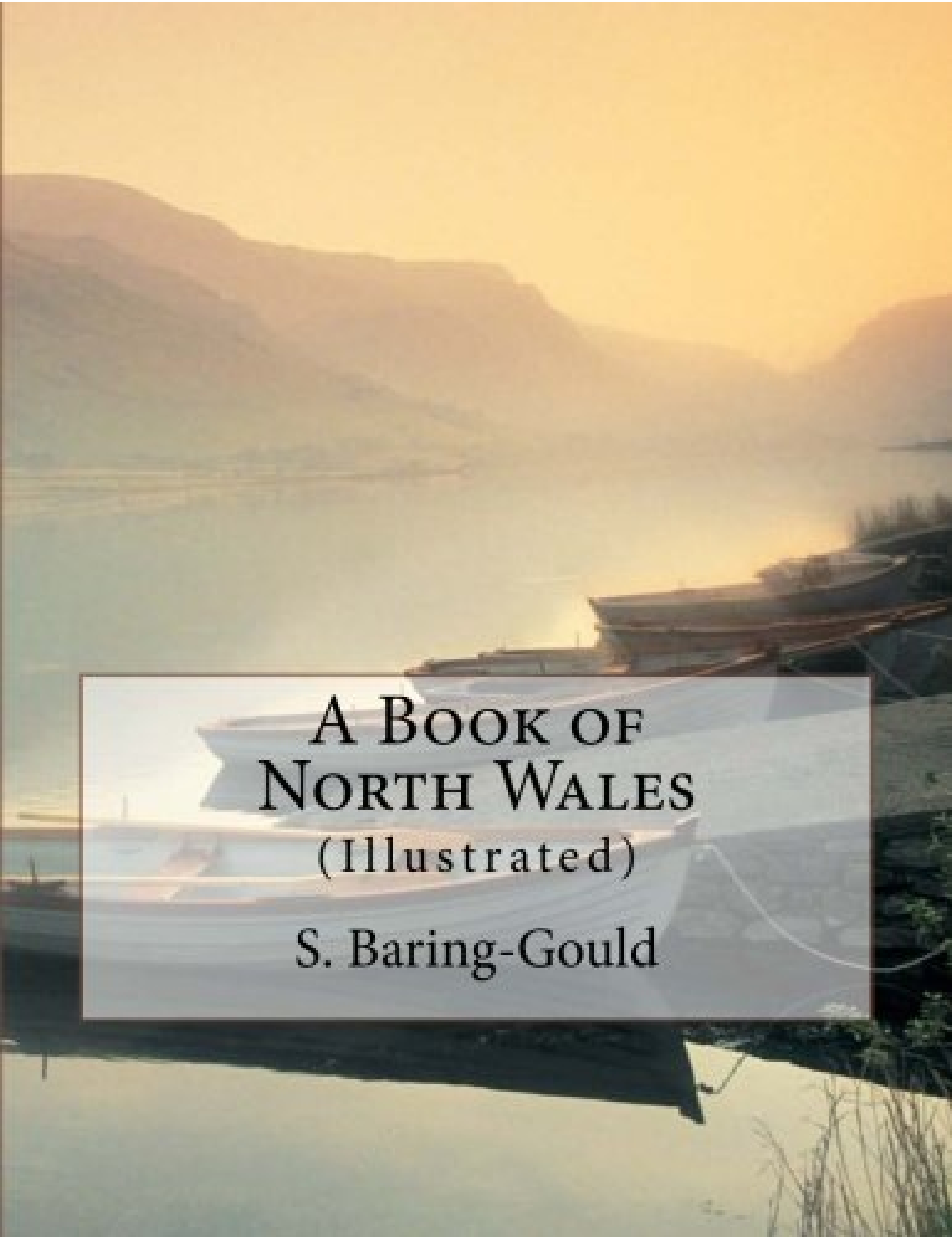


A Book of North Wales

(Illustrated)

S. Baring-Gould

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A BOOK OF
NORTH WALES

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

BY S. BARING-GOULD
A BOOK OF DARTMOOR
A BOOK OF THE WEST—TWO VOLUMES
VOL. I. DEVON
VOL. II. CORNWALL
A BOOK OF BRITTANY

BY F. J. SNELL
A BOOK OF EXMOOR



CONWAY CASTLE

A BOOK OF
NORTH WALES

BY S. BARING-GOULD

WITH FORTY-NINE ILLUSTRATIONS

METHUEN & CO.
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1903

PREFACE

CONCERNING the purpose and scope of this little book I have but to repeat what I have said in the prefaces to my other works of the same nature—*A Book of the West*, *A Book of Dartmoor*, *A Book of Brittany*—that it is not intended as a Guide, but merely as an introduction to North Wales, for the use of intending visitors, that they may know something of the history of that delightful land they are about to see.

Welsh history is a puzzle to most Englishmen; accordingly I have made an attempt to simplify it sufficiently for the visitor to grasp its outlines. Without a knowledge of the history of a country in which one travels more than half its interest is lost.

I have to return my warmest thanks to kind friends who have helped me with information, notably the Rev. J. Fisher, B.D., of Cefn, S. Asaph; Mr. J. E. Griffith, of Bryn Dinas, Bangor; the Rev. E. Evans, of Llansadwrn; Mr. C. H. Jones, of the Public Library, Welshpool; Mr. A. Foulkes-Roberts, of Denbigh; Mr. D. R. Daniel, of Four Crosses, Chwilog; and Mr. R. Williams, of Celynog, Newtown. I am also much indebted to Mr. R. J. Lloyd Price, of Rhiwlas, for kindly allowing me to reproduce the portrait of Catherine of Berain in his possession; and to Mr.

Prys-Jones, of Bryn-Tegid, Pontypridd, for sending me a photograph of the painting. But, indeed, everywhere in Wales I have met with general kindness and hospitality; and if I have failed to interest readers in the country and people the fault is all mine. It is a glorious country, and its people delightful.

S. BARING-GOULD

LEW TRENCHARD, N. DEVON

May 17th, 1903

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NORTH WALES

CHAPTER I
THE WELSH PEOPLE

General characteristics—The Iberian race—Linguistic survivals—Brython and Goidel—Roman conquest—Irish occupation of Wales—Their expulsion by Cunedda—Saxon occupation of Britain—Causes of subjection of the Celtic races—The Celt in the Englishman of to-day—Divisions of Wales.

IT cannot be said that the Welsh have any very marked external characteristics to distinguish them from the English. But there is certainly among them a greater prevalence of dark hair and eyes, and they are smaller in build. This is due to the Iberian blood flowing in the stock which occupied the mountain land from a time before history began, at least in these isles. It is a stock so enduring, that although successive waves of conquest and migration have passed over the land, and there has been an immense

infiltration of foreign blood, yet it asserts itself as one of predominant and indestructible vitality.

Moreover, although the language is Celtic, that is to say, the vocabulary is so, yet the grammar reveals the fact that it is an acquired tongue. It is a comparatively easy matter for a subjugated people to adopt the language of its masters, so far as to accept the words they employ, but it is another matter altogether to acquire their construction of sentences. The primeval population belonged to what is called the Hamitic stock, represented by ancient Egyptian and modern Berber. This people at a vastly remote period spread over all Western Europe, and it forms the subsoil of the French nation at the present day.

The constant relations that existed between the Hebrews and the Egyptians had the effect of carrying into the language of the former a number of Hamitic words. Moreover, the Sons of Israel were brought into daily contact with races of the same stock on their confines in Gilead and Moab, and the consequence is that sundry words of this race are found in both Hebrew and Welsh. This was noticed by the Welsh scholar Dr. John Davies, of Mallwyd, who in 1621 drew up a Welsh Grammar, and it is repeated by Thomas Richards in his *Welsh-English Dictionary* in 1753. He says: “It hath been observed, that our Language hath not a great many Marks of the original Simplicity of the Hebrew, but that a vast Number of Words are found therein, that either exactly agree with, or may be very naturally derived from, that Mother-language of Mankind.”

The fact is that these words, common to both, belong radically to neither, but are borrowed from the tongue of the Hamitic people.

This original people, which for convenience we will call Iberian, migrated at some unknown period

from Asia, and swept round Europe, whilst a second branch colonised the Nile basin and Northern Africa, and a third streamed east and occupied China and Japan.

The master idea in the religion of this people was the cult of ancestors, and the rude stone monuments, menhirs, cromlechs, and kistvaens they have left everywhere, where they have been, all refer to commemoration of the sacred dead. The obelisk in Egypt is the highly refined menhir, and the elaborate, ornamented tombs of the Nile valley are the expression of the same veneration for the dead, and belief in the after life connected with the tomb, that are revealed in the construction of the dolmen and kistvaen.

This same people occupied Ireland. It was a dusky, short-statured race, with long heads, and was mild and unwarlike in character.

Then came rushing from the East great hordes of fair-haired, round-headed men, with blue eyes. Their original homes were perhaps the Alps, but more probably Siberia. This new race was the Celt. It was divided into two branches, the Goidels and the Brythons, and the Goidels came first. Considerable difference as well as affinity exists between the dialects spoken by each. Where a Brython or Britton would speak of his head as “pen,” the Goidel or Gael would call it “ceann,” pronouncing the *c* hard, as *k*. So “five” in Manx is “queig,” but in Welsh “pump.” A like difference was found in Italy, where the Roman would name a man Quinctius (Fifth), but a Samnite would call him Pontius.

The Gael is now represented by the Irish, the Manx, and the Highlander: the Britton, so far as language goes, by the Welsh and Breton.

Where such names are found as Penmon in Anglesey, Pentire in Cornwall, Pen-y-gent in Yorkshire, there we know that the Britton lived long enough to give names to places. But where we find Kenmare, Kentire, Kinnoul, there we know that the Gael was at home.

Now we find it asserted that the Goidels overran Wales before they swept into Ireland, and that the Brittons penetrated as a wedge into Powys between two masses of Goidels.

But the place-names in North and South Wales are purely British, and not Gaelic. That the latter were at one time in both North and South Wales is indubitable, but they were not there long enough to stamp the mountains and rivers, the headlands and lakes, with names in their tongue. That was done by the Brittons who overflowed the whole of Wales from north to south.

Owing to the weakness of Britain, that had been in part Romanised, and which was ill-defended by a few legions, the island became a prey to invaders. It was fallen upon from all sides.

The Irish or Scots, as they were then called, poured down upon the western coast; the Picts broke over the wall from the north, and the Scandinavians and Germans invaded the east and north-east.

In 240 the Irish king Cormac MacAirt invaded Britain and assumed a nominal sovereignty over it. It was probably about this time that the Irish Gaels effected a lodgment on the coast of Wales and occupied Anglesey and all the northern fringe of the fair lands by the sea and the whole of Southern Wales.

That they were in the land we know, not only from the testimony of Welsh ancient writers, but

from the number of inscribed stones they have left behind them, some with the Ogam script, bearing distinctly Irish names. All these inscribed stones belong to the period after the occupation from Ireland, and none go back to an earlier date, and give any grounds for supposing that the original population of North and South Wales were Gaels. The Scots or Irish held these parts till an event took place which led to their expulsion.

The incursions of the Picts had made residence in the land between the Roman walls, *i.e.* from the Clyde to Solway Firth, altogether unendurable, and a chief there named Cunedda, with his sons and a great host of followers, descended on North Wales to wrest it from the Irish. This they succeeded in doing. Cunedda and his sons were Brittons. After a series of contests they drove the Irish first out of Gwynedd, and then out of Anglesey. Finally they turned them bag and baggage out of South Wales as well. Thenceforth the Gaels never again obtained a foothold for any length of time in Wales.

Ceredig, son of Cunedda, gave his name to Ceredigion or Cardigan; Meirion, grandson of Cunedda, has bequeathed his to Merioneth.

The contest began between 400 and 450, and the complete sweeping out of the Gael was not accomplished till the beginning of the following century. But by this time the invasion of Britain by the Jute, Angle, and Saxon had begun on a large scale, and as the Teutonic warriors advanced, burning and slaying, they rolled back the unfortunate Brittons westward.

After the whole of Eastern Britain had been taken and occupied, the line of demarcation between Celt and Teuton ran from the Firth of Forth along the backbone of the Pennine Range to the Forest of

Arden, and thence to Salisbury and to the sea by Christchurch. But the invaders pressed on. In 577 the Brittons were defeated at Deorham, near Bath, and those of Wales were cut off from their brethren in Devon and Cornwall. In 607 they met with a signal reverse at Chester, and they thenceforth were separated from the Brittons in Strathclyde. Still the unsatiated Anglo-Saxons pressed on, and the Brittons finally retained only the mountains of Wales as their last refuge. Many, indeed, fled over the sea and occupied and colonised Armorica, to which they gave the name of Lesser Britain or Brittany.

The borderland was the scene of bloody skirmishes for centuries. Till 784 Shrewsbury had been accounted the capital of the British kingdom of Powys, but then Offa took the city and advanced the English frontier to the Wye. He then constructed a dyke or bank with a moat that ran from the estuary of the Dee to the mouth of the Wye, as a limit beyond which no Welshman might pass.

Mona received an English colony under Egbert, and acquired its new name of Anglesey. Some time after the battles of Deorham and Chester the refugees began to call themselves Cymry.

The name implies “compatriots,” and well describes those of the same blood from all parts of Britain, now united in a common overthrow, and in a common resolution to hold for ever their mountain fastnesses to which they had been driven.

We may halt to inquire how it was that this great and heroic people, to which belong some of the finest qualities that are found in man, a people in some respects more gifted than that which dispossessed it, should have been so completely routed by invaders from across the stormy North Sea.

The Gaul had been of precisely the same Brythonic stock, and he had allowed himself to be buffeted by Cæsar and brought to his knees. Cæsar was sharp-witted enough to detect at a glance the defects in character and in political organisation of the Gauls, and to take advantage of them. Cæsar could always reckon on tribal jealousies, and consequently on setting one clan against another; and there was not a tribe in which there were not traitors, who, offended in their self-esteem, were ready to betray those of their own race and household, to wipe off some petty slight, to avenge some personal grudge. Precisely the same cause led to the ruin of the Brittons when opposed to Germanic invaders, and, as we shall see in the sequel, the same cause again acted throughout the long struggle with the English kings.

The divisions in Wales opened the door for Norman and English adventurers to come in and possess the land, and for the monarch to obtain an ever-strengthening grip on the land.

A brother was always ready to go over to the foe to gain some mean advantage; one sept was ever prepared to side with the national foe if it thought thereby to humble another sept, or to acquire through this means a few more cows and a little more pasture.

When Jute, Angle, or Saxon crossed the North Sea they were in the same political condition as were the Welsh; they also were tribally organised. But they quickly learned the lesson never to be taken to heart and acted on by the Britton, that of subordination of individual interests to the common good. The English kingdoms became consolidated into one; the British chieftains remained to the end disunited.

In feudal France province was opposed to province, in much the same way, till the strong hand

of Richelieu consolidated the monarchy.

Even in Armorica, Lesser Britain, to which crowds of refugees had escaped, the lesson was not acquired. Attacked from the east by the Franks, ravaged along the sea-coast by the Northmen, they could not combine. The princes turned their swords against each other in the face of the common foe.

Alan Barbetorte, godson of Athelstan, had not been fostered in England without having drunk in that which made England strong. When he returned to Armorica he succeeded in forcing his countrymen to combine in a supreme effort to hurl the pirates back into the sea, and naturally enough succeeded, by so doing, in freeing the land from them. But after his death all went back into the same condition of internal jealousies and strife. Throughout the Middle Ages Brittany was a battlefield, the dukes and counts flying at each other's throat, some calling themselves partisans of the English, some of the French, but all seeking personal aggrandisement only.



WELSH WOMEN

Not till 1490 did peace and unity reign in Brittany, just five years after Henry Tudor became King of England, and put a stop to the strife in Wales. The late Mr. Green, in his *The Making of*

England, laid stress on the important part that the Latin Church played in promoting the unity of the English race. But neither in France nor in Germany, there least of all, did it serve this end, and it was probably less the work of the Church that England became one than the peculiar genius of the Anglo-Saxon race. For a while we see it divided into three great forces—the Northumbrian, the Mercian, and the West Saxon—contending for the mastery, but each actuated by the dominating belief that so only could England thrive and shake off her enemies.

Mr. Green perhaps overrates the Anglo-Saxon, and thinks that the Britton disappeared from the soil before him as he advanced. At first, indeed, those who landed from their German keels proceeded to ruthless extermination. But as they advanced they ceased to do so; they were not themselves inclined to till the soil, they were content to spare their captives on condition that they became their slaves, and they certainly kept the women for themselves. Gildas, a contemporary, says that "some, being taken in the mountains, were murdered in great numbers; others, constrained by famine, yielded themselves up to be enthralled by their foes; others, again, escaped beyond the seas."

The English of to-day are a mixed race, and there is certainly a great deal more of British and Iberian blood in our veins than some have supposed. The Anglo-Saxon possessed rare qualities, perseverance, tenacity, and power of organisation; yet some of the higher qualities of our race, the searching intellect, the bright imagination, and idealism, are due to the spark of living fire entering into the somewhat heavy lump of the Germanic nature through contact with the Celt.

Wales was formed into three main divisions—

Gwynedd, Powys, and Deheubarth—but in this volume we have only to do with the two former. Each had its independent prince, but as according to Welsh custom every principality was divided up among all the sons of a prince on his death, this led to endless subdivisions, to fraternal quarrels, and fratricides. Moreover, the boundaries were incessantly shifting. The king of Gwynedd was recognised as the Gwledig, or Over-King, and the supremacy remained in the family of Maelgwn till 817, when it died out with Cynon Tyndaethwy. His daughter Esyllt married Mervyn Vrych, king of Powys, who by this means united both portions of North Wales under his sceptre.

Rhodri the Great, son and successor of Mervyn, moreover, acquired South Wales by his marriage with Angharad, daughter of Meurig, king of Ceredigion. Thus by a series of marriages all Wales was united under one sovereign and an unrivalled opportunity offered for consolidation, and sturdy united opposition to encroachment from England. Unhappily the chance was allowed to slip. On the death of Rhodri, Wales was divided among his three sons (877): Anarawd obtained Gwynedd, Cadell became king of Deheubarth, and Mervyn was placed in possession of Powys. In 1229 Powys was subdivided into Powys Vadog and Powys Wenwynwyn. In addition to the main divisions there were a number of small principalities, whose princes were engaged in incessant strife with one another and with the sovereign who claimed supreme rule over them. They sided now with the English, then those in Gwynedd would throw in their lot with the princes of the south. It was these intestine divisions, never appeased, that exhausted the strength of the country and made way for the conquest by the

English.

CHAPTER II
THE ENGLISH CONQUEST

The contest with the Saxons—William the Conqueror—The Norman invasion of Wales—The castles—The Welsh kingdoms—Rhodri the Great—Llewelyn the Great—The last Llewelyn—Edward I.'s treatment of the Welsh.

THROUGHOUT the reigns of the Saxon kings the Welsh had to maintain a contest, on the one hand with the English, and on the other with the Danes and Northmen hovering round the coast.

The Vikings, who carried devastation through England, did not overlook Wales. Wherever we find camps of a certain description, there we know that either Saxon or Dane has been.

These camps consist of earthen tumps or bell-shaped mounds, usually hollowed out in the middle, and with base-courts attached, protected by a palisade, and the top of the tump was crowned with a tower-like structure of timber.

At times the Welsh were in league with one of the kings of the Heptarchy against another; at others they were in league with the Danes against the English, and when not so engaged were fighting one another.

When William the Conqueror had subjugated England he was determined not to leave Wales to its independence.

But the conquest of Wales was not executed by one master mind. Wales was given over to a number of Norman adventurers to carry out the conquest in their own way, under no control, with the result that it was conducted with barbarity, lawlessness, wanton destruction, and spasmodically. In England, after the battle of Hastings, the Conqueror set to work to consolidate the kingdom under his sceptre, and blood ceased to flow. In Wales, in the north, the Earl of Chester and Robert of Rhuddlan fought and conquered for themselves in Gwynedd. In like manner the Earl of Shrewsbury raided in Powys from his fortress at Montgomery. In the south the Earl of Hereford carried sword and fire into Deheubarth. Frightful cruelties were committed. Ordericus Vitalis, as he records the glory of "the warlike marquess," or Lord Marcher, Robert of Rhuddlan, is forced to admit with honest indignation that his deeds were such as no Christian warrior ought to commit against his fellow-Christians.

Seeing the importance of Shrewsbury, William built a strong castle there. Chester, Worcester, Hereford, and Gloucester were made into fortresses, and everything was prepared for advance.

In the reign of William Rufus, Deganwy, the old residence of the kings of Gwynedd, above the mouth of the Conway, was seized and fortified, and the Welsh king had to remove to Aberffraw, in Anglesey.

> "The conquest which now began," says Mr. Freeman, "that which we call either the English or Norman conquest of Britain, differed from the Norman conquest of England. It wrought far less change than the landing at Ebbfleet; it wrought far

more change than the landing at Pevensey.

"The Britton of these lands, which in the Red King's day were still British, was gradually conquered; he was brought gradually under English rule and English law, but he was neither exterminated nor enslaved, nor wholly assimilated. He still abides in his ancient land, still speaking his ancient tongue.

"The English or Norman conquest of Wales was not due to a national migration like the English conquest of Britain, nor was it a conquest wrought under the guise of an elaborate legal fiction, like the Norman conquest of England."

The process pursued was this. The Norman barons advanced with their armed men along the shore, and up the basins of the rivers, till they gained some point of vantage controlling the neighbourhood, and there they erected castles of stone. This was an art they had acquired in Normandy, where stone was abundant and easily quarried. It was one to which the Brittons were strange. By degrees they forced their way further; they seized the whole sea-board. They strangled the valleys by gripping them where they opened out; they controlled the fertile pasture and arable land from their strongholds. Towns sprang up under the shelter of the castles, and English mechanics and traders were encouraged to settle in them.

The Welsh had never been city builders or dwellers in cities. They had suffered the old Roman towns to fall into decay, the walls to crumble into shapeless heaps of ruins. They lived in scattered farms, and every farmer had his *hafod*, or summer residence, as well as his *hendre*, or winter and principal home. Only the retainers of a prince dwelt about him in his palace, or *caer*. And now they saw strongly walled and fortified towns starting up at commanding points on the roads and beside all

harbours. The arteries of traffic, the very pores of the land, were occupied by foreigners.

As Freeman further observes:—

> "Wales is, as everyone knows, pre-eminently the land of castles. Through those districts with which we are specially concerned, castles great and small, or the ruins or traces of castles, meet us at every step. The churches, mostly small and plain, might themselves, with their fortified towers, almost count as castles. The towns, almost all of English foundation, were mostly small; they were military colonies rather than seats of commerce. As Wales had no immemorial cities like Exeter and Lincoln, so she had no towns which sprung up into greatness in later times, like Bristol, Norwich, and Coventry. Every memorial of former days which we see in the British land reminds us of how long warfare remained the daily business alike of the men in that land and of the strangers who had made their way into it at the sword's point."

Through the reigns of the Plantagenet kings the oppression and cruelties to which the Welsh were subjected drove them repeatedly to reprisals. At times they were successful.

During the commotions caused by the misrule of King John and the incapacity of Henry III. the Welsh took occasion to stretch their limbs and recover some of the lands that had been wrested from them, and to throw down the castles that were an incubus upon them.

There were three Welsh kingdoms, or principalities. Gwynedd, roughly conterminous with the counties of Anglesey, Carnarvon, Merioneth, and parts of Denbigh and Flint. Powys, sadly shrunken, still comprised Montgomeryshire and Radnor and a portion of Denbigh. The third principality, Deheubarth or Dynevor, composed of Pembrokeshire, Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, and Glamorgan.

Brecknock was claimed as part of it, but was an enclave in which the Normans had firmly established themselves. Monmouthshire also belonged to Deheubarth.

The king of Gwynedd claimed supremacy as head over the rest, and although this was allowed as a theory, if practically asserted it always met with armed resistance. But this was not all that went to weaken the Welsh opposition. Each prince who left sons carved up his principality into portions for each, and as the brothers were mutually jealous and desirous of acquiring each other's land, this led to incessant strife and intrigue with the enemy in the heart of each of the three principalities. A great opportunity had offered. Rhodri the Great had united all Wales in his own hands, as mentioned already. But the union lasted only for his life; all flew apart once more at his death in 877, and that just at the moment when unity was of paramount importance.

Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, surnamed "the Great," was king of Gwynedd at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and he had sufficient wit to see that the only salvation for Wales was to be found in its reunion, and he attempted to achieve this. As Powys was obstructive, he had to fight Gwenwynwyn its king, then to subject Lleyn and Merioneth.

In 1202 Llewelyn was firmly established in Gwynedd, and he married Joan, the daughter of King John, who proceeded to reinstate Gwenwynwyn in Powys. In 1211 this prince sided with Llewelyn against John, who, furious at this act of ingratitude, hanged twenty-eight Welsh hostages at Nottingham.

Llewelyn now turned his attention to the conquest of South Wales. He stormed one castle after another, and obtained recognition as prince of Dynevor. But in 1216 the false and fickle

Gwenwynwyn abandoned the Welsh side and went over to that of the English. After some fighting Llewelyn submitted to Henry III. at Worcester in 1218.

His grandson, another Llewelyn, was also an able man, but he lacked just that essential faculty of being able to detect the changes of the sky and the signs of the times, and that ruined him.

In 1256 Llewelyn was engaged in war against the English. He had done homage to Henry III. in 1247, but the unrest in England caused by the feeble rule and favouritism of Henry had resulted in the revolt of the barons. Llewelyn took advantage of this condition of affairs to recover Deganwy Castle and to subdue Ceredigion. Then he drove the unpatriotic son of Gwenwynwyn out of Powys. The same year he entered South Wales, and was everywhere victorious. Brecon was brought under his rule, and the castles held by the English were taken and burned. But Llewelyn's great difficulty lay with his own people, though his power was used for the recovery of Wales from English domination.

In 1265 he had received the oaths of fealty throughout Wales, which was now once more an independent principality. But he made at this point a fatal mistake. He did not appreciate the strength and determination of Edward I., the son of the feeble Henry, and in place of making favourable terms with him he intrigued against him with some revolted barons.

But Edward was a man of different metal from his father, and he declared war against Llewelyn, and in 1277 invaded Wales.

Three formidable armies poured in, and Llewelyn was driven to take refuge among the wilds of

Snowdon, where he was starved into submission. All might have gone smoothly thenceforth had Edward been just. But he was ungenerous and harsh. He suffered his officials to treat the Welsh with such brutality that their condition became intolerable. Appeals for redress that were made to him were contemptuously set aside, and the Welsh princes and people felt that it would be better to die with honour than to be treated as slaves.

A general revolt broke out. In 1282 Llewelyn took the castles of Flint, Rhuddlan, and Hawarden in the north, and Prince Gruffydd rose against the English in the south.

Edward I. resolved on completely and irretrievably crushing Wales under his heel. He entered it with a large army, and again drove Llewelyn into the fastnesses of Snowdon. Llewelyn thence moved south to join forces with the Welsh of Dyved, leaving his brother David to hold the king back in North Wales.

The place appointed for the junction was near Builth, in Brecknock, but he was betrayed into a trap and was surrounded and slain, and his head sent to Edward, who was at Conway.

Edward ordered that his gallant adversary's body should be denied a Christian burial, and forwarded the head to London, where, crowned in mockery with ivy leaves, it was set in the pillory in Cheapside. Nor was that all: he succeeded in securing the person of David, had him tried for high treason, hanged, drawn, and quartered. Llewelyn's daughter was forced to assume the veil. Thus ended the line of Cunedda, and Llewelyn is regarded as the last of the kings of Wales.

Edward was at Carnarvon when his second son

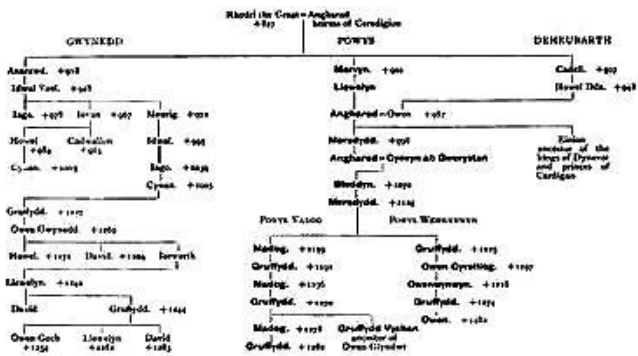
Edward was born, 1301, and soon after he proclaimed him Prince of Wales.

It has been fondly supposed that this was a tactful and gracious act of the king to reconcile the Welsh to the English Crown. It was nothing of the kind. His object was to assure the Crown lands of Gwynedd to his son.

> "Edward's brutal treatment of the remains of Llewelyn, who, though a rebel according to the laws of the king's nation, was slain in honourable war, and his utter want of magnanimity in dealing with David were long remembered among the Cymry, and helped to keep alive the hatred with which the Welsh-speaking people for several generations more regarded the English."[1]

The principality of Wales indeed remained, but in a new and alien form, and all was over for ever with the royal Cymric line.

PEDIGREE OF THE PRINCES OF GWYNEDD AND OF POWYS



CHAPTER III
ANGLESEY

The "Mother of Wales"—Agricola—Invades Môn—Mines—Caswallon Long-hand—Drives out the Irish—Conquest by Edwin—Aberffraw—Characteristics of Anglesey—Plas Llanfair—Llandyssilio—Llansadwrn—Inscribed stone of Sadwrn—Prophecy—Beaumaris—Bulkeley monuments—Penmon—Church of S. Seiriol—Old gallows—Puffin Isle—Maelgwn Gwynedd—Gildas—Loss of the *Rothesay Castle*—Tin Sylwy—English and Welsh inscriptions—Monument of Iestyn—His story—The Three Leaps—Amlwch—Llaneilian—John Jones—Llanbadrig—The witches of Llanddona—Goronwy Owen—Lewis Morris.

ANGLESEY is called the "Mother of Wales," apparently because of its fertility and as supplying the mountain districts of the Principality with corn.

It has not the rugged beauty of the greater portion of Wales—there is, however, some bold coast scenery on the north and the west—but it possesses one great charm, the magnificent prospects it affords of the Snowdon chain and group and of the heights of Lleyn. Its Welsh name is Môn, which was Latinised into Mona, and it did not acquire that of Anglesey till this was given to it by King Egbert in 828. We first hear of it in A.D. 78, when the Roman general Cn.

Julius Agricola was sent into Britain. He at once marched against the Ordovices, who occupied Powys.



HOLYHEAD, AT RHOSCOLYN

As represented by Tacitus, Agricola was a Roman of the purest type, a man sincere, faithful, and affectionate in his domestic relations, and gracious in his behaviour to all men. He was upright in his dealings, a fine soldier, an able general, but inflexible in his dealings with the enemies of Rome. The ancient Roman was filled with the conviction that the gods had predestined the City on the Seven Hills to rule all nations and languages, and that such as resisted were to be treated as the enemies of the gods. No mercy was to be accorded to them. Much of the same principle actuated the generals of the Republic and the Empire as did the followers of the Prophet. With one it was Rome, with the other Islam, or the sword.

The Ordovices had been most stubborn in their opposition, and most difficult to restrain within bounds. In a short but decisive campaign Agricola so severely chastised them that his biographer says that he almost literally exterminated them. This is certainly an exaggeration, but it implies the hewing to pieces of the chiefs and free men capable of bearing the sword who fell into his hands. Cæsar had treated the Cadurci, after their gallant stand at Uxellodunum, in the same way, and again the Veneti of Armorica, without a shadow of compunction. Whatsoever people opposed Rome was guilty of a capital crime, and must be dealt with accordingly. Agricola now pushed on to the Menai Straits, beyond which he could see the undulating land of Mona, the shore lined with Britons in paint, and brandishing their weapons, whilst behind them were ranged the Druids and bards inciting them to victory with their incantations and songs.

We can determine with some confidence the spot where Agricola stood contemplating the last stronghold of the Briton and its defenders. It was at Dinorwic, where now plies a ferry.

He waited till the strong current of the tide had run to exhaustion and left a long stretch of sand on the further side. The Britons seeing that he was without ships feared nothing.

But they were speedily convinced of their mistake. Agricola's auxiliaries, probably natives of the low lands at the mouth of the Rhine, had no fear of the water, plunged in, and gallantly swam across the channel.

A massacre ensued; the island was subjugated, and Roman remains found on it in several places testify that the conquerors of the world planted troops there in camp to keep Mona in complete

control. They worked the copper mines near Amlwch.



SERIGI. A STATUE AT CAERGYBI

As the Roman power failed in Britain, Mona became the stronghold of the invading Gwyddyl or Irish; they held it, and erected on its commanding heights their stone-walled fortresses, and it was not till the time of Caswallon Long-hand, grandson of Cunedda, that they were dislodged. He fought them in a series of battles, drove them from their strong castles faced with immense slabs of granite, such as Tin Sylwy, swept them together into Holy Island, then broke in on their last remaining fortress. According to legend, Caswallon was obliged to fasten his Britons together with horse-hobbles, to constrain them to fight by taking away from them the chance of escape by running away. With his own hand he slew Serigi, the Irish chief, near the entrance to the camp, and those of the Gwyddyl who did not escape in their boats were put to the sword. By an odd freak much like ours in glorifying De Wet and Lucas Meyer, the Welsh agreed to consider their late enemy as a martyr, and a chapel was erected where he fell, and he is figured, very shock-headed and bearing the short sword wherewith he was killed, in a niche of the doorway of the church which now stands in the midst of the old Gwyddyl fortress.

Caswallon set up his residence on the hill above Llaneilian, where the foundations may still be traced —a spot whence in the declining day the mountains of Wicklow may be seen, the Isle of Man stands out to the north, and in clear weather Helvellyn may be distinguished on the rim of the blue sea.

Edwin, king of Northumbria, conquered both Mona and the Isle of Man in 625. The place of his landing is still pointed out at Lleiniog, near

Beaumaris, and a mound of the Anglo-Saxon type remains to show where was his first camp. Here also Hugh the Fat, Earl of Chester, was killed by the arrow of Magnus Barefoot. But of this more presently. Driven from Deganwy, on the Conway, the kings of Gwynedd made their residence at Aberffraw, in Mona. Of that palace there are but scanty traces.

There is something remarkable in the character of Anglesey. The bold mountains of Wales come to an abrupt fall at the Menai Straits, and thence the island stretches west in low undulation rising nowhere to any considerable elevation, and scored across with depressions from north to south, feeble and imperfect replicas of the Menai Straits. One is the furrow occupied by the Malldraeth morass and sands, but this does not cut completely across the island. The other is more thorough; it severs Holy Island from the main body of Môn, but it is so narrow that it has been bridged at Penybont and the railway crosses it on a causeway at Valley.

Anglesey does not impress the visitor as being so fertile as has been supposed. There are long stretches of morass and moor strewn with pools. But perhaps Môn was first called the “Mother of Wales” because to it, as to a mother’s lap, retreated the Cymry when beaten, wounded, and sore before their oppressors. If so, it soon ceased to be their place of refuge, but formed a *point d’appui* for their enemies, whence to strike at them from the rear.

Mona, as already said, does not present us with very striking scenery, except on the coast, but it teems with interest in other ways. It is dotted with monuments of the primeval inhabitants—cromlechs and meini-hirion (the plural of maen-hir). It possesses very well preserved camps of the Gwyddyl invaders. It was first the sanctuary and school of the

Druids, and after that, of their spiritual successors, the Saints. The slope of Mona towards the east is well timbered and studded with mansions, the park of Plas Newydd, the residence of the Marquess of Anglesey, Plas Llanfair, and the palace of the Bishop of Bangor. This prelate had his residence near the Cathedral, but this has been sold, and a lordly mansion has been given to him on the Straits, where he can turn his back on his Anglesey clergy, and say to the rest, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed." The beautiful suspension bridge erected by Telford crosses the Straits at their sweetest spot. Here the channel is broken by a little island occupied by the graveyard and church of Llandyssilio. The church is of no architectural interest. It was founded by Tyssilio, one of the sons of Brochwel Ysgythrog, prince of Powys, when he ran away from Meifod to escape the blandishment of an over-affectionate sister-in-law.

Llansadwrn Church, beautifully situated and carefully restored, contains the tombstone of its patron saint. This is a small block, now broken, that was found under the wall of the north transept, and is now let into the side of the chancel. It bears the inscription: *Hic Beatu(s) Saturninus Se(pultus I)acit. Et Sua Sa(ncta) Coniux. P(ax)*. The knight was an Armorican prince, and the brother of S. Illtyd, founder of Llantwit Major, in Glamorganshire. Sadwrn and his wife Canna, who was his cousin, left Armorica, owing probably to some family unpleasantness. After his death she married again, and became the mother of Elian the Pilgrim, of whom we shall have something to say presently. In the very interesting church of Beaumaris is a tomb the sides of which are decorated with delicately carved figures of Anglesey saints, and among these

are two that may be taken to represent Sadwrn and his wife. He is shown in armour, his sword sheathed, and holding a pilgrim's staff in his left hand, whilst giving a benediction with the right.

When the tubular bridge for the railway was built it was considered that a prophecy made by a Welsh bard had been fulfilled, wherein he spoke of rising from his bed in Mona, of breakfasting in Chester, of lunching in Ireland, and of returning to sup in Mona. But the required speed to Ireland has not yet been attained. Another meaning or interpretation has been put on the words of Robyn Ddu. He was living at Holyhead when he wrote the lines in question, and there were two boats by the quay, one from Chester and the other from Dublin, and he breakfasted with the captain at his table in the first boat, took his midday meal in the cabin of the second, and returned to his own quarters to sup and sleep.

Beaumaris is a sleepy little place, only waking to life when the bathing season sets in. The castle was erected by Edward I., and took its name from its situation on the Fair Marsh. It is not a particularly striking building, and is far gone in ruin.

The church, however, which is of the same period, and due to Edward I., is worth a visit. The side aisles contain five two-light Decorated windows. The chancel is Late Perpendicular, with a very poor east window containing some fragments of stained glass. The arcade of the church is Perpendicular. In the vestry are Bulkeley monuments, removed at the Dissolution from Penmon. From Beaumaris a delightful excursion may be made to Penmon, which was a great nursery of saints for Gwynedd. It would be hard to find anywhere a sweeter or sunnier spot. The hills fold around the little dell in which lies the church, shutting off the gales from north and east

and west, and open only to the south to let in the sun.

Unhappily a marble quarry is close by, and is eating into one of the arms that is wrapped lovingly about the old site, and will in time eat its way through.

In the combe, among ancient walnut and chestnut trees and flowering elder, are some relics of the monastery and its Norman priory church. The foundation of the cloister may be traced. The church is cruciform, and is aisleless. The south transept contains rich Norman arcades, and the arch into this transept is of the same period and of equal richness. A square font in the nave, covered with interlaced and key work, is the base of an old Celtic cross. A Norman doorway on the south side gives admission to the nave. This has knotwork and a monster biting its tail in the tympanum. The chancel is three steps below the level of the nave. A fine cross is in the south transept, taken out of the ruins of the priory, where it had served as lintel to a mediæval window.

S. Seiriol, the founder, is represented in stained glass of the fifteenth century in a window of the south transept, and a bishop, probably S. Elian, in one of the north transept. Near the church is the holy well of the saint, gushing forth from under a rock, and filling what was once the priory fishpond. The well is now in request mainly by such as desire to know what is in store for them in their love affairs, by dropping in pins and forming wishes.

About a mile distant, on a height where the rock comes to the surface, are four holes—the sockets for a pair of gallows, as the Prior of Penmon had seigneurial rights, and could hang misdoers.

Just off the coast is Ynys Seiriol, or Puffin Island,

with the tower and ruins of a church on it. Hither retreated the monks of the first Celtic monastery to die and to be buried, and the soil is dense with their bones. The rabbits turn them up when burrowing. Here, according to tradition, Maelgwn, king of Gwynedd, was buried in 547. He was son of Caswallon, who drove the Irish out of Anglesey. Maelgwn was a remarkable man, tall and noble of countenance, and a masterful prince. He incurred the wrath of the ecclesiastics because he had once been a monk and had thrown aside the cowl. He was not particularly scrupulous about the rights of sanctuary claimed by the saints, and he was imperious in requisitioning meals of them when hunting in their neighbourhood.



S. SEIRIOL. STAINED GLASS, PENMON

He was, however, large-hearted and liberal, and

when Caw, a prince of Strathclyde, and his sons came helter-skelter into Gwynedd, flying from the Picts, he generously received them and gave them lands in Anglesey.

Somewhat later, Gildas the historian, one of the sons of Caw, when himself safe in Brittany, wrote his venomous letter on the *Destruction of Britain*, and thus indecently and ungratefully attacked Maelgwn, the protector of his family:—

> "Thou island dragon, first in wickedness, exceeding others in power and in malice, *liberal in giving*, but more prompt in sin, strong in arms, but stronger in what destroys the soul, why dost thou wallow in such a black pool of crimes? Why dost thou lade thy neck with such loads of heavy crimes? Thy conversion once on a time brought as much joy as now thy accursed reversion to thy disgusting vomit, like a sick dog, has caused sorrow. Thy ears are not given to listen to sacred hymns, but to the bawling of a rascally crew howling out lies and frothing phlegm, bespattering everyone round about."

Probably Maelgwn was not a good man, but the family of Gildas owed every yard of land it possessed to his munificence. By a word only does Gildas allude to their indebtedness to him; not an indication appears of loving pity—all is scurrilous abuse of the most insulting description. He was a sixth-century counterpart of Mr. Cutcliffe Hyne's Captain Owen Kettle, a curious combination of narrow religiousness and foulmouthedness. No wonder that in Brittany his symbol is a snarling cur. And the meanness of the man is conspicuous throughout. So long as his own skin was safe from the lash it deserved, he gave no thought to his kinsmen living under the protection of Maelgwn and other princes against whom he inveighed—with what unpleasant consequences to them we shall see presently.

At Ruys, in the Morbihan, is a very beautiful marble statue of him, set up by his tomb a few years ago. It represents a young monk with angelic face, and a mouth in which butter would not melt. It is too funny for words to look at that idealised portrait and read the *Destruction of Britain*.

And now the bones of Maelgwn lie in Ynys Seiriol. In 1897 some excavations were made on the island by Mr. Harold Hughes, who says:—

> "On removing the debris of centuries"—near the ruined church—"with the aid of pick and shovel we have succeeded in making a considerable clearing immediately to the east of the structure. We discovered at about four feet from the surface an ancient tomb. Beneath the rough clay, worn slabs, and covered with shingle from the shore, lay within a narrow inclosure, with feet to the east, the skeleton of a man. Although portions of the skeleton had crumbled away, many fragments remained, and these, after much difficulty, I pieced together."

Was this, one may ask, the tomb of the famous Maelgwn Gwynedd?

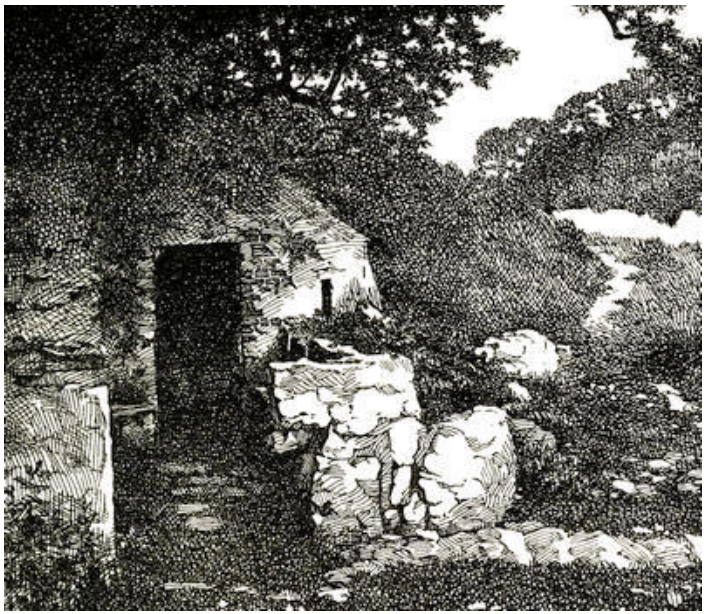
From the island a reef runs into the sea, called the Causeway of Seiriol, and it is supposed that it was constructed by the saint as a means of communication with Penmaen Mawr. It disappears under the Dutchman's Bank, a sandy stretch that obstructs the entrance to the Menai Straits. Hereon, in 1831, the *Rothesay Castle* was cast, when a hundred lives were lost. Miss Martineau, in her *History of the Thirty Years' Peace*, tells a striking story of this wreck:—

> "Two men, strangers to each other, found themselves holding on to the same plank, which, it soon appeared, would support only one. Each desired the other to hold on, the one because his companion was old, the other because his companion was young, and they quitted their grasp at the same

> moment. By extraordinary accidents both were saved, each without the knowledge of the other, and they met on the shore in great surprise. Few greetings in the course of human life can be so sweet and moving as must have been that of these two heroes."

The country for some distance west of Penmon is commanded by Tin Sylwy or Bwrdd Arthur as it is also called. It rises 500 feet above the sea and is crowned by a fortification. The wall is of stone unset in mortar, faced within and without with slabs set on end, and within the area are faint traces of *cytiau* or circular huts of stone, such as are traditionally attributed to the Irish. Some excavations have been made here, but not on an extensive scale, and Roman coins and Samian ware have been found; but the extant walling assuredly belongs to the Gwyddyl invasion and occupation. Below the camp, between it and the church of Llanfihangel, is a holy well. In the graveyard may be noticed a token of a change of feeling towards the Welsh tongue. To the date 1860, or thereabouts, the inscriptions on the tombstones are in English, after that date in Welsh.

There is nothing in the church of Llaniestyn but the very curious carved slab with a full-length figure of the saint who founded the church. One very similar and of the same period, the reign of Edward III., is in Llanbabo Church. Iestyn was a son of Geraint, the heroic king of Devon and Cornwall, who fell at Langport, in Somersetshire, fighting against invaders, about the year 522. Iestyn was buried here. He seems to have travelled, and it is probably of him that a pretty story is told.



HOLY WELL, PENMON

He had gone to Brittany, and had found a deserted habitation at Plestin, of which he took possession. The hut had been constructed by an Irish settler named Efflam, who had departed on a pilgrimage. On his return Efflam found his cell in the occupation of a stranger. The question arose as to which should have it. This they decided to determine in the following manner. Both seated themselves in the cabin. The day was overcast, but the clouds were breaking, and the sun was nearing its setting. He on whom it first shone should retain the hovel. Presently the clouds parted, and a golden ray shot in through the little window and blazed on Efflam's upturned face. Then Iestyn rose, bowed, and withdrew, and ended his days in Mona. It is by an artist's licence that on the monument Iestyn is

represented wearing a crown. He was, indeed, a king's son, but he never bore the royal circlet.

The somewhat similar monument is at Llanbabo, in the north-west of the island. Pabo, after long and stubborn fighting against the Picts in North Britain, was driven to take refuge in Wales, and was kindly received by the prince of Powys. He bears the title of "The Pillar of Britain."

On the north coast is Pentraeth, at the head of Red Wharf Bay, and here may be seen the Three Leaps, by which hangs a tale.

Einion, son of Gwalchmai, was lord of Trefeilir. Now there was a young lady named Angharad, daughter of Ednyfed Fychan, who was so beautiful, and was an heiress of so much, that she had many suitors. As she professed herself unable to decide among such an *embarras de richesses* of nice young men, her father proposed that she should marry the youth who could jump the furthest. She agreed. When the suitors came to try their powers, Einion surpassed the rest, for with a hop, skip, and a jump he covered fifty feet. The hop, skip, and jump are marked by three stones, which remain to this day in the dingle of Plas Gwyn. So Einion became the husband of Angharad.

His happiness was of short duration, for he was summoned by Owen Gwynedd to assist in driving the Flemings out of South Wales, who had been settled there by Henry I. This was in 1137. Einion was away for a good many years, constantly engaged in fighting, and when he did return to Trefeilir he found that on that day his wife had given her hand to another suitor, supposing that Einion was dead. Einion remained without and sent a servant within to summon her to come forth, and then, striking his harp, he sang a lay of reproach that has been

preserved. Then he entered the house and ejected the gentleman who had presumed to invade his premises.

The Parys Mountain rises to the height of 420 feet, and is pretty completely honeycombed with mines, as it is an almost solid lump of copper. It has been worked continually since the times of the Romans, and had probably been quarried at in the Bronze Age before that.

The little town of Amlwch is dominated by this mountain. It consists of two parts, the town proper and the port, and a considerable manufacture of chemical manures is carried on in it. Altogether Amlwch is in itself not a particularly attractive place. It has many spots of interest about it, and from it can be reached Bull Bay, where there are good sands, and the place is growing in favour. To the east the adjoining parish is Llaneilian, that possesses a quaint and interesting church, which, however, has suffered cruelly from unintelligent “restoration.” Like the majority of Welsh village churches, it has no side aisles; it is a cross church, with battlements and a western tower, covered from top to bottom in a panoply of slates. At the “restoration” the old oak seats were cast forth to make room for deal benches in preference, and the fine rood-screen with its loft had all the dainty tracery stripped from its panels and openings and destroyed, so that now it is a mere skeleton.

