loud knock at the door was heard as if some one attempted to break through; and on the sixth

evening when my informant went out for a short walk he heard such noise as if two hundred horses were rushing by him.

On the seventh and eighth evenings the knocking still continued; and on the ninth evening, Thomas went out with a gun in his hand, and found that there was no one to be seen anywhere, but he heard some groaning voice in the air, and doleful wailing. The man returned to the house quite frightened.

There was no more knocking after this evening.

In the beginning of January, 1883, at the very time when these strange knockings, sound, and wailing were heard at Pen'rallt Fach cottage, a woman whose old home had been this very house before she had left her native land was dying in America; and her crying on her death-bed in that far-off land was heart-rending, when she found that she was too ill to return to Wales, to die at her old home in Cardiganshire, and to be buried with her husband, who had died before she had left for America. One Mr. Lloyd, from Newcastle Emlyn, happened to be at her death-bed in America, when she was longing in vain to die in her old home in Wales. This solves the mystery of the "spirit knockings," and it also confirms the truth of the old belief that Death makes his presence known by knocking at the door of the relatives of friends of those he is about to strike.

LLEDRITH—WRAITH.

Lledrith is an apparition or the spectre of a person seen

soon before his death or about the time he is dying.

A most remarkable tale of an apparition of this kind is given in “Ysten Sioned,” an interesting Welsh book written by the late Rev. Chancellor D. Silvan Evans, and Mr. John Jones (Ivon).

About seventy years ago a young French sailor at Aberystwyth in Cardiganshire, had fallen in love with a servant maid in that town, and she with him. One evening, when this young woman was preparing to go to bed she heard her lover calling to her by her name. It was a bright moonlight night, and when she went to the door there she saw the young man approaching and offering his hand to her; but to her great surprise he disappeared again without speaking a single word. Soon after this, news came to the town that a ship from Aberystwyth got lost on the coast of Spain, and that amongst others of the crew, who were drowned, was the young Frenchman. The young woman discovered that her lover was drowned on the Spanish Coast in the very same hour that she saw his apparition at Aberystwyth!

The young Earl of Lisburne ten years ago saw a wraith at Havod, on the night his father was dying at Crosswood Park. Of this I was informed by Mr. Inglis-Jones, Derry Ormond, and by his Lordship himself.

It is well-known that the great Lord Brougham saw an apparition of this kind when a friend of his was dying in India, about one hundred years ago.

TANWEDD.

Another death portent was the "tanwedd," so called because it appeared as a fiery light. The Rev. Edmund Jones says in his "Apparitions".—"When it falls to the ground it sparkleth and lightens. The freeholders and landlords upon whose ground it falls, will certainly die in a short time after."

GWRACH Y RHIBYN.

Gwrach y Rhibyn was an ugly old hag with long flowing hair, glaring eyes and face as gloomy as death itself. The shriek of the old hag was supposed to foretell a death or some misfortune. She appeared, as a rule, only before the death of a person who had lived a wicked life; at least this is the saying in West Wales, especially in Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire.

CWN ANNWN—HELL HOUNDS.

Cwn Annwn were supposed to have been supernatural hounds whose yelling or howling on dark nights foreboded a death. If the howling was faint, it meant that the pack was close at hand, if loud, the hounds were only hunting at a distance. These hounds were supposed to watch for the souls of notoriously wicked men about to die.

An old farmer, named Mr. Thomas Stephens, Llwyncelyn, Llanarth, Cardiganshire, informed me that his brother once

heard the bark of these hounds on the road near Bronwen.

OTHER DEATH OMENS.

The Cock.—It was once thought in all parts of Wales that the crowing of a cock before or about midnight was a sign of death; but whether one of the family or one of a neighbour's family was going to die, it depended on the direction of the cock's head whilst crowing.

The Hen.—A hen crowing like a cock is also supposed to indicate a death in the family or some very near relation; or if not death, some very bad luck.

A hen laying two eggs in the same day was also a sign of death. A hen laying a small egg was also a bad sign.

An Owl persistently screeching near a house or a raven croaking hoarsely also indicated a death.

The Dog.—A dog howling, which is called in Welsh Ci-yn-udo, is a sign of a death.

The Death Watch.—A sound made by a small insect like the ticking of a watch was once considered a sign of death. A few years ago a sound of this kind was for a long time heard at a house in the parish of Llanddewi Brefi; but as no one died in the house, the family was cured of the superstition.

The sound in the ear as of a bell, is a token of death in the family.

Clothes Burning.—A farmer's wife near Aberystwyth, informed me that a few years ago she placed a servant boy's wet trousers on a chair to dry before the fire. Then she went out to milk the cows, but when she returned to the house she found that the trousers was burnt. A few days after this her mother died.

The untimely blossoming of a tree is another sign of a death.

Yarrow and Heather.—Bringing either yarrow or heather into a house is a presage of death; white heather, however, is a sign of good luck.

Death-pinch.—This is a mark that cannot be accounted for, appearing suddenly on any part of the body, and is a sign of the death of one of the family or a relative.

A Funeral Procession moving too fast is a sign that another funeral will soon follow.

MISSING A BUTT.

A writer in "Bye Gones" for 1892 says:—

"The other day in going through Mid-Cardiganshire on election business, I observed one row of turnips growing in the middle of a field of potatoes on a farm occupied by a Nonconformist minister. When asked how it happened that that solitary row of turnips came to be there, the minister explained that by accident the planters missed putting down potatoes, and the idea prevailed in the district if the vacant row was not filled in by sowing something in it,

some one would die in consequence in the neighbourhood."

This superstition is also found in Carmarthenshire as well as in Cardiganshire.

I have met with many ministers of the Gospel, Professors of Universities, and other enlightened and educated men who are convinced that there are death portents.

CHAPTER VIII.

MISCELLANEOUS BELIEFS, WEATHER SIGNS, BIRDS, LORE, Etc.

o find a horse shoe on the road or in a field is considered extremely lucky.

To see a lamb for the first time during the season with its head facing you is also lucky.

When you see a newly-wedded couple throw an old pair of shoes at them, for it means “good luck to them.”

This was done now at Llanilar, October, 1910, at the wedding of Miss Jones, Bryntirion, by Mrs. Richards, Derwen-Deg.

To drop your stick or umbrella on your journey is unlucky.

When you have started on a journey, to turn back to the house for something you have forgotten, means bad luck.

To bring heather into the house is a sign of death: white heather, however, is considered extremely lucky.

It is unlucky to meet a white horse when on a journey, to change it into luck spit over your little finger.

If a young lady looks through a silk-handkerchief at the first new moon after New Year's Day, she will be able to see her future husband.

It is unlucky to find a coin on the road, but if the head and not the tail happens to be up it is a lucky omen.

To carry in one's purse a crooked sixpence, or a coin with a hole in it is lucky.

Spit on the first coin you get in the day, and you'll have luck for 24 hours.

Never begin any new work on a Friday or Saturday.

It is considered unlucky for a servant to go to service on a Thursday or a Saturday. In Cardiganshire servants go to service either on a Monday or Wednesday, which are considered lucky days.

A woman near Narberth in Pembrokeshire told me that Tuesdays and Thursdays are lucky days in that part.

In some parts of Carmarthenshire, the most lucky days are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

But the fact of it is, I have discovered that the days which are considered lucky in one part of the country are considered unlucky in another part.

Odd numbers, especially three, and seven, are said to be lucky numbers.

Thirteen, however, is considered very unlucky, and it is thought that if thirteen persons sit down to table, the last

person who sits down and the first to rise up, are those to whom the ill-luck will fall.

It is considered unlucky by many to shake hands across a table; and when two people are shaking hands, if two others of the company attempt to shake hands across their hands it is a very unlucky sign.

It is considered unlucky by some to baptise more than one child in the same water. There is also the same superstition respecting one man washing after another in the same water.

In Cardiganshire, it is believed that he who dies on Sunday is a godly man.

Mr. Eyre Evans, Aberystwyth, informed me that he has just come across some people in Montgomeryshire who consider it unlucky to pick up or carry white stones in their pockets; and it seems from Sir John Rhys, that Manx Fishermen do not like to have a white stone in a boat.

Curious Belief about Salt.—When people remove into a new house it is customary to take a bar of salt into the building before taking in any of the furniture. This is supposed to secure good luck.

When this salt ceremony is forgotten or neglected, some people, especially women, are very much perturbed.

I have discovered that this curious old belief about salt is very common at present in the towns of Aberystwyth, Carmarthen, and Tenby, and other parts of West Wales.

To spill salt denotes quarrels. To serve another person with salt, is to serve him with sorrow.

When a white spot appeals on the nail of one of our fingers

it means a present.

Never stir the fire in anybody's house unless you are a friend of seven years' standing.

To break a looking-glass signifies ill-luck for seven years.

To put the bellows on a table is considered unlucky. There is also the same superstition about boots all over Wales.

Never mend your clothes while you are wearing them.

If you see a pin pick it up to insure good luck.

There is a saying in Welsh "Gwell plygu at bin, na phlygu at ddim," (It is better to bend down for a pin, than to bend down for nothing.) It seems that a needle, however, is not considered so lucky; for I once overheard a woman who had quarrelled with her neighbour telling her husband that her neighbour and herself were friends before she had given her a needle.

If a bramble clings to the skirts of a young lady some one has fallen in love with her; and the same is said of a young man when his hat goes against the branches of a tree.

Welshpeople believe that those who have cold hands are very warm-hearted; hence the saying "Llaw oer a chalon gynes," (A cold hand and a warm heart).

Two spoons in a saucer denote a wedding, or according to some that you are to be married twice dining your lifetime.

In West Wales it is considered unlucky to eat herring or any kind of fish, from the head downwards; and in order to ensure good luck the proper way is to eat the fish from the tail towards the head. This superstition is also known in Cornwall.

If in making tea you forget to replace the lid on the teapot, it is the sure sign of the arrival of a stranger.

David Evans, a millwright, of Llandilo, informed me a short time ago, that one evening when he was staying in Lampeter, the woman of the house who was preparing tea for supper at a late hour, forgot to replace the lid on the pot. When she found it out, she exclaimed: "A stranger is sure to come here to-night." The husband and wife, and the millwright sat down by the fire till a late hour, but there was no sign of a stranger; just as they were going to bed, however, there was a knock at the door, and a stranger came in!

Superstitions about Knives.—To cross your knife and fork is considered unlucky; and crossed knives foretell some approaching disaster.

To find a knife on the road or in a field is also supposed to be a very bad omen. This superstition is very general in all parts of Wales, and even in far off parts of the world as well. Many years ago in Patagonia, South America, two friends of mine and myself met in a field one morning by appointment, in connection with some particular business. Each of us three had come from different directions, and each of us had arrived at the spot the same time, and when we came together, strange to say, we discovered that each of us had found a knife on the way! The names of my two friends were Edwin Roberts, and William James, one was a native of Flintshire, and the other a native of Cardiganshire, both of them were no means superstitious; but I well remember that they were very much perturbed on account of the knives, and feared that some serious misfortune was going to happen. As soon as we went home we heard the sad news that a young man named Isaac Howells, was accidentally drowned in the river!

It is also very generally believed at present, that it is unlucky to receive a knife as a present. In such cases it is customary to pay a penny for the knife.

Wish whenever you get the first taste of the season of any kind of food. It is also considered very lucky to taste as many Christmas puddings as you can.

It is considered unlucky to pass under a ladder.

When walking a long journey if your feet are sore rub the feet of your stockings with soap.

A ringing in the right ear is a sign of good news; but a ringing in the left one, unpleasant news.

When the palm of your left hand itches, you are about to give away some money, or some one is blaming you; but when the palm of you right hand itches, it is a sign that you are about to receive money, or that someone is praising you or writing a kind letter to you.

When going on a journey, if the sole of your right foot itches, the journey will be a pleasant one; but the contrary if the left foot itches.

A child born with a caul is supposed to be very lucky, and he will always be safe from drowning. A caul is much appreciated among sailors in West Wales, as it is believed that to keep one on board the ship secures a safe voyage.

In all parts of Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire, it is generally believed among women that it is unlucky to cut the nails of an infant under six months old. The mother bites them off as they grow.

Superstition about Whistling.—It is considered unlucky for a young woman to whistle. Whistling is also, or at least

was regarded, as "Talking with the Devil." Mr. Ferrar Fenton in "Pembrokeshire Antiquities," page 59, says, that many years ago he happened to whistle one day whilst walking on the pier at Fishguard with a young sea captain. The Captain seemed very much perturbed at the whistling, and at last said to Mr. Fenton:—"I wish you would not whistle here!" "Why? What harm does it do?" "Well, you know," he said slowly, as if shy at his words, "We Welshmen and sailors are superstitious over some things, and whistling as you now do, is one of them." "Superstitious! Not you! But tell me about it: I love all those old tales." "You see," he replied, "my mother and all the old people told me when a boy that such kind of whistling was the way Croignorian (Magicians) talk with the Devil, and sailors believe something like it, and it always makes my heart start to hear it, especially on the seashore." Then he added, "Look! how muggy it is behind Pencaer. You'll bring a gale, and I always feel pity for the sailors afloat when a sou'-wester rages in the channel behind it." When the great Divine and Martyr, Bishop Ferrar, of St. David's, was burnt alive at Carmarthen in 1555, amongst other pretences for his destruction he was accused of being a Magician, and "teaching his infant son to talk with the Devil by means of whistling."

In the old days of sailing ships, wind was an agent of great value; and sometimes sailors whistled for a wind, and this whistling was considered a direct invocation to "the prince of the power of the air" to exert himself on their behalf. I have heard of an old man who is still alive who believes that the devil has some control over wind and rain.

THE MOON.

There are still lingering in Wales many beliefs and practices with respect to the moon. It is considered unlucky to see the new moon the first time through the window, and many persons go out of doors to see her and show her a piece of money to insure good luck while that moon lasts. I was told by an old gentleman in Cardiganshire that he had seen many taking off their hats and bowing to the new moon; some ladies also make a curtsey to her, and it is considered very lucky to see her over the right shoulder. If a person wishes anything when he sees the new moon after New Year's Day, his wish will be granted to him.

Putting a Hen to Sit.—A hen is put to sit so as to get the chick out of the egg at the waxing, and not at the waning of the moon, as it is believed that the young birds are strong or weak according to the age of the moon when they are hatched.

Sowing.—There are still many people who are very particular to sow their seeds in their gardens and their fields during the first quarter of the moon, owing to the idea that the seed will then germinate quicker, and grow stronger than when the moon is on the wane. I knew a farmer—a native of Llanfynydd, in Carmarthenshire—who was always very careful to sow his wheat during the first quarter or the waxing of the moon, and it is a well-known fact that he had always a good crop at harvest time.

There are also people who are very particular about having their hair cut just before or about full moon so that it might grow better afterwards.

When a child, I was told that the dark object which is to be seen in the moon is a man who was taken up there as a punishment for gathering firewood on the Sabbath Day.

WEATHER SIGNS, SEASONS.

The cat sitting with her back to the fire is considered to be a sign of snow.

The cock crowing on rainy weather is a sign of fair weather for the rest of the day.

Sea-gulls flying seaward betoken fair weather; when they fly landward, a storm is coming.

When the crane flies against the stream, that is, up the river towards its source, it is considered a sign of rain; but the same bird going down the river, is a sign of fair weather. The same is said of the heron.

To see ducks and geese flap their wings and dive wildly about is a sign of rain.

Crows flying low portend rain; but if they fly high in the air it is a sign of fair weather. The same is said of swallows.

Other rain signs are the woodpecker's screech; and the cows running wildly about.

If the mountain ponies leave the low and sheltered valleys and return to the mountains during hard weather, it is a sign of a change in the weather.

The sheep flocking together is a sign of rough weather.

According to the old Welsh saying the rainbow appearing in the sky in the morning portends rain; and in the

afternoon fair weather:—

"Bwa'r arch y bore,
Aml a hir gawode;
Bwa'r arch prydnawn,
Tywydd teg a gawn."

Rainbow in the morning,
Frequent and long showers;
Rainbow in the afternoon,
Fair weather we shall have.

Ceredigion, in "Bye-Gones," August 2nd, 1905, says: "All along the Merioneth and Cardiganshire Coasts farmers watch the sea carefully in harvest time. If there be not a cloud in the sky; if the wind be in a dry quarter; and if the sea be of cerulean blue, if the margin be discoloured and muddy, the farmers know that rain is approaching and will probably be on them before nightfall."

If distant mountains are clearly seen, rain may be expected; but if the mountains appear as if they were far off, it is a sign of fine weather.

When the smoke from the chimney falls down toward the ground, instead of rising upward, it is a sign that rainy weather will soon follow; but if the smoke goes upward straight, it is a sign of fair weather.

In the evening, when the horizon in the west is tinged with a ruddy glow it is a sign that fair and dry weather will come.

In the summer, when the atmosphere is dense and heavy it is a sign of a thunder-storm.

Rough weather may be expected when the wind blows the

dust about, and throws down people's hats.

When the stone floors are damp and are long in drying after having been washed is a sign of fair weather.

It is also considered a good sign to see large numbers of white butterflies.

Another good sign of fine weather is the sun setting red and clear.

Bread and butter falling on the floor upside down signifies "rain is near," according to some folks.

When the moon's horns are turned up, it is a sign of fine weather; if they are turned down rain is coming. When the face of the moon is partially obscured by a light thin vapour rain is coming.

Welsh people in country places generally expect a change of weather when the moon changes; and I have just been informed at Llanilar, that a new moon on a wet Saturday, brings wet weather, but that, on the other hand, a new moon on a fine Saturday, brings fine weather.

By Christmas, the days are said to have lengthened "a cock's stride."

The following Welsh weather sayings I often heard when a boy:—

"Chwefrol chwyth,
Chwytha'r deryn oddiar ei nyth."

(February's blast
Blows the bird from its nest.)

"Mawrth a ladd,
Ebrill a fling."

(March kills,
April flays.)

If the hazel (collen) blooms well it is a sign of a fruitful year.

"A NUTTY YEAR."

In Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire, it is believed that if nuts will be numerous, many children will be born that year.

A MILD WINTER.

I have met many people all over Wales who think that a very mild winter is not good, and they repeat the old saying:—

"Gaeaf glas, mynwent fras."

which means that

"When the winter is green, many funerals will be seen."

BIRDS AND BEASTS LORE.

THE CUCKOO.

It is believed in Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire by many, especially old people, that the cuckoo does not go away from this country in winter, but sleeps in some sheltered place. When a boy, I often heard the following ditty:—

"Amser y gwcw yw Ebrill a Mai,
A hanner Mehefin, chwi wyddoch bob rhai."

(The Cuckoo's time is April and May,
And half of June, as all know, I daresay).

The cuckoo making its appearance before the leaves are on the hawthorn bush is a sign of a bad year; and for the bird not to appear at its usual time is also a bad sign; hence:

"Gwcw Glamme,
Cosyn dime."

When you hear the cuckoo for the first time in the season it is very important to have money in your pocket in order to secure good luck for the coming year. People turn the money in their pockets with their hands, and sometimes toss a piece into the air. It is also considered very lucky to hear this bird for the first time when you are standing on green grass; but if you are on the road or on bare ground, it is otherwise.

I have met people who do not like to hear the cuckoo for the first time before they get up from bed in the morning.

To see the bird coming to the door is also regarded as an evil omen by some. A woman in North Cardiganshire informed me that a cuckoo came to the door before her father died. The cuckoo is supposed to be accompanied by the wryneck known in Welsh as Gwas-y-Gwcw.

If we are to believe an old legend, the cuckoo in former times used to begin to sing at Nevern, in Pembrokeshire, on the 7th of April, patron day of that parish; and George Owen of Henllys, who lived in the time of Queen Elizabeth, says, "I might well here omit an old report as yet fresh, of this odious bird, that in the old world the parish priest of the Church would not begin mass until this bird, called the citizen's ambassador, had first appeared and began her note, on a stone called St. Byrnach's Stone, being curiously wrought with sundry sorts of knots, standing upright in the Church-yard of the parish, and one year staying very long, and the priest and the people expecting her accustomed coming (for I account this bird of the feminine gender) came at last, lighting on the said stone, her accustomed preaching place, and being scarce able once to sound the note, presently fell dead."

According to another old legend, this stone upon which the cuckoo began her note, was at first intended by St. David for Llanddewi Brefi, but St. Brynach prevailed upon him to leave it at Nevern. The Rev. J. T. Evans, Rector of Stow, gives this legend in "The Church Plate of Pembrokeshire."

THE SWALLOW—Y WENNOL.

Many superstitions which cluster round the Swallow, have descended to us from remote antiquity; and among the Romans this bird was sacred to the household gods and the

family. In Wales, it was formerly believed that the swallow, like the cuckoo, slept through the winter. This bird is also supposed to bring good fortune to the house upon which it builds its nest. If, however, the bird forsakes its old nest on a house, it is considered a sign of ill-luck. It is also most unlucky to break a swallow's nest.

"Y neb a doro nyth y wenol
Ni wel fwyniant yn dragwyddol."

(Whoever breaks a swallow's nest,
Never, never shall be blest.)

ROBIN REDBREAST.

"Cursed is the man who kills a Robin," and ill-luck follows those who take the eggs of this little bird.

The following Carmarthenshire story about the robin appeared in Bye Gones, vol. 1. p. 173:—

"Far, far away, is a land of woe, darkness, spirits of evil, and fire. Day by day does the little bird bear in its bill a drop of water to quench the flame. So near to the burning stream does he fly that his dear little feathers are scorched; and hence is he named Bronchuddyn (Qu. Bronrhuddyn), i.e., breastburned, or breastscorched. To serve little children, the robin dares approach the infernal pit. No good child will hurt the devoted benefactor of man. The robin returns from the land of fire, and, therefore, he feels the cold of winter far more than the other birds. He shivers in brumal blasts, and hungry he chirps before your door. Oh, my child, then, in pity throw a few crumbs to the poor redbreast."

This old Welsh legend has been rendered into verse by the poet Whittier.

THE WREN—Y DRYW.

It seems from the following Welsh rhyme that the wren was also a sacred bird:—

"Pwy bynag doro nyth y dryw,
Ni wel byth mo wyneb Duw."

(Whoever breaks a wren's nest
Shall never know the Heavenly rest.)

It was once customary in Pembrokeshire to carry a wren round the houses during the Christmas holidays. I have given a full account of this custom in another chapter.

How the wren became king of the birds, is related in the next paragraph.

THE OWL.

The Owl is rather unpopular in Wales, and its hooting is considered a sign of ill-luck, if not of death. This bird is also supposed to be "hateful unto all birds." To account for the unpopularity of the owl there are many legends. The following is given by Mr. H. W. Evans, Solva, in the "Pembrokeshire Antiquities," p. 49:

"At one time all the birds unanimously decided to elect unto themselves a king; and (probably with an eye on the

eagle) they resolved to crown monarch the bird that would soar the highest. On a signal being given they all started on their upward flight. After a very exciting contest the eagle was seen considerably higher than all other birds. Having reached the highest altitude possible he, in a loud voice, proclaimed himself king. 'No, no, not yet,' said a wren which had perched on the eagle's back and had now flown a few yards higher. 'Come up here,' said the wren; but the eagle, having exhausted his strength, was unable to raise himself, and so the wren became king. When the birds beheld their king, they became very sad and sorrowful, and they cried bitterly. Afterwards they met in solemn conclave, and decided to drown their king in tears. So they procured a pan to hold their tears, and the birds gathered and craned their necks over the pan and wept. But the owl clumsily mounted the edge of the pan, thereby upsetting it, and spilled the tears. The birds became enraged at this, and swore vengeance against the owl, and ever since he has not dared to show himself during the day, and is obliged to seek his food at night, when all other birds are asleep."

According to another version of this tale which is extant in Carmarthenshire, the wren in the contest for the kingship fell to the ground and hurt himself. The birds in compassion, prepared healing broth to cure the little bird—each bird putting something in the pot towards making this broth—the owl through his clumsiness was guilty of upsetting this pot containing the healing broth.

According to the Mabinogion, (see Math the son of Mathonwy) a woman named Blodeuwedd, for her wickedness towards her husband was turned into an owl; "and because of the shame thou hast done unto Llew Llaw Gyffes, thou shalt never show thy face in the light of day henceforth; and that through fear of all the other birds.... Now Blodeuwedd is an owl in the language of this present time, and for this reason is the owl hateful unto all birds."

THE RAVEN.

To see one raven crossing the road when a person starts on a journey, is a bad omen; two ravens, however, are considered lucky.

THE MAGPIE.

I know many people in country places who are pleased to see two or three magpies going together from left to right when a person starts on a journey, as they regard it an omen of good luck. But to see a magpie crossing from the right to the left means ill-luck. Fortunately, however, a person can make void this bad luck by making a cross on the road and spit in the middle of it. A raven crossing after the magpie also makes void the bad luck, according to some; but the superstitions about the magpie and the raven are very similar.

Should a magpie descend on the back of a cow on the evening the animal is taken into the cow-house for the winter, it is a bad sign; but should this occur when the cow is taken out from the cowhouse for the summer, it is a good omen.

An old woman at Yspytty Ystwyth, informed me that the magpie was a bird of evil omen; for on the very day before her husband was killed at the mines, she saw three magpies close to the window.

THE MAGPIE AND THE WOOD-PIGEON.

"The Magpie, observing the slight knowledge of nest building possessed by the wood-pigeon, kindly undertook the work of giving his friend a lesson in the art, and as the lesson proceeded, the Wood-pigeon, bowing, cooed out:—

Mi wn! Mi wn! Mi wn!
I know! I know! I know!

The instructor was at first pleased with his apt pupil, and proceeded with his lesson, but before another word could be uttered, the bird, swelling with pride at its own importance and knowledge, said again:—

I know! I know! I know!

The Magpie was annoyed at this ignorant assurance, and with bitter sarcasm said: 'Since you know, do it then,' and this is why the wood pigeon's nest is so untidy in our days. In its own mind it knew all about nest building and was above receiving instruction, and hence its clumsy way of building its nest. This fable gave rise to a proverb, "As the wood pigeon said to the magpie: 'I know.'" Iolo MSS., page 567.

THE PIGEON.

It is said that if a sick person asks for a pigeon's pie, or the flesh of a pigeon, it is a sign that his death is near. There is also a superstition that people cannot die in ease if there are pigeon's feathers in their pillows. A writer in "Bye-Gones" refers to the case of a woman who died in 1803 at a farm-house called Southern Pills in the Parish of Lawrenny, Pembrokeshire, and states that on her death-bed the nurse snatched the pillow from under her head.

THE BEES.

The bees understand Welsh; for a woman on the borders of Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire informed me that they have a Queen, who leads, and that they follow, when she bids them to come in these words:—

"Dewch, Dewch, Dewch."

(Come, come, come.)

There are many superstitions about bees. There was a custom once of telling the bees of a death in the family, and they were even put in mourning. It was once considered by some very lucky to find that a strange swarm of bees had arrived in the garden or tree; if, however, they alighted on a dead tree it was an ill omen.

THE BEES AND ST. DAVID.

"Modomnoc, a disciple of St. David, went to Ireland, and a large swarm of bees followed him, and settled on the prow of the ship where he sat. They supplied him with meat during his Irish Mission; but he, not wishing to enjoy their company by fraud, brought them back to Wales, when they fled to their usual place, and David blessed Modomnoc for his humility. Three times the bees went and returned, and the third time holy David dismissed Modomnoc with the bees, and blessed them, saying that henceforth bees should prosper in Ireland, and should no longer increase in Glyn Rosyn. 'This,' adds Rhyddmarch, 'is found to be the fact: swarms forthwith decreased at David's; but Ireland, in which, until that time, bees could never live, is now enriched with plenty of honey. It is manifested that they

could not live there before; for if you throw Irish earth or stone into the midst of the bees, they disperse, and, flying, they will shun it.'—"Pilgrimage to St. David's."

THE COCK.

It is very curious that some people think that it is very lucky to possess a white cock and a black cat, whilst others look upon them with extreme disfavour.

"Na chadw byth yng ynghylch dy dy,
Na cheiliog gwyn na chath ddu."

(Never keep about thy house,
A white cock, nor a black cat.)

A cock crowing in the day-time before the door announces the visit of a friend; but should he crow at night before or about midnight, it is considered a sign of death.

Cock-fighting was once common in Wales, and spots have been pointed out to me here and there, in Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire where such fights took place.

THE CAT.

In some parts of the country a black cat is looked upon with extreme disfavour; in other parts again people say that a black cat keeps trouble out of the house. "Cath ddu yn cadw gofid ma's o'r ty."

It was thought that cats born in May bring snakes into the

house.

If the cat washed her face, strangers might be expected.

FLYING SERPENTS—GWIBEROD.

The Welsh name Gwiber means a flying snake, or a flying serpent, an imaginary creature supposed to be a kind of dragon. There are traditions of these dangerous creatures in several parts of Wales; and it was formerly believed that a snake, by drinking the milk of a woman, became transformed into a flying serpent. This superstition was very common in the southern part of Cardiganshire until very recently. A few years ago when staying for a short time at Talybont in the northern part of the same county, a rocky spot was pointed out to me, about a mile from the village, where, according to tradition, a Gwiber which attacked people, had a lurking place in former times. There is also a tradition in the parish of Trelech, Carmarthenshire, that a Gwiber lurked in that neighbourhood once upon a time. At last the creature was shot.

A FLYING SERPENT AT NEWCASTLE EMLYN.

The most remarkable story of this kind is the well-known tradition of the appearance of a gwiber or Flying Serpent in the neighbourhood of Newcastle Emlyn, in the Vale of Teivi. This interesting small town boasts of a fine old castle, or at least the ruins of one, and it was upon the top of this castle the flying serpent or dragon alighted and rested. According to some, this took place as late as the

eighteenth century, on a fine summer day. The flying creature was seen about mid-day, and as there was a fair at Newcastle Emlyn that day the town was crowded with people. The appearance of the "Gwiber" or dragon terrified the people, both old and young, and they feared that their lives were in jeopardy. The strange creature's skin was covered by a hard and stony substance or shell, except the navel. The people were afraid of attempting to kill this flying monster, and did not know what to do. Fortunately, a valiant soldier who had been fighting for his country on land and sea, volunteered to put an end to the life of this strange and terrific creature, or die in the attempt. So taking off all his clothes, except his trousers, he proceeded with his gun in hand and stood right in the river. He then took a good aim at the creature's navel which was the only part of its body not covered with shell. As soon as the soldier fired, in order to escape an attack from the flying serpent, he left a red flannel on the surface of the water, whilst he himself dived into the river and, at last, by swimming against the current, succeeded to land safely on the bank on the other side. The serpent fell or rushed into the river and began to attack the red flannel, but it was soon discovered that the creature had been mortally wounded, for the water of the river was coloured with its blood.

