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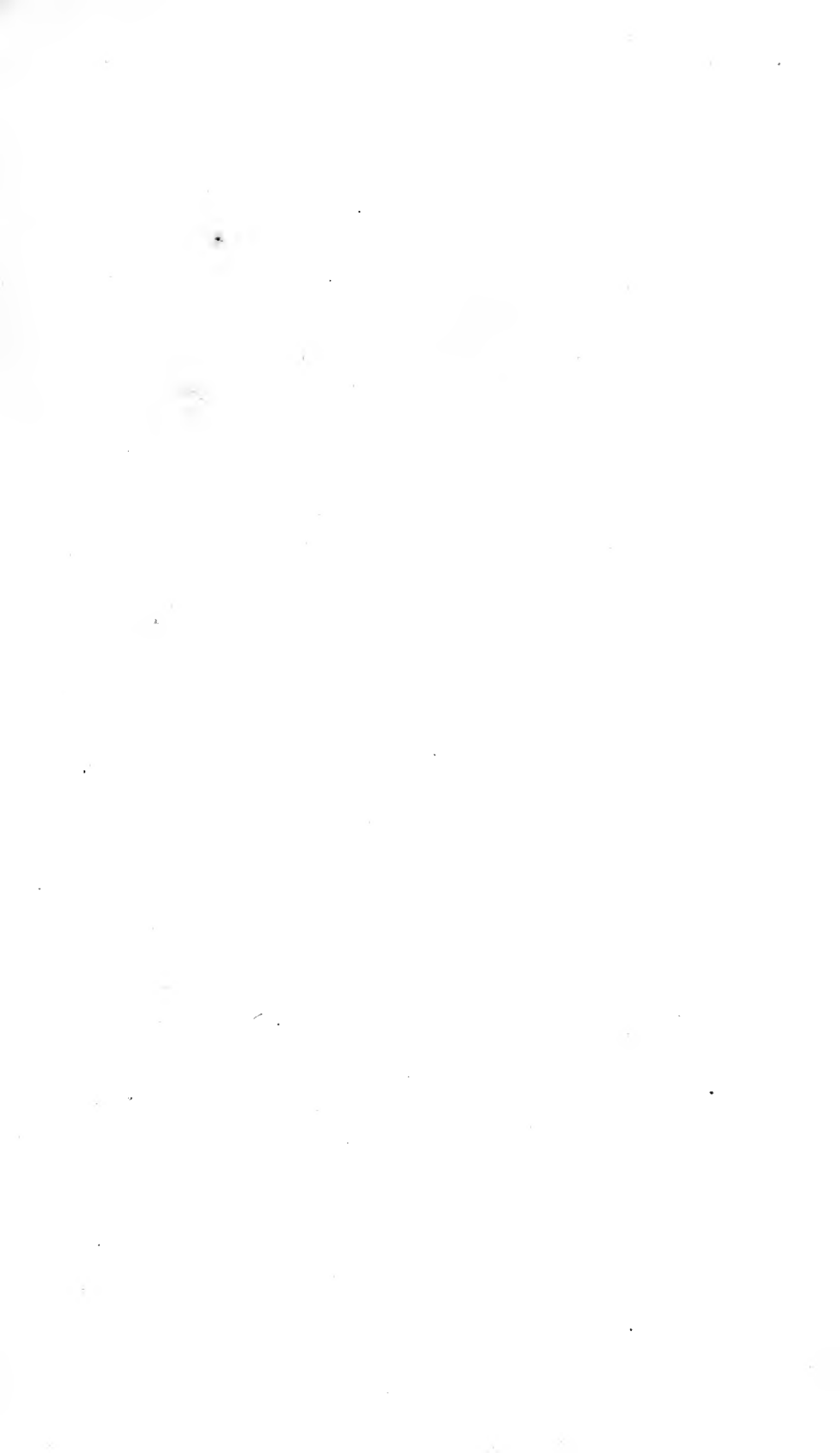
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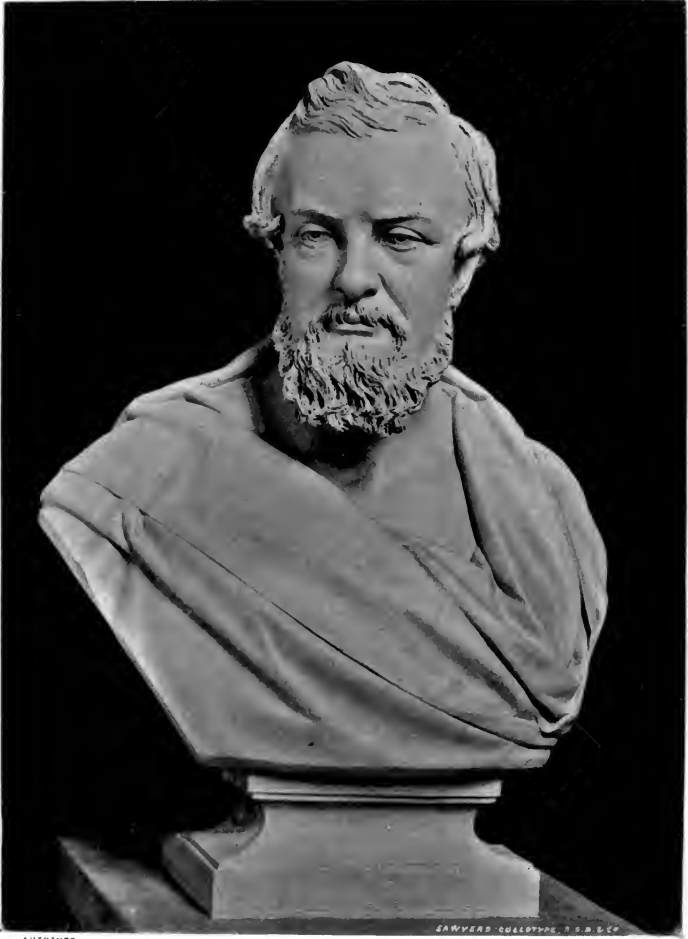
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THE
LITERATURE OF THE KYMRY