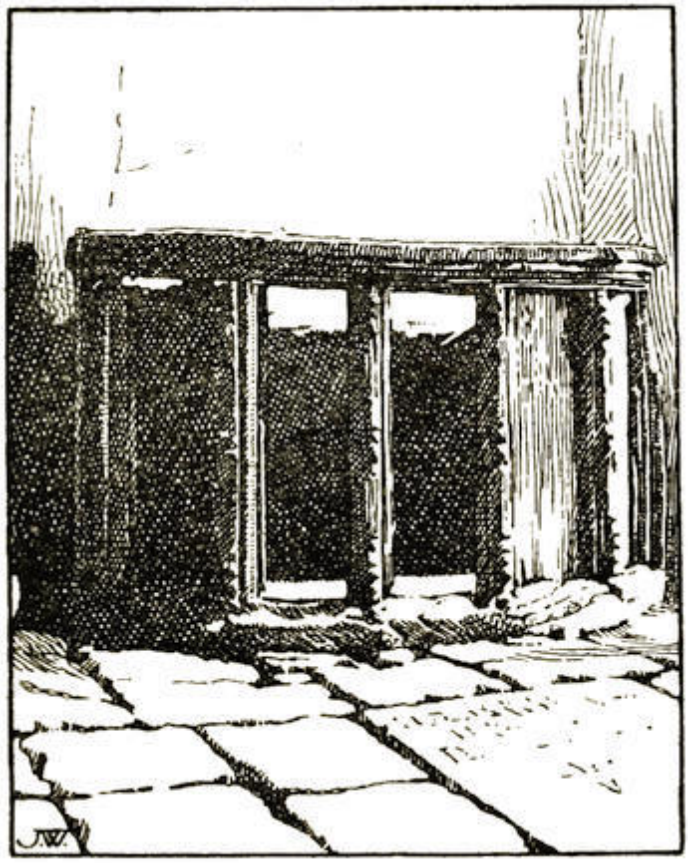
There is a curious little chapel at the south-east end of the church, differently orientated, and with a covered passage to it from the chancel.

This chapel has a well-preserved and good carved oak roof, which the present rector has saved from destruction by damp. Here is the base of the shrine of S. Elian. It is of wood, and the panels were

formerly carved, but the tracery is gone. Into this people crawled, and if they succeeded in turning themselves about within, believed that they would get cured of any disease they might have, or, according to another version, would have their lives extended by five years.

A painting of S. Elian by an Italian artist of the seventeenth century is kept in the church, but it is devoid of merit and is in bad preservation. There is also a pair of wooden *gefail gwn*, or dog-tongs, bearing the date 1748.

Above Llaneilian rises the hill on which was Caswallon's *llys*, or court. The story goes that Caswallon promised to Elian as much land as a stag he was hunting could run round in the day, and the deer's spring, a leap over a rent in the rocks, is shown to this day, but it is not any longer in the parish of the saint.



BASE OF SHRINE, LLANEILIAN

A late rector of Llaneilian, John Jones, who died in 1870, and had been curate of the parish for twenty years and after that rector for thirty-three, kept his harper and also a pack of hounds.

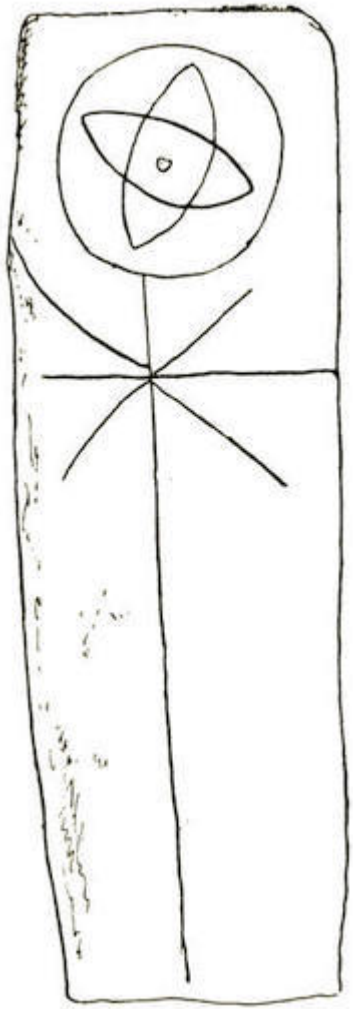
To the west of Amlwch, in a bold situation, is Llanbadrig. The church was founded, not by the Apostle of the Irish, but by a namesake who lived later and was a member of S. Cybi's monastery at Holyhead. According to legend, when he was on his

way back from Iona, where he had visited S. Columba, his frail boat was wrecked on Ynys Badrig, or the Middle Mouse, an islet off the coast. Patrick succeeded in making his way to the land, drank of a fountain near the shore, and scrambled up the rock, in which the marks of his feet are still to be seen, to where is the church which he planted on the edge of the precipice in commemoration of his providential escape.

Within the church is a very rude cross that may well date from the time of S. Patrick. The niche at the east end of the chancel that now contains a representation of "Salvator Mundi" has twisted serpents on the pedestal, and formerly contained a figure of the patron saint, who was confounded with the Apostle of Ireland.

The parish of Llanddona is in evil repute, as a nest of witches. The story goes that a boat came ashore in Red Wharf Bay without rudder or oars, containing women and men in a condition of great destitution. They were Irish. Now it was a common custom in Ireland to punish malefactors by putting them in a wicker-work coracle, covered by a single hide, without allowing them oars or rudder. So when S. Patrick converted Maughold, the robber, he bade him drift oarless on the sea, his feet chained together. He was swept by the winds and waves to the Isle of Man, and eventually became bishop there. Now when the good people of Llanddona saw this boat come ashore thus unprovided with the necessary apparatus for its guidance, they concluded that those on board were criminals, and would have nothing to do with them. They would have sent them adrift again had not a spring of clear water burst forth on the sands where the coracle had come ashore. The spring still flows. This was decisive as a

token that Heaven accepted the punishment of the crew, and desired them to rest where they had landed.



CROSS AT LLANBADRIG

So these strangers remained, and were suffered to build cottages, but for generations they continued apart from the Welsh inhabitants, and they maintained their evil propensities. The men lived by smuggling, and the women supported themselves by the exercise of witchcraft. It was not possible to overcome the smugglers in a fray, for they carried about with them a black fly tied in a knot of their kerchief, and the moment that the knot was undone the fly flew at the eyes of their opponents and blinded them. The women, old and young, were dreaded for the power they possessed of cursing those who refused them whatsoever they asked—a fowl, a loaf of bread, eggs, part of a pig. If this were denied them, they would imprecate the most awful curses, of which here is one:—

"May he wander for ages
And find at each step a stile,
And at every stile find a fall,
And at every fall a broken bone;
Not the largest, nor the least bone,
But the chief neck bone, each time."

If the Llanddona witches attended a market, and bid for anything, no one ventured to bid against them. But are not most Welsh girls witches?—witches, however, that win and do not revolt like those of Llanddona.

On the further side of Red Wharf Bay, where, by the way, there is an hotel, and where lodgings may be had, is Llanfair Mathafarn Eithaf. There are three parishes of the name of Llanfair in the island. Llanfair means the Llan or Church of S. Mary, the *M* in combination becoming *f*, as Llanfihangel signifies the Church of Mi[chael] the Angel.

This Llanfair Mathafarn was the birthplace of Goronwy Owen, the poet. He was born in 1722 of

extremely poor parents, went to Oxford through help of Edward Wynne, of Bodewryd. Subsequently Mr. Wynne despatched him to Jesus College, Oxford, and maintained him there. From an early age he gave indications of poetic genius, and he proved himself to be a ripe scholar in the classic tongues.

He was ordained in 1745, and his great ambition was to obtain a Welsh curacy and settle down in it. Lewis Morris did his best for him, but all he could get was a temporary appointment to his native parish Llanfair, where the curacy chanced to be vacant. But he had been there only three weeks when he received notice from the Bishop of Bangor that he must turn out to make way for a young clergyman of large independent fortune; so Goronwy was obliged to depart. He sought curacies in Wales, but could get no bishop to touch him with the ends of his fingers, as he had no connections and no fortune. That he was deeply pious, earnest, a scholar, an eloquent Welsh preacher, and a poet of singular merit counted as nothing. Unhappily, though Goronwy was a genius, he was given to drink, and could never remain long anywhere. At length he obtained a curacy at Oswestry, and there he married. From Oswestry he was removed to Donnington, in Shropshire, where his rector was a Scotchman and an absentee, but being a Douglas, rich and with the means of pushing himself, having neglected his duties as parish priest, he managed to get himself nominated and consecrated Bishop of Salisbury. Lewis Morris did his best to save the poet from his unfortunate vice, but failed.

At Donnington poor Goronwy Owen not only acted as curate to the great absentee rector, but also as master of the grammar school, and received twenty-six pounds as his stipend. Thence he shifted,

first into Cheshire and then to Northolt, near London. In 1756 he was living in a garret in town vainly soliciting employment in his sacred calling, and undergoing with his family the utmost privations. His Welsh accent in English stood in his way, and his brilliant Welsh qualifications were not wanted in Wales. But, indeed, poor Goronwy, with all his gifts, was not the man to do much spiritual work.

At length Lewis Morris obtained for Goronwy Owen the mastership of a Government school at Williamsburg, in Virginia. Thither he went, and there he died about the year 1770.

As Lewis Morris has been mentioned in connection with poor Goronwy Owen, a few words must be devoted to him.

> "Lewis Morris," says George Borrow, "was born at a place called Trev y Beirdd, in Anglesey, in the year 1700. Anglesey, or Mona, has given birth to many illustrious men, but few, upon the whole, entitled to more honourable mention than himself. From a humble situation in life, for he served an apprenticeship to a cooper at Holyhead, he raised himself by his industry and talents to affluence and distinction, became a landed proprietor in the county of Cardigan, and inspector of the royal domains and mines in Wales. Perhaps a man more generally accomplished never existed; he was a first-rate mechanic, an expert navigator, a great musician, both in theory and practice, and a poet of singular excellence. Of him it was said, and with truth, that he could build a ship and sail it, frame a harp and make it speak, write an ode and set it to music. Though self-taught, he was confessedly the best Welsh scholar of his age, and was well versed in those cognate dialects of the Welsh—the Cornish, Armoric, Highland Gaelic, and Irish.... It was he who first told his countrymen that there was a youth in Anglesey whose genius, if properly encouraged, promised fair to rival that of Milton; one of the most eloquent letters ever written is one by him, in which he discants upon the beauties of certain poems of

> Goronwy Owen, the latent genius of whose boyhood he had observed, whom he had clothed, educated, and assisted up to the period when he was ordained a minister of the Church, and whom he finally rescued from a state bordering on starvation in London, procuring for him an honourable appointment in the New World."

Lewis Morris made a collection of Welsh MSS., consisting of about eighty volumes, which are now in the British Museum. He died in 1765 and was buried at Llanbadarn Vawr, in Cardiganshire.

CHAPTER IV
HOLYHEAD

The Menai Straits to Holyhead—Llangadwaladr—The story of Cadwallon—Cadwaladr—Plague in 664—Ruskin on Holyhead—The old caer—Chapel of the Irishman—Story of S. Cybi—The menhir of Clorach—Cybi and Elian—Church of Caergybi—Chapel of Llochwyd—Holy well—Chapel of S. Brigid—Breakwater—The South Stack—Sea-birds—Their eggs—Cytiau'r Gwyddelod—Old villages—Camp—Construction of the huts—A conservative people that votes Liberal.

THE line from Bangor to Holyhead, after crossing the Menai Straits, runs through country that does not impress the traveller with an opinion that it is fertile or beautiful. The land is for the most part flat, or slightly undulating; there are no trees, much waste land, no mountains—only hills, and these away to the north. The surface of the island is speckled with little white houses with whitewashed roofs, as though a giant's wedding had taken place there, and it was sprinkled over with the rice cast at the bride.



SOUTH STACK LIGHT, HOLYHEAD

The line traverses the Malldraeth Marsh, and beyond Bodorgan station skirts Llyn Coron, a tarn with no picturesque surroundings, through which trickles the River Ffraw, that flows to the Aber, where once stood the residence, probably of timber, of the kings of Gwynedd.

Near the Llyn is Llangadwaladr, that takes its name from the last British prince who bore the title of King of All Britain. He was the son of Cadwallon ab Cadfan, and in the church is preserved the stone that bears the sententious inscription to inform the world that King Cadfan was “the wisest, the most renowned of all kings.”

The screen at Llaneilian has been already spoken of. It was delivered over to a joiner, who restored it by daubing over the paintings that decorated it, by hacking away the tracery that enriched it. Critics treat history in much the same fashion. They efface all the warm colouring that fancy has laid on, and eliminate all the detail which adorns it, leaving us

but the naked scaffolding of fact.

If we deal in this way with the story of Cadfan and his grandson Cadwaladr, we arrive at very meagre and uninteresting outlines. We will therefore take the story much as we find it. Ethelfrid was king of Northumbria, and he sent away his wife, probably a British woman, and she took refuge with King Cadfan in Môn. There, shortly after her arrival at the court of Cadfan, the discarded queen became a mother, and bore a son to whom she gave the name of Edwin. About the same time the queen of Gwynedd bore one also, who was named Cadwallon.

The two boys were sent to be fostered in Brittany to King Solomon (there happened to be no king there of that name till two centuries later, but we will not be hypercritical).

In due course, when they were grown to man's estate, the youths returned to Mona, and remained either there or at Deganwy till Cadfan died. Then Cadwallon assumed the crown of Gwynedd and the title of King of All Britain. Edwin went to Northumbria, where he was chosen king, and first of all the invading Angles and Saxons adopted a circlet of gold as symbol of sovereignty. Now one day Cadwallon was with his nephew Brian by the River Dulas when, overcome with the heat of the day, he laid himself down to sleep, with his head on Brian's lap.

As he slept, Brian's mind turned to the wrongs and sorrows that his countrymen had endured at the hands of the Teutonic invaders, and his tears ran down, and fell on Cadwallon's face. The king was disturbed in his sleep by the falling drops, and, half asleep and half awake, he said, "It rains! It rains!"

Then he opened his eyes and saw that the sky

above was blue as a corn-flower, and he remarked, “It is strange. There has been a shower, and the sun is shining. But where is the rainbow?”

Then Brian said, “Uncle, on the head of Edwin.” Cadwallon looked in his nephew’s face and saw that his eye-lashes were heavy with tears, and he asked the reason.

Thereupon Brian told him all that was in his heart, and Cadwallon rose up and vowed that he would make a desperate effort to recover the land for the British people.

So he made war on Edwin, but met with defeat after defeat, and was finally obliged to escape into Ireland.

There he resolved on seeking the assistance of the Armoricans, so he took ship and sailed for Brittany, but encountered a storm and was wrecked on an island, probably Ouessant, and all on board were lost save only Cadwallon and Brian.

Through distress at the death of his followers, and dearth of food, the king fell into a fit of profound dejection.

Brian was troubled for his uncle, whose heart seemed to be broken. He went about the island seeking for food, but could find naught. The sea-fowl had been disturbed by the gale, and the season was not that for eggs. He endeavoured to collect shell-fish, but the waters still boiled and tumbled on the rocks, and he could obtain none. Then he cut a slice from his own thigh, lighted a fire, roasted the flesh, and brought it to the king, and said that it was venison. Cadwallon, believing this, ate, and his spirit revived within him, and he determined on making an effort to reach the mainland. The wind fell, and he and Brian were able to get their battered ship afloat,

and in it they were wafted over to the coast of Brittany. They went before King Solomon, who received them kindly and promised his aid.

So it was resolved that Cadwallon should return to Wales with a thousand men of Armorica, and that Brian should make his way in disguise to the court of Edwin and spy out how matters stood there.

Brian landed at Southampton, and assuming the rags of a beggar, but armed with a spiked staff, made his way to York, where was King Edwin. Brian, in a mendicant's garb, went to the palace and stood outside among the beggars who waited daily for alms. As he thus stood his sister came forth. She had been taken captive, and had been placed in the household of the queen. She bore a pitcher, and was on her way to the well to fetch water when Brian addressed her in a whining tone. Nevertheless, she at once recognised him, and they carried on a conversation together with caution, lest he should be discovered. What he particularly desired was that a certain counsellor of Edwin should be pointed out to him by whose advice the king was principally governed, and whom the Britons regarded as a specially dangerous adversary.

Brian's sister did so as the man issued from the door with alms for the beggars. Thereupon Brian pressed through the crowd, and, raising his staff, struck him in the breast and transfixed him there. Then he stepped back and disappeared among the beggars.

Brian now fled to Exeter, where he roused the Western Britons, and they held the city.

Meanwhile Cadwallon had arrived, and through Brian entered into a league with Penda, king of the Mercians, against Edwin. Both forces marched into

Northumbria, and a battle was fought at a place called Heathfield, and Edwin was slain and his Northern Angles routed.

Then, for a while, Cadwallon reigned over all the British peoples in Wales, Strathclyde, and Devon and Cornwall.

He was succeeded by his son Cadwaladr, whose mother was a sister of Penda the Mercian. He was a good and peace-loving prince, not made of the same stuff as his father, and although he gained some victories his reign was marked by loss of ground on all sides.

He wore the crown for twelve years. In 664 a terrible plague broke out which spread desolation over Britain and Ireland, and in the latter swept away two-thirds of the inhabitants. Cadwaladr was one of the victims, and was buried in the church that bears his name by Llyn Coron. The church has an east window to the chancel of a flamboyant character, with some old stained glass in it representing the Crucifixion and saints.

The line to Holyhead passes a cluster of lakes of not much beauty—that of Llyn Penllyn has a little island in it—then it crosses a causeway into Holy Isle, and draws up at the terminus of Holyhead, under Pen Caergybi, the highest elevation in Anglesey.

Ruskin says:—

> "Just on the other side of the Mersey you have your Snowdon and your Menai Straits, and that mighty granite rock beyond the moors of Anglesey, splendid in its heathery crest, and foot planted in the deep sea, once thought of as sacred—a divine promontory, looking westward, the Holy Head or Headland, still not without awe when its red light glares first through the gloom."

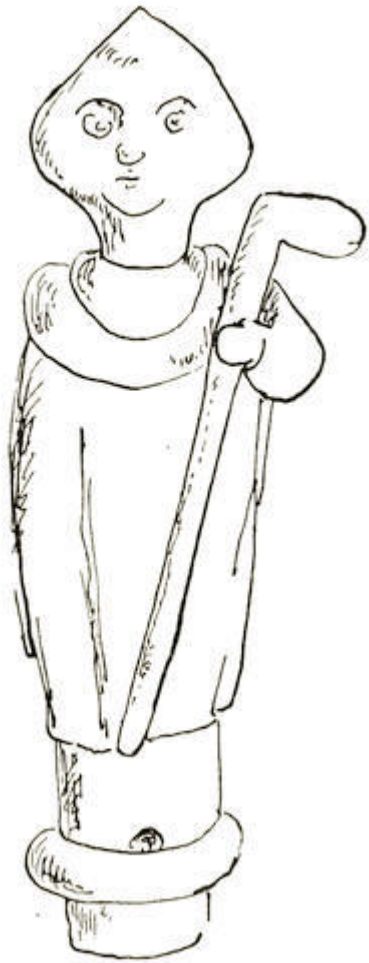
The cliff scenery here is of the finest quality, and Holyhead well merits a prolonged visit, what with the stimulating air rushing through one's lungs charged with sparkles, the look-out on the green sea flecked with foam and skimmed by gulls as flakes of froth that have been detached from the waves and become alive, the plunging water on the beach, the purple folds of the hills, and the abrupt cliffs, their feet ever bitten into and worried by the angry waves.

The town is as busy as Beaumaris is inert. It lives on the Irish trade, whereas Beaumaris picks up subsistence during a few short months only from bathers.

The one object of antiquarian interest in the town is the church, planted in the midst of an old *caer*, or fortress, the walls of which still stand in places 16 feet high, and are over 6 feet thick. The enclosure is quadrangular, and measures 220 feet by 130 feet. To what period the walls belong is hard to determine. They are constructed of unshaped blocks of granite rounded by the action of wind and rain, and are set in mortar made of sea-shells. In places they are arranged herring-bone fashion. The construction is too uncouth to be Roman, and the round towers at the angles are not Irish. It is certainly prior to the English conquest. A Norman builder would have disdained to put forth such work, and it is probably a unique specimen of a *caer* of late British erection. The two entrances are much more modern. This fortress was held by the Gwyddyl against Caswallon Long-hand. Then the walls were of stones set up without mortar, and probably faced with huge granite slabs. Caswallon forced his way in, and slew the Irish king Serigi with his own hand, where now stands Llan-y-Gwyddel in the churchyard.

The chapel had a chancel, which has been pulled

down, and it was converted into a grammar school in 1748, but is now disused. After the expulsion of the Irish the enclosure became a royal *caer*, and was occasionally occupied by Maelgwn Gwynedd, who made it over to S. Cybi.



S. CYBI. STATUE, SOUTH DOORWAY, CAERGYBI

The story of the saint is as follows. Cybi was the son of Solomon, king of Cornwall, and Gwen, the aunt of S. David. He was born between the Lynher and Tamar at Callington, and was sent to school when aged seven. Till he was twenty-seven years old Cybi remained in Cornwall, and then he started on his travels on the Continent. There he made the acquaintance of S. Elian the Pilgrim, and a friendship was formed that was to last through life, though little did both suppose at the time that they would be neighbours in their old age. From his travels Cybi returned to Cornwall, where he became involved in a political disturbance.

His father had died whilst he was away, and his uncle Cataw, or Cado, had assumed the rule, but he was succeeded by the turbulent Constantine. The arrival in Cornwall of Cybi gave occasion to an insurrection, and an attempt was made to displace Constantine, and elevate Cybi to the throne. It failed, and Cybi was obliged to fly for his life. He took with him a party of attached disciples and his uncle Cyngar. After a brief stay in Glamorgan he crossed into Ireland, and visited S. Enda in Aran, and remained with him for four years.

Cyngar was so decrepit with age that he could eat no solid food, and Cybi bought a cow with its calf to supply the old uncle with milk. This led to ructions. The calf strayed into the meadow of a monk of the name of Fintan, who impounded it. The consequence was angry altercation and so much unpleasantness that Cybi had to leave. He crossed to Ireland, took boat in Dublin Bay, and landed in Lleyn, the rocky promontory of Carnarvon, where his wicker-work coracle got on a reef that tore the leather covering. However, all reached the shore in safety, and Cybi founded a church where is now Llangybi, near

Pwllheli.

Maelgwn, king of Gwynedd, was hunting in Lleyn one day, when a goat he was following fled for refuge to Cybi's cell, and this led to the king meeting the saint. He was so impressed with his goodness and dignity that he made him a present of the *caer* at Holyhead, and to this day the Welsh name for the town is Caergybi.

Shortly after this "Magna et verbosa epistola venit e Capreis," the violent tirade of Gildas was launched at the heads of the British princes. Now one of the companions of Cybi was Caffo, a brother of Gildas. Maelgwn insisted on his dismissal, and Cybi reluctantly obeyed. Caffo left and got as far as Rhosyr, now Newborough, in Anglesey, when some shepherds of Maelgwn's queen, incensed at the indignity put on their master, fell on him and killed him. The church of Llangaffo marks the site of the murder. This took place about 545, and Maelgwn died of the yellow plague in 547. Cybi survived him to about 554.

There is a menhir at Clorach, near Llanerchymedd, with a curious hunch on it, popularly called "Tyfrydog's Thief." The story goes that a thief got into the church of Llandyfrydog and stole the Bible, put his spoil on his back, and ran away, but was turned to stone with the Bible he had carried off.

Not far from this prehistoric monument were two wells called after S. Cybi and S. Seiriol. Here they were wont to meet at midday, Cybi walking from the west and Seiriol from the east.

Cybi would start in early morning along the old Roman road, and he had the sun in his face all the way, and in like manner Seiriol had it behind him.

They met at noon, and lunched together and drank from their respective wells. Then Cybi turned west to retrace his steps, so also did Seiriol; and consequently Cybi had the evening sun blazing on his face for his homeward walk, and Seiriol was still in dusk, with his shadow running before him. The result was that Cybi was tanned, whereas Seiriol remained fair, and the former on this account obtained the name of Cybi the Tawny and his comrade from Penmon that of Seiriol the Fair.

Matthew Arnold wrote a poem on the meeting at Clorach, but not knowing the place, and not knowing the directions taken, missed the point of the story.

The church of Caergybi is fine. The chancel is Early English, with a Decorated east window. There was intended to have been a central tower, and the church was a cross church originally. The tower was never completed. The porch and side aisle are rich Perpendicular, and there is some quaint carving outside the south transept; and the south doorway within the porch is peculiarly rich, though the figure sculpture is poor. Over the door in a niche is the Trinity, popularly mistaken for a representation of Maelgwn Gwynedd. A south chapel, in excellent taste, from the designs of Mr. Harold Hughes, has been erected, with niches containing statuettes of Cybi and Seiriol. It contains a recumbent figure of the Hon. William Owen Stanley, good, but wrongly placed.

The nave has internally on each side an arcade of three Tudor arches. On the north, the piers are octagonal; on the south, clustered of four shafts, with general capitals. The arrangement of the transepts is clumsy, like other Welsh examples, running from north to south, uninterrupted by arches, and giving the effect of one church set at right angles to

another.

Capel y Llochwyd is on the mountain. Bishop Stanley, in 1830, thus describes it:—

> "A singular fissure, cleaved in a direct line from the summit to the base, forms, or rather did form, a passage of communication of no small celebrity in ancient days, and retaining its odour of sanctity till very recent date. It is known by the name of Ogof Lochwyd, *ogof* signifying a cave. A spring of crystal water filtering through the deep strata formed a deep well at the bottom of this chasm. Situated just at the higher opening of the gorge was a chapel for the accommodation of pilgrims called Capel y Llochwyd, of which a considerable remnant in ruins at the head of this gorge still remains. Till within sixty years the lonely chapel with its well were from time unknown the resort of lads and lassies of the island, who, at a certain annual festival called Suliau y Creiriau, the Sundays of the Relics, and held during three successive Sundays in July, assembled in troops to ascertain the contingencies awaiting them. Each diviner into futurity descended the chasm to the well, and there, if after having taken a mouthful of holy water and grasped two handfuls of sand from the charmed font, he or she could accomplish the re-ascent with them safely, each would obtain the wish of their heart before the close of the year. About sixty years ago (1770) the chapel was reduced to ruins, and the well was concealed by filling it with rubbish; but till twenty years ago the walls, to the height of seven or eight feet, remained sufficiently entire to convey a tolerable idea of the perfect building, which is represented to have been a substantial though rude and primitive edifice, composed of unhewn stones cemented with mortar, the windows and doorways excepted, which were well wrought by the chisel with considerable labour from some obdurated material, the whole apparently consisting of one oblong chamber not exceeding a few yards in length.
>
> "Of the well, however, not a trace was left, though its existence was proved beyond a shadow of doubt a few years ago by a party who landed and at length succeeded in detecting the spot, from whence, after removing a quantity of sand and loose stone, again gushed the fountain of water in its pristine

vigour and doubtless inherent virtues."

There was at one time a chapel of S. Ffraid or Brigid on an islet where according to legend she disembarked from Ireland. This was not the Brigid of Kildare, but a namesake. The story goes that being unable to find a boat to serve her purpose, she cut a sod of turf, threw it into the sea, stepped on it, and was carried across. The turf lodged on this hump of rock, and became fast there. But the wintry waves have eaten away the isle, chewed up the turf, and torn down the chapel walls.

The breakwater of Holyhead is a stupendous achievement. It is about a mile and a half long, and has a lighthouse at the extremity. On the Skerries also, some seven miles north, is another lighthouse, and the Government had to buy it from the owner, a Mr. Jones, for the sum of £444,984.

The old Government pier had already cost a million and a half of money, but it was abandoned when the London and North Western Railway Company undertook the construction of the new pier. The new harbour has a water area of twenty-four acres.



SOUTH STACK BRIDGE

Every visitor to Holyhead makes a point of going to the South Stack, just under four miles from the town. Cliffe thus describes it:—

> "At first you feel disappointed, and it is not until you descend that you become impressed with the grandeur of the scenery. At the foot of the formidable stairs, 380 in number, you arrive at the entrance of a light suspension bridge. For some years after the lighthouse was erected (1809) the only means of access across the chasm was by a rope and basket; then a bridge of ropes was made, but the risk was so great that a chain bridge became necessary. After crossing the bridge you can descend to look at a vast fissure in the islet, and wonder, if the day be stormy, how the boats fared that conveyed the materials for the lighthouse to that rugged and perilous spot, where the surge of the sea is awe-inspiring. The sea in south-westerly gales often dashes over the dwellings of the lightkeepers, when the scene is truly sublime."

The coast is alive with sea-birds, kittiwakes, razorbills, guillemots, solan geese, puffin, shag, cormorant, and tern; and collections of these birds'

eggs can be obtained at a very small cost in the town. An ingenious provision of Nature saves the eggs from being carried by the raging winds from the ledges of rock on which they are laid, when the mother-bird is not sitting. If, for instance, a guillemot's egg be looked at, it will be seen that it is so balanced that the wind, catching it, spins it round on its centre of gravity, and does not obtain sufficient resistance to carry it away bodily, and precipitate it into the sea.

There are objects of considerable archæological interest in Holy Island, and these are the Cytiau'r Gwyddelod, or habitations of the Irish. There are several collections, and some were explored by the Hon. W. O. Stanley in 1871.

They are strewn over the side of Holyhead mountain, but there are others by Porth Dafarch and Mynydd Celyn.

The sites of ancient habitations have been selected for shelter from the prevailing winds, and the huts are usually grouped together forming villages of from twelve to fifty huts. They are always protected from hostile attack by rude walls of dry masonry or by precipitous rocks. They are circular, and have slabs of granite set on end to face them within and without. The entrances are to the south. The roofs were constructed of poles resting on the low walls, brought together in the middle, and thatched or covered with turf. The walls of the huts enclose a space of from fifteen to twenty feet in diameter, and the doorway is formed of two upright stones of about four feet high, upon which formerly rested a stone lintel.

Some of these huts were dwelling-houses, others served merely as kitchens, and some were sweating or bathing chambers, by the production of steam by

throwing water over heated stones.

Mr. Stanley found bronze weapons, jet necklaces, ornamented spindle-whorls, stone lamps, and moulds for bronze buttons. The abundance of articles discovered in these dwellings is very unusual and seems to point to their having been left in a hurry.

There is a strong camp, Caer-y-Twr, on Holyhead mountain, facing east, and about two-thirds of the way up to the summit from the town. It is surrounded by a rude wall of dry masonry, following the ridge of the rock, which in places is almost perpendicular. The entrance is steep and seems to have been defended by hornwork.

There is a narrow cleft in the face of the mountain to the west, above débris of rock that has fallen in some convulsion of nature, leaving a perpendicular face of rock two hundred feet in height. This gap forms a passage through which only one person could pass at a time, and a steep path winds to it between rock faces. It may have served as a postern to the camp.

The construction of huts in the fashion described was derived by the Irish from the original population of the isle, the people who erected the rude stone monuments.

A traveller in Gilead and Moab will find precisely similar collections of hovels, similarly surrounded with walls of unhewn blocks, and associated, as in Ireland, with cromlechs and cairns and menhirs, the relics of the same prehistoric race which through long centuries, and after long journeys to new lands, continued to build houses, erect camps, and set up monuments to their dead in Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Cornwall, and Northern Africa precisely as they did in Central Asia and in Palestine. A mysterious people

that never advanced in the art of building, but clung tenaciously, as the bee, the bird, the spider, and the ant, to traditional usage in the structure of their dwellings, and which clung with like tenacity to the cult of ancestors. It came out of Asia with polished stone weapons, and only slowly accepted, as foreign importations, axes and swords and personal ornaments, made of bronze.

Certainly these were the most conservative people that ever overran Europe; and possibly that clinging to old institutions, that aversion to change, which brought ruin on the Welsh cause, may have been due to the large admixture of Iberian blood in the Cymric veins.

Take the Welshman of the present day. In his politics he is a Liberal, but in his bent of mind, in his mode of life, in his social relations, he is the most conservative of men.

This tenacity to what is old and customary is a valuable asset; it counterbalances the volatile and experimental tendency to adopt every novelty, and wreck every institution to supplant it with what is new and untried, but which is loud in promise.

It may be, it probably is the case, that there is much of this immobility in the English race. It is because of this that the American and German are beating us in manufacture and commerce, and if we are ever routed in the field, it will be due to the clot of it that has settled in our War Office not having been expelled.

CHAPTER V
BANGOR AND CARNARVON

Foundation of Bangor—Madog the Fox—The cathedral—Owen Gwynedd—Visit of Archbishop Baldwin—"Lazy-tongs"—Llanidan—Shrine of S. Nidan—Curious phenomenon of the filling stoup—Bust of Edwen—Llanfair—Owen Tudor—The fable of the Welsh pot-girl—Carnarvon—Elen the Road-maker—Maximus—Edward of Carnarvon—Hugh the Fat and Hugh the Wolf—Plas Newydd—Cromlechs—Destruction of prehistoric monuments—The cult of the dead—Llanddwyn—Story of Dwynwen—The holy well—Curious offering in the porch—Penrhyn quarries—Names of slates—Albert Davies—The Hirlas Horn—Lakes—Marchlyn.

BANGOR, pleasantly situated in a green valley, near the sea, sheltered from every rough blast, communicating with Beaumaris by a steamer, or with a ferry across the Menai Straits at Garth, backed by the glorious heathery mountains of Carnedd Dafydd, Elidyr Fawr, and Carnedd Llewelyn, with easy access by the London and North Western line on the one side with the thronged watering-places on the north coast, and with the Snowdon district on the other, serves as a convenient and cheerful centre for

excursions, and is preferable on the whole to Carnarvon. Bangor was founded by S. Deiniol in the sixth century. Deiniol was grandson of Pabo Post Prydain, whose monument is at Llanbabo, in Anglesey. His father was Dunawd, prince in North Britain, who, to his lasting disgrace, instead of uniting with his fellow-Britons against the Picts, attacked the sons of Urien, king of Rheged or Moray, and met with his deserts, for the Picts drove him from his principality, and he and his sons fled helter-skelter to Wales, where he entered the ecclesiastical estate, as the secular life was closed to him, and became Abbot of Bangor on the Dee, in Flintshire.

Then came the massacre of the monks there by Ethelfrid in 607, and that Bangor came to an end for ever. Those who had escaped took refuge with Deiniol, who had already settled in Arfon on lands granted him by Caswallon Long-hand. Maelgwn made this new Bangor the seat of a bishop, and Deiniol was the first of the series.

Bangor had a bishop in the eleventh century who was a great scoundrel. This was Madog Min, or the Fox. He was grandson of the king of Tegeingyl. He entered into a conspiracy with the sons of Edwyn ab Einion, and by his treachery obtained the assassination, in 1021, of Llewelyn ab Seisyll, king of Powys and Deheubarth and Gwynedd, a noble and just prince, under whose good government Wales flourished. Then Madog betrayed Gruffydd, son of Llewelyn, for three hundred head of cattle promised him for his treachery by Harold, king of the Saxons. After the deed was done, however, Harold refused to pay the price of blood, upon which Madog, execrated by his people, fled to Ireland, but the ship in which he was foundered, and of all who were in it he alone was drowned.

The cathedral lies in a hollow, and though small, is dignified. It has been repeatedly destroyed, first by the Saxons in 1071 and then again laid in ashes by Owen Glyndwr in 1402. It remained in ruins for nearly a century. Then it was patched up, and all the new work was in the Perpendicular style. It has been restored, and a good deal has been added to bring out the earlier work, which was Early English. The Welsh seem never to have developed an independent architectural school or style of their own as have the Bretons. The builders of their great churches were imported from England, and were not usually first-class designers. The western tower, which was added in 1532, is as poor and insipid as may be, the work not even of a second-class architect. All that remains of the pre-Norman cathedral is a stone with plait-work, now lying on the floor at the west end of the north aisle, which has been used as a sharpener for weapons, and most of the sculptured work has been by this means worn away.

Of the Norman cathedral also little remains. It was a cross church with an apse to the choir, but the foundations are buried beneath the floor of the later chancel. A Norman buttress and rude round-headed windows in the south wall of the chancel are all above ground that recall the church destroyed in 1071.

At the instigation of King John the city was burnt in 1212, and Bishop Robert was taken prisoner before the high altar, but ransomed for two hundred marks.

The structure underwent extensive alterations in the latter half of the thirteenth century under Bishop Anian, who christened the infant son of Edward I. When Sir Gilbert Scott undertook the restoration of the cathedral, he preserved and used up in the work

much of the earlier sculptured stone that he found. He says: “This exhuming and restoring to their places the fragments of the beautiful work of the thirteenth century, reduced to ruin by Owen Glyndwr, used as mere rough material by Henry VII., and rediscovered by us four and a half centuries after their reduction to ruins, is one of the most interesting facts I have met with in the course of my experience.”

In the south wall of the south transept is a tomb with a niche beside it that is supposed to be that of Owen Gwynedd, who died in 1169, but from the style it might be later by a century. Owen had died excommunicated for marrying his cousin Christiana. Thomas à Becket, from Canterbury, had fulminated a sentence of excommunication against him, but Owen refused to put away his wife, and preferred dying under the ban. He was, however, buried before the high altar.

In 1188 Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, made a tour through Wales, preaching the crusade, and used this as an excuse for gaining access to the churches of Wales and asserting therein his ecclesiastical supremacy. When he arrived at Bangor he was in a very bad temper. He had found everywhere that the Welsh princes and ecclesiastics were unmoved by his appeals, and the few who took the cross had the intention of slipping out of their obligation as soon as his back was turned. Having crossed the Menai Straits he was met by Rhodri, son of Owen Gwynedd and the fair Christiana, and the archbishop harangued the prince and people on the shore. Some of the congregation accepted the cross, but the youths of Rhodri’s family sat through the discourse on a rock, swinging their legs, wholly unmoved by his eloquence; and although Rhodri, out of courtesy to the archbishop, advised them to take

the pledge, they shrugged their shoulders and refused.

On entering Bangor, Archbishop Baldwin was a disappointed and offended man, and seeing the tomb of Owen, Rhodri's father, before the altar, immediately gave orders that the body of the late king should be removed from its resting-place and put in unconsecrated ground. Bishop Guy of Bangor was forced to promise compliance. Perhaps he did as bidden, perhaps not; but certain it is that the tomb, if it be that of the excommunicated king, was not erected till later.

Another opinion is that this is the tomb of Bishop Anian, as there is no sword cut beside the incised cross upon it. But if it had been that of the prelate, we might have expected his pastoral staff to be figured along with the cross.

In the cathedral is preserved a pair of "lazy-tongs," used for catching intrusive dogs by the neck and marching them forth without danger to the sexton. At Clynnog there are also dog-tongs, with the date 1815 on them. Indeed, dogs seem to have been a nuisance in churches for a long time. One main reason for Archbishop Laud's ordering the erection of communion rails was to keep these animals away from the altar and from defiling it.

The churchwardens' accounts of Llanfair Talhaiarn, in Denbighshire, show that the dog annoyance had grown to such a pass that in 1747 the parishioners, in vestry assembled, passed a resolution to inflict a fine of one shilling on the person who brought his dog to church during divine service. It does not seem that this order remedied the nuisance, for other resolutions were passed in 1749 on the same matter, and the sexton was granted a quarterly payment "for keeping the Church clear of 'em"; and

the vestry provided a stool for the convenience of the sexton by the church door, that he might be ready to pounce on any dog that put its nose in, and drive it out.

The plague of dogs in church was not confined to Wales. It would seem that in 1644 they found their way into Canterbury Cathedral, for Richard Culmer, in his *Cathedral Newes from Canterbury*, relates how "one of the great canons or prebends there, in the very act of his low congying (congé-ing) towards the Altar, as he went up to it in prayer-time, was not long since assaulted by a huge mastiffe dog, which leapt upright on him once and againe, and pawed him in his ducking, saluting progresse and posture to the Altar, so that he was fain to call out aloud, 'Take away the dog! Take away the dog!'"

A pleasant excursion may be made from Bangor to Llanidan, in Anglesey, by taking the ferry-boat across at Dinorwic.

Llanidan old church is for the most part in ruins, a new church having been erected in a more convenient situation. The church consisted of a nave and south aisle separated by an arcade. All but the two western bays and the porches are roofless. In the portion still covered is preserved the sandstone shrine of S. Nidan, who was confessor to the monks of Penmon. It still contains what are believed to be his skull and some of his bones. At the Reformation it was not destroyed, as it was in the possession of a hereditary keeper of the relics, and it was retained at a farmhouse in the parish by the family till recently, when it was surrendered to the church, and now the fleshless bones of the founder are in the dismantled church he founded.

The Celtic mode of dedicating a church was this,

as described at length by Bede. The founder, having selected the spot, remained on it in constant prayer and fast for forty days and nights, eating only a little after set of sun, and on the Sundays, when he consumed a small piece of bread, one egg, and a little milk and water. At the end of that period the place became his, and was called thenceforth after his name. It is a touching thought, looking on the bones of old Nidan, to think that there he rests who fourteen hundred years ago, by prayer and fasting on this very spot, dedicated it to the service of God.

The south porch is curious. It is overgrown with moss and fern, and contains a stoup that is ever full of water. If sponged out, it rapidly fills again. It has been conjectured that there is a spring underground, and that the stones of the porch suck up the water by capillary attraction, and so supply the stoup. But the church and graveyard are quite dry.

A similar phenomenon existed at Llangelynin, in the old church, between Barmouth and Towyn, but when the roof fell in the stoup became dry. The explanation is that the drip of the roof fell on the porch, saturated it, and thus the water drained into the stoup. And this may be the true explanation of the phenomenon at Llanidan.

In the church by the shrine is preserved a bust, not ill carved, of a female wearing a crown. It is possible that this may have been intended as the head of S. Edwen, patroness of the daughter parish. She is said to have been a daughter or niece of Edwin, king of Northumbria, who, as has been already related, spent his youth in Anglesey.

From Bangor the train may be taken to Llanfair, and thence it is a walk to Penmynydd, where is the Plas, the cradle of the House of Tudor.

The handsome Owen Tudor caught the fancy of Catherine, widow of Henry V.; but before she would marry this Welsh knight she sent a deputation to his ancestral home to inquire into the respectability of his family, its antiquity, and its dignity.

The commissioners arrived at the little mansion and found Owen's mother shelling peas, and surrounded by goats, to which she cast the pods, and pigeons that pounced on the peas that escaped her fingers. As to the pedigree, that was soon disposed of; the old lady could recite the *Aps* back to Anna, the cousin of the Virgin Mary, an Egyptian princess. The deputation returned with its report, pulling long faces. The Tudors were petty Anglesey squires and nothing more, not largely estated, nor with a great retinue. But Queen Catherine was very much in love and very eager to lay aside her widow's weeds. "Make the most of the pedigree," she said, "but cook the rest of the report; write down the goats as serving-men and the pigeons as ladies-in-waiting."

They did so. The King's Council was satisfied, and Catherine married Owen, and became, by him, the mother of Edmund "of Hadham," who was created Earl of Richmond by Henry VI. in 1453.

His son, Edmund Tudor, married Margaret, daughter of John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, and great-granddaughter of "old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster," and so became the father of Henry VII.

Queen Catherine died in 1437, leaving, beside Edmund, a son Jasper, and another Owen, who embraced a monastic life and died early.

As soon as the queen was dead bad times ensued for Owen. The marriage had been winked at, but not relished, and he was seized and committed to

Newgate, and the three sons were given into the custody of the Abbess of Barking.

Aided by his chaplain and a servant, Owen effected his escape, but he was retaken and delivered to the Earl of Suffolk to be kept in Wallingford Castle; but he was transferred to Newgate. He made his escape a second time.

In the year 1453 his sons were both made earls—Edmund was created Earl of Richmond and Jasper Earl of Pembroke. Owen had an illegitimate son, named David, who was knighted by his nephew, Henry VII.

Owen remained unnoticed till 1459, when his own son Jasper graciously conferred knighthood on him. Henry VI. granted him some lands and a revenue, but a law was passed that henceforth no commoner, under severe penalties, should presume to marry a queen dowager of England without special licence from the king.

In 1461 he fought under the banner of his son Jasper at the battle of Mortimer's Cross, and would not quit the field, but was taken with several other Welsh gentlemen, and was beheaded soon after at Hereford.

Jones, in his *Relicks of the Welsh Bards*, 1794, gives a duet which purports to be translated from the Welsh, and which is based on the wooing of Owen Tudor and Catherine. He does not give the original Welsh. The air as well as the words has a very modern smack.

The duet begins:—

> "*Owen.*I salute thee, sweet Princess, with title of grace,
> For Cupid commands me in heart to embrace
> Thy honours, thy virtues, thy favour, thy

beauty,
With all my true service, my love, and my duty.

Catherine. Courteous, kind gentleman, let me request,
How comes it that Cupid hath wounded thy breast?
And chanc'd thy heart's liking my servant to prove,
That am but a stranger to this, thy kind love?"

And it all winds up with their saying together:—

"Then mark how the notes of our merry town bells,
Our ding-dong of pleasure most cheerfully tells.
Then ding-dong, fair ladies, and ladies all true,
This ding-dong of pleasure may satisfy you."

Actually it would seem that the spooning was on the side of the Queen and not of Owen.

The house of Penmynydd dates from 1370, and is consequently the same as that visited by the commission. The kitchen is intact, and the Tudor arms are carved about the building, and there still is the courtyard in which the ancestress of King Edward VII. sat shelling peas into a bowl when the deputation arrived.

Wales is supposed to have provided a grandmother to queens Mary and Anne, a pot-girl, who married the brewer whose tubs she scoured, so soon as his wife died. But the story is as apocryphal as that of the smuggling into the palace of James II. of a surreptitious Prince of Wales in a warming-pan.

The Protestant party got up this latter scandalous fable, and Mary of Modena and the Roman Catholic faction retaliated with the tale of the Welsh pot-girl.

The story was this. It was confidently asserted that the wife of the celebrated Lord Clarendon was a bare-footed Welsh lass who had gone to London for service and found employment as a “tub-woman” to a brewer and publican there, who subsequently married her, and on his death bequeathed to her a large fortune. As the succession was disputed by his relations, she sought the professional assistance of the lawyer Edward Hyde, who introduced her to his family, and his son Edward married her. She became the mother of Anne, whom James Duke of York married. Her granddaughters Mary and Anne wore the crown.

But the story is contradicted by facts. Edward Hyde, who became Earl of Clarendon and High Chancellor of England, married Anne, daughter of Sir George Ayliffe, knight. Six months afterwards she died of small-pox, and childless. Then he married Frances, daughter of Sir Thomas Aylesbury, knight, and by her became the father of Mary and Anne.

Burke, in his *Romance of the Aristocracy*, tells the story somewhat differently. He makes the pot-girl marry Sir Thomas Aylesbury, by whom she had a daughter Frances, who married Edward Hyde.

But this story also breaks down. For it is certain that the wife of Sir Thomas Aylesbury was the daughter of Francis Denman, rector of West Retford, and widow of William Darell.

As far as can be ascertained there is not even a substratum of truth in the story.

Carnarvon lies at a little distance from the old Roman town of Segontium, or Caersaint, as the British called it. The river that flows into the sea beneath the castle walls is the Seiont, or Saint. It was here that resided Elen the Road-maker, daughter of

Eudaf, chieftain of Erging and Ewyas, who married the usurper Maximus, called by the Welsh Maxen Wledig. This Roman general was raised to the purple by the legions in Britain in 383. He was by birth a Spaniard, and had acquired a reputation under the elder Theodosius in a campaign against the Picts and Scots in 368.



CARNARVON CASTLE

According to Welsh tradition he was a humane ruler, who showed favour to the native British. Unfortunately for himself and for Britain, Maximus did not content himself with recognition as king in Britain, but aspired to be emperor in Rome. He assembled a large army of native levies, prepared a fleet, crossed the Channel. His wife's brother or cousin, Cynan Meiriadog, a ruler whose home was near S. Asaph, threw in his lot with him, and led to his assistance the flower of the youth of Britain.

Maximus established himself at Trèves, and his

wife, who was a pious woman, gave up the imperial palace there to be made into a church. At Trèves she has been confounded with Helena, mother of Constantine, who never was there at all. This misconception has been made to serve as a basis for the myth of the "Holy Coat," the seamless robe of Christ, which she is supposed to have brought from Jerusalem and to have given to the church of Trèves, where it is preserved as an inestimable relic and exposed at long intervals. Maximus was finally defeated and killed at Aquileia in 388. His followers dispersed, and Cynan Meiriadog and his young bucks never saw again their native land. "Britain," says Gildas, "was thus robbed of her armed soldiery, of her military supplies, of her rulers, of her vigorous youth who had followed the footsteps of the above-mentioned military tyrant, and who never returned."

What became of Elen after the death of Maximus can only be inferred. Probably she escaped from Trèves and came back to her native Wales. She has been credited by the Welsh with the great paved roads that traverse the Principality in all directions, and they bear her name as Sarnau Helen.

The noble castle of Carnarvon was begun by Edward I., and is picturesque, but not equal to Conway. In it Edward "of Carnarvon," who succeeded to the throne, was born. He was invested with the Principality of Wales after the extinction of the race of Cunedda in blood.

Visitors are shown a room in the Eagle Tower as that in which Edward first saw the light; but this tower was not erected till later, though the castle itself was begun in 1284. It was not completed till 1322. There had, however, been a fortress here before, erected by Hugh the Wolf, or the Fat, Earl of Chester. This Hugh and his namesake, the Earl of

Shrewsbury, were unsparing in their cruelties to the Welsh. If Hugh of Chester was a wolf in his ferocity, he was a fox in guile. He inveigled the king of Gwynedd into a conference, then treacherously imprisoned him, and the king languished in a dungeon for twelve years, to 1098. Hugh was sister's son to William the Conqueror, who delivered over Wales to him to rifle at an annual rental of £40.

Gruffydd, king of Gwynedd, escaped in 1098, and at once threw himself into Anglesey. The two Hughs marched against him from Carnarvon as their base, and entered Mona. What had happened before, and was to happen again and yet again, occurred now. At the supreme moment Gruffydd flew to Ireland, and Anglesey was at the mercy of the two Hughs. They set to work to destroy the crops, burn the houses, and slaughter the inhabitants in cold blood, after all resistance had come to an end. When weary of killing, they tore out the tongues, scooped out the eyes, and hacked off the feet and hands of the peasantry, out of mere lust of torture.

It so chanced that at this juncture a Viking fleet appeared off the coast, under Magnus Barefeet of Norway, and Hugh the Fat of Chester and Hugh the Proud of Shrewsbury advanced to the coast to oppose the landing of the Northmen. On board the king's ship was Magnus of Orkney, a pious, feeble youth. The Norse king bade him arm for the fight.

"No," replied the young man, "I will not hurt those who have not hurt me."

"Then go down, coward, into the hold," said Magnus Barefeet wrathfully. The young prig took his psalter and obeyed. And as the battle raged above him, his voice could be heard above the din of arms repeating the psalms.