A version of this story appeared in "Y Brython," fifty years ago, and another version of it written by the Rev. W. Eilir Evans, appeared in a Welsh book called "Hirnos Gauaf," published in 1899.

CATTLE.

Many of the farmers are very much perturbed when a cow brings forth two calves. A few years ago a farmer's wife in the parish of Llangybi, near Lampeter, informed me that one of the cows had twin calves, and that she was very anxious to sell the animal as soon as possible, as such an incident was considered an omen of ill-luck or a very great misfortune to the family or the owner. This superstition is very general in Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire; but I have heard that in some parts of North Wales a contrary view is taken of such an event.

When the first calf of the season happens to be a male one, it is a sign of a successful year to its owner, but the contrary, if the calf is a she one.

If the new born calf is seen by the mistress of the house with its head towards her, as she enters the cowhouse to view her new charge and property, it is a good omen. It is also considered a good sign to find the cattle wild and difficult to manage on the way to the fair; for you'll sell them to your advantage.

THE MILK-WHITE MILCH COW.

The milk-white Milch Cow gave enough of milk to every one who desired it; and however frequently milked, or by whatever number of persons, she was never found deficient. All persons who drank of her milk, were healed of every illness; from being fools they became wise, and from being wicked, became happy. The cow went round the world; and wherever she appeared, she filled with milk all the vessels that could be found; leaving calves behind her for all the wise and happy. It was from her that all the milch cows in the world were obtained. After traversing

the Island of Britain, for the benefit and blessing of country and kindred, she reached the Vale of Towy; where, tempted by fine appearance and superior condition, the natives sought to kill and eat her; but just as they were proceeding to effect their purpose, she vanished from between their hands, and was never seen again. A house still remains in the locality, called Y Fuwch Laethwen-Lefrith, (the Milk-white Milch Cow).—Iolo M.S.S., page 475.

There is a version of this well-known legend of the mythic cow, located near Aberdovey. According to the Aberdovey tale, the cow was of Fairy origin, and disappeared into Barfog Lake when a farmer attempted to slaughter the animal.

THE ASS.

I was told when a boy that the stripe over the shoulders of this animal was made by our Lord when He rode to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER IX.

WITCHES, WIZARDS, PROPHECIES, DIVINATION, DREAMS.

WITCHES.

he popular belief in witchcraft, is often alluded to by Shakespeare. In times gone by witches held dreaded sway over the affairs of men, perhaps more or less in almost every country; for they were suspected to have entered into a league with Satan, in order to obtain power to do evil, and it was thought that they possessed some uncanny knowledge which was used by them to injure people, especially those whom they hated. It was also believed that they could cause thunder and lightning, could travel on broomsticks through the air, and even transform themselves and others into animals, especially into hares. A good many other imaginary things were also placed to the credit of witches.

In the beginning of last century, and even up to the middle of it, witchcraft was very strongly believed in in many

parts of Pembrokeshire, Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, Radnorshire, and Montgomeryshire. Even at the present time, there are some who believe that there is in it something more than a mere deception. I have met several who still believe in it. Many well-known characters were proud of being looked upon as witches and conjurors; because they were feared as such and could influence people to be charitable to them. Many an old woman supposed to be a witch, took advantage of the credulity of the people, went about the farm houses to request charity in the way of oat-meal, butter, milk, etc., and could get almost anything, especially from the women, from fear of being witched; for it was believed that these witches could bring misfortune on families, cause sickness, and bring a curse on both men and animals; so that many used to imagine that they were bewitched whenever anything went wrong, even a slight mischance. Unfaithful young men would soon fulfil their promise when they found out that the girl they had slighted was consulting a witch, so that there was some good even in such a foolish superstition as witchcraft.

WITCHES SELLING THEMSELVES TO THE DEVIL.

In order to become witches it was believed in Cardiganshire that some old women sold themselves to the Father of Lies by giving to His Satanic Majesty the bread of the Communion. The following story I heard about three years ago, and my informant was Mr. John Davies, Gogoyan Farm, a, farmer who had heard it from old people:—

Sometime in the beginning of the last century, two old dames attended the morning service at Llanddewi Brefi Church, and partook of the Holy Communion; but instead of eating the sacred bread like other communicants, they kept it in their mouths and went out. Then they walked

round the Church outside nine times, and at the ninth time the Evil One came out from the Church wall in the form of a frog, to whom they gave the bread from their mouths, and by doing this wicked thing they were supposed to be selling themselves to Satan and become witches. It was also added that after this they were sometimes seen swimming in the river Teivi in form of hares!

According to Cadrawd, there was an old man in North Pembrokeshire, who used to say that he obtained the power of bewitching in the following manner:—The bread of his first Communion he pocketed. He made pretence at eating it first of all, and then put it in his pocket. When he went out from the service there was a dog meeting him by the gate, to which he gave the bread, thus selling his soul to the Devil. Ever after, he possessed the power to bewitch.

A SERVANT MAID WITCHED IN A CHAPEL.

An old woman of about eighty years of age, named Mrs. Mary Thomas, Bengal, near Fishguard, Pembrokeshire, informed me about four years ago, that when she was a young girl, the Gwaun Valley in that county was full of witches, more especially of the descendants of one particularly malicious old woman who in her time had proved a terror to the neighbourhood. On one occasion, a well-known family who practised the black art and were guilty of witchcraft, wanted to become members of the Baptist Chapel at Caersalem, and at last they were admitted; but after being received as members of the chapel, they were ten times worse than before. One witch

during Divine Service, even on the very day she became a communicant, witched a young woman who was a fellow servant of my informant at a farm called Gellifor, near Cilgwyn. The witch was sitting behind, and in the very next pew to the young woman she witched, which caused the unfortunate girl to rush out from the chapel, and was seen running about the road almost wild and mad. After she had been wild and ill for some time, and every remedy having failed to recover her, her father at last went to Cwrt-y-Cadno, over forty miles away in Carmarthenshire, to consult Dr. Harries, a well-known wizard and a medical man. The conjurer informed the man that his daughter had been witched in chapel by an old woman who was a witch, and he showed him the whole scene in a magic mirror! In order to unwitch the girl, and to prevent further witchcraft, the wizard gave the father some paper with mystic words written on it, which the young woman was to wear on her breast.

A GIRL WHO WAS BEWITCHED BY THE GYPSIES, NEAR CARMARTHEN.

About fifty years ago there was a young woman very ill in the parish of Llanllawddog, Carmarthenshire, but no one could tell what was the matter with her, and the doctor had failed to cure her. At last, her mother went to consult the local wizard, who at that time kept a school in the neighbouring parish of Llanpumpsaint, and lived at a place called Fos-y-Broga. At the woman's request the conjurer accompanied her home to see her daughter. After seeing the girl he entered into a private room alone for a few minutes, and wrote something on a sheet of paper which he

folded up and tied it with a thread. This he gave to the woman and directed her to put the thread round her daughter's neck, with the folded paper suspending on her breast. He also told the mother to remember to be at the girl's bedside at twelve o'clock that night. The young woman was put in bed, and the wizard's folded paper on her breast. The mother sat down by the fireside till midnight; and when the clock struck twelve she heard her daughter groaning. She ran at once to the poor girl's bedside, and found her almost dying with pain; but very soon she suddenly recovered and felt as well in health as ever. The conjurer had told the girl's mother that she had been bewitched by the Gypsies, which caused her illness, and warned the young woman to keep away from such vagrants in the future. The Conjurer's paper, which had charmed away her illness was put away safely in a cupboard amongst other papers and books; and many years after this when a cousin of the mother was searching for some will or some other important document, he accidentally opened the wizard's paper and to his surprise found on it written:

"Abracadabra,
Sickness depart from me."

My informant, whose name is Jones, an old farmer in the parish of Llanpumpsaint, vouches for the truth of the above story, and that the young woman was a relation of his.

Another old man, named Benjamin Phillips, who lives in the same neighbourhood gave me a similar tale of another girl bewitched by the Gypsies, and recovered by obtaining some wild herbs from a conjurer. Such stories are common all over the country. Certain plants, especially Meipen Fair, were supposed to possess the power of destroying charms.

A CARDIGANSHIRE GIRL WHO HAD BEEN WITCHED.

I obtained the following story from David Pugh, Erwlwyd, Carmarthenshire, an old farmer who is over 90 years of age:—

A woman from Cardiganshire whose daughter was very ill and thought to have been bewitched, came to the Wizard of Cwrt-y-Cadno, in Carmarthenshire to consult him. The wise man wrote some mystic words on a bit of paper, which he gave to the woman, telling her that if her daughter was not better when she arrived home to come to him again. The woman went home with the paper, and to her great joy found the girl fully recovered from her illness. My informant knew the woman, as she had called at his house.

ANOTHER CARDIGANSHIRE WOMAN WITCHED.

An old man living in the parish of Llangwyryfon, seven miles from Aberystwyth, named Jenkin Williams, told me the following story six years ago when he was 89 years of age, and vouched for the truth of the account:—A certain woman who lived in that parish was supposed to be a witch, and it was said she had a brother a wizard: Her husband was a shoemaker. Another woman who used to go

back and fore to the town of Aberystwyth, with a donkey-cart, refused on one occasion to bring some leather to the supposed witch and her husband. Soon after this, the woman was taken ill, and the shoemaker's wife was suspected of having witched her. The son of the sick woman went to Cwrt-y-Cadno in Carmarthenshire to consult the "Dyn Hysbys." The conjurer told the young man to go home as soon as possible, and that he should see the person who caused his mother's indisposition coming to the house on his return home. When the son reached home who should enter the house but the supposed witch, and as soon as she came in she spoke in Welsh to his mother something as follows:—"Mae'n ddrwg genyf eich bod mor wael, ond chwi wellwch eto, Betti fach." (I am sorry you are so unwell, but you will get well again, Betty dear). The sick woman recovered immediately!

A FARMER'S DAUGHTER AT WALTON EAST, IN PEMBROKESHIRE BEWITCHED FOR FIFTEEN YEARS FOR REFUSING ALMS TO AN OLD HAG.

Mrs. Mary Williams, Dwrbach, a very old woman, informed me, that about 55 years ago, there was a well-known witch in the neighbourhood of Walton East, and that on one occasion two young women, daughters of a farm in that part of the country, were taken ill quite suddenly, and were supposed to have been witched by this old woman. The mother of the two young women went to the witch and rebuked the old hag, saying: "Old woman, why did you witch my daughters? Come and undo thy wickedness." The old woman replied that she did not do

anything to them. But the mother still believing that she was guilty, compelled her to come along with her to the farmhouse and undo her mischief. At last, she came, and when they reached the door of the farmhouse, the witch pronounced these words in Welsh: "Duw ai bendithio hi." (God bless her). Any such expression pronounced by a witch freed the bewitched person or an animal from the spell. One of the two sisters (both of whom were in bed in another room), overheard these words of the old woman, but her sister did not hear or at least did not catch the words. The young woman who heard the supposed witch saying "Duw a'i bendithio hi," got well at once, but her poor sister who missed hearing, instead of recovering went worse, if anything, than before, and continued to keep to her bed for fifteen years. And during all these years she was so strange, that even when her own mother entered her room, she would hide under the bed clothes like a rat, and her food had to be left on her bed for her, for she would not eat in the presence of anybody. At last, the old woman who was thought to have witched the young woman, died, and as the the mortal remains of the witch were decaying in the grave, the girl began to get better, and she soon fully recovered and became quite herself again after fifteen years' illness. My informant added that after recovering, the young woman got married and received £1,500 from her parents on her wedding-day, and that she is still alive (or was very lately) and a wife of a well-to-do farmer. My informant also said that she was well acquainted with the family.

MEN WITCHED BY AN OLD LLEDROD HAG.

About sixty years ago Thomas Lewis, Garthfawr, between Llanilar and Lledrod, was for some time suffering from almost unbearable bodily pain, and did not know what to do. The general belief was that he had been bewitched by an old woman who was a terror to the neighbourhood; and at last a man went to Llangurig, in Montgomeryshire, to consult a wise man about it. It was found out soon afterwards that as soon as the conjurer was consulted, the sick man fully recovered from his illness, got up from bed, dressed himself, and came down from his bedroom and felt as well as ever, to the very great surprise and joy of all his family and friends. My informant, Thomas Jones, of Pontrhydfendigaid, who knew the man well, vouches for the truth of this story.

Mr. Jones also gave me an account of another man who was witched by the same old hag. The wife of Rhys Rhys, Pwllclawdd and her sister were churning all day, but the milk would not turn to butter. Rhys, at last, went to the old witch and asked her to come and undo her mischief, as she had witched the milk. She was very unwilling to come, but Rhys compelled her. When Mrs. Rhys and her sister saw the old witch coming, they ran to hide themselves in a bedroom. The hag took hold of the churn's handle for a few seconds, and the milk turned to excellent butter at once; but poor Rhys who had always been a strong man till then, never enjoyed a day of good health after; for the old hag witched the farmer himself in revenge for compelling her to unwitch the milk.

A HORSE WITCHED.

Thomas Jones, an old man who is 85 years of age and lives at Pontrhydfendigaid, informed me that about sixty years ago, the old witch was greatly feared by the people of the neighbourhood, as it was generally believed that the hag cursed or witched those whom she disliked. On one occasion, when her neighbour's horse broke through the hedge into her field, she witched the animal for trespassing. The horse was shivering all over and everything was done in vain to cure the poor animal; but the very moment John Morgan, the Llangurig conjurer was consulted, the horse fully recovered, and looked as well as ever. My informant vouches for the truth of this, and says he had seen the horse, and that the man who consulted the conjurer was a friend of his, and, that he even knew the conjurer himself.

CATTLE WITCHED.

At Mathry in Pembrokeshire, there was a celebrated witch, and people believed that she was often guilty of witching the cattle. On one occasion when a servant maid of a farm-house in the neighbourhood had gone out one morning to milk the cows, she found them in a sitting posture like cats before a fire, and in vain did she try to get them to move. The farmer suspected the witch of having caused this. He went to her at once, and compelled the hag to come and undo her evil trick. She came and told him that there was nothing wrong with the cows, and she simply put her hand on the back of each animal, and they immediately got up, and there was no further trouble.

HORSES KILLED BY WITCHCRAFT IN RADNORSHIRE.

Mr. Theophilus, a blacksmith, at Cilcwm, in Carmarthenshire, 80 years of age, informed me that he well remembered a Radnorshire farmer who had lost two horses, one after the other, and as he had suspected that the animals were "killed by witchcraft" he decided to go all the way to Cwrt-y-cadno to consult the wise man about it. The man travelled all the way from Radnorshire, and in passing the small village of Cilcwm, where my informant lived, begged the blacksmith to accompany him to the conjurer who lived in another parish some distance off. The wizard told him that it was such a pity he had not come sooner, "for," said he, "if you had come to me yesterday, I could have saved your third horse, but now it is too late, as the animal is dying. But for the future take this paper and keep it safely and you will have your animals protected."

I was also informed that farmers came all the way from Herefordshire to consult the wise man of Cwrt-y-Cadno.

SHEEP KILLED BY AN OLD WITCH.

Mrs. Edwards, an old woman who lives at Yspytty Ystwyth, in Cardiganshire, informed me that she knew an old witch who lived in the neighbourhood of Ystrad Meurig. One day, this hag saw two shepherds passing her cottage on their way to the mountain with some sheep. The old woman espied one particular lamb and begged one of

the shepherds to give the animal to her as a present, but the young man refused her request. “Very well,” said the witch, “thou wilt soon loose both the lamb and its mother, and thou shalt repent for thus refusing me.” Before reaching the end of the journey to the mountain, the sheep and her lamb died, and it was all put down to the hag’s account, for it was believed that she had witched them to death in revenge.

A SHIP WITCHED.

On a particular occasion nearly sixty years ago, a large number of the leading gentry and others from all parts of Pembrokeshire went to witness the launch of H. M. Ship “Cæsar,” at Pembroke Dock. Among the crowd there was an old woman named “Betty Foggy” who was believed to possess the power of witching. When Betty noticed a lot of gentry going up the steps to the grand stand, she followed suit with an independent air; but she was stopped by the police. She struggled hard to have her way, but was forced back. She felt very angry that she had to yield, and shouted out loudly: “All right, the ship will not go off,” but the old hag’s threat was only laughed at. The usual formalities were gone through, and weights dropped, and amidst cheering the ship began to glide away—but not for long, for the “Cæsar” soon became to stand and remained so till the next tide when she got off by the assistance of some ships afloat, and other means. The old witch was delighted, and people believed that she was the cause of the failure to launch the ship.

MILK THAT WOULD NOT CHURN AND THE WITCH.

Many believe, and some still believe, especially in Cardiganshire, that when milk would not churn that witches had cursed it. An old woman at Ystrad Meurig, who was supposed to be a witch, called one day at a farm house and begged for butter, but being refused she went away in a very bad temper. The next time they churned the milk would not turn to butter, and they had to throw it out as they were afraid of giving it to the pigs. When they were churning the second time again the milk would not turn to butter as usual. But instead of throwing out the milk as before, they went to the old woman and forced her to come to the farmhouse and undo her spell. She came and put her hand on the churn, and the milk successfully turned to butter. My informant was Mrs. Edwards, Ysbytty Ystwyth.

ANOTHER CARDIGANSHIRE STORY OF MILK THAT WOULD NOT TURN TO BUTTER.

The following account was given me by Mr. Jenkin Williams, Llangwyryfon:—

There was a man and his family living at a cottage called Penlon, a small place just enough to keep one cow. The name of the man was John Jones; and on one occasion when he and his wife were trying to churn they failed to do so, or in other words the milk would not turn into butter. At last J. Jones went to Cwrt-y-Cadno, in Carmarthenshire to consult the “Dyn Hysbys.” The wizard as he often did,

gave the man a bit of paper with some mystic words on it, and told him not to show it to anybody, as the charm could not work after showing the paper to others. As he was passing on his way home through a place called Cwm Twrch, he met with a woman who accosted him and asked him where he had been to. The man was rather shy, but at last he admitted that he had been to Cwrt-y-Cadno to consult the conjurer, and he told the woman everything. "I well knew," said the woman, "You had been to Cwrt-y-Cadno, for only those who go to the conjurer pass this way; show me the paper which he gave to you, for I am a cousin of the conjurer." And the man showed it to her. "The paper is alright," said she, "Take it home with you as soon as you can." He went home with great joy, but unfortunately the churning still proved a failure. Instead of undertaking another journey himself again, J. Jones went to his neighbour Jenkin Williams, and begged him to go to the conjurer to obtain another paper for him, and at last J. Williams went. The conjurer, however, was not willing to give another paper without £1 cash for it; but he gave it at last for a more moderate price, when my informant pleaded the poverty of his friend. When Williams asked the wise man what was the reason that the milk would not churn, the reply was that an enemy had cursed it by wishing evil to his neighbour. When this second paper was taken home (which was not shown to anybody on the road), the milk was churned most successfully, and splendid butter was obtained.

In some places a hot smoothing iron thrown into the churn was effective against the witch's doings.

BURYING THE CHARM.

In some of the stories I have already given a paper obtained from a conjurer in the way of charm was considered very effective to undo the witch's evil doings; but from the following story, which I obtained from David Pugh, Erwlwyd, it seems that it was necessary in some cases to bury this bit of paper in the ground. It was also thought a few generations ago, that a letter hidden under a stone was a good thing to keep away both witches and evil spirits and to secure good luck to a house.

Many years ago in the neighbourhood of Llandilo, Carmarthenshire, a young farmer was engaged to be married to a daughter of another farmer; but a few days before the wedding-day the bride and bridegroom and their families quarrelled, so that the wedding did not take place. After this, ill-luck attended the young farmer day after day; many of his cattle died till he became quite a poor man very depressed in spirit. The young woman who had been engaged to him was a supposed witch so she was suspected of having caused all his misfortunes. His friends advised him to consult a wizard, and he did so, as there was a "dyn hysbys" close by at Llandilo, in those days, so it was said. The wizard informed the farmer that he and his friends were right in their suspicions about the young woman, and that his losses had been brought about by her who had once been engaged to be married to him. Then the wizard wrote something on a sheet of paper and handed it to the young farmer directing him to bury this paper down in the ground underneath the gate-post at the entrance to his farmyard. The young man went home and buried the paper as directed by the wizard, and from that time forth nothing went wrong.

PROTECTIVES AGAINST WITCHCRAFT.

Mrs. Mary Thomas, Bengal, near Fishguard, informed me that it was customary when she was young to counteract the machinations of witches by killing a mare and take out the heart and open and burn it, having first filled it up with pins and nails. This compelled the witch to undo her work. Mrs. Thomas also added that when the heart was burning on such occasions the smoke would go right in the direction of the witch's house.

Another old woman near Fishguard, informed the Rev. J. W. Evans, a son of the Rector of Jordanston, that she remembered an old woman who was thought to be guilty of witching poor farmers' cattle. At last she was forced to leave the district by the people who believed her to be a witch. But soon after she left a cow died, and even her calves were ill. People took out the cow's heart and burnt it, which forced the hag to return to heal the calves.

A FISHGUARD WITCH DISCOMFITED.

Another way of protecting oneself from witchcraft was to keep a nail on the floor under the foot when a witch came to the door. Mr. David Rees, baker at Fishguard, told me a few years ago that there was once a particular witch in that town who was very troublesome, as she was always begging, and that people always gave to her, as they were afraid of offending her. She often came to beg from his mother, who at last, as advised by her friends, procured a big nail from a blacksmith's shop. She put the nail under

her foot on the floor, the next time the old witch came to the door begging. The old hag came again as usual to beg and to threaten; but my informant's mother sent her away empty handed, saying, "Go away from my door old woman, I am not afraid of you now, for I have my foot on a nail." She kept her foot on the nail till the witch went out of sight, and by doing so felt herself safe from the old hag's spells.

Nails or a horseshoe or an old iron were considered preservatives against witchcraft.

A CILCWM STORY.

Mr. Theophilus, the old blacksmith, at Cilcwm, in Carmarthenshire, told me that when he was a boy the cattle had been witched by an enemy. They would not touch the grass in the field of their own farm; but whenever put in any field of another farm they would graze splendidly. My informant's mother could not understand this, and she felt very much distressed about it. At last she took the advice of friends and went to consult the Wizard of Cwrt-y-Cadno, who informed her that an enemy with whom she was well acquainted, had witched her cattle. Then he advised her to go home and buy a new knife, (one that had never been used before), and go directly to a particular spot in the field where a solitary "pren cerdinen" (mountain ash) grew, and cut it with this new knife. This mountain ash, and some of the cows' hair, as well as some "witch's butter" she was to tie together and burn in the fire; and that by performing this ceremony or charm, she should see the person who was guilty of witching her cows,

coming to the door or the window of her house. My informant told me that his mother carried out these directions, and that everything happened as the wizard had foretold her. After this, there was nothing wrong with the cows.

WITCHES AND THE MOUNTAIN ASH.

Of all things to frustrate the evil designs of witches the best was a piece of mountain ash, or as it is called in Welsh "pren cerdinen." The belief in mountain ash is very old in Wales, and the tree was held sacred in ancient times, and some believe that the Cross of our Lord was made of it. Witches had a particular dread of this wood, so that a person who carried with him a branch of "pren cerdinen" was safe from their spells; and it is believed in Wales, as well as in parts of England, that the witch who was touched with a branch of it was the victim carried off by the devil when he came next to claim his tribute—once every seven years.

I was told a few years ago at Talybont, that many in that part of Cardiganshire grew mountain ash in their gardens, and that a man carrying home a little pig was seen with a branch of this wood to protect the animal from witchcraft. In South Pembrokeshire many carry in their pockets a twig of the mountain ash when going on a journey late at night; and a woman at Llanddewi Brefi, in Cardiganshire, Miss Anne Edwards, Penbontgoian, informed me about seven years ago that when she was a child the neighbourhood was full of witches, but nothing was so effective against them as the mountain ash; no witch would come near it. A

man travelling on horseback, especially at night, was very much exposed to the old hags, and the horse was more so than even the man riding the animal; but a branch or even a twig of the mountain ash carried in hand and held over the horse's head, protected both the animal and the rider against all the spells of witches. The same woman informed me that on one occasion, the servant man and the servant girl of Llanio Isaf, in that parish, were going to the mill one night, but all of a sudden they found both themselves and their horse and cart right on the top of a hedge. This was the work of the witches. After this, they carried a mountain ash, so as to be safe.

Another old woman in Pembrokeshire, named Mrs. Mary Williams, Dwrbach, informed me that a notorious old hag who was supposed to be a witch, was coming home on one occasion from Haverfordwest fair, in a cart with a farmer who had kindly taken her up. As they were driving along the road between Haverfordwest and Walton East, they happened to notice three teams harrowing in a field, and the farmer who was driving the cart asked the witch whether she could by her spells stop the teams? "I could stop two of them," said she, "but the third teamster has a piece of mountain ash fast to his whip, so I cannot do anything to him."

Mrs. Mary Williams also informed me that when she was a little girl her mother always used to say to her and the other children on the last day of December: "Now children, go out and fetch a good supply of mountain ash to keep the witches away on New Year's Day," and branches of it were stuck into the wall about the door, windows and other places outside. Then witches coming to beg on New Year's Day could do no harm to the inmates of the house.

In Carmarthenshire, Cardiganshire, and North Pembrokeshire, the mountain ash is called "pren cerdinen,"

but it was once known in the South of Pembrokeshire, where the people are not of Welsh origin, as "rontree"; and the name "rowan" is still retained in some parts of England, which is derived according to Dr. Jameson, from the old Norse "runa," a secret, or charm, on account of its being supposed to have the power to avert the evil eye, etc.

DRAWING BLOOD FROM A WITCH.

Drawing blood from a witch by anyone incapacitated the old hag, from working out her evil designs upon the person who spilt her blood. Many years ago a farmer from the neighbourhood of Swyddffynon, in Cardiganshire, was coming home late one night from Tregaron, on horseback. As he was crossing a bridge called Pont Einon (once noted for its witches), a witch somehow or other managed to get up behind him on the horse's back; but he took out his pocket-knife with which he drew blood from the witch's arm, and he got rid of the old hag. After this, she was unable to witch people. My informant was Mr. John Jones, of Pontrhydfendigaid.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF WITCHES.

Witches were supposed to transform themselves into animals, especially that of an hare. And this belief is a very old one, for Giraldus Cambrensis seven hundred years ago in his "Topography of Ireland," (Bonn's edition) says: "It

has also been a frequent complaint, from old times as well as in the present, that certain hags in Wales, as well as in Ireland and Scotland, changed themselves into the shape of hares, that, sucking teats under this counterfeit form, they might stealthily rob other people's milk." Tales illustrative of this very old belief are still extant in Wales, and John Griffiths, Maenclochog, in Pembrokeshire, related to me the story of:

A WITCH WHO APPEARED IN THE FORM OF AN HARE EVERY MORNING TO A SERVANT MAID AT MILKING TIME.

Griffiths informed me that when his mother was young, she was engaged as a servant maid at a small gentleman's seat, called Pontfaen, in the Vale of Gwaun. But whenever she went out early in the morning to milk the cows, an old witch who lived in the neighbourhood always made her appearance in the form of an hare, annoying the girl very much. At last she informed her master of it, and at once the gentleman took his gun and shot the hare; but somehow, the animal escaped, though he succeeded in wounding and drawing blood from her. After this, the young woman went to see the old hag who was supposed to be a witch, Maggie by name, and found her in bed with a sore leg.

A WITCH IN THE FORM OF AN HARE SHOT BY A FARM SERVANT.

The following tale was told me by a Mrs. Edwards, Ysbytty Ystwyth, in Cardiganshire:—

An old witch who lived at Tregaron, went to Trecefel, a large farm in the neighbourhood, to beg for the use of a small corner of a field to grow some potatoes for herself. The farmer himself was away from home at the time, but his wife was willing, as she was afraid of offending the witch. The head servant, however, refused her request, and sent her away, which naturally made her very angry, and in departing she used threatening words. One day, soon after this, the same servant was out in the field, and he noticed a hare in the hedge continually looking at him, and watching all his movements. It occurred to him at last that this creature was the old witch he had offended, appearing in the form of a hare, and somehow or other he had not the least doubt in his mind about it, so he procured a gun and fired, but the shot did not inflict any injury on the hare. In the evening, when he met some of his friends at a house in the village, the man servant told them everything about the hare and of his suspicion that she was the witch. One of his friends told him that ordinary shots or bullets were no good to shoot a witch with, but that it was necessary for him to load his gun with a bent four-penny silver coin. He tried this, and the next time he fired the hare rolled over screaming terribly. Soon after this, people called to see the old woman in her cottage, and found that she had such a wound in her leg that she could hardly move. Dr. Rowland was sent for, and when he came and examined her leg he found a fourpenny silver coin in two pieces in it. “You old witch,” said he, “I am not going to take any trouble with you again: death is good enough for your sort,” and die she did.

The possibility of injuring or marking the witch in her assumed form so deeply that the bruise remained a mark on her in her natural form was a common belief.

A WITCH IN THE FORM OF A HARE HUNTED BY A PEMBROKESHIRE SQUIRE'S HOUNDS.

The following tale was told me by Mrs. Mary Thomas, Bengal, near Fishguard:—

The Squire of Llanstinan, was a great huntsman, but whenever he went out with his hounds, a certain hare always baffled and escaped from the dogs. He followed her for miles and miles, day after day, but always failed to catch the animal. At last the people began to suspect that this hare must have been a witch in the shape of a hare, and the gentleman was advised to get "a horse and a dog of the same colour," and he did so. So the next time he was hunting he had a horse and a dog of the same colour, and they were soon gaining ground on the hare; but when the dog was on the very point of catching the animal, the hare suddenly disappeared through a hole in the door of a cottage. The Squire hurried to the spot and instantly opened the door, but to his great surprise the hare had assumed the form of an old woman, and he shouted out: "Oh! ti Mari sydd yna." (It is you Mary!)

A WITCH IN THE FORM OF A HARE HUNTED IN CARDIGANSHIRE.