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THOMAS STEPHENS.

FROM A BUST BY J. EDWARDS.

THE
LITERATURE OF THE KYMRY:

BEING A CRITICAL ESSAY ON THE HISTORY OF THE
LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE OF WALES

DURING THE TWELFTH AND TWO SUCCEEDING CENTURIES;

CONTAINING NUMEROUS SPECIMENS OF ANCIENT WELSH POETRY IN THE
ORIGINAL AND ACCOMPANIED WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS.

BY
THOMAS STEPHENS.

SECOND EDITION,
EDITED, WITH THE AUTHOR'S ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS, BY
THE REV. D. SILVAN EVANS, B.D.

WITH A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR BY
B. T. WILLIAMS, ESQ., Q.C.

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1876.

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[DEDICATION OF THE FIRST EDITION, 1849.]

TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

ALBERT EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES,

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY PERMISSION OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN,

THE FOLLOWING

RECORD OF LITERARY AND INTELLECTUAL LABOURS

AMONG THE

Ancient and Illustrious Race

WHOSE REPRESENTATIVE HE IS,

IN THE HOPE

THAT WHEN FUTURE YEARS HAVE EXTENDED HIS EXPERIENCE

AND RIPENED HIS JUDGMENT,

HE MAY FEEL A REGARD FOR THE INHABITANTS OF

The Principality,

AS STRONG AS IS THEIR AFFECTION FOR

THE HEIR APPARENT TO THE THRONE OF BRITAIN.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE AUTHOR of the following work had for some years been collecting materials for a new and improved edition; but owing to declining health, and a pressure of other engagements, he had, at the time of his death, been able to accomplish but a portion of the improvements which he had contemplated.

It was his intention to re-write the part relating to the alleged discovery of America, by Prince Madog ab Owain Gwynedd in the twelfth century, his opinion, after further investigation, having undergone a considerable change on that subject; to treat of the Triads at greater length, in order to ascertain their true historical value; and to devote a section to the unravelling of the fable of Hu Gadarn. He would probably have also modified some of the statements respecting the poems attributed to the early Bards in accordance with the views which he put forth in a series of articles contributed to the 'Archæologia Cambrensis,' subsequent to the appearance of the 'Literature of the Kymry.'

With the exception of some verbal corrections, and a few unimportant foot-notes, which are distinguishable from

the others, the additions to the volume are all from the papers of the Author, and in his own words, it being the desire of his representatives, as well as of the Editor, that the work should, in the present issue, express no other sentiments or opinions than those of him whose name it bears.

D. SILVAN EVANS.

January 1, 1876.

P R E F A C E.

ON THE MAP OF BRITAIN, facing St. George's Channel, is a group of counties called Wales, inhabited by a people distinct from, and but very imperfectly understood by, those who surround them. Their neighbours call them *Welshmen*. Welsh, or Walsch, is not a proper name, but a Teutonic term signifying "strangers," and was applied to all persons who were not of that family; but the proper name of these people is "Kymry." They are the last remnant of the *Kimmerioi* of Homer, and of the Kymry (*Cimbri*) of Germany, that great people whose arms struck terror into the Roman legions, and whose virtues Tacitus held up for the imitation of his countrymen. From the Cimbric Chersonesus (Jutland) a portion of these landed on the shores of Northumberland, gave their name to the county of *Cumberland*, and in process of time followed the sea-side to their present resting-place, where they still call themselves Kymry, and give their country a similar name. Their history, clear, concise, and authentic, ascends to a high antiquity; their language was embodied in verse long before the languages now spoken rose into notice; and their literature, cultivated and abundant, lays claim to being the most ancient in modern Europe.

In the history of Cambrian literature there are four marked periods. Of these the first relates to the fortunes of the Strathclyde Kymry, the wars of the Ottadini in the North of England in the sixth century, and the subsequent emigration of that people to North Wales; the second is embraced between the years 1080 and 1350; the third, thence to the first half of the seventeenth century; and the fourth from 1650 to the present time. The following Essay treats of the second period, and is the work to which the Ven. Archdeacon Williams awarded the Prize offered by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales at the Abergavenny Eisteddvod of 1848. It has been since considerably enlarged, and through the liberality of Sir John Guest, Bart., M.P., is now made public. It embraces a term of years among the most stirring in the history of man; for in the greatness of the aims, the vastness of the achievements, and the prevalence of profound excitement it can only be compared to the age of the Reformation or the late European war. Activity prevailed everywhere, and was as apparent in literature, philosophy, and theology as it was in warfare. It is during such an era of general movement that we have to treat of the literature of Wales; and it will be found, on examination, that the Kymry need not shrink from a comparison with any contemporaneous people.

