

A BOOK OF
NORTH WALES

[ii]

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

[iii]



CONWAY CASTLE

[iv]

**A BOOK OF
NORTH WALES**

BY S. BARING-GOULD
WITH FORTY-NINE ILLUSTRATIONS

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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,[vi] 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[2] 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[3] 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[4] 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[5] 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,[6] 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.

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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^[8] 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

[9]

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[10] 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 Epyllt 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[11] 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.

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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[13] 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[14] 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[15] 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,[16] 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, it 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,[17] and he attempted to achieve this. As Powys was obstructive, he had to fight Gwenwynwyn its king, then to subject Llyn 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[18] 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 [19] a large army, and again drove Llewelyn into the fastnesses of Snowdon. Llewelyn thence moved south to join forces with the Welsh of Dyfed, 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.

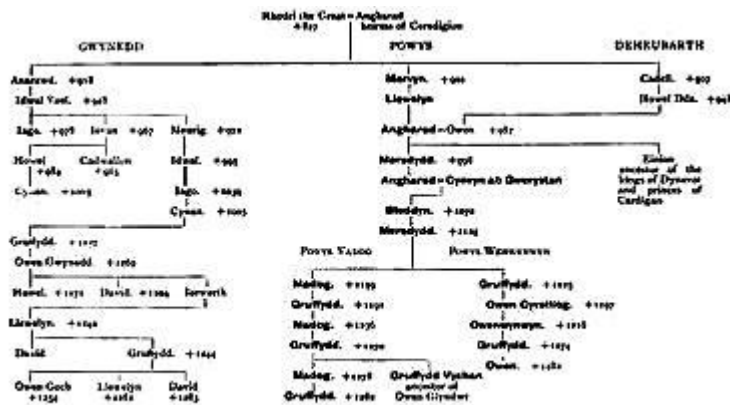
Edward was at Carnarvon when his second son Edward was born, 1301, and soon after he proclaimed him Prince of Wales.

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 [20] 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.

[21]



[22]

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 *Rothsay 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 Lley. 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

[23]

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 [24] 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.

[25]



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[26] 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.

[27]

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 [28] 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 [29] 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[30] 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. Eliau, 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[31] 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[33] 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?

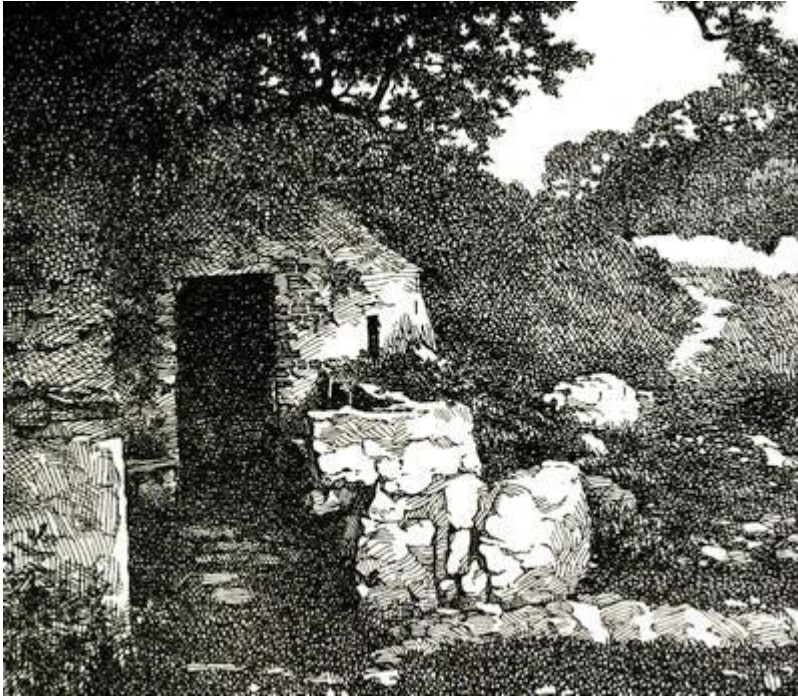
From the island a reef runs into the sea, called the Causeway of Seiriol, and it is supposed that it was constructed by the saint as a means of communication with Penmaen Mawr. It disappears under the Dutchman’s Bank, a sandy stretch that obstructs the entrance to the Menai Straits. Hereon,[34] in 1831, the *Rothsay 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.

[35]

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.[36] The hut had been constructed by an Irish settler named Eflam, who had departed on a pilgrimage. On his return Eflam 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 Eflam's upturned face. Then lestyn rose, bowed, and withdrew, and ended his days in Mona. It is by an artist's licence that on the monument lestyn 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^[37] 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^[38] can be reached Bull Bay, where there are good sands, and the place is growing in favour. To the east the adjoining parish is Llanellian, 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.