Mr. Rees, Maesymeillion, Llandyssul, told me the following tale which he had heard from an old woman in the neighbourhood:—

Once there was a Major Brooks living in the parish of

Llanarth, who kept hounds and was fond of hunting. One day, he was hunting a hare that a little boy of nine years old had started; but the hare not only managed to elude her pursuers, but even to turn back and attack the hounds. The hunting of this hare was attempted day after day, but with the same results; and the general opinion in the neighbourhood was, that this hare was nothing but an old witch who lived in that part, with whom the huntsman had quarrelled.

An old man in Carmarthenshire informed me that an old woman known as Peggy Abercamles, and her brother Will, in the neighbourhood of Cilcwm, in that county were seen running about at night in the form of hares.

THE FAMILIAR SPIRIT OF A WITCH SHOT IN THE FORM OF A HARE.

From the following story which I heard at Talybont, in North Cardiganshire, it seems that witches did not always transform themselves. In some cases it was thought that the hare was not the witch herself, but the old hag's Familiar Spirit assuming the shape of a hare in her stead; but the life of the witch was so closely connected with the Familiar, that when the Familiar was shot, the witch suffered.

The tale is as follows:—

There was an old woman at Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, who was supposed to be a witch. One day a man in the neighbourhood shot a hare with a piece of silver coin. At the very time when the hare was shot, the old woman who

was a witch was at home washing, but fell into the tub, wounded and bleeding. It was supposed by the people of the neighbourhood that the hare which was shot was the old hag's familiar spirit.

MEN CHANGED INTO ANIMALS.

It is said that an old witch near Ystrad Meurig, in Cardiganshire, turned a servant man of a farm called Dolfawr, into a hare on one occasion; and into a horse on another occasion and rode him herself.

In the Mabinogion we have the Boar Trwyth, who was once a King, but God had transformed into a swine for his sins. Nynniaw and Peibaw also had been turned into oxen. And in the topography of Ireland, by Giraldus Cambrensis, mention is made of a man and a woman, natives of Ossory, who through the curse of one Natalis, had been compelled to assume the form of wolves. And while speaking of witches changing themselves into hares the same writer adds: "We agree, then, with Augustine, that neither demons nor wicked men can either create or really change their nature, but those whom God has created can, to outward appearance, by His permission, become transformed, so that they appear to be what they are not."

If learned men, like Augustine and Giraldus Cambrensis and others, believed such stories, it is no wonder that ignorant people did so. I am inclined to believe, like the late Rev. Elias Owen, that the transformation fables that have descended to us would seem to be fossils of a pagan faith once common to the Celtic and other cognate races.

The belief in transformation and transmigration has lingered among some people almost to the present day. Mr. Thomas Evans, Gwaralltyryn, in the parish of Llandyssul, informed me that he was well-acquainted with an old Ballad singer, who was known as Daniel Y Baledwr. Daniel lived near Castle Howel, and sang at Llandyssul fairs, songs composed by Rees Jones, of Pwllffein. This ballad-singer told my informant that he was sure to return after death in the form of a pig, or of some other animal; and that an animal had a soul or spirit as well as a man had.

WIZARDS.

There were many conjurers in Wales in former times, and even at the present day there are a few who have the reputation of practising the Black Art; for we still hear occasionally of persons taking long journeys to consult them, especially in cases of supposed bewitched cattle, horses, pigs, etc. I have already given stories of conjurers counteracting the machinations of witches, and delivering both people and animals from their spell. But they were accredited with the power to do many other things beside. They could, it was thought, compel a thief to restore what he had stolen; could also reveal the future and raise and command spirits.

The possibility of raising spirits, or to cause them to appear, was once believed in in Wales, even in recent times; and Shakespeare in his Henry the Fourth, Act III., S. 1., makes the Welshman, Glendower say:—

“I can call Spirits from the vasty deep.”

Wizards and others who practised magical arts were supposed to be able to summon spirits at will; but it seems that some could not control the demons after summoning them. An old man at Llandovery, named Mr. Price, who was once a butler at Blaennos, informed me that an old witch at Cilcwm, named Peggy, found it most difficult to control the spirits in the house, and sometimes she had to go out into a field, and stand within a circle of protection with a whip in her hand.

Conjurers possessed books dealing with the black art, which they had to study most carefully, for it was thought that according to the directions of magical books the spirits were controlled. It was considered dangerous for one ignorant of the occult science to open such books, as demons or familiar spirits came out of them, and it was not always easy to get rid of such unearthly beings. An old woman at Caio, in Carmarthenshire, informed me that the great modern wizard Dr. Harries, of Cwrtycadno, who lived in that parish, had one particular book kept chained and padlocked. The old woman also added that people were much afraid of this book, and that even the wizard himself was afraid of it, for he only ventured to open it once in twelve months, and that in the presence and with the assistance of another conjurer, a schoolmaster from Pencader, who occasionally visited him. On a certain day once every twelve months, Dr. Harries and his friend went out into a certain wooded spot not far from the house, and after drawing a circle round them, they opened the chained book. Whenever this ceremony was performed it caused thunder and lightning throughout the Vale of Cothi. My informant vouched for the truth of this, and stated that her husband had been a servant to Harries.

A wizard in Pembrokeshire, named William Gwyn, of Olmws, Castell Newydd Bach, with his magic book invoked a familiar spirit. The spirit came and demanded

something to do; William commanded him to bring some water from the River in a riddle!

In the 18th century a well-known wizard in the same county was one John Jenkins, a schoolmaster. But the greatest wizard in the beginning of 19th century was Aby Biddle, of Millindingle, who was in league with the evil one or at least many of the people in South Pembrokeshire believed so. Aby Biddle's real name was Harries; but, of course, he was not the same person as Harries of Cwrtycadno, in Carmarthenshire. There are still many most curious stories concerning him in South Pembrokeshire, and as typical of other tales, I give the following story which appeared a few years ago in "The Welsh Tit Bits" column of the "Cardiff Times:"—

THE PRIESTS AND THE HORNETS.

In the winter of 1803 there was an evening gathering at the —— Vicarage, which consisted chiefly of clerics, and Aby Biddle was of the number of the guests, having been invited as a source of pastime to help beguile some of the long hours of that forsaken spot. Seldom did he go beyond the solemn dingle, but he had been prevailed upon on this occasion. Much merriment was expected, nor was the expectation misleading, save that it was entirely at the expense of the clerics. The hours glided along gently on the wings of fairy tales. The party remained until the small hours of the morning, singing, merry-making, and tale-telling in turn. The conversation now furtively drifted in the direction of occult science. Aby Biddle sat near the window. Every now and again as he listened to the words

magic and witchcraft and various opinions respecting them, he pulled back a corner of the blind and the pale light of the moon flickered on his countenance, revealing the lines of a retreating smile.

A loquacious young cleric interposed a caustic remark at this point and fanned the fire into flame, and the discussion was like to have taken a somewhat lively turn had not a broad-browed divine on whose head rested the snow of full three score winters and ten, sternly rebuked the young priest. This divine denounced sorcery and conjuration in unmeasured language. Another aged divine of Puritanic air nodded his assent.

Aby Biddle said nothing, though some of the company invited him to speak, but played carefully with the fringe of the curtain. During a momentary lull in the conversation, he rose suddenly, paced the room for a minute or two, and disappeared into the lawn. He was not gone many seconds before he returned with three small rings in his hands. He held these up and remarked, "Gentlemen, we'll see whether conjuring is possible or not." He placed the rings on the floor, at a distance of about a yard apart, and hurriedly left the room, taking care to turn the key in the lock on the smooth side of the door. The priests turned their gaze intently in the direction of the rings. Suddenly there appeared in one of the rings a fly flitting and buzzing. The fly grew. In half a minute or less it had grown into a monster hornet. No sooner had this metamorphosis taken place than it frisked into one of the other rings, and another fly appeared in its place. This one also developed into a hornet, giving way, when fully formed, to a third fly. Each ring was now occupied, and the clerics wondered what next would happen. Little time had they for musing, for the third fly quickly accomplished its transformation, when the first one left the ring and flew through the room. New hornets appeared in quick and

quicker succession. The guests became now thoroughly alarmed. Priestly amusement gave way to pallid amazement. More and more came the dreaded hornets, louder and louder their droning hum. They filled the room, they darkened the whitened ceiling, and insinuated themselves into the hoary locks of the Puritanic divine so that he yelled hoarsely. It was utter confusion, and all were rushing wildly here and there for refuge or escape, when the conjuror reappeared with a merry laugh, and a loud "Ho! is conjuring possible now, gentlemen?" The Cloth was soon pacified, the hornets dismissed to their sylvan home, and the reputation of the Aby Biddle established as a mighty magician in the minds of some noted parsons of Pembrokeshire.

SIR DAFYDD LLWYD, YSPYTTY YSTWYTH.

About two hundred years ago there lived in the neighbourhood of Ysbytty Ystwyth, in Cardiganshire, a wizard and a medical man, known as Sir Dafydd Llwyd, who had been a clergyman before he was turned out by the Bishop for dealing in the Black Art. According to "A Relation of Apparitions," by the Rev. Edmund Jones, it was thought that he had learnt the magic art privately at Oxford in the profane time of Charles II. Like other wizards Sir Dafydd also had a Magic Book, for the Rev. Edmund Jones tells us that on one occasion when he had "gone on a visit towards the Town of Rhaiadr Gwy, in Radnorshire, and being gone from one house to another, but having forgotten his Magic Book in the first house, sent his boy to fetch it, charging him not to open the book

on the way; but the boy being very curious opened the book, and the evil Spirit immediately called for work; the boy, though surprised and in some perplexity, said, "Tafl gerrig o'r afon,—(throw stones out of the river) he did so; and after a while having thrown up many stones out of the river Wye, which ran that way, he again after the manner of confined Spirits, asking for something to do; the boy had his senses about him to bid it to throw the stones back into the river, and he did so. Sir David seeing the boy long in coming, doubted how it was; came back and chided him for opening the book, and commanded the familiar Spirit back into the book."

SIR DAFYDD DEFEATING A RIVAL WIZARD.

According to the stories still extant in North Cardiganshire, this Sir Dafydd Llwyd had a most wonderful control over the demons.

The following tale was told me by Mr. D. Jones, Bryntirion, Llanilar:

A rival wizard who lived in the neighbourhood of Lampeter, on one occasion challenged Sir Dafydd to a contest in the black art, in order to prove to the world which of the two wizards was the cleverest in controlling the demons. On the morning of the appointed day for the contest between the two experts in the black art, Sir Dafydd sent his boy to an elevated spot to have a look round if he could see a bull coming from the direction of Lampeter. The boy went, but ran back immediately to

inform his master that a most savage bull was approaching. Off went Sir Dafydd to Craig Ysguboriau, and stood on the spot with his open magic book in his hand. The bull, or rather a demon in the form of a bull, fiercely attempted to rush at him, but Sir Dafydd compelled him to return whence he came. The animal returned to Lampeter and rushed at once at the Lampeter wizard, and killed him. So Sir Dafydd defeated and got rid of his rival.

Another story I heard at Ysbytty Ystwyth was that one Sunday morning when Sir Dafydd went to Church, he sent his boy to keep away the crows from the wheat field; but when he came home he found that the boy had collected all the crows into the barn. Sir Dafydd at once discovered that the boy had learnt the Black Art.

There is a tradition in the neighbourhood that the body of Sir Dafydd lays buried under the wall of Yspytty Ystwyth Churchyard, and not inside in the Churchyard itself, and people still believe that this is a fact. The story goes that the wizard had sold himself to the devil. The agreement was that the arch-fiend was to have possession of Sir Dafydd if his corpse were taken over the side of the bed, or through a door, or if buried in a churchyard. In order to escape from becoming a prey to the Evil One, the wizard on his death-bed had begged his friends to take away his body by the foot, and not by the side of the bed, and through a hole in the wall of the house, and not through the door, and to bury him, not in the churchyard nor outside, but right under the churchyard wall. So that his Satanic majesty, who had been looking forward for the body of Sir Dafydd, was disappointed after all.

That it was formerly believed that the devil could be out-witted or deceived is evident from the fact that in the Middle Ages it was often customary to bury an ungodly rich man in the garb of a Monk. This could be done by

paying the Monks a certain sum of money.

There is a story very much like the one I have just given, to be found in the South-Western part of Montgomeryshire. In the Montgomeryshire version, however, the wizard is not Sir Dafydd Llwyd, but Dafydd Hiraddug, who had charged his friends, that on his death, the liver and lights were to be taken out of his body and thrown on the dunghill. They were then to take notice whether a raven or a dove got possession of them; if a dove got possession of them, he was to be buried like any other man in the churchyard; but if a raven, then he was to be buried under the wall, and under the wall he was buried, as a raven got possession of the liver and lights.

The devil in disappointment cried out:—

"Dafydd Hiraddug ei ryw,
Ffals yn farw, ffals yn fyw."

(Dafydd Hiraddug, ill-bred
False when living, false when dead.)

The dove and the raven play their part in many of the wizards tales. An old man from Llandilo, named David Evans, informed me that the wizard of Cwrtycadno asked his friends to throw his heart on the dunghill. If a dove came for it first, he had been a good man; but a raven, a sign that he had been a bad man.

The appearance of a dove at the time of a death or a funeral was regarded as a sure sign that the deceased had been a good man. The Rev. Edmund Jones in his "Apparitions," referring to the death of a certain godly man, says that "Before the body was brought forth, a white dove came and alighted upon the bier."

WIZARDS RIDING DEMONS THROUGH THE AIR.

In the present day we hear a great deal about airships; but if we are to believe some of the old folk-stories, magicians travelled through the air in days long before anyone had ever dreamt of a balloon. In former times it was believed by the ignorant that a wizard with his magic book could, and did, summon a demon in the shape of a horse, and travelled on the back of the fiend through the air. It is said that Sir Dafydd Llwyd of Ysbytty Ystwyth, employed a demon for that purpose; and one night when he was riding home from Montgomeryshire on a demon in the shape of a horse, a boy who rode behind him on the same horse lost one of his garters on the journey. After this the boy went to search for his garter, and to his great surprise saw it on the very top of a tree near the church, which convinced him that the wizard and himself had been riding home through the air!

There was also at Llanbadarn Fawr, in the same county, about seven hundred years ago, a Knight named Sir Dafydd Sion Evan, who was supposed to be taking journeys through the air on a demon-horse. This Sir Dafydd was at times absent for weeks; and when he returned he was often wet with foam and covered with seaweed, or his head and shoulders sprinkled with snow, during the heat of summer. At other times he was blackened with smoke and smelling strong of sulphureous fire. On one occasion when Sir Dafydd had mounted this "devil-born" horse, and had gone up a considerable height into the air, the horse turned his head and said, "How I have forgotten Sir Davy Sion Evan; I asked not of the course of thy travel; art thou for steering above wind, or below wind"? "On Devil-born!" said Sir Davy, "and stint prate."

Such tales of wizards riding through the air on demons are to be found in Scotland as well as Wales, and Sir Walter Scott in his Notes to the Lay of the Last Minstrel, gives the following story concerning Sir Michael Scott, who was chosen, it is said, to go upon an embassy to obtain from the King of France satisfaction for certain piracies committed by his subjects upon those of Scotland. Instead of preparing a new equipage and splendid retinue, the ambassador retreated to his study, opened his book, and evoked a fiend in the shape of a huge black horse, mounted upon his back, and forced him to fly through the air towards France. As they crossed the sea, the devil insidiously asked his rider what it was that the old women in Scotland muttered at bedtime? A less experienced wizard might have answered that it was the Pater Noster, which would have licensed the devil to precipitate him from his back. But Michael sternly replied, "What is that to thee? Mount Diabolus, and fly!" When he arrived at Paris, he tied his horse to the gate of the palace, entered, and boldly delivered his message. An ambassador with so little of the pomp and circumstances of diplomacy was not received with much respect; and the King was about to return a contemptuous refusal to his demand, when Michael besought him to suspend his resolution till he had seen his horse stamp three times. The first stamp shook every steeple in Paris, and caused all the bells to ring; the second threw down three of the towers of the palace; and the infernal steed had lifted his hoof to give the third stamp, when the King rather chose to dismiss Michael with the most ample concessions than to stand to the probable consequences.

It seems that in Eastern countries also, there are traditions of magicians riding through the air, for in the "Arabian Nights," we have the story of the Enchanted Horse.

An old carpenter, named Benjamin Phillips, Bronwydd

Arms, Carmarthen, informed me the Wizard of Fos-y-Broga, often caused a demon to appear at night in the form of a white bull, on the road near Llanpumpsaint.

THE HARRIESES OF CWRTYCADNO, THE POPULAR MODERN WIZARDS.

The most popular and greatest wizards of modern days were undoubtedly the Harrieses of Cwrtycadno, in Carmarthenshire.

John Harries lived at Pantcoy, Cwrtycadno, in the Parish of Caio, and died in the year 1839. His sons were also popular conjurers, one of whom only died about 45 years ago.

Harries was a medical man, an astrologer, and a wizard, and people came to enquire of his oracle from all parts of Wales, and from the English borders, especially Herefordshire, and his name was familiar through the length and breadth of the land. It is said that he had a wonderful power over lunatics; could cure diseases; charm away pain; protect people from witches, and foretell future events, etc. Good many stories are told of him by old people, and I have already introduced his name in my account of witches.

I was told by an old man, Mr. David Evans, a millwright from Llandilo, that the popularity of Harries as a wizard originated as follows:—A young woman somewhere in that part of the country was lost, and could not be found after searching for her everywhere; at last her relations and

friends went to Cwrtycadno to consult Dr. Harries. The wizard informed them that the girl had been murdered by her sweetheart, and that he had hid her body in the earth, under the shades of a tree, in the hollow of which they would find a bee's nest. The tree stood alone near a brook. The searching party at last came across the spot indicated by the conjurer, and here they found the young woman's body buried, as the wise man had told them. The young man who had murdered the girl was found, and confessed the crime. When the authorities of the law became aware of these facts, the wizard was brought before the magistrates, at Llandovery, where he was charged with knowing and abetting of murder, otherwise he could not have known she was murdered, and where she was buried. He was, however, discharged. According to the "History of Caio," by F. S. Price, an interesting book presented to me by Lady Hills-Johnes, the wizard told the magistrates (Lloyd, Glansevin, and Gwyn, Glanbran), that if they would tell him the hour they were born, he would tell them the hour they would die!

CWRTYCADNO CONJURER AND SPIRIT RAISING.

I did not hear any stories of Dr. Harries riding demons through the air like Sir Dafydd Sion Evan and others; but it was believed, and it is still believed by many, that he could and did summon spirits to appear. A few years ago when I was allowed to search what is left of the Library of Harries, which is still to be seen at Pantcoy, where he lived, I found a large number of medical books, and Greek and Latin works, I also found several books dealing with

astrology, magic art, charms, etc.; but the much talked of padlocked volume full of demons was last I was told though amongst other curious things I found the following "Invocation":—

HOW TO OBTAIN THE FAMILIAR OF THE GENIUS OR GOOD SPIRIT AND CAUSE HIM TO APPEAR.

"After the manner prescribed by Magicians, the exorcist must inform himself of the name of his Good Genius, which he may find in the Rules of the Travins and Philermus; as also, what Chonactes and Pentacle, or Larim, belongs to every Genius. After this is done, let him compose an earnest prayer unto the said Genius, which he must repeat thrice every morning for seven days before the Invocation.... When the day is come wherein the Magician would invocate his prayer to Genius he must enter into a private closet, having a little table and silk carpet, and two waxen candles lighted; as also a chrystal stone shaped triangularly about the quantity of an apple which stone must be fixed upon a frame in the centre of the table; and then proceeding with great devotion to Invocation, he must thrice repeat the former prayer, concluding the same with Pater Noster, etc., and a missale de Spiritu Sancto. Then he must begin to consecrate the candles, carpet, table and chrystal, sprinkling the same with his own blood, and saying: I do by the power of the holy Names Aglaon, Eloi, Eloi Sabbathon, Anepheraton, Jah, Agian, Jah, Jehovah; Immanuel, Archon, Archonton, Sadai, Sadai, Jeovaschah, etc., sanctifie and consecrate these holy utensils to the performance of this holy work, in the name of the Father,

Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen. Which done, the Exorcist must say the following prayer with his face towards the East, and kneeling with his back to the consecrated table: —O thou blessed Phanael my angel guardian, vouchsafe to descend with thy holy influence and presence into this spotless chrystal, that I may behold thy glory, etc. This prayer being first repeated towards the East, must be afterwards said towards all the four winds thrice. And next the 70th Psalm repeated out of a Bible that hath been consecrated in like manner as the rest of the utensils, which ceremonies being seriously performed, the Magician must arise from his knees and sit before the chrystal bareheaded with the consecrated Bible in his hand and the waxen candle newly lighted waiting patiently and internally for the coming and appearance of the Genius.... Now about a quarter of an hour before the spirit come, there will appear great variety of apparitions within the glass; as first a beaten road or tract, and travellers, men, and women marching silently along. Next there will be rivers, wells, mountains, and seas appear, after that, a shepherd upon a pleasant hill feeding a goodly flock of sheep, and the sun shining brightly at his going down; and lastly, innumerable flows of birds and beasts, monsters and strange appearance, and which will all vanish at the appearance of the Genius.

"The Genius will be familiar in the stone at the performance of the wizard."

The following story of this Welsh wizard's spirit summoning was related to me a short time ago by a clergyman who is a native of Carmarthenshire, the Rev. J. Phillips, vicar of Llancynfelyn:

THE FARMER WHO CONSULTED THE CONJUROR; OR THE FAMILIAR SPIRITS AND THE LOST COWS.

A farmer who lived in the Southern part of Carmarthenshire, lost three cows. Having searched in vain for them everywhere, he at last went to Cwrt-y-Cadno, though he had a very long journey to go. When he arrived there and consulted Dr. Harries, the worthy wizard told him that he could not give him any information concerning his lost cows till next day, as he wanted time to consult his magic books. The farmer was a little disappointed, as he wanted to go home that evening; but under the circumstances there was nothing to be done but try and get a bed for the night at some farm in the neighbourhood. So he left the wizard for the night with the intention of returning to him again in the morning, when he hoped to hear something of his lost cows. But after going out of the house, he noticed a barn close by, which he entered, and found in a corner a heap of straw where he thought he could lie down and sleep comfortably till next morning. This he did unknown to the wizard, who took for granted that the farmer had gone to stay for the night at some house in the neighbourhood. He slept comfortably in the barn for a while, but about one o'clock in the morning, he was awakened by the sound of the wizard's footsteps entering the place at that untimely hour, with a lantern in his hand. The disturbed farmer could not imagine what he wanted in the barn at this time of the night, and he was afraid of being discovered. Presently, however, he noticed the conjurer drawing a circle around himself in the middle of the room; that is the well-known Wizard's Circle. Then he stood right in the middle of this circle, and having opened a book, he summoned seven demons or familiar spirits to appear, and in an instant they came one after another and stood outside the circle. Then he addressed or called out to

the first spirit something as follows:—"Tell me where are the farmer's lost cows"? But the demon answered not. He repeated the question two or three times, but the Familiar was quite dumb. At last, however, it shouted out, 'A pig in the straw' but this was no reply to the wizard's question.

Having failed with the first spirit, the wizard addressed the second one, and then the third, and so on till he had given the question to each one of the familiars except one, without any result; the spirits seemed very stupid on this occasion, and would not give the information required. Fortunately, however, when the question was given to the seventh and last of the demons, it shouted out, 'The farmer's cows will be on Carmarthen Bridge at 12 o'clock to-morrow.' Then the wizard left the barn and went to bed well pleased.

The farmer who was hiding in the straw heard everything, and made up his mind to travel to Carmarthen at once, so as to be there in time to find his cows on the Bridge. So off he went to Carmarthen, and reached the Bridge just at 12 o'clock, and to his great joy the cows were there. Then he drove them home, but when he had gone about half-a-mile from the Bridge, the cows fell down as if half dead on the roadside, and in vain did he try to get them to move forward any further. So he had to go all the way to Cwrt-y-Cadno again, so as to consult what to do. When he arrived there "Serve thee right," said the wizard to him, "I have cast a spell on thy cattle for running away secretly last night from the barn without paying me for the information obtained from the spirits."

Then the farmer gave the wizard a certain sum of money and returned to his three cows which he had left on the road half-a-mile from Carmarthen Bridge; and to his great joy the cows went home without any further trouble.

A FAMILIAR SPIRIT IN THE SHAPE OF A DOG AND THE LONELY NIGHT TRAVELLER.

On one occasion a certain man from Cilcwm, was on a visit in the neighbourhood of Cwrtycadno. When he started to return home it was getting rather late, and he had a long journey to go through a lonely mountainous country. The wizard, Dr. Harries, asked him if he was afraid of such a journey over the mountain in the depth of night. The man confessed that he did not like such a journey at that late hour without a single soul to accompany him, but that he was obliged to go home that night without fail; and so he proceeded on his way. As he journeyed along, the darkness of night overtook him on his way over the mountain, but to his great surprise, when he looked around him, he noticed a black dog following him, or rather walking by his side. The dog was very friendly, and the lonely traveller felt glad of the animal's company. So on they went together; but when they were nearing his home the dog vanished suddenly into nothing. The man was quite convinced that the dog was nothing but a familiar Spirit, in the shape of a dog, sent by the wizard to bear him company in his lonely night journey.

The above story was related to me by the Rev. J. Phillips, vicar of Llancynfelyn.

CONJURERS AND LUNATICS.

About one hundred years ago there lived in the neighbourhood of Pencader, a wizard, named Phillips, who

was very successful in curing lunatics. On one occasion, an old woman from Tregroes, near Llandyssul, took her son to him who had been insane from his birth. The wise man blew into the young man's face, and informed his mother that he would be sane for twenty years, and so it happened; but after twenty years he became insane again as the wizard had predicted.

My informant was Mr. Rees, Maesymeillion, in the parish of Llandyssul, whose father's uncle remembered the lunatic.

The wizard of Cwrt-y-Cadno was also very successful in curing lunatics. He would take the insane to the brink of the river and fire an old flint revolver which would frighten his patient to such a degree that he fell into the pool.

WIZARDS REVEALING THE FUTURE.

It was believed that conjurers could tell fortunes, or reveal the hidden future, and a good many, especially young people, consulted them.

The following is a copy of a card which Harries of Cwrt-y-cadno distributed:—

"NATIVITY CALCULATED."

In which are given the general transactions of the Native

through life, viz:—Description (without seeing the person), temper, disposition, fortunate, or unfortunate in their general pursuits; honour, riches, journeys, and voyages (success therein, and what places best to travel to, or reside in); friends, and enemies, trade, or profession best to follow; whether fortunate in speculation, viz: Lottery, dealing in Foreign Markets, etc., etc., etc. Of marriage, if to marry.—The description, temper, and disposition of the person, from whence, rich or poor, happy or unhappy in marriage, etc., etc. Of children, whether fortunate or not, etc., etc., deduced from the influence of the Sun and Moon, with the Planetary Orbs at the time of birth. Also, judgment and general issue in sickness and diseases, etc.

By Henry Harries.

"All letters addressed to him or his father, Mr. John Harries, Cwrtycadno, must be post paid, or will not be received."

A CONJURER SHOWING A YOUNG MAN HIS FUTURE WIFE.

Harries, Cwrtycadno, had a magic glass, so it is said, into which a person looked when he wished to know or see the woman he was to marry. A young man named Phillips, once had gone from the parish of Llanllawddog, to Cwrtycadno, to show Dr. Harries some of his father's urine, which he took with him in a small bottle, as the old man was very ill. Harries examined it, and told the young man that his father would never get well again. The young man now decided to return home as soon as he could

through Abergorlech, and Brechfa, where he intended staying for the night, as the journey was a long one. Just before he departed, however, Harries asked him, “By the way young man, would you like me to tell your fortune? I’ll do it for 2s. 6d.”; and so it was agreed. The conjurer had a large looking glass, the Magician’s Glass, which was covered with a large board. He took off this covering, and told the young man to look into the glass. so as to see his future wife. He did look stedfastly as he was directed, and saw in the glass the form of a young woman passing by. Meanwhile, the wizard himself had entered alone into a little side room, where he was speaking loudly to a familiar Spirit, or something; but he soon returned to the young man and asked him, “Did you see anything in the glass?” “Yes, I saw a young woman.” “Did you know her?” “No. I had never seen her before: she was a perfect stranger to me.” “Well,” said the conjurer, “whether you have met her or not, that young woman you saw in the glass is to be your future wife.”

Sometime after this, the young man and his brother, both being carpenters, were one day working on the roof of a house which had been damaged by a storm, and it so happened that some woman and her daughter, who were passing by, came to speak to them. When the women had gone away out of hearing, the young man, who had been to Cwrtycadno, said to his brother in surprise: “That young girl was the very one I saw in the Wizard’s Magic Glass.” This was their first acquaintance, and by and by they were married. My informant was their own son who is a carpenter, and lives about a mile from Bronwydd Arms Station, in Carmarthenshire. His name is Benjamin Phillips.

ANOTHER SIMILAR TALE.

About sixty years ago, Isaac Isaac, Tyllain, Llanarth, in Cardiganshire, went to Harries, Cwrtycadno, to consult him about something. The wise man was at the time busy with his harvest, and he asked Isaac to be as kind as to help him a little for telling his fortune, and he did so. As they were working together on the field. Harries asked the young man if he intended going to London? Isaac said, no, but that he had a letter in his pocket he wanted to forward to London. Then Harries took the young man to the house and showed him his future wife in a magic glass. He recognised her at once as the young woman to whom he was already engaged, and whom he finally married, though much against the wishes of the young lady's parents. My informant was Mr. Watkin Evans, Blaenpark, an old man who lives in the parish of Llanarth.

THE WIZARD OF CWRTYCADNO FORETELLING THE FUTURE DESTINY OF A NEW BORN CHILD.

Owen Evans, Maesydderwen, near Llansawel, Carmarthenshire, an old man of 90 years of age, informed me about four years ago that on one occasion, long ago, when a baby, a girl, was born to him and his wife, he went to Dr. Harries, Cwrtycadno, to consult him about the future destiny of the child. The conjurer spoke to him something as follows:—"I hope you will not be distressed when you hear what is going to happen to your dear child; but the truth of it is, she will have a very narrow escape from drowning at the age of four, and death awaits her at the age

of twenty!" My informant then went on to tell me with tears in his eyes, that everything took place exactly as Harries told him. His dear girl at the age of four one day, whilst playing and running along the river side (River Cothy), fell over the banks into the water and nearly got drowned. After this, she never enjoyed good health, and at the age of twenty she died!