The Essay, it will be observed, embraces a variety of subjects, and surveys all the manifestations of the Cambrian intellect. My object was to give a complete account of the mental labours of the Kymry of these centuries; and to this end Poetry, Music, History, the Triads, and the Mabino-gion have been made subsidiary. In order to embrace this variety of topics, I found it necessary to divide the history

of the Poetry into four periods, and preferred arranging the special dissertations in groups around the fixed points thus obtained to interrupting a continuous narrative by such a number of lengthy episodes. By this arrangement we gain in variety what is lost in symmetry; and as the episodical sections are the most original in the book, it is to be hoped that the defect they have caused in the plan may be the more readily pardoned. A rational account is now given of the poems so long erroneously attributed to Taliesin and Merddin; an attempt is here made to develop the pregnant meaning of "Hud a Lledrith;" and the old stories of the massacre of the bards, with the burning of the books by the often execrated Ysgolan, have been thoroughly sifted with a view to their final settlement.

My own predilections were strongly in favour of taking an enlarged view of the literature of the centuries embraced between the ages of Meilir and Gwilym Ddu, and I have been strengthened in that desire by a conviction that this ought to be an Essay more particularly directed to English readers. This is the way in which the Kymry can best serve their country, as the preponderance of England is so great, that the only hope of obtaining attention to the just claims of the Principality is by appealing to the convictions and sympathies of the reading part of the English population. It is full time for some of us to do this; and therefore it was my aim so to shape the Essay that, if successful, it might be published, and its contents made known to the English people, that they might no longer be ignorant of our real literary worth. This is a knowledge of which our neighbours are deficient, and one which we feel confident will surely produce an effect most favourable to the inha-

bitants of the Principality. Past experience justifies this anticipation ; for Sharon Turner was not slow to exhibit his appreciation of our poetic remains ; and Robert Southey, the late Poet Laureate, lent us a willing ear. Leigh Hunt, a veteran in literature, exhibits the same kind regard in these lines :

I used to think of thee and thine
As one of an old faded line,
Living in his hills apart,
Whose pride I knew, but not his heart ;
But now that I have seen thy face,
Thy fields, and ever youthful race,
And women's lips of rosiest word,
(So rich they open), and have heard
The harp still leaping in thy halls,
Quenchless as the waterfalls,
I know thee full of pride, as strong
As the sea's most ancient song,
And of a sympathy as wide.

And it would be ingratitude not to acknowledge our obligations to the poet Gray and to Mrs. Hemans. These examples teach us that we have but to make known the richness of our ancient literature to earn a favourable estimate of ourselves ; and I, for one, will no longer bear the too just reproach that we are continually boasting of literary wealth which we never produce for the public inspection in an intelligible form ; for how can we reasonably expect our neighbours to appreciate our literature until they are made acquainted with it in a form which they can understand ? But, while I exhort my countrymen to additional exertions, it is not to be inferred that they have hitherto made no efforts to diffuse a knowledge of their ancient literature. Llwyd's account of our ancient MSS. was pulished in 1707 ; and in 1764 Dodsley, under the designation *Dissertatio de*

Bardis, published several specimens of ancient Kymric poetry, with translations, undertaken by the Rev. Evan Evans, at the suggestion of Bishop Percy. Mr. Lewis Morris had frequent correspondence on the subject with Mr. Thomas Carte and Dr. Samuel Pegge; Sir Walter Scott was on intimate terms with Mr. William Owen, afterwards Dr. W. O. Pughe, and has included in the notes to several of his poems extracts from Kymric documents, furnished by the Cambrian lexicographer; and Mr. Hooper, Pall Mall East, in 1834, published a small volume of translations by Arthur James Johnes, Esq., of the Poems of Davydd ab Gwilym.

I have not thought it necessary to offer any vindication of the antiquity of the Cambrian Poems; a large portion of the originals are lodged in the British Museum, and may be seen on enquiry. Such specimens as are here given are accompanied by the originals; and the translation being line for line, the reader may easily test my fidelity. The Cambrian names of persons and places have been rendered in English equivalents; the English *v* has been substituted for the Kymric *f*; and where there was any probability of the *c* being pronounced soft its place has been supplied by the letter *k*: in all cases I have not hesitated to alter the symbols, in order to preserve the proper sounds.

Throughout the volume I have been more solicitous to inform than to instruct, to state facts than to advance speculations, to allow our ancient remains to make their own impression than to make out a case for them, and to supply the reader with materials wherewith to frame his own opinions than to furnish him with thoughts ready

made. Of such a work the specimens must of necessity form a most important part; in adhering as closely as possible to the originals, I have been in most cases compelled to give unrhymed translations; but where metrical versions, such as those of Mrs. Llewelyn, which were kindly placed at my disposal, were also distinguished for fidelity, they have been given in preference. In my own translations I have derived much valuable assistance from the Dictionary of Dr. Pughe, the translations of the Rev. Evan Evans, and the paraphrases of the Rev. Thomas Price. I am also under considerable obligations to the works of the Rev. Edward Davies and the Rev. Walter Davies. Many errors may naturally be expected to have crept into the pages of one whose life has been spent within the shadows of his native mountains, and whose scanty information has been, as chance directed, picked up on the outskirts of the empire of intelligence. For the correction of many of these I am much indebted to Lady Charlotte Guest, whose suggestions, as well as those of Mr. Rees, the publisher, offered while the sheets were passing through the press, have been gratefully received and generally adopted.