The two earls were on the coast near Beaumaris, where it shelves into the sea, riding up and down urging on their men.

"Then," says the Icelandic Saga writer, "King Magnus shot with his bow, but Hugh was clad in armour, and nothing was bare about him save one eye. King Magnus let fly an arrow at him, as did also a Halogolander at his side. They both shot at once, one arrow struck the nose-screen of the helm and glanced aside, but the other entered the earl's eye and penetrated his head, and that was afterwards recognised as the king's arrow."

When the shaft struck him, Earl Hugh leaped into the air. "Ah, ha!" shouted King Magnus, "let him skip."

The Hugh who fell was Hugh of Shrewsbury.

The Norsemen came ashore, but finding Anglesey already ravaged, re-entered their boats and spread sail.

The Magnus who would not fight, but sat in the hold singing psalms, is he to whom the cathedral of Kirkwall, in Orkney, is dedicated.

From Bangor, Plas Newydd, the seat of the Marquess of Anglesey, may be visited. The grounds are fine, and there is good timber in the park, but the house is naught. More interesting is Plas Côch, a fine example of an Elizabethan house, built by Hugh Hughes, Attorney-General in the sixteenth century.

In the grounds of Plas Newydd are two cromlechs, or rather what the French would call *allées couvertes*. They are prehistoric tribal mausoleums, and are perhaps the finest in the Principality. The cap stone of one is 14 feet long by 13 feet broad, and from 3 to 4 feet thick. There are vast numbers of cromlechs in Anglesey, but year by

year sees the number decrease. By the Highway Act of William IV. (1835) the road surveyor may enter on any waste or common and dig and search for stone and remove the same. He may also take stones from any river. He may go into another parish and do as above, provided he leaves sufficient stone for the said parish. He may enter enclosed land, with the consent of the owner, and remove stone, paying nothing for the same, but paying for any damage caused by transportation of the stone. If the owner refuses consent, the surveyor may apply to the nearest justice, who may authorise him to enter the enclosed land and remove any stone he requires. Farmers are only too delighted to have cromlechs and other prehistoric stone monuments blown up with dynamite and cleared off. Then visitors will not trespass to see them, and all obstruction to cultivation will be removed. Recently a number have been destroyed in Anglesey and elsewhere. They are being used up for roads. The cromlech, kistvaen, and *allée couverte* were tombs. Usually a stone was left to be removed, or a plug was inserted in a holed stone, that could be taken out at pleasure, to enable the living to enter the tomb and thrust back the skeletons that were old to make room for new interments. Perhaps also food for the dead was passed in to them through these holes.

On a day in the year, we know not what day it was, but probably at Samhain, the Feast of the Underground Spirits, corresponding to our All Souls' Day, a great banquet was held in commemoration of dead ancestors, and then the bones of the resurrected parents and grandparents were brought out, fondled, scraped, and cleaned up, and then reconsigned to the family tomb. The family or tribal mausoleum was the centre round which the family or tribe revolved. All

the religion of these Neolithic and Bronze Age people centred in their dead and in the world of spirits. We find among the Welsh, that all their tribal rights depended on the preservation of their pedigrees. It was the same idea in another form.

We, in our matter-of-fact and of to-day world, think nothing of our forbears. I believe it was Swedenborg who said that Europe had still a great lesson to learn—he did not specify it—and that this lesson would be taught it by the Turanian race. Perhaps the Chinaman will play his part in the future, and he will bring to us Westerns the doctrine of the reverence due to the old people from whose lives we derive our physical and spiritual and mental powers.

Monier-Williams, in his *Brahminism and Hinduism* (1887), says:—

> "The neglect of our ancestors, which seems to spring not so much from any want of sympathy with the departed as from an utter disbelief in any interconnexion between the world and the world of spirits, is by some regarded as a defect in our religious character and practice."

We have lost a great tie to those who have gone before in the neglect of commemoration of the dead and realisation of the Article of the Faith, the Communion of Saints. Our modern civilisation, our culture, our manliness, our refinement, we owe to the straining after an ideal, not always attained, but seen and sought by those who have predeceased us. We do not make ourselves, we have been made and moulded into what we are by the good old folk who are to us only names in our pedigree. If the sins of fathers are visited on their children, and of this there can be no doubt, so also do their virtues descend, and we owe them something, some recognition,

some kindly thought, some remembrance in our commune with God, on that account.

So these cromlechs and kistvaens may teach us something. Anglesey and Carnarvonshire abound in these monuments, and Mr. J. E. Griffith, of Bangor, has published a splendid work on them, with photographic plates representing such as remain.



NANT BRIDGE, CARNARVON

From Carnarvon Llanddwyn may best be visited. To the south-east of Anglesey is a tract of blown sand from Newborough—in Welsh Rhosyr. A spit of land runs out into the sea, and bears a lighthouse that sheds its warning ray over the southern entrance to the Menai Straits. It encloses a bay, and the sands extend thence to the Straits.

On this tongue of land stand the ruins of a church founded by S. Dwyn or Dwynwen, daughter of Brychan, the Irish king of Brecknock. The place is not easily reached from Newborough without a guide, as

the sands are over ankle, and in places half-way up the calf, deep, and the labour of reaching it is great to anyone who does not know the track. Yet the place was at one time greatly resorted to. Dwynwen was the Venus of Wales. She and one Maelor Dafodril fell desperately in love with each other, but when he paid her his addresses, in a spirit of caprice or levity she flouted him, and he retired deeply offended. She constantly expected him to return, but he did not; instead, he published libels about her. She was miserable, partly because of these slanders, partly because she loved him still. Then in her distress she prayed to be relieved of her passion, and an angel appeared and administered to her some drops of a heavenly liquid, and at once her heart was cured of love-sickness.

Next the angel administered the same medicine to Maelor, and he was congealed to ice. God now gave to Dwynwen three requests which He undertook to fulfil. So she asked to have Maelor thawed, and he was so; then she asked that all lovers who invoked her aid might obtain the object of their desires, or become indifferent; then, lastly, she asked that she might never again hanker after the married estate.

At Llanddwyn was a holy well that is now choked by sand, but till it was smothered up was in much resort for its oracular answers to questions put to it. The following is an account of the ceremony from the pen of William Williams, of Llandegai, written about 1800:—

> "There was a spring of clear water, now choked up by the sand, at which an old woman from Newborough always attended and prognosticated the lover's success from the movements of some small eels, which waved out of the sides of the well on spreading the lover's handkerchief on the surface of the water. I remember an old woman saying that

> when she was a girl she consulted the woman at the well about her destiny with respect to a husband. On spreading her handkerchief, out popped an eel from the north side of the well, and soon after another crawled from the south side, and they both met on the bottom of the well. Then the woman told her that her husband would be a stranger from the south part of Carnarvonshire. Soon after, it happened that three brothers came from that part and settled in the neighbourhood where this young woman was, one of whom made his addresses to her, and in a little time married her. So much of the prophecy I remember. This couple was my father and mother."

A maxim attributed to the saint is, "There is no amiability like cheerfulness"; *i.e.* Nothing is so attractive as a cheerful spirit. S. Dwynwen was also regarded as patroness of the cattle in Anglesey. The same writer adds:—

> "I remember hearing an instance which happened, I believe, about one hundred and fifty years ago. The ploughing oxen at Bodeon, on April 25th, took fright when at work, and ran over a steep rock and perished in the sea. This being S. Mark the Evangelist's Day, it was considered that having done work on it was a transgression of a divine ordinance, and to prevent such accident for the future the proprietor of the farm ordered that this festival of S. Mark should be for the future invariably kept a holy day, and that two wax candles should annually on that day be kept burning in the church porch of Llanddwyn, which was the only part of the building that was covered in, as an offering and memorial of this transgression and accident, and as a token that S. Dwynwen's aid and protection was solicited to prevent such catastrophe any more. This was only discontinued about eighty years ago, *i.e.* 1720."

The Penrhyn slate quarries are reached by a branch line from Bangor to Bethesda. The quarrying is carried on upon a vast scale, and the place is interesting to the geologist on account of the presence, in the midst of a great dyke of greenstone, of an eruptive rock which has traversed the beds,

and which has been left untouched.

The slates are cut to various sizes. Duchesses are the largest; then come Countesses and Ladies. About the beginning of last century a slate merchant of the name of Docer, going through the quarry with Lord Penrhyn, advised him that the slates should be made of such-and-such a size, and this is the origin of the name of "Docer." By this time the skill of the quarryman and of the slater found some new plan continually. One wanted to do this, and another that. His lordship failed to please everybody. His lady, seeing him in this plight, and in continual trouble, advised him to call the slates after the names of the degrees in the aristocracy. He took up the suggestion, and called the 24 by 12 slate a Duchess, the 20 by 10 a Countess, and the 16 by 8 a Lady.

This has given occasion to some witty verses by an old Welsh judge, Mr. Leycester, and I venture to quote a few of them, though they have already been enshrined in that most delightful of all handbooks, *The Gossiping Guide*.

"It has truly been said, as we all must deplore,
That Grenville and Pitt have made peers by the score;
But now, 'tis asserted, unless I have blundered,
There's a man who makes peeresses here by the hundred.
By the stroke of a hammer, without the King's aid,
A Lady, or Countess, or Duchess is made.
And where'er they are seen, in a palace or shop,
Their rank they preserve, they are still at the top.
This Countess or Lady, though crowds may be present,
Submits to be dressed by the hands of a peasant,
And you'll see, when Her Grace is but once in

his clutches,
With how little respect he will handle a
Duchess."

An interesting example has been observed in the quarries of the direction in which a seismic wave passes. The slates are arranged in a long series. When a shock of earthquake comes it has been noticed that the slates click, click, click in succession, showing the course taken by the vibration of the earth, from east to west or from north to south.

The quarry presents a busy scene. A horn gives the signal for the blasting. When it sounds, at once the workmen disappear under sheds, till the explosion is over with its consequent rush and rattle of débris.



BETHESDA

At Penrhyn died quite recently an old workman, Albert Davies, whose life's story may be told, as it illustrates the intellectual and especially the theological bent of the Welsh mind. This mind is

speculative and disputative, and it exercises itself by choice in political and theologic fields.

Albert Davies in his early years was a collier in South Wales, a member of a Calvinistic Methodist family, and could speak no other tongue but Welsh. From boyhood his great craving was for books, and, above all, for books that treated of sacred matters. In the dinner-hour it is very general for miners, quarrymen, and labourers to argue points of divinity, and Davies became a strong controversialist against the Unitarian and Socinian notions which were gaining ground among his associates. By degrees an idea germinated in his brain that as Calvin, Wesley, Luther, and other great founders had created organisations to maintain and propagate their opinions, so, in all probability, the great Founder of Christianity had formed a corporate body to carry on His teaching unto the end of time. He had never been brought into direct contact with the Church of England, and had an inherited prejudice against it, as purely English, and as representing Saxon domination over Wales, and he could think of no Body that would answer his requirements but the Roman Church. He accordingly took up the study of its teaching and claims, and became convinced that if Christ did found a community, it must be the Catholic Church, which the Roman Body asserted itself to be; and Davies was received into that communion.

After some years, however, his confidence gave way; he found, as he thought, too much credulity, too great demands made on faith; and he took to a study of the Fathers.

Then his faith gave way; he separated from the Roman Communion, and for a while was adrift in his convictions. He left the colliery in which hitherto he

had worked, and wandered from place to place in bitterness of spirit, taking up occasional work here and there, unsettled in every way, spiritually as well as temporally.

After a while he settled as a quarryman at Penrhyn, and here for the first time came in contact with Anglican clergy, and found that the Church of England, while not pretending to be the whole Church, considered herself to be part and parcel of the One Body, with the sacred deposit of faith, orders, and sacraments. This gave him what he wanted, and Albert Davies now found his feet on what he thought was solid ground, and the old argumentative spirit reawoke in him, and the dinner-hour was once more the time for theological dialectics.

So years passed, and old age and ill-health crept on. The quarry work that he could do was ill-paid and precarious. He lived in chronic hunger, and often was too poor to afford himself a fire in winter; for every penny he could spare was spent in the purchase of books. He would read none but such as dealt with theology.

At length he became so ill that he had to be taken into the workhouse. He struggled against the necessity as long as he could, and then submitted, saying, “It is God’s will, and I must accept what He desires.”

In the workhouse he received better food, and comforts such as he had not been accustomed to as a poor and failing quarryman. Any little gratuity offered him he accepted to spend on his beloved books, and in time his library was by no means inconsiderable. After his death, by his express wish, they have been divided between Bangor and

Beaumaris libraries.

In the workhouse he died peacefully, and content with his solitary lot. He was a man of rugged exterior, with a head and face singularly like those attributed to Socrates.

Such is the story of one man of the people; it is characteristic of the Welshman, with strong theologic bent, that leads one in this direction, another in that; the mind is active, inquiring, especially in the direction of abstruse studies.

In Penrhyn Castle is preserved the so-called Hirlas Horn. It was discovered among the rubbish, during some alterations and rebuilding of the castle, and had probably fallen from the top of one of the towers from which it had been blown. It bears the arms of Sir Piers Griffiths, Sheriff of Carnarvonshire in 1566, and was used for both drinking and blowing. The name given to it is from the Hirlas horn celebrated by Owen Cyfeiliog, prince of Powys in the twelfth century, in a poem famous wherever the Welsh language is spoken. It was composed immediately after a great victory gained over the English in Maelor.

"Up rose the ruddy dawn of day;
The armies met in dread array,
On Maelor Drefred's field;
Loud the British clarions sound,
The Saxons gasping on the ground,
The bloody conflict yield.

"Fill, fill the Hirlas horn, my boy!
Nor let the tuneful lips be dry
That warble Owen's praise,
Whose walls with warlike spoils are hung,
And open wide his gates are flung
In Cambria's peaceful days.

"This hour we dedicate to joy;

Then fill the Hirlas horn, my boy,
That shineth like the sea!
Whose azure handles, tipt with gold,
Invite the grasp of Britons bold,
The Sons of Liberty."

The scene is the night after the battle, and the prince passes the horn round to each of his chiefs, and reckons up their gallant deeds. Then, turning to the empty seats of those who have fallen, the princely bard, who does not fail to blow his own trumpet, drinks to the memory of the dead:—

"Pour out the horn, tho' he desire it not,
And heave a sigh o'er Morgan's early grave;
Doomed in his clay-cold tenement to rot,
While we revere the memory of the brave."

From Bethesda a road leads across the mountains to Bettws-y-Coed (the Bead-house in the Wood) by the pretty lake Ogwen. There are a number of picturesque tarns in the neighbourhood—the wildly beautiful Llyn Idwal, Llyn Bochlwyd, Marchlyn Mawr (the Great Lake of the Horse), Ffynnon Llugwy, Llyn Cowlyd, Llyn Eigiau—and several days may well be spent in exploring the beauties of this mountain region, but the explorer must be prepared for vast solitudes and for steep scrambles, and he must take refreshments with him.

A word of caution to anyone visiting Marchlyn. Should he see a horse, however quiet and staid, browsing near, let him not venture to mount it, although the beast seems to invite the weary traveller through the heather to take a seat on its back. No sooner is he in his seat than all its want of spirit is at an end. It flies away with its rider towards the lake, plunges in, and will never be seen again. It is the Ceffyl y Dwfr, the Water-horse, a spirit that lives in the depths, with a special taste for human

flesh, which it will munch below when it has its victim at the bottom of the blue water.

CHAPTER VI
SNOWDON

Beauty of shape of Snowdon—Vortigern retreated to it—Story of his castle—Merlin—S. Germanus—The last Llewelyn—Dolbadarn—Owen and David—Treachery—David Gam—Topography of the Snowdon district—Glacial action—The great red sea—Llanberis—Church rights a family matter—Married clergy—Beddgelert—The legend of the hound—Whence it came and how it grew—Capel Curig—Curig visits Brittany.

SNOWDON is a topic to be approached with hesitation and reluctance, because it has been so much and so well written about that it is not easy to describe the mountain without a sense of falling behind others who have done the work superlatively well. It is therefore advisable to touch only on such topics as have been passed over by other writers, or not dealt with fully by them.

Snowdon compared with the Alps is of course inconsiderable, so far as altitude goes; so is Pilatus, but Snowdon shares with this latter the supreme beauty of shape, and it surpasses Pilatus in that it does not stand near giants as those of the Oberland. And hugeness is not of the essence of beauty. No one looking on Snowdon can deny that it is a mountain

in its majesty, and that in form it is absolutely perfect.



SNOWDEN, FROM BWLCH GLAS

Snowdon, or Eryri as it is called by the Welsh, has served as a fastness to which the hard-pressed princes of Gwynedd could retreat before the overwhelming power of England. It was an impregnable stronghold, and the Norman or English could not penetrate to it, and could only hope to starve into surrender those who took refuge there. It could not be approached through broad valleys. It is reached only by ravines. It was possible at any time for those sheltering in its recesses to collect unobserved and swoop down on a town or castle where the defenders were few. To Snowdon Gwrtheyrn Gwrtheneu, or Vortigern, retreated before the angry and resentful British, who laid upon him the blame of calling in the aid of the Jutes and Saxons, although he had only so done as the mouthpiece of their general council.

Nennius tells a strange story of the founding by him of a castle in Snowdon.

The *History of the Britons* that passes under the name of Nennius was composed in Alclud, or Dumbarton, about the year 679. It was re-edited by one Nennius in or about 796, and it underwent a second redaction by Samuel in Buallt, or Builth, later again, about 810.

The story of Vortigern and his castle in Snowdon is compounded of two distinct legends that have been clumsily put together. It is to this effect. Vortigern desired to erect a residence for himself in Eryri, but met with difficulties over the foundations. He consulted his Druids, and they recommended him to bury under the wall a fatherless child whose parentage was unknown. The laying of the foundations with a human victim was a common form of pagan superstition. The reason for selecting a child of unknown parentage was to avoid the risk of a blood-feud, should one be taken from a tribe of which he was an acknowledged member. After some seeking, a brat was discovered that answered the requirements, and he was brought before Vortigern, where he announced to the king that the real reason why his foundations gave way was that they were laid in a swamp, and that in the swamp were two reptiles engaged in incessant conflict. Then he proceeded to declare that these creatures symbolised the Briton and the Saxon, that although the latter seemed to prevail, in the end the Briton would obtain the mastery and expel the other from the land.

The story goes on, with curious inconsequence, to relate that the boy informed Vortigern that he was named Ambrose, and was the son of a Roman consul; and then taking a high hand he ordered the king to

depart and leave the fortress and the better portion of his kingdom to himself, and Vortigern meekly submitted. But the story gets still further tangled up, for Ambrose is made to be one with Merlin the prophet and enchanter.

Now, although the story as it reads is in a muddle, it is possible to disentangle the threads, and, moreover, to restore a substratum of truth that has been disturbed by the importation of foreign matter. The incident of the reptiles and the prophecy must be eliminated as belonging to a legend of Merlin. Vortigern, it would seem, after popular feeling had turned against him, fell back on the pagan party, which was still strong in country places, whereas the Romano-British towns were wholly Christian. That he actually did have recourse to the pagan practice of burying a child alive under the foundations of his castle, or of sprinkling them with its blood, is probable enough under the circumstances. The practice did not die out for some time. From this fortress Vortigern was obliged to withdraw through the defection of his followers, and it was seized by Ambrose, who was at the head of the opposed faction. He had been raised to lead the revolt because descended from one of the Roman emperors —in fact, from Maximus, who had married Elen.

Ambrose was supported by S. Germanus, who excommunicated Vortigern and called down the vengeance of Heaven on his head.

The palace of Vortigern is now called Dinas Emrys, or that of Ambrose, and it rises above Llyn Dinas—some mounds indicate the site—on the summit of an insulated hill surrounded by woods. It would be most interesting to explore this spot with pick and spade—not in quest of the child's bones under the foundation-stone, nor of the reptiles, but in

the hopes of finding personal ornaments and weapons of the period of Vortigern and Ambrose, for such are most scanty and rare in our museums.

Merlin, or, as the Welsh call him, Myrddin or Merddin, was the son of Morfryn, and he was actually engaged in conflict against his own brother-in-law Rhydderch Hael in the north of Britain; Rhydderch being the leader of the Christian Britons, Merlin threw himself into the opposed party, which was pagan, headed by Gwenddolew, and was defeated in a great battle at Arderydd, now Arthuret, in 573.

To Snowdon twice retreated Llewelyn, the last Prince of Wales of the House of Cunedda.

If it served the Welsh princes as a refuge, it was also of use to them as a prison, in which they could hold their most dangerous adversaries, and the tower of Dolbadarn at the foot of Llyn Peris was their gaol. The most noted of those who were there confined was Owen the Red, brother of Llewelyn ab Gruffydd. On the death of David, son of Llewelyn the Great, in 1246, the Welsh of Gwynedd chose the brothers Owen and Llewelyn as joint kings to rule over them and lead them against the English. It was an injudicious choice, for in Wales in a royal family a man's worst foes were those of his own household, and the electors might have foreseen that these brothers would ere long fly at each other's throat. The two princes had a brother David, who was dissatisfied at being left out in the cold, and he hasted to the court of King Henry III. to obtain his assistance against his successful brothers. The King was delighted to have an excuse for fomenting fratricidal war in Wales, and he flattered and encouraged David, who began to intrigue with Owen against Llewelyn. Suddenly, in 1255, these two

brothers raised the standard of revolt, but Llewelyn was on his guard, and he captured both of them and slew many of their followers.

Owen, as the more dangerous, was sent to Dolbadarn, and was immured there for twenty years; but David was liberated in 1258, as he feigned the profoundest contrition.



ABERGLASLYN PASS

But David only waited his opportunity, and he entered into a secret arrangement with Owen, prince of Powys, to murder his brother Llewelyn, so that he might secure the crown of Gwynedd. In order to further this plot, David recommended Llewelyn to invite the prince of Powys to a great banquet at Aberffraw, to be followed by hunting parties in Môn. This was in 1275. Llewelyn, unsuspecting treachery, agreed. Prince Owen arrived, but his retinue, on which he relied for obtaining the mastery of the palace, in the confusion consequent on the murder,

was detained by bad weather and the impassability of the roads. David was alarmed. He suspected that Owen of Powys purposed betraying him, and he took to flight.

Llewelyn, perplexed at the disappearance of David, questioned Owen, who made full confession of the plot. The conspirators intended to have surrounded the bedroom of Llewelyn in the night, and to have assassinated him in his sleep.

The Prince of Wales, on learning all particulars, cited David to appear before him and answer to the charge of high treason; but David declined to attend, and, collecting a body of armed men, fell on and ravaged portions of his brother's territory, and when Llewelyn marched to chastise him he fled to the court of Edward I., who received him favourably.

In 1277 Edward invaded Wales, and was greatly assisted by David, who knew the country and the people, and was able to foment jealousies among the Welsh chieftains, and cripple Llewelyn in his resistance to the advance of the invader, by detaching them from his allegiance. Owen the Red from his prison contrived to send to Edward his best wishes for his success.

Llewelyn was now obliged to take refuge in Snowdon, and was forced to come to terms with Edward, and by these terms he was compelled to release Owen. After this we hear little more of this red-haired fox, and it is probable that his long captivity had broken his health.

Now the false and fickle David deserted Edward, and went over to the side of Llewelyn, actuated, not by patriotism, but by self-interest.

In 1282 King Edward again invaded Wales, but his advance was checked at Conway. He accordingly

sent a fleet to effect the subjugation of Anglesey, and to form that a base for operations against Llewelyn in Snowdon. Having succeeded in this, Edward exclaimed exultantly, “Now I have plucked the finest feather out of Llewelyn’s tail.”

Llewelyn, hard pressed in Snowdon, left that stronghold to be defended by David, whilst he hastened south to rally the Welsh under the prince of Dynevor. He fell into an ambush, as has been already related, and was killed. David was captured, and hanged, drawn, and quartered. Another prisoner detained in Dolbadarn was David Gam of Brecon, who tried to assassinate Owen Glyndwr. But about him more when we come to Machynlleth.

To understand the topography of the Snowdon district we must conceive of Snowdon itself as shaped much like a star-fish with the radiating arms curved, and little lakes lying in the hollows between the ridges. The entire mass, however, forms a rude triangle with its base at Llyn Dinas and Llyn Gwynant and the pass of Bwlch-y-Gwyddel, the neck that attaches Snowdon to the stately mountain mass of Moel Siabod. North of Llyn Padarn and Llanberis is again a great mountain bulk.

The geology of Snowdon is too complicated for the unscientific eye to understand and unravel, but broadly it may be described as eruptive matter breaking through the Cambrian slates. These slates are the best in England, though their purple tinge is unpleasant to the eye, and the silvery grey is far more grateful. The slate quarries find employment for armies of workmen, but are detrimental to the beauty of the scenery, the mountain-sides being sliced and hacked and hewn into, and over the hideous piles of débris it will take thousands of years for the grass to grow.

Even the uninitiated eye will soon be able to detect the traces of glacial action in scored rocks as the great ice rivers moved over them, scratching them with the stones embodied in the frozen stream, in the fragmentary moraines, and in the eratic blocks.

Once, in that cold remote age, the sea, a red sea, swept from the mouth of the Dee over Cheshire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire, to the estuary of the Severn. Wales was a great mountainous island with glaciers rolling down the valleys, discharging their mighty rivers of ice into it. The Wrekin stood up above the waters, and the waves leaped about it. The great rollers from the north plunged and shivered into foam against Wenlock Edge. The swirls formed the pools that are now still basins full of carp around Ellesmere; it deposited its salt in the beds whence the brine is pumped at Droitwich and in Cheshire. Rafts of ice broken off from the glacier, descending the valleys of the Dee, the Severn, and the Wye, drifted about till they melted, tilted, and discharged their burdens of stone, brought from the Welsh mountains, over the sea bed, so that now these are found strewn around Birmingham and Bromley, scattered over the Clent and Lickey Hills.

Snowdon, unhappily, is fond of wearing his cloud-cap, that Tarn-Kappe of Northern mythology which was supposed to make him invisible who donned it. In the *Niebelungen Lied*, one of the four greatest epic poems the world has produced, when Gunther, the Burgundian king, goes to court, Brunehild of Iceland, the virago, informs him she will have none but such as can overmaster her in hurling and in leaping. Siegfried dons the mist-cap, and puts his hand behind that of Gunther to assist him in casting the spear and pitching the stone, and

he takes him in his arms to leap, and so wins the bride for Gunther. And dear old Snowdon with his mist-cap on has baffled the forces of Norman and English again and again as he hugged to his heart the gallant but outnumbered Welsh. It was not the rugged heights or the impenetrable ravines alone that bewildered and held back the invader, but the cap of cloud which Snowdon drew over the refugees who clung to him for safety. Standing forward, and looking over the western sea, Snowdon attracts the vapours, and they are fortunate who, ascending it, can see from its summit the glorious panorama of tossed mountain ridges and jewelled lakes surrounding it.



LLANBERIS

And now a few words relative to those places whence the visitor to Snowdon will explore this beautiful neighbourhood.

Llanberis, much given over to slate quarrying, takes its name from a certain Peris, “Cardinal of

Rome," of whom scarcely anything but the name is known, not even his pedigree,[2] and that means a great deal, or rather did so, till the Normans came into Wales and upset the ecclesiastical order there.

Achau y Saint was the *Who's Who* of the Welsh Church. Now when an ecclesiastic founded a church and obtained land around it, constituting what we may call his parish, that church and parish became the hereditary property of his family. It was accordingly of first importance to establish who he was, and who were his blood relations. Thenceforth every pater-familias of his family had rights to land in the benefice, be he layman or cleric. All the land in the parish belonged to the family of the saint. To establish a right to land in it a man had to prove his descent; consequently, next to fixing the pedigree of the founder came the preservation of the genealogies of the descendants.

It did not in the least matter whether they were in Holy Orders or not, they had hereditary rights in the benefice. If among them there were one, two, or even a dozen, who were clerics, all these clerics were co-rectors—that is to say, they had their rights to land in the parish as kinsmen of the saintly founder. What they received in their clerical capacity were surplice dues. Gerald the Welshman, who lived in the twelfth century, speaks of it as an "infamous custom." No doubt it did not work well. There was no responsible priest with the cure of souls. Some one or other of the tribe who was in sacred orders celebrated divine service and administered the sacraments, but all went on in a hugger-mugger way. Gerald speaks of parishes with several rectors. Even bishoprics passed from father to son. Archbishop Peckham, in his visitation in 1284, complained that this custom was ruinous to the well-being of the

Church. As all the householders of an ecclesiastical tribe lived on the proceeds of the benefice, there was scarcely enough coming in to the share of the actual priest who ministered, to support him. The principle of co-ownership in land prevailed in the secular tribes, and it extended to the ecclesiastical tribes as well, that is to say, to those of the saint's kin living about the church on Church lands. Gerald says:—

> "The Church has almost as many parsons or parties as there are principal men in the parish, and the sons, after the decease of their fathers, succeed to the ecclesiastical benefices, not by election, but by hereditary right; and if a bishop should dare to presume to appoint or to institute anyone else, the people would most certainly revenge the injury on the institution or the instituted."

It was probably to get rid of this mischievous custom that the Norman conquerors and the English barons who occupied castles in Wales turned such benefices as they could lay their hands on into vicarages under monasteries. Then the abbots or priors appointed some of their monks to minister in these parishes, and these men were entirely detached from all family ties in the place, and could attend to its spiritual charge and to that only. But till this new order of things came in—and it came in slowly and by degrees, and was forced on a reluctant people—the genealogies of the saints and of their kin were preserved with the utmost care. People were much more anxious to remember their pedigrees than the stories of the lives of the founders. The pedigrees were the title deeds to the enjoyment of valuable rights to land and other endowments.

In the Latin Church a saint was remembered for what he had done, for his holy life; in the Celtic Church all that was nothing—he was valued for the

land he had acquired, and which he transmitted to his posterity.

In the Welsh Church, saints, bishops, abbots, clergy, as a rule, were married, and took care to transmit their benefices parcelled up among their sons. When the Latin ecclesiastics condescended to write the lives of the Celtic saints they suppressed this fact. Thus Gildas the historian, Abbot of Ruys, and a reformer of the Irish Church after the reaction to paganism that followed the death of Patrick and his devoted band, was a married man, and the father of some half a dozen children. He had two biographers. Neither says a word about this; each asserts that from boyhood he was "crucified to the world and the world to him"; that he "scorned transitory things," and lived a life of severe self-abnegation. His son Cenydd, or Keneth, was a hermit in Gower, and he also had wife and family. But those terrible genealogies, so carefully preserved by the Welsh, tell us facts not quite in harmony with the statements of these "Lives," just as parish registers and the wills in probate courts make sad havoc of some of the pedigrees of our gentle families as given in "Burke" and in county histories.

Beddgelert is visited annually by a crowd of tourists, who drop a tear on the grave of Llewelyn's faithful hound. Who Celer was, who has given a name to the place, is not known. Llewelyn may have had a dog called Kill-hart, as we shall see presently, that was true and dear to him, and the beast may have been buried here—that is possible enough; but the story of the death of Gelert, killed by his master in mistake, is not true—it is an importation. The full legend as connected with Beddgelert appears first of all in Jones's *Musical Relicks of the Welsh Bards* (ed. 1794, p. 75) about a dog, Cylart, at Beddgelert. Then

came Spencer's poem, *Beth-Gelert, or the Grave of the Greyhound*, which was first printed privately as a broadsheet in 1800, when it was composed. He says: "The story of this ballad is traditionary in a village at the foot of Snowdon, where Llewelyn the Great had a house. The greyhound named Gelert was given him by his father-in-law, King John, in the year 1205." This is taken straight out of the note of Jones, date and all. We may well inquire what was Jones's authority. The legend had found its way into Wales at least in the sixteenth century, for there is an *englyn*, in a MS. written in that century, to Llewelyn's hound, Kilhart, "when it was buried at Beddgelert"; and the legend occurs as one of the pseudonymous *Allegories*, or *Fables of Catwg Ddoeth*, in the Iolo MSS., written about the same century, and, as all the other documents there, in the South Welsh dialect. It is there entitled, "The Man who killed his Greyhound." It is therein connected with a man "who formerly lived at Abergarwan." The tale—infant in cradle, a greyhound, a wolf—is given complete, and one of the popular sayings it gave currency to—"As sorry as the man who killed his greyhound"—is found in most collections of Welsh proverbs. As to the allegories of Catwg Ddoeth, the collection was itself an importation from the popular mediæval volume *The Sayings of Cato the Wise*, and it was foisted on S. Cadog of Llancarfan.



BEDDGELERT

With respect to the grave of the greyhound at Beddgelert, Professor Rhys says that there are still alive old men there who remember and can testify to having seen the cairn erected by the landlord of the Goat Inn.

We have, then, the story traced so far. It was brought into Wales in one of the popular collections of tales that circulated in the Middle Ages; then it was applied to some man, nameless, at Abergarwan, in South Wales. Then it attached itself to Llewelyn; Jones took the *englyn*, invented the date and the fable that it was presented by King John to Llewelyn. Next, Spencer composed the ballad which at once became popular, and finally the innkeeper at Beddgelert manufactured the grave of the dog. But let us go a little further back, and track the still earlier history of the tale.

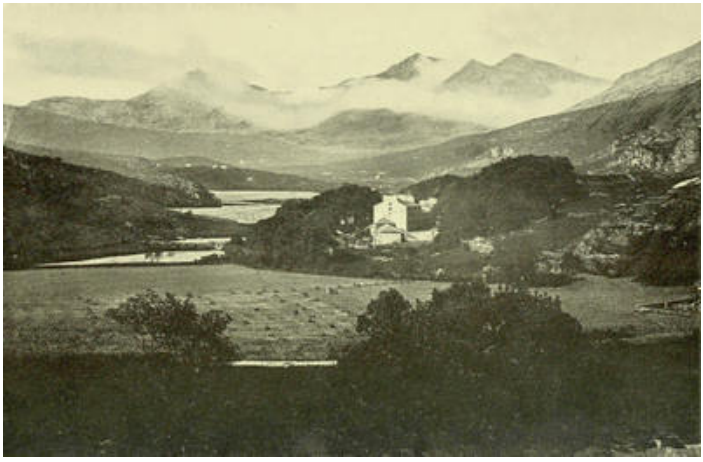
It appears first of all in the *Pantschatantra*, a collection of stories made in Sanskrit (in India) some centuries before the Christian era. It was translated

into Syriac under the title of *Kalilah and Dimna*. This was rendered into Arabic under the Calif Almansor (754-775), and by this means spread and became a popular story-book throughout the Mussulman world. It was translated into Persian in or about 1150, and into Greek by Simon Seth about 1080, and by John of Capua into Latin about 1270. In Spain it had been rendered out of Arabic by Raymond of Beziers in 1255, and it became a source of many collections of tales, as that of the *Seven Wise Masters* and the *Gesta Romanorum*, that circulated in the Middle Ages throughout the Western world.

The story of the faithful beast slain by its master through a hasty conclusion that it had devoured his son is found in Thibet, in Russia—almost everywhere in Asia and in Europe.

In its original form in the *Pantschatantra* it stands thus:—

> "The wife of a Brahmin had an ichneumon in the house, as well as a child. One day she was about to go to the well to draw water, and she said to her husband, 'Look sharply after the baby whilst I am away, lest the ichneumon do it a mischief.' But the man went off begging, and neglected his charge. In the meanwhile a venomous black serpent approached the crib, and the ichneumon flew at it and killed it. Then the creature ran out, with its mouth bloody, to meet the woman as she returned from the well. When she saw the animal with its jaws dripping with gore she rushed to the conclusion that it had killed her son, and threw the pail at it and crushed the life out of it."



CAPEL CURIG

An ichneumon was not an animal known in Europe, and so the translators changed it into any beast that they thought would serve—as a cat, a weasel, or a dog—and some vaguely describe it as a "domestic beast." The oldest form of the local legend is found in a MS. dated 1592. This relates that the Princess Joan, natural daughter of King John, and wife of Llewelyn the Great, brought a noble staghound with her from England, and that the dog was one day fatally wounded by a horn-thrust when on a chase. In another MS. of the same period the dog is called Kilhart, and this seems to have been its real, an English, name, "Kill-hart."

Capel Curig takes its designation from S. Curig; he departed by Cornwall to Brittany. In Cornwall and Wales the Latin clergy speedily displaced him from the churches he had founded, and put Cyriacus, a boy martyr of Tarsus, into his room.

But he has been better respected in his adopted land. At Perros-Guirec is his oratory on a rock in the

bay, to which he was wont to retire from visitors and troublesome distractions, to read, meditate, and pray. The tide flows around the rock, so that Curig was cut off from interference by dancing waves. The wonderful spire of Kreisker at S. Pol de Léon is attached to a chapel that he is reported to have founded, and it is regarded as the finest in Brittany.

CHAPTER VII
LLEYN

The promontory of Lleyn—Resemblance to Cornwall—Watering-places—Irish camps—Tre'r Ceiri—Nant Gwrtheyrn—End of Vortigern—Madryn—Holy wells of Llanaelhaiarn and Llangybi—Castell March—The story of King March—Irddw and the wild fowl—The tarn of Glasfryn—"Old Morgan"—Screen at Llanengan—Chest of King Einion—Bardsey Isle—What a saint meant—Canonisation—Isle of S. Tudwal—Love of the old saints for an isle—Avallon the Isle of the Blessed—Madog's supposed discovery of America—Celtic settlers in Iceland—Iolo Goch—The meeting at Aberdaron—Clynnog—The story of S. Beuno—Beuno's mark—How to raise money for charities.

LLEYN is the promontory of Carnarvon that serves, with the Pembrokeshire headlands of Strumble and S. David's, to form the Cardigan Bay. It bears a curious resemblance in outline to Cornwall. It has its Land's End at Braich-y-pwll, its Mount's Bay, Porth Nigel, and its Lizard Point at Pencilan. Bardsey may also be assumed as representing the Scilly group. The general aspect of Lleyn is also like that of Cornwall, no trees except in combes, heathery moors, and little ports between rocky crags.

Curiously enough, a number of Cornish saints

settled here. But Cornwall can show no such bold heights as Yr Eifl (the Rivals) and Carn Fadryn. Their elevation is not great. Yr Eifl, rising into three peaks, is only 1,850 feet and Carn Fadryn less—1,200 feet—but their shapes are finer than those of the tors of the Cornish moors.

Lleyn has several watering-places on the south coast, as Portmadoc, Criccieth, and Pwllheli, and those preferring the more bracing air on the north coast find what they desire at Nevin.

The peninsula was a stronghold of the Irish, who tyrannised over the British as the Roman's grip on Britain relaxed. Their camps remain at Tre'r Ceiri, Pen-y-gaer, and Carn Bentyrch. The first of these occupied one of the summits of Yr Eifl, and is the finest specimen in Wales. From being situated so high and so far from building sites, it has not been molested, and the walls are in places fifteen feet high. It stands 1,500 feet above the sea, and towers precipitously above the village of Llanaelhaiarn in a valley below. There was a walk around the wall on the top protected by a parapet, which is perfect in several parts. The enclosure is of an oblong shape with outer defences where the side of the mountain was least steep, and the interior is crowded with *cytiau*, or hut-circles. The entrance is well defended, and is quite distinct, as is also a sally-port.

The situation is extremely wild and picturesque. The camp cries out to be scientifically and laboriously explored. It is now menaced by the terrible tripper coming over in char-à-bancs from Criccieth and Pwllheli, who respects nothing, and may amuse his empty mind by throwing down the venerable walls that are set up without mortar, the stones kept in position by their own weight alone.

What has stood in the way of the work of exploration has been the solitude and height at which stands the stone castle. Those undertaking the excavation would have to camp in it, and snatch the chances of bright days.

Below Yr Eifl is Nant Gwrtheyrn, the Valley of Vortigern, with some mounds indicating the site of the wooden hall of this unfortunate king. Hither he retired as his last place of refuge.

Unable effectively to resist the incursions of the Picts and Scots, he invited the Germans to come to his aid. But he did not venture on this upon his own initiative. He summoned a great national council to devise a remedy for the distress of Britain when an appeal to Rome had failed. The unanimous voice of the assembly authorised Vortigern to call to his assistance the Teutonic rovers. Hengest and his brother Horsa, with three tribes of Jutes and Angles, were accordingly invited over, and they landed in the Isle of Thanet in 449. With their aid Vortigern successfully rolled back the tide of northern barbarians, and then assigned Thanet to his new auxiliaries, in the fond belief that this would content them. He further undertook to furnish them with provisions in proportion to their numbers. Tempted by the alluring reports sent home by these adventurers, fresh tribes of Angles now poured in, and on the plea of insufficient remuneration, Hengest and Horsa led their countrymen to plunder the neighbouring Kent.

At the same time the beautiful Rowena, daughter of Hengest, arrived, and Vortigern, who met her at a banquet, was so fascinated by her charms that to gain her hand he consented to assign Kent to Hengest.

The Angles still pressed on; several battles were

fought with various success. In one of these Vortimer, the gallant son of the king, was wounded, and, when he died, the exasperated Britons declared that he had been poisoned by Rowena. Still the invaders advanced, and the Britons met with a crushing defeat at Ebbsfleet.

Vortigern was doubtless incapable, vacillating, and weak. The anger of the Britons, now in deadly alarm, was concentrated on him. A general revolt against him ensued, and, headed by Ambrosius Aurelius and encouraged by S. Germanus—not he of Auxerre, but a nephew of S. Patrick—he was driven from his throne, and took refuge under the old Irish fortress of Tre'r Ceiri. Germanus pursued him, and the wooden structure was set on fire. Tradition varies as to what became of him. Some supposed that he perished in the flames, others asserted that he managed to escape and wandered about with a few followers from place to place, and finally died of a broken heart. In the palace at the time was his granddaughter Madryn, wife of Ynyr, king of Gwent, with her little son. She was allowed to pass out of the fire, and she fled to the fortified hilltop that now bears her name—Carn Fadryn. Thence at the earliest opportunity she took boat, and found a home for the rest of her days in Cornwall. Her son embraced the ecclesiastical profession, and built himself a church under the shadow of the mountain to which his mother had fled for refuge.

In Madryn Hall, the seat of the Jones-Parry family, is a beautiful marble statue of her by an Italian artist, representing her flying from the burning palace with her babe in her arms.

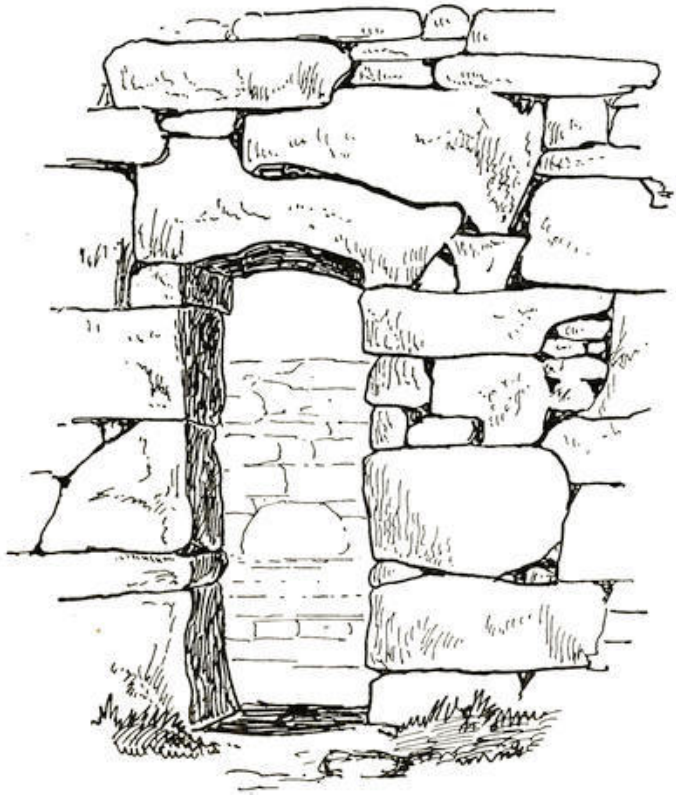
Below Tre'r Ceiri, as already mentioned, is the village of Llanaelhaiarn, with a remarkable spring. It consists of a tank with stone seats about it for the

bathers who awaited the “troubling of the waters.” This troubling consists in the sudden welling up of a gush of water charged with sparkling bubbles, first in one place and then in another.

The well has been closed and locked, as it adjoins the highway and is liable to contamination. To this was attributed an outbreak of diphtheria in the village a few years ago, when an order was made for the closing of the well doors, and the water is now conducted into the village by a pipe.

Aelhaiarn, “the Iron Brow,” was, according to the legend, an over-curious servant of S. Beuno. The saint was wont to go in the dead of night from Clynnog to Llanaelhaiarn to say his prayers on a stone in the midst of the river. Aelhaiarn one night, to gratify his curiosity, followed him, and was rewarded by being torn to pieces by wild beasts. Beuno picked up the poor fellow’s bones, and pieced them together, but “part of the bone under the eyebrow was wanting.” This he supplied with the iron on his pikestaff.

Llangybi was the foundation of S. Cybi when he escaped from the wreck of his boat, after crossing over from Ireland. His holy well and bath are in good preservation. This latter is also a tank, and there are niches in the wall for the seats of those who desired to bathe in the salutary waters. On the rocky height above is shown his chair, a natural throne in the rock, where he is supposed to have sat whilst instructing his disciples, who crouched among the fern and against the oak trees around.



DOORWAY, S. CYBI'S WELL

There are several cromlechs about Criccieth, but not of any great size. Criccieth Castle was erected by Edward I. on the site of a prehistoric *caer*. It is now in the last condition of ruin.

Llanarmon must have been founded by, or in commemoration of, S. Germanus when he smoked Vortigern out of his last place of refuge.

At Castell March it is fabled that King March, one of Arthur's warriors, resided, who had horse's ears. The same story is told of him as of Midas. In order to

conceal the fact, he killed every barber who trimmed his hair, and then buried him in a swamp. A piper happened to cut the reeds that grew there, but the pipe would play but one tune, “Mae clustiau march i Farch ab Meirchion,” and the attendants on the king, regarding this as an insult, fell on the piper and killed him. But when one of them put the pipe to his lips, again it would play no other tune. It was then discovered where the reed had been cut, and the whole story came out.

March was the husband of the fair Iseult, who eloped with Tristan, his nephew. Twenty-eight knights were sent in pursuit, but failed to catch the runaways. However, at last they were taken and brought before King Arthur, who decided that Iseult should spend half the year with Tristan and half with March, and it was left to the latter to decide whether he should have his wife with him whilst foliage was on the trees or when they were bare.

He chose the latter, whereupon Iseult exultantly exclaimed, “Blessed be the judgment of Arthur, for the holly and the ivy never drop their leaves, but are ever green; so farewell for ever to King March.”

An odd story is told of Irddw, great-grandson of March. He amused himself with taming wild fowl, by holding meat in the air, and they came for it to his hand, and he taught them to carry it off in pairs. He went to the Holy Land to fight the infidels, and was taken prisoner, but was allowed by the Sultan to walk in the open air, and he offered to show how he fed the wild birds. So meat was given to him, and he called, and multitudes of birds came, and he caught them by means of the meat, and they in their efforts to escape soared into the air, carrying Irddw along with them, and they flew over land and sea, and did not drop him till they reached his native Wales. In

commemoration of his escape he added a flying griffin to his arms.

The little tarn of Glasfryn has a story connected with it that is found in connection with other sheets of water in Wales, in Ireland, and Brittany.

There was once a well there, but no lake, called Ffynnon Grassi, or Grace's Well, that was walled about, and had several holes in the wall for the overflow to issue thence. Over the well was a door always kept shut, and it was placed under the charge of Grassi, who was bidden never leave the door open, but shut it down after drawing from it the supply required for domestic purposes. But one day she forgot to do this, and the well overflowed, and the water spread and formed a lake.

So as punishment for neglect she was changed into a swan, and in that form she continued to swim on the lake for successive years. Then, at length, she died; but still it is reported that at times her plaintive cry may be heard over the water that has swallowed up her home and its fair fields.

It is also reported that a mysterious Morgan, a monster, dwells at the bottom of the lake, and naughty children are threatened with being given to "Old Morgan" unless they amend their ways.

At Llanengan is a fine screen with rood-loft. The carving is coarse but effective. It is remarkable that in Wales it is the exception to find a screen without a loft, whereas among the hundred and fifty screens in Devon there are only two with the ancient loft left undemolished. The reason is this. The Devon rood-galleries were supported on fan vaulting, which, if beautiful, is not overstrong to support much weight. In Wales it is sustained by three, in some cases four, parallel rows of posts.

In the church is a huge oak chest, supposed to have been the coffin of Einion, king of Lleyn, but actually it was the chest for receiving the offerings made by pilgrims. Over the tower door is still to be seen an inscription, which reads "Eneanus Rex Walliae fabricavit;" it is, however, very much weather-worn. The present church was erected many centuries subsequent to his time. It was this prince who founded Penmon, and placed his brother Seiriol there. He also gave up the Isle of Enlli or Bardsey to S. Cadfan.

Bardsey became the Holy Isle of Wales, and the saints thought it profitable to retire to it for death and burial. It is said that so many as twenty thousand repose in it.

The island belonged to the late Lord Newborough, who erected a cross upon it, with the following inscriptions on three sides:—

[*a*]"Safe in this Island
Where each saint would be,
How wilt thou smile
Upon Life's stormy sea."

[*b*]"Respect
the Remains of 20,000 Saints
buried near this spot."

[*c*] "In hoc loco requiescant in pace."

When the Bollandist Fathers undertook to write their great work on the Saints of Christendom, they were staggered when they found that Ireland and Wales claimed to have had as many as all the rest of Christendom put together. They say of the Irish, "They would not have been so liberal in canonising dead men in troops whenever they seemed to be somewhat better than usual, if they had adhered to the custom of the Universal Church throughout the world."

The total number of Welsh saints whose names are known as founders is about five hundred, but there are the twenty thousand whose bones lie in Bardsey, and Bishop Gerald of Mayo is said to have had three thousand three hundred saints under him.