Owen Evans informed me that when he went to Cwrtycadno, several other men accompanied him there, and one of them was named John Lloyd, who was a perfect stranger to Dr. Harries. But the wise man through his knowledge of the occult science, was able to tell this stranger that he had a mole on his head, and had met with an accident on his leg, which was true. My informant also added that the wizard "set great importance on the Planet under which a man was born."

Mr. Thomas Davies, Penybont, Llanddewi Brefi, over 90 years of age, vouched for the truth of the following account:—Many years ago, Wiliam Davies, Pistill Gwyn Bach, Llanddewi Brefi, in Cardiganshire, had lost some money, and could not find it, so he went to Cwrtycadno, to consult Dr. Harries about it. The Conjurer told him where to find the money, and warned him to keep away from fairs, lest some accident should befall him. Wiliam was very careful for a time, but at last a son of his got married, and persuaded him to accompany him to a fair at Lampeter. He went, and was thrown down by a horse, and died in a few days.

It is said in the neighbourhood of Caio that Dr. Harries had foretold the death of the Late Lamented Judge Johnes, of Dolaucothy, about thirty years before it took place. Mr. Johnes, who was highly respected, was cowardly murdered by a native of Ireland in 1876.

Mr. D. Owen (Brutus), in his book "Brutusiana" which was published in 1840, condemns the wizard for his fortune telling:

"The first day of winter.
Severe is the weather,
Unlike the first Summer,
None but God can foresee what is to come."

Druidical "Warrior Song."

PREDICTION CONCERNING THE DEATH OF HIS LATE MAJESTY KING EDWARD.

According to Mr. Arthur Mee, Cardiff, in the "Western Mail," May, 1910, astrologers who make a study of national forecasts, had predicted the death of the late King.

SIR RHYS AP THOMAS CONSULTING A WIZARD CONCERNING KING HENRY VII.

When the Earl of Richmond (afterwards Henry VII.) was about to land in Wales from France on his way to Bosworth, Sir Rhys Ap Thomas, consulted a well-known wizard and prophet, who dwelt at Dale, as to whether the Earl would be successful to dethrone Richard III. After much hesitation, and at the urgent demand of Sir Rhys, the Conjurer on the next day prophesied in rhyme as follows:

—

"Full well I wend, that in the end
Richmond, sprung from British race.
From out this land the boare shall chase."

The "Boare" meant Richard III. See "Life of Sir Rhys Ap Thomas," by M. E. James, page 49.

THE CONJURER AND THE LOST OX.

Mr. Thomas Jones, Brunant Arms, Caio, gave me the following account of what took place about 55 years ago, when his father lived at Penlifau, in the parish of Cilcwm, on the mountain side, and near the road which leads over the mountain from Cilcwm to Cwmcothi. A young farmer who lived at a place called Foshwyaid, Cwm Du, near Talley, has taken some cattle to Caio fair, in the month of August. Somehow or other, one of his oxen went astray from the Fair, and could not be seen anywhere in the neighbourhood. The young farmer and others went in every direction in search of the animal, but returned disappointed. At last, the man went to Cwrtycadno, to consult the "Dyn Hysbys." The wise man informed him that his ox had wandered away from the Fair, at first in a northernly, and afterwards in an easterly direction, "and" said he, "if you take the road leading from here over the mountain to Cilcwm, you will meet a man (the conjurer gave a description of the man) who is likely to know something, or at least give you some clue to your lost animal."

The young farmer then went on his way, and after

proceeding for some distance, he did meet a man as the conjurer had told him, and he told him all his troubles. Now this very man happened to be my informant's father who lived close by. Mr. Jones sympathised very much with the young farmer, and though a stranger, invited him home with him to get something to eat, and he accordingly went, and at the house, they talked together for some time. At last, the young farmer had to proceed again on his journey, rather disappointed, as his new friend who had showed every kindness, could give him no information about his lost ox. Jones went with him for a short distance, just to show him a path (a short cut) leading from the house to the road; and after bidding each other farewell, they parted. But before the young farmer had gone far, Jones called him back, and informed him that he had just recollected hearing some men, when coming home from Cilcwm Church last Sunday, talking together about some new ox which they had not noticed before in the field or yard of Tim. Davies, Gweungreuddyn (a path from the Church went close by T. D.'s farm). When he heard this bit of news from Jones, off he went at once as fast as he could go to Mr. Timothy Davies; and to his great joy, when he arrived there, found his stray animal quite safe in the "ffald." The local authorities had discovered the ox wandering about the country; but before the young farmer was allowed to take his animal home with him, the sum of seven shillings was to be paid for faldage. The young man went back to Jones, obtained the loan of seven shillings which he repaid honestly after arriving home with his ox.

My informant also added that the conjurer had addressed the same young farmer as follows:—"My poor fellow, you are in great sorrow," "No" said the farmer, "Yes" said the conjurer again, "you have buried your mother a few weeks ago." The man then confessed that this was quite true. The wise man added, "A more melancholy event still awaits

you at the end of twelve months." And at the end of twelve months the young farmer himself died!

Watkin Evans, Blaenpark, informed me that a farmer in the parish of Dihewyd, Cardiganshire, found a harrow which he had lost by consulting a conjurer.

One John Evans, of Llanddarog, in Carmarthenshire, 85 years ago, lost a bull, but he found the animal at Morfa, Kidwelly, by consulting a conjurer.

THE CONJURER AND THE LOST HORSE.

An old farmer, Mr. David Pugh, Erwlwyd, near Caio, Carmarthenshire, told me the following story a few years ago, and vouched for the truth of it:—

A friend of Mr. Pugh had lost a horse, and after searching in vain for the animal for a whole fortnight, he was at last advised to go to consult the "Dyn Hysbys." He rather hesitated at first, but he, however, went. The man was a farmer in the neighbourhood of Llandovery, but my informant did not wish to mention his name. The Wizard, Harries, of Cwrtycadno, consulted his oracles, but did not know what reply to give to the farmer at first about his animal. "Do tell me" said the farmer most earnestly, "what has become of my horse, or who has taken away the animal? It is such a loss to me to lose such a fine steed." Presently, the wizard informed him that a certain man (whom he described) had found the horse on the road, and caught the animal and tied him to a tree which was close by. After a while, this stranger took him home quietly and closed him in his own stable, fully making up his mind to

sell the horse at the first opportunity. “And I am almost certain he’ll succeed in doing so,” added the conjurer, “I am afraid you’ll never see your horse again.” “Can you do something to prevent the thief selling my horse”? asked the farmer. “Yes,” replied the wizard. The wise man then took some paper or parchment on which he inscribed some magic word, or words, and gave it to the farmer, telling him that so long as the parchment was kept safely in his pocket, the thief could not succeed in selling the horse at the fair. “But what can I do to find my stolen horse”? “Watch on the road next Friday, near Glanbran, and I feel almost certain that you will And your horse before the day is over, grazing on the roadside somewhere in that neighbourhood.”

The farmer then departed with the magic paper safely in his pocket, and when Friday came, he watched on the road, and to his great joy and surprise, he found the horse near Glanbran. Just as he mounted the animal to go home, a young man who passed by, told him that a few days ago, he had seen this very horse offered on sale at Rhayader fair, but that the man who was trying to sell him failed to do so!

A LLANFAIR CLYDOGAU WIZARD.

Mr. Walter Evans (Pentre-Richard), in the Parish of Llanddewi Brefi, informed me a few years ago, before he died, that some years ago, when he lost some sheep, a conjurer who lived on Llanfair mountain, directed or pointed out to him where to find them, and that they were found two days afterwards in some water nearly drowning

as the wise man had said. This Llanfair Clydogau conjurer only died about nine years ago, and until he died people consulted him from the surrounding districts of Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire.

The best service rendered by conjurers to society was to help people to discover thieves, and the superstitious often restored what they had stolen through fear.

On one occasion a man who was often losing potatoes from the field went to Harries, Cwrtycadno, who was a terror to thieves. The conjurer showed him the thief in a magic glass, which enabled the man to discover who the culprit was. In another potato tale, the wise man, by means of his magic art forced the thief to appear at his house and confess his guilt.

THE WIZARD OF LLANPUMPSAINT AND THE DUCKS OF ALLTYFERIN.

Mr. Griffiths, of ‘Rhenallt, an old farmer near Carmarthen, informed me about six years ago that long ago when he was a young man, he was once a servant at Alltyferin. Ducks were continually lost at the farm, and his master who suspected a neighbour as the thief, sent Griffiths with a letter to a conjurer who lived at Fosybroga. The wise man sent a note in reply giving a full description of the thief, and he was caught.

A woman in Pembrokeshire, who had lost a most valuable picture, consulted a well-known wizard, who showed her a picture of the thief in a magic glass. She recognised the

culprit at once as one of her intimate friends. The wizard then wrote the name of the thief on a piece of paper, and pierced it with a needle, and informed his client that if the picture was not restored to her within half an hour the thief would be eaten up of a strange disease.

WIZARD MARKING THE CULPRITS.

It was believed in Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire, that Harries, Cwrtycadno, could mark out thieves, and also persons who had an "Evil Eye," by causing a horn to grow out of their foreheads. A man in Tregaron had witched a woman, but the conjurer marked the mischievous person by putting a horn on his head.

A farmer from the parish of Llangwyryfon, in Cardiganshire, whose cattle had been witched by a neighbour who had an evil eye, went to Llangurig in Montgomeryshire, to consult, a well-known conjurer who only died a few years ago. The Wizard for the payment of 10s. showed a picture of the offender in a magic mirror, and offered to cause him to die of a strange disease. The farmer begged the conjurer not to do that; that he did not desire to kill his enemy, only to punish him, and he was punished. My informant was a farmer who lives near Talybont, Cardiganshire.

This Llangurig wizard was continually consulted by clients from Montgomeryshire, Cardiganshire, Radnorshire, and other counties. Not long ago, there was also a conjurer at Llanidloes, in the same county (Montgomeryshire), who was consulted on all cases of cursed fields, bewitched cattle, horses, pigs, churns, backward lovers, bewitched

women, etc.

A WIZARD AND THE YOUNG MAN WHO HAD BEEN CURSED.

An old man named Evan Morris, who lives at Goginan, near Aberystwyth, informed me that about 60 years ago, a young man in that neighbourhood was struck dumb all of a sudden, that he could not utter a word. As he had neither been ill nor met with an accident it was suspected that he had been witched by some neighbour. So his father at last went over the mountain to Llangurig, about twenty miles off, to consult a well-known wizard named "Savage." The wizard opened his magic book, from which out came a big fly, buzzing or making a humming noise, boom, boom, boom, near the conjurer's face, who exclaimed, "What is the matter with this old fly?" The wise man then struck the insect with his hand and commanded it back into the book, and closed the volume; but he opened it again at another page, and out came another fly of a different colour. This fly again was buzzing till the wizard commanded it back into the book, which he now closed altogether; and addressing the man who had come to consult him, said to him: "You have suspected a certain man in your neighbourhood of having witched your son; but you are wrong; another man whom you do not suspect is the guilty. But your son has not been witched at all; he is under a curse."

Welsh conjurers made a distinction between witchcraft and a curse. Thomas Jones, of Pontrhydfendigaid, informed me that a conjurer at Llangurig, named Morgans, told him

once, that some men who were born under certain planets, possessed an inherent power of cursing, “and their curse,” said he, “is worse than witchcraft itself.”

When the man returned home from the conjurer, to his great joy and surprise, he found his son able to speak. My informant vouches for the truth of the story, and added that this conjurer was so deep in the Black Art that he could do almost anything.

MERLIN.

I have in the preceding pages given some instances of modern and mediæval magicians or wizards; but divination astrology and magic in this country are of very ancient date. The names of Idris Gawr, Gwyddion, the Diviner by Trees, and Gwyn, the son of Nud, have come down to us from prehistoric times. So great was these three’s knowledge of the stars, that they could foretell whatever might be desired to know until the day of doom. In Welsh Mythology, several even of the kingly families are represented as playing the role of magicians, especially Rhiannon, the daughter of Heveydd Hen. Math Ap Mathonwy, King of Gwynedd, could form a maiden out of flowers, and transform men into deers and wolves, etc. But, perhaps, the greatest of all the wizards was Myrddin, or Merlin as he is known among English readers, who lived about the beginning of the sixth century. Myrddin was born in the neighbourhood of Carmarthen, or at least so it is believed; and it is also believed that the meaning of Carmarthen is Myrddin’s town, and the people of Carmarthen to this day feel proud of such a famous

prophet who was born in their town. Merlin (or Myrddin)'s fame spread throughout all the Western parts of Europe, if not to other parts of the world, and his mighty magic adorned the tales of romance, and in the tenth century one eminent scholar on the Continent, went as far as to write, a commentary on his prophecies or prognostications. But to confine ourselves to Welsh writers, we have some account of Merlin by Nennius in the eighth century, and by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the twelfth.

Geoffrey says:—"Vortigern, after the infamous treachery of the long knives, retreated to Mount Erir—which is Eryri, or snowden—and here he ordered the building of a great tower of defence, whose foundations, however, were swallowed up by the earth as fast as they were filled in." The Magicians, on hearing this, said he must procure the blood of "a youth that never had a father," and sprinkle it on the stones and mortar. Vortigern, accordingly, sent messengers to different parts of the country in search of such a youth; and "in their travels they came to a city, called, afterwards, Caermerdin, where they saw some young men playing before the gate, and went up to them; but being weary with their journey, they sat them down there.... Towards evening, there happened on a sudden a quarrel between two of the young men, whose names were Merlin and Dalbutius. In the dispute, Dalbutius said to Merlin, 'As for you, nobody knows what you are, for you never had a father.' At that word the messengers looked earnestly upon Merlin, and asked who he was. They learnt it was not known who was his father, but that his mother was daughter to the King of Dimetia, and that she lived in St. Peter's Church, among the nuns of the city."

Merlin and his mother at the request of the messengers accompanied them from Carmarthen to Snowdon to the presence of King Vortigern; and when the boy was asked who was his father, his mother in reply gave a very

peculiar account of the birth of her son, whose father she declared was a supernatural being, and so had no human father. Then the King said to Merlin, “I must have thy blood.” And when the youth asked the King what good could his blood be more than the blood of any other man, he was informed in reply that the twelve wise men or bards had suggested the blood of a youth in order to make the building stand. Then Merlin asked the bards or magicians what was the real cause that the building of the tower was not a success? But they could give no answer. Young Merlin now upraided them for their ignorance and the cruelty of their suggestion. He then gave orders to dig the ground, and when this was done a lake was discovered. Merlin drained this lake, and at the bottom, as he had predicted, a stone chest was discovered in which there were two sleeping dragons. These, whenever they awoke, fought with each other, and their violence shook the ground, thus causing “the work to fall.” When the King commanded the stone chest to be opened the two dragons came out and began a fierce battle. One of these dragons was white and the other red. At first the white dragon drove the red one to the middle of the pool, then the red one, provoked to rage, drove the white one thither in turn. When the King asked what this should signify, Merlin exclaimed as follows:—“Woe to the red dragon for her calamity draws nigh, and the white dragon shall seize on her cells. By the white dragon the Saxons are signified, and the Britons by the red one, which the white shall overcome. Then shall the mountains be made plains, and the glens and rivers flow with blood. The Saxons shall possess almost all the island from sea to sea, and afterwards our nation shall arise, and bravely drive the Saxons beyond the sea.” Nennius, chap. 43.

The old King Vortigern then left the neighbourhood of Snowdon, and removed to South Wales, and built a fort or

a Castle on a spot known to this day as Craig Gwrtheyrn, or Vortigern's Rock, near Llandyssul and Pencader.

The white and the red dragons respectively symbolised the Celtic and Saxon races, and Merlin's prophecy concerning the final overthrow of the Saxons by the Britons made a deep and lasting impression on the minds of the Welsh people for ages, and even nearly nine hundred years after Merlin's time. Owen Glyndwr found these prophecies highly instrumental in his favour when fighting against the English. According to a little book which I have in my possession entitled, "Prophwydoliaeth Myrddin Wyllt," (Merlin's prophecy), one Owen Lawgoch, who is tarrying in a foreign land, is to drive out the Saxons, and become King under the title of Henry the ninth. Welshmen of the present day, however, believe that Merlin's prophecy was fulfilled in the year 1485, when Henry VII., a Welshman leading a Welsh army to Bosworth Field, became King of England.

There are also many prophecies here and there attributed to Merlin; some of which have been fulfilled, and others to be fulfilled in the future. He had foretold even of the railway train running along the Vale of Towy, which prediction has proved true:

"Fe ddaw y gath a'r wenci ar hyd Glan Towi i lawr;
Fe ddaw y milgi a'r llwynog i Aberhonddu fawr."

"The cat and the weasel shall come down along the banks of Towy;
The greyhound and the fox shall come into the town of Aber honddu," (Brecon).

It is believed that the train has fulfilled these sayings.

In the Vale of Towy, near Abergwili, there is a large stone in a field belonging to Tyllwyd farm. I went to see it myself, and several people in the neighbourhood informed me that a young man was killed when digging under this stone in search of hidden treasure, and that Merlin had prophesied about this.

According to another prophecy of Merlin a fearful catastrophe awaits the town of Carmarthen:—

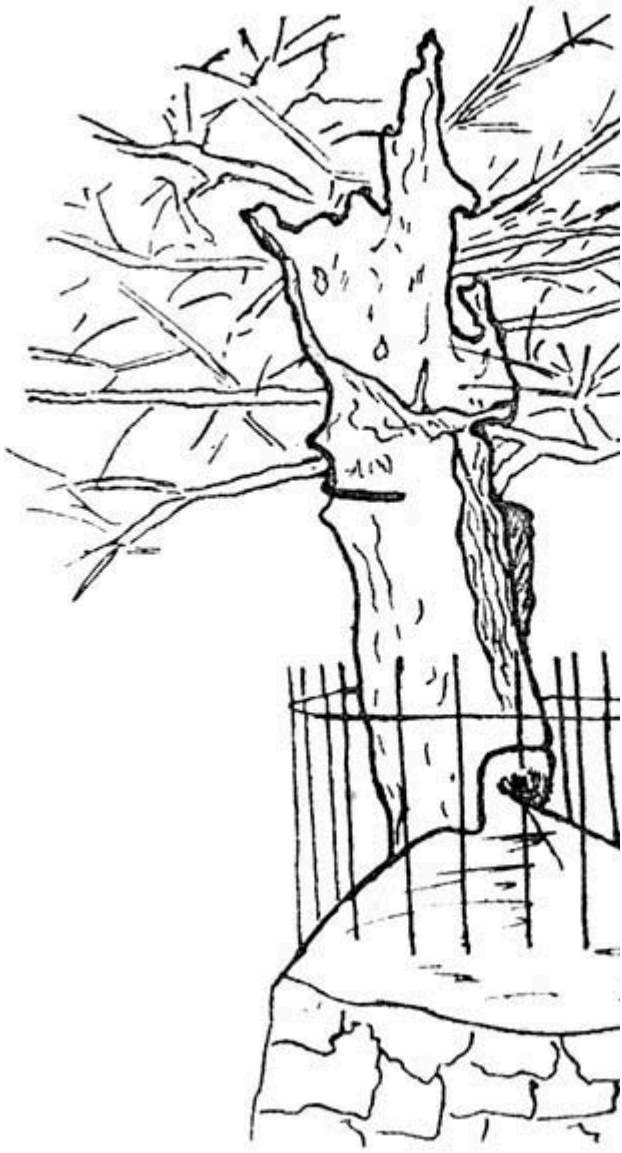
"Llanllwch a fu,
Caerfyrddin a sudd,
Abergwili a saif."

(Llanllwch has been,
Carmarthen shall sink,
Abergwili shall stand).

"Caerfyrddin, cei oer fore,
Daear a'th lwnc, dwr i'th le."

(Carmarthen, thou shalt have a cold morning,
Earth shall swallow thee, water into thy place).

The people of the neighbourhood even to this very day, more than half believe that Carmarthen is to sink. At the end of a long street in that town there is an old tree known as Merlin's Tree, in a very withered condition. Every care is taken to protect it from falling, as Merlin had prophesied that when this tree shall tumble down, the town of Carmarthen shall sink.



MERLIN'S TREE, CARMARTHEN

(Sketched by Mr. Benjamin Isaac).

"When Merlin's Tree shall tumble down.
Then shall fall Carmarthen town!"

(A Prophecy of Merlin).

According to another prophecy attributed to the same ancient wizard, Carmarthen is to sink when Llyn Eiddwen, a lake in Cardiganshire, dries up.

It is said that Merlin had predicted that a bull would go right to the top of the tower of St. Peter's Church, Carmarthen, and that a calf fulfilled this prophecy.

My cousin, the Rev. Joseph Evans, the Rector of Jordanston, in Pembrokeshire, informed me a few years ago that one mile from the town of Fishguard, there is a farm called Tregroes, respecting which Merlin prophesied that it would be in the middle of the town some day. There are now signs that this ancient prophecy is likely to be fulfilled. September 4th, 1909, the Royal Mail Ship, Mauretania, the finest and fastest liner afloat, inaugurated the new Transatlantic Service from New York to Fishguard, so that there is a great future before the place as indicated by Merlin of old. It is also interesting to note that the captain of the Mauretania was a Welshman (Pritchard), and the first passenger to land was also a Welshman, named Mr. Jenkin Evans, brother to the Rector of Jordanston.

I have been informed that a relation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, lives at this very house respecting which Merlin had prophesied.

General Gwynne, a fine old gentleman I met a short time ago at the house of my genial friend, Col. Gwynne-Hughes, of Glancothy, wrote to me as follows respecting another remarkable prophecy of Merlin and its fulfilment:

—

"Glancothy, Carmarthenshire, Oct. 12, 1909.

Dear Mr. Davies,—

I have heard you are writing a book on the Folk-Lore of Wales. Perhaps the following may be of use to you.

Some time in the forties, when I was at the College at Llandovery, my sister, Madam —— speaking of our old property Glanbran, at that time mortgaged, said, there is an old Welsh saying attributed to Merlin to the effect that the Gwynnes should be at Glanbran until a man standing at Dover could speak to another at Calais. Years after, when I was in India, about the year when the telephone or telegraph was perfected between France and England, a document was sent out to me for my signature, which was my final release to the Glanbran Estate as the youngest son of the late Col. Sackville Gwynne of Glanbran Park.

Yours sincerely,
NADOLIG GWYNNE.

According to Giraldus Cambrensis, Merlin had prophesied that a King of England and Conqueror of Ireland, should die in crossing "Llechllafar," a stone of great size which was placed across the stream dividing the cemetery of St. David's from the north side of the Church to form a bridge. When Henry II. passed over it on his return from Ireland a frantic woman called upon Llechllafar to kill him according to Merlin's prophecy.

"The King, who had heard the prophecy, approaching tie stone, stopped for a short time at the foot of it, and, looking earnestly at it, boldly passed over; then, turning round, and looking towards the stone, thus indignantly

inveighed against the prophet: ‘Who will hereafter give credit to the lying Merlin?’ A person standing by, and observing what had passed, in order to vindicate the injury done to the prophet, replied, with a loud voice, ‘Thou art not that King of whom Ireland is to be conquered, or of whom Merlin prophesied!’”

According to an ancient tradition, this stone spoke or groaned once when a corpse was carried over it.

I was informed by many persons who live in the neighbourhood of Abergwili, near Carmarthen, that Merlin was such a giant that he could jump over the Vale of Towy.



MERLIN’S HILL, ABERGWILI.

MERLIN’S FATE.

The end or final fate of Merlin is surrounded by mysteries. A few years ago when I was staying in the neighbourhood of Carmarthen, Merlin's Hill (Bryn Myrddin) was pointed out to me where the great magician still lives (so they say) in a cave in that hill, and held there in imprisonment by an artful woman who contrived his disappearance from among human beings. Moreover, it is added, that if you listen in the twilight, you will hear his groans, and also the clanking of the iron chains which hold him bound. Others say he is heard working in this underground prison.

It seems from Spenser's "Faerie Queen," however, that according to another ancient tradition, Merlin's place of confinement is, or was, a cave near Dynevor, in the neighbourhood of Llandilo:

"And if you ever happen that same way to traveill, go to see that dreadful place. It is an hideous hollow cave (they say) under a rock that lyes a little apace emongst the woody hilles of Dynevowre (Dynevor), etc."

Some stories describe Merlin as being held spellbound in a bush of white thorns in the woods of Bresilien in Brittany. Others say that he died, and was buried at Bardsey Island. But according to the Triads he went to sea and sailed in a house of glass, and was never heard of any more. In this voyage, Merlin took with him the thirteen curiosities of Britain, which were:—

1. Llen Arthur (the veil of Arthur), which made the person who put it on invisible.

2. Dyrnwyn.

3. Corn Brangaled (the horn of Brangaled), which furnished any liquor desired.

4. Cadair, neu car Morgan mwynfawr (the chair or car of Morgan Mwynfawr), which would carry a person seated in it wherever he wished to go.

5. Mwys Gwyddno (the hamper of Gwyddno), meat for one being put into it, would become meat for a hundred.

6. Hogalen Tudno (the whetstone of Tudno), which would sharpen none but the weapon of a brave man.

7. Pais Padarn (the cloak of Padarn).

8. Pair Drynog (the caldron of Drynog), none but the meat of a brave man would boil in it.

9. Dysgyl a gren Rhydderch (the dish and platter of Rhydderch), any meat desired would appear on it.

10. Tawlbwrdd (a chess board, or, rather backgammon board), the ground gold, and the men silver, and the men would play themselves.

11. Mantell (a robe).

12. Modrwy Eluned (the ring of Eluned), whoever put it on his finger could make himself invisible.

13. Cyllell Llawfrodedd,—which was a kind of knife with which the Druids killed their victims for sacrifices.

"The story of Merlin and Vivian as told in Brittany," translated from the French-Breton magazine "L'Hermine," edited by M. Tiercelin, is given in Part X. of the Transactions of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society, from which I give the following short extract—Viviane, the love-making temptress, had enchanted the enchanter (Merlin). He sleeps, says the legend, in the forest of Broceliande, vaulted by an impenetrable hedge, on the

bank of the fountain of love, his head resting on the knees of Viviane; the enchanter enchanted; and nobody has yet awakened the Celtic Orpheus from his eternal slumber. "Ne onques puis Merlin ne issit de ceste tour, où sa mie, Viviane l'avait mis."

PEMBROKESHIRE WOMAN'S PROPHECY FULFILLED.

The following appeared in the "Pembrokeshire County Guardian":—

> "About one hundred and sixty years ago, there lived on a farm near Spittal in Pembrokeshire, a man of the name of David Evans. He had a family of five children: Thomas, the eldest, was born on November 3, 1756, and married Sarah Bevan, of Martel Mill, on Sunday, November 14, 17—, and they lived on a small farm near Trefgarn Rocks, called Penyfeidr. This Sarah Bevan, or Mrs. Evans was, like her husband, noted for her piety, and among her neighbours was possibly more noted for her visions and her ability to foresee and foretell coming events, of which there are many reliable records still existing and talked of in the district to this day. Entering the house one day, she told those present that she had just seen a most remarkable sight below the house in Trefgarn Valley, and described it as a large number of heavily laden carts or waggons going very fast one after the other, and no bullock or horses drawing them, but the first one appeared from the smoke she saw, to be on fire. George Stephenson was the first to introduce steam locomotive power into practical use in the year 1825. So we may state with certainty that the rustics of Pembrokeshire had no idea or knowledge whatever of the railway train at the time that Mrs. Evans saw the

vision. About 54 years ago the railway was brought into Pembrokeshire, and the scheme of the great engineer, Brunel, was to extend it to the sea shore near Fishguard. With this in view, much work was accomplished in cuttings and embankments in Trefgarn Valley, which are now to be seen there. The country people were jubilant, expecting soon to realise the prophetic vision. But strong influence was brought to bear on Brunel, and finally he abandoned that route and took the line to New Milford instead. And the vision and prophecy came to nought. Afterwards the old people looked forward to the joining of Fishguard and Goodwick with the main line, and believed the truth of the story. But, alas! when the branch line was made, it was many miles to the North of Trefgarn, and the old lady and her vision were once more ridiculed, and apparently, there were no further grounds for hoping that the prophecy would be fulfilled.

"When the project of the G. W. Ry. Co. got matured, it was found that the old loop line via Letterston was not suitable for a fast and direct service from Goodwick to London. So it was decided to make a new line from Goodwick through Trefgarn Valley,—thus re-adopting Brunel's original scheme. And last week I actually saw 'a large number of heavily laden carts or waggons going very fast, one after the other, and no bullocks or horses pulling them, but the first one appeared from the smoke I saw, to be on fire.' Just as described, and in the very spot indicated by Mrs. Evans about 100 years ago.

"H.W.E.

"Solva, December 26th, 1905."

The people of Pembrokeshire have been remarkable for their insight into the future; navvies were heard making railway cuttings many years before the introduction of steam locomotive power into practical use.

I have been informed that the sound of a railway engine, whistling, was heard at Llanilar, in Cardiganshire, fifty years before a railway was constructed through the neighbourhood; and it is also said that the sound of blasting was heard at Tyngraig, between Ystrad Meurig and Llanafan, where afterwards a tunnel was made. My informants were Mrs. Lloyd, the Vicarage, Llanilar, and Mr. Jones, Tyncoed.

THE CRIMEAN WAR SEEN IN THE SKIES.

About six months before the outbreak of the Crimean War, in 1853, John Meyler, Cilciffeth, saw a strange mirage in the sky. He was returning home late from Morville, and when nearing Penterwin he saw the image of armies in the skies. There were several battalions at first, and they increased in number till they spanned the heavens. There were two opposing forces, and he could distinctly see the image of men falling and of horses galloping across the firmament, and the clashing of great masses of men. He was so terrified that he called at Penbank and called the attention of Mr. James Morris, who lived at that place at that time, and he saw the same thing. This strange phenomenon appeared for about two hours.

The above account of this strange vision in the skies appeared in the "Cardiff Times," a few years ago, sent to that paper by Cadrawd. Pembrokeshire has always been known as the land of phantasm.

A REMARKABLE FULFILMENT OF A CONDEMNED MAN'S PREDICTION.

In the Churchyard of Montgomery is a grave where the grass refuses to grow, though it is in the midst of luxurious vegetation. The unfortunate man named John Newton, who was buried there in the year 1821, had predicted this as a proof that he was innocent of the charge brought against him at the Assizes, when he was condemned to die on the evidence of two men named Thomas Pearce, and Robert Parker, who charged him with highway robbery. On being asked at the trial why judgment should not be passed upon him, he said before the judge: "I venture to assert that as I am innocent of the crime for which I suffer, the grass, for one generation at least, will not cover my grave." The poor man's prediction proved true, for the grave to this day remains a bare spot.