MERTHYR TYDVIL: *July 2, 1849.*

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THE LIFE
OF
THOMAS STEPHENS.

By B. T. WILLIAMS, Esq., Q.C.

CHAPTER I.

IN the Vale of Neath, at the foot of the hills that skirt the boundaries of the counties of Brecon and Glamorgan, is Pontneddfechan, the birthplace of Thomas Stephens. Before the awakening of enterprise in South Wales the Vale of Neath, now teeming with a busy population and darkened by the smoke of great works, was distinguished for its beauty and solitude. It was inhabited by an industrious and happy people, among whom lingered many quaint traditions, ancient customs, and songs of characteristic melody. The house of Aberpergwm, famed for its love of Welsh literature and music, had long flourished in this valley. Its influence was traceable among the people. Miss Jane Williams of Aberpergwm, going from house to house, caught their traditional songs, put them into form, and thus aided in winning for Welsh melody its present fame. The valley still retains much of its ancient beauty, and Pontneddfechan has lost none of it. This mountain village attracts still the attention of the traveller as it nestles among the wild hills. It was there, on the 21st of April, 1821, that Thomas Stephens was born, and it was there that he passed his early years under auspices the most favourable to awaken in him a love of the historic romance and poetry of the Welsh people.

The circumstances of his parents were removed from poverty, and still farther removed from wealth. His grandfather was a Unitarian minister, and had a small chapel near at hand. This fact had an influence upon the career of young Stephens. The Unitarians from early times in Wales, as well as elsewhere, have sought to promote a sound classical education. In

many a town and village in South Wales has the Unitarian minister kept a school at which the youth of the district were enabled to obtain an accurate and severe training in Latin and Greek. Classical learning was one of the traditions of the Unitarians, and Stephens received the benefit of it to some extent. He was sent to a school at Neath, kept by the Rev. John Davies, a Unitarian minister there, who was known to be a sound classical scholar. This school had been established by the son of Davies, of Castell-howell—well known as a poet, scholar, and divine. Stephens remained there for several years, and got a thorough grounding in the Latin language. Without this he could not subsequently have pursued his philological studies with the success that attended them. Soon after he had attained his fourteenth year he was apprenticed to a chemist at Merthyr Tydfil. The term of his apprenticeship extended over five years, and was marked by close application to study. "Reading—ever reading," is the account given of him at this time—"reading every moment in the day which was at his disposal—reading often all night." If Stephens was ever missed, he was always found reading; if ever guilty of any neglect or breach of duty, it was traceable to reading. He then struck the mine of knowledge which afterwards brought him honour and fame, and when quite a boy commenced to write essays upon Welsh history and literature, which appeared in some of the local newspapers. He pursued also the studies of his own business with assiduity, and in time became an able and scientific chemist. In after years he was accustomed to undertake chemical analysis and to give evidence as an expert in the law courts of Glamorganshire. On the completion of his apprenticeship, and before he had attained the age of twenty-one years, he succeeded to his master's business as a chemist and druggist at Merthyr Tydfil. He remained at the head of this business all his life, and died in the house in which he had served as a boy. His triumphs were won and his studies were pursued there. The student's victories are none the less glorious because they are unattended by the exciting cheers of approving crowds. His victories are achieved in silence, and posterity marks his fame. There are no stirring events in the life of Thomas Stephens. He was a successful student, a man of undoubted talent, worthy in himself, but seeking not his own, modest, kind, courteous, and true. It is gratifying to turn aside from vulgar self-assertion and false claims to worth and learning, to the real merits of this illustrious life. "I value Stephens," said his distinguished friend Lord Aberdare, "for the force of his intellect, for his courage in maintaining unpopular opinions and opposing cherished but unfounded prejudices, for his simplicity of character and genial warmth of heart, and for the true friendship he showed me during the many years of our acquaintance. He was honoured by all for his high qualities, and he has left a lasting mark on the literature of his time and country."

CHAPTER II.

WHEN Mr. Anthony Trollope, in one of his books, proposes to settle a hero comfortably out of the civilised world, he suggests that he should either become Chief Justice of Patagonia or the county court judge at Merthyr Tydfil. Like many others, this writer was probably not aware of the dense populations that crowd around the great manufacturing and colliery districts of Glamorganshire.

When Stephens first commenced the business of life Merthyr had not attained its present position ; but Stephens profited, as others have done, by attaching himself to its fortunes. He took an interest, as we shall see, in the promotion of every effort to raise and improve the people, and to alleviate their sufferings and poverty. He was also a pronounced politician and a fearless asserter of his own views of religion. But he was not one of those restless patriots who ever seek noise. He had a depth of faith in his own views ; and, as some one has said, the deeper a man's faith the more calm is his own life. While Stephens concealed not his opinions, and held not his light under a bushel, he was no agitator. Above all, like a true student and artist, he never permitted popular turmoil to interfere with the great studies of his life. These were pursued incessantly year after year, until he became at length the most learned of all men in those branches of research and study which he had selected for his own. In the meantime also he had not any of the weaknesses of Mr. Harold Skimpole—weaknesses which some are still pleased to parade. He was attentive to his business. He did all in his power to win the confidence of the people of Merthyr in his shop, and he won it. Year by year his circumstances improved, and after the lapse of a comparatively short time he became free from all pecuniary anxieties. His money enabled him to stock his library with rare and valuable works and to maintain the manly independence of his character. He never sought favours from anyone, and he left his wife well provided for through his industry and care.