But the fact is, a saint in the Celtic mind was something very different from one as conceived in the Latin Church. He was one who had entered the ecclesiastical profession, and was counted a saint, whatever his moral qualities were. Piro, Abbot of Caldey, tumbled into a well when drunk, and was drowned, but he was regarded as a saint all the same. The title of saint has changed its significance. S. Paul addressed the "saints" at Corinth, but he lets us understand that a good many of them were very disreputable characters, and a scandal even to the heathen. They were saints by vocation, but not by manner of life. In precisely the same way the Welsh called all those saints who took up the religious profession. Whether they were decent, well-conducted saints, that was another matter.

Not one of the old Irish saints was canonised, not even S. Patrick. None of the Welsh saints have been canonised except S. David.

Canonisation is of comparatively recent introduction. Originally the names of the dead, good and moderately good, were read out by the priest at the altar. Then the bishops took it on them to decide what names were to be read. Next the metropolitans claimed to determine this; and lastly, the sole right to canonise, that is to say, to include a name in the canon of the Mass was reserved to themselves by the popes.

Bardsey is not very easy of access, as a strong current runs between it and the mainland. A boat has to be taken at Aberdaron, but now it is best to go by

steamer, which occasionally takes an excursion party from Pwllheli.

Another isle is that of S. Tudwal. To this a Roman Catholic priest retired a few years ago, and lived there the life of a solitary. It would seem to have been part of the pre-Celtic religion to believe in a spirit-land beyond the waters of the west; and this belief was taken up by Brython and Goidel alike. They looked west and saw the sun go down in a blaze of glory into the sea. Whither went it? What mysterious land did it go to illumine? Hy Brasil the Irish call the wondrous land to the present day, and the fishermen on the Galway and Clare coast imagine that at times they can see it above the rim of the ocean.

This it was which induced the Celtic saints to hasten, as death approached, to some isle that commanded an unbroken view of the sea to the sunset; they could die in peace looking over the waste of waters to the land of delight whither angels would transport their souls. That was the true Avallon to which the mysterious barge conveyed King Arthur—

> "Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
> Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
> Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
> And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
> Where I shall heal me of my grievous wound."

It was in quest of this land that Brendan, the Navigator, set forth on his seven years' voyage; and Madog, the Welshman, sailed in quest of it, when life at home became too troubled for his peace-loving spirit.

Dafydd ab Owen Gwynedd had obtained the throne in 1171 by killing his brother Hywel, but fearing every kinsman lest he should become a rival, he set himself to pick quarrels with his surviving brothers and cousins on one plea or other, and to crush or expel them.

Madog is described by the poet Llywarch ab Llewelyn as “the placid one.” He was a brother of the ambitious and unscrupulous Dafydd. He embarked with a picked crew of faithful followers in Cardigan Bay, and in the year 1170 started on an exploring excursion to the far west, far beyond Ireland, “in trouble great and immeasurable.”

Dafydd was alarmed; he feared that his brother had gone to obtain assistance in Ireland, and knowing that the bard, Llywarch, was his intimate friend, he tortured him with hot irons to wring from him the secret as to whither and for what purpose Madog had departed. Llywarch composed a poem whilst undergoing the ordeal, which is extant.

It was said that after a year Madog returned, and gathered to him other followers, to the number of three hundred men in ten ships, and again departed in 1172 for the wondrous land beneath the sunset, from which he never returned. Consequently he has been esteemed a forerunner of Columbus. But nothing is certainly known about him more than that he sailed away to the west.

Southey’s delightful epic *Madoc* is based on this story. The expeditions of Madog are spoken of by three contemporary poets, and also by Meredydd ab Rhys, in a poem written before Columbus was heard of.

In 1790 a young Welshman, John Evans, a native of Carnarvonshire, fired with these allusions and

traditions of the extensive discoveries of Madog, made an expedition to America in the hopes of discovering traces there of the colony from Wales settled in the twelfth century. He ascended the Missouri for some 1,300 miles, but without success, and returned to S. Louis on the Mississippi to organise another expedition. However, he was prostrated by a fever, and died without accomplishing his object in 1797.

Catlin, in his *Manners and Condition of the North-American Indians*, convinced himself that he had found the descendants of the Welsh colony in the Mandans, but he has convinced no one else; and no other travellers have found a trace of Madog and his settlers from Wales.

The Celtic saints were children of light, and they followed the light. It was this that took them to Iceland in their wicker-work coracles, pursuing the summer sun.

When, in 870, the Norse refugees, deserting Norway rather than submit to Harold Fairfair, colonised Iceland, they found Irish and perhaps Welsh monks there, and the new-comers called them Papar. These eventually abandoned the island, as they did not care to live among heathen; but left behind them bells, croziers, and books.

Aberdaron, the little port whence pilgrims started for Bardsey, has a church of some interest that was ruinous, but has been recently put in order, and is empty, swept, but not garnished.

Here, at this harbour, in the house of the Dean of Bangor, David Daron, took place that meeting which has been represented by Shakespeare, where those united against Henry IV. contrived the partition of the land between them that they had, as yet, not

conquered.

Shakespeare was not historically correct. Harry Hotspur had fallen at Shrewsbury in 1403, and the meeting did not take place till 1406. Those who met were the fugitive Earl of Northumberland, the father of Hotspur, Owen Glyndwr, and Edmund Mortimer.

Northumberland had, in fact, twice revolted against Henry IV., and had escaped to Scotland; he had lost nerve, as he saw tokens, or suspected them, of an inclination on the part of the Scots to exchange him with the English king for Lord Douglas, and he took ship and fled for France, but put in at the headland of Lleyn on his way, for conference with Glyndwr, who doubtless desired to send messages to France through the earl. The assembly took place on February 28th, 1406, and at it the Indenture of Assent was signed by the three contracting parties.

Owen had his bard with him, Iolo Goch, and the harper sang the prophecy of Merlin, which declared that the “mole accursed of God” should come to destruction, that a dragon and a wolf should have their tails plaited together and prevail, and that with them should unite the lion, and these three would divide the kingdom possessed by the mole.

The three who met at Aberdaron applied the prophecy to themselves. Owen was the dragon, Percy the lion, and Mortimer the wolf, and the mole was none other than the burrowing, crafty Henry Bolingbroke. Little came of this agreement. Percy after two years spent partly in France, partly in Wales, played his last stake in 1408, was taken on Bramham Moor and was executed.

Clynnog possesses a fine and interesting church, in which is Beuno’s chest.

Beuno had been residing near Welshpool, but as

he was walking on a certain day near the Severn, where there was a ford, he heard some men on the further side inciting dogs in pursuit of a hare, and he made sure they were Englishmen, for one shouted "Kergia!" (Charge!) to the hounds. When Beuno heard the voice of the Englishman he immediately turned back, and said to his disciples, "My sons, put on your garments and your shoes, and let us abandon this place, for the nation of the man with the strange language, whose voice I heard beyond the river inciting his dogs, will invade this place, and it will be theirs." Beuno left and went to Meifod, where he remained but forty days and nights with Tyssilio, and then went on into the territory of Cadwallon, king of Gwynedd, who gave him land on which to settle, far away from the hated Saxon. And he and his monks began to enclose an area with a mound and a moat. Whilst thus engaged, a woman came up with a child in her arms, and asked Beuno to bless it. "Wait a while," said the abbot, "till we have done a bit of banking." Then the child began to cry, so that it distracted the monks, and Beuno bade her still it.

"How can I do that," said she, "when you are taking possession of the land that belonged to my husband, and should be that of this little one?" Beuno at once stopped the work to inquire into the matter, and found that what the woman had said was true. Then, in great wrath, he ordered his chariot, and drove to the palace of Cadwallon, and asked him how he had dared to give him land which belonged to the widow and orphan.

Cadwallon answered contemptuously that he must take that or none at all. So Beuno would not take it, and swarmed off with his disciples to Clynnog, and settled there on land given him by the king's cousin, and there ended his days about the

year 640. Leland, in his *Collectanea* (ii. p. 648), relates a curious account given him in 1589 of a custom that prevailed at that period at Clynnog. John Anstiss, Esq., Garter, wrote it.

> "Being occasioned the last yere to travaile into mine owne native countrye, in North Wales, and having taryed ther but a while, I have harde by dyvers, of great and abominable Idolatry committed in that countrye, as that the People went on Pylgrymage to offer unto Idoles far and nere, yea, and that they do offer in these daies not only Money (and that liberally) but also Bullockes unto Idoles. And having harde this of sundrye Persons while I was there—upon Whitsondaye last, I went to the Place where it was reported that Bullockes were offered, that I might be an eye witnesse of the same. And upon Mondaye in Whitsonne Week there was a yonge Man that was carried thither the Night before, with whome I had conference concerning the Maner of the Offerings of Bullocks unto Saints, and the yonge man touled me after the same Sort as I had hard of many before; then dyd I aske him whether was ther any to be offered that Daye? He answered that ther was One which he had brought to be offered; I demanded of him where it was? he answered, that it was in a close hard by. And he called his Hoste to goe with him to see the Bullocke, and as they went I followed them into the close, and the yonge Man drove the Bullocke before him (beinge about a yere oulde) and asked his Hoste what it was worth? His Hoste answered that it was worth about a Crowne, the yonge Man said that it was worth more, his Hoste answered and said that upon Sondaye was senight Mr Viccar brought here a Bullocke about the Bigness of your Bullocke for Sixteen Groats. Then the yonge Man said, How shall I do for a Rope against even to tye the Bullocke with? His Hoste answered, We will provide a rope; the yonge Man said againe, Shall I drive him into the Church-yarde? His Hoste answered, You maye; then they drove the Bullocke before them toward the Church-yard; And as the Bullocke dyd enter through a litle Porche into the Church-yarde, the yonge Man spake aloude, 'The Halfe to God and to Beino.' Then dyd I aske his Hoste, Why he said the Halfe and not the Whole? His Hoste answered in the yonge man's

> hereing, He oweth me th' other Halfe. This was in the Parishe of Clynnog in the Bishopricke of Bangor, in the yere of our Lord 1589—Ther be many other things in the Countrye that are verye gross and superstitious; As that the People are of Opinion, that Beyno his Cattell will prosper marvelous well; which maketh the people more desyrous to buye them. Also, it is a common Report amongest them, that ther be some Bullockes which have had Beyno his Marke upon their Eares as soone as they are calved."

The indignation of the narrator seems to be very unreasonable. One cannot see what difference there is between giving in money and in kind for the keeping up of the church.

But that this was the survival of a sacrifice of a horned animal is possible enough. The custom at Clynnog spoken of fell into disuse only in the nineteenth century; till a little over a hundred years ago it was usual to make offerings of calves and lambs which happened to be born with a slit in the ear, popularly called *Nôd Beuno*, or Beuno's mark. They were brought to church on Trinity Sunday, and delivered to the churchwardens, who sold them and put the proceeds into Beuno's chest. Something of the same sort of thing continues to this day at Carnac, in Brittany, on the feast of S. Cornelius (September 13th). After High Mass horned beasts are blessed at the door of the church. These beasts, donations of the peasants to Cornelly, are then conducted, with a banner borne before them, to the fair, where they are sold for the profit of the church, and are eagerly purchased, for the presence of one in a stable is thought to guarantee the health of the rest for a twelvemonth.

We have recourse to other expedients to raise money for church expenses. I have heard of curates at a bazaar entering into washing competitions, of exhibitions of babies, of beauty competitions as well,

of wags grinning through horse-collars, running races carrying eggs in spoons, to raise a few shillings.

A short time ago a bazaar in aid of the funds of a hospital was held in a garrison town in one of the eastern counties. The rector of a certain village not far distant appeared in the costume of an East End costermonger, presided at a stall, and conducted an "auction sale" in the "patter" of the street salesman, to the great disgust of decent-minded people.

At harvest festivals we have donations of fowls, butter, legs of mutton, and hams, to be sold for the good of the church. The donation of bullocks is to be ranked in the same category, and it was a more decent exhibition for a good end than that of curates making tomfools of themselves at bazaars.



CONWAY CASTLE

CHAPTER VIII
CONWAY

The town of Conway—The castle—Title of Prince of Wales—Archbishop Williams—The church and its screen—Plas Mawr—Caer Seiont—Deganwy—The Yellow Plague—The Sweating Sickness—Llandudno—Overflow of the sea—Gwyddno and Seithenin—Cave with prehistoric relics—The Steward's Bench—New invasion of North Wales—The tripper—The railway—The Cursing Well—Penmaenmawr—King Helig—The Headland of Wailing—Similar stories—Submarine forests—Chronology of the prehistoric ages—Conovium—Pen-y-Gaer—The purposes of these camps—Underground retreats—Örvar Odd—The salmon-weir of Gwyddno—Elphin—Taliessin.

CONWAY is an interesting and eminently picturesque town, surrounded, as it still is, by its old walls, and possessing the ruins of the finest castle in Wales—it may perhaps be said in England. This castle occupies one point of the triangle that encloses the town, and has the harbour on one side and the River Gyffin on the other.

The castle was begun in 1283 by Edward I. on the site of a Cistercian monastery, Aber Conwy, and was constructed after the designs of Henry de Elreton, the architect of Carnarvon, and it is said that the

workmen employed upon it were brought from Rutlandshire, which produced the best masons in England. It is an extensive structure, and possessed a magnificent dining-hall, built on a curve, the roof formerly sustained by eight stone arches, but of these only two remain. It was lighted by nine Early English windows. At the east end is a chapel, with an apse and a groined roof, lighted by three lancet windows.

The castle was in a decayed condition in the reign of James I. However, it was garrisoned for Charles in the Civil Wars by the warlike Archbishop Williams of York, who, huffed at being superseded by Prince Rupert, went over to the Parliamentary faction and assisted in the attack on the town in 1646. General Mytton took the castle, which was defended by Irish soldiers, and so great was the resentment felt against these auxiliaries, that he had them all tied back to back and flung into the river to drown.

Charles II. granted the castle to the Earl of Conway, who, in 1665, stripped the lead from the roofs and carried off the timbers to convert them to his own use. If it had not been for this, what a residence it would have made for the Princes of Wales, and how pleased the Welsh people would have been to have their Prince living among them!

The Welsh are a loyal people, which the Irish are not, and they are sensitive to consideration. Why should not the Prince of Wales have a stately residence in the Principality? Why should his title be a title only recalling cruel injustice done to this people in the past?

Conway Castle is indisputably finer than any on the Rhine, and its situation and the grouping of the towers are eminently picturesque. The crimson valerian has spread as a gorgeous mantle about the rock on which it is built, and adheres as drops of

blood to the crumbling walls.

A short account of Archbishop Williams will not come amiss. John Williams was born at Aberconwy in 1582, and was the second son of William Williams of Cochwillan, in Carnarvonshire. At the age of sixteen he entered S. John's College, Cambridge. He was a young man of good parts, robust constitution, and with a keen eye for the main chance. It was said of him that he never required more than three hours of sleep out of the twenty-four. He became fellow of his college in 1603. His method in study was this. If he desired to master a subject, he put everything else on one side and concentrated his attention upon it, grappled it to him, and did not let it go till he had thoroughly got to know it in all its aspects.

Having made the acquaintance of Archbishop Bancroft, he obtained access to the King, who took particular notice of him, and when he entered Holy Orders he obtained one preferment after another. In 1617 he was made a prebendary of Lincoln, Peterborough, Hereford, and S. David's, in addition to a rectory in Northamptonshire and a sinecure in North Wales. He was also chaplain to the King, and had to receive and entertain that eccentric man Marco Antonio de Dominis, Archbishop of Spalato, who had quarrelled with the Pope and came to England. In 1619, not satisfied with all his preferments, he obtained the deanery of Salisbury, and the year following, that of Westminster. In 1621 he was made Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England, and was raised to the bishopric of Lincoln, which he held along with the deanery of Winchester and his Northamptonshire rectory.

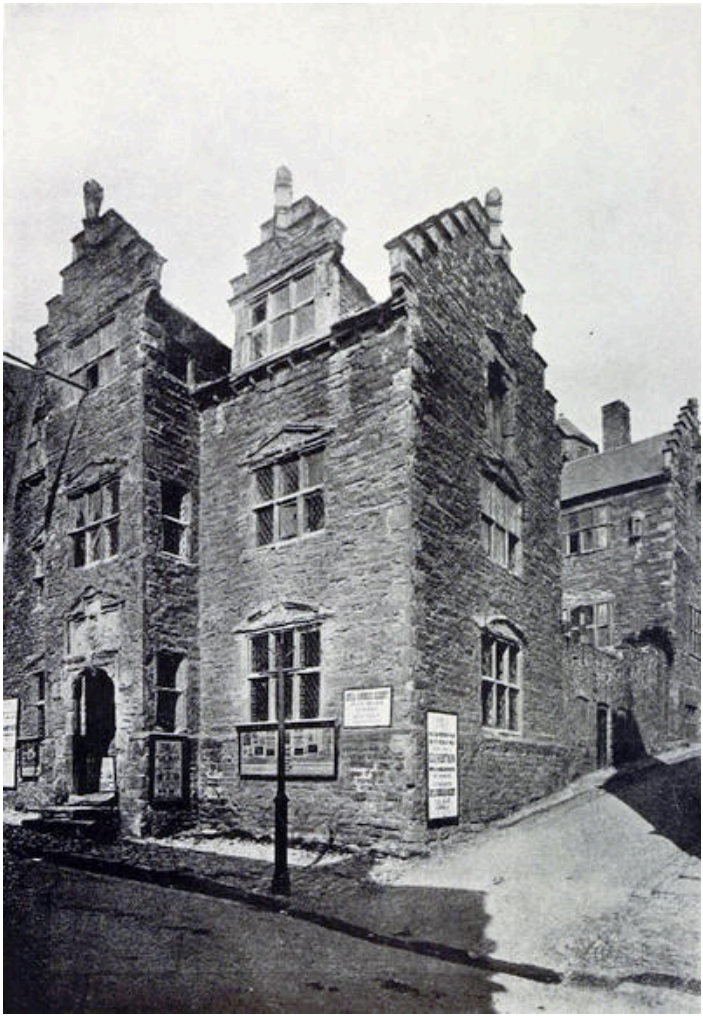
On the death of James I., whom he attended at the last, he fell out with the Duke of Buckingham, and Charles I. took the Great Seal from him in 1626.

Afterwards, on some charges brought against him in the Star Chamber, he was fined ten thousand pounds, suspended from all his functions, dignities, and emoluments, and sent to prison in the Tower for three years and a half. The King was, however, soon reconciled to him, cancelled all orders that had been made against him, and in 1641 he was advanced to the archbishopric of York.

When war broke out between the King and the Parliament, he took the side of the former, and had to fly from York, as the younger Hotham was marching on York, and had sworn to capture and kill him for having commented strongly on the manner in which Sir John Hotham had seized on the King's magazine of arms at Hull.

Archbishop Williams hasted to Conway and fortified the castle for the King, and Charles, by letter from Oxford, "heartily desired him to go on with the work, assuring him that whatever moneys he should lay out upon the fortification of the said castle should be repaid him before the custody thereof should be put into any other hand than his own."

The good people of Conway town placed all their valuables in the castle for security.



PLAS MAWR, CONWAY

In 1645 Sir John Owen, a colonel in the King's army, obtained from Prince Rupert the appointment to the command of the castle. This the archbishop angrily resented, as the King had assured the governorship to him till the money he had dispensed

should be repaid. Charles could not raise the requisite sum, and the castle was too important not to be placed under a soldier instead of a churchman. He accordingly went over to the side of the Parliament, and with the assistance of Colonel Mytton, the Parliamentarian officer, forced the gates and secured that stronghold for the faction against which he had hitherto contended.

Williams, in fact, had been keen-sighted enough to see that the King's affairs were falling into ruin in all quarters, and he characteristically joined the winning side.

But if Williams had reckoned on retaining his archbishopric and other emoluments as the price of his treachery, he was mistaken. The rest of his life was spent in seclusion, in vain regrets, and it is said in sincere repentance, rising from his bed at midnight and praying on his bare knees, with nothing on but his shirt and waistcoat. He died at Gloddaith, near Conway, in 1650, and was buried in Llandegai Church, where a monument was erected to him by his nephew, Sir Griffith Williams.

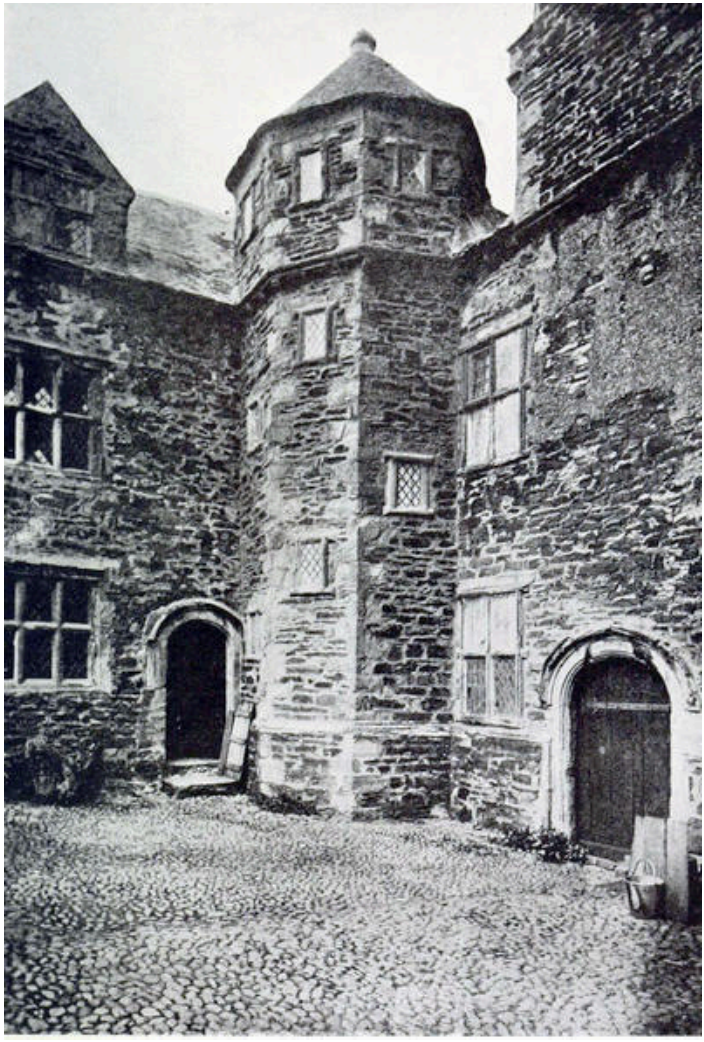
Conway Church is good, with a fine tower and an Early Decorated chancel that has a Perpendicular east window inserted. But the greatest treasure of the church is its magnificent rood-screen; and there are good stalls in the choir.

Plas Mawr is a specimen of a Welsh gentleman's house of the sixteenth century, with panelled rooms and quaint plaster ceilings. The house has fifty-two doors, as many steps up the tower, and 365 windows.

Rising above Conway is Caer Seiont, where are circles of stones and embankments, the remains of a camp probably dating from the Irish possession of

Gwynedd. The railway is carried through a tunnel in a spur of the hill. A glorious view is obtained from the summit, of the sea, the Great Orme's Head, and the valley of the Conway dotted with houses. Near the mouth of the river on the further bank is Deganwy, once the royal residence of Maelgwn, king of Gwynedd, a bold warrior, but terribly nervous about his health, apparently, for when the Yellow Plague, in 547, broke out he took to his heels. However, the plague went after him, and he died of it.

But Maelgwn was not the only one to run away. Teilo, Bishop of Llandaff, fled, taking with him his clergy, and sheltered in Brittany till the disorder had passed. The Yellow Plague would seem to have been a very infectious sickness attacking the bilious glands and producing jaundice. It spread to Ireland and committed frightful ravages both there and in Britain. As neither Bede nor the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle makes any allusion to it, the plague cannot have touched the English, but was confined to the Celtic lands. It, however, broke out again in 664.



PLAS MAWR, CONWAY

The plague of 547-50 created the liveliest panic. In Ireland it was thought that the only escape from it was to put “seven waves” between the soil of Erin and a place of refuge, and monks and princes fled to

the islands. Maelgwn, in a panic, assumed the habit of a monk, and escaped to the church of Llanrhos, intending to go further, but died there. It is curious that twice again a plague was thought to have originated in Wales. The next was the Sweating Sickness, the germs of which were carried to Bosworth by the army of Richmond, and which after the victory there spread in a few weeks from Bosworth and the Welsh mountains to London. Those afflicted with it had their powers prostrated as by a blow; they suffered intense internal heat, yet every refrigerant was certain death. Not one in a hundred who was attacked escaped at first. The physicians were bewildered; they turned over the pages of Galen and found that the disease was not described there, nor were any remedies prescribed for any malady that at all resembled it. Death came quickly; a day and a night after a man was attacked he was a corpse. The battle of Bosworth was fought on August 22nd, 1485, and Henry entered London on the 28th. Immediately the Sweating Sickness began its ravages. The Lord Mayor and six aldermen died within a week. The sickness struck at the most vigorous and robust men, and from London it spread like wild-fire throughout the kingdom. The coronation of the King had to be postponed, and did not take place till October 30th.

As the physicians were quite at a loss how to deal with the malady, the people looked to common sense, and found that the best of doctors. Directly a man felt the fire in him, and the sweat began to stream from every pore, he took to his bed, not even staying to take off his clothes, and was given only liquids, and these hot.

The plague broke out again in 1551, not exactly in Wales, but at Shrewsbury. All the spring clammy

fogs had hung over the Severn valley, and suddenly, on April 15th, the Sweating Sickness again appeared. The visitation was so general at Shrewsbury and in the basin of the Severn that everyone believed that the air was poisoned. The disease came unexpectedly and without warning—at table, during sleep, on journeys, in the midst of amusement, and at all times of the day. Some died within an hour of the attack; none who had it mortally survived four-and-twenty hours.

Crowds of fugitives escaped to Ireland and Scotland, some embarked for France or the Netherlands, but it was remarked that the Sweating Sickness struck down only the English, not foreigners in England, nor did it spread from the refugees abroad. Within a few days nine hundred and sixty of the inhabitants of Shrewsbury died.

Thence it rapidly spread throughout England. The banks of the Severn were, however, the focus of the malady, and a fetid mist was thought to hang over the river, “which mist,” says a writer of the time, “in the countrie wher it began, was sene flie from towne to towne, with such a stincke in morninges and evenings, that men could scarcely abide it.” It lasted from 15th April to 30th September.

To return to Deganwy, from which we have wandered. It was struck by lightning in 812, but was speedily restored. Hugh the Fat, Earl of Chester, made it his stronghold, but it was taken and demolished by Llewelyn ab Gruffydd in 1260.

Llandudno, on the neck of land connecting the Great Orme’s Head, or Pen y Gogarth, with the mainland, has grown into a fashionable watering-place. The Head rises to the height of nearly 680 feet above the sea; on the Conway side was an ancient

monastic settlement at Gogarth. In the first half of the sixth century a low-lying tract of land, now overflowed by the sea, formed a hundred called Cantref y Gwaelod, in Cardigan Bay. It was probably a portion of land that had been reclaimed by the Romans from the waves by strong sea walls. This district was ruled by two chiefs, Gwyddno and Seithenin. The story goes that owing to the neglect of Seithenin, who was a drunkard, and whose duty it was to see to the repairs of the walls, one stormy night the rollers coming in with an unusually high tide and wind, the dykes were overleaped, and the whole *cantref* was covered with sea.

With difficulty did the sons of Gwyddno escape with their lives, and as they had lost their lands and tribal rights, nothing was open to them save to enter religion and found ecclesiastical tribes. Among the sons of the tipsy Seithenin was Tudno, who settled on the Orme's Head. But here also was a great inundation, as we shall see presently. The church, which is of the twelfth century with a fifteenth-century chancel, was for some time left in ruins, but it has been restored, and service is now held in it in summer. In the interior is an early circular font.

In 1881 a cave in the limestone was discovered behind Mostyn Street in Llandudno, which had been inhabited in prehistoric times, for beside the bones of cave bears, were found skeletons of men, and a necklace of pierced teeth of beasts. These were the relics of that primeval race which began to settle in the land as the Ice Age came to an end and the glaciers disappeared.

There are many caves in the limestone rock of the Head, one fitted up as a summer-house, by some of the Mostyn family, with stone seats and tables. A small cromlech and some rude stone remains on the

headland may be seen, but the relics are sadly mutilated.

Pen y Ddinas overhangs the town, and on it is a logan rock, the Maen Sigl, which is also called S. Tudno's cradle.

A stony ledge runs out to sea, and is covered at high tide with about two feet of water, and is named the Steward's Bench. Here, according to tradition, a steward of the Mostyn family, who had been convicted of peculation, was compelled to sit naked during the flow and reflow of two tides.

The entire north coast of Wales, after having been invaded by the Gwyddyl, and then by the Britons from Strathclyde, and next by the Normans, has been invaded by a horde of trippers. It has been taken possession of by them for the summer months. The horde derives from Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham; and every vantage place is laid out with piers, promenades, pavilions; and for the delectation of the holiday-makers there are Ethiopian serenaders, dancing-dogs, cheap-jacks, organ-grinders, and monkeys.

The intelligent tourist, knowing that the chief study of mankind is man, will find endless amusement in observing his fellow-Englishmen and women when out on a spree. The bow must at times be relaxed, but when it is, it does not invariably take a graceful form.

How the North Welsh coast has changed within a century in its aspect may be gathered from a letter of Mr. Gladstone, which describes it some eighty years ago.

> "I remember," he says, "paying my first visit to North Wales, travelling along the North Wales coast as far as Bangor and Carnarvon, when there was no such thing as a watering-place, no such thing as a

> house to be hired for the purpose of those visits that are now paid by thousands of people to such multitudes of points all along the coast. It was supposed that if any body of gentlemen could be found sufficiently energetic to make a railway to Holyhead, that railway could not possibly pierce the country, and must be made along the coast, and if carried along the coast, could not possibly be made to pay. So firm was the conviction that—I very well recollect the day—a large and important deputation of railway leaders went to London and waited on Sir Robert Peel, who was then Prime Minister, in order to demonstrate to him that it was totally impossible for them to construct a paying line, and therefore to impress upon his mind the necessity of his agreeing to give them a considerable grant out of the consolidated fund. Sir Robert Peel was a very circumspect statesman, and not least so in those matters in which the public purse was concerned. He encouraged them to take a more sanguine view. Whether he persuaded them into a more sanguine tone of mind I do not know. This I know, the railway was made, and we now understand that this humble railway, this impossible railway, as it was then conceived, is at the present moment the most productive and remunerative part of the whole vast system of the North-Western Company."

Prestatyn, Rhyl, Abergele, Colwyn, Llandudno, Penmaenmawr, Aber—what a string it forms of bathing-places, ever extending and threatening in time to run a continuous line of lodging-houses and hotels along the entire coast!

S. Elian's Well is a little beyond Colwyn. It is now filled up, and the structure over it has been destroyed, for the place was in bad repute, and was resorted to for no good purpose. The spring was a Cursing Well, and here from time immemorial a guardian ministered to the resentments of the ill-disposed. Anyone who bore a grudge against another, and believed himself to have been wronged, would resort to this well to "throw in" his adversary. A writer of the beginning of last century says:—

> "The well of S. Elian lies in a dingle near the high road leading from Llanelian to Groes yn Eirias. It was surrounded by a wall of 6 feet high, and embosomed in a grove; but the trees have fallen and the wall is thrown down. It was resorted to by the Welsh to call imprecations and the vengeance of the saint on any who had done them an injury. Mr. Pennant says that he was threatened by a person he had offended with a journey to the well to curse him with effect. The ceremony was performed by an old woman, who presided at the font, in the following manner. After having received a fee, the name of the offender was marked on a piece of lead; this she dropped into the water, and mumbled imprecations, whilst taking from and returning into the water a certain portion of it. It frequently happened that the offending party who had been the subject of her imprecations sought through the medium of a double fee to have the curse removed; and seldom was this second offer refused by her. On this occasion she took water from the well three times with the new moon, select verses of the psalms were read on three successive Fridays, and a glass of the well water drunk whilst reading them."

The well became such an occasion for ill-feeling that a former incumbent of the parish had it destroyed.

In 1818, at the Flintshire Great Sessions, the "priest" of the well was sent to gaol for twelve months for obtaining money under false pretences, by pretending to put some into the well, and to fetch some out whom others had put in.

The last "priest" of the well was John Evans, who died in 1858. Doctor Bennion, of Oswestry, once said to him, "Publish it abroad that you can raise the devil, and the country will believe you." Evans took the advice offered in jest, and confessed afterwards, "The people in a very short time spoke much about me; their conduct when they thought I held converse with the devil fairly frightened me."

In Ireland there are several cursing wells. There

boulders are placed on the low wall that surrounds the well, and he who wishes to call down a curse upon another turns the stone against the sun thrice whilst repeating the curse and the name of the person on whom he desires it to fall.

Penmaenmawr, to the west of Conway, is a favourite watering-place, and takes its name from the hill, 1,180 feet high, that rises steeply from the sea and commands a tract like Cantref y Gwaelod, that was about the same time overflowed by the sea. The story told of this sunken land is that King Helig was feasting with his lords and ladies where now lies the sandbank bearing his name, when the cellarer, having gone down to broach another cask, rushed up the steps in terror at finding the cellar under water, and he shouted, “The sea! the sea is on us!” The panic-stricken revellers fled for their lives, and as they issued from the palace heard the roar of the waves and could see the gleam of the manes of the white horses as they overleaped the sea wall.

Half a mile from Penmaenmawr is Trwyn-y-wylfa, the Headland of Wailing, for there the survivors congregated and looked over a tumbling sea that covered what had once been fair pastures and quiet homesteads. Tyno Helig, the lost land of Helig, stretched between Puffin Island and Penmaenmawr; and the Lavan sandbank covers a portion of it. The story reappears in many places with variations. In Brittany the same is told of King Grallo. He was warned to fly from his palace by S. Winwaloe, as the vengeance of Heaven would fall on it on account of the disorderly life of his daughter Ahes, and there the sea encroached and overwhelmed the palace and town.

But the most curious instance of the reduplication of the story is found in the marshes of Dol, in

Brittany, where is a little lake which, in popular belief, covers a great city, and it is called la Crevée de Saint Guinou. Here we have actually the name of Gwyddno transferred to Lesser Britain. The colonists must have carried the story with them to their new home, and located it there. The morass was not formed till an inundation that took place in 709. The whole of Mount's Bay, in Cornwall, was also at one time land, and William of Worcester, in his *Itinerary*, wrote: "All this region was once covered with dense forest, and extended six miles from the sea, a suitable place for wild beasts, and in which at one time lived monks serving God."

The existence of submarine forests along this north coast of Wales and in Cardigan Bay, as well as off the south coast of Cornwall, may have originated the legend of the sunken land. In 1893, for instance, after a gale, a submerged forest was disclosed at Rhyl, nearly a mile east of the pier. But it is also quite possible that the tradition preserves the memory of a real subsidence.

In Brittany the sinking of the land is still going on. In an island of the Morbihan are two circles of standing stones. One is already half under water, and the other is completely submerged. At Locmariaquer a Roman camp is almost wholly engulfed, and Roman constructions of a villa that were observed and described in 1727 are now permanently under water.

But the submerged forests belong to a much earlier period than the sixth century, though to a time when man lived on the land and hunted in these forests. Gerald of Windsor, in the twelfth century, was puzzled at the revelation of trees beneath the waters of S. Bride's Bay. He says:—

> "The sandy shores of South Wales being laid bare by the extraordinary violence of a storm, the surface of the earth which had been covered for many ages reappeared, and discovered the trunks of trees cut off, standing in the sea itself, the strokes of the hatchet appearing as if only made yesterday; the soil was very black and the wood like ebony."

Among the bones found in these underwater forests are those of the brown bear and the stag; the trees were Scotch firs, oaks, yews, willows, and birches, and they show by the way they have fallen, with their heads pointing to the east, that the prevailing wind, then as now, was from the west. The size of the trees proves that they must have grown at some considerable distance from the seaboard. Indeed, the forest land can be pretty well made out. The whole of Cardigan Bay was above the sea, and the promontory of Lleyn and Bardsey were heights rising out of the woodland. The stretch of forest extended a long way to the north of Wales, and the coasts of Lancashire and Cheshire were many miles further out to sea than they are now. The men who chased in this primeval forest used flint weapons; the age of metal had not then dawned.

According to Montelius of Stockholm an absolute chronology can now be given for periods of prehistoric civilisation in Europe, because Copper, Bronze, and Iron Ages are contemporaneous with an historic period in Egypt and Western Asia, and also because numerous points of connection are known between the different parts of Europe and the East from the beginning of the Copper Age onwards.

He fixes the periods as follows:—

B.C. 2500-2000	Copper and Stone.
B.C. 1900-900	Bronze.

B.C. 800 Iron Age.

Now the Stone Age preceded that of Copper. So we must throw back the period of this vast forest to something like three thousand years before the Christian era.

Those who are satiated with the study of the tripper and the holiday-takers, and can wrench themselves from the contemplation of their sportive gambols, will take the train to Tal-y-cafn and walk thence to Caerhun, that occupies the site of the Roman town Conovium. This town did not give its name to the Conway, but took its title from it.

The Dulyn is a tributary of the Conway at Tal-y-bont (the Head of the Bridge), and it flows from the little lakes Llyn Dulyn (the Black Pool) and Melynllyn (the Yellow Pool), the former under fine crags, and forms a beautiful fall on its way.

Another stream, Afon Porthlwyd, issues from a much larger lake, the Llyn Eigiau, lying 1,220 feet above the sea under precipices of rock; and another again, the Afon Ddu, or Black River, rises in a still larger lake, the Llyn Cowlyd.

At Pen-y-Gaer, above Afon Dulyn and the little church of Llanbedr-y-Cennin, is a prehistoric camp of stone, with obstacles set in the soil, stones planted on end on the glacis, so as to break up an onrush of the enemy, in a manner seen in the Aran Isles off Ireland, some castles in Scotland, and one in Brittany. Where upright stones were not erected, sometimes the slope before the walls was purposely strewn with rubble or slates, and the assailants had to stumble over these slowly and with difficulty, exposed to volleys of arrows or stones, before they could come to close quarters. In some of the camps are great cairns of stones of a handy size piled up to

serve as a store of missiles for the besieged.

It has often been remarked that these camps are away from springs and watercourses; and one wonders how those who held them managed for drink. But almost certainly they never were intended to stand long sieges. They were places of refuge. When an enemy appeared or was signalled by beacons, the inhabitants of the valleys and plains fled to them, driving their cattle before them and carrying their poor possessions on their backs. The foe came on and endeavoured to storm the stronghold; if he failed to do this at once, he abandoned the attempt, and did not sit down before it to reduce it by starvation. In some camps there are underground storehouses rudely constructed of stones set on end and roofed over, where the treasures of the tribe were concealed.

There is a story in the Norse Saga of Örvar Odd, of how he and other northern Vikings came on just such a subterranean passage. A great flat stone lay over it, but he chanced to pull it up, and found the entrance. He went in, and found it full of women in hiding. One was so pretty that he took hold of her and tried to drag her out, but the other women, screaming, held her back.

"You shall come with me," said Odd.

"Let me buy my freedom," she pleaded. "I have gold and silver to pay for it."

"I have plenty of that," answered the Northman.

"Then I have gay clothing I will give," she said.

"And of that I have abundance," he replied.

"Then," said she, "I promise to embroider for you a beautiful kirtle with gold thread in it, and so thick with the precious wire that no sword will cut through it."

"That is something," he said. "But when may I have it?"

"Come next year, and the kirtle shall be done," she answered. And he agreed, and allowed the women to remain without further molestation.

In the River Conway at Gored Wyddno was the salmon weir of Gwyddno, who had lost his land through the inundation of the sea in Cardigan Bay. He had a son called Elphin, who had so wasted his substance that he was obliged to fall back on his father for help, and Gwyddno consented to allow him for a while the profit of his salmon weir. Coming one morning to it he found there a babe in a leather bag, apparently a leather-covered coracle that had drifted down-stream. "What a bright-browed little chap!" exclaimed Elphin, so Taliessin, or Bright-brow, became his name, and he grew up to be a famous bard. At Christmas, long after this, Elphin was at the court of Maelgwn at Deganwy, and the bards then vied with one another in flattering the king and his queen. He was the handsomest, the wisest, the mightiest of monarchs, and she was the loveliest and most virtuous woman in the world. Elphin had the indiscretion to demur to this, and say that his wife was the chastest on earth. The story runs something like that of Posthumus and Imogen, but there are differences. Maelgwn, highly incensed, ordered Elphin to be cast into prison, and sent his son Rhun to test the lady. But Elphin had time to forewarn her, and she dressed her maid in her clothes, and put his ring on her finger. Rhun was completely deceived; he returned to Deganwy, and cast a finger with a ring on it upon the table, and declared that he had cut it off from the false wife's hand. Elphin was brought from prison, and was shown the finger. "It is not that of my wife," said he,

"for the finger is larger than hers, and the ring has not been put on it further than the middle joint. The nail has not been cut for a month, whereas my lady trims her nails every Saturday. She from whom this finger has been cut has been recently baking rye bread—you may see the dough under the nail. That is what my wife never does." So the laugh was turned against Rhun.

CHAPTER IX
S. ASAPH

Situation of the city—The cathedral—Tomb of Bishop Barrow—Epitaph of Dean Lloyd—The *Red Book of S. Asaph*—Dick of Aberdaron—Parish church—Catherine of Berain—Meiriadog—The legend of Cynan, and of the Eleven Thousand Virgins—Ffynnon Fair—Cefn caves—Plas Newydd—Cawr Rhufoniog—Covered avenue—Rhuddlan—The air "Morfa Rhuddlan"—Welsh airs—Need for careful examination and discrimination—Stories connected with certain tunes—Welsh hymn tunes—Gruffydd ab Llewelyn—Constitution of Rhuddlan—Edward "Prince of Wales."

THE city of S. Asaph is pleasantly planted, for the most part, on rising ground above the River Elwy, in the vale of the Clwyd, which unites with the Elwy below this miniature city.

The cathedral is small and not particularly interesting, and the interior effect is spoiled by the choir being moved under the central tower, and the transepts being closed in to form vestries, chapter house, consistory court, and library. The structural choir is a mere chancel without aisles, and possibly the dean, canons, and choristers may have felt cramped in it; but the alteration has robbed the interior effect of its dignity. The clerestory windows

are square-headed, and the arches of the nave rise from pillars without capitals. The chancel was restored by Sir Gilbert Scott in the Early English style, and contains some good modern glass, and some that is execrable.

Outside the cathedral, at the west end, is the tomb of Bishop Isaac Barrow, who died in 1680, with the epitaph: “O vos transeuntes in Domum Domini, domum orationis, orate pro conservo vestro ut inveniam misericordiam in Die Domini.”

In the cathedral yard is a cross, with eight figures about it, of those who assisted in the translation of the Bible into Welsh, but it commemorates especially the tercentenary of Bishop Morgan’s first complete translation, published in 1588.

One of the deans of S. Asaph, Dr. David Lloyd, who died in 1663, is said to have made for himself the following epitaph:—

> “This is the epitaph
> Of the Dean of S. Asaph,
> Who, by keeping a table
> Better than he was able,
> Ran much into debt
> Which is not paid yet.”

He was buried at Ruthin, of which he was once warden, but there is no monument there to his memory.

In the episcopal library is preserved the *Red Book of S. Asaph*, originally compiled in the fourteenth century, containing a fragmentary life of the saint who gives his name to the church and diocese, and early charters and other documents connected with it.

The site was granted to S. Kentigern, of Glasgow, when driven away by the king of Strathclyde,

Morcant, and he only returned after the defeat, in 573, of Morcant by Rhydderch Hael. Then he left his favourite disciple Asaph to take charge of the foundation he had made on the banks of the Elwy.



CATHERINE OF BERAIN

In the cathedral library is preserved the polyglot dictionary of Dick of Aberdaron, a literary vagabond. He is reported to have acquired thirty-four languages. He was a dirty, unkempt creature, who

wandered about the country, his pockets stuffed with books. His predominant passion was the acquisition of languages. A dictionary or a grammar was to him a more acceptable present than a meal or a suit of clothes. He had no home, and was sometimes obliged to sleep in outhouses.

Bishop Carey did what he was able for him, but his personal habits made him unsuitable to have in a decent house, and he was impatient of every restraint. He died in 1843, and was buried at S. Asaph.

The little parish church consists of nave and aisle of equal length—one dedicated to S. Kentigern and the other to S. Asaph. It lies at the bottom of the hill, and has a somewhat original Perpendicular east window.

Not far from S. Asaph is Berain, the residence once of Catherine Tudor, an heiress with royal blood in her veins, for she was descended from Henry VII., who, when he was in Brittany collecting auxiliaries for his descent on England to win the crown from Richard III., had an intrigue with a Breton lady named Velville, and became the father of Sir Roland Velville. Sir Roland's daughter and heiress, Jane, married Tudor ab Robert Vychan of Berain, and their only child was Catherine. She is commonly spoken of as Mam Cymru, the Mother of Wales, as from her so many of the Welsh families derive descent.

She was first married to John Salusbury of Lleweni, and by him became the mother of Sir John Salusbury, who was born with two thumbs on each hand, and was noted for his prodigious strength. At the funeral of her husband, Sir Richard Clough gave her his arm. Outside the churchyard stood Maurice Wynn of Gwydir, awaiting a decent opportunity for proposing to her. As she issued from the gate he did

this. “Very sorry,” replied Catherine, “but I have just accepted Sir Richard Clough. Should I survive him I will remember you.”

She did outlive Clough and married Wynn. She further survived Wynn, and her fourth husband was Edward Thelwall of Plas-y-Ward. She died August 27th, and was buried at Llannefydd, September 1st, 1591, but without a monument of any kind.

Popular tradition will have it that she had six husbands in succession, and that as she tired of them she poured molten lead into their ears when they slept, and so killed them. Her last husband, seeing that her affection towards him was cooling, and fearing lest he should meet with the same fate as her former husbands, shut her up in a room that is still shown at Berain, and starved her to death. There are several supposed portraits of Catherine to be found in Wales, but not all are genuine. One by Lucas de Heere, painted in 1568, is in the possession of Mr. R. J. Ll. Price of Rhiwlas, near Bala, and shows her to have been a very beautiful woman with hard, dark eyes. Another genuine portrait is at Wygfair, in the possession of Colonel Howard, and this was taken when Catherine was an old woman. The remorseless stony eye is that of one quite capable of the trick of the molten lead.

In a lovely situation on the Elwy is Meiriadog, whence came Cynan, brother or cousin of the road-building Elen. When Maximus went to Gaul to assert his claims to the purple, Cynan accompanied him and never returned. Much fabulous matter has attached itself to this Cynan. It was supposed that after the death of Maximus he retired to Brittany, with all the gallant youths who had accompanied him to the war, and as they were forbidden to return home they appealed for a shipload of wives to be

sent out to them. Accordingly Ursula, daughter of Dunawd, a Welsh king, started with eleven thousand marriageable damsels, but they were carried by adverse winds up the Rhine, and landing at Cologne were there massacred by the Huns. The walls of a church there are covered with little boxes containing their skulls.

The earliest mention of these gay young wenches starting out husband-hunting, and meeting instead with a gory death, is found in a sermon preached between 752 and 839, but in it Ursula is not named. In an addition to the chronicle of Sigebert of Gemblours, made by a later hand, is an entry under 453:—

> "The most famous of wars was that waged by the white-robed army of 11,000 Holy Virgins under their leader, the holy Ursula. She was the only daughter of Nothus (Dunawd), a most noble and rich prince of the Britons."

She was sought in marriage, the writer goes on to say, by "a certain most ferocious tyrant," and her father wished her to marry him. But Ursula had dedicated herself to celibacy, and the father was thrown into great perplexity. Then she proposed to take with her ten virgins of piety and beauty, and that to each, with herself, should be given an escort of a thousand other girls, and that they might be suffered to cruise about for three years and see the world. To this her father consented. And the requisite number of damsels having been raked together, Ursula sailed away with them in eleven elegantly furnished galleys. For three years they went merrily cruising over the high seas, but at the end of that time, having ventured up the Rhine to Cologne, they were all put to the sword.

Geoffrey of Monmouth, who died in 1154, gives another form to the story. He relates that the Emperor Maximian (Maximus), having depopulated Northern Gaul, sent to Britain for colonists wherewith to repeople its waste places. Thus out of Armorica he made a second Britain, which he put under the rule of Conan Meriadoc, who sent to have a consignment of British girls forwarded to him. At this time there reigned in Cornwall a king, Dinothus by name, and he listened to the appeal and despatched his daughter Ursula with eleven thousand young ladies, and sixty thousand others of lower rank. Unfavourable winds drove the fleet to barbarous shores, where all were butchered.

The story is, of course, devoid of a shred of historic truth, and is a mere romance, and a silly and poor one.

But there is something to be added.

Conan Meriadoc has figured largely in fabulous Breton history. At the beginning of the eighteenth century a priest of Lamballe, named Gallet, wrote a history for the glorification of the dukes of Rohan, and he spun a wonderful tale that imposed on later serious historians. According to him, Conan or Cynan Meiriadog, disappointed at not getting Ursula, married Darerca, the sister of S. Patrick, and from this union descended the kings of Brittany and the dukes of Rohan. This he achieved by identifying Cynan with Caw, the father of Gildas, entirely regardless of chronology, for Gildas, son of Caw, king in Strathclyde, died in 570, and Cynan was contemporary with Maximus, who was killed in 388, and Patrick was born about 410.

Dom Morice, whose *History of Brittany* was published in 1750, reproduces this absurd and

impossible pedigree, and further identifies Conan with Cataw, son of Geraint, and uncle of S. Cybi, who died about 554.

There is a holy well, Ffynnon Fair, in the parish of Cefn, in a beautiful situation, once very famous, but the chapel is in ruins, though the spring flows merrily still. It was the "Gretna Green" of the district, for here clandestine marriages were wont to take place, celebrated by one of the vicars choral of the cathedral, till all such marriages were put a stop to by the Act of Lord Hardwicke in 1753. The chapel was of the fifteenth century, and is now overgrown with ivy, and in a clump of trees. Mrs. Hemans made this, "Our Lady's Well," the subject of one of her poems. In the unpretending-looking house just across the Elwy was written one of the earliest printed Welsh grammars (1593).