THE GRAVE ON WHICH THE GRASS WILL NOT GR

(Sketched by Miss E. M. Howes, North Walsham, Norfolk, and now of Llanilar

One of the condemned man's accusers became a drunkard, and the other "wasted away from the earth," and a curse seems to follow every one who attempts to get anything to grow on the spot. At the head of the grave is the stem of a rose tree, and it is said that the man who put it there soon fell sick and died. I had heard of this grave even when I was a boy, and some account of the story respecting it has appeared in the papers from time to time.

SHOULDER-BLADE DIVINATION.

Giraldus Cambrensis, seven hundred years ago, speaking of the Flemings of South Pembrokeshire, in his "Itinerary through Wales," says:—"It is worthy of remark, that these people, from the inspection of the right shoulder of rams which have been stripped of their flesh, and not roasted, but boiled, can discover future events, or those which have passed and remained long unknown. They know, also, what is transpiring at a distant place, by a wonderful art, and a prophetic kind of spirit. They declare also undoubted symptoms of approaching peace and war, murders and fires, domestic adulteries, the state of the King, his life and death. It happened in our time, that a man of those parts, whose name was William Mangunel, a person of high rank, and excelling all others in the aforesaid art, had a wife big with child by her own husband's grandson. Well aware of the fact, he ordered a ram from his own flock to be sent to his wife as a present from her neighbour; which was carried to the cook and dressed. At dinner the husband purposely gave the shoulder bone of the ram, properly cleaned, to his wife, who was also well skilled in this art, for her examination; when, having for a short time

examined the secret marks, she smiled, and threw the oracle down on the table. Her husband dissembling, earnestly demanded the cause of her smiling and the explanation of the matter; overcome by his entreaties, she answered, 'The man to whose flock this ram belongs has an adulterous wife, at this time pregnant by the commission of incest with his own grandson.' The husband, with a sorrowful and dejected countenance, replied, 'You deliver indeed an oracle supported by too much truth, which I have so much more reason to lament, as the ignominy you have published redounds to my own injury.' The woman thus detected, was unable to dissemble her confusion, betrayed the inward feelings of her mind by external signs; shame and sorrow urging her by turns, and manifesting themselves, now by blushes, now by paleness, and lastly (according to the custom of women), by tears.

The shoulder of a goat was also once brought to a certain person instead of a ram's, both being alike when cleaned, who, observing for a short time the lines and marks, exclaimed 'Unhappy cattle that never was multiplied! Unhappy likewise the owner of the cattle, who never had more than three or four in one flock!'

Many persons, a year and a half before the event, foresaw by the means of the shoulder bones the destruction of their country after the decease of King Henry the First, and selling all their possessions, left their homes, and escaped the impending ruin. In our time, a soothsayer, on the inspection of a bone, discovered not only a theft, and the manner of it, but the thief himself, and all the attendant circumstances; he heard also the striking of a bell, and the sound of a trumpet, as if those things which were past were still performing. It is wonderful, therefore, that these bones, like all unlawful conjurations, should represent by a counterfeit similitude to the eyes and ears, things which are past as well as those which are now going on."

It is evident that the Celts, as well as the Flemings, knew something of Shoulder-bone Reading, for J. G. Campbell, in his "Superstitions of the Scottish Highlands," an interesting book presented to me by Countess Amherst, states that this mode of divination was practised, like the augury of the ancients, as a profession or trade; and Pennant, in his "Tours in Scotland," 150 years ago, says that when Lord Loudon was obliged to retreat before the Rebels to the Isle of Skye, a common soldier, on the very moment the battle of Culloden was decided, proclaimed the victory at a distance, pretending to have discovered the event by looking through the bone; and Sir S. R. Meyrick, in his "History of Cardiganshire," writing one hundred years ago, says that the remains of this custom still existed in Cardiganshire in his time; "but the principal use made of the bone is in the case of pregnant women. The shoulder bone of a ram being scraped quite clean, a hole is burnt in it, and it is then placed over the door of the apartment in which the pregnant woman is, and she is told that the sex of her offspring will be precisely the same as that of the first person who shall enter the room."

DREAMS.

A dream was a common way of making known the will of God to the prophets of old. We know from the Bible that important dreams took place in the early ages of the world, and Welsh people, like other nations, believe in the importance of these mysterious night visions, and of their power of forecasting the future, and there are both men and women all over the country who can give instances of dreams which came true. There are, undoubtedly, some

persons whose dreams, as a rule, are reliable; whilst the dreams of others are not to be depended on. It is also said that morning twilight dreams are more reliable than other dreams; and it is believed that a dream which is repeated is more to be relied on than that which occurs only once. I have had most striking dreams myself; indeed almost everything that happens to me has been presaged by a dream. About nine years ago I dreamed that I was delivering a lecture to a large audience, and speaking most fluently. On awaking, I had a distinct recollection of every word I had uttered; and I am now very sorry that I did not write down next morning the lecture which I had delivered in my dream. The most remarkable fact is this: Previous to my dream I had no knowledge whatever of the subject on which I lectured, as I had never studied the subject in my life, and as a psychological curiosity I may mention that by means of my dream I had become possessed of knowledge on a particular subject which would have taken me at least a whole month's hard study to acquire. (I am, of course, used to public speaking).

I have taken notes of few of my latest dreams, and perhaps it would not be out of place to record here a remarkable dream which I dreamt just before this book was going to press:

One night in January, 1910, I dreamed that I was walking near St. Bride's, the country seat of Lord Kensington, in Pembrokeshire, and I met Lord Kensington himself, who spoke to me thus: "Go into the house, Lady Kensington is home, and I'll be with you in a few minutes." Then I went to the door and rang the bell, and the butler took me into the drawing-room. After waiting in the room alone for some time without seeing anyone, all the household servants came to me in a group, dressed in their holiday attire, and informed me that Lady Kensington was not home after all, but that her Ladyship had gone away and

had got lost somewhere in going about, and that Lord Kensington was seeking in vain for her everywhere, but failing to find her anywhere. When I awoke from my dream I felt certain that something had happened to one of the Kensingtons. A day or two after my dream I was surprised to read in the papers that a cable-gram was received in London from Calcutta, announcing the death of Dowager Lady Kensington in India. I discovered that her death took place on the very date of my dream, and that a few days previously Lord Kensington had hurriedly left for India, having received news of the Dowager's serious condition.

In order to add to the interest of the dream, I may state that the very day before I dreamt, I expected every moment to hear of the Dowager's return to England, as her Ladyship knew one or two interesting "traditions of Bridget of Ireland, known as St. Bride," which she intended to write down for me in order to record them in this book, to which she was looking forward, as she was greatly interested in Welsh traditions, especially those of Pembrokeshire.

One night, about seventeen years ago, when I was spending a few days at Penmachno, in North Wales, where I had delivered a lecture, I dreamt that I was receiving a letter; and when I looked at the envelope, I recognised the handwriting at once as that of Lady Hills-Johnes, of Dolaucothy. I then opened the letter and read it all through, and found it was from her Ladyship; and when I awoke up from my sleep I remembered every word of its contents. In the morning as soon as I went down for breakfast, the landlady of the house delivered me a letter which had come by post. I looked at the envelope as I had done in my dream; it was from Lady Hills-Johnes; and when I read it, I discovered that I knew every word of its contents beforehand from my dream.

When I was in Australia ten years ago, I had another remarkable dream about Dolaucothy, just when Sir James Hills-Johnes was leaving home for South Africa, to see his friend Lord Roberts, during the War; but I have been asked by Lady Hill-Johnes not to publish the dream.

A remarkable fulfilment of a dream was reported in the "Aberystwyth Observer" in the year 1888, in relation to the sudden death of the late Colonel Pryse, an uncle of Viscountess Parker, and Great-uncle of Sir Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse, Bart., of the ancient Family of Gogerddan:—"It was not considered safe to break to Viscountess Parker the news of her uncle's death for some days, and Mr. Fryer went up to London to convey to her the information. On his arrival at her residence, in Montague Square, a maid announced to her Ladyship his arrival. 'Mr. Fryer!' she said, 'I know what it is. My uncle is dead. He died on a lane leading from Rhiwarthen to Penwern. I have dreamt four times in four years that this would happen, and the last time was the night before baby was born. I have tried many times to keep him from going that way. Ask Mr. Fryer to come up.' She afterwards said that she meant the road leading to Penuwch which is in the same direction, and that she would know the spot."

The editor of "Blackwood" gives authenticity to the following dream:—A young man, engaged in a china manufactory at Swansea, about the beginning of the last century, dreamed that he saw a man drowning in one of their pools; he dreamed the same a second time, and a third time, and then could not resist making an effort to rise and satisfy himself that it was not so. He did rise, went to the spot, and found the man drowned. A man in the neighbourhood of Newcastle Emlyn, dreamed a similar dream in the 18th century.

The late Rev. J. E. Jenkins, Rector of Vaynor, in

Breconshire, in his interesting book on that parish gives the following account of a girl saved by a dream:—

"The Rev. Williams Jones, afterwards Canon Jones, was curate in sole charge here in 1822, and for many years afterwards. The Old Rectory House and the Glebe land was at that time occupied by a man named Enos Davies and his family. The Rev. W. Jones also had rooms at the Rectory.

"One morning at the end of May in that year, about two o'clock Enos had a remarkable dream. He dreamt the Church was on fire. He suddenly awoke, and in great excitement jumped out of bed and knocked at the bedroom door of Mr. Jones, and cried:—'Master! Master! come down at once, I have dreamt the Church is on fire.' The worthy divine laughed at him, and told him to go back to bed, and not to give heed to foolish dreams and nightly visions. Enos obeyed, but could not sleep. During the day Mr. Jones walked down to the Church, and found everything in the usual order, safe and uninjured. The following morning, at the same hour, strange to say, Enos had the same dream, and again disturbed the peaceful slumbers of his good master. 'Come down to Church, Master,' said he, 'there must be something wrong, I have again dreamt the Church is on fire.' 'All right Enos,' said Mr. Jones; 'I will come with you, it is a fine morning.' By the time they reached the Church it was half-past three. Coming-down the Lych Gate, which was close by the little brook—the old entrance—they were struck with a great awe and a terrified feeling came over them, for they heard a peculiar sound coming, as it were, from the direction of the Church. They stood, listened, and looked at each other in mute astonishment, and Enos's hair stood on end. The sound became plainer: it was like the sound of a sexton digging or opening a grave inside the Church, as was often the custom in those days. Enos trembled, and became as

pale as death; whilst the clergyman, who was a tall strongly built man, entered the churchyard, and stealthily went to listen at the west door. He could distinctly hear a man digging a grave. Mr. Jones soon found that an entrance had been made into the Church through one of the north side windows. Re-tracing his steps to Enos, who was still standing on the road by the brook, his attention was directed to a young girl coming down the steep pathway over Cae Burdudd—'the field of carnage'—the field where the mound is. She came running down merrily, and in a pleasant manner, said—'good morning, Mr. Jones, you are here before me.' 'Yes, my girl,' said the curate, 'where are you going so early?' 'Coming to be married, to be sure;' was her joyous reply. The curate took in the situation in a moment and told her:—'You have made a mistake as to the time. You must wait till eight o'clock; I cannot marry you before eight. Go up to the Rectory to Mrs. Davies and get some breakfast; we shall come after you in a short time. We will wait here until John comes, and will bring him up.' The innocent girl departed as requested, but had not gone far when the south door of the church was opened from within by her treacherous lover. He was at once apprehended by the courageous curate and Enos, and was made to stand over the grave he had prepared for the girl he had shamefully deceived and ruined, and whom he had intended murdering. He pleaded hard for mercy, and, ultimately, in order to avoid public scandal, on his promising to leave the neighbourhood immediately, and never again to return to Vaynor, he was allowed to depart. He was a native of Herefordshire, and was at this time in a service at a well-known farm in the parish. He left at once, and was never heard of afterwards by anyone from this parish. The curate, in a calm, gentle way, partly detailed to the maid the evil intentions of her base lover, and stated how God, in his good providence by the means of a dream, had preserved her from an untimely death.

"The young girl was terribly shocked, and fell unconscious into the arms of the curate. She lost her health, and after a time was taken home to the neighbourhood of Knighton, and in a few months later news reached Vaynor that the poor girl had died of a broken heart, and the curate was asked to go up to bury her, but failed to go. The above account was given me by my predecessor, the Rev. Rees Williams, and was confirmed by the testimony of the late Mrs. Thomas, formerly of Cwm and others. Mrs. Evans, late of Pengellifach, however, added that the would-be murderer was handed over by Mr. Jones to the charge of the Parish Constable, and was afterwards released. It should be remembered that there were but few, if any, fixed pews in the Old Church, only movable benches. Neither was the floor paved or boarded."

CONVERSING WITH THE DEPARTED IN A DREAM.

The following appeared in the "Weekly Mail," Cardiff, for June 18, 1910:—"The Rev. Hugh Roberts, Rhydymain, Dolgelly, discoursed on "The Intermediate State" on a recent Sunday, and in the course of the sermon related the substance of a conversation which he had had with departed friends. "Recently in a dream," he said, "I conversed with an old deacon friend who has been in the intermediate state for some time, and was assured by him that he was not in a state of inertia by any means. It is a 'country' where everybody has something to do—where one and all contribute to make each other happy. However, they pine even in the intermediate state—some are longing for the circles which they left on earth, others pining for

their bodies. But all longing will cease when the Spirit has completed the heavenly bodies."

Welshpeople believe that if a young girl dreams that she has a long hair, that she will marry a very wise man.

To dream of being well-dressed is a sign of wealth and prosperity, especially if you are dressed in silks.

If a person dreams that he is going to get married, it foretells sickness.

If a man dreams that he is surrounded by pigs, some one will come to him to ask him for some money.

To dream of a horseshoe is a sign of good news.

Welshpeople generally believe that it is not good for any one to dream that he is losing his teeth, and that it means either a death or the loss of friends.

To dream of bacon is also considered bad.

If a young man dreams of a full barn, it means that he will marry a wealthy young woman.

Those who are interested in the interpretation of dreams must consult dream-books, as I am not expected to enter fully into such subject here.

CHAPTER X.

THE HEALING ART; OR HOW TO CHARM AWAY DISEASES, Etc.

CHARMS FOR WARTS.

here were and there are still, many charms in use for the purpose of removing warts; and the writer can prove from experience that there are cases of complete cures through the instrumentality of charms.

I remember once when I was a boy I had the misfortune of having two big warts right under my foot, which caused me a great deal of discomfort in walking. As I was complaining about this to my mother, she advised me to go and see a lady friend of hers, who was the wife of a very prominent gentleman in the neighbourhood. I went to the woman and told her everything about the warts. She told me to go home and take a small bit of flesh meat and rub the warts with it. Then I was to go out though the back door, the meat in one hand, and a spade in the other, and after proceeding to the middle of a field, dig a hole in the

ground, and bury the meat in it. Perfect silence was to be observed during the ceremony, and everything to be done in secret, for if detected in the act of burying the meat, the charm lost its efficacy. I did everything as I was directed by the woman, and strange to say within two or three days the warts had disappeared.

Major Price Lewes, Tyglyn-Aeron, informed me that when he was a boy at Llanllear, an old woman in the neighbourhood charmed away warts from his hands.

A woman in the neighbourhood of Ystrad Meurig informed me that she got rid of her warts by washing her hands in the water in which the blacksmith cools iron.

Another way of charming away warts is to pick up small white stones from a brook,—one stone for each wait—and rub the warts with them. Then the stones are to be tied up in paper, and the person who has the warts is to go to the nearest cross roads, and throw the stones over his shoulders, and whoever picks up the parcel gets the warts. A young woman in the parish of Llanarth, in Cardiganshire, did this, and got rid of her warts. Soon after this an old woman who lives in the neighbourhood, passed by, and picked up the parcel of stones, thinking it contained some biscuits or sweets which one of the school children had lost on the way home from school. But to her great surprise, when she opened the paper, she only found small white stones! After this the old woman found her hands covered with warts; but she in her turn charmed them away by washing them with spittle from the mouth. My informant was the old woman herself.

Another charm for warts is to cut a slip of an elder tree, and make a notch in it for every wart. Rub the elder against each wart, and burn or bury it, and the warts will disappear.

In former times Holy Wells were much resorted to by those who desired to get rid of their warts, when a pin was dropped into the well, and a rag with which the warts had been rubbed, hanged on the nearest tree.

ROSEMARY CHARM FOR TOOTHACHE.

Many people still believe that toothache is caused by a worm in the tooth, and it was once thought that to burn a Rosemary bough until it becomes black and place it in a strong linen cloth, and anoint the teeth with it would kill this worm.

According to the old Welsh Magazine, "Y Brython," vol. 3, page 339, there were many charms performed with Rosemary.

Rosemary dried in the sun and made into powder, tied in a cloth around the right arm, will make the sick well.

The smoke of Rosemary bark, sniffed, will, even if you are in gaol, release you.

The leaves made into salve, placed on a wound, where the flesh is dead, will cure the wound.

A spoon made out of its wood will make whatever you eat therewith nutritious.

Place it under the door post and no snake nor adder can ever enter thy house.

The leaves placed in beer or wine will keep these liquids

from becoming sour and give such a flavour that you will dispose of them quickly.

Place a branch of rosemary on the barrel and it will keep thee from fever, even though thou drink of it for a whole day.

"SLIME" OF TROUT AS MEDICINE.

In West Wales once a freshly caught trout was placed in a pan of milk in which it would swim, and after it was supposed that the fish had passed the milk through its gills and left some of its slime in the milk, the milk was supposed to have been given the necessary medicinal powers for the cure of whooping cough and other illness.

CHARMS FOR FITS AND FOR QUINSY.

There is a belief in some parts of West Wales that fits may be cured by wearing round the neck a band made of the hair from the crop of an ass's shoulder. Hair cut at midnight from the shoulder of an ass and applied to the throat was also thought to be efficacious in curing the quinsy.

Charm for Rheumatism.—Carry a potato in your pocket.

A charm for the Ague.— Ague was charmed away by tying on the breast a piece of cheese; and after keeping it

there for a time, throw it away back over the head.

Charms for Whooping Cough.—Drink the milk of a female ass; or buy a penny roll, drape it in calico, bury it in the garden take it up next day, then eat the roll until it is consumed.

ABRACADABRA.

One of the most famous and popular charms in the central parts of Wales—especially Cardigan and Carmarthenshire—was the magic and mysterious word Abracadabra, which was obtained from wizards by paying a certain sum of money for it. The word was inscribed on a paper or parchment, line under line, repeating the same, but with one letter less in each line till it ended in A, as follows:—

A B R A C A D A B R A
A B R A C A D A B R
A B R A C A D A B
A B R A C A D A
A B R A C A D
A B R A C A
A B R A C
A B R A
A B R
A B
A

There are many people even at the present day in West and Mid-Wales who keep this mystic cabala in their houses as a most valuable treasure. It is called “papur y Dewin” (the wizard’s paper). It was considered a protection against

witches and the "evil eye," as well as all other evil influences; and an antidote against fevers. It was effective to protect both persons and animals, houses, etc. Sometimes it was worn round the neck, or on the breast, at other times carried in the pocket, and kept in the house. It was also the custom to rub the charm over cattle or to tie it round their horns, especially when witchcraft was suspected.

This mysterious word, Abracadabra, to which the superstitious attributed such magical power was, according to some, invented by one Basilides, and that he intended the name of God by it. Others say that it was the name of an ancient heathen deity worshipped in Syria, or in Assyria. Dr. Ralph Bathurst is of the opinion that the word is a corrupt Hebrew: dabar is verbu, and abraca is benedixit; that is verbum benedixit.

As the charm appears very much like a pyramid (though upside down), perhaps that has something to do with the superstition concerning its magical power: anything in the shape of a pyramid is considered very lucky, quite as much as—if not more so—than a horse-shoe.

THE PENTACLE.

Cadrawd, in the "Welsh Tit-Bits" column of the "Cardiff Times," speaking of South Pembrokeshire, says:—

The pentacle, or pentalpha—a figure consisting of five straight lines so joined and intersected as to form a five-pointed star—is still regarded in Fleming-land as a physical charm and the repository of Talismanic power.

This credulity is identical with the traditions of the Greek Christians, who used the figure as a mystic sign in astrology and necromancy. The figure was held in veneration by mediævalists, and was known as the "Pentacle of Solomon." Sir William Jones, the great Oriental scholar, in his work on "Folklore," observes that "it is worthy of remark that at the present time the magical pentalpha in the western window of the southern aisle of Westminster Abbey is one of the emblems which still exist and speaks to the initiate that the black monks who once chanted in the choir were deeply read in occult science."

Some years ago, when on a tour in quest of lore, a Pembrokeshire gentleman tells us that he remembers being puzzled by the appearance of a number of pentacles being cut into the bark of several oak trees near the solitary dwelling of a charmer. He addressed the Solon a few questions on the meaning of these strange figures, but was cut short with the reply, "They be signs." On Cresswell Hill, near Lady's Well, there grows a row of tall beeches, on one of which may be seen the figure of a pentacle. It stands about 15 feet from the ground, and the wound was evidently made well nigh a century ago, judging by its appearance. There is a tale that many years ago the "White Ladies" were charmed away or banished from the vicinity of the Lady's Well, of Cottage Dingle, by means of several pentacles being cut into the bark of trees growing near by.

CHARMS FOR CATTLE AND PIGS.

An old man named Evan Morris, Goginan, near Aberystwyth, informed me that he had several times

consulted a conjurer in cases of bewitched cows and pigs. The conjurer, said my informant, took a sheet of paper on which he drew a circular figure very much "like the face of a clock." Sometimes he made more than one figure, which he filled in with writing. In fact, the paper was covered all over with writings and figures and symbols; and it took the wise man about half-an-hour to do this. This paper or charm, the conjurer gave to my informant, and charged him to rub the bewitched animal's back with it, "all over the back right from the ears to the tail," and at the same time repeating the words, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Morris added that this charm never failed. His sister-in-law once had a sow which refused to take any food for nine days; a farrier was sent for, but when he came, he could do nothing. At last, my informant went to a conjurer and obtained a charm, with which his sister-in-law, after some hesitation, rubbed the sow, repeating "In the name, etc." and to their great surprise the sow fully recovered and began to eat immediately, and soon ate up all the food intended for two fat pigs. When I asked my informant to show me one of the papers he obtained from the conjurer, he stated that he never kept such paper longer than twelve months. I next asked him if he had read one of the papers, and what were the words written on it? He replied that he could not decipher the conjurer's writing.

Mr. Hamer, in "The Montgomeryshire Collections," vol X., page 249, states that a paper or charm in his possession opens thus:—

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen ... and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ my redeemer, that I will give relief to —— creatures his cows, and his calves, and his horses, and his sheep, and his pigs, and all creatures that alive be in his possession, from all witchcraft and from all other assaults of Satan. Amen."

Mr. Hamer also states that "at the bottom of the sheet, on the left, is the magical word, "Abracadabra," written in the usual triangular form; in the centre, a number of planetary symbols, and on the right, a circular figure filled in with lines and symbols, and underneath them the words, 'By Jah, Joh, Jah?' It was customary to rub these charms over the cattle, etc., a number of times, while some incantation was being mumbled. The paper was then carefully folded up, and put in some safe place where the animals were housed, as a guard against future visitations."

In West Wales, there was once a kind of charm performed upon a cow after calving, when some fern was set on fire to produce smoke, over which a sheaf was held until it was well-smoked. Then it was given to the cow, to be consumed by the animal.

THE CURE OF RICKETS.

The complaint which is called in West Wales "llechau" means rickets, a complaint to which children are subject. It was thought that it could be cured by cutting a slit in the lobe of one of the child's ears. The practice was once common in Pembrokeshire and Cardiganshire and other parts; and Mr. H. W. Williams, of Solva, mentions in "Cambrian Notes and Queries," for January 11th., 1902, of a man in the Rhondda Valley who had recently cut the rickets. He was a Cardiganshire man.

HOW TO CURE A DOG THAT HAS BEEN BITTEN BY A MAD DOG.

Write down on a bit of paper the words “Arare, cnarare, phragnare,” in three lines as follows:

Arare Charare Phragnare.
Phragnare Cnarare arare
Arare cnarare phragnare.

Also write down in addition the name of the dog.

Having done this, put the paper in a piece of bread and give to the dog to eat. About the middle of the last century, when mad dogs were common, this “prescription” was considered “a sure and certain cure”; or at least, so says my informant, an old farmer in the neighbourhood of Ystrad Meurig, who also added that the mountain farmers obtained this charm from Dr. Harries, the wizard of Cwrtycadno.

HEALING STONES.

There is at the present day preserved at Gilfachwen, Llandyssul, by D. J. Lloyd, Esq., a small white stone, not quite the size of an egg. The stone is comparatively soft, and was supposed to possess healing power to cure people bitten by mad dogs. A little substance of the stone was scraped off, and mixed with milk and given as a dose to the patients. In years gone by—though not now—people believed so much in this stone that some travelled long distances to Gilfachwen; but how many of them were

cured I have not been able to discover. The stone is called Llaethfaen, and when I visited Gilfachwen about five years ago, Mr. Lloyd showed me the interesting relic, and a few weeks afterwards I received from the same gentleman, the following communication by post, with an enclosed copy of his late brother's MS. concerning the stone:—

Gilfachwen,
Llandyssul,
Cardiganshire,
Feb. 20th, 1905.

Sir,—

I send you, as promised, a copy of all my late brother knew about the Llaethfaen. He died in 1889, but the paper was written many years before his death. There is no record of where the stone was found, or how it came to the Rev. D. Bowen's hands.

I remain,
Yours truly,
D. J. LLOYD.

The following is a copy of the paper written by the late Mr. John Lloyd:—

LLAETHFAEN.

I know very little about this stone or what curative power it has or was supposed to have. I only know that it was very much in request many years ago. It came to my father's

possession on the death of his uncle, Rev. David Bowen, of Waunifor about the year 1847. In those days and for many years afterwards, mad dogs were very "fashionable," a summer never passing without one hearing of a great many people having been bitten, and, consequently, a great many people called at Gilfachwen for a dose of the Llaethfaen, and whether it had curative or preventive powers or not, none of the patients were ever known to be attacked with hydrophobia. People who had been bitten would travel immense distances in order to get the stone. I remember a whole family, father, mother, and four or five children, who had been bitten by the same dog, arriving at Gilfachwen early one summer morning, before anyone was up, having travelled all night in order to be treated with the stone cure; they went away very happy and relieved in mind, after each had received a dose. It has not been used now for many years. The last instance I recollect was this: two men employed in a Brewery at Llanon, on the Cardigan coast, had been bitten by the same dog, supposed to be mad, arrived here on a Sunday afternoon; poor fellows, they looked utterly miserable and wretched; they had spent nearly a week enquiring for the stone, and meanwhile, had been advised by some old woman who was supposed to be learned in some ailments, not to eat any food; this advice they very foolishly followed, and when they arrived here, they were truly in a terrible plight. After giving each of them a dose of the Llaethfaen and a good meal they went away happy and never heard of them since.

JOHN LLOYD, Gilfachwen.

It is rather interesting that Iolo Morganwg saw a stone of this kind in the year 1802, in the neighbourhood of Bridell, North Pembrokeshire. The following extracts from Iolo's Diary appeared in "Young Wales," June, 1901:—"Leave

Cardigan, take the road to Llanfernach. Bridell Church.... Meet a man who carries a stone about the country, which he calls Llysfaen. Scrapes it into powder with a knife, and sells it at about five shillings an ounce as an infallible remedy for the canine madness. He says that this stone is only to be found on the mountains after a thunderstorm, that every eye cannot see it. He showed me the stone, and when I assured him and a little crowd that had gathered about him, that the stone was only a piece of the Glamorgan alabaster, the poor fellow was confounded and seemed very angry; but I was surprised to hear many positively assert that they had actually seen the Hydrophobia cured in dogs and man with this powder given in milk, and used as the only liquid to be taken nine days, and the only food also.... The name by which this fellow named his stone is obviously a corruption of Cleisfaen, from its blushy white colour, veined or spotted with a livid or blackish blue colour like that of a bruise (clais)."

The excellent old Welsh Magazine "Y Gwyliedydd" for the year 1824, page 343, gives an account of two other such stones, one of them preserved at Maes y Ffynon, Maelienydd, and the other at Llwyn Madog, Breconshire. How these two stones were discovered the following story is given:—A man attacked with hydrophobia wandered away one day and slept on a hill, where he dreamt that a remedy for his disease was to be found in the ground under his head, where he was sleeping. After digging the ground, two white stones were discovered.

A healing stone supposed to have descended from the sky was discovered on a farm called Disgwylfa, in Carmarthenshire.

THE PHYSICIANS OF MYDDFAI.

The following extracts from the book of remedies of The Physicians of Myddfai, will not be irrelevant, as those celebrated Physicians were of Fairy origin, having been furnished with medical prescriptions by their supernatural mother, the Fairy lady of Llyn y Fan, in Carmarthenshire.

TO EXTRACT A TOOTH WITHOUT PAIN.

"Take some newts, by some called lizards, and those nasty beetles which are found in ferns during summer time, calcine them in an iron pot and make a powder thereof. Wet the forefinger of the right hand, insert it in the powder, and apply it to the tooth frequently, refraining from spitting it off, when the tooth will fall away without pain. It is proven."—Physicians of Myddfai.

FOR THE BITE OF A MAD DOG.

"Seek some plantain, and a handful of sheep's sorrel, then pound well in a mortar with the white of eggs, honey, and old lard, make it into an ointment and apply to the bitten part, so that it may be cured."—Physicians of Myddfai.

FOR PAIN IN THE EYE.

"Seek the gall of a hare, of a hen, of a eel, and of a stag, with fresh urine and honeysuckle leaves, then inflict a wound upon an ivy tree, and mix the gum that exudes from the wound therewith, boiling it swiftly, and straining it through a fine linen cloth; when cold, insert a little thereof in the corners of the eyes, and it will be a wonder if he who makes use of it does not see the stars in mid-day, in consequence of the virtues of this remedy."—Physicians of Myddfai.

HOLY BREAD AS A REMEDY.