I am disposed to think that the great pleasure of Stephens consisted in studentship. His efforts were mainly devoted to the acquiring of knowledge and to the solution of historic difficulties. The putting of the results of his studies into shape for the benefit of the public was a secondary consideration, and was rarely attempted by him except for the sake of winning prizes at a Welsh Eisteddfod. Much has been said about the continuation of this national institution in these times. It may, however, claim the honour of having encouraged Thomas Stephens to persevere in his work. To the Eisteddfod we owe all his best efforts, and

among them his far-famed "Literature of the Kymry." But Stephens was himself well aware of the unsatisfactory character of the literature usually produced by the giving of prizes at the Eisteddfod or elsewhere; and we cannot but regret that his own genius was not fostered under higher and better auspices. "Much," writes Stephens, "of the prize literature of every country is worse than useless, having been written more from a desire to please than to aid the cause of truth—more for self-gratification and pecuniary gain than from any desire to leave the world better and wiser—more in the way of supporting foregone conclusions than in the spirit of honest enquiry. But whether it becomes a blessing or a curse must depend in a great measure upon the judges. If writers must not hope for success, except by inculcating the peculiar views of the judges, and by confirming their prejudices, the literature produced by prize-giving at the Eisteddfod were well sunk at the bottom of the sea!"

As the majority of my readers know, the Eisteddfod is the revival of those great assemblages of the Welsh bards which used to take place at the courts of the native princes of Wales. On such occasions they competed against each other in music and song. The modern Eisteddfod embraces also competition in literature and science and in art and industry. The Eisteddfod is now as popular in Wales as it ever has been in the history of that country. It has many faults, and the chief are attributable to the fact that loud and uncultured men sometimes, on account of their power of Welsh speaking, get to leading positions in it. It is a mistake, too, in these days that any great public gathering should be conducted upon the principle that every man present must be taken to understand Welsh.

But when the faults of the Eisteddfod are corrected, and when modern facts, however painful and disagreeable, are recognised, it will, I trust, long continue. It stimulates culture, art, and thought, and encourages the Welsh people to develop the gifts they possess of oratory, music, and song. I know of no national institution coming down from the far-off past of which a people have greater reason to be proud.

In the year 1840, when Stephens was nineteen years of age, he won a prize at the Liverpool Eisteddfod for a "History of the Life and Times of Iestyn ab Gwrgant, the Last Native Lord of Glamorgan." He believed in the historical existence of that great hero then, but in his later years he was a breaker of many Welsh images and had many doubts with regard to Welsh idols. In 1841 he gained a prize at the Abergavenny Eisteddfod for a "History of Remarkable Places in the County of Cardigan," and in 1845 he won another Eisteddfod prize for an essay on the "Heraldic Poetry of Wales." But scant justice would be done to the learning and genius of Stephens if it were supposed that these prize essays represent his

claims to consideration. They were mere accidental scintillations of a greater light and but faintly evidenced its glory. He pursued ever in the meantime his far-extended researches, but the full benefit of these, on account of his having been stricken by early paralysis, the world will never receive.

In 1847 there was an agitation among the Dissenters of Wales with regard to the receipt of Government grants for educational purposes. It is interesting to note this controversy. It shows that since that time the leading parties to it have entirely changed their opinions and their sides. The Dissenters maintained that the education of the people was no part of the duty of the State, and that it ought to be left entirely to voluntary effort. "It is against our principles," they argued, "to receive money from the Government for religious purposes. We object to a State Church because religion must be left for its support to the will of the people. There is no proper education unless religion is made the basis of it. We would rather," exclaimed they, "see the people uneducated than educated without belief in orthodox Christianity." On the other hand, their opponents, the members of the Church of England, contended that the secular education of the people was a part of the duty of the State, because all citizens were interested in the decrease of the number of the inmates of our gaols and prisons, in the advancement of the health, enterprise, sobriety, and general well-being of the people, all of which would be promoted by a widespread education. Grant this, and why should not the State discharge its duty in this respect? "The question of religion," they said, "is settled. We have the charge of that." The Dissenters are now the strong advocates of secular education and Government aid, and the Churchmen plead in solemn tones for voluntary efforts and denominational schools. Stephens took a deep interest in this question at the time and boldly maintained his opinions. I have now before me a series of powerful letters written by him then, the arguments of which I need not repeat, because, after thinking upon the subject for nearly thirty years, the Welsh people have come to the conclusions which he then powerfully maintained. He was conscious that he was nearly alone, for, quoting from De Foe, he says, "If the impartial writer regards truth, let him expect martyrdom on both sides, and then he may go on fearless; and this is the course I take myself." In this spirit in a series of sound arguments, supported by facts and statistics, he proves—

- “1. That voluntary exertions would be insufficient to provide education for the very large number of children who now remain uneducated.
- “2. That the Government scheme by which the deficiency was proposed

to be supplied was fair, just, and honourable, and fraught with no injury to any power or party."