The Cefn caves are in an escarpment of mountain limestone high above the river, and have been carefully explored. They yielded bones of extinct animals—the cave bear, wolf, *elephas antiquus*, *bos longifrons*, reindeer, the hyæna, and the rhinoceros—but very scanty traces of man. The bones are preserved at Plas-yn-Cefn, the residence of Mrs. Williams-Wynn, on whose property the caves are. The caves are worth visiting more for the view from the rocks than for any intrinsic interest in themselves.

A quaint Elizabethan mansion, Plas Newydd, has in its wainscoted hall an inscription to show that it was built by one Foulk ab Robert in 1583 when he was aged forty-three. It is said to have been the first house in the neighbourhood covered with slates. A giant, Cawr Rhufoniog, used to visit there, and a crook is shown high up near the cornice, on which he was wont to suspend his hat. Giants, it would

appear, were in days of yore pretty plentiful in this neighbourhood. The grave of one is pointed out close by, and another, Edward Shôn Dafydd, otherwise called Cawr y Ddôl, lived at an adjoining farm. His walking-stick was the axle-tree of a cart, with a huge crowbar driven into one end and bent for a handle. He and Sir John Salusbury (of the double thumbs) once fell to testing their strength by uprooting forest trees.

Between Plas Newydd and Plas-yn-Cefn, in a field, is a "covered avenue," only it has lost all its coverers. It was in a mound called Carnedd Tyddyn Bleiddyn, with some trees on the top. When these were blown down in a storm, a little over thirty years ago, the cromlech within was exposed. It was found to contain several skeletons, in a crouching position, of what have been called the Platycnemic Men of Denbighshire.

Between S. Asaph and Rhyl is Rhuddlan with its castle in ruins. Formerly the tide washed its walls. The marsh, Morfa Rhuddlan, was the scene of a great battle, fought against the Saxons in 796, in which the Welsh, under their King Caradog, were defeated with great slaughter, and the prisoners taken were all put to the sword. The beautiful melody "Morfa Rhuddlan" has been supposed to pertain to a lament composed on that occasion; but the character of the melody is not earlier than the seventeenth century, and it apparently owes its name to the verses adapted to it by Iean Glan Geirionydd, who lived a thousand years after the event of this battle.

Welsh melodies require to be taken in hand by some musical antiquary and thoroughly investigated and sifted. It will be found that along with many noble airs that are genuinely Welsh, a goodly number are importations from England. This was

inevitable, so mixed up were the Welsh with English families in the great houses and castles. Edward Jones published his *Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards* in 1784. He collected the tunes from harpers and singers, but he knew nothing of old English music, and was incapable of discriminating what was of home production from what was an importation; consequently, in his collection, a goodly percentage consist of English melodies.

He gives us a Welsh air, "Difyrwch Gwyr Dyfi," as a bardic melody, but it is found in Tom D'Urfey's *Pills to purge Melancholy*, published in 1719-1720, and is the old English melody of "Greensleeves" spoiled. The melody of "Cynwyd" is none other than the venerable English air of "Dargason," which may be traced back in England to the reign of Elizabeth. A tune given by Jones as "Toriad y Dydd" is the old English air "Windsor Terrace," and "Y Brython" is a country dance published in *The Dancing Master* by Playford, 1696. Jones gives the "Monks' March" as probably the tune of the monks of Bangor when they marched to Chester, about the year 603, and it is none other than "General Monk's March," composed at the restoration of Charles II., and "The King's Note" is none other than King Henry VIII.'s "Pastyme with good company." The "Ash Grove" is doubtful. It first appears as a popular song in Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, 1727, "Cease your funning." The *Beggar's Opera* became the rage in London, throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland, and we know that it was performed also in Wales. Edward Jones in his *Bardic Museum*, in the second series published in 1802, inserted a tune that seems to have been formed on it, but the resemblance was confined to the first part. John Parry touched it up and altered all the second part of the tune to what it is now. It is,

of course, possible that Gay may have heard a Welsh air and introduced it into his opera, but it is far more probable that the *Beggar's Opera*, which was repeatedly performed in Wales, introduced the melody into the Principality. One Welsh air Gay did insert in his play, "Of noble race was Shenkin," and he may have picked up another.

Tunes are like birds of the air that fly from place to place and light on every tree, and are at home everywhere. There is a popular melody sung to very gross words by the peasantry in England. I picked it up in Devon, and it has also been found in Yorkshire, and a lady sent it me as heard in Wales, but without the words. Mr. Chappell has noted sixteen in Jones's collection that are certainly English, and he did not exhaust the number.

A curious instance of the manner in which melodies drift from their original connections is that of the popular hymn tune "Helmsley," to which is sung "Lo! He comes with clouds descending."

Thomas Olivers was born in the village of Tregynon, in Montgomeryshire, in 1725; his father was a small farmer, who died when Thomas was a lad, and he was then committed to the charge of his father's uncle Thomas Tudor, a farmer at Forden. In his youth he was of a merry and thoughtless disposition, and was dearly fond of dancing and all sorts of amusements. In his autobiography he states "that out of sixteen nights and days, he was fifteen of them without ever being in bed."

Some years after, when he was in Bristol, he was "converted" by Whitefield, and he became a Wesleyan Methodist lay preacher, and in 1777 undertook the printing of Wesley's *Arminian Magazine*. But his lack of education stood in his way, and in 1789 Wesley had to take the periodical out of

his hands. In his *Journal*, Wesley enters his reasons: "1. The errata are unsufferable. I have borne them for these 12 years, but can bear them no longer. 2. Several pieces are inserted without my knowledge, both in prose and verse."

Olivers became noted, however, as a hymn writer, and especially for his tune "Helmsley," which he gave to the world, no doubt firmly convinced that it was original. But this it was not; it was a reminiscence of his old unregenerate days. In fact it is an opera air, and belongs to *The Golden Pippin*, in which occurs the song:—

"Guardian angels now protect me,
Send to me the youth I love."

The Golden Pippin appeared in 1773.

Some of the stories connected with genuine Welsh airs are delightful. David Owen, of the Garreg Wen, lay on his death-bed, and fell into a trance. His mother, who was watching him at the time, supposed that he was dead. But presently he roused, and said to her that he had been in an ecstasy, and had seen heaven open, and the harpers about the throne were playing a wondrous strain. He called for his harp, and, with a radiance as of the world he had visited on his face, played the tune "Dafydd y Garreg Wen." As the last note died away the flame of life passed from him. The air became fixed in his mother's memory, and has thus been preserved.

Another story of the same musician is that he was returning home from a feast in the early morning, and daybreak overtook him as he sat on a stone—still pointed out at Portmadoc—and there, watching the soaring skylark, he composed the air "The Rising of the Lark." The melody "Hoffedd merch Dafydd Manuel" ("The delight of David Manuel's daughter")

is associated with a member of a very remarkable family. Dafydd Manuel was a poor cottager, born in Trefeglwys, Montgomeryshire, in or about 1625. He became a poet, and lived to a very advanced age, dying in 1726 at the age of a hundred and one. He left three children, two daughters—also excellent poets—and a son David. The elder daughter, Mary, noted for her wit and as a great harpist and singer, is she whose tune is called "The delight of David Manuel's daughter." Another member of the family, John, who fought in Egypt under Sir Ralph Abercromby, was thoroughly conversant in English, French, and Welsh. His daughter Sarah was quite illiterate till her thirtieth year, when she learned to read fluently and became well acquainted with the current literature of the day. Thomas Manuel, a sawyer, was illiterate till he grew to manhood, but accidentally becoming possessed of a French Testament, he resolved on mastering that language, which he did very quickly. His son William was a very remarkable boy, who at an early age—it is said at four, but this is hardly credible—could read English, Welsh, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. At the age of eight he was placed in Christ's Hospital, where he died of consumption on attaining his twelfth year. This extraordinary child had two brothers also possessed of great natural gifts. Thomas, the eldest, was an excellent Welsh, Latin, Greek, and English scholar. He also died of decline. Edward, the youngest, gave promise of even more extraordinary abilities than William. It is asserted that he could read English, Welsh, German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew when only four years old, and he died of consumption at the age of five. Precocious geniuses are like candles that blaze away and gutter and are out quickly. The mother of these remarkable

children, perceiving the thirst for learning evinced by them, taught herself to read and translate Latin and Greek, for the sake of helping them in their studies.

Some of the Welsh hymn tunes are magnificent, and one cannot but desire that some had been taken into such popular collections as *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, in place of the utterly insipid trash which has found its place there. But some are quite impossible of transference, as "Crug-y-bar," one of the very best. The Welsh accent so differs from that of English, that to render the words into English, or write others to suit the melody that are not nonsense, is almost impossible.

The Welsh melodies have a charm of their own, and they are harp tunes; whereas a great many of the most popular of our English folk airs are hornpipes. But, as already said, the thing needed is a critical investigation and a sifting of Welsh melodies.

Gruffydd ab Llewelyn, king of Gwynedd (1039-1069) and prince of Wales, had a fortress at Rhuddlan. He was a notable man, and he played a conspicuous part in Welsh history before the Norman Conquest. Under him the Cymry developed an amount of military capacity that was unusual. At the commencement of his reign he raided Mercia and defeated the English forces under Edwin, the brother of Earl Leofric, and slew him in battle. Then Gruffydd turned his attention to South Wales, and defeated its prince, Howel, and forced him to take refuge in Ireland. Two years after Howel returned at the head of Irish kerns, and was defeated again. On this occasion Gruffydd captured Howel's wife and made her his mistress. But in the ensuing year Gruffydd was himself defeated and made prisoner. He, however, escaped, and returned to Gwynedd. Howel, with a fleet from Ireland, entered the Towy,

but was beaten and killed in battle by Gruffydd.

Under Harold an English army assembled at Gloucester and marched against the Welsh. Gruffydd made peace, but next year broke his engagements and invaded Mercia, which was defended by the sheriff and the Bishop of Hereford. They were, however, defeated, and both fell on the field of battle.

In 1063 Harold determined to crush his dangerous neighbour, and he marched to Rhuddlan and surprised Gruffydd, who, however, escaped in a boat. Unable to follow, and not strong enough to maintain his hold on the land, Harold contented himself with destroying Rhuddlan, and then retired to Gloucester, but only to concert a plan for a systematic invasion and subjugation of Wales. He collected a fleet at Bristol, and sailed along the coast ravaging it, whilst his brother Tostig, at the head of an army, wasted Gwynedd.

Hitherto the English had been accustomed to fight in close array, heavily weighted with their armour. They now abandoned their old methods, and adopted those of their foes, with the result that the power of Gruffydd was broken, and some of his Welsh followers turned against him and murdered him. “The shield and deliverer of the Britons,” says the Brut, “the man who had hitherto been invincible, was now left in the glens of desolation, after he had taken vast plunder, and gained innumerable riches, and gathered treasures of gold and silver, jewels, and purple raiment.”

The castle of Rhuddlan was rebuilt under the Earl of Chester at the same time as that of Montgomery, and these formed redoubtable outposts whence the Welsh could be watched and worried.

After the conquest of Wales by Edward I. a Constitution was drawn up at Rhuddlan in 1284, which was included among the statutes of the realm. English law was introduced. In the matter of succession to land, Welsh custom was to be followed. Upon a death occurring, estates continued to be divisible among all the children.

> "The general constitutional effect was that the Principality was considered a distinct parcel of the Kingdom of England, ruled, however, by English laws, save so far as these were not modified by the provisions of the statute."[3]

I have already told the story of Llewelyn, the last of the Welsh princes, and of his treacherous and unprincipled brother David, but I may here enter into fuller particulars of the end of David.

He had been a fugitive with his wife and children in the forests and mountains, hunted from place to place, with a few tenants accompanying him, grumbling at short commons and wretched quarters, casting sidelong glances at the English, and wondering whether they would not secure better meals and more comfortable lodgings if they turned against their lord and prince. And this desire took effect; for their own base ends they betrayed him to the English king. With the same measure with which he had dealt with his brother Llewelyn, it was meted to him. Delivered over to the hereditary enemies of his race by men of his own household, tongue, and blood, he was brought before Edward at Rhuddlan, and with him were handed over the crown of King Arthur and the rest of the regalia of Wales.

On the last day of September, 1283, Edward held a parliament at Shrewsbury for the trial of David, who was condemned to be hanged, cut down whilst

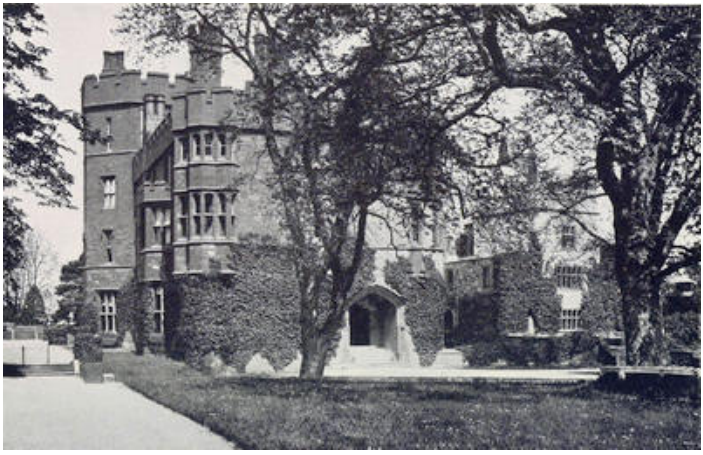
still breathing, his belly sliced open, and his still palpitating heart plucked out. Then his body was chopped in pieces, and the parts distributed for exhibition in certain English towns. His head, forwarded to London, was placed on a spike above the gatehouse of the Tower. His steward, “faithful found, among the faithless faithful only he,” was also convicted of high treason, and was condemned to be torn to pieces by horses.

Edward, the second son of the King, was born at Carnarvon on April 25th, 1284, and the story goes that King Edward, then at Rhuddlan, having assembled there the principal men of Wales, announced to them that as the royal race of Cunedda was extinct, he would give to them a Prince of Wales who could speak no word of English, and who was a native of the Principality. The chieftains replied that this they would accept, and to him they would yield obedience. Thereupon Edward presented to them his infant son, recently born at Carnarvon.

By the death of Alphonso, Edward’s eldest son, at Windsor, this Prince Edward became heir-apparent to the throne.

Some of the jewels of the Welsh regalia were used for the decoration of the shrine of Edward the Confessor at Westminster.

In 1399 Richard II. was prisoner at Rhuddlan on his way to Flint. In 1646 it was captured by General Mytton from the Royalists, and was dismantled by order of the Parliament, and has remained a ruin since.



RUTHIN CASTLE

CHAPTER X
DENBIGH

The colonisation of Denbigh from the north—Denbigh Castle—Sir John o' the two thumbs—Henry de Lacy—Projected transfer of cathedral to Denbigh—The Goblin Tower—Thomas Plantagenet—Robert Dudley—The bowling green—The Duke of Sussex and his breeches—Sir Hugh Myddelton—Sir Thomas Myddelton—Mrs. Jordan—Her last song—Llanrhaiadr—Anne Parry's body—"The Three Sisters"—Ruthin—Contest with Owen Glyndwr—Reginald de Grey—Oppressive laws—Dean Gabriel Goodman—The Huail stone—The church—Moel Fenlli—Story of Benlli—Llandegla—Oblations of cocks and hens.

THE county of Denbigh, together with that of Flint, was at one time all but permanently lost to the Celtic race.

The Angles of Mercia had advanced steadily and irresistibly along the broad level land from Chester, planting their stockaded forts where later would arise the stone-walled castles of the Normans, following the banks of the great estuary of the Dee, and supported by their fleets. They reached the mouth of the Clwyd, and began to spread up its fertile basin, driving back the Welsh before them. They had planted a large colony at Conway, and

Deganwy, the old palace of the kings of Gwynedd, was in their hands.

Anarawd, son of Rhodri the Great, was king in North Wales, paying to the king of Wessex a reluctant tribute of gold and silver, and the fleetest of Welsh hounds; but he could not roll back the tide of Teutonic invasion, and he was forced to lurk in Snowdon and Anglesey, and look down from the rocky heights and heather-flushed mountains on the smoke of English farms that rose above the ruins of many a burned *hendre* of his people.

Then an appeal came to him from the Britons of Strathclyde, in North Lancashire and Cumberland, exhausted by the ravages of Danes and Saxons, asking for help. Anarawd could not assist them with armed hand, but he pointed to Flint and the vale of the Clwyd, and invited them to turn out the English there settling themselves, and "not yet warm in their seats." They rose to the order, migrated in a mass, and dislodged the Angle colonists. But sorely misdoubting their ability to make good their hold, they entreated Anarawd to stand by them. He did so, mustering all the strength of Gwynedd; he joined forces with the Strathclyde immigrants, met the Mercian forces near Conway, and in a pitched battle (878) drove them back to the Dee, with immense slaughter, never to return. And thenceforth Flint and Denbighshire have remained Welsh.

Denbigh stands on a limestone height crowned by a castle, Din-bach, the Little Fortress or Castle. But that is not the popular derivation of the name. A monster, the *Bych*, occupied a cave in the face of the rock, now almost choked up. Thence it issued to ravage the country, but was killed by Syr Sion y Bodiau, the double-thumbed son of Catherine of Berain. But as Sir John Salusbury lived in the reign

of Elizabeth, it is clear that some ancient myth has attached itself to him which belonged originally to a primeval hero. The first certain account of the castle is at the time of the final conquest of the Principality. King Henry III. granted the custody of it to Dafydd ab Gruffydd, that treacherous and unprincipled prince who was the brother of Llewelyn, the last Prince of Wales of the native stock. After the execution of David at Shrewsbury in 1283 the fortress was granted to Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, who erected the present castle.

Old Denbigh occupied the area in front of the castle, but this part was abandoned about the reign of Elizabeth for New Denbigh, built at the foot of the hill, either because there was lack of water on the summit of the rock, or because the steepness of the ascent rendered a residence more convenient lower down. Now the space within the walls is unoccupied save by the little church of S. Hilary, and the ruins of a cathedral begun by the Earl of Leicester, who proposed to transfer thither the seat of the bishop from S. Asaph. But it was not completed. This is to be regretted, as it would have been a most curious specimen of Gothic in its last stage of decay. We have plenty of examples of domestic architecture of the period, and very delightful they are, but of ecclesiastical buildings none. It was a period of church gutting and pulling down, and not of erection and decoration. Henry de Lacy was engaged on building the castle when a fatal accident disheartened him, and he left the work incomplete. He had erected a tower, now called that of the Goblin, over a well with an unfailing spring in it, that was to supply the castle. His son Edmund, a boy of fifteen, was playing in the tower, scrambling among the scaffolding, when he lost his footing, fell

to the bottom, and was killed.

The water has now been drawn off to a bath-house outside, at the foot of the rock, and was at one time supposed to possess curative properties.

The dead boy's spirit is thought still to haunt the tower, and his white face to be seen peeping out of the ruined windows.

Henry de Lacy's daughter Alice was married to Thomas Plantagenet, Earl of Lancaster, and he by right of his wife became Earl of Denbigh. Edward of Carnarvon had received his father's instructions before Edward I. died. Of these the principal were: that he should persist in the conquest of Scotland, and should not recall his favourite Piers de Gaveston. These commands were violated by the young King. His first act was to send for Gaveston, and to confer on him the royal earldom of Cornwall; and when, at the coronation of Edward, Gaveston was given precedence over all the great nobles of the realm, their wrath knew no bounds. Three days after the ceremony they called upon the King to dismiss his favourite. Edward was obliged to give way, and Gaveston to swear that he would never return. The Pope, however, released the favourite from his oath, and shortly after Edward recalled him. The Earl of Lancaster and Denbigh refused to attend the next parliament convoked by the King, and the barons, flying to arms, captured Gaveston at Scarborough, and by order of Thomas of Lancaster cut off his head.

The news affected the King with passionate grief, to which was quickly added a fierce desire for revenge.

Some time after the death of Gaveston, Edward found a new favourite, Hugh le Despenser, whose harsh attempt to enforce feudal law to his own

advantage excited the marchers of Wales to arms against him. They were joined by Thomas of Lancaster, but he was defeated and taken to Pontefract Castle, where he was executed. Upon his death Denbigh was conferred on Hugh le Despenser.

The incapacity and favouritism of Edward occasioned a fresh outbreak, and Hugh le Despenser fell into the hands of the barons, who hanged him after a hasty trial. Then Denbigh Castle passed to another favourite, Roger Mortimer, the paramour of Queen Isabella. He was taken at Nottingham, arraigned in a Parliament summoned at Winchester, and hanged at Tyburn.

It really seemed that Denbigh was doomed to bring ill-luck on its masters. That ill-luck did not end with the hanging of Mortimer.

In 1566 Elizabeth granted it to her favourite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, whom she created Earl of Denbigh.

His conduct rendered him odious to the inhabitants, and his extortions drove them to open rebellion against his authority. He raised rents from £250 per annum to £800, he levied fines arbitrarily, encroached on private estates, and enclosed commons. Two of the young Salusburys of Lleweni pulled down the fences he had set up on the common land. He had them arrested, taken to Shrewsbury, and hanged there. The exasperation against Leicester became so great that the Queen was compelled to interfere, and he, with a view to make some satisfaction for the evils he had inflicted, began the erection of his cathedral, of which he laid the first stone on March 1st, 1579. But now the fate that had already fallen on three of the holders of Denbigh reached him. He died of poison at the age of fifty-six, on September 5th, 1588. The castle and lordship

then reverted to the Crown, and from that time till the commencement of the Civil War drops out of historical importance.

The keep, grand entrance, and Goblin Tower are undoubtedly the work of Henry de Lacy. The gateway is best preserved, and over the entrance in a niche is a mutilated statue of Edward I., with lovely ball-pattern sculpture in the mouldings of the niche enclosing it.

The views from the castle over the Vale of Clwyd are most beautiful; none finer than from the bowling green. That was inaugurated by the Duke of Sussex in 1829.

During the carouse on that occasion, that took place in the arbour, His Royal Highness had the misfortune to spill a glass of punch over his lap. As his breeches were white, and he had not another pair with him, he was constrained to retire to bed till a local tailor could fit him out afresh. When the august visitor to Denbigh re-emerged into the streets, lo! already had the little tailor inscribed over his shop: "By Special Appointment, Richard Price, Breeches-maker to his R.H. the Duke of Sussex."

There are two modern churches in Denbigh. The old parish church, S. Marchell's, is at Whitchurch, about a mile out of the town. S. Hilary's, in Old Denbigh, was only the castle chapel. S. Marchell's is a good fifteenth-century building, and is now used as a mortuary chapel. The roofs are specially fine. In it is the tomb of Sir John "of the double thumbs." He was a man of enormous strength, and is reported to have killed a white lioness in the Tower by a blow of his fist. He died in 1578. In the porch are two brasses of Richard Myddelton, of Gwaenynog, Governor of Denbigh Castle in the reigns of Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth, and of his wife Jane. Denbigh was the

native place of Hugh Myddelton, who, largely at his own expense, brought the New River from Ware, twenty miles distant, to London. He was the sixth son of the above-mentioned Richard, and was a goldsmith in Basinghall Street. His elder brother Thomas was a grocer—so little in those days was trade thought to be unsuitable for men of gentle birth and good position. He represented Denbigh in Parliament several times, and obtained a charter of incorporation for his native town. A proper supply of pure water to the Metropolis had often been canvassed by the corporation, and the wells were frequently contaminated and productive of periodical outbreaks of fever.

Myddelton declared himself ready to carry out the great work, and in 1609 “the dauntless Welshman” began his undertaking. The engineering difficulties were not all he had to contend with, for he had to overcome violent opposition from the landowners, who drew a harrowing picture of the evils that would result were his scheme carried through, as they contended, for his own private benefit. Worried by this senseless but powerful party, with a vast and costly labour only half completed, and with the probability of funds failing, most men would have broken down in bankruptcy and despair. But James I. came to his aid and agreed to furnish one half of the expense if he were granted one half of the ultimate profits. This spirited act of the King silenced opposition, the work went on, and in about fifteen months after this new contract the water was brought into London.

The popular story is that Myddelton ruined himself by this undertaking, and had to apply for relief of his necessities to the citizens of London, who, however, failed to unbutton their pockets for

their benefactor. He fell into poverty, and disguising himself under the name of Raymond, laboured as a common pavior in Shropshire.

This is, however, a myth. After the completion of his great achievement for the benefit of London, Sir Hugh reclaimed Brading Harbour, in the Isle of Wight, and undertook the working of Welsh mines, whose tin and lead brought in a large revenue, but he sank much money unprofitably in looking for coal near Denbigh. He died at the age of seventy-six, leaving large sums to his children, and an ample provision to his widow. When James I. created him a baronet he remitted the customary fees, amounting to over a thousand pounds—a very large sum of money in those days.

But he was not the only Myddelton who was a benefactor. In 1595 his brother Sir Thomas purchased Chirk Castle and Denbigh from the Crown. He provided the Welsh "nation" (in 1630) with the first portable edition of the Scriptures at his own expense. His brother William gave the Welsh a metrical version of the Psalms.

In Nantglyn, at Plas, five miles from Denbigh, was born Mrs. Jordan the actress, if we may trust local authorities. She made her first appearance at Drury Lane in 1785, and appeared as Peggy in *The Country Girl*, driving her audience frantic with delight. How she could act in serious parts Charles Lamb has described in one of the most exquisite passages of the *Essays of Elia*. According to some accounts, she was not Welsh, but Irish; but this opinion seems to be due to her having made her début at Dublin. Her real name was Dorothy Bland, but she assumed the name of Frances. To her we owe "The Blue Bells of Scotland," one of those rare instances of a woman composing a melody that has taken hold and

remained. It is curious that a Welsh girl—or Irish, if the Waterford claims to her be maintained—should have contributed a national air to Scotland. Mrs. Jordan was not really beautiful, but she had a most engaging manner and expression of face. Her voice was not only sweet, but her articulation was distinct. The last song she sang in public on the stage was—

"Last night the dogs did bark,
I went to the gate to see,
And ev'ry lass has her spark,
But nobody's coming for me.
O dear! what can the matter be?
O dear! what shall I do?
Nobody's coming to marry me,
Nobody's coming to woo!"

—one of those delightful English airs that will never die. This was shortly before her eldest son, George Fitzclarence, was born—January 29th, 1794.

Mrs. Jordan acquired a good deal of money by her profession, and she was not an extravagant person. She had a large family, and was a good mother. A person who had married one of her daughters had involved her in a debt of £2,000, and this so preyed on her spirits that it shortened her days. She withdrew from England and settled at S. Cloud, near Paris, and died there July 5th, 1816, aged fifty, and is buried at S. Cloud.

Llanrhaiadr is three miles from Denbigh. The church has some fine old glass in the east window, representing a Jesse tree. There is a wonderful genealogical tombstone in the churchyard to a certain John ap Robert, ap David, ap Gruffydd, ap David Vaughan, and so on back to Cadell Deyrnllwg, king of Powys.

A curious story is connected with an interment in this churchyard.

> "Anne Parry had opened her house for the preaching of the Methodists in this place, and originated a Sunday-school in the neighbouring village. She ended a life of laborious benevolence by a peaceful death, and forty-three years after her decease, on the occasion of her son's burial in the same tomb, her coffin was opened, and the body of this excellent woman was found to be in a perfect state of preservation, undecayed in the slightest degree, and her countenance bearing the hues of living health. The very flowers which had been strewed upon her body, it is said, were as fresh in colour, and as fragrant in odour, as when they were first plucked from their native boughs. The body of this lady was exhumed about three years afterwards (in 1841), and was nearly in the same state of preservation. This was corroborated by the mayor of Ruthin in 1841. The compiler of this account received the same information on the very day the lady had been re-interred, not only from the parish clerk and the mayor of Ruthin, but from several other parties who saw the body."[4]

Some allowance must be made for exaggeration here. That a body in certain undetermined circumstances may remain undecomposed is doubtless true, but the statement relative to the flowers must be dismissed as impossible.

Between Denbigh and Ruthin, and three miles from the latter, is Llanynys. Here, at Bachymbyd, an ancient mansion, are "The Three Sisters," noble chestnuts planted by the three daughters of Sir William Salusbury. The property passed into the hands of Sir Walter Bagot through a singular circumstance. He had been shooting in the neighbourhood, and a favourite pointer strayed, and he could not recover it. Some time after Sir William Salusbury found the dog, and sent it to Sir Walter with his compliments. This led to an exchange of compliments, and next time Sir Walter Bagot was in the neighbourhood he called at Bachymbyd to express his gratitude. He there met the daughters of

Sir William, and fell in love with one of them, proposed, and was accepted. Before the lady left for her new home she and her sisters planted these trees.

Ruthin is a pleasant little town, with its castle, but the latter is not old, having been almost wholly rebuilt. Portions of the earlier castle still remain.

The castle was founded in 1281 by Edward I., and was granted to Reginald de Grey. This man did his utmost to exasperate the Welsh to fresh insurrection, and Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury, made a journey into Wales to mediate between the King and Llewelyn, and allay the irritation. He complained to Edward, but in vain, of the rapacity of Reginald, whom he accused of committing the most flagrant acts of injustice, of depriving officers of the places they had purchased and of commissions that had been granted to them, of revoking just sentences when they jarred with his interests, and of compelling the peasantry to plough his lands without wages.

A contest about a common called Croesau, between Ruthin and Glyndyfrdwy, led to the insurrection of Owen Glyndwr.

During the reign of Richard II. a controversy had arisen relative to rights over this common. Reginald de Grey, who held Ruthin Castle, had claimed it. Owen disputed the claim, and gained his suit in a court of law. But no sooner was the usurper Henry of Lancaster on the throne than De Grey took possession of the common. Glyndwr appealed to Parliament, but his appeal was dismissed. Not satisfied with this infringement of his neighbour's rights, De Grey resolved on utterly ruining him. Henry had summoned Owen among his barons to attend him on his expedition to Scotland, and had confided the summons to De Grey to deliver. De Grey

treacherously withheld it, and then represented Owen as wilfully disobedient. Owen was accordingly sentenced, unheard, to be deprived of his lands, and De Grey seized them.

The Bishop of S. Asaph appealed to Parliament against this injustice, but in vain; and he warned it against the imprudence of exasperating an honourable and loyal man of extended influence, and driving him into rebellion to maintain his just rights. But the Lords scoffingly replied that "they had no fear of that pack of rascally, bare-footed scrubs."

De Grey surrounded Owen's house, but failed to capture him. He had attempted a most treacherous plan. He sent to Owen to offer to dine with him and talk over matters for a reconciliation. Owen consented on condition that De Grey came with only thirty followers, and these unarmed. De Grey accepted the terms, but ordered a large force to approach and surround the house while he was within. Glyndwr, however, knew his man, and he had set his bard Iolo Goch to watch. Iolo saw the approach of men-at-arms, so entering the hall he struck his harp and sang:—

"Think of Lleweni's chief, no slight
A murder on a Christmas night.
The blazing wrath of Shrewsbury keep,
The burning head's avenging heap."

Owen took the hint; he escaped.

Owen now proclaimed himself Prince of Wales, and called on all true-hearted Welshmen to rally to his standard. His first exploit was the capture of Ruthin in September, 1400. His men had concealed themselves in the thickets of Coed Marchan, near the town, and when the gates were thrown open for a fair, some made their way within disguised as

peasants, and kept the gates open for their confederates. Glyndwr's men rushed in, fired the town in four places, and slaughtered every Englishman they met. Then, laden with booty, they retreated to the mountains. Lord de Grey collected a force and marched against Glyndwr, but fell into an ambush, and was taken and carried off to the wilds of Snowdon, where Owen, before he would let him depart, forced him to marry his daughter Jane and to pay for his ransom 10,000 marks, which compelled him to sell his manor of Hadleigh, in Kent.

It was in consequence of Glyndwr's insurrection that the parliament of 1401 passed a series of the most oppressive and cruel ordinances ever enacted against any people—prohibiting the Welsh from acquiring lands by purchase, from holding any corporate offices, from bearing arms in any town; ordering that in lawsuits between an Englishman and Welshman, the former could only be convicted by English juries; disfranchising every English citizen who should marry a Welshwoman, and forbidding Welshmen to bring up their children to any liberal art, or apprentice them to any trade in any town or borough of the realm.

The barony of Grey de Ruthin was made out by patent to Reginald and to his heirs, without specifying that these should be males; it is therefore one of the few that devolve through heiresses.

In S. Peter's Square is the picturesque timber and plaster house in which was born Gabriel Goodman, Dean of Westminster for nearly the whole of Elizabeth's reign, and one of Bishop Morgan's helpers in the translation of the Bible into Welsh. In front of it, built into the platform, is the Maen Huail. On this stone, according to tradition, King Arthur cut off the head of Huail, brother of Gildas. He was a

quarrelsome, turbulent man, who, instead of serving against the Saxons, was engaged in broils against King Arthur. But his death was due to another cause.

Huail was imprudent enough to court a lady of whom Arthur was enamoured. The king's suspicions were aroused and his jealousy excited; he armed himself secretly, and intercepted Huail on his way to the lady's house. Some angry words passed between them, and they fought. After a sharp combat Huail wounded Arthur in the thigh, whereupon the contest ceased, and reconciliation was made on the condition that Huail should never reproach Arthur with the advantage he had obtained over him. Arthur returned to his palace at Caerwys, in Flintshire, to be cured of his wound. He recovered, but it caused him to limp slightly ever after. A short time after his recovery Arthur fell in love with a lady at Ruthin, and in order to enjoy her society disguised himself in female attire, and so got among her companions. One day when this lady and her maids and the disguised Arthur were dancing together, Huail saw him. He recognised him at once, and with a sneer on his lips said "the dancing might pass muster but for the stiff thigh." Arthur overheard the remark, and exasperated at the allusion, and at having been detected in such an undignified disguise, withdrew from the dance, and after having assumed his royal robes, summoned Huail before him, and ordered his head to be struck off in the midst of Ruthin, on the stone that now bears his name.

Gildas was in Ireland at the time; he at once hasted to Wales, where he raised such a storm, and roused so many enemies against Arthur, that the king was obliged to compromise matters, and he made over to Gildas and his family some lands in Denbighshire as blood-fine, after which Gildas gave

him the kiss of peace.

Ruthin Church is puzzling at first sight. It was made collegiate in 1310 by John, son of Reginald de Grey. It consisted originally of two churches, the parochial church of S. Peter, formed of one long nave and tower, and beyond the tower the collegiate church.

> "The choir being destroyed," says the late Professor Freeman, "the tower forms the extreme eastern portion of the northern body. Though the upper part has been rebuilt, the arches on which it rests happily remain unaltered. In this lies the great singularity of the church. There are not, and never could have been, any transepts, but still arches, almost like those of a lantern, are thrown across the north and south sides. These, however, are merely constructive or decorative, as it is clear they never were open. This arrangement is exceedingly rare."

The roof is said to have been given by Henry VII. when he bought the lordship of Dyffryn Clwyd. On it are nearly five hundred different devices. An aisle has been added to the church, much altering its character.

In the chancel is the tombstone of one John Parry, 1636, with the inscription "Hic jacet et (sedes cum sua) jure jacet." ("Here he lies, and since the pew is his own, he lies here by right.")

The range of the Clwydian Hills to the east is in several places surmounted by camps, that have been occupied by succeeding peoples, for in some are found flint weapons, bronze, later Roman ware and coins, and even mediæval pottery.

The highest point is Moel Famma. Moel Fenlli is the nearest to Ruthin, and takes its name from Benlli, king of Powys, who was supplanted by Cadell Deyrnllwg. He is reported to have retired to this stronghold. The story is this.

Germanus—not, I hold, the Bishop of Auxerre, but his namesake, a nephew of S. Patrick, and finally Bishop of Man—was in western Britain. He came to Pengwern or Shrewsbury, and asked to be admitted. But Benlli refused, and Germanus was forced to spend the night outside the walls. A servant of Benlli, named Cadell, disregarding his master's orders, furnished the saint and his party with food. According to the legend, fire fell from heaven and consumed the town, and Benlli escaped with difficulty. Then Germanus set up Cadell to be king of Powys in his room.

What seems actually to have happened was that Benlli, with the pagan party, clung to the side of Vortigern, and Germanus, stirred up Cadell, a petty prince of Powys, against him, and that Pengwern was taken, and Cadell elevated to be king in the room of Benlli.

Legend has been busy with the deposed king. It is said that in his camp he suffered tortures from rheumatism and wild-fire, and that he sought relief from S. Cynhafal, patron of Llangynhafal hard by, who refused it to him, as he was a renegade to paganism. Then Benlli in his pain sought ease in the cooling waters of the River Alun, but the stream likewise refused its aid, and dived underground. Again Benlli plunged in, and the water dived again. He tried a third time, and the river a third time retreated below the surface. The story has been invented to explain the fact that the Alun actually does thrice disappear in its bed.

At Derwen, in the church, there is a good screen, but the finest of all in this district is that of Llanrwst. In most of the Welsh screens the openings are rectangular, with some dainty tracery introduced at the top. But at Llanrwst the openings are pointed. In

the Devon and Cornish and Somersetshire screens these openings are mere Perpendicular windows, and all in each screen are alike in tracery, and this tracery is very much the same in all. But at Llanrwst the design in each window of the screen is different; there are, however, no mullions. The face of the rood-loft is also rich, and only needs the filling in of the niches with figures to make it complete.

Llandegla is interesting only on account of its spring, now all but choked up, on Gwern Degla, about two hundred yards from the church. Pennant in his *Tours* writes:—

> "The water is under the tutelage of the Saint (S. Tecla); and to this day is held to be extremely beneficial in the *clwyf Tegla*, S. Tecla's disease, or the falling sickness. The patient washes his limbs in the well, makes an offering into it of fourpence, walks round it three times, and thrice repeats the Lord's Prayer. These ceremonies are never begun till after sunset. If the afflicted be of the male sex, he makes an offering of a cock; if of the fair sex, of a hen. The fowl is carried in a basket, first round the well, after that into the churchyard, when the same orisons, and the same circumambulations are performed round the church. The votary then enters the church, gets under the Communion Table, lies down with the Bible under his or her head, is covered with the carpet or cloth, and rests there till break of day; departing after offering sixpence, and leaving the fowl in the church. If the bird dies, the cure is supposed to have been effected, and the disease transferred to the devoted victim."

This is now a thing of the past. But the oblation of cocks and hens still goes on in Brittany. At Carnoet, near Carhaix, is a chapel of S. Gildas. At his *pardon* in January the peasants bring fowls, and in the chapel are three ranges of hutches, in which they are placed, and where they remain clucking and crowing during Mass, so that often the voice of the

celebrant is drowned. After service the fowls are sold by auction, and the money obtained goes for the maintenance of the chapel. On the floor of the chapel is a stone sarcophagus, in which sick people were wont to lie in the hopes of thereby recovering. It was, one would suppose, kill or cure. They also offered a cock or hen, but this has gone out of use in Brittany as in Wales. No one now sleeps under the altar at Llandegla, or in the stone coffin at Carnoet.



LLANGOLLEN

CHAPTER XI
LLANGOLLEN

The Vale of Llangollen—S. Collen—A Breton Llangollen—Dinas Bran—Maelor—The old maids—The church—Vale Crucis—The pillar of Eliseg—Plas Eliseg—Owen ab Cadwgan and Nest—End of Owen—Corwen—Church rebuilt—English and French capitals to pillars—Inscribed stones—Cup-markings—Caer Drewyn—Owen Gwynedd and Henry II.—Rûg—Gruffydd ab Cynan—Image of Derfel Gadarn—Burning of Friar Forest—Pennant Melangell—Patroness of hares—The Welsh harper—Different kinds of harps—Satire on harpers.

THE Vale of Llangollen is proverbial for its beauty, and possibly because it has been so spoken, written, and sung about, it disappoints at first sight, but it is only at first sight that it does disappoint. Its beauties grow on one. The really finest portion is at Berwyn, which is the next station on the line to Bala, and not at the town that gives its name to the vale.

The mountains are not very lofty, rising only to 1,650 feet, but the Eglwyseg rocks redeem them from being regarded as hills. Llangollen owes its name to a founder named Collen in the seventh century. He descended from Caradog Freichfras who drove the Irish out of Brecknock, and whose wife, the beautiful and virtuous Tegau Eurfron, has been made famous

by the ballad of “The Boy and Mantle,” which is in Percy’s *Reliques*.

A wonderful Life of Collen exists in Welsh that has not as yet been translated. It relates how that he went abroad and studied at Orleans, then he returned to Britain and settled at Glastonbury, where he was elected abbot. This post he soon resigned for another that was “heavier and harder,” which consisted principally in going about preaching. He again got tired of this, and returned to Glastonbury, where everything went on smoothly for five years, when he happened to quarrel with the monks, for he was a peppery Welshman; and cursing them, he left for Glastonbury Tor, and made for himself a cell under a rock, where he could grumble to himself unmolested.

As he was in his cell one day, he heard two men talking about Gwyn ab Nudd, and saying that he was king of the under-world and of the fairies. Collen put his head out, and told them to hold their peace and not speak about these beings as if they were deities, for in fact they were only devils.

“You had best not use any disrespectful words about Gwyn,” retorted they, “or he will serve you out for doing so.”

Now at dead of night Collen heard some raps at the door of his habitation, and in answer to a call, “Who is there?” received the reply, “It is I. Gwyn ab Nudd, king of the nether world, has sent me, his messenger, to bid you meet him at the top of the hill.”

“I won’t go,” retorted the saint.



BERWYN

Again the messenger summoned him, and still Collen refused to be drawn.

Then the messenger said, “If you don’t come, Collen, it will be the worse for you.”

This disconcerted him; so, taking some holy water with him, he went. On reaching the top of the tor, Collen beheld the most beautiful castle that he had ever seen, manned by the best-appointed soldiery. A great many musicians, with all manner of instruments, made glorious music. About the hill were young men riding horses; at the palace gate handsome sprightly maidens—in fact, every element becoming the retinue and appointments of a great monarch.

Collen, carrying his pot of holy water, was invited to enter; he obeyed, and was ushered into a banqueting hall where he saw the king seated in a chair of pure gold. Gwyn very graciously invited Collen to take a seat and refresh himself at the table, whereon were all kinds of dainties. Collen replied

churlishly, “Bah! I don’t browse on leaves.”

“Hast thou ever seen,” said the king, “men better dressed than these my servants in red and blue?”

“The clothing—such as it is—is good enough.”

“Such as it is!” repeated the king. “What do you mean?”

“Red for fire, blue for cold,” replied Collen, and he dashed the pot of holy water in the king’s face and the liquid was splashed about on all sides. Instantly everything disappeared, and Collen was alone on the tor and the stars were shining down on him out of a frosty sky.

That is the story as he told it to the monks of Glastonbury, and it was a dream and nothing more, but so vivid that he believed in its reality.

Collen passed into Brittany, and there is a Llangollen there, near Quimper, by no means as lovely a spot as his Llangollen in Wales. Long before Collen settled here the conical hill that commands the vale, called Dinas Bran, had been crowned by a fort, and a fort it remained throughout the Middle Ages till the fifteenth century, when it was demolished.

Flintshire was the great doorway, or main gate, of entrance into North Wales, watched from the strong fortress of Chester, but the postern was the Vale of Dee, and to command this Dinas Bran must have been all-important. On looking at the map it will be seen that there is a portion of Flintshire detached from the rest, with no great town in it, but including Overton and Hanmer and Penley. It is hardly ten miles long by five miles broad; it forms a break between Shropshire and Cheshire, and its Welsh name is Maelor Saesneg (Saxon Maelor), whereas Welsh Maelor is on the west side of the Dee.

This was placed by Edward I. under the jurisdiction of the Sheriff of Flint by the Statute of Rhuddlan in 1284. Why this was done is hard to understand, yet there must have been purpose in it.

Mr. Godsal explains it thus:—

> "Since Maelor Saesneg, as we find it to-day, originated in a time of war, it is evident that military principles are likely to prove the best guides to the answers to these questions. The chief, in fact the dominating military feature on the eastern side of Maelor Saesneg, is a morass more than four miles long, and a mile or more wide, that is impassable to this day except by individuals on foot who know the ways across. From this morass runs a brook down the Wych Valley which protects the northern flank of Maelor, and which must have been very difficult to pass before the days of roads and bridges. The morass is called on the Maelor side the Fenns Moss; on the Shropshire side Whixall Moss. In ancient times it was covered by a forest."



BERWYN FROM CASTELL DINAS BRAN

It had been a stronghold of the British protected by the fens. Yet we do not see why it was not placed under the Earl of Shrewsbury instead of under the Sheriff of Flint, unless it were, in the event of an attack up the valley of the Dee, that the Sheriff might

hold this portion in check whilst the Dee valley was entered.

To return to Dinas Bran.

It had been a stronghold of the princes of Powys, and held to be important as commanding this pass up the valley of the Dee. Perhaps Collen got across with the men of Dinas Bran as he had with the monks of Glastonbury, and in a huff packed up his duds and went away.

As everyone has heard of the beauties of Llangollen, so has everyone heard of its old maids. These were Lady Eleanor Butler, sister of John Earl of Ormonde, and Miss Sarah Ponsonby, daughter of Chambre Brabazon Ponsonby, Esquire, grandson of the first Lord Bessborough. They had been friends from early girlhood, and their tastes coincided. Both loved quietude, and neither felt any vocation for the married life. Many and brilliant offers had been made to Lady Eleanor, but she rejected every suitor, and in 1779 induced her friend to retire with her to Llangollen, and there they spent the rest of their lives —full half a century. They protested that not once for thirty hours successively had they quitted their peaceful retreat since they entered it.

Miss Seward describes this house as it was during their lives:—

> "It consists of four apartments—a kitchen, the lightsome little dining-room, the drawing-room, and library.
>
> "This room (the parlour) is fitted up in the Gothic style, the door and large sash-windows of that form, and the latter of painted glass. Candles are seldom admitted into this apartment. The ingenious friends have invented a prismatic lantern, which occupies the whole elliptic arch of the Gothic door. The lantern is of cut glass, variously coloured, enclosing two lamps. The light it imparts resembles that of a volcano, sanguine and solemn. It is assisted by two

glow-worm lamps that, in little marble reservoirs, stand on the chimney-piece. A large Æolian harp is fixed in one of the windows, and when the weather permits them to be opened, it breathes its deep tones to the gale, swelling and softening as that rises and falls.

"This saloon of the Minervas contains the finest editions, superbly bound, of the best authors; over them the portraits in miniature, and some in larger ovals, of their favoured friends. The kitchen garden is neatness itself. The fruit trees are all of the rarest and finest sort, and luxuriant in their produce."

She further describes their personal appearance:—

"Lady Eleanor is of middle height, and somewhat beyond the *embonpoint* as to plumpness; the face round and fair, with the glow of luxuriant health. She has not fine features, but they are agreeable; enthusiasm in her eye, hilarity and benevolence in her smile. Miss Ponsonby, somewhat taller than her friend, is neither slender nor otherwise, but very graceful. A face rather long than round, a complexion clear, but without bloom, with a countenance which, from its soft melancholy, has peculiar interest."



THE LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN

Now compare this with the description given by Charles Mathews:—

> "Oh! such curiosities! I was nearly convulsed. I could scarcely get on for the first ten minutes after my eye caught them. As they are seated there is not one point to distinguish them from men: the dressing and powdering of the hair; their well-starched neck-cloths; the upper part of their habits, which they

> always wear even at a dinner party, made precisely like men's coats; and regular beaver black hats. They looked exactly like two respectable superannuated old clergymen."

They were a century before their time. The lamp so admired, with its rosy light "like a volcano," is now in every drawing-room; and as to the dressing like men!—why, every girl now tries to rig herself out like them and ape them in everything, even in bad manners.

Llangollen Church has been much altered by rebuilding, but it retains some points of interest. The south aisle and chancel are new, but the very fine roof has been retained, supposed to have been brought at the Dissolution from Vale Crucis Abbey.

This abbey may possibly take its name from the pillar stone of Eliseg that still stands after the abbey has been broken down. But the stone itself has suffered. Originally it was twelve feet high; now it is broken in half, and what remains is but a little over six feet in height. It bears an inscription testifying that it was set up by one Cyngen in memory of his great-grandfather Eliseg, a descendant of Brochwel, king of Powys.

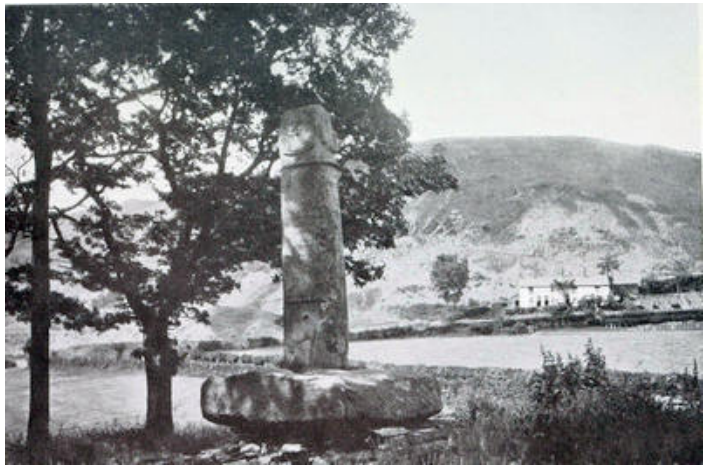
The abbey was never very large. It was founded in 1200 by Madog ab Gruffydd Maelor, prince of Powys, and the remains of the church belong to the period when founded, or are but little subsequent.

The church was exquisitely beautiful, and in the dearth of really fine architectural specimens in Wales it is to be deeply deplored that it was wrecked. The west end has in it three double-light windows, with cusped circles enclosed within the arch, and below them is a beautiful doorway.

Some of the domestic offices remain, and in one of these is a Decorated window of rich and original

design. Three lights filled in with flamboyant tracery are surmounted most strangely by bold, uncusped tracery richly sculptured with foliage.

Plas Eliseg is one of those delightful old timber-and-plaster houses of which there are so many, and all so charming and so peculiarly English, in Shropshire and Montgomeryshire; it is a gem of its style and quite unspoiled, in an exquisite situation, and rich with oak panelling and ancient furniture. It contains Lely's portrait of Cromwell, mole and all, as well as one of his mother. The house belonged to Colonel Jones, the regicide, who was executed at the Restoration; it has passed out of the possession of his descendants.