"Black or Holy Bread is that which has been made on Good Friday and kept for twelve months. It is stored in the cottage-roof where it keeps dry and becomes black, and is consumed on Good Friday only. This bread is here said to be an excellent remedy for people and cattle suffering from certain complaints."—The Church Plate of Radnorshire by the Rev. J. T. Evans, page 15.

HOW TO CURE A "FOUL FOOT."

"If a hoofed animal is found to be suffering from "Foul Foot" it must be taken to a field, or sward, and the impression made on the ground by one of its hoofs must be carefully cut out and placed upside down on a hedge or

bush; when the turf has withered the animal will be cured."—Church Plate of Radnorshire, page 16.

PILLS OF DEAD MEN'S BONES.

Pentrevor, in the "Pembroke County Guardian," says:—I have a valuable recipe for quack doctors. Mr. George Williams, knows of a young lady who was one day cleaning a window when a flash of lightning so frightened her that she became subject to fits. As an infallible cure, someone suggested that a dead man's bone be procured. Llanwnda Churchyard was visited for the purpose, while a new grave was being dug, and dead men's bones were thrown up by the spade. A bone was found and cleaned, ground into powder and made into pills, which the patient took, and was completely cured.

GWELLA CLEFYD Y GALON, OR HEART DISEASE, A LOVE SICKNESS.

A writer in "Cymru Fu" an interesting reprint from "The Weekly Mail," says:—

It is a well-known fact that "clefyd y Galon," or love-sickness is a very prevalent complaint in Wales, especially among young females who have been jilted, or have failed to win the affection of the young man whom they admire best. The lamented Talhaiarn knew all about it when he

penned the line in one of his love songs:—

"Minau'n ceisio caru Gwen, a hithau'n caru Roli."

A cure of this disease has been for centuries, and still is, a secret of great value in the Principality, and there are many old women, and some young men, now living, who are making splendid profits out of the secret they have in their possession. An old wag called "Ned y Wain," who resided near Aberystwyth; Harries, Cwrtycadno; and a shrewd old woman in the neighbourhood of Ystumtuen, Cardiganshire, practised the "cure" as a part of a professional conjuring, and many excellent but ridiculous stories are current anent the visits of young females, especially the "Ladies of Borth," to the chambers of the enchanters. The "secret" came into my possession thirty-eight years ago in the following manner:—

When a young lad at home, I had the privilege of visiting a farm house, the last on the borders of Cardiganshire, adjoining Montgomeryshire, where resided a wealthy young widower now living. The landlady of the adjoining farm on the other side of the River Llyfnwy, during my stay, used to cross the river frequently to visit the young widower, with whom she spent hours closeted in the parlour. The frequency of her calls, and the great secrecy observed at her coming and going, drew my attention, and provoked my curiosity, and I began to twit the young widower, who was a local preacher, of something he could not very well relish, and in order to clear himself of all suspicion, he told me that the woman visited him only to cure Clefyd-y-galon; and handed over to me the cherished secret, which I now divulge as a relic of the dark days of Wales, and for the amusement of the readers of "Cymru Fu."

The MS. was in Welsh, of which the appended is a

translation:—

1st.—Ask the name of the person, and the surname, and the age; and take a double threaded yarn and measure it with your naked arm from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger three times, naming the person, and saying the age, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Then put a mark on the thread, and if it is on the person the thread will shorten, but it not, the thread will lengthen. For example, say thus—I am Joseph, thirty-six years of age in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; and measuring, and say it each time while measuring; and do not cut the thread until you have measured three times. It is necessary that the thread should be scoured white wool. Take care not to put the age of the person more than it is. Then put it round the neck of the person, and leave it there for three nights; then take it from the neck and bury it under the ashes in the name of the Trinity. Put a knot on one end of it after cutting it. It is necessary to look several times if the person is recovering or not. Should the thread shorten above the middle finger, there is but little hopes of his recovery; nevertheless, many recover when it shortens the finger's length. It is necessary to keep the whole affair as secret as you possibly can. Again, take notice, it is necessary to measure three lengths from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger; then put a mark on the spot, or let anyone take hold of it; then begin to measure the same way again, naming as said before until you have measured three times, and take notice, as said before if the thread shortens.

THE MEDICINE.

Six penny worth of gin, or quart of beer, four penny-worth of best saffron; give them a boiling on a slow fire, and take them for seven mornings, after putting red hot steel in to warm it.

TOUCHING; OR THE CURE OF THE DISEASE KNOWN AS "THE KING'S EVIL."

In the new and valuable History of Radnorshire (p. 321), published by Davis and Co., Brecon, appeared the following transcript of a printed paper, now in a decayed state, which was pasted on a board and placed in a conspicuous part of the Church of Diserth, in that County: —

"At the Court of Whitehall, the 9th of January, 1683.

"Whereas by the Grace of God, the King and Queen of this Realm, by and for many years past, have had the happiness by their sacred touch, and invocation of the name of God, to cure those who are afflicted with the disease called the King's Evil; and His Majesty in no less measure than any of his royal predecessors, having had success therein, and in his most gracious, and pious disposition, being as ready and willing as any King or Queen of this realm ever was in anything to relieve the distresses and necessities of his good subjects; yet in his princely wisdom, foreseeing that in this (as in all other things) order to be observed, and fit times are necessary to be appointed for the performance of this great work of charity, his Majesty was therefore this day pleased to declare in Council his royal will and pleasure to be that (in regard heretofore the usual times of

presenting such persons for this purpose have been prefixed by his royal predecessors) from thenceforth be from the Feast of All Saints, commonly called All Hallowtide to Christmas until the first of March, and then to cease till Passion Week, on account of the temperature of the season, and in respect of contagion, which may happen to his Majesty's Sacred person. And when his Majesty shall at any time think fit to go, any progression, to appoint such other times for healing as shall be convenient. And his Majesty doth order and command that from the time of publishing this his Majesty's order, none present themselves at his Majesty's Court to be healed of the said disease, but only at, or within the times for that purpose appointed as aforesaid. And His Majesty was further pleased to order that all such as shall hereafter repair to the Court for this purpose, shall bring with them certificates under the hands and seals of the —— or minister, and of both, or of one of the Churchwardens of the respective parishes whereto they belong, and from whence they come, testifying according to the truth, that they have not at any time before been presented to the intent of being healed of that disease. And all ministers and Churchwardens are ordered to be careful to examine into the truth before they give certificates, and also to keep and register the names of such persons, to whom such certificates they shall from time to time give. And to the end that all His Majesty's loving subjects may be informed of His Majesty's command, His Majesty was pleased to direct that this order be published in all parish churches, and then to be affixed to some conspicuous place there; and that to that end a convenient number of copies be sent to the Most Reverend Father in God, the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Lord Archbishop of York, who are to take care that the same be distributed to all the parishes in their respective provinces."

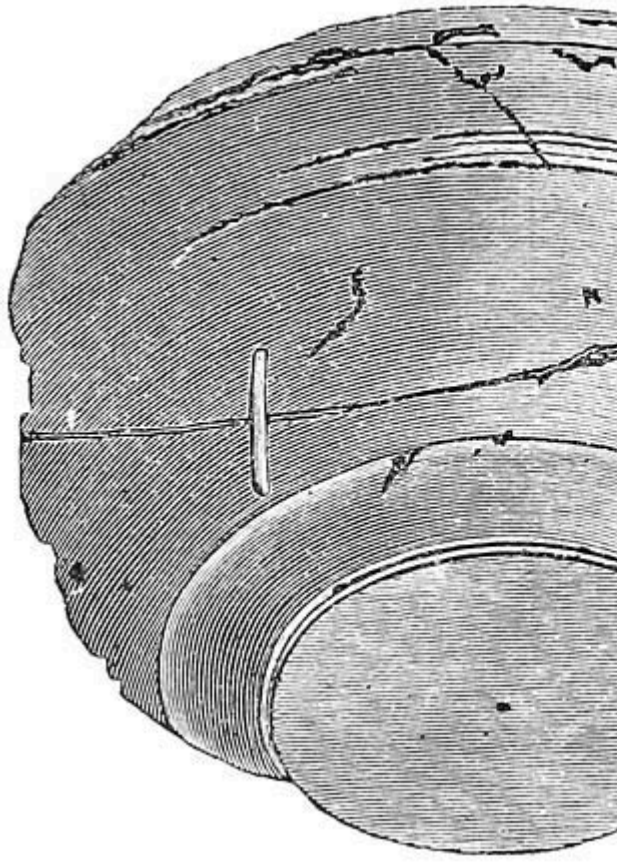
The above proclamation was issued in the Reign of Charles II.

HOLY RELICS.

THE NANTEOS CUP.

There is preserved at the mansion of Nanteos, near Aberystwyth, a sacred healing cup known in Welsh as the "Phiol," which interesting relic was shown me a few years ago by Mrs. W. B. Powell, to whom, and to the genial Squire, I am indebted for much kindness and respect. In the same week an intelligent and wealthy Roman Catholic lady—an invalid—came all the way from London, as she had such faith in the efficacy and healing virtues of the Sacred Cup.

The Cup is of a very dark wood and supposed to have been formed from the wood of the true Cross, and it seems to have been preserved in the Abbey of Strata Florida. At the time of the Dissolution, the Abbey, lands and goods, were given to the Stedman family, who also carefully preserved the relic, and from that family it passed over to the Powells as well as the demesne.



THE HEALING CUP.

Until a few years ago it was usual for people who were ill, especially those suffering from hemorrhage to send to Nanteos for the loan of this healing cup, as it was supposed to possess healing power which could only be called miraculous, and there are many instances of cures believed to have been effected by taking food and medicine or wine

out of the cup. It is a great pity that this interesting relic is now in an unshapely condition, having been considerably damaged by some of the patients who were not content with drinking from it, but tried to bite away parts of the cup itself.

It is quite possible that this holy relic was the chalice therein our Lord consecrated the wine and water at the institution of the Eucharist, and in which was said to be preserved some of the blood which fell from the Saviour's wounds as he hung on the cross.



NANTEOS

Reproduced from the drawing by A. Weight Matth

In an interesting little book written five years ago, by Miss Ethelwyn M. Amery, B.A., entitled "Sought and Found," the writer, after giving the story of the the Holy Grail, concludes. "Not far from the sea-side town of Aberystwyth, in Mid-Wales, stands the House of Nanteos, the country seat of the Powells. The family is an ancient one; it was ancient in the days of the Reformation, and is possessed of all the traditions of antiquity, including a phantom coach, which foretells death. To this house came, one summer's day, a party of holiday-makers from Aberystwyth—ordinary twentieth century people, with all the most up-to-date ideas—and to them was shown the house and its treasures. There was old armour in the hall, old china in the gallery, a wonderful carved arch in the drawing-room, and many other things which attract the sightseer, attracted one and another of the party. But there were a few who had no eyes for these things; to them the centre of interest was found in a small glass, carefully covered with silk, which was brought out to the lawn from its home in the library, so that all might more easily see it. Now those who looked at this case wondered what this treasure could be which was thus carefully guarded, and when the cover was withdrawn, the astonishment of many more than equalled their previous curiosity, for in this case was a fragment of wood, at first sight shapeless and worm-eaten (and many saw no more than this), but those who looked more closely saw that this worm-eaten fragment was shaped like a wooden bowl about five inches high, of which one side was broken nearly down to the foot, and the other part was roughly held together by two rivets. Many having seen this were satisfied, and went away, but some listened to what their hostess told them concerning the cup, and this is the story she told:

"'Many years ago, when Henry VIII. was destroying the Monasteries, his servants came into Wales, and hearing of

an ancient Monastery among the hills, where only seven old monks remained to guard their treasure, he determined to destroy the Abbey and seize their goods. But the monks were warned by friendly neighbours, and fled by night, bearing their treasure with them. Their journey was long and dangerous for such old men, but they reached the House of Nanteos in safety, and deposited the treasure they had suffered so much to save. One by one the old monks died, and at the point of death he entrusted the treasure to the owner of the house that had sheltered them, until the Church should once more claim its own. But the Church has not yet claimed it, and it is that treasure of the monks which you now see.'

"And again some were satisfied and went away, only wondering that the old monks risked their lives for so small a thing. But those who remained heard further, that the monks had regarded this cup as sacred. Many reasons were given for this: one was that it had a Communion Chalice, another that it possessed miraculous power of healing, but the true reason is told only to the few who press closely for it, and it is thus:—

"Not for its healing properties alone was this cup treasured, not because from it the Monks had received the Communion wine; the cup was older than the Monastery—indeed, the Monastery had been built to receive it; it had been handed down from Abbott to Abbott through the ages, and in each age its secret was told to one or two, that they might guard it the more carefully, for this cup is none other than the one from which our Lord drank at the Last Supper—the cup so eagerly sought for by King Arthur's knights; found and handled by many, who, because of their blindness were unable to perceive the treasure which was before them; seen and realized by the pure knight Galahad, and then hidden from common touch and sight during the sinful days which followed, but preserved carefully

through them all, and powerful even yet to give to those who will wait for it, a faint—alas! very faint—glimpse of Galahad's vision, and to remind them that even yet 'The pure in heart shall see God.'"

Just as I am sending this to the press, Mrs. Powell of Nanteos, showed me a letter which she had just received from a noble French lady begging her to send to her in a letter, an handkerchief, or ever a rag, which had been tied round this Healing Cup for 24 hours.

THE STAFF OF ST. CURIG.

In the Church of St. Harmon, Radnorshire, was once preserved a pastoral staff supposed to have belonged to St. Curig, the founder of Llangurig, in Montgomeryshire. Giraldus Cambrensis says that this staff was "covered on all sides with gold and silver, and resembling in its upper part the form of a cross; its efficacy has been proved in many cases, but particularly in the removal of glandular and strenuous swellings."

PENGLOG TEILO (TEILO'S SKULL.)

A relic known as "Penglog Teilo" is still preserved at Llandilo Llwydiarth, Pembrokeshire. I give a full account of it in my chapter on Holy Wells.

CHAPTER XI.

FOLK-LORE OF FOUNTAINS, LAKES, AND CAVES.

HOLY WELLS.

here is much Folk-Lore in connection with wells, in Wales, and an interesting volume might be written on the subject. Holy Wells were once much frequented by devotees in search of health, omens, or prognostications of coming events; and even at the present day some of them are made use of as wishing wells by young men and young women, who throw a bent or a crooked pin into the well, and wishing at the same time. In the old times when "Gwyliau Mabsant," or Saints' Fetes, were in vogue in Wales, wells were sometimes the scenes of great merriment, both before and even after the Reformation. According to an old writer they were much frequented in the time of Queen Elizabeth. The habit of tying rags to the branches of a tree close to the well was well-known once in several places. This was done by people who were

suffering from maladies. The rag was first dipped in the water, and the afflicted part of the body bathed with it. Afterwards before going away from the well the rag was tied to the branch of a tree near it. It is also worth mentioning that this ceremony is in vogue in Eastern Countries as well, such as Arabia and Persia. As far as Wales is concerned, some of the wells frequented in times past, possessed medicinal properties; but it must be admitted that some of the superstitious ceremonies which were performed at them, must have come down from pre-Christian times; and it seems evident that water was once an object of worship, or at least of veneration, and that offerings were made either to the water itself, or more probably to the tutelary god of the fountain. This was the opinion of the late Rev. Elias Owen, F.S.A., who had made a special study of the subject all his life-time. That the inhabitants of Great Britain were, in ancient times, given to the adoration of fountains, is evident from the fact that in 960, King Edgar commanded by Canon law "That every priest industriously advance Christianity and extinguish heathenism and forbid the 'Worship of Fountains, and necromancy and auguries.'" But finding the worship of fountains too strong to put down at once, the priest effected a compromise, by transferring veneration from the tutelary god by dedicating the well to a saint, and building a church on the spot, and baptised his flock in the well; nevertheless many pagan customs of well worship lingered on from generation to generation. At the present day in some places, we find a village pump situated at the corner of the Churchyard, which is not at all a good thing from a sanitary point of view. But we must bear in mind that the well was there before the Churchyard, and that in most of such cases the site of the Church had been fixed upon because of the virtue and attractions of the well.

ST. TEILO'S WELL.

This strong spring rises within a short distance of the ruined church of Llandilo Llwydiarth, near Maenclochog, in Pembrokeshire, and close by, there is a farm-house in which a skull, traditionally called "Penglog Teilo," (Teilo's Skull) is kept, and has been kept from time immemorial. This skull is used for drinking water out of from St. Teilo's Well. In former times St. Teilo's Well had a wide-spread reputation as a healing well, and the sick from all parts of South Wales resorted to it; but it was considered absolutely necessary to drink the water out of the skull, which had to be dipped in the well, and filled with water, and handed to the patient by the hereditary keeper. The present keeper of the relic is Mr. Melchior, an intelligent farmer, who informed me that his ancestors had been keepers of the skull from time immemorial. How the skull first came there, Mr. Gibby, of Llangolman, gave the following tradition:—When St. Teilo was dying he bade a female servant take his skull from Llandilo, in Carmarthenshire, to Llandilo, in Pembrokeshire, and that if this was done, the skull would be a blessing to coming generations of men who would have their health restored by drinking water out of it. According to another tradition which I have heard, the skull came from Llandaff Cathedral, where St. Teilo was Bishop, though born in the neighbourhood of Tenby. If we believe the old legend, the miracles he worked in death were marvellous; for, "on the night of his decease, there arose a great dispute between the clergy of the three Churches each asserting its authority and privileges for obtaining his body; but at length, attending to the advice of discreet men, they had recourse to fasting and prayer, that Christ, the great judge, who is the true authority, and privilege of holy persons, should declare by some sign, to which of them he would be pleased to commit the body of the saint. And in the

morning a certain elder, looking towards the place where the body was, spoke with a loud voice, saying, "Our prayer, brethren, has been heard by the Lord, who deprives no one of his reward; arise, and behold what things have been done by Christ the meditator between God and man, that our dispute might be settled; and as in the life so in the death of the holy confessor, Teilo, miracles should be performed." For, lo! they saw there three bodies, to which there was the same dimensions of body, the same beauty of countenance; they had the lineaments of the whole frame, without any difference. So peace being restored, each with their own corpse returned homewards, and they buried the different bodies in those several places with the greatest reverence."

St. Teilo died in the year 566, and people of the present day hardly believe that the relic at Llandilo Llwydiarth is the real skull of this saint, though the skull in question is a very old one, and only the brain pan now remains. About five years ago an old man named John Griffiths, living in the village of Maenclochog, informed me that he well remembered the time when people came to St. Teilo's Well, from all parts of the country, for the alleviation of their ailments, "and were cured" said he, "by faith." The same old man also told me that when a boy, he and other two boys who were suffering from the whooping cough, were sent by their mothers early in the morning to drink water from the well out of the skull. They did so and got rid of their coughs entirely. I was told by another person in the neighbourhood, that about seventy years ago, a gentleman from Glamorganshire, drove his consumptive son in a carriage all the way to Pembrokeshire, to try this healing fountain of St. Teilo, but arrived home in Swansea without feeling any better. He had drunk the water from the well, but not out of the skull. His father took the boy all the way to St. Teilo's Well a second time, and now made

him drink out of the skull, and was completely cured of his complaint. When I was spending a few weeks at Maenclochog, some years ago, in quest of information, I accompanied Mr. Melchior to the well one day, and drank out of the skull. But, unfortunately, I did not get rid of my cold, from which I was suffering at the time, but, perhaps, my faith was not strong enough.

THE PRIEST'S WELL.

"There is a well on the Picton Castle Estate, situated near the Red House Cottages, called the Priest's Well, which the children are (this was written thirty-five years ago) in the habit of decorating with mountain ash (or as it is called "Cayer" in the district) and cowslips on May Day. This is supposed to have the effect of keeping the witches away from those families who get water from the well during the year. The children sing over the well while decorating it "Cayer, Cayer, keep the witches in May Fair."—Bye-Gones, December, 1874.

ST. LEONARD'S WELL.

This well, which is situated in the parish of Rudbaxton, in the neighbourhood of Haverfordwest, was once much made use of for its medical properties, especially by those who were suffering from sore eyes. There was once a St. Leonard's Chapel a short distance from the well, though St. Leonard was not a Welsh Saint.

The Chalybeate Wells, Gumfreston, Tenby, had a great reputation once for their healing virtues.

WELLS OF THE FIVE SAINTS.

These are five wells or pools in the river, near Llanpumpsaint, in Carmarthenshire, and I am indebted for the following tradition concerning them, to old records in the possession of the Rev. Canon Lloyd, B.D., Vicar of that parish. Llanpumpsaint, of course, means the "Church of the Five Saints." According to the tradition the five wells were made use of by the five Saints, and each particular saint had his particular well. In former times on St. Peter's Day, yearly, between two and three hundred people got together, some to wash in, and some to see the wells. In the summer time the people in the neighbourhood bathed themselves in the wells to cure their aches.

THE HOLY WELL OF LLANFIHANGEL GENEU'R GLYN.

This well is about four miles north from Aberystwyth, in Cardiganshire. It is situated quite close to the eastern wall of the Churchyard of Llanfihangel Parish Church. This well has been, and perhaps still is, held in honour for its curative virtues. It is surrounded by a small building and within a few years of the present time, people in search of health took the trouble of coming from long distances to drink from and to bathe in its waters. When the Rev. Z. M. Davies, vicar of the parish, and myself, visited the spot five years ago, a lady living quite close to the well, informed us, that a short time previously, a crippled girl from Glamorganshire, who had come there on crutches, was able to walk away without them, and left them behind.

Ffynnon Francis, is also a well in the Parish of Llanfihangel Geneu'r Glyn, on a farm called Penuchaf, and it seems that it was once popularly esteemed, for there is a tradition at Talybont, that its waters had the power of restoring sight to a blind old man named Francis.

THE LLANCYNVELYN WELL.

The parish of Llancynvelyn is situated on high ground which juts out into the bog called Gors Fochno not far from Borth, in North Cardiganshire. Cynvelyn, to whom the Church is dedicated, was a Welsh Saint, descended from Cunedda. Within the memory of many people who are now alive, there was a holy well in the Churchyard of Llancynvelyn, and the sexton, an intelligent old man, informed me a few years ago, that its water was thought to possess health-restoring qualities, and he himself noticed people resorting there to bathe their feet in the well; and some came with bottles and carried some of the water home with them as a household remedy.

CANNA'S WELL (CARMARTHENSHIRE).

The parish of Llangan is not far from Whitland. The holy well there, known as Canna's Well, was much resorted to in former times, as its water was supposed to cure ague and intestinal complaints. After throwing a pin into the well, and drink of the water or bathe in it, it was customary for the patient to sit down in "Canna's Chair" for a certain length of time and try to sleep. "Canna's Chair" is a stone. In former times the superstitious believed it had a peculiar virtue in connection with the well.

ST. ANTHONY'S WELL.

St. Anthony's Well, at Llanstephan, Carmarthenshire, was formerly famous for its curative virtues; and it is rather popular at the present day as a "Wishing Well." Young men and young women resort to the spot to wish, and are in the habit of throwing a pin into the well as an offering to its deity or to St. Anthony, its patron saint.

THE "WISHING WELL" OF CAREG CENEN CASTLE.

About four miles to the east of the town of Llandilo, in Carmarthenshire, are the remains of a remarkable old castle called Careg Cenen, which stands on the summit of a solitary rock. This rock is about 300 feet high. The most noted feature in connection with the Castle is its underground gallery. In one part of the building a passage terminates in a flight of steps leading down to a dark subterranean cave of about 200, or perhaps, 250 feet long, and at the end of this passage or cave, there is a well which is still used as a "wishing well," more especially by young people. When I went to see the remains of the Castle a few years ago, I also visited the subterranean cave. After lighting a candle and descending the flight of steps, I proceeded along this dark and marvellous passage slowly and cautiously, as there was water in some places. After going on underground in this manner about forty yards, to my great surprise, I heard the sound of human voices, and saw a light in front of me; and all of a sudden I came upon three young ladies, one from London, and two from Ammanford, who informed me that they had intended going on as far as the well, but turned back before reaching it, as they were afraid of proceeding any further into the interior of such a dreary dungeon. However, when I

offered to take the lead, they followed me with joy, and at last we reached the Wishing Well at the far end of the cave. Before we left the spot, each one of the three young ladies threw a bent pin into the well, wishing, I suppose that she might have her heart's desire. We found many pins at the bottom of the well, which had been probably left there by young people given to the practice of amorous spells.

There is also a well in the neighbourhood of Llandilo, called Ffynon-fil-feibion (thousand men's well), respecting which tradition states that 1,000 men fell near it.

ST. MARY'S WELL, RHAYADER.

In the "History of Radnorshire" it is stated: "On the western extremity of the common called Maes-y-dref, is a most excellent spring of pure and limpid water, namely, St. Mary's Well. It was heretofore a custom for the young people of Rhayader, of both sexes, to resort hither on Sunday evenings, during the Spring and Summer seasons, to drink this salutary beverage sweetened with sugar."

PILLETH CHURCHYARD WELL (RADNORSHIRE).

The water of this well was once considered beneficial in ophthalmia and other diseases of the eyes. There are in Radnorshire numerous springs for the cure of various diseases, and in this county also is the celebrated and well-known health resort of Llandrindod. Builth Wells, Llangamarch, and Llanwrtyd (Breconshire), are also on its borders.

LLANNON (CARMARTHENSHIRE.)

There is a holy Well in this parish dedicated to Non, mother of St. David. Tradition also says that Non herself got water from this well.

LLANELLY.

In former times there was a Holy Well in the neighbourhood of Llanelly, known as “Ffynnon Elli,” supposed to possess medical qualities.

HOLY WELL AT LLANGYBI.

Llangybi is about four miles from Lampeter, in Cardiganshire. The Vicar, the Rev. J. N. Evans, informed me that there is a well in this parish known as “Ffynon wen,” formerly supposed to possess healing powers; and that there is a tradition in the neighbourhood that St. Gybi himself lived at a house which is still called “Llety Cybi.” Mr. Evans also adds in the Transactions of the Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society, Vol I., that within a quarter-of-a-mile of the Holy Well, there used to be a large stone called “Llech Gybi,” which the invalids who came to this well for healing were required to touch.

There is a Holy Well of St. Gybi in Carnarvonshire also, to which it was once customary for young women to travel long distances, in order to find out their lover’s intentions at the forthcoming fair. A pocket handkerchief was thrown on the surface of the water, and “if it floated to the South there would be great joy and delight, but if to the North,

the girl would be an old maid."

THE HOLY WELL OF ST. GWENOG.

St. Gwenog's Well is close to the graveyard walls of the Church of Llanwenog, which is situated about six miles from Lampeter, and two from Llanybyther. The well was once much resorted to, even within memory of people who are still alive, as its water was considered very beneficial, especially to wash children whose backs were weak.

THE LLANLLWNI WELL.

In the parish of Llanllwni, Carmarthenshire, there is a well called Ffynon Garedig, which seems to have been famous once. There is an old saying that if you hold your two arms in this well for a certain length of time, you will find out whether you are healthy or unhealthy. If one's arms are red when taken out of the water, it is a sign of good health, but if white, a sign of bad health.

THE PWLLFFEIN WELL.

Mr. Rees, Maesymeillion, Llandyssul, Cardiganshire, informed me, that there was once a famous well for its healing virtues, on the side of the river Clettwr, known as "Ffynon Pwllffein." An old man who is now dead, informed him that this well was much resorted to about the first part of the last century, and pins were once found at its bottom. The well has been destroyed by the river now.

Ffynon-Ddewi, or St. David's Well, near Alltyrodyn, in the same parish, was also much resorted to once, even within living memory, as it was popularly esteemed for its cures of whooping-cough.

THE LLANDYSSILIO WELL.

In the parish of Llandyssiliogogo, Cardiganshire, a well, known as Ffynon Blaenglewinfawr, was once popularly esteemed for its cures of bad legs and other physical troubles. It is said that some who went there on crutches were cured.

FFYNON Y GROES (WELL OF THE CROSS).

This well is in the parish of Llangranog, Cardiganshire, and was famous once, for tradition, says that in former times, pilgrims rested here to quench their thirst and to make the sign of the Cross. This parish has also its Ffynon Fair, or St. Mary's Well.

FFYNON Y PISTYLL.

This well, which was once celebrated for its healing virtues is in the neighbourhood of Kidwelly, in Carmarthenshire, and its water cured sore eyes.

THE WELL OF FFOSANNA.

This well is also in Carmarthenshire, in the parish of Cyuwil Elvet. There was hardly a well in the county more celebrated in former times than "Ffynon Ffosanna," and there are traditions still extant in the neighbourhood, that many of the cripples who resorted here, went home healed.

FFYNON BECCA.

Another well-known well of great repute in Carmarthenshire, is Becca's Well, between Newcastle Emlyn and Llandyssul. This well is still thought by many to possess health-restoring qualities, and its water cured both gravel and diseased eyes. It was much resorted to within living memory.

ST. NON'S WELL, NEAR ST. DAVID'S.

This famous holy well, dedicated to Non, the mother of St. David, Patron Saint of Wales, is situated near the remains of St. Non's Chapel, near St. David's, and was formerly much resorted to for many complaints; and Fenton in his History of Pembrokeshire says: "In my infancy, as was the general usage with respect to children at that time, I was often dipped in it, and offerings, however trifling, even of a farthing or a pin, were made after each ablution, and the bottom of the well shone with votive brass.... At the upper end of the field leading to Non's Chapel there appears the ruined site of a house, probably inhabited by the person deputed to take care of the spring, most likely a lucrative employment in more superstitious times."

When I visited the neighbourhood a few years ago, an old man at St. David's informed me that he remembered diseased persons coming to the well, and returning home completely restored to good health, and that without doubt there must be healing virtues in the water of this sacred spring. The old man also believed that St. David was baptised in the well. Pembrokeshire people firmly believe that the Patron Saint of Wales was born in the neighbourhood which bears his name. The Welsh name for the cathedral and the town of St. David's is Ty Ddewi, which means the House of David.

ST. EDREN'S WELL.

St. Edren's is situated about half way between Haverfordwest and Fishguard. According to a local tradition there was once a most famous sacred well in the Churchyard, much resorted to for the cure of many complaints, especially hydrophobia; but one time, a woman washed her clothes in this well on Sunday, which caused the spring to dry up as a curse for breaking the Sabbath. Fortunately, however, for poor patients, the healing propensities or virtues of its water were miraculously transferred into the churchyard grass. So people took some of the grass to their homes to eat it with their food, which cured them of their ailments. There was a hole in the church wall to receive the offerings of those who came to procure some of this grass. One old man informed the Vicar, the Rev. J. Bowen, who is an enthusiastic antiquarian, that the sacred well had been closed in order to drain the graveyard, but that there is still a spring in a field outside the wall.