In the course of the long argument his opponents, bearing out De Foe's theory, denounced him as "a maniac and a liar," and as a traitor to the Church and Dissent. "I thank you," he writes to the editor of the *Monmouthshire Merlin*, in which paper the correspondence appeared, "for the very handsome manner in which you have borne testimony to the truthfulness of my character during the years we have known each other." And thus this most loyal man had to combat with the bigots of his time!

Education was Stephens's idea of all reform. "The ballot box and the power to vote will not make thee a hero, my drunken collier of Cyfarthfa!" Thus would he exclaim with Carlyle. Libraries, mechanics' institutes, schools of all sorts, were ever engaging his energies. Nothing tempted him to leave his own literary labours as did endeavours to educate those around him, and to stimulate to intellectual efforts the young men who came to him for advice.

CHAPTER III.

In the year 1846 Stephens was actively engaged in promoting the establishment of the Merthyr Library. In this institution he ever afterwards continued to be deeply interested, and to it he bequeathed a valuable legacy of books by his will. He was still only twenty-five years of age, but he was hard at work at many things. Early he had the good fortune to win the respect and confidence of Sir John Guest, the great ironmaster of Dowlais, and of Lady Charlotte Guest, his gifted and amiable wife. Their friendly encouragement and aid were of incalculable value to Stephens then. In the struggle for position in early life the hand that helps then is blessed. Sir John Guest co-operated with Stephens in the founding of the Merthyr Library. This institution was established forthwith, and it continues to this day to be of great benefit and use to the people of that town.

In 1848 much interest was awakened among the Welsh people by the offer of a prize, to be given at an Eisteddfod at Abergavenny by the Prince of Wales, for the best essay on the "Literature of Wales during the Twelfth and Succeeding Centuries." The value of the prize was no more than 25*l.*; but the fact that it was the first occasion on which the Prince of Wales had patronised an Eisteddfod, as well as the nature of the subject itself, awakened the competition of the best Welsh scholars. Here

was an opportunity for a man, if he had distinguished learning upon this subject, to show it. Stephens set himself to the task. He started with advantages such as few possessed, because he had all the knowledge with which the severe studies of many years had stored his mind. At the Eisteddfod, when the judges were prepared to announce the prize, the greatest interest and excitement prevailed, and this the late Archdeacon Williams, of Cardigan, still further increased by declaring, as he rose to make the award, that "a new star was to appear this day in the literature of Wales." When the bardic name attached to the essay was read out, the silence of expectation was most painful. Again the name rang through the building, and then a young man, with marks of severe study upon his face, rose and announced that he was Thomas Stephens, the author of the successful essay. This essay was the basis of his great work the "Literature of the Kymry." It was shortly afterwards published under that name. It was accepted as a leading authority by all Celtic scholars, not only at home, but also abroad. Count Villemarqué, Henri Martin, and other literary critics were loud in their praises of it. Professor Schuitz translated it into German, and Mr. Matthew Arnold in due time saw in it "sweetness and light." Stephens always regarded it as his best work. "Is it to be believed," said the venerable Welsh scholar the Rev. Walter Davies, "that the author of this is only twenty-eight years of age?"

The "Literature of the Kymry" was published at the expense and risk of Sir John Guest. "Sir John," writes Lady Charlotte Guest to the publishers, "having been the means of bringing Mr. Stephens's composition within reach of the public, wishes also to do what is most liberal to Mr. Stephens himself. He desires me to say that he wishes a hundred copies to be placed at the disposal of Mr. Stephens free of all charge, and if any profit should accrue from the sale of the remaining copies, Sir John desires to present Mr. Stephens with the same." The book was waited for anxiously by Welsh scholars. While it was passing through the press enquiries were continually made about it by eminent men; and when it was at length issued, it sold quickly. "Your book," writes the local publisher, Mr. W. Rees of Llandovery, "sells as fast as my binder can turn it out of hand. Messrs. Longmans have sold off their first supply, and I have just sent off to them another." The work was most favourably noticed in all the leading literary reviews of the day, and the fame of the author was established. The admiration of it of the present accomplished editor, Mr. Silvan Evans, is not of recent origin. In August 1849 he thus wrote to Stephens: "I do not hesitate to pronounce your book a most masterly production, reflecting the highest credit on yourself and conferring a boon of infinite worth upon the literature of the Principality."

The Prince Consort, on the part of the Prince of Wales, duly forwarded

to Stephens a cheque for the value of the prize. Then came the difficult question, How was a copy of the book which had thus won the royal prize to be presented to the Queen and the Prince of Wales? With all his research and learning, this was a problem that Stephens could not solve. Lady Charlotte Guest is resorted to; and she obtains all the necessary information. This I reproduce here for the guidance of any loyal and ambitious reader. Lady Charlotte says that "she called at Mr. Murray's, and enquired what was usual with regard to presentation copies to the Queen. She was informed that it was customary to have them bound in morocco or white vellum, with gold lettering, and to have the royal arms on the side." But this was only a step. How was the book so bound and decorated to get to the Queen? This Lady Charlotte solves as follows: "I believe that it is not usual to send any note or inscription addressed to the Queen or Prince with the copies of any work to be presented. The Queen's private secretary is the proper channel through which they should be sent, and the best way will be for you to write to him to take the Queen's pleasure as to accepting the copies, and at the same time to write to him any observations which it may be wished should be conveyed to the Queen or the Prince relating to the work." This course was followed; the Queen consented to accept the copies of the book, and they were duly sent. Lady Charlotte was presented by Stephens with a beautifully bound copy for herself; and well did her Ladyship deserve it.