THE PILLAR OF ELISEG



VALE CRUCIS ABBEY

The place has earlier associations. Hither Owen ab Cadwgan, a wild blood of the twelfth century, carried off the Helen of Wales, Nest, daughter of Rhys ab Tewdwr. Her story is worth recording.

Cadwgan was king of Powys and lord of Ceredigion. His son Owen "possessed the best and the worst characteristics of the Cymric princely families." On Christmas, 1108, Cadwgan held a great eisteddfod at Cardigan, to which he invited all the kings, princes, and chiefs of the three kingdoms of Wales. To this gathering came Nest, daughter of Rhys, king of Deheubarth, who had been sent as a child as hostage to the English court, and Henry I. had basely taken advantage of her unprotected position to seduce her. He, however, quickly married her to Gerald of Windsor, whom he appointed Governor of Dyfed, with his residence at Pembroke. She was an extraordinarily beautiful woman, and Owen, son of Cadwgan, seeing her at his father's

court, fell desperately in love with her.

Assembling some wild fellows, he went with them to Pembroke, attacked the castle and set it on fire. Gerald had only time to escape by a drain, and so save himself, but Nest and his two children were taken by Owen, who carried them off to Plas Eliseg. This created a great commotion. King Cadwgan, fearing for the consequences, went promptly to his son and commanded him to restore at once the fair Nest to her husband. But the turbulent and enamoured Owen refused to give back the lady, and only reluctantly returned the children to their father.

This outrage was the occasion of civil war. Gerald of Windsor, with his followers, raged against the Welsh, destroying all around them with fire and sword. Two uncles of Owen, Ithel and Madog, were goaded on by the unscrupulous Bishop of London to take up arms and kill or capture Owen and his father, the king of Powys, who was guiltless of connivance in the abduction of Nest. Two other Welsh princes associated themselves with Ithel and Madog, urged by revenge, as Owen had killed their brothers; and these foes solemnly vowed to bring Owen and his father, alive or dead, to the bishop, who was at Shrewsbury. They marched into Ceredigion, laying waste the country as they went, and unless the inhabitants had been forewarned all would have been butchered. The day before these blood-thirsty human hunters reached the coast Owen had fled to Ireland, and Ceredigion was devastated, every house and church burnt, and every human being come across was massacred.

Cadwgan appealed to King Henry, protesting his innocence, and at last the English king consented to allow him to return to desolated Ceredigion, but exacted from him a fine; however, he allowed Ithel

and Madog to keep possession of Powys.

Owen, hearing that his father had made peace with King Henry, returned from Ireland, but his father refused to see him. Owen went off into Powys and managed to patch up a reconciliation with Madog, who had lately sought his life as the murderer of his brothers. The recent enemies met and swore a solemn oath of perpetual friendship and of united hostility to the King of England. Owen, with a party of ruffians who had come with him from Ireland, now entered his father's territories in Ceredigion, and thence made a series of marauding visits into Dyfed, using for the purpose the ships in which he had crossed from Ireland. In one of these he killed a Bishop William of the Flemings, who was on his way to the English court. The news reached King Henry whilst Cadwgan was with him on some business connected with the settlement of Welsh affairs. The King, exasperated to the last degree, bitterly reproached Cadwgan for not restraining this wild son of his, and at once despatched troops to chastise Owen, who immediately fled to Ireland.

Cadwgan was suffered to return to Powys, but was there assassinated by Madog, his son's ally, who at once hastened to announce the news to the Bishop of London, and was received with favour.

Owen hurried back from Ireland; Madog was caught in an ambush, and Owen put out his eyes with red-hot irons.

Curiously enough, now King Henry received Owen into his favour, and took him as a companion to Normandy, where he acquitted himself gallantly, and was knighted by the King. On his return to England Henry sent him into Wales with a commission and promises of favour and assurances of confidence. But Gerald of Windsor was awaiting

his opportunity. Owen on entering Wales began to butcher and burn with the utmost barbarity, and some peasants who escaped informed Gerald as to his whereabouts. Gerald hastened to intercept him, surrounded him, and Owen was pierced to the heart with an arrow.

A run of half an hour by train takes us to Corwen, a dingy little town at the junction of the line to Ruthin and Rhyl. Lying under steep mountains to the south, it comes off scantily for sun in winter.

Here the church has been rebuilt in very bad taste, with hideous plate-tracery in the windows, and a cumbrous French "Gothic" arcade within. The English and French architects of the Middle Ages started with different conceptions as to how to deal with the arch and the capital of the pillar on which it rested. The Frenchman made of his arch a hole bored in slabs of stone with sharp angles. If he had to sustain it on a circular drum of a pillar, he accommodated the capital to the arch by taking the Ionic crown as his type and reproducing the horns at the corners which serve as supports to the four angles of the arch resting on it.

But the English architect saw how crude and harsh and unpleasant to the eye was the bald, sharp-angled arch, and he bevelled it away, substituting delicate mouldings, and the section of the block of masonry at the spring of the arch was now not a parallelogram, but a hexagon. There was accordingly no need for the Ionic horns, and he treated his capital as a basket of flowers or foliage, or as a bowl wreathed round with leaves. This is infinitely more beautiful.

But our architects fifty years ago, when taking a holiday, rushed off to Normandy and filled their

sketch-books with drawings made in French churches, and on returning home used them up in "restoring" our English sacred buildings, or in designing churches and town halls on foreign lines.



VALE CRUCIS ABBEY

And what excuse can be found for plate-tracery that consists in drilling holes in slabs in Caen stone for windows, when exquisite tracery and moulding can be wrought out of the same stone? I should have liked to take Mr. Ferry, the perpetrator of the abominations at Corwen, to Vale Crucis Abbey and shame him by the comparison.

The only portions of the earlier church left at Corwen are the lancets at the east end, and a bit of north wall of the chancel.

Over the south porch door into the church is an early incised cross, that is popularly supposed to be the impression of Owen Glyndwr's dagger, flung from the height above, and which left its mark on

the stone. Into the east side of the north porch is built the leaning Carreg-y-Big-yn-y-Fach-Rewlyd (the Pointed Stone in the Frosty Corner). It is about six feet high, and is a prehistoric menhir. The story goes that the church was begun on another site, but every night the stones were removed and brought here and heaped about this block. Accordingly the builders accepted the intimation and erected the church where it now stands.

An old cross with interlaced Celtic work on it, and a short sword in relief, stands in the churchyard. The Maen Llwyd, near Llandeilo, has also a sword carved on it, and such stones probably indicate the burial-place of a warrior. The base is indented with hollows, like the cup-markings found in menhirs, dolmens, and flat rocks, which are still a mystery to antiquaries, but which were perhaps intended as receptacles for oil as oblations to the *manes* of the dead, for some councils and bishops denounced the superstitious anointings of standing stones by the semi-Christianised peasantry.

Beyond the river rises Caer Drewyn. The stone wall encloses a large area on a steep slope. It does not occupy the summit of the hill, but a spur near a spring from which flows a tiny rill. The walls were of stone unset in mortar, and they have fallen and form a continuous mound of débris. Within are a few ruined *cytiau*. The camp is of the type of the Irish forts near the coast, but has been supposed to be earlier and to belong to the Bronze Age, and without an exploration with pick and shovel there is no determining its period, for much the same construction belonged to both epochs.

It was occupied at a much later time. Owen Gwynedd in 1164 rose in revolt against Henry II. The English King collected a mixed force, and from

Oswestry ascended the Dee. Owen and his brother Cadwaladr of Merioneth fought a battle with him at Crogen, near Chirk. The King's life was saved by the self-devotion of Hubert de Clare, who, seeing an arrow hurtling through the air towards his master, interposed his body, and received the missile in his breast. The Welsh retreated across the Berwyn Mountains to Corwen, pursued by the English, and Owen established himself and his forces within this venerable ring of stones. They could obtain plenty of mutton from the mountains and moors at their back, and there was water in the spring under the north wall. Henry's army camped on the opposite hill. The weather broke up, rain poured down, and the ground of the English camp became a quagmire. The English dared not venture far for fear of falling into ambushes among the woods and rocks, and suffered for want of food. Men and horses dwindled through sickness and privation. Military stores ran short, and at length, in the mood of a baffled tiger, Henry was compelled to withdraw without having accomplished the end aimed at in this campaign. Raging at his discomfiture, he had the eyes torn out of the heads of the sons of Owen Gwynedd and Rhys ab Tewdwr, whom he held as hostages.

Rûg, near Corwen, is the scene of the treacherous seizure of Gruffydd ab Cynan, king of Gwynedd, in 1080, by Hugh the Fat, Earl of Chester. He invited the king to come unattended and unarmed to a friendly conference here, and when he arrived had him loaded with chains and carried off to Chester, where he remained a prisoner for twelve years. He owed his release to a young man of Corwen, who on some plea obtained access to him in prison, and carried him forth on his back, chains and all, on a night when the garrison was keeping high revel and

his guards were drunk. On his return into Gwynedd, he lurked for some time among the mountains till he had rallied sufficient men about him, when he swooped down on castle after castle of the Normans, took and burnt them and drove the invaders out of his lands.

Llandderfel is noted as having been a foundation of Derfel Gadarn, son of Hywel ab Emyr of Brittany. Before the Reformation there was a huge wooden image of him in the church, which was held in so great esteem that hundreds resorted to it daily with their offerings of cows, horses, and money. It was believed to have power to fetch souls out of Purgatory. Dr. Ellis Price was sent by Cromwell as Commissary to get rid of it. He found that on the day when he visited Llandderfel between five and six hundred pilgrims had been there. Price was ordered to send the image to London; the people were angry, and offered £40 to have it left. When the image arrived in London it was resolved to turn it to a signal purpose.

Friar Forest, a Franciscan, had been chaplain and confessor to Catherine of Aragon, and he declared that he "owed a double obedience, first to the King by the law of God, and secondly to the Bishop of Rome by his rule and profession."

He was ordered to be burnt at the stake in 1538, and Latimer was appointed to preach before him on the occasion. The letter in which the Reformer accepted this commission is not pleasant reading. He was ready, since Cromwell desired it, "to play the fool after his customable manner when Forest should suffer," and he complained that the unfortunate man was treated with too great leniency by his gaolers, and that he was even suffered to hear Mass and receive the Sacrament.

In Smithfield the pyre was built up, and the wooden statue of Derfel Gadarn placed on it; above all was a pair of gallows from which Forest was suspended in chains to be slowly burnt to death, whilst Latimer was haranguing from his pulpit, which at Latimer's own request was placed close to the pyre.

In the church still remains a portion of a wooden horse, or rather stag, popularly called *Ceffyl Derfel*, and a wooden crozier, his *Ffon*, that formed part of the subject. "The common people used to resort from all parts at Easter in order to have a ride on Derfel's horse. The horse was fixed to a pole, which was placed in a horizontal position, and attached to another, which stood perpendicularly and rested on a pivot. The rider, taking hold of the crozier, which was fastened to the horse, was wheeled round and round, as children are wheeled when they mount a wooden horse at a fair."

From Llandderfel the old Sarn Helen, or Elen's Road, runs to Llandrillo; and with a visit to this place may be combined one to the Pennant of Melangell, who was descended from this Elen and her husband Maximus. Her mother was an Irishwoman.

The story goes that her father desired to marry her to a chief under him, but either she disliked the man or the thought of marriage, and determined to run away. Accordingly she found an opportunity to escape, and secreted herself at Pennant, a lonely and lovely spot at the head of the Tanat. Her story is represented on the cornice of the carved oak screen of the church.

In this spot, sleeping on bare rock, she remained for fifteen years. One day Brochwel, prince of Powys, was hunting and in pursuit of a hare, when puss escaped into a thicket and took refuge under the robe

of a virgin of great beauty, whom the huntsman discovered. She faced and drove back the hounds. The huntsman then put his horn to his lips, and there it stuck as if glued. Upon this, up came the prince, and he at once granted a parcel of land to the saint, to serve as a sanctuary, and bade her found there a convent. This she did, and she lived in a cell, which still remains, though somewhat altered, at the east end of the church.

She was buried there, and fragments of her beautiful shrine, as it is believed, remain built into the walls, sufficient to allow of its reconstruction. The cell of S. Melangell is, as said, to the east of the church, and has no communication with it. It goes by the name of Cell-y-Bedd, or Cell of the Grave, and has a door and a window, and in this cell formerly stood her shrine.

Melangell is considered the patroness of hares, which are termed her lambs. Until the eighteenth century so strong was the superstition that no one in the parish would kill a hare, and even now, when a hare is pursued by hounds, boys will shout after it, “God and Melangell be with thee!” and it is held that it will escape.

Her *gwely*, or bed, lies on the side of the valley opposite to the church, a quarter of a mile further south. It is a recess in the rocks, overgrown with a bush, above the road.

In the churchyard is a sculptured stone, on which is represented a man in armour, with the inscription “HIC JACET EDWART.” This is believed to be the tombstone of Iorwerth (Edward) with the Broken Nose. He was the eldest son of Owen Gwynedd, prince of North Wales. Because of the blemish he was set aside, and the crown accorded to his brother David, and he was granted a few hundreds in

Carnarvonshire and Merionethshire for his lordship. But David grudged him even these, and he had to fly from him to Pennant Melangell, as to a sanctuary. He was pursued thither, and there murdered at his brother's instigation.

At Llangollen the Welsh harper may still be heard. He frequents the hotels and plays for sixpences and threepenny-bits given him by the visitors. What a delightful instrument the harp is! Its resonant chords thrill those in the human heart in a manner that the wires of the harpsichord and piano that have superseded it cannot do. The latter are mere mechanical instruments compared with harp and violin and the ancient lute. The harp was adopted, in the reign of James I., as the arms of Ireland, to be quartered with those of England and Scotland. When this was proposed, then said the Earl of Northampton, "Very suitable symbol for Ireland, costing more to keep in tune than it is worth."

But Wales would have had as much right to the harp as symbol as has Ireland; it had, however, its own ancient arms—the four lions quarterly. According to the Triads there were formerly in use three harps—that of the king, that of the bard, and that of the gentleman. The first two were valued at 120 pence, and the last at 60 pence; but we do not know in what consisted the distinction.

The performers let their nails grow to claws, and the strings were twanged with them. In the *Romance of Prince Horn*:—

"The King came into hall
Among his knights all
He calleth Adhelberus
His steward and him said thus:
'Steward, take thou here
My foundling him to lere (learn)
To play upon the harp

With his nails sharp.'"

And Chaucer, in his *House of Fame*, says:—

"For though that the best harper upon live
Would on the beste sounid jolly harpe
That ever was, with his fingers five
Touch all one string, or aie one warble harpe,
Were his nails pointed never so sharp," etc.

The most ancient harp had but a single row of strings, then a second row was introduced, and, lastly, a third; and the final improvement was the addition of pedals. The number of strings varied from 54, 56, 58 to 60. Formerly the Welsh harp was rested by the performer on the left shoulder—the treble was played with the left hand, and the bass with the right —but now the position is reversed.

That Edward I. ordered a massacre of the Welsh bards and minstrels is a mere fiction.

"That Edward did this," says Sharon Turner, "seems rather a vindictive tradition of an irritated nation than an historical fact. The destruction of the independent sovereignties of Wales abolished the patronage of the bards, and in the cessation of internal warfare, and of external ravages, they lost their favourite subjects and most familiar imagery. They declined because they were no longer encouraged."

The early Welsh harps seem to have been strung with hair. Dafydd ab Gwilym, a contemporary of Chaucer, boasts that his harp had not "one string from a dead sheep" in it, but "hair glossy black." The Irish harp was strung with wire. Some of the Welsh harps of an inferior kind were of leather, and Dafydd pours scorn on such:—

"The din of the leathern harp" (presupposes it shall not be played with a horny nail), "of unpleasing form, only the graceless bears it, and I love not its

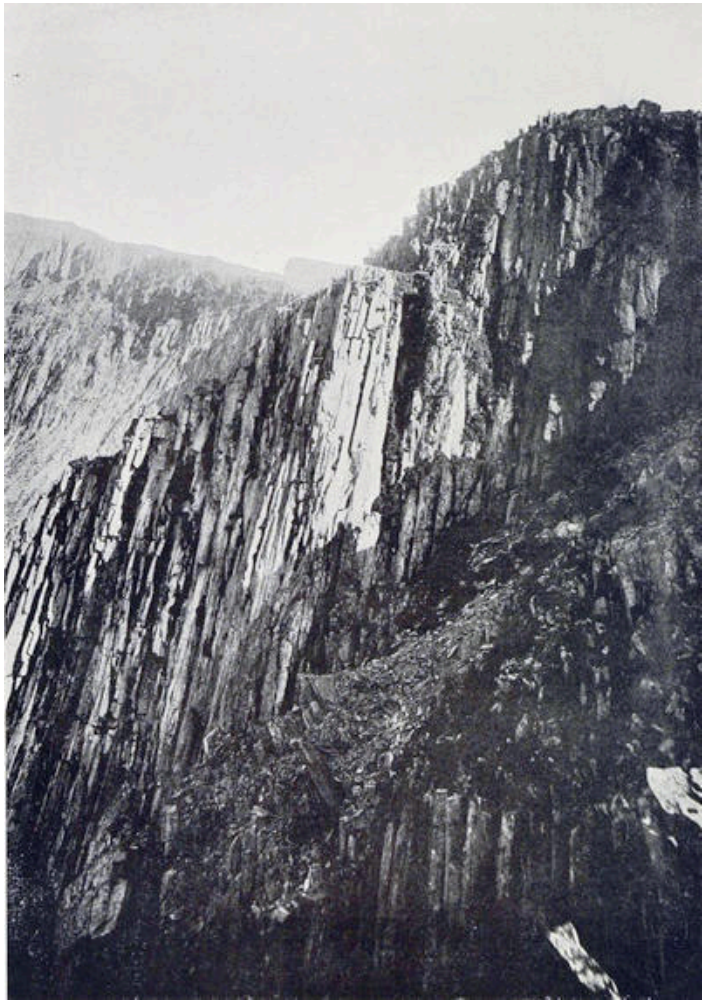
> button-covered trough, nor its music, nor its guts, sounding disgustingly, nor its yellow colour ... nor its bent column; only the vile love it. Under the touch of the eight fingers, ugly is the bulge of its belly, with the canvas cover; its hoarse sound is only fit for an aged Saxon."

The bards, according to Taliessin, himself one of them, do not seem to have had a high character, although, according to the Triad, the bard is equal to the king.

Taliessin is supposed to have lived in the time of Maelgwn Gwynedd, in the first half of the sixth century, and is credited with a satire on the king's bards; but the poem was actually composed in the thirteenth century, and satirises the bards of the writer's own day:—

> "Minstrels persevere in their false custom,
> Immoral ditties are their delight;
> Vain and tasteless praises theirs.
> At all times falsehood they utter.
> Innocent people they turn to jest,
> Married women's character they take away
> And destroy the innocence of maids.
> They drink all night; they sleep all day,
> The Church they hate, and the tavern they haunt.
> Tithes and offerings to God they do not pay,
> Nor worship Him Sunday or Holyday.
> Everything travails to obtain its food,
> Save the minstrel and the lazy thief."

It was the degradation of the minstrel that led to such severe Acts being passed to put him down. But the harper and minstrel remained attached to the household of a gentleman as a matter of course in Wales till the eighteenth century, and, as we have seen, so late as in the first half of the nineteenth century an Anglesey parson had his harper as one of his household.



CADER IDRIS

CHAPTER XII
DOLGELLEY

The Lake of Bala—Estuary of the Mawddach—Barmouth—Cader Idris—The Torrent and Precipice Walks—"Welsh web"—Numerous lakes—Fishing in Wales—Treachery of David ab Llewelyn—Gruffydd's attempt to escape—"The Spirit's Blasted Tree"—John Thomas—Characteristics of the Welsh people—Intelligence great—None of the coarseness characterising the Anglo-Saxon bumpkin—Long-heads and short-heads—A Welsh courtship—Untruthfulness a product of servitude—Religiousness of the Welsh—The theatre discountenanced—Old Interludes—Richard Malvine—Twm o'r Nant—Poetry in Wales—Welsh Nonconformity—The squirearchy—The Seiet—The old Welsh preachers—Embellishments—The Hwyl—Reviving the spirit—How the Church was treated—The Methodist Revival—The Church in Wales.

ONLY as one reaches the head of the Bala Lake, coming from Ruabon, does the beauty of form of the Welsh mountains begin to impress one. Then ensues the rapid descent of the valley of the Wnion, down which the train gallops, and as Dolgelley is approached, Cader Idris breaks on the sight.

Beyond Dolgelley expands the estuary of the Mawddach, and when the tide is in it is hard to

match it for loveliness in the British Isles, especially when the heather is in bloom. Then the flush is on the mountains above that mirror, and it is like the glow of glad surprise on the young girl's cheek when she contemplates herself in a glass and for the first time realises how beautiful she is.

Dolgelley and Barmouth are two delightful places at which to halt and whence to explore the glorious surrounding scenery. To the former belongs Cader Idris, and to the latter Llawllech and Diphwys. To the first the vale of the Mawddach, and to the second that of the Arthog.

Cader Idris is the throne of the great father of Welsh song. Who Idris was we hardly know. He is veiled in mystery, as his throne is wrapped in mist. But some dim traditions of him have come down to us.

The Triads celebrate him as Idris Gawr, or the Giant, one of the three primitive bards of the Isle of Britain, the inventor of the harp, and withal great in the knowledge of the stars. It was said that whosoever should pass a night on Cader Idris would descend in the morning inspired with the spirit of poetry or a frenzied madman.

I said to my guide in Iceland one day, pointing to a glittering jökull, "Oh, Grimr! would you not like to stand on the top?" "I can see the top very well from down here", was his reply.

A good many of us with old bones, and breath coming short, will be content to look on Cader Idris from below, or only to mount the glens to the lakes that lie around it, and leave the ultimate climb to the young bloods.

The Town Council of Dolgelley has done its best to make the place attractive to visitors who have not

this climbing passion on them, by laying out walks such as those of the Torrent and the Precipice, to facilitate the easy reach of striking points of view.



CADER IDRIS

Of the town itself not much can be said. “You see this decanter?” said an old gentleman after dinner. “That is the church”; and, taking a handful of nutshells and strewing them about the decanter, he added, “there are the houses.”

Dolgelley does a little business. It has long been noted for the manufacture of the “Welsh web,” and it is a famous resort of fishermen, though the well-whipped streams do not abound in finny denizens as they did at one time; moreover, the fish have grown uncommonly wary. The neighbourhood has within reach many lakes more or less deserving of the angler’s attention, and all meriting a visit by anyone who has an eye for the beautiful. To the fisherman comes the choice between stream and tarn, between

following up the brawling torrent to its source, lingering by the pools in which the trout glide like shadows, and dreaming in a boat on one of the lakelets, whilst a gentle breeze ruffles its surface. Some clever lines were written by the late Major George Cecil Gooch, some years ago, contrasting the fishing in England with that in Scotland. They apply equally to the contrast between angling in England and in Wales.

"Oh! yon angler in Kennet and Itchen!
How he creeps and he crawls on his knees.
How he casteth a fly a deep ditch in,
Or on high hangs it up in the trees!
How he stalks a poor trout that is rising,
How he chucks a fly into its mouth!
Then vows that his skill is surprising,
For they manage things so in the South.

"Let him boast of his fine fishing tackle,
Of his lines and his casts and all that,
Of his quills and his cluns let him cackle,
Let him tie a cork band round his hat;
The reward of his toil, do you ask it?
While he grovels all day on his face,
After all, when he reckons his basket,
He must count all his spoils by the brace.

"Leave the country of hedgerows and meadows,
Where the yellow marsh-marigold grows,
Where the oak and the elm cast their shadows,
Bid adieu to the Land of the Rose.
Come with me to the Land of the Thistle,
Where the waters run rugged and fleet,
To the hills where the wild curlews whistle,
Where a man may stand up on his feet.

"Come with me where the bright sunbeams flicker,
Through the larches above on the brae,
Where the streams by the boulder stones bicker,
And wavelets around are at play.

Throw your line straight across over yonder,
Down, down let it gradually swing,
By the swirl near the rock let it wander,
And you'll hook a trout fit for a king.

"There he comes! now just hit him and hold him!
Let him rage up and down through the pool!
There are no wretched weeds to enfold him,
He's yours if you only keep cool.
So you have him! Now try for his cousins,
For his uncles and aunts and so forth.
Never fear but you'll get 'em by dozens,
That's the way that we fish in the North."

Aye! and in Wales also!

The Precipice Walk is that which will probably be first taken by the visitor to Dolgelley, carried round Moel Cynwch, which rises to the height of 1,068 feet, and has on its lower head a prehistoric camp. The way from Dolgelley leads past Cymmer Abbey, that was founded by Llewelyn ab Iorwerth the Great, who died in 1240.



THE TORRENT WALK, DOLGELLEY



MILL, TORRENT WALK, DULGELLEY

His son Gruffydd, a man of noble stature and majestic beauty, won the hearts of the men of Gwynedd, and he was preferred by them to his brother David, whose mother was English; and from the moment that the breath was out of the body of Llewelyn a fierce and sanguinary war broke out between the half-brothers. At length, by the interposition of the Bishop of Bangor, a meeting was arranged to take place between the rival princes, but David treacherously waylaid his brother, and his eldest son Owen, on their way to the appointed place of conference, and shut them up in the castle of Criccieth.

The bishop, indignant with David for his treachery, hasted to King Henry and invoked his intervention. The King accordingly ordered David to release his prisoners, and when he refused to do so marched into North Wales. Senena, the wife of Gruffydd, met the King at Shrewsbury, and concluded a treaty with him, acting on behalf of her

husband.

Henry now marched into Gwynedd and brought David to his knees. He surrendered Gruffydd and Owen, but the King, violating his promises, sent both to the Tower of London.

The Bishop of Bangor, distressed at the perfidy of the King, in vain pleaded for the liberation of the captives, as did also the unhappy Senena, who went to London to plead her cause in person, but all in vain.

As time passed, and Henry showed no inclination to release them, Gruffydd became desperate, and contrived a plan of escape along with his devoted wife, who had obtained a reluctantly granted permission to visit her husband and son in prison. He cut up the tapestry of his chamber, as also his sheets and table-cloths, into strips, which he twisted and plaited into a rope, and one night, by means of this frail cable, attempted to descend from his window, assisted from above by his son Owen, whilst Senena waited below. But the great weight of Gruffydd strained and ravelled out the cable; it broke, and he fell from so great a height that his head, striking the ground, was driven to the chin into his breast, and he was killed on the spot.

Owen was thenceforth kept in closer durance than before.

The lovely Llyn Cynwch is under the mountains, and reflects Cader Idris on its glassy surface. Nannau, the old residence of the Vaughan family, is near the Precipice Walk, and in the grounds, where now stands a sundial, was formerly the “Spirit’s Blasted Tree,” alluded to in *Marmion*. Nannau was the seat of Howel Sele, a cousin of Glyndwr; he had rendered himself obnoxious to his relative by the zeal with

which he had espoused the cause of King Henry IV. The Abbot of Cymmer, desirous of effecting a reconciliation, contrived that the cousins should meet. Howel had the reputation of being an excellent archer, and as he and Glyndwr were walking in the grounds of Nannau the latter pointed out a deer for the purpose of trying his kinsman's dexterity. Howel bent his bow, adjusted the arrow, but abruptly turned its point on Glyndwr and discharged it at his breast. Happily the latter wore a suit of chain mail under his kirtle, and the purpose of the assassin was foiled. Howel was instantly seized by the followers of his intended victim and thrown into the hollow trunk of an oak that stood by, and was there left to perish. His skeleton was not discovered till forty years later. Glyndwr burnt the house of Nannau, and committed other devastations on the domain of his treacherous relative.



CADER IDRIS

The tree fell on the night of July 13th, 1813. Out

of it has been fashioned a table now at Hengwrt.

Hengwrt is an interesting old house, and stands in woods that are famous among entomologists as the haunt of many rare moths; and the traces of these latter may be noted on the trees, where they have been smeared with ale and sugar; and the lanterns of these eager scientists wander about the shades of the oaks at night like wills-o'-the-wisp.

Dolgelley was the native place of John Thomas, Bishop of Salisbury. He was born in 1681, and was the son of a porter in the service of a brewer. His father's employer, seeing that he was a bright, clever boy, paid the expenses of his education at school and college. He was ordained and went as chaplain to the English factory at Hamburg, and owing to the fluency with which he could speak German, acquired during his residence in the capacity of chaplain at that seaport, he attracted the notice of King George II., who took Thomas along with him whenever he visited his electorate of Hanover. Thomas married a Danish woman, and on her death married a niece of Bishop Sherlock of Salisbury. He was made rector of S. Vedast's, Foster Lane, London, and then prebendary of Westminster and canon of S. Paul's. In 1743 he was nominated to the bishopric of S. Asaph, but before he was consecrated he was offered and accepted the bishopric of Lincoln, and was consecrated in 1744. He was translated to Salisbury in 1761, and died there in 1766.

> "He is," says Cole, who wrote during his lifetime, "a very worthy and honest man, a most facetious and pleasant companion, and remarkably good-tempered. He has a peculiar cast in his eyes, and is not a little deaf. I thought it rather an odd jumble, when I dined with him in 1753; his lordship squinting the most I ever saw anyone; Mrs. Thomas, the bishop's wife, squinting not a little; and a Dane, the brother of his

> first wife, being so short-sighted as hardly to be able to know whether he had anything on his plate or no. Mrs. Thomas was his *fourth* wife, granddaughter, as I take it, of Bishop Patrick, a very worthy man. It is generally said that the bishop put this poesy to the wedding ring when he married her: 'If I survive, I will have five'; and she dying in 1757, he kept his word."

It is not my intention to describe scenery, perhaps because as I have not slept on Cader Idris I lack the proper *afflatus*, but also because that of Cader Idris and of the Mawddach valley has exercised better pens than mine.

Instead of dilating on the scenery I will here give a few remarks on the characteristics of the Welsh people, for whom I entertain a great liking.

The Englishman accustomed to life in country districts cannot fail to be impressed with the intellectual superiority of the Welsh peasant to the English country bumpkin. The Welsh of the labourer and small farmer class are brighter, quicker, keener than those occupying the same position in Saxon land. The working man has an intellect higher developed than the little farmer in England. This, in a measure, is due to his being bilingual. The acquisition of a second tongue undoubtedly gives flexibility to his mind. No English labourer dreams of learning another language than his own, but the Welsh peasant must do this, and this fact gives to his mind aptitude for fresh acquisitions, and affords a spur to learning. He reads more, above all, thinks more. He leads an inner life of thought and feeling; he is more impulsive and more sensitive. He is more susceptible to culture, more appreciative of what is poetical and beautiful, and does not find in buffoonery the supreme delight of life.

The horse-play, the boisterous revelry that

characterise the enjoyment of country Hodge and Polly, as well as town-bred 'Arry and 'Arriet, when taking a holiday, are never present on a similar occasion among the Welsh. The great gatherings of the latter are their Eisteddfods, and not races and football matches. They assemble in thousands to hear music and poetry, and such gatherings are entirely free from the vulgarities and riot of a collection of Anglo-Saxons out for a junketing.

A friend of mine, an incumbent for many years in a purely Welsh parish, who was transferred at length to one that was more than half English, remarked on the difference to me.

There had been an entertainment in a neighbouring place, and the English performers had given music-hall songs of a vulgar type, not without *double entendres*, which were rapturously applauded by those of the audience who were of English blood, whereas the Welsh sat mute and disgusted. And my friend said to me, "Such an entertainment would have been impossible in a purely Welsh village. The Welshman has a sense of decorum and a higher standard of taste, which would make him shrink from such an exhibition. But possibly it may be this coarseness and animality that have made the Englishman so masterful and so successful. It is the outward token of the tremendous vital force within, that makes him carry everything before him, undeterred by shyness, unhampered by sensitiveness, the qualities which hold back the Celt from the rough-and-tumble struggle of life."

It is the old story of the round-heads and the long-heads, as revealed to us by the barrows on our wolds and moors. The most ancient inhabitants of Britain had well-developed skulls, with plenty of brains in them; had delicate chins and finely formed

jaws, every token that the race was one of a gentle, highly strung quality. But it was trampled under foot by an invasion of round-heads, bullet-shaped skulls, with beetling brows, and jaws that speak of brute force.

That the Welsh are more moral than the English cannot be maintained. The Celtic idea of marriage was not that of the German, and woman in Celtic lands did not stand so high in dignity and in popular esteem as Tacitus shows us was the case among the Teutons. The Welsh laws allowed a man to divorce his wife and marry another if she were unfruitful, and for other reasons that seem to us frivolous.

A Welsh courtship is not conducted in the same manner as in England. There is not, or rather was not till recently, any walking-out of couples together; that was denounced from the chapel pulpits as indecorous. But with the consent or connivance of the parents of a young woman the suitor would come at night to the window of the damsel he affected, and scratch at it with a stick or throw at it a little gravel. Then she would descend, open the door, and the pair would spend the greater part of the night together on the sofa in the parlour, with, as a young man who had gone through the experience informed me, a bottle of whisky, a Bible, and a currant cake on the table before them. Some deny the whisky, some the Bible, but all allow that refreshment is necessary when the session is carried on to the small hours of the morning.

The Welsh are given the character of being untruthful, but with injustice. They are not more so than the Anglo-Saxon of the lower class. Untruthfulness is a product of oppression and injustice, and doubtless the long martyrdom undergone by the Welsh people forced them to

equivocate and seek all manner of subterfuges, but this has passed away—both the occasion and the consequence. The consequence does not always become extinguished when the cause has been removed—not at once—but it tends rapidly to disappear.

Mistresses complain in England that their domestics are untruthful. Of course they are, if the authority over them is unjust. Plautus shows us Davus as a liar through every fibre of his soul, but Davus was a slave. If mistresses will treat their servants as part of their family, and trust them, they, in turn, will be true.

Unfortunately, athletic sports are discountenanced by the preachers in the chapels as well as the walking-out of sweethearts; consequently the discipline of the cricket field and the struggle of the football are not for the Welsh, except in a mining district. Football, however, was formerly a favourite pastime among the Welsh, but as it was principally played on Sundays it was put down with stern severity by the Nonconformist preachers.



PISTYLL-Y-CAIN, DOLGELLEY

Religion is an integral part of the life of the Welshman. There is hardly any of that indifference to it which everywhere prevails in England. With us, in a country place, one quarter of the population goes to church, another quarter to chapel, and a half goes

nowhere. That half may live, and does live, a respectable, but it is a godless life. That is not the case in Wales. There two-thirds of its population go to the chapels, one-third to church, and an infinitesimal proportion holds aloof from either. Religion enfolds the Welsh man and woman from infancy. It does much to develop in him the faculty of self-government; it moulds his opinions from the earliest age. But the form of religion he has adopted has its disadvantages. It narrows his view, it cuts him off from much that is wholesome and harmless, and limits his world to his sect. The theatre is taboo. I was in a little town of some 1,200 inhabitants, to which came a strolling company of players, with a programme of perfectly wholesome and, indeed, edifying pieces. It expected to reap a harvest of sixpences and shillings, and announced performances for four consecutive evenings. But no sooner were the placards up than in all the seven chapels the ministers denounced “the play” as a snare of the devil, and warned their congregations to eschew it as a step to damnation. One told an anecdote. A young man with whom he was acquainted went to the theatre, resolved to see a play; but, raising his eyes, he saw written up, “This way to the pit.” Then, conscience-stricken, he withdrew. “But,” said the preacher, “every way—gallery, and stall, and box—lead alike to the bottomless pit.”

The result was that no Dissenters went, no Churchmen either, lest they should offend their “weaker brethren” of the chapel, and the poor players departed not having pocketed enough to pay their expenses for a single night.

The Welsh are, however, a people with the dramatic instinct in them, as is the case with all high-strung, sensitive races. In former times they had

their “Interludes,” just as the Cornish had their Miracle and secular plays. In Cornwall there exist still the “Rounds”—great amphitheatres of artificial construction, in which plays were wont to be performed in the open air to crowds of spectators. The Wesleyan Revival killed these plays, and the Rounds are now only employed for great preaching bouts.

The Welsh Interludes were poetic compositions, calling forth the abilities of the village composers. A great many of these still exist, not perhaps excellent in dramatic situations, but some of them of no mean poetic value. The Interlude was the direct offspring of the old Morality, and it was allegorical rather than directly dramatic. We have in English, among our peasantry, still a few of these, such as the “Dialogue between the Serving-man and the Gardener,” and a score of altercations in verse, very generally sung, in Cornwall, between a youth and a damsel, who begin by quarrelling, or with the maiden flouting the young man, and end in reconciliation and a trot off hand-in-hand to be married. There is another, once popular in Cornwall, in which the ghost of a maiden appears to her lover and sets him hard riddles, which he answers. Unless he could answer them she would have drawn him to the grave. Another, again, is that of “Richard Malvine,” where the plot consists in an intrigue carried on between a parson and the miller’s wife. The wife pretends to be ill, and sends for her husband.

“O Richard Malvine, O Richard Malvine!
Good husband, I’m like to die,
And medicine alone can me restore
As here on my bed I lie.
I would drink of the Well of Absalom,
Its water I fain would try,
And oh! for a bottle of ale!”

The husband departs in quest of the Well of Absalom, and the wife complacently says:—

"Pray God send him a hard journey,
And never to come home."

No sooner is Richard Malvine gone than the wife sends for the parson, and to him she says:—

"Pray feast with me;
I have good ale, bread fresh and bread stale,
And withal a venison pasty.
And merry we'll drink and eat and dance,
Right merry I trow we'll be."

Now Richard Malvine had a man who was trusty. And so soon as the miller went forth, the man pursued him, caught him up, and said:—

"O master, good Richard Malvine,
Thou art not gone far from here.
The priest and thy wife are right merrie,
Are having good sport and cheer.
Get into the sack, that I bear on my back,
And what they shall say, thou'lt hear.

"O Richard Malvine, O Richard Malvine!
Thy wife is false to thee.
I'll stand the sack in the chimney-back,
Where thou canst hear and see.
And thou shalt find, when thou hast a mind
To call, I am near to thee."

The parson arrives, and the table is spread—all this was acted in farm-houses. The wife says:—

"My husband, Richard Malvine, is forth,
A journey afar doth roam,
A bottle to fetch of the water fresh
Of the Well of Absalom."

Then the parson sits down and eats with the wife, and there is much fun, somewhat broad—when out of the sack in the chimney-back jumps Richard

Malvine, and he shouts:—

"'Now into the sack, as I'm Richard Malvine,
Or thy blood, Sir Priest, I will take!
O good my lady and gentleman,
I heard what you both did say,
The parson I'll dip in the mill-pond quick
Before that I let him away,
And my wife with a rope about her neck
I'll sell next market-day.'"

The waggoner then hoists the sack with the parson in it on his back, and carries him forth to be ducked in the mill-pond.

Another such an Interlude was one, not more edifying, in which occur snatches of a song:—

"Oh the wind and the rain,
They have sent him back again,
So you cannot have a lodging here!"

and:—

"Oh, the wind is in the west,
And the cuckoo's in his nest,
So you cannot have a lodging here!"

and finally:—

"Oh, the devil is in the man,
That he cannot understan'
That he cannot have a lodging here!"

The half play half game of "Jenny-Jan" is common in the West of England and in Scotland, alike.

A young man enters the room, when a woman acting the mother asks:—

"Come to see Jenny, Jan? Jenny, Jan? Jenny Jan? Come to see Jenny?"

He."Can I see her now?"

She. “Jenny is washing, washing, washing,
Jan.
Jenny is washing, Jan, you can’t see her
now.”

Then all say:—

“Morning, ladies and gentlemen, too!
Morning, ladies and gentlemen, too!
Come to see Jenny, Jan? Jenny, Jan? Jenny,
Jan?
Come to see Jenny, and can’t see her
now.”

Next the youth is informed that Jenny is married, then that she is dead, then that she is buried, and lastly that her grave is green. “Jenny’s grave is green with the tears that flow.” The principal performer has to simulate various emotions at the information given to him.

Now the first of these trifles is certainly derived from the old prose romance of *Friar Rush*, the earliest English printed copy of which is dated 1620, but which was taken from the German, and this was printed at Strasburg in 1515. The story, however, dates, in all probability, from a much earlier period.

The second is remarkable because the music is almost note for note as sung not very many years ago, with the air to the same words as given in Queen Elizabeth’s *Virginal Book*. That Jenny-Jan must have been common all over England seems to be implied by the fact of its existing in Devon as well as in Scotland, though to different melodies.

We can hardly doubt that these plays, in which three, at the most five, but usually three persons took part, were common in Wales in the Middle Ages, and, indeed, down to the Methodist Revival, when all such things were set aside as of the devil, devilish. Of all the Welsh composers of interludes, Twm o’r

Nant, or Tom o' the Dingle, was the most famous. He wrote an interlude on John Bunyan's "Spiritual Courtship," on Naaman's Leprosy, and an allegorical piece on Hypocrisy. He was born in 1739, and was married in 1763. His biography is extant and is very entertaining. His other interludes were "Riches and Poverty," "The Three Associates of Man—the World, Nature, Conscience," and "The King, the Justice, the Bishop, and the Husbandman," and he was wont to act in them himself.

These were all composed in verse, and were not without poetic fire, but the allegorical character of the pieces was against them.

One great cause of the refinement of mind, as well as of manner, in the Welshman of the lower classes, is the traditional passion for poetry. The Welsh have had their native poets from time immemorial. The earlier poets are hard to be read, often from a habit they had of introducing words, wholly regardless of sense, to pad out their lines, or to produce a pleasant effect on the ear. But all this drops away in the later poets, and Wales has never failed to produce a crop of these, and their productions are read, acquired by heart, and go to mould the taste.

Now look at the English bumpkin. What poetic faculty is there in him? Take the broadside ballads of England. Unless you stumble on an ancient ballad, all is the veriest balderdash.

"To hear the sweet birds whistle
And the nightingales to sing,"

or again:—

"As I went forth one May morning
To scent the morning air,"

the final line of which is capable of a double interpretation—the bucolic mind rises to no poetic conception. It looks at Nature with dull, dazed eyes, and sees nothing in it. It does not distinguish one plant from another, its only idea of a sensation is a young woman dressing as a sailor or a soldier to run after her young man, and its only idea of humour is grossness.

But the moment you come in contact with Celtic blood a ripple of living fire runs through the veins, the eyes are open and they see, the ears are touched and they hear, the tongue is unloosed and it sings.

The sole conception that the vulgar English mind has of poetry is rhyme, and the rhyme often execrably bad. In my time I have come upon many a village poet—but never a poetic idea from their minds, never a spark of divine fire in their doggerel.

But to return to Welsh Nonconformity. That it was the revolt of the Conscience against the deadness of the Church, which had left out of view all its glorious Catholic heritage, and offered stones in place of bread, and put wolves in place of pastors over the sheep, does not admit of question. Nor can it be doubted that Nonconformity has done an amazing deal for the development—if one-sided, yet a development—of the Welsh mind. It has stunted some of its faculties, but it has expanded the mind in other directions. Nonconformity exercises a most controlling force upon the Welshman. He no more dares to think or worship or have an aspiration beyond his sect, than has a Mussulman outside his religion. So long as he is in Wales, by a thousand ties he is bound to his sect. He would wreck his social, his moral influence, his position, his worldly prospects if he left it.

The bicycle, however, is making a breach in the

bonds that restrain the young people, much as in France it is emancipating the demoiselle from the severe tutelage in which the French girl is held. It is taking those who use the “wheel” beyond the little area over which their religious community exercises influence.

We talk of the Irish peasantry as priest-ridden, but the Welsh are in almost as strict subjection to the opinion of their chapel body. The emancipation the bicycle produces has its good effects, but also those which are evil. The chapel opinion makes for godliness and a decent life.

The *Sciet*, or Society, comprises every member of the denomination, and is a miniature democracy, in which the affairs of the community are discussed, and its working is arranged, its religious tenets are shaped, and its code of morals is fixed. The greatest excitement allowed is the *Diwygiad*, or Revival, which may or may not leave good moral results. Sometimes it awakens the indifferent, sometimes deepens the religious life, but it also occasionally leads to lapses from virtue.

Revivalism is a two-edged weapon that may cut the hand that holds it.

The Church is supported principally by the squirearchy and the dependants on the squirearchy. And, as a rule, the squirearchy likes to have a religion that does not make great demands on its time, does not exact self-denial, does not require exalted spirituality. And it is ready enough to pay for a jog-trot religion, but will button up the pocket against a too exacting zeal.



TYN-Y-GROES, DOLGELLEY

Some of the old Welsh preachers at the outburst of the revolt against the deadness and worldliness of the Church were very remarkable men, and their eloquence was great. It would not pass muster at the present day in their own communities, but it served its purpose at the time.

There was one, for instance, reminiscences of whose sermons have survived—Stephen Jenkins, born 1815, died 1892.

On one occasion he was preaching upon prayer, and he suddenly broke forth into a graphic description of the animals entering the ark. After having seen the lion, the bear, the ape, and the snail enter, all whose progresses were graphically described, he went on to speak of the elephant, and he drew a lively picture of the monstrous beast ascending the plank that led to the entrance to the house-boat. “But how is this?” exclaimed the preacher. “The elephant is higher than the door. By no means can he walk in. Of no avail for Noah and

his sons to prog him with goads. He cannot enter. The door is low, and his head is held too high. Then says Noah, 'Go down on your knees, beast!' and the elephant obeys. Then, Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth thrusting behind, they managed to get the elephant into the ark. And you, if you will enter the kingdom of heaven, must go down on your knees. Strait is the gate and narrow is the way."

The story is told differently in a little memoir of Stephen Jenkins that has been published recently (Tonypandy, 1902), but I give it as it reached me some years ago; probably the preacher used Noah's ark more than once, and to enforce different maxims.

The following is, however, from the book:—

> "When Peter went to Cæsarea to his publication [*i.e.* preaching to which invited], ha took Mrs. Peter with him. And ha was putting up at a farmhouse. And the farmer took Peter around the farm with him, to show his stock to 'n. On the way home the bull roared at 'n, but ha didn't notice that. When ha cam' to the farm-yard, the ould gander cam' hissing after 'n, but he didn't mind that either. But, all of a sudden, the ould cock cam' up to 'n quite bould, and sang *Cock-a-doodle-doo*, and he turned quite pale, and begged the farmer to let 'n go into the house. And when ha went into the house, Mrs. Peter asked, 'What is the matter, Peter *bach*?' 'Oh, that ould bird again!' he said.... Ah, my dear people, ould Conscience will remind you some way or other, of your past sins, even after you're forgiven."

This may be absurd, but it served its purpose. Whether a preacher is justified in drawing so freely on his imagination is a question I do not enter upon. The sermon recalls to me one heard in a little Cornish chapel a few years ago. I believe that I give the preacher's words without exaggeration. The text was from Psalm lvii. 8: "Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp." And this was the opening of the

discourse:—

> "My brethren! King David awoke early in the morning, just as the sun was rising. There had been wretched bad times, rain, rain, rain, all day and night, and the sheep were cawed [diseased], and the harvest was not got in, the shocks of corn were standing, the grain was sprouting in the ears. You know what sort of bread comes of that! David had been sore at heart, for he knew the farmers were in a bad way, and the labouring people were also not well off. So he got out of bed, and opened his window, and looked out, and smelt the beautiful fresh morning air. Then he saw the sun come a-peeping up over the eastern hills, like a spark of gold. So says David, 'There he comes, and not a cloud in the sky, and there's every promise of a good day. Wake up, my glory! wake up, my beautiful shining luminary, and give us a long fine day, for we want it sore before the corn is utterly spoiled and done for.' And then, brethren, he made another remark, and that he addressed to his Possle-tree [psaltery]. Now, I don't pretend to know exactly what sort of a tree a Possle-tree is, but travellers who have been in Palestine, and learned commentators, do assert that it is a plant that turns her face to the sun, whichever way the sun be. In short she is a sort of convolvulus. Now David saw this here possle-tree drooping, with her blossom heavy with rain, and says he, with a great shout, 'Possle-tree!' says he, 'Possle-tree, my hearty, wake up! The glorious sun is up and shining, and it becomes you also to wake up, and look the glorious sun in the face, as is your nature and your duty too.'"



HALFWAY HOUSE, DOLGELLEY

How completely Celtic both these addresses were! To the dull Saxon mind there would be unreality and trifling in such rich embroidery of sacred facts, and it would repel, not edify. But the Celtic taste is not squeamish; it allows a broad margin for imaginary decoration, and so long as the moral enforced is satisfactory, it does not regard the means whereby it is reached.

Of course this sort of address would be impossible now in Wales, but in Cornwall the level of culture is a century in arrear of Wales.

A Welshman is like an Irishman, naturally an orator, and his highest climax is reached in the *hwyl*, the Welsh howl. This consists in a rhythmic musical intonation, rising to a high pitch. It was at one time general in extempore preaching, but has fallen into disuse, as it showed a tendency to become a mechanical trick, a striving after effect, when the orator felt that his matter ceased to interest and

arouse.

An amusing story was told me of a religious revival effected by an old woman and a mendicant.

Said Sheena to Shone, “How is it at Bethesda now?”

“Ah, Sheena, dead as ditchwater!”

“That is a pity,” said she. “Let us revive the spirit.”

So they went together to the chapel, and during an eminently prosy sermon began to rock on their seats, to moan and utter exclamations. The influence spread, and presently the whole congregation swayed and cried out, “Glory be to God!” at the preacher’s platitudes. Then, little by little, the agitation of spirits affected him—his voice rose to a cry, and sank and thrilled; he flamed, he flung about his arms; finally, he howled. Thenceforth all was animation and unction in Bethesda.

We may doubt whether the Catholic Church ever gained as firm a hold over the Welsh people as it did over the English. The best benefices were generally given to English or to foreign ecclesiastics who did not understand a word of the vernacular of the people, and the poor cures were cast to hedge-priests who were both ignorant and immoral; such livings as were in Welsh hands were very indifferently served, as the churches belonged to several people, in or out of Orders, as has been already shown.