THE LETTERSTON WELL.

Another Pembrokeshire well supposed by some to possess curative properties is called "Ffynon Shan Shillin," at Letterston, about five miles from Fishguard. Some say that the water of the well was once so valuable that it was sold for a shilling a bottle.

THE LLANLLAWER WELL.

A well near the Church of Llanllawer, in the neighbourhood of Fishguard, had once the reputation of possessing medical properties, and was much frequented in the old times.

There is a Rocking-Stone also in this neighbourhood, perhaps once used in divination.

There was also a well near Moelgrove, between Nevern and Cardigan, which was resorted to once, and pins were discovered at the bottom of it.

RHOSCROWTHER.

"Down in a hollow beside the stream stands the ancient Parish Church, dedicated to St. Decumanus, patron of Springs and Wells, who in old times was held in high esteem for the cures effected at the bubbling rill hard by."—"Nooks and Corners in Pembrokeshire," page 82.

ST. KEYNAN'S WELL (LLANGURIG.)

According to the late Rev. Elias Owen, F.S.A., this well granted the wish of the first who drank it; and every married couple endeavoured to first drink the water, for the one did so became the master in their wedded life.

LAKES.

LLYN MOEL LLYN.

This is a lake in the parish of Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, North Cardiganshire. There is a saying that every bird that attempts to fly over this lake, falls into it dead. There is also a tradition in the neighbourhood that when an attempt was made to drain the lake, terrific thunder and lightning compelled them to give up the attempt.

TREGARON LAKE.

There is a small lake near Tregaron, between Lampeter and Aberystwyth; and there is a tradition in the neighbourhood that the village or town of Tregaron was once situated on the spot which is now occupied by the lake, but that it sunk, and some fancy they can see some ruins or remains now at the bottom of the lake.

PENCARREG LAKE.

Pencarreg Lake is not far from Lampeter, but lies on the Carmarthenshire side of the river Teivy, and near Llanybyther. According to an old tradition in the district, a village once stood on the spot where now the lake is; but the village was swallowed up, and the lake is now known as the "bottomless."

TALLEY LAKES.

Talley Lakes are close to the remains of the fine old Abbey, and not far from Edwinsford, the country seat of Sir James Drummond, Bart., Lord Lieutenant of Carmarthenshire. Respecting these lakes also there is a tradition that a town lies beneath their waters.

Such traditions of towns lying buried beneath lakes are common to many lakes, both in Wales, and other countries. Such traditions have probably come down from pre-historic times, when people dwelt in lake habitations, and in caves, for safety from the beasts of the forest as well as from human foes. Traces of lake dwelling have been discovered in Switzerland and in other countries.

LLYN LLECHWEN.

Llyn Llechwen, or Llyn Llech Owen, lies on the top of a hill near Gorslas, in Carmarthenshire. According to a local tradition there was only a small well once on the spot now occupied by the lake. The well had a stone cover which had to be removed by those who came to obtain water, and

to be carefully replaced after obtaining it. But once upon a time a certain farmer in the neighbourhood sent a boy almost every day to the well to water his horse. Whenever the boy returned the farmer always asked him, "Did you put back the stone over the mouth of the well, my boy?" The boy answered "Yes." One day, however, when in a hurry, the lad quite forgot about replacing the stone, and the consequence was that the water of the well burst forth till it formed a lake. The above story was told me by an old man named John Jones, who lives in the small town of Llangadock, who added that he had heard it from his mother when a boy.

According to another tale respecting the spot, it was one famous warrior known as Owen Lawgoch, and his men, who forgot to replace the cover; but when he found the water bursting forth both he and his men entered a cave in alarm, and fell asleep which is to last till it is broken by the sound of a trumpet and the clang of arms on Rhiw Goch, then to sally forth to conquer.

LLYN Y FAN FACH.

This lake is known to all lovers of Welsh Fairy Lore. It lies on the Black Mountain on the borders of Carmarthenshire and Breconshire. It has been customary from time immemorial for people from all parts to throng the banks of this lake on the first day of August to see the Fairy Lady of the Lake appearing on the surface of the water to comb her hair. For account of this lady see Fairies in this book.

LLYN EIDDWEN, LLYN FANOD, AND LLYN

FARCH.

These are a group of lakes in which the river Aeron, in Cardiganshire, rises. There is an old story that wild cattle used to come out of Eiddwen, and rush back when disturbed. Mr. David Rees, Glynwern, Llanilar, informed me that according to an old prophecy attributed to Merlin, when Llyn Eiddwen dries up the town of Carmarthen will sink! There is also a story about Llyn Farch that, once upon a time, a most wonderful animal came out of its waters, and was shot by a farmer.

SAVADDAN LAKE (BRECONSHIRE).

This celebrated lake which is known by several names, such as Llangorse Lake, Lake of Brycheiniog, etc., occupies a spot where, according to ancient tradition, once stood a large city, which was swallowed up by an earthquake. Camden once thought that the supposed city was the ancient Loventium of the Romans; but Loventium stood, in all probability, in the parish of Llanddewi Brefi, Cardiganshire.

This lake was once celebrated for its miracles, and Giraldus Cambrensis seven hundred years ago, says:—"In the reign of King Henry I., Gruffydh, son of Rhys ap Theodor, held under the King, one comot, namely, the fourth part of the cantred of Caoc, in the Cantref Mawr, which, in title and dignity, was esteemed by the Welsh, equal to the southern part of Wales, called Deheubarth, that is, the right-hand side of Wales. When Gruffydh, on his return from the King's Court, passed near this lake, which at that cold season of the year was covered with waterfowl of various sorts, being accompanied by Milo,

Earl of Hereford, and Lord of Brecheinioc, and Payn Fitz-John, Lord of Ewyas, who were at that time secretaries and privy counsellors of the King; Earl Milo, wishing to draw forth from Gruffydh some discourse concerning his innate nobility, rather jocularly than seriously thus addressed him: 'It is an ancient saying in Wales, that if the natural prince of the country, coming to this lake, shall order the birds to sing, they will immediately obey him.' To which Gruffydh, richer in mind than in gold (for though his inheritance was diminished, his ambition and dignity still remained), answered, 'Do you therefore, who now hold the dominion of this land, first give the command'; but he and Payn having in vain commanded, and Gruffydh, perceiving that it was necessary for him to do so in his turn, dismounted from his horse, and falling on his knees towards the East, as if he had been about to engage in battle, prostrate on the ground, with his eyes and hands uplifted to Heaven, poured forth devout prayers to the Lord: at length, rising up, and signing his face and forehead with the figure of the cross, he thus openly spake: 'Almighty God, and Lord Jesus Christ, who knowest all things, declare here this day Thy power. If Thou hast caused me to descend lineally from the natural princes of Wales, I command these birds in Thy name to declare it;' and immediately the birds, beating the water with their wings, began to cry aloud, and proclaim him. The spectators were astonished and confounded; and Earl Milo hastily returning with Payn Fitz-John to Court, related this singular occurrence to the King, who is said to have replied, 'By the death of Christ (an oath he was accustomed to use), it is not a matter of so much wonder; for although by our great authority we commit acts of violence and wrong against these people yet they are known to be the rightful inheritors of this land.'"

RIVER LEGENDS.

"Hafren ag Wy, hyfryd eu gwedd
A Rheidol fawr ei hanrhydedd."

(How beautiful are the Severn and
Wye
And Rheidol is held in honour they
say.)

The Severn, the Wye, and the Rheidol rise on Plinlimon Mountain. These rivers, which are called three sisters, agreed to make a visit to the sea in the morning. Severn rose up very early, and took compass through Shropshire, Worcestershire, and Gloucestershire. Wye rose later and took her journey through the counties of Radnorshire and Hereford, falling in with her sister near Chepstow, and went hand in hand to the ocean. Rheidol indulged in her dreams and lay so late that she was forced to take the nearest road to Aberystwyth. According to another version of this legend five sister fountains are mentioned, namely, Wye, Severn, Rheidol, Llyfnant and the Dulas.

There is another interesting old legend having close connection with the Severn, the following version of which is given by Milton in his History of Britain:—"After this Brutus in a chosen place, built Troja Nova, changed in time to Trimovantum, now London; and began to enact laws (Heli being then High Priest in Judea); and having governed the whole isle twenty-four years died, and was buried in his new Troy. Three sons—Locrine, Albanact, and Camber—divided the land by consent. Locrine had the middle part, Loegria; Camber possessed Cambria or Wales; Albanact, Albania, now Scotland. But he in the end, by Humber, King of the Hums, who, with a fleet,

invaded that land, was slain in fight, and his people driven back into Loegria. Locrine and his brother go out against Humber; who now marching onward was by these defeated, and in a river drowned, which to this day retains his name. Among the spoils of his camp and navy were found certain maids, and Estrilidis, above the rest, passing fair, the daughter of a King in Germany, from whence Humber, as he went wasting the sea-coast, had led her captive; whom Locrine, though before, contracted to the daughter of Corineus, resolves to marry. But being forced and threatened by Corineus, whose authority and power he feared, Gwendolen, the daughter, he yields to marry, but in secret loves the other; and ofttimes retiring as to some sacrifice, through vaults and passages made underground, and seven years thus enjoying her, had by her a daughter equally fair, whose name was Sabra. But when once his fear was off by the death of Corineus, not content with secret enjoyment, divorcing Gwendolen, he makes Estrilidis his queen. Gwendolen, all, in rage, departs into Cornwall; where Pladan, the son she had by Locrine, was hitherto brought up by Corineus, his grandfather; and gathering an army of her father's friends, and subjects, gives battle to her husband by the river Sture, wherein Locrine, shot with an arrow, ends his life. But not so ends the fury of Gwendolen, for Estrilidis and her daughter Sabra she throws into a river, and, to have a monument of revenge proclaims that the stream be thenceforth called after the damsel's name, which by length of time is changed now to Sabrina or Severn." The Poet in his "Mask of Comus" makes the nymph Sabrina "that with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream" the goddess of the river, but still retaining her maiden gentleness, and the shepherds, at their festivals, "Carol her goodness loud in their rustic lays, and throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream of pansies, pink, and gaudy daffodils. And, as the old swain said, she can unlock the clasping charm, and

thaw the number spell, if she be right invoked in warbling song; for maidenhood she loves, and will be swift to aid a virgin, such as was herself, in hard-besetting need." In the year 1634 when this "Comus" was presented at Ludlow Castle before the Lord President of Wales, the President's own daughter, Lady Alice Egerton, when only a little girl, acted in it; and it is an interesting fact that this same Lady Alice, some years afterwards, became the wife of the Earl of Carbery, Golden Grove, Carmarthenshire, who entertained Jeremy Taylor during the time of the Commonwealth.

CAVES.

OGOF MORRIS (MORRIS'S CAVE).

Near Tre'rddol in North Cardiganshire, there is a cave known as Ogof Morris. According to a tradition I heard in the neighbourhood, this Morris was a notorious robber who lived in this cave, and went about to steal hens and sheep; but at last he was caught and hanged at Cardigan. According to the eminent antiquarian, Mr. Barnwell, there was a robber of the name also in Pembrokeshire, who had a little dog trained to fetch the arrows shot at unfortunate wayfarers. At last he was killed and buried at a spot where there is a stone still called "Bedd Morris" on the highway from St. David's to Newport.

BLOODY CAVE.

There is a cave at Pendine, in Carmarthenshire, in which according to tradition a gang of most desperate and murderous robbers once made their headquarters. At last, these scoundrels were attacked by the people of the neighbourhood, and put to death for murdering a woman for her money.

PLANT MAT'S CAVE.

According to tradition "Plant Mat," or "Plant y Fat," were two sons and a daughter of one Matthew Evans, who kept a public house at Tregaron in the seventeenth century. These persons became highway robbers and lived in a cave near Devil's Bridge. The entrance to the cave admitted only one person at a time and this enabled the robbers to keep out hundreds when they were attacked. It seems that they had some notion of honour, for it is said that if either had a friend, he gave him his glove, which served as a passport when stopped by the others. They lived for some years in this cave, but at last they were executed for murder. One of them was captured near Hereford, just as he was giving out the well-known hail of "Deliver or die." These robbers are also credited with the attributes of the fairies.

TWM SHION CATTI'S CAVE.

"Mae llefain mawr a gwaeddi,
Yn Ystradffin eleni;

Mae'r ceryg nadd yn toddi'n blwm,
Rhag ofn twm Sion Catti."

(In Ystradffin a doleful sound
Pervades the hollow hills around;
The very stones with terror melt,
Such tear of Twm Shion Catti's felt.)

This cave, which is near Ystradffin, on the borders of Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire, was once, says tradition, the stronghold of Twm Shion Catti, or to give him his proper name Thomas Jones. This Thomas Jones, or Twm Shion Catti, lived at Tregaron in the time of Queen Elizabeth. It seems that he had been in his younger days a freebooter, but reformed and became a celebrated bard, antiquary and a genealogist. The legends which have gathered round the name of this eminent man, are still retained in the memory of the people in Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire, and the late Mr. T. J. L. Prichard, of Llandovery, made him the hero of a most popular romance, into whose book the stories have been introduced, and embellished.

OWEN LAWGOCH'S CAVE.

This cave is in the limestone rock of Dinas, Llandebie, in Carmarthenshire, respecting which there is a story that a great warrior named Owen Lawgoch and his men fell asleep in it, but who are some day to awake and sally forth. A version of the legend is given in the Brython for 1858, page 179, by the late Gwynionydd, and an English translation of the same story is given by Sir John Rhys in

his “Celtic Folk-Lore.”

“Not the least of the wonders of imagination wont to exercise the minds of the old people was the story of Owen Lawgoch. One sometimes hears sung in the fairs the words:—

‘Yr Owain hwn yw Harri’r Nawfed
Sydd yn trigo ‘ngwlad estroniaid, etc.’

(This Owen is Henry the Ninth
Who tarries in a foreign land, etc.)

But this Owen Lawgoch, the national deliverer of our ancient race of Brythons, did not, according to the Troed yr Aur people, tarry in a foreign land, but somewhere in Wales, not far from Offa’s Dyke. They used to say that one Dafydd Meirig of Bettws Bledrws, having quarrelled with his father left for England. When he had got a considerable distance from home, he struck a bargain with a cattle dealer to drive a herd of his beasts to London. Somewhere on the corner of a vast moor, Dafydd cut a very remarkable hazel stick; for a good staff is as essential to the vocation of a good drover as teeth are to a dog. So while his comrades had had their sticks broken before reaching London, Dafydd’s remained as it was, and whilst they were conversing together on London Bridge a stranger accosted Dafydd, wishing to know where he had obtained that wonderful stick. He replied that in Wales he had had it, and on the stranger’s assuring him that there were wonderful things beneath the tree on which it had grown, they both set out for Wales. When they reached the spot and dug a little they found that there was a great hollow place beneath. As night was spreading out her sable mantle, and as they were getting deeper, what should they find but stairs easy to step, and great lamps illuminating

the vast chamber! When they reached the bottom of the stairs, they found themselves near a large table, at one end of which they beheld sitting a tall man of about seven foot. He occupied an old-fashioned chair and rested his head on his left hand, while the other hand, all red, lay on the table and grasped a great sword. He was withal enjoying a wondrously serene sleep, and at his feet on the floor lay a big dog. After casting a glance at them, the wizard said to Dafydd: 'This is Owen Lawgoch, who is to sleep on till a special time, when he will wake and reign over the Brythons. That weapon in his hand is one of the swords of the ancient Kings of Britain.' Then they moved slowly on, gazing at the wonders of that subterranean chamber; and they beheld everywhere the arms of ages long past, and on the table thousands of gold and silver pieces bearing the images of the different Kings of Britain. They got to understand that it was permitted them to take a handful of each, but not to put any in their purses. They both visited the cave several times, but at last Dafydd put in his purse a little of the gold bearing the image of one of the Owen's ancestors. But after coming out again they were never able any more to find Owen's subterranean palace."

This story of Owen Lawgoch and his sleeping warriors is a version of the well-known Welsh tradition of the enchanted sleep of King Arthur and his Knights.

According to an old Welsh ballad, Owen Lawgoch does not sleep in a cave in Wales, but "tarries in a foreign land"; and Dr. O. T. Lewis, of the University College, addressing the Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society, November 30th, 1910, stated that the garrison at Aberystwyth "was increased in 1369, when Owen Lawgoch with his French auxiliaries were expected from beyond the seas."

CHAPTER XII.

LOCAL TRADITIONS, Etc.

LLANDDEWI BREFI.

his parish is celebrated for its legendary lore; and no wonder for it is a spot of great historic interest.

There is a tradition current in the neighbourhood to the effect that it was originally intended to build the Church of Llanddewi Brefi in a field on Godregarth farm, and that the work was actually commenced on that spot, but the attempt to build there was constantly frustrated, for that which was set up during the day was pulled down in the night by a Spirit, and all the material removed or carried to the spot where the Parish Church now stands. The field pointed out by tradition is about a mile away from the village, and yew trees are still to be seen there.

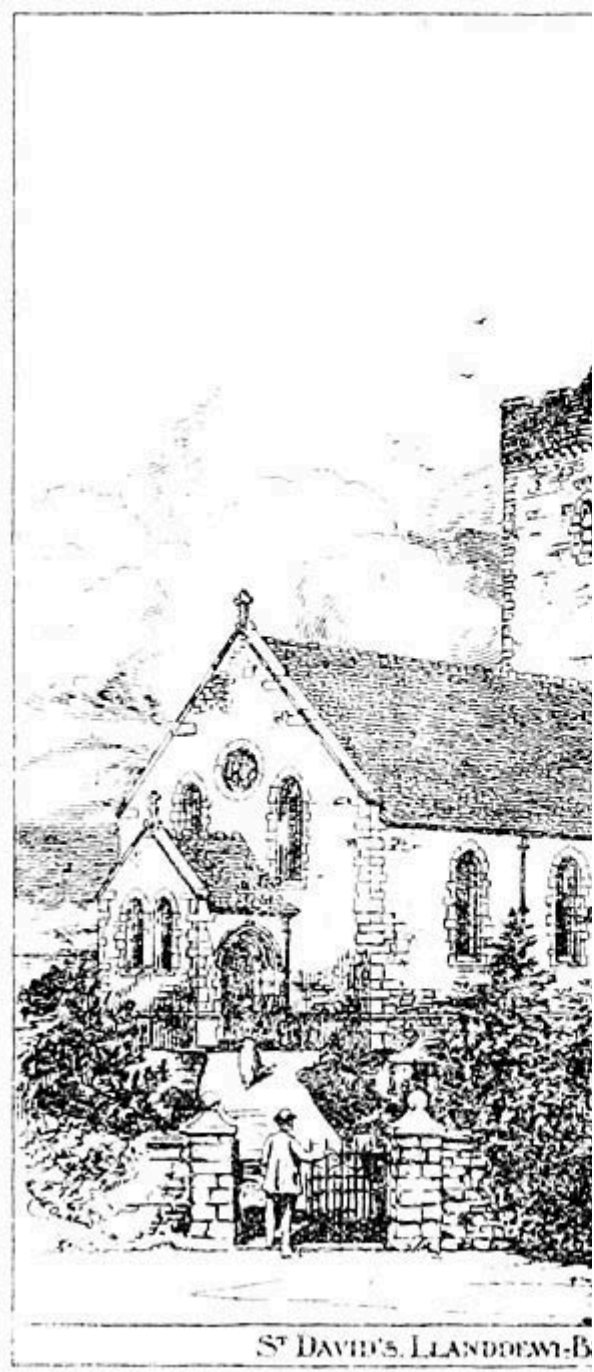
According to another most ancient tradition, when the Church was in process of construction, two oxen known as the "Ychain Bannog" were employed to draw the stone required for the building. The load was so heavy that one

of the two oxen died in the attempt to drag it forward; but before falling down dead he bellowed nine times, and so powerful was the echo that the hill, which before presented itself as an obstacle, divided or split in two. The other ox alone was then able to bring the load unassisted to the site of the Church.

"Llanddewi Brefi fraith,
Lle brefodd yr ych naw gwaith,
Nos hollti craig y Foelallt."

(Llanddewi Brefi the spotted,
Where the ox bellowed nine times,
Till Foelallt rock split in two.)

According to another version of the story, it was the ox which survived was the one that bellowed, and not the one that died. According to another story given in Meyrick's History of Cardiganshire, these two Bannog Oxen were on one occasion used to draw "away a monstrous beaver dead"; but this is only a version of a legend which is to be found in several parts of Wales, and is founded on the older story of Hu Gadarn, or Hu the Mighty, who, with his Bannog Oxen, drew to land the avanc out of Llyn Llion, so that the lake burst out no more to deluge the earth. See "Legend of Llyn y ddau Ychain" in Folk-Lore of North Wales, by the late Rev. E. Owen, page 132.


St David's, Llanddewi-B



St David's. Llanddewi-

The two Ychain Bannog of Llanddewi were sometimes called "dau ychain Dewi" (St. David's two oxen). In a poem written in the Twelfth Century, the Welsh Bard Gwynfardd Brycheiniog alludes to the old tradition as follows:—

"Dau ychan Dewi, deu odidawe,
Dodyssant eu gwar dan garr kynawe,
Dau ychen Dewi ardderchawe oeddynt."

There used to be preserved at Llanddewi Church a remarkable fragment of a horn called "Madcorn yr Ych Bannog," that is, the core of the Bannog Ox's Morn, which, according to tradition, had been kept there as a valuable relic ever since the time of St. David. This horn is now at Llidiardau, Llanilar, kept privately. It has been pronounced by Professor Boyd Dawkins to have belonged to "the great urns (Bos Primigenius) that Charlemagne hunted in the forest of Aachen, and the Monks of St. Galle ate on their feast days."

When St. David was preaching at Llanddewi at the great Synod, in the year 519, it is said that the ground on which he stood rose up and formed a hillock under his feet. Cressy recounts the miracle in the following words: —"When all the fathers assembled enjoined David to preach, he commanded a child which attended him, and had lately been restored to life by him, to spread a napkin under his feet; and, standing upon it, he began to expound the Gospel and the law to the auditory. All the while that this oration continued, a snow-white dove, descending from Heaven, sate upon his shoulders; and, moreover, the

earth, on which he stood raised itself under him till it became a hill, from whence his voice, like a trumpet, was clearly heard and understood by all, both near and far off, on the top of which hill a church was afterwards built, and remains to this day."

The people of Llanddewi Brefi told me that there is another tradition still extant in the neighbourhood, which says that as St. David was preaching on this great occasion, a nightingale appeared on the spot, and sang. The music of the bird was so sweet, that the people listened to the nightingale's song, instead of continuing to give their attention to the sermon. Seeing this, the Holy Saint David rebuked the congregation, and informed them that the nightingale should never again sing in the neighbourhood; and from that day till now the bird has never been heard there. According to the great historian George Owen, there is a different version of this story in Pembrokeshire. "St. David, being seriouse occupied in the night tyme in his divine orizons, was so troubled with the sweete tuninges of the nightingales, as that he could not fasten his minde upon heavenlie cogitacions, as at other tymes, being letted (hindered) by the melodie of the bird, praied unto the Almightie, that from that tyme forward there might never a nightingale sing within his Dioces, and this saieth our women (old wives' fables), was the cause of confininge of the bird out of this country."

At Llanio Isaf, in the parish of Llanddewi Brefi are the remains of Loventium, which was a large Roman city. About half a mile from Gogoyan, in the same parish, was once a holy well called Ffynon Ddewi, or St. David's Well, the water of which, according to tradition, flowed up miraculously when St. David restored to life the son of a widow. The well has now been closed up, and a house stands on the spot. There is another "Ffynon Ddewi," on the road-side between Aberaeron and Cardigan.

CAIO (CARMARTHENSHIRE).

In the parish of Caio, there is a gold mine which in ancient times was worked by the Romans. It is on the estate of Dolaucothy, and the spot is known as the "Ogofau," or caves, and part of it is a height, hardly a mountain, that has been scooped out like a volcanic crater by the Romans during their occupation. In this hollow or basin it is said that the five saints named Ceitho, Gwyn, Gwynno, Gwynnoro, and Celynin, who flourished in the sixth century, had retired in a thunderstorm for shelter. They had penetrated into the mine and had lost their way, and taking a stone for a bolster had laid their heads on it and fallen asleep. And there they would remain in peaceful slumber till the return of King Arthur, or till a more godly bishop than has hitherto been should occupy the throne of St. David. When that happens, Merlin himself is to be disenchanted and restore to liberty the dormant saints. An inquisitive woman named Gweno, who, led by the devil, sought to spy on the saintly brotherhood in their long sleep, was punished by losing her way in the passage of the mine. She, likewise, remained in an undying condition, but was suffered to emerge in storm and rain, and in the night, when her vaporous form might be seen about the old Ogofau, and her sobs and moans were heard and frightened many.

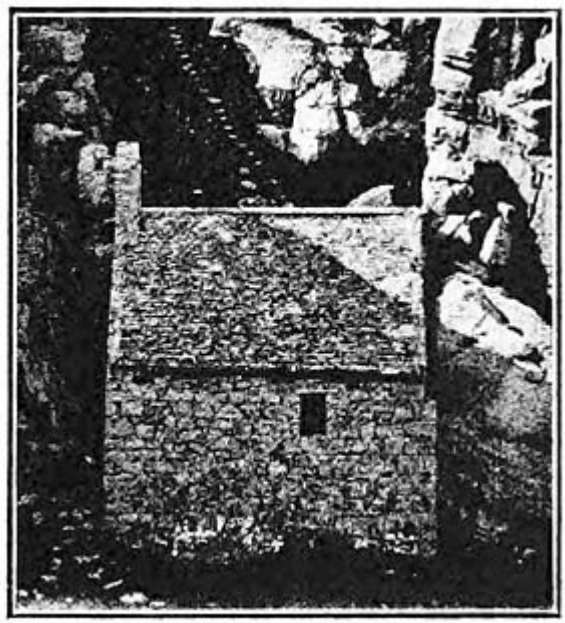
Mr. F. S. Price, in his interesting "History of Caio," says that another legend is that one of these saints appears to have a special commemoration, but under a female appelative in "Ffynon" and "Clochdy Gwenno," the latter an isolated rock standing up in the midst of the great gold

excavations, and marking their depth in that particular place. The well had, in good old times, a high reputation for healing virtues, and that "on an unfortunate day, Gweno was induced to explore the recesses of the cavern beyond a frowning rock, which had always been the prescribed limit to the progress of the bathers. She passed beneath it and was no more seen. She had been seized by some superhuman power, as a warning to others not to invade those mysterious 'penetralia,' and still on stormy nights, when the moon is full, the spirit of Gweno is seen to hover over the crag like a wreath of mist."

ST. GOVAN'S.

About seven miles from Pembroke, and a mile from Bosheston, there is a small chapel of rude masonry half way down the cliff known as St. Govan's Chapel. It is a seaside building, perched across a fissure in the side of the cliff, and a long flight of steps leading down to it from above. There is a popular belief that these steps cannot be numbered by anyone correctly, or "counted by none both ways alike." I visited the spot myself in October, 1909. In the east wall of the Chapel a doorway admits into a cleft of the rock in which is a marvellous cell or crevice, "that enables the largest person to turn round therein, and at the same time quite filled by the smallest." This cavity has been regarded by the superstitious as a miraculous cell, and according to a legend Our Lord on one occasion, when pursued by His enemies, the Jews, sought safety in this neighbourhood. "Passing through a field where men were sowing bailey, He ordered them at once to go for their reaping hooks, and, if any passed that way and inquired

after Him, to say that they had seen such an one, but it was in sowing time. The men although they knew not who it was, did as they were bid, fetched their hooks, and lo! on their return, the field was waving with ripe corn. Whilst engaged in the reaping, a band of men accosted them, as was expected, who, having received the appointed answer, gave up the chase in despair. The Lord, meanwhile, had been concealed in this crevice, which had opened to receive Him, and still bears a faint impression of His person."



ST. GOVAN'S CHAPEL.

According to another tradition which is still extant in the neighbourhood it was St. Govan (Sir Gawain), one of King Arthur's knights, that took shelter in this cell when he was pursued by his pagan persecutors. The cell has been used from time immemorial as a "wishing place," and it is said

that “all who turn round therein, and steadfastly cling to the same wish during the operation will most certainly obtain their wish before the expiration of the year.” It is still resorted to I believe by young people.

A few yards lower down in the ravine is a holy well, once much resorted to for the cure of diseases. This well was frequently visited seventy years ago, and, it is said that its water was so efficacious that some who came there on crutches were able to walk away without them.

There are, or at least were, somewhere in this part, three upright stones, about a mile distant from each other. The tradition is, that on a certain day these stones meet to “dance the Hay,” at a place called Saxon’s Ford, and when the dance is over, travel back and resume their places.

The late Mr. Thomas, Greenpark, informed me that there was a moving stone of this kind in the parish of Llandyssul, Cardiganshire.

TREGARON.

At a distance of about three miles from Tregaron there is a ridge running east and west separating Upper and Lower Tregaron. It is called “Cwys yr Ychain Bannog,” the Furrow of the large-horned Oxen. Tradition has it that the “Furrow” was made by two Bannog Oxen dragging along the ground the carcass of a huge reptile which had been killed by the people of the neighbourhood in ancient time. (For more about Tregaron see Lakes.)

CRUG MAWR.

The Rev. Peter Roberts, in his "Cambrian Popular Antiquities," says that Crug Mawr, or Pentychryd Mawr, is a lofty hill in Cardiganshire, situated in the Vale of Aeron, mentioned in Giraldus, where he says, "there is an open grave, which fits the length of any man lying in it, short or long." Hence arose the ancient tradition, that a powerful giant, kept his post on this hill, and was endowed with the genius of the Aeron Vale. He had a lofty palace erected on the hill, and used occasionally to invite the neighbouring giants to a trial of strength on the top of it. At one of these meetings coits were proposed and introduced, and, after great efforts, the inhabitant of the spot won the day, by throwing his coit clear into the Irish shore, which ever after gave him the superiority over all other giants in Ceredigion, or the land of Ceredig.

Gwynionydd in the First Volume of the "Brython," 1859, mentions two places known as "Crug Mawr," one near Cardigan, and the other in the Vale of Aeron.

Near the road leading from Newcastle Emlyn to Lampeter, is "Crug Balog," where a warrior or giant of the name of Balog was buried.