It is to be remembered that at the same Eisteddfod at which Stephens won the royal prize he also won another prize for an interesting history of the famed Caerphilly Castle.

CHAPTER IV.

IN 1849 Stephens took an extended tour upon the Continent. In these days the Continent is made familiar in early years to the youth of England, and they never learn the interest which a journey through Europe is to a man who takes it for the first time late in life. Dr. Johnson was an old man when he first saw Paris; and the long postponement of this pleasure was well compensated for by his being able to appreciate all around him with the keen sense which the thought and varied experiences of his life had given him. Stephens emerging from his studies—pursued without intermission for many years—and from his constant attention to his business, shaking off all learning and care, and going through the cities of Europe simply to see and enjoy, must have been for the time a happy man. All that he could have done under the

circumstances of his life he had done; and now all the glory of the civilisations, old and new, was exhibited to him.

But he did not long remain idle, for in the following year three prizes were awarded him at the Rhuddlan Eisteddfod. One was for an essay on the "Advantages of a Resident Gentry," another for a "Biographical Account of Eminent Welshmen since the Accession of the House of Tudor," and a third for a "Summary of the History of Wales." It has often been said that no one has yet written a fair and reasonable History of Wales. We have had summaries of prehistoric traditions and of national legends which few in these days can with gravity pretend to believe. The facts of our real history as a people have not been collected. We recently have read with a new interest the excellent books¹ of Dr. Nicholas and Mr. J. Roland Phillips, as giving us almost for the first time some solid information with regard to the important part played by the Welsh people in the history of England since the Conquest. It was hoped by many that Stephens had applied himself to this work. He has, however, done no more than write the summary for which he won this prize and several other treatises which bear upon the subject. Lady Hall—now Lady Llanover—has always been ready to patronise the Eisteddfod. Her Ladyship appears to have given these prizes herself at Rhuddlan. She sent a cheque direct to Stephens for the amount which he had won, and informed him that "she had declined to pay it to the Rhuddlan Committee."

After the establishment of the fame of Stephens as a Welsh scholar and historian by the publication of the "Literature of the Kynry," he became general referee upon all subjects relating to the Welsh language and antiquities. His correspondence immensely increased. Scholars from all quarters of Europe wrote to him for his views on disputed historical, philological, and antiquarian questions. It is to be inferred from their replies, many of which are before me, that he usually returned learned and elaborate answers to the enquiries sent him. The publication of this correspondence, if it could be got together—and there is no doubt that it could—would be welcomed by all Celtic scholars. The limits assigned for this biography permit only of a passing reference to it. He became a critic and a stern upholder of historical truth in the *Archæologia Cambrensis* and other journals. He bowed to no prejudices, but exposed all falsities which family and national pride sought to perpetuate. He traced the origin of alleged prehistoric triads to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; he exposed the vain notion that America was discovered by the Welsh before the time of Columbus; and he pronounced the story of

¹ The *County Families of Wales*, by Dr. Nicholas, and the *Civil War in Wales*, by R. Phillips. The two are published by Messrs. Longmans.

the massacre of the Welsh bards by Edward I. to be false. A Continental writer said of him that he "scaled the Celtic mythological heavens and scattered the false gods and goddesses that disported there." Attached to the Welsh people, and admiring their literature and song, he never allowed his patriotic sentiments to interfere with the assertion of the hard truths of history. For this he lost in popularity, and was often regarded with distrust by Welsh enthusiasts; but this quality of seeking truth above all things won for him the confidence of all true scholars.

The following letter, addressed to the editor, was inserted in the *Archæologia Cambrensis* :

SIR,—I hardly know whether it is worth while to intrude on the gravity of your pages with allusions to a subject started by some of the more illiterate among our fellow-countrymen not long ago; but, having observed in print a suggestion as to the propriety of publishing a list of such persons as have proved themselves "traitors," as the term goes, to the last of the several phases of traditional belief among the Kymry, I send you a list of the more prominent names of persons of this description. I cannot but remark that, in this our day, "treason" of the kind alluded to assumes so bold a front that vigorous measures must be taken by its opponents to hinder its progress, or else we shall all have to alter and renew our notions of Cambrian history; stump-oratory will be deprived of some of its most valuable and successful claptraps; and the nation itself will have to content itself with an honourable and rational account of its past existence.

The list of the principal "traitors" is as follows :

1. Meurig Davydd, of Glamorgan (1560–1600), for asserting that the Gospel was brought hither by the Apostle Paul, whereas he should have had prescience enough to see that after his day the legend of Bran ap Llyr would be invented, and would become the authoritative belief.—*Cyvrinach y Beirdd*, p. 31.
2. Llywelyn Sion (1601), for a similar want of prescience, and for believing that the Gospel was brought hither by Joseph of Arimathea.—*Cyvrinach y Beirdd*, p. 8.
3. George Owen Harry, for asserting cromlechs to have been graves.
4. Thomas Pennant, for the same offence.
5. Edward Lhuyd, for asserting that the Gael occupied this country before the Kymry.
6. The Rev. Ed. Davies, for denying the antiquity of the bardism of Glamorgan.
7. Iolo Morganwg, for denying that there ever was a *Brut Tyssilio*.
8. The Rev. Thomas Price, for asserting that the pretensions of the chair of Glamorgan can on no account be received.—*Hanes Cymru*, p. 42.
9. Rev. Walter Davies, for denying that Prince Madoc ever went to America.
10. Professor Rees, for denying any historical foundation to the Bran ap Llyr legend.