The Reformation did not at all mend matters. During the Tudor period, it is true, the Church did hold the affection of the Welsh people, and was, for upwards of a century, ruled by bishops who were Welsh in name and tongue. But evil days followed. Bishoprics and livings were given to Englishmen who did not know Welsh, and who often were

nonresident. The revenues of the Church were drained into the pockets of English pluralists and men who ostentatiously neglected their duties.

With the Methodist Revival the Welsh found themselves masters of their own religion; they could form communities for themselves, invent their own creeds, and accommodate the worship to their own idiosyncrasies.

Although the Welsh are an emotional people, they are a clear and hard-headed people as well. They have passed through the period of hysterical religion, and a preacher who is acceptable must be one who is worth listening to because he has something to say. He must be, not a man of frothy eloquence, but one who has read and thought. One of the drawbacks of the Church in Wales is that ministers who have proved themselves to be more or less failures in their sects have been too much in the habit of coming over to the Church and seeking ordination, in the hopes of being coddled and applauded as "'verts," and being put into benefices; and the bishops have shown too ready a disposition to receive them.

Such converts are often no gain to the Church and no loss to Dissent. In *Don Giovanni* Figaro struts up and down the stage unrolling a list of his conquests in the field of love, and it is not edifying or pleasing to see some of the more vigorous defenders of the "Establishment" parade in like manner the captures from Nonconformity. The Church in Wales, except at Cardiff, has been hardly touched as yet by the breath of the revival which has transformed the Church in England. If the Church is to regain her hold over the Welsh people, it will be by supplying them with what they cannot have in the sects. They can obtain Christianity attenuated

into the most vaporous condition, thrown into the most varied nebular forms, in the several denominations. But if the Welshman joins the Church, it will not be, like Ixion, to embrace a cloud, but for a definite creed and apostolic order.



HARLECH CASTLE

CHAPTER XIII
HARLECH

Situation—The castle—Bronwen—Bronwen's tomb—Dafydd ab Ifan—"March of the Men of Harlech"—Prehistoric remains—Llanfair—Ellis Wynne—*Visions of the Sleeping Bard*—Sam Badrig—The drowned land—Ardudwy—Fight of the men—Roman Steps—Owen Pughe—Fires and destruction of Welsh MSS.

THE situation of Harlech is fine—a rock rising almost vertically from the level tract of sandy flats that fringes the sea, surmounted by a castle, and with the little town clustering behind it and slipping down the sides.

The castle consists of a rude quadrangle, with round towers at each angle, and to the east a gateway flanked by two more. It is not a particularly picturesque ruin, and before it fell into ruin must have been positively ugly. It is not comparable to Conway in size or in beauty of outline, but Henry de Elreton, the architect, built for use, and looked to make it an impregnable stronghold, and did not consider the picturesque.

The castle occupies the site of Twr Bronwen.

Bran the Blessed was king of Britain, and he had a beautiful sister called Bronwen.

One day he was in his fortress at Harlech when, looking west, he saw a fleet approach. It was that of Matholwch, king of Ireland, who came to ask for Bronwen to be his wife. He was well received, and the wedding was appointed to be kept at Aberffraw, in Anglesey. So Bran and all his warriors went thither by land, and the Irish king by sea, and at Aberffraw a great marriage feast was held.

Now Bran and Bronwen had a half-brother named Evnyssien, who had not been consulted in the matter, and out of spite during the night he went to the horses brought over by the Irish king and "cut off their lips to the teeth, and their ears close to their heads, and their tails close to their backs, and their eyelids to the very bone."

Matholwch was furious at the insult, and was with difficulty appeased by Bran giving him a silver rod as tall as himself and a plate of gold as wide as his face, and by assuring him that the outrage had been committed without his knowledge and against his wishes.

Then Matholwch sailed away with his bride. In the course of a year she bore him a son, whom she called Gwern. Now the story of the insult offered to their king circulated in Ireland, and this produced very bitter feeling against the queen, and Matholwch was himself so turned against her that he degraded her to be cook in his palace.

Bronwen reared a starling in the cover of the kneading trough, and wrote a letter telling her woes, and tied it to a feather of the bird's wing, and let it fly. The bird departed and reached Caer Seiont, or Carnarvon, where King Bran then was, lighted on his shoulder and ruffled its plumes, and, discovering the letter, he detached and read it. Then, in great wrath, he collected a force and manned a fleet, and sailed to

Ireland to revenge the wrongs offered to his sister.

Matholwch, unprepared to resist, invited him to a conference and a banquet, and in compensation for the wrongs offered to raise his own son Gwern to the throne, and to abdicate.

Now at the banquet the boy Gwern entered the hall, and for his beauty and courtesy was by all admired and fondled save by the malevolent Evnyssien, who, when the lad came before him, suddenly grasped him by head and feet and flung him into the fire that burned before them. When Bronwen saw her child in the flames she endeavoured to spring in after him, but was restrained by her brother Bran and another, between whom she was seated.

This shocking act of violence caused a general fight between the Welsh and the Irish. Evnyssien fell and many others on the side of Bran, who was obliged to retreat to his ships and escape over the sea to Britain, wounded in the foot in the fray by a poisoned dart.

On reaching Wales Bran felt that he was death-struck, and he commanded that his head should be cut off and taken to London, and buried on the White Mount, where is now the Tower, and that the face should be set towards France. Bronwen, who had escaped, soon after died of a broken heart. “Woe is me!” she said, “that ever I was born; for two islands have been destroyed because of me!”

She was buried in Anglesey, in a spot since called Ynys Bronwen. In 1813 the traditional grave was opened.

> “A farmer, living on the banks of the Alaw, having occasion for stones to make some addition to his farm-buildings, and having observed a stone or two peeping through the turf of a circular elevation on a

> flat not far from the river, was induced to examine it, where, after paring off the turf, he came to a considerable heap of stones, or *carnedd*, covered with earth, which he removed with some degree of caution, and got to a *cist* formed of coarse flags canted and covered over. On removing the lid, he found it contained an urn placed with its mouth downwards, full of ashes and half-calcined fragments of bone."

In the *Mabinogion* the grave is thus described:—

> "A square grave was made for Bonwen, the daughter of Llyr, on the banks of the Alaw, and there she was buried."

The urn that contained the ashes and bones was of the well-known Bronze Age type.

According to the traditional pedigrees of the Welsh, Bronwen was the aunt of the celebrated Caractacus who so gallantly resisted the Romans, and who was taken prisoner and conveyed to Rome. But these very early pedigrees are untrustworthy.

The Bronwen Tower of Harlech Castle is that on the left of the sea-front as we enter the courtyard.

In 1404 Owen Glyndwr got possession of the castle and held a parliament in it.

During the Wars of the Roses, the Earl of Pembroke and his brother, Sir Richard Herbert, laid siege to the fortress. It was defended by the governor, Davydd ab Ifan, who there offered an honourable asylum to Margaret of Anjou, queen of Henry VI., and the Prince of Wales, after the battle of Northampton. When summoned to surrender, he replied that he had held a fortress in France till all the old women in Wales had heard of it, and he now purposed holding out in Harlech till all the old women in France heard of it.



BRONWEN'S URN

According to a contemporary bard, there was great slaughter; he says that six thousand men fell, but this shows him to have been able to draw the long-bow as well as to finger the lyre. Eventually, after a blockade, Harlech was forced to capitulate, and the whole district was then subjected to Edward IV. The famous air, "The March of the Men of Harlech," is said to have been composed during this siege, more probably long after, in commemoration of it.

Harlech is not a good watering-place, as the sea is at some distance from the town, separated from it by

tedious sand-flats. But it commands a magnificent view of the promontory of Lleyn, with Yr Eifl—in English the Rivals—rising from it, then Moel Siabod, Snowdon, and the Glyders; and many pleasant excursions may be made from it. The view is blocked before the principal hotel by the huge bulk of the castle.

The railroad to Barmouth runs under what were sea-cliffs, but the sea has retreated, and at the mouth of the Nant Col and Artro, and between that of the mouth of the brook Afon Ysgethin, is an exclusive stretch of Morfa, or sand-dune. So also between Harlech and the estuary of the Afon Glaslyn.

Near Harlech are several of the Cytiau'r Gwyddelod, circular stone habitations dating back from the Irish occupation of the country, if not more ancient still. But a more interesting monument of prehistoric antiquity is the Caer on Moel Goedog, standing 1,210 feet above the sea, where is a stone fort, and there also are stone circles. Other relics of a remote antiquity lie to the south, about Llyn Irddyn, to be reached by ascending the valley of the Ysgethin. Here are camps, remains of a prehistoric village, and cairns.

At Llanfair, in the church, is a stained-glass window to the memory of Ellis Wynne, and his birthplace, Glasynys, is about a mile and a half from Harlech. Ellis Wynne was born there in 1671. Some twenty-five years before he saw the light Harlech Castle had been the scene of many a fray between Roundheads and Cavaliers, and of the last stand made by the Welsh for King Charles. The remembrance of these events must have been fresh as he grew up.

In 1703 he published *The Visions of the Sleeping Bard*, which has ever since been regarded as a classic

work in Welsh prose. It was not original in its inception. In 1668 Sir Robert l'Estrange had published his translations of Gomez de Quevedo's *Dreams*, and this must have fallen into the hands of Ellis Wynne. Quevedo had his visions of the World, of Death, and Hell, and Wynne followed in having the same.

The same characters are represented in both, the same classes are satirised, and the same punishments are meted out.

Wynne had also composed a *Vision of Heaven*, but when it was detected that he was a plagiarist, he was so annoyed that he threw his manuscript into the fire.

Nevertheless, *The Visions of the Sleeping Bard* remains, and ever will remain, a Welsh classic.

> "No better model exists of the pure idiomatic Welsh of the last century, before writers became influenced by English style and method. Vigorous, fluent, crisp, and clear, it shows how well our language is adapted to description and narration. It is written for the people, and in the picturesque and poetic strain which is always certain to fascinate the Celtic mind."[5]

On a summer day the bard ascends one of the Welsh mountains "spy-glass in hand. Through the clear, tenuous air and the calm, shimmering heat, I beheld far, far away over the Irish Sea many a fair scene." So he falls asleep, dreams, and finds himself among the fairies, whom he approaches, and of whom he requests permission to join their society. They snatch him up forthwith and fly away with him over lands and seas, till they reach the Castle Delusive, where an Angel of light appears, and delivers him from their hands.

With the angel as his guide he visits the City of

Destruction, and its streets, Pride, Lucre, Pleasure. Then he soars to the City of Emmanuel.

The whole is allegorical and far-fetched, and absolutely intolerable to modern taste; but there was a time, and that not far distant, when allegory was much appreciated in Wales. In England also, Bishop Wilberforce, with his *Agathos*, and Munro, with his *Dark River* and other tales of like character, were the last of a school that has, happily, passed away for ever.

Ellis Wynne and his guide traverse the Well of Repentance and come to the Catholic Church, on the roof of which sit various princes brandishing their swords as her protectors.

Over the transept of the Church of England sits Queen Anne, holding the Sword of Justice in the left hand, and the Sword of the Spirit in the right. "Beneath the left sword lay the Statute Book of England, and beneath the other a big Bible. At her right hand I observed throngs clad in black—archbishops, bishops, and learned men upholding with her the Sword of the Spirit, whilst soldiers and officials, with a few lawyers, supported the other sword."

He does not paint the Welsh Church as in a satisfactory condition in his day. The angel seats him in the rood-loft of one of them, "and we saw some persons whispering, some laughing, some staring at pretty women, others prying at their neighbours' dress from top to toe, others showing their teeth at one another, others dozing, others assiduous at their devotion, but many of these latter dissimulating"; and he points out the irreverence and sacrilege caused by the law that required a man to be a communicant before he could receive office.

Ellis Wynne died in 1734, and is buried under the altar at Llanfair.

Mochras Spit, a grand field for finding shells, is the starting-point of the Sarn Badrig, a reef that runs for something like twenty miles into the Cardigan Bay, and is about four yards wide. At ebb tide about nine miles are exposed, but the foam about the rest can be traced far out to sea. Traditionally it was one of the embankments that enclosed the Cantref y Gwaelod, the low-lying hundred, well peopled, that contained twelve fortified towns, but which was submerged in the fifth century through the folly of the drunken Seithenin, who neglected to keep up the sea-wall. The story has been told already.

A short poem attributed to Gwyddno, whose territory was overwhelmed, has been preserved, in which he laments:—

> "Stand forth, Seithenyn, and behold the dwelling of heroes, the plain of Gwyddno is whelmed in the sea,
> Accursed be the sea-warden, who, after his carousal, let loose the destroying fountain of the raging deep.
> Accursed be the watcher, who, after drunken revelry, let loose the fountain of the desolating sea.
> A cry from the sea rises above the ramparts; to heaven does it mount,—after fierce excess comes a long lull.
> A cry from the sea arouses me in the night season.
> A cry from the sea rises above the winds.
> A cry from the sea drives me from my bed at night."

Llanaber Church, which has been restored, deserves a visit from either Harlech or Barmouth. It was built in the thirteenth century, and is in the pure Early English style. In the east end is a single lancet. The nave has a clerestory. The exterior is plain, and

all the enrichment is within. An inscribed stone is inside that was rescued from serving as a footbridge over the Ceilwart. It bears on it, "Cælexti Monedorigi."

All the district from Barmouth to the Aber Glaslyn comprises Ardudwy, and the mountains are of Cambrian grit, "an immense block of mountains running from Maentwrog to Barmouth, and separating the Harlech country from all the eastern portion of Merionethshire. Although they all constitute the same group without a single break, they are called by different names according to the most prominent points" (Murray). They are strewn with small tarns that are interesting, though not enclosed by craggy walls, and abound in fish.

The story goes that the men of Ardudwy, like the early Romans, finding themselves short of women, made an incursion into the Vale of Clwyd and brought away a number of the fairest damsels, whom they conveyed into their own country. They were pursued and overtaken at a place called Beddau Gwyr Ardudwy, where a fight ensued. Instead of the women acting as did the Sabine damsels, rushing between the combatants and separating them, the maidens, seeing their ravishers get the worst of it, precipitated themselves into the lake that now bears the name of Llyn-y-Morwynion, where they were drowned, rather than return to their homes.

The mountains are traversed by an ancient paved road, called the Roman Steps, that comes from the valley of the Afon Erbu at Pont Grible, and strikes past the Llyn-y-Morwynion to Llyn Cwm Bychan, and thence to Talsarnau (the Head of the Roads), whence passage was made across the Traeth Bach to Mynffordd. It would seem to have been a branch from the Sarn Helen, which followed very nearly the

course of the modern road, as straight as an arrow, from Dolgelley to Maentwrog.

At Egryn, between Llanaber and Llanddwywe, was formerly an abbey, but of that nothing now remains, and its site is occupied by a farmhouse. Here lived in his early days William Owen Pughe, an enthusiastic antiquary and lover of all things Celtic. In 1785 he laid the foundation of his great work, a Welsh-English Dictionary, which was printed and published in London in 1803. Some idea of the richness of the Welsh language may be gained from the fact that, whereas Johnson's English Dictionary, as enlarged by Todd, contains about 61,000 words, the first edition of Dr. Pughe's Welsh Dictionary contained as many as 100,000 words.

Another great work in which he was engaged was the transcription and editing of the three volumes of the *Myvyrian Archæology of Wales*, a mine of information on the early history of Wales. It was published in 1801-7.

As a number of the MSS. printed have been since destroyed by the fires that have consumed so many Welsh houses and their libraries, we may well be thankful that the publication was then made.

One of the most disastrous of the fires which have caused so much of Welsh literature to perish was that of Llwyd's collection. Edward Llwyd, born in 1660, devoted his life to the accumulation of materials relative to Wales. He visited Ireland, Cornwall, Brittany, and Scotland in quest of MSS., and formed a compilation of his collections in forty volumes in folio, ten in quarto, and above a hundred in smaller size. These were offered, after his death, to Jesus College, Oxford, but owing to Dr. Wynne, then Fellow of Jesus, having been on bad terms with Llwyd, the college, by his advice, refused the offer.

They were then purchased by Sir Thomas Seabright, of Beechwood, in Hertfordshire, in whose library they remained till 1807, when they were sold to Sir Watkyn Williams Wynn, Bart. Some years afterwards the greater and more valuable portion of these priceless documents was transmitted to London to a binder. His premises caught fire, and the result of Llwyd's life-labours was consumed.

Another disastrous fire was that of Hafod, near Aberystwyth. This was a residence of the Johnes family, and in the library was a large collection of Welsh manuscripts on various subjects—history, medicine, poetry, and romance. The house and library were both destroyed in a conflagration that broke out.

> "The fire," says George Borrow, "is generally called the great fire of Hafod, and some of those who witnessed it have been heard to say that its violence was so great that the burning rafters mixed with flaming books were hurled high above the summits of the hills. The loss of the house was a matter of triviality compared with that of the library. The house was soon rebuilt—but the library could never be restored."

Again, in 1858, the fine collection of Welsh MSS. at Wynnstay was destroyed by fire. Thus a literature perishes, and every effort should be made to print what remains.

CHAPTER XIV
WELSHPOOL

Montgomery—Offa's Dyke—The castle—George Herbert—The church and its screen—The "Robber's Grave"—Story of John Newton—Situation of Welshpool—The Severn Valley—Buttington—Parish church of Welshpool—Cottage of Grace Evans—Escape of Lord Nithsdale from the Tower—Powysland Museum—Castell Coch—Cadwgan ab Bleddyn—Iorwerth ab Bleddyn—Ghost story—Guilsfield—The church—Old yews—Holy wells—Meifod—Charles Lloyd—S. Tyssilio—His story—His cook and the conger—Mathrafal—Meifod Church—Lake Vyrnwy—Anne Griffiths—The spirit-stone—The wishing-stone.

THE luckless town of Montgomery has taken a back seat. The railway runs at a distance of two miles from it, and it is uncertain whether at the station a visitor will find a conveyance to take him to it. And at that station there is no hotel at which a trap can be hired. A bus does, I believe, make an occasional trip to it, but as it only now and then finds anyone there wanting to go to Montgomery it is discouraged and reluctant to go again.

Montgomery is out of the question as a centre, but it would be a delightful corner into which to

creep from the swirl of business, curl up, and go to sleep.

The active, vigorous life of the county has been drawn away to Newtown and to Welshpool, and the condition of Montgomery, to all appearances, is hopeless, unless the line be continued from Minsterley, in which case it will be put into direct communication with Shrewsbury. It lies very close to the English frontier, and Offa's Dyke runs along the edge of Long Mountains, and through Lymore, close to it, and that was the boundary set in the eighth century, beyond which no Welshman was to pass. It is a pity it was not to be a line of demarcation which every Norman-English ruffian was forbidden to transgress.

Curiously enough, when Offa, king of Mercia, drew this line he did not appreciate the importance of Montgomery, and so left it to the Welsh; but the Normans perceived the advantages of such a position in a moment, seized it, and constructed a formidable castle therein. The ridge on which the castle stands dominated the country round and must have had an oppidum on it, or camp of refuge, from the earliest time. Whether the earthworks to the west of the ruins belong to a prehistoric camp, or to the structure built by Baldwin de Bollers in 1121, is uncertain; they go by the name of Ffridd Faldwyn, bear his name, but have the look of having been old when he was born. The castle had been accorded before him by the Conqueror to Earl Roger de Montgomeri. It has undergone siege after siege, has changed hands, been demolished and rebuilt, and was finally destroyed by the Roundheads after the siege in 1644, when it had been held for the King by Lord Herbert.

The ridge rises steeply from the town clothed in

woods; the ruins themselves are inconsiderable. In this castle, not then in ruins, according to Izaak Walton, was born the saintly George Herbert, in 1593. He was the fifth son of Richard Herbert, a younger brother of the celebrated Lord Herbert of Cherbury. In his fourth year his father died, so that, with his brothers and sisters, he was left under the sole charge of that excellent woman his mother, who subsequently married Sir John Danvers. He grew up to be a good scholar, and became an attendant at court, in expectation of preferment. But at length, weary of such dancing attendance on court favour, he retired into Kent, "where," says his biographer, "he lived very privately. In this time he had many conflicts with himself, whether he should return to the painted pleasures of a Court life or betake himself to a study of divinity and enter into sacred orders, to which his dear mother had often persuaded him. At last God inclined him to put on a resolution to serve at His altar." He was offered the prebend of Layton Ecclesia, in the diocese of Lincoln, whilst still a layman.

In 1628 he married Jane, daughter of Mr. Charles Danvers, a near relative of his stepfather.

> "Mr. Danvers having known him long and familiarly did so much affect him that he often declared a desire that Mr. Herbert would marry any of his nine daughters, but rather his daughter Jane, because Jane was his beloved daughter. Mr. Danvers had so much commended Mr. Herbert to her, that Jane became so much a Platonick as to fall in love with Mr. Herbert unseen. This was a fair preparation for a marriage; but, alas! her father dyed before Mr. Herbert's retirement; yet some friends to both parties procured their meeting, at which time a mutual affection entered both their hearts, and love having got such possession governed, insomuch that she changed her name into Herbert the third day after this first interview."



CHURCH, MONTGOMERY

A few months after the marriage, the Earl of Pembroke obtained for him from the King the living of Bemerton, whilst he was still in deacon's orders, but he was speedily ordained priest.

> "When, at his induction he was shut into Bemerton Church, being left there to toll the bell, as the law requires him, he staid so much longer than an ordinary time before he returned to his friends, that staid expecting him at the church door, that his friend Mr. Woodnot looked in at the church window, and saw him lie prostrate on the ground before the altar; at which time and place (as he after told Mr. Woodnot) he set rules to himself for the future manage of his life; and then and there made a vow to labour to keep them."

He died of consumption in 1632, aged 39.

It is remarkable that Wales should have given to England two of her sweetest sacred singers, George Herbert and Henry Vaughan.

The church of Montgomery, an interesting

building with Early English arcade, is cruciform with a modern tower at the extremity of the northern transept. It possesses a superb carved-oak screen with rood-loft and good stalls, but the quaint misereres have been badly mutilated. The church contains a good deal of Early English work, but the east and west windows are Perpendicular.

In the graveyard, in a remote corner, is "The Robber's Grave," a bare space even with the surrounding ground, and it remains bare, although the grass grows luxuriantly about it.

Fresh soil has been frequently spread over it, and seeds of various kinds have been sown, but not a blade for many years was known to spring there—the soil remained sterile. Until recently the bare patch was of the size and shape of a coffin, but of late the surrounding grass has somewhat encroached; nevertheless the coffin-shape remains. The date of the grave is 1821.

The story relating to it is this. A widow named Morris and her daughter occupied a farm called Oakfield in the parish. The farmer, James Morris, had been a dissipated, neglectful man, and had left his wife and child in distressed circumstances. The little estate had formerly belonged to a yeoman farmer named Pearce, and Thomas, who now represented this family, hoped with his savings to be able, when the Morrises were down, to recover Oakfield.

Jane Morris, the daughter, was a comely wench, and a farmer of the neighbourhood named Robert Parker had taken a fancy to her, but as he was much her senior, she did not receive his addresses cordially. Shortly before the death of James Morris, a young man named John Newton had been taken into service at Oakfield. He was a shy, reserved man, but

honest and hardworking, and with his energetic help the widow's affairs began to mend, and the prospect of a sale of the property became remote. Moreover, Jane and John Newton fell in love with each other, and the mother considered that the match would be altogether what was best for the farm. Both Parker and Pearce were incensed and disappointed, and determined upon being revenged on John Newton.

An opportunity for accomplishing this purpose occurred. Newton had been attending a fair in the neighbourhood, and had been detained by business to a late hour. He did not leave till six in the evening, and the night was one in November. At some little distance from the town Pearce and Parker awaited him, and after a struggle overmastered him, brought him back into the town, and took him before a magistrate, charging him with an attempt to rob them on the highway. Newton was committed and tried.

At the assizes he employed no counsel for his defence, did not cross-question the witnesses, but contented himself with solemnly protesting his innocence. However, the testimony of the two men Pearce and Parker was clear, positive, and unshaken. They were men of respectability and repute, and he was pronounced "Guilty."

When Newton was asked if he had anything to say why sentence of death should not be pronounced upon him, he repeated his assertion that he was guiltless. "But, my lord," he said, "if it be true that I am guiltless in this matter, I am not so in another with which I am not charged, and of which none know but myself. And I ask of Almighty God to bear testimony to my innocence of the crime wherewith I am charged, by not suffering the grass, for one generation at least, to cover my grave."

Newton was executed and buried in this corner of the churchyard, and his grave is the blank spot spoken of.

Parker soon after left the neighbourhood, became a dissolute and drinking man, and was killed by the blasting of the rock in the limeworks in which he had found employment. Pearce became low, dissipated, and gradually wasted away.

Curiously enough, the English county border of Shropshire does not follow Offa's Dyke south of Montgomery, but stretches inwards a mile and three-quarters in length, forming a tongue half a mile across.

A chain of camps extends north and south from Montgomery above the Severn Valley.

The towns where there is real activity in Montgomeryshire are Welshpool and Newtown.

Welshpool is a pleasantly situated little place among the hills, about half a mile from the Severn. It takes its name from the Llyndu, in the park of Powis Castle; but the Welsh name for it is Trallwng, or Trallwm, "across the vortex"—that is to say, the llyn, which tradition says will some day burst its bounds and overwhelm the town.

On the west are the wooded slopes of Bron y Buckley and Gungrog. The little stream that waters the town is the Lledau.

The Severn for some miles above and below Welshpool flows through a broad valley that is a dead level, and stretches to the bases of two ranges of flanking hills which start abruptly from the broad expanse of river flat. That beyond the river is the Long Mynd and then comes the Breidden. This stretch of level is caused by the overflow of the Severn, which floods it all at times, giving to the

basin the appearance of a tidal estuary.

North-east of Welshpool is the quaintly shaped Rallt, with the steep side towards the Severn, and dividing that valley from the basin in which stands Guilsfield.

Below the town by Buttington was the scene of a complete overthrow of the Danes by the allied English and Welsh forces, in 894, under Ethelred, Ethelm, and Ethelnoth, eorldermen, whilst King Alfred was engaged in fighting another body of them in Devon. The Danes had formed a camp near the river on low ground, and the Anglo-Welsh army surrounded it. The Danes were in such distress that they ate their horses. Then they burst forth from their camp and fought desperately. Several thanes were slain, "and of the Danishmen was made great slaughter."

The parish church of Welshpool stands on high ground, and was built about the year 1275. But very little remains of the original church; the lower stages of the tower, with its archway into the nave, and an Early English window in the north gable behind the organ are all. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the nave was rebuilt, with a north and a south aisle; but in the eighteenth century the arcade on the south was removed, and the outer walls rebuilt.

This gives to the church a lop-sided appearance internally, as the chancel arch is thrown on one side of the unusually broad nave. The fine rood-screen was destroyed in or about 1738, when the parishioners appealed to the bishop for permission to remove it, because "a great number of the very common sorte of people sit in it (under pretence of psalm-singing), who run up and down there; some of them spitting upon the people's heads below."

Hanoverian windows and galleries were added, and the church made as ugly as well could be. It has, however, been taken in hand since, and made more decent. It still retains a fine carved-oak roof in the chancel, supposed to have come from Strata Marcella Abbey.

The key of the church—in Wales nearly every church is kept locked—is kept at a picturesque little black and white cottage at the east end, in which once lived Grace Evans, who assisted Lady Nithsdale, a daughter of the Duke of Powis, in effecting her husband's escape from the Tower of London.

Lady Nithsdale wrote an account of the whole affair to her sister, and in it she always speaks of the humble Welsh girl Grace as "My dear Evans."

William Maxwell, fifth Earl of Nithsdale, had been involved in the Jacobite cause, was taken prisoner, and committed to the Tower. "As a Roman Catholic upon the frontiers of Scotland, who headed a very considerable party, a man whose family had signalised itself by its loyalty to the royal house of Stuart would become an agreeable sacrifice to the opposite party," wrote Lady Nithsdale.

But one day was left before the execution. She appealed to Parliament for permission to intercede with the King for a pardon, and this was granted. She flew to the Tower, and "I told the guards as I passed by that the petition had passed the House—I gave them some money to drink to the Lords and to His Majesty."

But she had doubts that a pardon would be granted.

> "I then sent for Mrs. Mills, with whom I lodged, and acquainted her with my design of attempting my lord's escape, as there was no prospect of his being pardoned, and that this was the last night before the

execution. I told her that I had everything in readiness, and that I trusted she would not refuse to accompany me, that my lord might pass for her. At the same time I sent to Mrs. Morgan, to whose acquaintance my dear Evans had introduced me, and I immediately communicated my resolutions to her. She was of a very tall slender make, so I begged her to put under her own riding-hood one that I had prepared for Mrs. Mills, as she was to lend hers to my lord, that in coming out he might be taken for her. When we were in the coach, I never ceased talking, that they might have no leisure to reflect. On our arrival at the Tower, the first that I introduced was Mrs. Morgan (for I was only allowed to take in one at a time). She brought in the clothes that were to cover Mrs. Mills when she left her own behind her. When Mrs. Morgan had taken off what she had brought for the purpose, I conducted her back to the staircase, and, in going, I begged her to send me my maid to dress me; that I was afraid of being too late to present my last petition that night if she did not come immediately. I despatched her safe, and went downstairs to meet Mrs. Mills, who had the precaution to hold her handkerchief to her face, as is natural for a woman to do when she is going to take her last farewell of a friend on the eve of his execution. Her eyebrows were inclined to be sandy, my lord's were very dark and thick; however, I had prepared some paint of the colour of hers to disguise his with; I also brought an artificial head-dress (wig) of the same coloured hair as hers; and I painted his face with white, and his cheeks with rouge, to hide his beard, which he had not time to shave. The guards, whom my slight liberality the day before had endeared me to, let me go quietly out with my companion, and were not so strictly on the watch as they had been. I made Mrs. Mills take off her own hood, and put on that which I had brought for her; I then took her by the hand, and led her out of my lord's chamber, and in passing through the next room, in which were several people, I said, 'My dear Mrs. Catherine, go in all haste, and send me my waiting-maid. I am to present my petition to-night, and if I let slip this opportunity I am undone, for to-morrow will be too late.' Everybody in the room, chiefly the guards' wives and daughters, seemed to compassionate me exceedingly, and the sentinel officiously opened me the door. When I had seen her

> safe out, I returned to my lord, and finished dressing him. When I had almost finished dressing my lord in all my petticoats except one, I perceived it was growing dark, and was afraid that the light of the candles might betray us, so I resolved to set off. I went out leading him by the hand, whilst he held his handkerchief to his eyes. I spoke to him in the most piteous tone of voice, bewailing the negligence of Evans, who had ruined me by her delay. Then I said, 'My dear Mrs. Betty, for the love of God, run quickly and bring her with you; I am distracted with this disappointment.' The guards opened the door, and I went downstairs with him, still conjuring him to make all possible despatch. At the bottom of the stairs I met my dear Evans, into whose hands I confided him."

Grace Evans managed a place of concealment for Lord Nithsdale till he could be smuggled to the Venetian ambassador's, and thence to Dover, dressed as a lacquey, behind the ambassador's coach and six. There he was put on board a boat and conveyed to Calais.

The Powysland Museum deserves a visit. It contains many objects connected with local history and antiquities, among others a bronze bell of Celtic character from Llangystennin Church, Roman remains from Caersws, and mediæval from Strata Marcella.

But the chief object of interest in the district is Castell Coch, the Red Castle of Powys.

This stands boldly out on a rock that has been hewn into terraces. It is a stately Elizabethan mansion, but underwent injudicious handling by Sir Robert Smirke, the architect, at a period when the true characteristics of mediæval architecture and that of the Tudor period were not grasped. The walls are older than the Elizabethan period, when it was remodelled. It contains much that is worth seeing—tapestries, old furniture, and paintings.

James II. raised William Lord Powis to a dukedom after his flight from England in 1689. The second Duke of Powis was implicated in the rebellion of 1715, and was sent to the Tower. The dukedom became extinct in 1748.

Cadwgan ab Bleddyn, prince of Powys, began to build a castle here in 1110. He and his brothers Madog and Rhirid ruled in the three portions of Powys. Filled with ambition, they combined to attack South Wales, and drove away King Rhys, who fled to Ireland, but returned, and in a battle with the sons of Bleddyn the brothers of Cadwgan were killed. He had, however, two more—Iorwerth and Meredydd.

In 1102 Robert de Belesme, Earl of Shrewsbury, rebelled against Henry I., and induced Cadwgan and his brothers to make common cause with him. King Henry, however, opened secret communications with Iorwerth, and by large promises bribed him to arrest and deliver over his brother Meredydd to him. Iorwerth did this, but when he appealed to Henry for his stipulated reward the King contemptuously refused to ratify his engagement, and had Iorwerth seized and imprisoned.

In 1103 Meredydd found means of escaping, and returned to Wales. Then ensued the troubles with Owen, son of Cadwgan, who carried off Nest, wife of Gerald of Windsor, as has been related elsewhere.

The wily Bishop of Hereford entered into negotiations with Ithel and Madog, sons of the deceased Rhirid, and nephews of Cadwgan and Iorwerth, to stir up civil war in Powys and Ceredigion.

Iorwerth had by this time also left his prison, and had returned to Powys, and from Mathrafal issued a proclamation against these turbulent princes. But

Madog, hearing that his uncle Iorwerth was at Caereinion, near Welshpool, with few attendants, stealthily surrounded the building and set fire to it. Iorwerth attempted to escape from the flames, but was thrust back into them by the spears of his nephew's followers, and perished.

Not long after, Cadwgan was looking at the works in progress at Castell Coch, when Madog, with his attendants, crept through the woods, fell on him, and murdered him also.



POWIS CASTLE

In reward for having done to death his two uncles Henry I. received him favourably, and invested him with lands and paid him a large sum of money. But Meredydd, another uncle, remained, and in 1111 he entered the lands of his nephew Madog, discovered his whereabouts by torturing one of his servants, captured him, and handed him over to Owen, son of Cadwgan, who put out his eyes.

Owen would have killed him but that he and Madog had previously sworn friendship and fidelity to each other.

A rather curious ghost story attaches to Powis Castle. It occurs in the autobiography of the grandfather of the late Mr. Thomas Wright, a well-known antiquary. It was told to Mr. Wright in 1780 by Mr. John Hampson, a Methodist preacher.

Mr. Hampson, having heard rumours that a poor unmarried woman who had attended on his ministry had conversed with a spirit, sent for her and took down her deposition. It was to this effect. She was accustomed to get her livelihood by spinning hemp and flax, and she was wont to go from farm to farm to inquire for work, and whilst employed was given meat, drink, and lodging.

One day she called at Castell Coch for this purpose, and was received by the steward and his wife, who set before her a heap of material that would occupy her some days to spin.

The earl and family were at that time away in London.

When bed-time arrived two or three of the servants, each with a lighted candle, conducted the woman to her bedroom, which was on the ground floor, and handsomely furnished. They gave her a good fire, and left a candle alight on the table, and then wished her good night.

She was somewhat surprised at so many servants attending her, as also at being accorded so grand a room. Before retiring to bed, she pulled out of her pocket a Welsh Bible, and began to read a chapter. Whilst thus engaged she heard the room door open, and turning her head, saw a gentleman enter in a gold-laced hat and waistcoat; he walked to one of the

windows, and resting his elbow on the sill, stood in a leaning posture with his head in his palm.

Not knowing what to make of this, she watched the apparition for some time, and then kneeling said her prayers. Presently the figure turned and left the room.

After the lapse of a short time, he again appeared and walked across the room. Then the woman said, "Pray, sir, who are you, and what do you want?" He raised his finger and said, "Follow me." She at once took the candle and obeyed. He led her through a long panelled passage to the door of a chamber, which he opened and entered.

> "As the room was small, and I believed him to be a spirit," she said, "I halted 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. '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, said he, 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. Will you see it done?' I said, 'I will do my best to get it done.' He said, 'Do, and I will trouble this house no more.' He then walked out of the room and left me. I stepped to the door and set up a shout. The steward and his wife and the other servants came in to me immediately, all clung together, with a number of lights in their hands. 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."

The box was afterwards forwarded to the earl in London, and he sent down orders to his steward to inform the hemp-spinner that he would provide for her during the rest of her days. And Mr. Hampson

said it was a well-known fact that she had been so provided for, and was still so at the time she gave him the account.

The country around Welshpool is marvellously rich and is splendidly timbered, and the black-and-white old mansions and farms nestling among the foliage are most picturesque. But one wonders, among the gentlemen's seats adjoining one another, where is room for farmers and cottiers to come in?

Guilsfield, or Cegidfa, the Hemlock field, is situated in a basin, rich and fertile, and on the way to it the delightful timber-and-plaster house of Old Garth is passed on the right.

The church dedicated to S. Aelhaiarn is Decorated, with a Perpendicular east window, and a fine carved ceiling in the chancel. The modern pitch-pine roofing of the nave and aisles is mean and out of character with the old work, as is also the modern screen, which is not only coarse in design, but has been carried half-way up the doorway that gave access to the ancient loft.

In the churchyard are some fine yews. By one is a tombstone with the inscription:—

"Under this yew tree
Buried would he be,
For his father and he
Planted this yew tree,"

and the monument is to Richard Jones, who died, aged ninety years, on December 10th, 1707.

The font has on it some curious carving, and in the porch is an oak chest hewn out of a single trunk.

A holy well a mile and a half distant is in a pretty dingle; it is frequented on Trinity Sunday, when its water is drunk with sugar, and is still regarded as possessing curative properties.

A more interesting holy well is at Llanerfyl. Under a grand old yew tree in the churchyard, said to be the staff of the saint which rooted itself there, is the only Romano-British inscribed stone in the county. Some fragments of the saint's shrine remain.

The well, Pistyll y Cefn, Bedwog, lies in a field a quarter of a mile distant from the village. It is in fair preservation, built up and covered with large granite slabs, but the water has been drained away. Formerly people assembled there on Whit Sunday and Trinity Sunday to drink sugar and water at the well.

Meifod, in the valley of the Vyrnwy, is also in a fertile neighbourhood. Above the village rises the mountain called the Hill of the Anchorite, with a bald head, blushing with heather, and crowned with ancient earthworks.

Meifod was the summer residence of the kings of Powys, but was given by Brochwel to his son Tyssilio when he entered religion, and he founded here an abbey which became important.

His mother was Arddun, daughter of Pabo Post Prydain, whose monument we have seen in Anglesey. He was great-grandson of Cadell Deyrnllwg, who founded the dynasty of the kings of Powys after the expulsion of Benlli by S. Germanus.

The first Abbot of Meifod was Gwyddfarch. Tyssilio found the old man one day full of the project of going to Rome. But he was too advanced in age for such a journey, and Tyssilio said to him, "I know what this journey to Rome means; you want to see the palaces and churches there. Dream of them instead of going." Then he took the abbot a long mountain trudge, till he was thoroughly exhausted and declared that he could go no further. So Tyssilio bade him lie down on a grassy bank and rest. And

there Gwyddfarch fell asleep.

When he awoke, Tyssilio asked how he could endure a journey to Rome if such a country stroll tired him. And then the abbot informed him that he had dreamed of seeing a magnificent city, and that sufficed him.

Some time after this Gwyddfarch died, and Tyssilio succeeded him as abbot.

On the death of Brochwel this prince was succeeded by a son, who, however, died two years later without issue. This son's widow was a strong and determined character, and after consulting with the chief men of Powys, resolved on withdrawing Tyssilio from his monastery, marrying him, and making him king of Powys.

The times were full of peril, and a strong and able man was necessary for the post. But Tyssilio was not the right person for the occasion; he hated war, knew nothing of its practice, and, above all, objected to marrying his deceased brother's wife, and she such a masterful woman. So he refused. His sister-in-law took this as a personal affront. She was incapable of understanding that Tyssilio had a vocation for the monastic life, could not believe that he was intellectually and morally unfit for a life of war, and assumed that his refusal was due to personal dislike of herself. Therefore, as an offended woman, she did all in her power to injure and annoy the monks of Meifod.

The position of Tyssilio, close to Mathrafal, where the slighted widow resided, became intolerable. She seized the revenues of the abbey; and Tyssilio, to free his monks from persecution, fled with a few attached to his person and left Wales, crossed the sea, and entered the estuary of the Rance, near where now

stands S. Malo. The river forms a broad estuary of blue glittering water, up which the mighty tides heave gently, the waves broken and torn by a natural breakwater. Ascending this river for four miles, he found a point of high land with a long creek on the north, making of it a narrow peninsula. On this point of land Tyssilio drew up his boat, and there resolved on settling.

Tyssilio, like a prudent man, had not left Wales without taking his *chef de cuisine* with him, and this master of the kitchen, monk though he was, had an amour with a girl on the opposite side of the Rance. He was wont, Leander-like, to swim across and visit her. On one occasion as he was crossing, a monstrous conger eel curled itself about him, and the poor cook was in dire alarm. He invoked all the saints to come to his aid—Samson, Malo, his own master Tyssilio—none could deliver him till he thought on Maglorius of Sark, and called on him for assistance. At the same moment it occurred to him that he had his knife attached to his girdle, and unsheathing that, he hacked and sliced at the conger till it relaxed its hold, and so the poor fellow got across alive, and vowed he would never again go a-courting.

Whilst Tyssilio was in Brittany, news reached him that his sister-in-law was dead, and his monks wished him to return to Meifod. However, he was content to remain where he was, and he declined the invitation. The name by which he is known in Brittany is Suliau, or Suliac. His statue is over the high altar of his church on the Rance, and represents him as a monk in a white habit, a bald head, and holding his staff. It is a popular belief that as the staff is turned so is changed the direction of the wind. The old woman who cleans the church informed me that her husband, a fisherman, was

returning, but could not enter the harbour owing to contrary winds. She turned the crozier in the hand of the saint, and at once the wind shifted, and the boat arrived with full sails in the harbour. Tyssilio's ring is preserved in the church.



TYSSILIO'S RING AT SAINT-SULIAC

About three miles up the valley above the junction of the Banw and Vyrnwy, but on the former, are the mounds that mark the site of Mathrafal, the former palace of the kings of Powys after they were driven from Shrewsbury. They form a quadrangle with a tump at one angle immediately above the river, and there are indications of more extended earthworks cut through by the road and mostly levelled.

Meifod Church stands in an extensive yard, planted with avenues of fine trees. It has been much altered by rebuilding, but on the south side are round-headed arches, very rude, of early Norman work. The east window of the south aisle is Decorated, but that of the chancel is Perpendicular. Within the church is a richly carved late Celtic pillar with figures on it. The screen has been removed; it

was late in character, and is now stuck as a decoration against the wall of the chancel, and portions are worked into a partition shutting off the vestry from the church. This vestry occupies the site of the original church of S. Tyssilio.

Here is buried Madog, eldest son of Meredydd ab Bleddyn, prince of Powys, from whom is named one of the two divisions of Powys—Powys Fadog. He is not a man for whom one can feel any respect. He sided with Henry II. against his own countrymen, and took the command of the English fleet in the invasion of Anglesey, and was defeated with great loss. His second wife was Matilda Verdun, an Englishwoman; she had a temper, and he was of an amorous complexion, and they led a cat-and-dog life. At last he deserted her. She appealed to the English king, who ordered each party to appear at Winchester before him, and it was stipulated that each should have as retinue no more than twenty-four horses. Madog arrived with his horses and one man on each, but the lady with twenty-four horses and two men riding on each horse. The result was that she overbore him, and he was ordered to entail the lordships of Oswestry upon her and her heirs male, *by whomsoever* begotten; and he was thrown into prison, where he was murdered at her instigation. Thereupon she married John Fitz-Alan, Earl of Arundel, and carried the lordship of Oswestry to the English house. Madog died in 1161. His body was transported to Meifod.

Meifod is the parish whence came Charles Lloyd, the founder of Lloyd's Bank. He was born in 1637, and was a member of a very ancient family that was estated at Meifod, and his father was a county magistrate. Whilst a student at Oxford he took up with the new notions promulgated by George Fox,

and became a Quaker. In 1662 he was arrested and required to take the oath of allegiance. As he refused, the oppressive laws against sectaries were enforced against him with the utmost rigour. For ten years he was detained in prison at Welshpool, his possessions were placed under præmunire, his cattle sold, and the family mansion of Dolobran allowed to go to wreck and ruin. He was confined in "a little smoky room, and did lie upon a little straw himself for a considerable time." His wife, who had been tenderly nurtured, "was made willing to lie upon straw with her dear and tender husband."

When released he made over the family property to his son, and removed to Birmingham, where he became an ironmaster, realised much money, and founded Lloyd's Bank.

William Penn is thought to have visited him at Dolobran, and portions of the panels of oak have been removed as relics and carried to America.

A contemporary thus describes Charles Lloyd:—

> "He was a comely man in person, of an amiable countenance, quick of understanding, of a sound mind, and would not be moved about on any account to act contrary to his conscience, very merciful and tender, apt to forgive and forget injuries (even to such as were his enemies), and did good for evil, hated nothing but Satan, Sin, and Self."

He died in 1698.

His brother Thomas accompanied William Penn to Pennsylvania; another brother, John, was the ancestor of that very staunch Churchman, Bishop Lloyd, of Oxford, who is regarded as the initiator of the Oxford or Tractarian Movement.

Dolobran is still in the possession of the Lloyd family.

At Llangynyw, in the church, is a screen in position; there is no loft. The old oak porch is fine.

The adjoining parish is Llanfair Caereinion, the scene of the burning of Iorwerth by his nephew Madog.

The upper waters of the Vyrnwy have been dammed and converted into a lake to supply Liverpool with water. Now it fell out that when the dam was in course of construction there was a stone in the river called Carreg yr Ysbryd, or the Ghost Rock, and it had to be removed. This was supposed to cover an evil spirit that had been laid and banned beneath it. The Welsh labourers engaged on the works would have nothing to do with shifting the block; but the English navvies had no scruples, and they blasted the rock, and with crowbars heaved out of place the fragments that remained.

Then was revealed a cavity with water in it; and, lo! the surface was agitated, and something rose out of it. The Taffies took to their heels. Then an old toad emerged, hopped on to a stone, yawned, and passed its paws over its eyes, as though rousing itself after a long sleep.

“It’s nobbut a frog,” said the Yorkshire navvies. “It’s Cynon himself,” retorted the Welshmen. “Look how he gapes and rubs his face. You may see by that he has been in prison.”

After that, whenever a Taffy was observed to yawn, “Ah, ha!” said his mates; “clearly you have but recently come out of prison.”

Lake Vyrnwy is nearly four miles long, and is fed not only by the river that gives its name to the reservoir, but also by many torrents that dance down the mountain-sides, forming pretty waterfalls. The work of impounding this sheet of water was

commenced in 1881, and the water was stopped by closing the valves on November 28th, 1888. It has all the appearance of a natural lake, except from the lower end, where shows the magnificent dam, 161 feet high, but with 60 feet below of foundation.

Llanfyllin is the nearest station to Lake Vyrnwy. Near this is Llanfihangel yn Nghwnfa, where was born and lived one of the sweetest hymn-composers of Wales, Anne Griffiths. She first saw light at Dolwar Fechan, a farmhouse in this parish, in 1776, and was the youngest daughter of Mr. John Thomas, a farmer. She received such education as was to be obtained in a country school at that period, and acquired a smattering of English, some arithmetic, and a knowledge of reading and writing Welsh. She grew up to be a fresh-faced, comely, dark-eyed, and dark-haired young woman, and was fond of dancing and other innocent pleasures.

When aged about twenty she joined the Calvinistic Methodist sect, and thenceforth her life was distinguished for its devotional character and deep piety. In October, 1804, she married a Thomas Griffiths, of Cefn-du, Guilsfield, who came to live with her at Dolwar. In July, 1808, she gave birth to a child, that lived but a fortnight, and she survived it but another fortnight, dying at the age of thirty.

> "Thus living and dying in the seclusion and obscurity of a lonely mountain farmhouse, Anne Griffiths composed some of the sweetest and most precious hymns in the Welsh language, if not, indeed, in any language. They are not numerous—all that have been preserved being only about seventy-five verses—and they are too often marred by faults of composition and the transgression of the simplest rules of prosody, yet many of them are so rich in poetic fancy, sublime imagery, holy sentiment, and seraphic fervour, that they can never be forgotten so long as hymns are sung in the Welsh language.

> Mothers teach their babes to lisp them, and many a pious Christian has been heard faintly to whisper them in the hour of death."[6]

None of them were published during her life, and, indeed, it did not occur to her that they would ever appear in print, or would be esteemed beyond the circle of her own most intimate friends. She committed very few of them to writing, but she recited them to Ruth Hughes, a farm-servant with her, who treasured them in her memory; and they were taken down from Ruth's repetition some time after the death of Anne Griffiths. They were first published at Bala in 1806. They have recently been translated into English, but they do not bear rendering out of the Welsh in which they were composed.

In the churchyard of Welshpool is a stone—the Maen Llog. It is shapeless, and is said formerly to have stood in the abbey of Strata Marcella, and on it the abbots were installed. After the Dissolution it was brought to S. Mary's Church, and those who had to do penance were required to stand on it in a white sheet with a candle in one hand. During the Commonwealth the Puritan Vavasour Powell turned it out of the church, as an object of superstition; but in the graveyard it continued to be regarded with some respect, and was in request as a Wishing Stone. Those very ardently desiring something mounted it, and turning thrice sunways framed their wish; and so, before quitting Welshpool, I took care to mount it, turned the right way about, and wished prosperity to this cheerful little town and to its Powysland Club.

CHAPTER XV
NEWTOWN

Manufacture of cloth and flannel—Fine screen and ugly modern church—Sir John Pryce—Aberhafesp Church—S. Mark's Eve—Bed of an ancient lake—Caersws—Legend of Swsan—Obligations of a chieftain—How a tribe would increase—How to reduce the difficulty of providing land—Llanwnog—S. Gwynnog—Consequences to his family of the publication of the letter of Gildas—View from Llanwnog—Llanidloes Church—Richard Gwynn—Chartist riots—Poetical description of them—Robert Owen—Henry Williams—Richard Davies.

NEWTOWN is new in every particular except in its manufacture, and that of cloth and flannel was old enough in Wales, if we may judge by the spindle-whorls and shuttles found in camp and cairn; but the business once spread over the Principality is now concentrated at Newtown.