CANTREF Y GWAELOD; OR THE LOST LOWLAND.

"Ochenaid Gwyddno Garanhir,
Pan droes y don dros ei dir."

(The sigh of Gwyddno Garanhir,
When the waives swept over his land.)

There is a well-known tradition in Cardiganshire, and indeed all over Wales, that what is known to-day as Cardigan Bay was once dry land. The country was known as Cantref y Gwaelod, or The Lowland Hundred. It had sixteen cities, and in the beginning of the sixth century the district was governed by a king named Gwyddno Garanhir. As the land was below sea-level, dykes had been built to check the encroachments of the sea. One day, however, Saethennyn Feddw, that is, Saethennyn the Drunkard, son of the King of South Wales, opened the sluices, and the sea flowed in, but the people fled to the uplands.

One of the ancient Welsh Triads commemorates the inundation as follows:—

"The three abandoned drunkards of the Isle of Britain were, first, drunken Geraint, King of Siluria, who in the paroxysm of a fit of intoxication set fire to the standing corn; the conflagration in consequence of which rash act spread so violently, that all the corn of the country, to an immense distance, was totally consumed, and a destructive famine ensued."

"The second was Vortigern, surnamed the wry-mouthed, who when intoxicated gave Horsa, the Saxon chief, the Isle of Thanet, for permission to have an illicit connection with his daughter Rowena; and further promised, that her son, the fruit of that amour, should succeed to the Crown of England; which proved productive of treachery, and a sanguinary massacre of a prodigious number of the chieftains of the Cambrian race.

"The third was drunken Seithinyn, the son of Seithyn Saidi, King of Dimetia; who when in a state of intoxication

suffered the sea to overflow Cantref y Gwaelod, where lands and habitations the most beautiful in all Wales, excepting only Caerleon or Usk, to the number of sixteen cities and towns, were in a short period inundated and ruined. The lowland hundred was the property of Gwyddno, surnamed longshanks, King of Ceredigion (Cardiganshire). This event happened in the reign of Emrys Wledig. The inhabitants who escaped from that inundation landed in Ardudwy, and ascended the mountains of Snowdon, which had never been inhabited before that period."

There is a poem on this inundation in the ancient Welsh book "Llyvr Du Caerfyrddin" (Black Book of Carmarthen).

Near Wallog, a few miles to the North of Aberystwyth, a causeway called Sarn Cynfelyn, extends several miles into the sea. According to local tradition this is supposed to have been a main road leading into the submerged country, and it is said that there was a royal palace in this part. Other places which traditions associate with the Lowland Hundred are Sarn Cadwgan and Sarn Ddewi, further South, near Aberayron, and Sarn Badrig, in North Wales. So much has been written on this subject, both in prose and verse, that it it not necessary to dwell further on it here. But it is of interest to add that there is a tradition, which is still extant that between Borth, in Cardiganshire, and Aberdovey, in Merionethshire, there once stood a town at a spot which is now covered by water. There is also a well-known story of the chimes of bells being heard at the bottom of the sea.

Dwellers near Ramsey Sound, in Pembrokeshire, also hear the chimes of bells in the sea, and this reminds us of the Story of Grallon, in Brittany, who reigns beneath the waves.

LLANFIHANGEL YSTRAD.

There is a tradition in the Vale of Aeron that some generations ago, a man from the neighbourhood of Ystrad, was sentenced at the Cardigan Assizes, to be hanged for sheep-stealing, or some other such offence. The sentence, however, was not carried out, as the criminal was a useful man, particularly so to the Squire who happened to be the High Sheriff that year. But before the Squire's year of office had elapsed, urgent inquiries came down from the Government as to the execution, of which no report had ever reached them. The Squire was so frightened at the Government's inquiries, that he had the unfortunate man, who was out in the fields at the time, seized, bound and hanged on a birch tree. One of the Squire's servants entered a small cottage and begged an old woman for the loan of her apron, but concealing from her what he was going to do with it. When the old woman discovered that her apron was made use of to blindfold the poor man who was so unceremoniously hanged, she pronounced a curse on the Squire and his descendants. After this everything went wrong with that Squire.

A STRANGE CARMARTHENSHIRE TREE LEGEND.

There is a fine old mansion in Carmarthenshire, with a very strange tradition in connection with it. I am not permitted to mention the name of the place.

Once upon a time there was a certain tree, or rather a bush, in a field, or in the Park, which bloomed with flowers

every Christmas morning. Christmas after Christmas, when putting forth its blossoms, the bush made a strange noise, which attracted to the spot large crowds of people from all parts of the country. At last the selfish Squire cut down this sacred bush, in order to put a stop to the people damaging his park; but by doing this rash act he brought upon himself and his descendants a curse, and his offence has not been expiated till this day.

MAESYFELIN.

The most popular tradition associated with Lampeter is that known as the "Curse of Maesyfelin." Maesyfelin was a stately mansion on the banks of the river Dulas, on the east side of the town of Lampeter. It was once a place of consequence, and an ancient family of Lloyds lived there. About the beginning of the 17th Century the famous Vicar Pritchard of Llandovery, author of "Canwyll y Cymry" had a son named Samuel. Tradition has it that this young Samuel was an intimate friend of Sir Francis Lloyd, Knight of Maesyfelin, who was a wicked man. At last, so the story goes, the two quarrelled over some love affair, and young Samuel was stifled to death between two feather beds. The body, tied in a sack and placed on horse-back, was conveyed over the mountain in the depth of night and thrown into the river Towy in Carmarthenshire. When the body of his lamented son was discovered in the river, the broken-hearted father pronounced a curse on Maesyfelin in the following words:—

"Melldith Duw ar Maesyfelin—
Ar bob carreg, ar bob gwreiddyn—

Am daflu blodau tref Llan'ddyfri
Ar ei ben i Dywi i foddi."

(The curse of God on Maesyfelin!
On every stone, and root therein,
For throwing the flower of Llandovery town
To Towy's water, there to drown.)

People believe to this day that the judgment of God fell on the family and mansion of Maesyfelin. The palace delapsed and no longer exists. Materials from its ruins were carried away to repair Ffynonbedr, another mansion in the neighbourhood; but that place is also in ruin now, so that it is believed that the curse of Maesyfelin followed the material to Ffynonbedr.

TENBY (PEMBROKESHIRE).

In former times Tenby was so celebrated for its fishery and it was known as Dinbych-y-Pysgod, that is Tenby-of-the-Fish. There is a tradition in the neighbourhood of some extraordinary bank or rock, at sea, called "Will's Mark," on which codfish in great abundance were formerly taken. The spot is no longer to be found, and the loss is said to have been occasioned as a curse which the inhabitants of the town brought upon themselves by their barbarous usage of a deaf and dumb man, who had come into the town begging.

CWM KERWYN (PEMBROKESHIRE).

In this locality is a huge stone or rock, which, according to tradition, was thrown there by King Arthur of old; and somewhere in the same neighbourhood is “Bedd Arthur,” Arthur’s Grave.

LLANSTEPHAN CASTLE (CARMARTHENSHIRE).

It is popularly supposed that there is an underground passage from this old Castle to the mansion, known as Plas Llanstephan. Tradition has it that many an attempt was made in former times to go through, but always in vain, as a spirit extinguished the candles of all who entered the passage after proceeding a certain distance.

CWMYREGLWYS (PEMBROKESHIRE).

According to Pentrevor, in “The Pembroke County Guardian,” March, 1903, a “Fairies’ Town” has been seen in the sea occasionally in this neighbourhood. He also adds that there are on the extreme point of Dinas Head, some steps in the rock called “The Devil’s Footprints.” There are also “Devil’s Footprints” in a rock, to be seen in Cardiganshire, between Llanwenog and Llanarth.

MESUR Y DORTH (MEASURE OF THE LOAF).

Between St. David's and Fishguard is an object not unlike a milestone, upon which is rudely traced a cross within a circle: the irregular disc being about a foot in diameter. This is known as "Mesur y Dorth," (Measure of the Loaf); and the tradition is, that St. David caused these figures to be made in order to regulate the size of the loaf of bread in times of scarcity.

ABERGWILI.

Near the Bishop of St. David's Palace, Abergwili, is a pool in the river Towy, called "Pwll y Coach" (the Coach's Pool). The tradition is that in the old Coaching Days the "Great Coach" fell into this pool, and was never seen again.

CAE POETH (HOT FIELD).

In the parish of Llanon, Carmarthenshire, is a field called "Cae Poeth." Tradition says that images which were in the Church before the Reformation were burnt at this spot.

CRAIG GWRTHEYRN (VORTIGERN'S ROCK).

Craig Gwrtheyrn is in the neighbourhood of Pencader, in Carmarthenshire. According to an old legend, the disreputable old British King Vortigern, built a castle here in the fifth century; but he and his castle were destroyed by fire from heaven. There is also a story that Owen Glyndwr sleeps in a cave here.

BRYNBERIAN (PEMBROKESHIRE).

Near Brynberian, in North Pembrokeshire, there is a grave known as "Bedd yr Afanc," or the Avanc's Grave. According to an old tradition in the neighbourhood, this Avanc was a most dangerous beast or monster, which at last, after much trouble, was caught in a pool in the river, and buried with pomp and religious rites on a spot which still bears the name "Bedd yr Afanc."

LLANON (CARDIGANSHIRE).

Non was the mother of St. David. The Vicar, Mr. Lewis, informed me that there is a tradition in the neighbourhood that the Patron Saint was born here, and owned much land here, including all the flats known as Morfa Esgob—The Bishop's March. It is said that St. David divided the land into small portions which he gave to the fishermen of the

place. There was a stone on the exterior wall of the ruins of St. Non's Chapel, on which was carved the face of a woman with a child in her arms, traditionally reputed to be that of Non and her child David. There is also a tradition that the Saint was educated at Henfynyw. See more about this in Mr. Eyre Evans' interesting book on the Antiquities of Cardiganshire.

Some three miles from Llanon, says Mr. Horsfall-Turner in his "Wanderings in Cardiganshire," legends have been busy with a huge stone pillar which marks, perhaps the grave of some long-forgotten hero. "During the building of Devil's Bridge, we are told, his Satanic majesty wished to employ this monolith and carried it away, his finger marks may still be seen—leaving another impression. He sat so long and thought so deeply, that at the crowing of the cock, he was startled and vanished so rapidly that the stone was so completely forgotten."

TYNYCASTELL (DEVIL'S BRIDGE).

According to the Rev. John Griffith, Llangynwyd, there is a version of the well-known legend of Arthur or Owen Lawgoch and the Sleeping Warriors attached to this place; but as I have already given a version of this story in connection with Owen Lawgoch's Cave, near Llandebie, I shall not repeat it here. King Arthur figures rather prominently in North Cardiganshire. Between Devil's Bridge and Llanafan is a farm belonging to the Earl of Lisburne called "Maen Arthur"—Arthur's Stone; and in the parish of Llanbadarn-fawr there is a "Llys Arthur"—Arthur's Court, a legendary residence of the renowned

King.

BEDD TALIESIN (TALIESIN'S GRAVE).

About eight miles north of Aberystwyth is an ancient grave known as Bedd Taliesin. According to a local tradition, Taliesin, Chief Bard of the Island of Britain was buried on this spot. The grave, which is composed of stones, is in the centre of a large heap of earth or mound surrounded by stone circles, and some generations ago bones, and even a human skull, were found in it, which probably were the remains of the great ancient poet. There is a superstition respecting Bedd Taliesin that should anyone sleep in it for one night, he would the next day become either a poet or an idiot. There is a similar popular belief in connection with Cader Idris, in Merionethshire, where an eminent bard once tried the experiment. Taliesin's Grave is in the Parish of Llanfihangel genau'r Glyn, and in the adjoining parish of Llancynfelin there is a village bearing the name of Taliesin; and, according to the "Mabinogion," the great poet was born somewhere between the Dyvi and Aberystwyth. The people of North Cardiganshire believe to this day that Taliesin was both born and buried in their district. The origin of his birth, which was supposed to be very miraculous, and other legends which cling to the memory of this great man are to be found in the Mabinogion.

CRUGIAU'R LADIS (CARMARTHENSHIRE).

On the mountain above the village of Caio, there are two peculiar heaps of stone known as Crugiau'r Ladis, concerning which there is the following curious tradition:—Two ladies from London were exiled from their homes, and lived in this district. The change of town life to country was so great, that they set to work and gathered heaps of stone together to build a Babel heavenward, from the top of which they could see London from the land of exile.

I heard a story when a boy that Derry Ormond tower, near Lampeter, was also built in order to see London.

EURGLAWDD.

In a field called Llettyngharad on this farm, which is in the parish of Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, there are two stones respecting which an ancient prophecy says that when the third appears, the end of the world will be at hand. At Llwynglas, in the same parish, there was once preserved a long knife, which, according to tradition, was used by the Saxons in the time of Vortigern, at the treachery of the long knives.

TRAETH SAITH (CARDIGANSHIRE).

Tradition says that Traeth Saith—the Seven's Shore—had its name from the seven daughters of a king who were wrecked there, having been put by order of their father into a vessel without sails or oars. A poem commemorates this tradition.

Probably the place is named from a brook.

LLANILAR.

The present vicar, the Rev. J. F. Lloyd, remembers hearing from an old lady, that when she was a little girl, it was customary for the women of the parish to curtsy to an oil painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on entering the church. It seems that there was a holy well once known as Ffynnon Drindod not far from Llanilar.

LLANGADOCK.

An old man, named John Jones, informed me that Llangadock was a large town in ancient times; but that a part of it sunk. According to tradition, a church stood once where Pwll y Clychau—the Pool of the Bells—is now, and the old man added that people still hear the sound of the bells at the bottom of the pool. There is a stone in the river Sawdde, known as Coitan Arthur, respecting which there is a tradition that it was thrown down from the top of Pen Arthur—about a mile distant—by Arthur the Giant.

ABERMARLAIS.

At the entrance gate of Abermarlais Park there is an interesting stone, near which, according to a tradition related to me by Mrs. De Rutzen, the Welsh Princes held a council of war. I was also informed by people in the neighbourhood that the spot was once haunted by the ghost of a lady in white.

OYSTERMOUTH CASTLE (GOWER).

It is said that in an underground dungeon of Oystermouth Castle is, or there was, a large pillar known as "The Wishing Post," around which young men and young women, when wishing for a lover or sweetheart, were in the habit of walking nine times, and at the same time sticking a pin in the pillar and looking on the wall, when they were supposed to see "a lady in white."

OXWITCH (GOWER).

Near the Bone Caves is a cromlech known as Arthur's Stone. According to tradition, St. David split it with a sword in proof that it was not sacred.

CAE HALOG (NORTH CARDIGANSHIRE).

"Cae Halog," at Llanbadarn-fawr means "Desecrated Field." The tradition in the neighbourhood is, that in former times people met together at this spot to indulge in games and contests on Sundays, thus breaking the Sabbath.

MOUNT AND VERWICK (CARDIGAN).

It was customary in former times for the people of this district to meet together on the First Sunday after New Year's Day, called by them "Sul Coch" (Red Sunday), when wrestling, football, etc., took place, to commemorate a victory over the Flemings.

In the neighbouring parish of Llangoedmore, is St. Cynllo's Cave, where, according to ancient tradition, the holy Saint prayed, and where marks of his knees are to be seen in the rocks.

MAENCLOCHOG (PEMBROKESHIRE).

It is said that this parish received its name from a stone which sounded like a bell. An old man named John Griffiths, informed me that he remembered this stone, which was a very large one, and that people broke it up in order to see what caused it to sound.

HIGHMEAD (CARDIGANSHIRE).

There are old traditions that an ancient Welsh King, named Pryderi Ap Pwyll, had a palace here, somewhere on the river side, on a spot known according to the Mabinogion, as “Rhuddlan Teivi.” The present mansion is the country residence of Colonel Davies-Evans, the worthy Lord Lieutenant of Cardiganshire, who informed me that Sir John Rhys, Oxford, has been trying to discover traces of Pryderi’s palace.

I dealt with this subject in a paper which I read at Highmead, June, 1910, before the Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society, and which is to be published in the Transactions of that Society. I may also add that the Lord Lieutenant and Mrs. Davies-Evans are among my best friends in South Wales, and I have made much use of their valuable library.

GOGERDDAN (NEAR ABERYSTWYTH).

The late John Jones, Bristol House, Talybont, informed me six years ago, that there is a tradition in the neighbourhood that Henry VII. called at Gogerddan when on his way through Cardiganshire to Bosworth Field. Henry had been entertained at Wern Newydd and Llwyn Dafydd in the south of the county. Gogerddan is the ancient residence of the genial baronet, Sir Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse.

LLANGYNLLO (CARDIGANSHIRE).

There is a tradition in this parish, that in ancient times, the Romans put to death a young woman in the neighbourhood of Gernos, and that her spirit haunted the spot for generations. At first, she appeared as a cat, and afterwards as a "White lady."

There is a tradition that a son of Howell Dda, King of Wales, lived in the neighbouring district of Dyffryn Cerri.

LLANGWYRYFON (CHURCH OF THE VIRGINS).

Tradition says that this parish received is name from eleven thousand Welsh virgins, who were massacred by barbarians on the coast of Germany. The virgins were on their way to Brittany.

PENBRYN (CARDIGANSHIRE).

According to my friend, the Rev. Prys Williams (Brythonydd), there is a farm in this parish called "Perth Geraint"; and it is probable that Geraint, one of King Arthur's knights was buried somewhere in this neighbourhood, as tradition locates in the parish of Penbryn, the "Battle of Llongborth," at which Geraint was killed. This is the Geraint who figures in the Mabinogion,

and in Tennyson, as the knight who married the young Lady Enid, who is described as "comely and graceful."

There is a stone near Troed-y-Rhiw, which, according to tradition, was an ejected pebble from the clog of a giant who lived in the district in ancient times.

CILGERRAN (PEMBROKESHIRE).

It is said that the spot where the remains of the Castle now stand, was known in ancient times as "Dyngeraint," so named from Geraint, one of King Arthur's Knights. This is the Geraint I have just mentioned above in connection with the traditions of Penbryn, Cardiganshire, a parish which is only about seven miles distance from Cilgerran. Arthur and his Knights figure prominently in the traditions of Pembrokeshire, and there is a legend of a battle fought by Arthur's sons in the neighbourhood of Precelly.

GORSYGEDOL (MERIONETHSHIRE).

Lady Enid Vaughan, daughter of Countess Lisburne, and sister of the young Earl of Lisburne, informed me that there is a tradition in the neighbourhood of Harlech that Charles I. during the Civil War, was at one time hiding at Gorsygedol, and that the bedstead in which he slept is still to be seen there. Near the same old mansion is a large stone known as "Coeten Arthur"—Arthur's coit.

NICK-NAMES, OLD AND POPULAR SAYINGS.

"There is one-half of him in Penboyr."

"Angylion Ceinewydd, Gwartheg Llanarth, Hwrddod Cilcennin." (New Quay's angels, Llanarth's cows, Cilcennin's rams.)

"Gwyr Llanddeusant, capan crwyn,
Lladron defaid, mamau'r wyn."

(Llanddeusant men, skin caps,
Sheep stealers, lambs's mothers.)

"Moch Sir Benfro."
(Pembrokeshire pigs.)

It is probable that Pembrokeshire was the particular part of Britain into which pigs were first introduced. In the Mabinogion, Gwydion tells Math, son of Mathonwy, Lord of North Wales, that Pryderi, Lord of the South, had some beasts called pigs. Pryderi, though he had a palace at Rhuddlan Teivi, in Cardiganshire, was a Pembrokeshire Prince, and it would seem that his chief palace was still at Narberth, and that he introduced some of his pigs from Pembrokeshire into Cardiganshire.

"Esmwyth yw Cwsg cawl Erfin."
(Easily sleeps turnip broth.)

In the "Cambrian Notes and Queries," reprinted from the "Weekly mail," March, 1902, I.H.A. says: "There were two families living in two small cottages somewhere in a secluded spot on one of the slopes of the Black Mountain, Carmarthenshire, both in very straitened circumstances.

The paterfamilias' names were John and David. John found a way out of the difficulty of rearing a family upon the salary earned by farm labourers in those days by stealing a sheep now and then from the mountain flocks. His family very often had mutton broth and plenty of meat for supper while David's family had to sup upon a piece of coarse bread and turnip broth. Upon a certain night David had enjoyed his usual repast and gone to bed. Mrs. David had gone to the "next door" to view the feast, when suddenly two constables of the old fashion, made their appearance to demand the body of friend John, his depredations having been found out. Mrs. David was frightened and ran into her own house. She then called her husband. 'David! David! Come down at once; they are going to take John of the next door to prison.' 'No,' says David, 'I will sleep on'—

"Esmwyth y Cwsg cawl erfin."
(Easily sleeps turnip broth.)

The above saying is well-known all over Wales, but in the northern part of the Principality people say, "Esmwyth y cwsg potes faip." What is known as "Cawl erfin" in South Wales, is known in North Wales as "potes faip."

Another similar saying which I have heard many a time is "Esmwyth cwsg cawl dwr"—easily sleeps water broth.

Mr. John Davies, of the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, in the "Cambrian Notes and Queries," says: "'Esmwyth cwsg cawl dwr' is an old saying in Cardiganshire, especially in the parish of Llandyssul. About the year 1830 my grandfather was constable of the parish, 'Lladron Defaid' (sheep stealers) were very popular at that time; so old Siams Isaac, of Pantrhedynen, was called from his bed one winter night to take a prisoner to Cardigan Gaol, who was caught red-handed in the act of

killing the sheep in his house. On the road going from Horeb to Newcastle Emlyn the constable and prisoner went into a public house and called for a pint of beer and bread and cheese each. After resuming their journey for about a hundred yards, the landlady of the public house called after them that the man had stolen a knife from the house. A search was made, and the knife was found in the pocket of the 'Lleidr Defaid.' After the usual compliment of a few rounds of old-fashioned boxing, he was taken safely to a place of correction, and never returned to Tregroes. So the old woman who happened to live next door always said to John, her husband, 'Esmwyth cwsg cawl dwr John bach,' (water broth, easy sleep, John dear).

"CYNGHOR GWRAIG HEB EI OFYN."

(A Woman's advice without asking for it).

When King Henry VII. (then Earl of Richmond) was on his way through Wales to Bosworth Field, he consulted Dafydd Llwyd of Mathavarn, as to the final issue of the coming struggle with Richard III. Dafydd was a country gentleman, a bard, a wizard, and a prophet. On this occasion, however, he did not know how to prophecy, and was greatly perplexed. Fortunately, his wife was a very shrewd woman, who, having discovered her husband's embarrassment or trouble of mind, secretly advised him to tell Henry that he would be successful in dethroning Richard III. and in making himself King. She assured her husband that if the prediction failed of its fulfilment, he would hear no more on the subject, but that it would make his fortune if confirmed by the event. Henry went on his

way to Bosworth, rejoicing, and we know that the prophecy became true. Hence originated the proverb, "Cynghor gwraig heb ei ofyn," which implies that it is always a good thing to follow a woman's advice, when she gives you an advice without asking for it.

In an old book entitled "The History of the Principality of Wales, etc.," by Robert Burton, published as early as the year 1695, the writer when speaking of Cardiganshire says:—"They have a proverb 'Bu Arthur ond tra fu'; that is, 'Arthur was only whilst he was.' It is honourable for old men if they can say, 'We have been brave fellows.' They have another proverb, 'Ni thorres Arthur nawdd gwraig,' that is, 'King Arthur never violated the refuge of a woman.' For the King was the mirror of knighthood. By the woman's refuge we may understand her tongue, (and no valiant man will revenge her words with his blows)."

The above sayings mentioned by Robert Burton 200 years ago have fallen into disuse now, but I have occasionally heard, "Ni thorres Arthur nawdd gwraig."

CHALKING THE DOOR-STEP.

The following appeared in the "Western Mail," December 3rd, 1910:—

According to a work just published on South Pembrokeshire, the custom prevailing in that part of the country of chalking the door-step dates back to Druidical times. The object of this chalking was to keep evil spirits out of the house. The patterns run round the slated steps, and, elaborate as they often are, the essential thing is that

there should be no gap in them, because the evil spirits could enter into the house through the gaps. Does this custom prevail in all parts of Wales? It undoubtedly does in Carmarthenshire, Cardiganshire, Glamorgan, and Pembrokeshire.

WAKES IN RADNORSHIRE.

The following account by an eye-witness of a Wake at Disserth, on July 9th, 1744, will prove of interest:—

"At the end of a mead, by this river side (the R. Ieithon), were a company dancing in a barn. They were about nine couple, genteely dressed, and all people of fortune and fashion, and I may with security say, the best and most active country dancers I ever saw. We observed that the men were gay and genteel, handsome, and well shaped; the women were genteel without pride, modest without affectation, beautiful without art, and free without fondness. The generous hand of nature appeared in every face, unspotted with the artful follies of this degenerate age. It gave me a strong idea of the happiness and simplicity of the ancient Britons before the Roman and other corruptions overwhelmed the now refined part of the island (as we are pleased to term it). But these zealots for liberty maintained their independency long, and under this happy government they continue (and they never end) their innocent customs, manners and recreations. A favourite dance (Bumpers Squire Jones) I saw them perform with the greatest spirits, order and exactness ... the churchyard, which, though large, was filled with people of almost all ages and qualities. Near this, was a little house, where we

put off our riding coats, etc. The church is a strong building, and pretty large, against the tiles of which were a dozen lusty young fellows playing at tennis, and as many against the steeple at fives. They played very well, but spoke (as almost every one else did) in the Welsh tongue. On one side of the church were about six couples dancing to one violin, and just below three or four couples to three violins, whose seat was a tombstone. We saw common games of ball played against the sacred pile, and there also music playing over the bones of the deceased. We were in the middle of a merry, noisy throng, without knowing their language, or indeed almost anything they said."—Church Plate of Radnorshire, by J. T. Evans, quoted from "Pryse's Handbook."

ERRATA.

Page 5, line 27, read *secretly* instead of secretely.

Page 89, line 9. read *hide* instead of hid.

Page 122, line 10, read *Morgan* instead of Jenkins.

Page 143, line 12, read *Goblin* instead of Boblin.

Page 209. line 5, read *present* instead of preent.

Page 210, line 19. read *cup* instead of sup.

Page 225, line 38, read *Witched* instead of Wtiched.

Page 247, line 6, read *at least* instead of at east.

Page 320, line 39, read *1859* instead of 1850.

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30	woed	wooed
30, 138, 275	:	.
32, 33, 37, 43, 47, 83, 83, 96, 152, 221, 313, 321	”	[*Deleted*]
43, 43, 43, 43, 43, 43, 43, 43, 43, 44, 44, 117, 164, 175, 227, 270, 332, 332, 332, 332, 332	“	‘
43, 43, 43, 43, 43, 43, 43, 43, 43, 44, 44, 96, 117, 164, 255, 332, 332, 332, 332, 332	”	’
46	Armenial	Armenian
47	a	[*Deleted*]
58	destestation	detestation
62, 134, 185, 242, 262, 332	[*Not in source*]	”
67	boul	bowl
70	padge	badge
72	Wiliams’s	Williams’s

72	’	”
79, 87, 88, 143, 150, 177, 180, 198, 207, 207, 217, 219, 227, 243, 270, 279, 282, 306, 318, 336, 336, 337, 341, 341, 343, 347	[*Not in source*]	.
89	hid	hide
89	imagained	imagined
89, 117, 121, 159, 164, 165, 169, 169, 170, 170, 207, 218, 238, 238, 238, 243, 250, 271, 275, 338, 339, 341, 344, 344, 345, 345, 346, 346, 346, 346, 346, 347, 348, 348	[*Not in source*]	,
90	revengful	revengeful
102	‘	[*Deleted*]
111	.	:
112	Lech	Llech
114	covenient	convenient
117, 118, 175, 331	[*Not in source*]	‘

117, 118, 153	’	[*Deleted*]
118, 160, 160, 164, 175, 275, 278, 310, 313, 331	[*Not in source*]	’
118	[*Not in source*]	?
120	wordly	worldly
122	Jenkins	Morgan
124	Faries	Fairies
125	pages	page
126, 126	Peggie	Peggi
129	Dyved	Dyfed
132	,	,
136	discvery	discovery
138	guardian	guardians
142	an	and
142	aspects	aspect
143	Einon	Einion
143	Boblin	Goblin
148	interupt	interrupt
148, 309	it	its
149	Gobblins	Goblins
154	and	[*Deleted*]
155	HOUSE MAID	HOUSEMAID
156	till	still
158	kneeling	knelt
160	[*Not in source*]	is
163	rapily	rapidly
163	,	,
163	Lanfair	Llanfair

165	Llandyssil	Llandyssul
166	PONTY-Y-GWENDRAETH	PONT-Y-GWENDRAETH
167	disappeared	disappear
170	noboby	nobody
173	Rosmeherin	Rhosmeherin
175	—	’ (
183	Cambrenis	Cambrensis
184	hurredly	hurriedly
187	suplicating	supplicating
187	belfrey	belfry
190	Devils	Devil’s
191	an	a
199	pubic	public
200	day time	day-time
206	prognosicator	prognosticator
206	[*Not in source*]	against
208, 306	[*Not in source*]	a
209	supertitious	superstitious
209	preent	present
210	vessed	vessel
210	sup	cup
210	‘	“
219	bow	bowing
223	next	nest
223	be	he
225	WOODPIGEON	WOOD-PIGEON
229, 275	[*Not in source*]	;
230	strongy	strongly
235	WTICHED	WITCHED

236	Cwrty-cadno	Cwrt-y-cadno
237	affoat	afloat
241	neighbouroodneighbourhood	
241	Haverford-West	Haverfordwest
241	Wliliams	Williams
246	conjurors	conjurers
246	tbat	that
247	!.	!
247	east	least
259	,	
269	Translantic	Transatlantic
276	Skie	Skye
278	lone	lane
289	Wesh	Welsh
289	havng	having
297	Cambresis	Cambrensis
297	[*Not in source*]	)
302	frm	from
302	iour	four
307	bubbing	bubbling
308	seut	sent
310, 321, 330, 330, 331	).	.)
313	’	)
319	fight	flight
320	1850	1859
324, 324, 328, 328, 329, 344	.)	).
327	or	of
332	.”).	).”

336	Ladies	Ladis
337	of	Of
337	Hallt	Allt
341	,,	,
342	Arichbald	Archibald
343	Stdeet	Street
348	[*Not in source*]	(

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