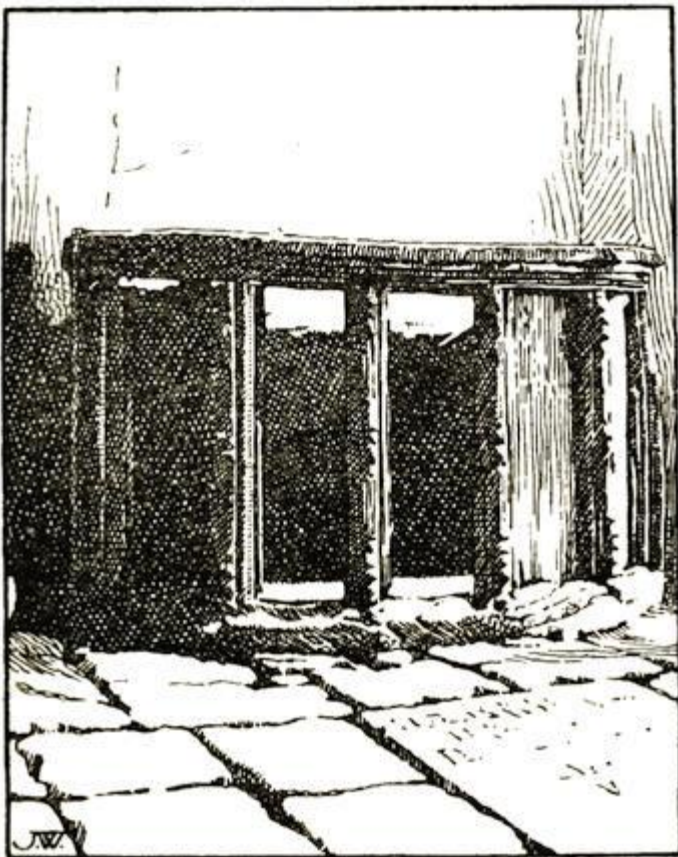
This chapel has a well-preserved and good carved oak roof, which the present rector has saved from destruction by damp. Here is the base of the shrine of S. Eliau. It is of wood, and the panels were formerly carved, but the tracery is gone. Into this people

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.

[39]

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.



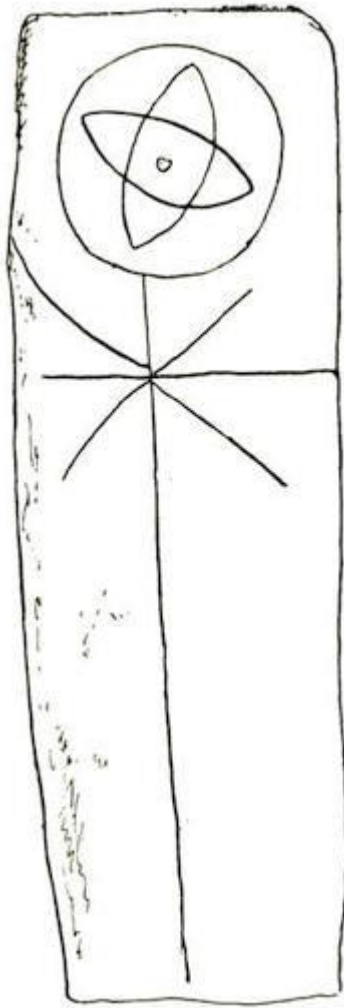
BASE OF SHRINE, LLANEILIAN

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[40] 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[41] 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[42] 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[43] 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.

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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, [45] 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.

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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 Elan—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

[47]

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 Llanelian 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).

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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.

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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[50] 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^[51] 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.”

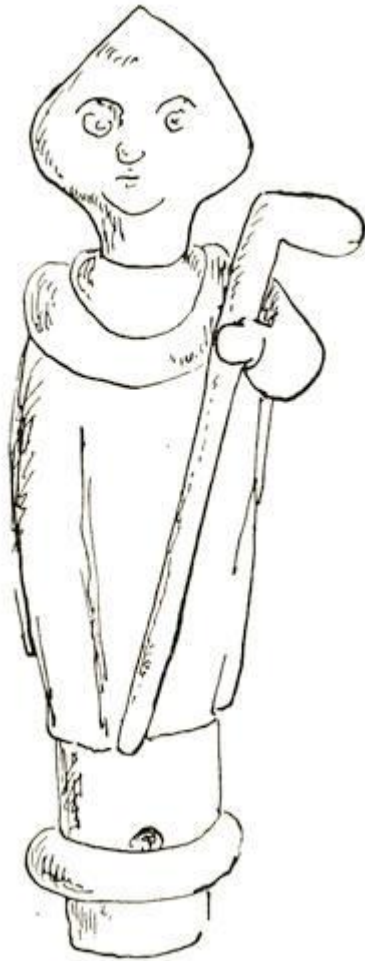
The cliff scenery here is of the finest quality, and Holyhead well merits a prolonged visit, what with the stimulating air rushing through one's lungs charged with sparkles, the look-out on the green sea flecked with foam and skimmed by gulls as^[52] flakes of froth that have been detached from the waves 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[53] 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[54] acquaintance of S. Eliau 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^[55] 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^[56] 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[57] 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[58] of unhewn stones cemented with mortar, the windows and doorways excepted, which were well wrought by the chisel with considerable labour from some obdurate 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

[59]

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[60] 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^[61] 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 debris 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^[62] 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.

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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 Dwywnwen—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[64] 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.

[65]

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[66] 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^[67] 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 Clynog 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[68] 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.