The ugly white brick church has taken the place of one that was old, and contained a magnificent screen. This has not been destroyed, but is preserved in a barn at the rectory. There is some talk of placing it once more in the church, where it would be like the proverbial jewel of gold in a swine's snout.

Sir John Pryce, fifth baronet, of Newtown Hall, was born in 1698, and succeeded to the title and

estates on the death of his father in 1720. He married first his first cousin Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Thomas Powell. She died in 1731.

One day Sir John was overtaken by a storm of rain whilst out shooting, and took refuge under a tree, and to the same shelter ran a girl, Mary, daughter of a small farmer of Berriew, named John Morris. As the rain continued to fall, Sir John Pryce was given plenty of time to make the girl's acquaintance, to fall in love with her, and to propose. This led to a second marriage.

But the humble origin of Lady Pryce led to much spiteful comment, and some people would assert that she had not been married to Sir John. This was absolutely untrue, but falsehood is believed if venomous. Whether it were this, or that she could not accommodate herself to her new situation, or the fact that the first Lady Pryce was kept, embalmed, by the bedside, or perhaps all together combined to weigh on her spirits, and she died of despondency after two years of married life. This was in 1739.

In July, 1741, the Rev. W. Felton, curate of Newtown, was dying, when, two days before his death, he received a long letter from Sir John Pryce, from which a few passages may be extracted:—

> "DEAR MR. FELTON,—I waited an opportunity yesterday of conferring with you in private; but, not finding the room in which you sat clear a minute, I am forced to communicate this way my thoughts. I have abundant reason to believe that you will immediately enter upon a happier state when you make an exchange, and I desire that you will do me the favour to acquaint my two Dear Wives, that I retain the same tender Affections and the same Honour and Esteem for their Memories which I ever did for their persons, and to tell the latter, that I earnestly desire, if she can obtain the Divine permission, that she will appear to me, to discover

the persons who have wronged her, and put me into a proper method of vindicating those wrongs which robbed her of her life and me of all my happiness in this world.

"I heartily wish you the Divine protection and assistance, and am

"Your Friend and Humble Servant,

"JON PRYCE.

"P.S.—I have sent you a Bottle of Mint Water, which, if you find too strong, you may dilute with Spring Water to what size you please."

Sir John wrote an elegy of a thousand lines on his second wife, in which he affirmed that with his latest breath he would "lisp Maria's name."

Ere long, however, he fell in love again, and this time with a widow, Eleanor Jones, and married her.

But when the lady found the bodies of his two preceding wives embalmed, one on each side of the matrimonial bed, she absolutely refused to enter it, and ordered their burial "before she would supply their vocation."

She also died, in 1748. Immediately Sir John wrote off to one Bridget Bostock, "the Cheshire Pythoness," who pretended to heal the sick by the faith-cure and with her "fasting spittle," which she supplied in corked and sealed bottles:—

"MADAM,—Being very well informed by very creditable people that you have done several wonderful cures, even when Physicians have failed ... why may not God enable you to raise the Dead as well as to heal the Sick, give sight to the Blind and hearing to the Deaf? Now I have lost a wife whom I most dearly loved, and I entreat you for God Almighty's sake that you would be so good as to come here, if your actual presence is absolutely requisite, to raise up my dear wife, Dame Eleanor Pryce, from the Dead.... Pray let me know by return of the Post, that I may send you a Coach and Six and Servants to attend you here, with orders to defray your expenses in a manner most suitable to your

desires.

"Your unfortunate afflicted petitioner & hble servt.

"JOHN PRYCE."

In compliance with this invitation Mrs. Bostock visited Buckland, in Brecknockshire, where Sir John then was, and exerted all her miracle-working powers, but without effect.

Sir John remained inconsolable—for a while. But from his will, dated 20th June, 1760, it appears that he was then meditating a fourth marriage. He, however, died before it took place. In his will he speaks of "that dearest object of my lawful and best and purest Worldly affections, my most dear and most entirely beloved intended wife, Margaret Harries, of the parish of S. Martin, Haverfordwest, spinster."

He died on October 28th, 1761, and was buried at Haverfordwest.

His son, Sir John Powell Pryce, sixth baronet, was an unfortunate man. Having by some accident injured his eyes, his wife applied to them a strong acid by mistake for a lotion, which entirely blinded him. But this was not all. Want of management, and wasteful living, obliged him to part with one estate after another, and at last he was thrown as a debtor into King's Bench, where his faithful wife joined him, and spent many years with him in the prison, till he died in 1776. With his son Edward Manley the title expired.

Three miles up the Severn above Newtown are two churches without villages attached—Penstrowed and Aberhafesp—on opposite sides of the Severn.

A story is told of the latter, a modern church with very bad glass in it. Two men, hearing that he who

remains in the church porch on S. Mark's Eve will see or hear something concerning those who are to die in the course of the year, resolved to keep watch there over midnight. One of them, wearied with the day's work, fell asleep. Presently, in the dead of night, the one who was awake heard a voice from within the church calling his fellow by name. He roused him, and said, "Let us go—it is of no use waiting longer here."

In the course of a few weeks, there was a funeral from the opposite parish of Penstrowed, and the departed was to be buried in Aberhafesp churchyard. There is no bridge nearer than that which spans the river at Caersws, and to take the body that way would mean a journey of over five miles. It was determined, therefore, to ford the river opposite Aberhafesp Church. The person who had fallen asleep in the porch volunteered to carry the coffin across the river, and it was placed on the saddle in front of him, and, to prevent it from falling, he was obliged to grasp it with both arms.

The deceased had died of an infectious fever, and the coffin-bearer was stricken, and within a fortnight was a dead man, and was the first parishioner who died in the parish of Aberhafesp that year.

The hills fall back above the two churches and allow of a broad level basin, once the bed of a fine lake, before it was silted up at the end of the Glacial Period. Here the Afon Garno, Paranon, and Ceryst, meet the Severn at Caersws, which was an important Roman station, at the junction of several roads, and where now the Mid-Wales line falls into the Cambrian Railway.

Caersws derives its name from a traditional Queen Swsan, that carried on a war with a prince

who reigned over a tribe on the south of the Severn. One day, seeing the enemy mustered on the Llandinam Hills, she crossed the river with her forces to give battle to the foe. The prince, occupying higher ground, was able to repel the attack; and the queen, seeing that her men were routed and in full flight, rode up to the prince and demanded to be put to death, that she might be buried in a great cairn beside her braves who had fallen. The prince replied that she was too gallant to be thus slain, and that he pardoned her; and further committed himself to her hands. Thenceforth their quarrels were fought out in private.

The Roman castrum may still be traced—it covers about seven acres. Excavations made here have given up coins of Vespasian, Domitian, and of later emperors, also Samian ware. Roman soldiers must have been very regardless as to the condition of their pockets, for wherever they went they dropped their money.

The plain would seem to have been a debatable ground from hoar antiquity, for every height about it is entrenched.

It was one of the first obligations of a chief of a Celtic tribe to provide every married man who was subject to him with a farm, with seven acres of arable land, seven of pasture, seven of woodland, and a share in commons. Now as the tribe grew and multiplied he was put to great straits, and the only way out of his difficulties, where all the available land was appropriated, was for him to oust a neighbour from his territories. This obligation weighed on a chief to the eighth generation. Now suppose that a man started to found a tribe, and had three sons, and each of these sons had three, and all married, and in each generation had the same

number. In the eighth, the tribe would consist of 2,673 marriageable men clamouring to be provided with farms of seven acres of arable, land, seven of forest, and seven of pasture. What could the chief do to satisfy them but lead them against a neighbour?

One way out of the difficulty was the establishment of monasteries. This explains the development of monachism on the steppes of Tartary, as well as in Wales and Ireland. On that high and sterile plateau in Central Asia, only a limited population can be maintained, and it is to keep down the growth of the population, as a practical expedient, that so large a portion of the males is consigned to celibacy. And it was this practical necessity that provoked the ascetic and celibate societies of the Druids first, and the Christian monks afterwards. When no new lands were available for colonisation, when the three-field system was the sole method of agriculture known, then the land which would now maintain three families at least, would support but one. To keep the equipoise there were migration, war, and compulsory celibacy as alternatives. That this really was a difficulty confronting the old Celtic communities we can see by a story of what occurred in Ireland in 657. The population had so increased that the arable land proved insufficient for the needs of the country. Accordingly an assembly of clergy and laity was summoned by Dermot and Blaithmac, kings of Ireland, to take the matter into consideration. It was decided that the amount of land held by any one householder should be restricted; and further the elders of the assembly directed that prayers should be offered to the Almighty to send a pestilence “to reduce the number of the lower class, that the rest might live in comfort.”

S. Fechin of Fore, on being consulted, approved of this extraordinary proposal. And the prayer was answered from heaven by a second visitation of the terrible Yellow Plague; but the vengeance of God caused the force of the pestilence to fall on the nobles and clergy, of whom multitudes, including the kings and Fechin of Fore himself, were carried off.

To this day, in Tyrol, where the farms cannot be subdivided, owing to the mountainous nature of the land, on the death of the father the sons draw lots who shall marry and take the farm. The rest work under their more fortunate brother, and remain single.



A FIFTEENTH-CENTURY STATUE AT LOCMINÉ

Llanwnog lies under the rounded, heathy

mountain of Ddifed, in rear of which are some tarns lying high. The church has in it a very fine and well-preserved screen and rood-loft, and an old stained-glass representation of the patron saint and founder of the church.

His name was Gwynnog, and he was a son of Gildas the historian.

At an early age Gildas committed his son to S. Finnian to be educated. Leaving his master when his education was complete, Gwynnog settled in this spot above the plain of Caersws, but the scurrilous pamphlet issued by his father from his safe retreat in Brittany seems to have fallen like a bombshell among those of his family who were in Wales and Cornwall, and obliged them to leave the territories of the princes against whom Gildas had hurled invectives. Cuneglas (or Cynlas) was prince of Powys at the time. Gildas called him “a bear, wallowing in filth, a tawny butcher.”

Cuneglas after this was not likely to deal tenderly with a son of the pamphleteer, and Gwynnog fled for his life to Brittany, to his father. It seems not improbable that he was elected Bishop of Vannes, where there had been sorry doings and ecclesiastical scandals, and the Church was looking out for a respectable ruler.

The Frank historian Gregory of Tours calls him Eunius, and says that he was over-fond of the bottle. Weroc II. was Count of Vannes at the time, and he was engaged in hostilities with Chilperic, king of the Franks, whom he defeated with great slaughter in 578. Chilperic made terms with the Breton chief, who undertook to pay tribute, but afterwards made difficulties about fulfilling his engagement, and sent Bishop Gwynnog, or Eunius, to Chilperic with a list of complaints. Chilperic was furious at this breach of

engagements, and resented it against the unoffending prelate, whom he sent into exile. Gwynnog died at Angers in 580, just ten years after his father.

The view from Llanwnog across the basin of the Severn at the mountains up the valleys of the Severn and the streams that pour into it is very beautiful.

A branch line from Moat Lane leads to Llanidloes at the junction of the Clywedog and Afon Tylwch with the Severn. Although the mountains here do not rise to a great height, they are broken and fine, and many beautiful walks may be taken up the glens of the tributaries of the Severn and over the heathy moors. The Afon Brochan may be ascended to a tarn from which the stream flows, or to the pretty lake Llyn Ebyr, three miles to the north.

Llanidloes possesses one of the finest churches in North Wales, with a richly carved oak roof, the hammer beams supported by angels bearing shields.

Richard Gwynn was a native of Llanidloes. He was educated at S. John's College, Cambridge, and must have been of poor parentage, for he was a sizar there. He could not reconcile himself to the religious changes in the reign of Edward VI., nor to the violence with which fanatics wrecked the churches; nor would he accept the claim of Queen Elizabeth to be "Supreme Governor" over the Church in England, the objectionable title "Supreme Head" having been put aside.

He lived quietly with his wife and children, keeping a school, at one time at Overton Madog, then at Wrexham, Gresford, and again at Overton; and had many scholars, as he led an exemplary life, and was well known for his learning and scholarship. He does not seem to have been mixed up with any seditious movements, or to have been associated

with the Jesuits. Nevertheless he was arrested in 1580 and cast into prison, and kept there for four years; he was treated with great harshness, and frequently tortured to force him to accept the Queen's supremacy. After several trials he was finally brought up at Wrexham Assizes in 1584 and condemned to death for high treason. The sentence was as follows:—

> "Richard White (*i.e.* Gwynn) shall be brought to prison from whence he came, and thence drawn on a hurdle to the place of execution, where he shall hang half dead, and so be cut down alive, his members cast into the fire, his belly ripped into the breast, his bowels, liver, lungs, heart, etc., thrown likewise into the fire, his head cut off, his body be parted into four quarters."

"What is all this?" said Gwynn. "Is it any more than one death?"

The sentence was carried out on October 15th, 1584.

Llanidloes was the scene of a Chartist outbreak in 1839. The weavers armed and requisitioned contributions from the neighbourhood. Lord John Russell, who was Home Secretary, sent down three police officers to cope with hundreds of rioters well armed with fowling-pieces, pistols, and hand grenades. The magistrates then, unsupported properly, took the matter into their own hands and swore in special constables. The crisis came on April 30th. A man blowing a horn summoned the Chartists to assemble on the Bridge, and three men were captured on their way to the assembly, and were conveyed to the "Trewythen Arms." The crowd now rushed to attempt a rescue, but was held at bay by fifty special constables. However, by weight and numbers, the rioters drove them away after a

struggle, entered the inn, and wrecked it; they liberated the three men who had been taken, and caught the ex-mayor, who appealed to the mob to spare his life, as he was a doctor who had brought many of them into the world. They let him go, and he left the town to give the alarm. For five days Llanidloes was ruled by mob law, but the Chartist leaders saw that no gross outrages were committed.

Matters had now become too serious to be dealt with in the mild manner Lord John Russell had thought might suffice. Military aid was sent. An old lady has recorded her reminiscences of the time.

> "The town," she says, "was in an uproar. The Chartists had been drilling in the Dingle. The news came that a regiment of soldiers was coming to put down the riots, and I can remember watching their arrival. I was standing in a crowd on the Bank, and the soldiers in red coats and brass helmets came up the Pool road, the band playing before them. I shall never forget the scene. The women and children were crying like wild things, they thought everybody was going to be slaughtered. The soldiers proceeded to Newtown Hall, followed by a great and excited crowd. Here they were met by George Arthur Evors, the chief magistrate, who gave instructions to fire. But the officer in charge refused. 'What,' he said, 'fire upon a lot of women and children? Certainly not.' The soldiers, after all, did no harm, but in the course of a row one man was killed with clubs. After that we did not hear much about the Chartists. Many of them left the country, and never returned. Some were arrested and put into gaol, others managed to hide till things had quieted down, and then came back. But poor Frost, Jones, and Williams were transported."

A schoolmaster of Newtown named George Thomas wrote a Hudibrastic poem on the riots, containing allusions and sly hits at local characters that were much relished at the time.

According to him—

"The rebels had a bullet mould,
A pistol rusty, crack'd and old,
Some bellows, pipes, and lucifers,
Tweezers, card-plates, and goose-oil cans,
With dust and other nameless pans,
Hot water, soapsuds, toasting prongs,
With cat-calls, horns, and women's tongues."

All ended with much noise and little harm done.

"When eggs were spent, tongues peace desir'd,
The spoils of war had brought no crust,
The rebels fled, the troops retir'd,
Covered with glory, sweat and dust."

In the old churchyard of Newtown may be seen the plain slab that covers the body of Robert Owen, the Socialist. He was born in the place, but his father was from Welshpool, and had set up business as saddler, ironmonger, and postmaster. Robert was born in 1771, and was sent to London to a situation in a haberdasher's shop. Thence he removed to Manchester, where he started cotton-spinning. His life is too well known to be given in full here, but a few points may be mentioned. He had imbibed very strong anti-religious ideas, and he was persuaded that the whole social world was topsy-turvy, and required reorganising on the new principles that he had excogitated.

"Character," said he, "is formed *for* and not *by* the individual, and society now possesses the most ample means and power to well form the character of everyone by reconstructing society on its own true principles"—that is to say, on those devised by Robert Owen.

In 1797 he started the "New Lanark Twist Company," in which his theories were to be carried out; but although the system was nominally and theoretically democratic, Robert Owen ruled as an

autocrat, and having a splendid organising and business head he made the scheme into a commercial success. Some of the partners could not agree to his plans, so he bought them out, but took in others, who also declined to let him rule despotically, and in disgust he went off to America to found a Socialistic community there on the wreck of an attempted German Communistic venture. This, however, failed, and when he returned to Scotland the partners in the New Lanark Twist Company had increased in number, and gave him to understand that they intended managing it in their own and not in his way.

Then he founded a Communistic Society at Orbiston, in Scotland, but this also slipped from his control. He next started a weekly paper, *The Crisis*, and an "Equitable Labour Exchange." The latter came to a disastrous end in 1833. After this little was heard of Robert Owen.

One of his early theories was that the universe was one great self-acting laboratory, and that all life, movement, thought, were results of chemical action.

His conception of the formation of character was bound to end in disappointment. Minds are not mere bits of blank paper on which you may write what you like; souls are not lumps of putty to be moulded to what form you will.

My dear father had been impressed with some of Robert Owen's doctrines, specially with this, and he set to work to shape my brothers and me each for a special profession, and to give each a separate bent; and the result was that we all went in clean opposite directions to what he purposed, and adopted professions which he had intended the others to enter.

Owen finally took up with table-rapping and Spiritualism, and supposed himself to be a medium through whom the Duke of Kent revealed the mysteries of the other world. Finally, as his health failed, a great longing came over him to return to his native place and die there.

> "And as a hare, when hounds and horns pursue,
> Pants for the place from whence at first it flew,"

so did he come back to Newtown, and there shortly after expired.

A little way down the Severn below Newtown is Llanllwchaiarn, a church founded by a brother of S. Aelhaiarn of Guilsfield. The parish is not of interest in itself, except as having given birth to, and been the residence of, a remarkable man, Henry Williams, of Ysgafell, one of the sturdiest Nonconformists of the time of the Restoration. His father owned the farm, which had belonged to the family for several generations.

The Conventicle Act, which came into force in 1664, imposed a penalty of £5 or three months' imprisonment on anyone frequenting a dissenting meeting, for the first offence; £10 or six months' imprisonment for a second offence; and for a third offence a fine of £100 or transportation beyond the seas.

Henry Williams was in prison from time to time during nine years. On one occasion a party of soldiers beset his house, and in the skirmish, as they attempted to enter, his father was knocked down and killed. On another the house was fired, and Mrs. Williams, taking one child in her arms and leading another, attempted to cross the Severn from the

soldiery, when one of them cocked his pistol and vowed to shoot her. However, the officer knocked the man down, and sent an escort to attend her to a friend's house.

Another time when Henry Williams was preaching the soldiers fell on him, beat, and nearly killed him. They seized his stock and devastated his farm. There was, however, one field that had been sown with wheat, not yet sprung up, which they could not or did not harm. That field throve amazingly, and the crop next summer surpassed in yield every other in the neighbourhood. Nothing like it had been seen, and at harvest the produce was so abundant as to repay the family for all its losses. There were six, seven, and eight full ears upon each stalk. Two of these stalk-heads have been preserved to the present day; one has on it seven ears, the other eight. The field where this marvellous crop was grown is known to this day as Cae'r Fendith, the Field of Blessing.

Some of the principal persecutors of Henry Williams died so strangely that it was regarded as a judgment of heaven upon them. One dropped suddenly from his chair dead whilst eating his dinner, a second was drowned in the Severn when drunk, and a third fell from his horse and broke his neck close to the house of Henry Williams, which he had plundered.

About half-way between Caersws and Machynlleth is Llanbrynmair, the birthplace of Richard Davies, known in Wales by his bardic name of Mynyddog, who is regarded as the Burns of his native land. He was born in 1833, and his father was a farmer. At an early age the poetic faculty displayed itself in him, and he wrote for several Welsh magazines, and won prizes at local literary meetings.

As his education had been but scanty, he laboured hard as a young man to make up for this deficiency. He was a tall, fine man, with an open, pleasant face, was full of a kindly, never caustic, wit; and he speedily became one of the most popular of Welsh poets. There is a freshness and flavour of the soil in his compositions, like those of Burns, but none of the coarseness of the Scotch poet. He died in 1877 at his residence, Bronygân, in Cemmes. It is hard, almost impossible, to give anything of the charm of his compositions in a translation, and I venture on one with the utmost diffidence.

"BOXER."

"Full many a lusty horse I've viewed,
When following father's team,
Would draw the plough, make furrow and ridge,
With the coulter's after gleam.
Now, fair befall
Good horses all!
But never a one can I recall
That could compare, in my esteem,
With Boxer, my father's horse.

"If I to bet were a bit inclined,
One hundred pounds I'd lay
On every hoof old Boxer had,
The best that fed upon hay.
But he would scorn,
As one well born,
To be accounted not worth a thorn.
He'd toss his head and proudly neigh
Unless he were leading horse.

"The chapel choir for a practice came,
It was upon Monday night,
To the glory of God an anthem sing
In harmony and might.
But each would lead,
And each decreed
That not a note would he proceed,
He'd hold it a purposed slur and slight

Unless he were leading horse.

"A deacon to choose at Tal-y-Coed,
Most woeful discord wrought,
For every chapel-member declared
The office was that he sought.
And he would scorn,
For this thing born,
To be set back, as not worth a thorn,
By all the *sciet*, a thing of naught!
For he would be leading horse.

"Our Boxer once was set in the shafts
When flow'ry June was gay,
And ordered to draw a wain, upheaped
With burden of balmy hay.
But he thought scorn
As one well born
To be accounted not worth a thorn,
In second place, and behind our bay,
For he would be leading horse.

"He backed, as stubborn as mule could be,
And, backing over a rock,
Adown he tumbled, with load atop,
A frightful wreckage and shock.
He broke his back,
For he would not hack
As a common cart-horse; and thus, alack!
The haughty Boxer was dead as a stock
Because he'd be leading horse.

"When folks see merit in any man,
That man will be thrust afore.
But he who elbows and pushes his way
Is surely esteemed a bore.
And I declare
Let all beware
Lest they the fall of Boxer share,
For that's the fate for him in store
Who'll only be leading horse."



OWEN GLYNDWR'S HOUSE, MACHYNLLETH

CHAPTER XVI
MACHYNLLETH

Pronunciation of the name—Owen Glyndwr—His history—David Gam—Fish—Lakes—Bugeilyn—Llyn Penrhaiadr—Towyn—Inscribed stone of S. Cadvan—Who Cadvan was—Tal y Llyn—Bass fishing—Llanegryn and its screen—Peniarth—The Wynn family—Welsh names—The Arms of Wales—The Three Feathers.

THE pronunciation of this name demands a smattering of knowledge as to how to speak it intelligibly to a Welshman; but the clerks at railway stations delivering tickets to the place are prepared to accept every laboured effort to pronounce and mispronounce it. To ensure being understood, call the place "Măhúntleth."

The town, a cheerful little place, clean, but without anything of much interest in it, is one of the six contributing boroughs of Montgomery. It has not even an old parish church; the structure that serves for the purpose is modern and poor in design. But it does retain a little plaster-and-timber house, nearly opposite the gates of the grounds of Plas Machynlleth, the place of the Marchioness of Londonderry, which is traditionally held to have been the dwelling in which Owen Glyndwr

assembled a parliament to consult as to the best means of resisting Henry IV., and the place also where an attempt was made to assassinate him by David Gam.

Owen Glyndwr was born about 1359 in South Wales, but descended from the princes of Powys, and he takes his name from Glyndyfrdwy in Yale. He first comes to notice as witness in a remarkable trial that lasted four years between the houses of Grosvenor and Scrope relative to rights to a certain coat-of-arms.

The story of rights over a common, which originated the struggle between Owen and Lord Grey of Ruthin, and brought on a contest with the whole power of England, that lasted through Glyndwr's life, has been already told.

The treachery of the unprincipled English baron led to the desolation of Wales, to rivers of blood being shed, and to a good deal of humiliation to his master, Henry IV.

It may be remembered that when, in 1400, King Henry was preparing an expedition against Scotland, he summoned Glyndwr to join his forces, but confided the summons to Grey to deliver. Lord Grey purposely suppressed it, and then represented Owen to the King as a malcontent and a rebel; whereupon, without inquiry into the matter, Henry IV. pronounced his estate forfeit.

The Welsh had sympathised with Richard II., and they regarded Bolingbroke as a usurper, but would have contented themselves with singing dirges to the memory of Richard, had they not been exasperated to revolt by the violence and injustice of the Marchers. Owen, enraged against Grey de Ruthin, at first made a personal quarrel of his wrongs; but this

soon developed and extended until it involved the whole of Wales, which rose against the English Crown.

In 1401 King Henry marched into North Wales, but the natives, and all those who held to Owen, retired into the mountains; and Henry returned to England, having effected nothing. He left Henry Prince of Wales, then a boy of thirteen, at Chester, to watch and control the Welsh, with Henry Hotspur, eldest son of the Earl of Northumberland, as Justice of North Wales and Constable of the Castles. Shakespeare has considerably disturbed men's minds relative to persons and events of the period. He makes the fiery Percy but little older than Prince Hal, whereas he was actually older than Henry IV. And Prince Hal was by no means the roysterer at East Cheap as represented, but from early days engaged in war, and carrying on a prolonged contest with Glyndwr, a wily and able commander, in a country most difficult to hold.

Owen, finding that Harry Percy and the young prince were too strong to be attacked, now fell with all his force on South Wales, harrying the land of the English and of such Welsh as would not join him. Then he abruptly turned to the Severn valley, burnt Montgomery, and was only stopped under the red walls of the castle of Percy at Welshpool. Now all Wales was in insurrection, and everywhere Owen was regarded as one who would deliver the Cymry from their hereditary oppressors. The rapid progress of his army spread terror along the Marches, and messengers on swift horses galloped to London to announce to the King that unless succour were sent his castles would fall.

In October, 1401, King Henry and the Prince of Wales entered the Principality at the head of a huge

army, and pushed on to Bangor, only to find that the Welsh had retreated to the mountains, carrying off with them all their goods. The King passed along the coast to the abbey of Strata Florida in Cardiganshire, which he gave up to pillage and fire. Having succeeded in capturing about a thousand Welsh children without having fought a battle, Henry ingloriously withdrew.

About this time, moreover, Owen succeeded in getting hold of his great enemy Lord Grey de Ruthin, and sent him to his tower of Dolbadarn, there to languish until he could raise the heavy ransom which Owen, who was sorely in want of money, demanded for his release.

Henry Percy, unable to obtain payment for his services in Wales, and reimbursement for large sums laid out by himself in the King's service, threw up his charge and retired to Northumbria to fight the Scots.

In May, 1402, Owen Glyndwr attacked the Welsh territories of young Edmund Earl of March, who, with his younger brother Roger, was held in custody by the King, on account of his having been acknowledged by Parliament to be the lineal heir to King Richard.

Sir Edmund Mortimer, their uncle and guardian, hastened to protect the lands, assisted by the other Marchers.

They met on the border in a narrow valley at Pilleth, near Knighton, and during the battle the Welsh tenants went over in a body to the side of Glyndwr. Eleven hundred men were killed, and Mortimer was captured.

Then ensued the dispute between Harry Hotspur and King Henry which has been immortalised by Shakespeare. Henry Percy's wife was the sister of Sir

Edmund Mortimer, and he was urgent for the ransoming of the captive. But King Henry was in sore straits for money, and he was, moreover, not particularly desirous to have the uncle of the true heir to the throne at large. What he did was to lead an army a third time into Wales, whilst a second was placed under the command of the Prince of Wales, and a third under that of the Earl of Warwick.

> "Never within man's memory had there been such a September in the Welsh mountains. The very heavens themselves seemed to descend in sheets of water upon the heads of these magnificent and well-equipped arrays. Dee, Usk, and Wye, with their boisterous tributaries that crossed the English line of march, roared bank-high, and buried all trace of the fords beneath volumes of brown tumbling water, while bridges, homesteads, and such flocks as the Welsh had not driven westward for safety were carried down to the sea."[7]

Numbers died of exposure; the King's tent was blown over upon him; and just a fortnight after having entered Wales in all the pomp and circumstance of war, the armies had to retreat, baffled, draggled, and dispirited, and fully persuaded that their great adversary was in league with the Spirit of Evil.

Meanwhile a friendship had sprung up between Mortimer and his captive, quickened by resentment against Henry, who had refused to ransom him, and this led to a closer tie, for he married Glyndwr's fourth daughter, Joan.

Meantime, also, the anger of Harry Hotspur against the King had reached a head. He allied himself with the Scots, and marched upon Shrewsbury, unhappily for him without having concerted a plan of operations with Owen, who was away in the South of Wales, and unaware that the

fiery Percy was about to engage the King.

Tradition will have it that Glyndwr hastened towards Shrewsbury, and watched the battle from a tall oak on the Welsh road from Shrewsbury, and made no attempt to strike at Henry from the rear. But this is false. Glyndwr, at the time, was in Carmarthen in total ignorance of the movements of Harry Percy.

The defeat of Shrewsbury was disastrous to the cause of the Welsh. Owen, having lost the assistance of his northern ally, entered into negotiations with the French, who sent him some aid, which was not very effective, and from this time his power began to decline. Now it was that Owen summoned a parliament of the Welsh to meet at Machynlleth, consisting of four persons of consequence out of every Cantref in the Principality.

One of those attending it was David ab Llewelyn, nicknamed Gam, or the "squint-eyed," a little red-haired, long-armed, unprincipled man, who had been in the household of John of Gaunt. He was a native of Brecon, no relation to Owen, though he knew him intimately, and was trusted by him. Whether at the instigation of King Henry, or moved thereto by his own treacherous heart, we know not, but he framed a plot for the assassination of Owen during the conclave. One of the conspirators betrayed the design, and David Gam would have been executed but that his Brecon friends and relations intervened. Owen Glyndwr consented to remit the extreme penalty, and sent him for confinement in prison at Dolbadarn.

In 1405 Glyndwr's forces met with a reverse at Monnow, where they attacked Prince Henry, and a battle was fought in which no quarter was given on either side, and again at Pwll Melyn, in Brecon,

where fifteen hundred Welshmen fell, and among the slain was Owen's brother.

The King, emboldened by these successes, himself marched against Owen, but Glyndwr was too cautious to risk another pitched battle, and Henry had to retire without having effected anything.

Little is known of Owen's movements for some while, but his power was certainly on the decline. The King offered free pardon to all his adherents, excepting, however, Owen himself, and the Welsh wavered and many deserted him.

However, in 1407 he met with a notable though not far-reaching success.

Aberystwyth Castle was held for him, and Prince Henry determined to take it. At the head of a large force he invested the fortress, and was supplied with cannons sent from Yorkshire to Bristol, and thence transported by sea. Great stores of bows, arrows, stone shot, and sulphur were collected at Hereford. Woods on the banks of the Severn were cut down to furnish siege machinery, and a troop of carpenters was despatched from Bristol to erect scaffoldings and towers for the taking of the formidable castle. But all failed. The King's particular cannon, weighing four and a half tons, that was discharged once in the hour, and made great noise but did little harm, did not frighten the besieged into surrender.

Prince Henry found the castle impregnable, and sat down before it to reduce it by starvation. Provisions began to fail within, and Glyndwr's commander, Rhys ab Gruffydd, was constrained to open negotiations with the besiegers. It was agreed that unless the fortress were relieved by All Saints' Day (November 1st) the Welsh garrison should surrender.

So confident was the Prince that Glyndwr could not throw any force into it, that he left Wales, and only an inconsiderable portion of his army remained to watch the castle.

Owen seized his opportunity, slipped unexpectedly into Aberystwyth with fresh forces, and defied the English once more.

In 1408 Owen's dearly loved and faithful wife and Sir Edmund Mortimer's children fell into the King's hands when he captured Harlech, and they were sent to London.

Owen's fortunes dwindled more and more; he was accompanied by a small band only, and was engaged in a guerilla warfare alone. What eventually became of him is unknown. It was said that finally, deserted by all, he wandered about the country in the disguise of a shepherd. It is supposed, with some good reason, that he found a refuge in the house of his married daughter at Monnington.

Prince Henry, when he ascended the throne, sent a special message of pardon to his brave old antagonist. At Monnington is a tower that bears Glyndwr's name, and it is deemed to have been that he occupied, and in the churchyard is a stone without any name upon it, beneath which he is thought to lie.

Above Machynlleth, in the parish of Llanwrin, is Mathafarn, where lived a great poet and soothsayer, David Llwyd, who was a bitter opponent of Richard III., and a partisan of James Earl of Pembroke. He subsequently threw himself into the party of Henry Earl of Richmond, who is said to have stayed a night at Mathafarn on his way to Bosworth field in August, 1485. David Llwyd was regarded by his countrymen as invested with prophetic powers; and he had a

tame sea-gull that perched on his shoulder, and was supposed to communicate the secrets of the future in his ear.

On the occasion of the visit of Henry of Richmond that prince asked him as to what would be the event of his contest with Richard. David begged to be allowed the night for consideration. He tossed in bed, unable to sleep, and his gull afforded him no counsel. Then his wife asked him why he was so restless. He told her what his difficulty was. "Fool," said she; "prophesy success. If he succeeds, your future is made. If he fails, he will never return from the battlefield to reproach you."

This satisfied the seer.

This adventure has given rise to a Welsh proverb: "Take a wife's advice unasked."

The story goes on to say that Henry heard what had occasioned the prophecy of good event, and he said, "Llwyd, as I shall win, lend me your grey horse." David could not refuse. The earl rode the grey horse to Bosworth, but the grey mare remained at Mathafarn.

Some verses composed on Richard III. by the poet have been preserved. They have been thus rendered in English:—

> "King Henry hath fought and bravely done,
> Our friend the golden circlet hath won,
> The bards re-echo the gladsome strain
> For the good of the world crooked R is slain.
> That straddling letter, so pale and sad,
> In England's realm no honour had.
> For ne'er could R in the place of I
> Rule England's nation royally."

The "R" so crooked stands for Richard, and the "I" so upright stands for Iorwerth, or Edward IV.

Above Mathafarn is Cemmes Road Station, and

hence a branch line runs up the Dyfi to Mallwyd and Dinas Mawddwy. The lower portion of the valley, though pleasing, lacks grandeur, but the scenery improves as we ascend. George Borrow thus describes it:—

> "Scenery of the wildest and most picturesque description was rife and plentiful to a degree; hills were here, hills were there; some tall and sharp, others huge and humpy; hills were on every side; only a slight opening to the west seemed to present itself. What a valley! I exclaimed. But on passing through the opening I found myself in another, wilder and stranger, if possible. Full to the west was a long hill rising up like the roof of a barn, an enormous round hill on its north-east side, and on its south-east the tail of the range which I had long had on my left—there were trees and groves and running waters, but all in deep shadow, for night was now close at hand."



OLD BRIDGE, DINAS MAWDDWY

A stream enters the valley of the Dyfi at Mallwyd, and a capital road ascends it, crosses a shoulder, and

descends into the valley of the Banw, leading ultimately to Welshpool. It was in the Cwm that opens upon Mallwyd and its ramifications that lurked the "Red-haired Banditti of Mawddwy."

After the cessation of the Wars of the Roses many lawless men, bred to deeds of violence, found time hang heavy on their hands, and lacking employment, a certain number of outlaws or felons gravitated to this wild region, and made their headquarters in this valley, whence they sallied forth, marauding, cattle-lifting, and murdering. Robert Vaughan, the Welsh antiquary, who flourished shortly after, says that they never tired of

> "robbing, burning of houses, and murthering of people, in soe much that being very numerous, they did often drive great droves of cattell somtymes to the number of a hundred or more from one countrey to another at middle day, as in tyme of warre, without feare, shame, pittie, or punishment, to the utter undoing of the poorer sort."

The occupants of manor- and farm-houses had to fix scythes and spiked bars in their chimneys to prevent the marauders entering their houses by descending the wide chimneys at night. And within the memory of man many such have been removed.

At last a commission was issued to Lewis Owen, Baron of the Exchequer of Wales, and Sheriff of Merionethshire, to clear the country of them.

In pursuance of his orders, Owen raised a body of sturdy men, and stealing up the valley on Christmas Eve, 1554, when the robbers were keeping high revel, he fell on them and secured eighty, whom he tried and hanged on the spot.

The mother of two of the worst scoundrels vowed vengeance on Owen, and "baring her breasts" before him, shrieked in his face, "These yellow breasts have

given suck to those who shall wash their hands in your blood."

The headquarters of the band were at Dugoed Mawr on the Cann Office Road, and the place of the execution, a mound about thirty feet high, now overgrown with trees, on the Collfryn Farm estate.

On All Hallows' Eve, 1555, hardly a year after the summary execution, Baron Owen was returning from the Montgomery Assizes with his brother-in-law and two servants, when he found the road blocked at a spot, since called Llidiart-y-Barwn, by fallen trees. They had been felled by some of the survivors of the band, who had waited for an opportunity to revenge the death of their fellows. The spot is two miles from Mallwyd on the Welshpool road.

As Owen drew up at the barrier, and his servants proceeded to remove the logs, a shower of arrows was discharged at him from the dense coppice. One struck him in the face, but he plucked it out and broke it. Then the ruffians sprang into the road and attacked him with bills and spears. His son-in-law, John Lloyd of Ceiswyn, defended him to the last, but his attendants fled at the first onset. Owen fell, covered with thirty wounds, and whilst he was still breathing, the brothers of the slain sons of the hag who had threatened him ripped the murdered man open, and actually washed their hands in his blood, so as to fulfil the curse cast at him by their mother.

From Dinas Mawddwy Aran may be ascended (2,972 feet), the highest mountain in Wales next to Snowdon, and perhaps commanding a finer view. It is one vast sponge, and he who attempts to climb it must be careful to avoid the bogs.

A good road follows the River Dyfi to the pass of Bwlch y Groes and thence to the head of Bala Lake.

About four miles above Dinas Mawddwy is Llan-y-Mawddwy, where the church is buried in yew trees. The church was founded by S. Tydecho. He led an eremitical life in this sequestered valley, and according to the legend made the Saethnant run with milk.

The report of his sanctity reached Maelgwn Gwynedd, and to make unpleasantness for him he sent him a stud of white horses and bade him pasture them for him. Tydecho turned them out on the mountains, where they fed on heather, and ran wild and were ungroomed. When the king sent for them they had turned yellow, at which he was very angry, and seized on the saint's oxen as reprisal. Thereupon stags came from the forest and allowed themselves to be yoked to the plough, and a grey wolf lost its wildness and drew the harrow for him. Maelgwn came to hunt in the neighbourhood, and being wearied seated himself on a rock, and adhered to it, and could not leave till Tydecho released him; but as a token of the miracle left the impression of his person on the rock.

Cynan, prince of Powys, carried off Tegfedd, sister of Tydecho, who, however, struck the ravisher with blindness, and obliged him to restore the damsel unhurt, and to make over some lands in compensation for the rape.

The land of Tydecho was granted many privileges; amongst these was that of Gobr Merched. By Welsh laws, for every damsel who had been outraged the ravisher was required to pay a heavy fine. Tydecho's land was granted the very questionable privilege of exemption from the law; in other words, that on it no girl was under the protection of the law from assault.

On a rock are shown four holes in the shape of a

cross, said to mark the spot where the saint was wont to kneel in prayer.

It is possible that it was due to his father's abusive epistle, which attacked Maelgwn of Gwynedd and Cuneglas or Cynlas of Powys so fiercely, that Tydecho had to leave North Wales. Apparently he retired to the same part of Brittany as his father and his brother Cennydd or Kenneth, and took up his abode in the Isle de Groix, where he is known as S. Tudy, and where he is held to have died.

Some delightful mountain expeditions may be made from Machynlleth, as up the River Castell to the two tarns whence it springs, Glaslyn and Bugeilyn, "The Shepherd's Pool." This latter and Llyn Morwynion, "The Fair Maids' Tarn," are about the only two in North Wales that produce "trout of an exceptionally fine quality—short, thick, strong fish, that fight hard when you hook them, and cut red as salmon and creamy as curd should you be lucky enough to induce a few to face the cucumber. I would rather waste my time and energies on making the acquaintance of half a dozen from either pool than I would in courting the problematical attentions of a Dovey sewin."[8]

Moreover, the walk to the sources of the River Castell will amply reward the lover of scenery.

Then there is the ascent of the River Dulas, and the branch from the valley by a good road to Tal-y-Llyn under red crags, Graig Goch.

Another delightful walk of about five miles is to Llyn Penrhaiadr, and one can drive to about two miles from the lake. A little beyond the point where the carriage is quitted, Pistyll-y-Llyn, the waterfall from the lake, is reached. The water shoots over a tremendous shelf of rock and plunges into a dark

pool below. It is one of the finest falls in Wales, and only lacks more trees about it to make it most impressive. Waterfalls are liable to pall on one. They are either of the type of the falls of the Rhine, of the Giesbach, or of the Staubbach, and when one has seen these, one does not particularly care for such as are inferior. Waterfalls cease to interest, but, to my mind, lakes never do. They are infinitely more varied, and lend themselves to finer pictures in a way that cascades do not. There are two other tarns near, lying rather higher than Llyn Penrhaiadr. A walker will do well to strike across to the head of the River Hengwm, where is another waterfall, and to follow the stream down under the splendid crags of Bwlch Hyddgen, then turn to the left by the Rhyd Wen, and Machynlleth is reached again.

From Machynlleth a short run by rail takes us to Towyn, a rising watering-place, with a noble Norman cross-church. The central tower fell in 1696, and a western tower was erected in 1736, encroaching on two bays of the nave. This was pulled down in 1884, and the central tower rebuilt, but the nave is short of its two westernmost bays.

In the churchyard are four upright stones enclosing a quadrangular space, within which no burials are made, and in the church is an inscribed stone, that apparently stood originally by these four "marks." On it is an inscription most puzzling to antiquaries, supposed to be couched in Early Welsh, and to record that this was the burial-place of S. Cadvan, and that his great patron Cyngen, prince of Powys and this portion of Merioneth, lies by him. It has been thus translated by Professor Westwood:—

> "Beneath the mound of Cynvael lies Cadvan,
> Where the earth extols his praise. Let him rest
> without a blemish.

The Body of Cyngen, and between them will be the marks."

Professor Rhys, however, disputes the reading. Cadvan was a son of Gwen of the Three Breasts by her first husband, Æneas of Armorica. Owing to some dynastic revolution he fled with sundry of his cousins and followers to Wales, in the fifth century, and was well received by Cyngen, who gave him lands. Gwen afterwards married one Fragan or Brychan, and went with him to Brittany, where she became the mother of S. Winwalloe, Abbot of Landevennec.

Near the church is S. Cadvan's Holy Well, now in the yard of a soda-water manufactory, and covered over and disregarded. Formerly it was much resorted to for baths.

From Towyn the Dysynni valley should be ascended to Tal-y-Llyn. The lake occupies the trough of a valley, and is a mile and a quarter long and a quarter of a mile wide, and is one of the most fished lakes in Wales. Although the Dysynni is full of salmon and sewin, these fish do not enter the lake, or, if they do, lose all their sporting instincts. The brooks that feed the lake absolutely swarm with trout, very small, but very delicious; and so the cormorants find them who sit on Craig Aderyn, a magnificent projecting rock down the valley, and dream off their last meal till appetite wakes them and they wing their way, now to fish in the sea and then to go inland for the trout in the lake and its tributaries.

At Towyn there is sea-fishing for others beside cormorants. Good bass angling with a fly can be had where the river enters the sea, and "these somewhat ungainly productions," says that enthusiastic

sportsman Mr. Lloyd Price, “supposed to be the most useful adjuncts to the art, with their red bodies, white and yellow wings, ephemeræ of scorn to the salmon-fishers, display their crude and vulgar proportions in the windows of almost every shop in the town.”

The ascent of Cader Idris can be made from the head of Tal-y-Llyn Lake, and thence the *cirque* of Cwm Cowarch should be visited, and the wondrous tarn Llyn Caer lying, as it were, at the bottom of a crater.

Near Towyn is Llanegryn, on a height commanding a glorious view, and the church contains a magnificent rood-screen and loft in excellent preservation. In this parish is Peniarth, the house of the Wynns, with its precious legacy of Welsh MSS. The church is crowded with Wynn monuments.

The Wynns are of Irish extraction, deriving from one Osborn Wyddel (the Irishman), who came over in the thirteenth century, and obtained by marriage an estate in Merioneth. He is supposed to have been a junior of the House of the Geraldines, but the evidence is not satisfactory. The family soon became thoroughly Welsh, as far as names go, bearing those of Llewelyn, Gruffydd, Einion, Iorwerth, and quartering the arms of Owen Gwynedd.

Peniarth came to them through marriage with an heiress of the Williams family, whose arms, two foxes counter-salient, form a sign and give a name to many an inn in the Williams-Wynn country, which extends over a large portion of North Wales.



LLANEGRYN

The name of Wynn was not adopted till the sixteenth century. Before that the sons were all *aps*. The adoption of surnames in Wales that became fixed and hereditary began in single instances with Welshmen who had become familiar with English customs, but it was not general until Rowland Lee, Bishop of Lichfield and President of Wales and the Marches, when calling over the panel of a jury one day, became weary of the repetition of the *ap*, and directed that "the ancient and worshipful gentleman "Thomas ap William ap Thomas ap Richard ap Howel ap Iefan Fychan, etc., of Mostyn, and the rest of the jury, should thenceforth severally assume as a surname either their last genealogical name or that of their residence. Lee died in 1543. Many of the names one meets with in Wales are thus derived: Bowen is ab Owen, Price is ap Rhys, Pritchard is ap Richard, Bevan is ab Evan, etc.; and John Jones is John son of Jones, and Thomas Evans is Thomas the

son of Evan.

When the Welshmen took to giving themselves surnames, very few adopted place-names; but there are some—as Glynne, Trevor, Mostyn. Fewer still assumed such as were descriptive—as Gwyn (White), Llwyd, or Lloyd (Gray).

The majority took patronymic names, and thus we have such swarms of Joneses, Williamses, Davieses, Evanses, Robertses, and Thomases. It has become a real nuisance. “It is impossible,” says a recent writer, “to estimate the inconveniences, the annoyance, and even the suffering, occasioned by this unnecessary dearth of Welsh surnames, and the continued multiplication of the comparatively few in popular use. Indeed, our surnames are so few in number that they almost swamp the population of England in the statistics compiled to show which are the most numerous family names in use among us.”[9]

To obviate the inconvenience, in Wales it is usual to distinguish one Jones or Williams from another by appending the name of his home or his profession, or a descriptive epithet; but this serves its purpose only when he is in his native country.

Four of the Welsh members of Parliament bear the name of Thomas; and while all share a common initial, two have no other.

“What tales of infinite trouble and everlasting worry our Post Office officials in Wales could tell! How often have our local postmasters to implore persons of the same name, or of the same name and like initials, in the postal districts, to come to some amicable arrangement as to the delivery of their letters and telegrams!”

In a Carnarvonshire will case, heard in July,

1894, the number of Joneses and Robertses called as witnesses during the two days that the action lasted threw judges and counsel engaged into a condition of absolute bewilderment, and turned the court into a patronymical Bedlam.

Sometimes parents, with national enthusiasm, have their sons christened with a truly Welsh name, and are not always careful to select such as will pass smoothly over English tongues, should these sons, on growing up, go out of the Principality. Such was the case with a Rev. T. Mydir Evans, who in England became "Passon Murder Evans." And what stumbling has been caused over the name of Dr. Gwenogfryn Evans at Oxford!

It was at Bishop Lee's suggestion, and in the year of his death, that the shires of Wales were formally constituted, though earlier, in 1535, the counties of Denbigh, Montgomery, Merioneth, Glamorgan, Brecon, and Radnor had been constructed out of the old Marches of Wales.

In conclusion, a word must be added relative to the arms of Wales and the three feathers of its Prince's crest.

Coats-of-arms were assumed and changed very arbitrarily in early days, and there does not seem to have been any fixed rule as to those borne by the several princes. Owen Gwynedd is said to have had on his shield vert, three eagles in fess or, membered and beaked gules, and these are quartered by the Wynns of Peniarth.

But Rhodri the Great had four banners carried before him on which were depicted lions, to represent the principalities of Gwynedd, Powys, Deheubarth, and the Isle of Man, over which his rule extended. Yet the red dragon was the symbol and

ensign of the Pendragon, or chief king.

A lion rampant appears to have been the favourite bearing of the princes of Powys. Gruffydd ab Cynan of Gwynedd bore three lions passant gardant in pale argent incensed azure.

Lewis Dwnn, in his *Heraldic Visitations of Wales*, says that "the recognised arms of the Principality were four lions passant gardant quarterly, and that is the coat now accepted for Wales."

The red dragon was used by Henry VII. as his crest, and as a supporter on the dexter side, and on the sinister, the greyhound of York.

Henry VIII. retained the dragon, but discarded the greyhound for a lion. The unicorn supplanted the dragon in the reign of James I. The ostrich feather was not properly a Welsh crest at all, but was employed as a badge by Edward III. It was not till the reign of Henry VII. that the three plumes, to represent the three principalities of Wales, in a circlet or coronet, were adopted as a cognisance of the Prince of Wales, and since then have remained as an appropriate symbol; for, indeed, Gwynedd, Powys, and Deheubarth are feathers in the cap of our princes of which they may well be proud.

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FOOTNOTES:

[1] RHYS and BRYNMOR JONES, *The Welsh People*, p. 342.

[2] A Peris is, however, given as son of Helig ab Glannog (Iolo MSS. p. 124), but is this the same?

[3] RHYS and BRYNMOR JONES, *The Welsh People*, p. 356.

[4] *The Vale of Clwyd*, by W. DAVIS. Ruthin, 1856.

[5] R. G. DAVIES, *The Visions of the Sleeping Bard*, translated. London, 1897.

[6] WILLIAMS (R.), *Montgomeryshire Worthies*, p. 79. Newtown, 1894.

[7] BRADLEY, *Owen Glyndwr*, p. 178.

[8] LLOYD PRICE (R. J.), *Walks in Wales*, 1893, p. 44.

[9] *Transactions of the Cymmrodorion Society*, 1903.

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