[69]

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[70] 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[71] 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.

[72]

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."

[73]

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[74] 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

[75]

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 [76] 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 fled 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.

[77]

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.

[78]

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[79] 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[80] 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

[81]

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[82] 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[83] 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[84] 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 Gossipping 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

[85]

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^[86] 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."

[87]

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.

[88]

“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 Bochlywd, 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.

[89]

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.

[90]

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

[91]

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 Bualt, 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^[92] 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^[93] 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[94] 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

[95]

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[96] 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[97] 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 erratic 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.[98] 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 *Nibelungen 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

[99]

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[100] 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^[101] 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^[102] 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

[103]

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[104] 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 Beziars 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

[105]

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.

[106]

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[107] 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.

[108]

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[109] 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.

[110]

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 Clynog 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[111] 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[112] 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."

[113]

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[114] 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 Llyn, 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,[115] 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.[116] 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[117] 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[118] 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[119] 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 Fairhair, 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[120] 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.

[121]

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.

[122]

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 wnesse 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[123] 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 Countrey that are verie 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 amongst 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 Clynog 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.[124] 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

[125]

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 [126] 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[127] 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^[128] 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 hastened 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

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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 Parliamentary 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.

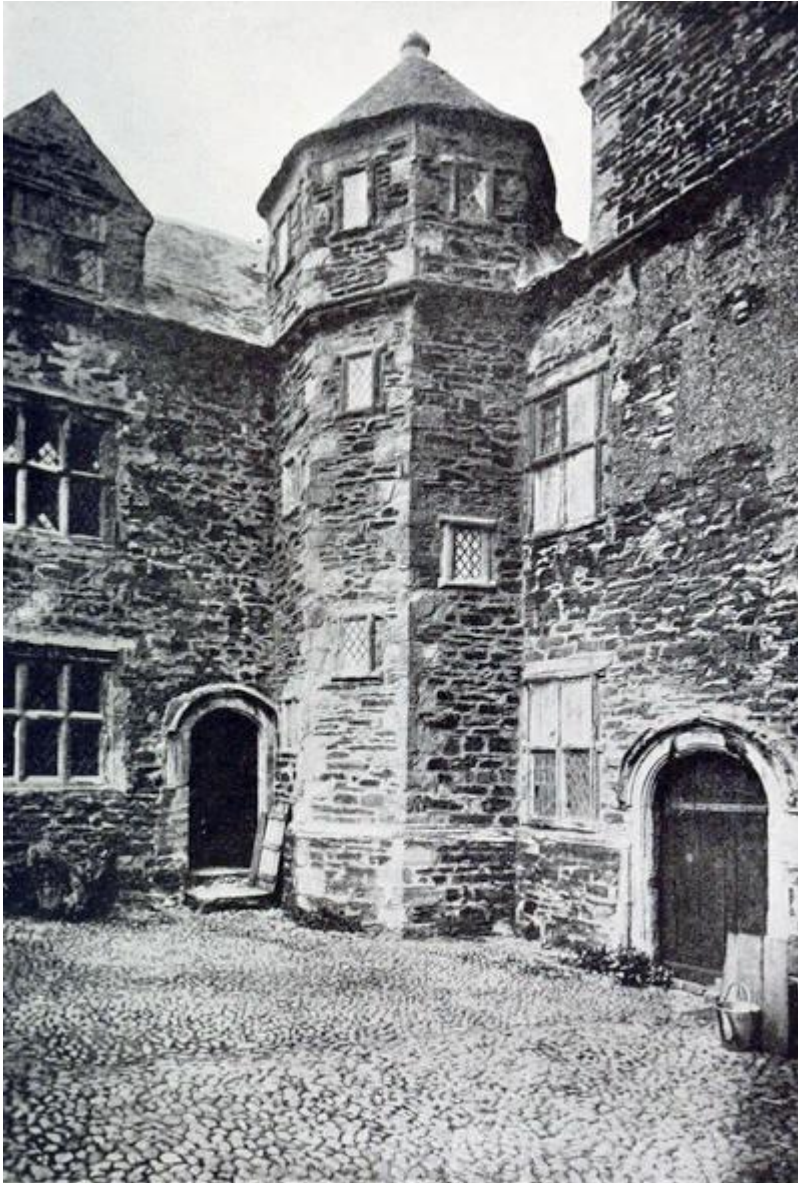
But if Williams had reckoned on retaining his archbishopric and other emoluments as the price of his treachery, he was mistaken. The rest of his life was spent in seclusion, in vain regrets, and it is said in sincere repentance, rising from his bed at midnight and praying on his bare knees, with nothing 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[130] 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

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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.

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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.

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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 [134] 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[135] 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[136] 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 Llanellian 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[137] 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[138] 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[139] 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:—

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“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 sea-board. 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.

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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 Melynlllyn (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 [142] 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.

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“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[144] 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.

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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[146] 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

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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[148] 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 Llanefydd, 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, [149] 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.”

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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.

[151]

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[152] 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.[153] 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 Ieuan 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;[154] 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,[155] 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*.^[156] 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,^[157] 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,[158] 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.[159] 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.