11. Rev. John Williams (ab Ithel), for denying the truth of the Trojan legend.

12. Rev. W. Basil Jones, for having written "Vestiges of the Gael in Gwynedd."

13. Mr. Aneurin Owen, for having denied the antiquity of the laws of Dyvnwal.

14. Archdeacon Williams, for insinuating the paganism of the bardic chair

15. And that arch-heretic Mr. Thomas Stephens, for having adopted nearly all the heresies of his predecessors, with I know not how many more, and especially for having abandoned his qualified belief in the Triads, on the ground that, after seven years of incessant researches into the sources of Cambrian history, he found them to be neither old nor trustworthy.

All these men, it is true, were thoroughly conscientious in their belief, and laboured under the delusion that they were doing their country a real and important service in unveiling its true history, and in paving the way for such a reconstruction of its annals as should command the respect of the literary world, instead of exciting its ridicule, and might be accepted as an authentic, integral, and honourable portion of the history of Europe. Moreover, they seem to have had a most obstinate love of something they call TRUTH, and in their simplicity to have believed that history should not be an illusion, and that patriotism should have some more enduring foundation than a series of demonstrable truths.

I remain, &c.,
INVESTIGATOR.

With reluctance I pass over this learned correspondence. I see that Dr. Basil Jones, the present Bishop of St. David's, ever an enthusiastic student of Welsh literature, carried on a frequent discussion through the post office with Stephens. In one letter the Bishop, doing himself but scant justice, says, "I am a very poor Welsh scholar, and am so far from understanding the poems attributed to Taliesin that I always regarded it as a strong exercise of faith to believe they mean anything." As a boy in school with a decent dictionary has no difficulty in understanding Homer, we are bound to ask, How was it that Dr. Basil Jones, who was, notwithstanding his modest statement to the contrary, a profound Welsh scholar, could see no meaning in the rhapsodies of Taliesin?

Not only was Stephens regarded as the corrector of Welsh errors and general instructor and critic of all Welsh subjects, but he was also sometimes sought to check the follies of individual Welshmen. The late Mr. Williams of Aberpergwm, a man of great culture, requests the aid of Stephens in the following difficulty: "The bearer of this," writes Mr. Williams to Stephens, "has just introduced himself to me. He says you have had the kindness occasionally to manifest some interest in his behalf. He now informs me of his intention to undertake a journey to London and to present himself to the Queen! I have endeavoured, without hurting his feelings, to dissuade him from committing that absurdity; but people

in his excited state of mind are not easily moved from a fixed idea. It is a pity to think that one who, by his conversation and appearance, deserves at least the tenderness of the world, should expose himself to public ridicule. I am sure you will, in your charity, prevail upon him to relinquish his ill-advised project, or at least to defer it until instruction through books and converse with the informed may render him more presentable at the Palace than he is now." We have reason to believe that the kind offices of Stephens were exercised with success, and that this peculiar ambition remained without realisation.

In 1851 Stephens received a prize at the Cardiff Eisteddfod for a "History of Cardiff." In 1852, at Port Madoc, he won a prize for an essay on the "Working Men of Wales." At the Abergavenny Eisteddfod in 1853 he won three prizes—one for an essay on "Names of Places Designated from Remarkable Events," another for a "History of Welsh Bards," and a third for an essay on the "History of Trial by Jury in Wales." This last prize, which was one of 70*l.*, was awarded to him by Chevalier Bunsen. The essay is a remarkable production, which will, I trust, some day be published. The Chevalier Bunsen spoke of it in terms of unqualified praise. Sir Erasmus Williams and many others urged the publication of this work at the time. "Bunsen's judgment," wrote Sir Erasmus, "is, in my opinion, an effectual recommendation of any work that may come from you. *Laudari a laudato* is something, but *laudari a laudatissimo* is much more. Happy should he be who has won, as you have done, the praise and admiration of that noble and most admirable man."

The following is the adjudication of the Chevalier Bunsen :

The author of the fourth essay, marked "Savigny" (Mr. Stephens), has gone over the same ground as his competitors, with so much more caution, and with such a thorough knowledge of the critical researches of the last thirty years, that he has left his competitors far behind. "Savigny," too, stands up for the claims of the Britons as originators of the trial by jury, but he thinks it necessary to sift critically the sources of our knowledge of their institutions. He exhibits, in his judgment of the earliest Welsh traditions, great conscientiousness and that impartiality which alone is worthy of a historian. He shows the mythical and legendary character of some of those traditions, and treats especially of those connected with Ddynwal Moelnu, whom he supposes to belong, not to the sixth century before Christ, but to the seventh of our era. "Savigny" adopts, essentially, the definition of jury given by Forsyth in his classical work, which he reduces to four principal points. Two of the distinctive features are negative—the first, that they are not a distinct class of men; the second, that they are not judges and no part of the judicial court. Two are positive—the third, that they are a sworn body of men; the fourth, that their duty is to find the truth of disputed facts, decide upon the effect of evidence, and to inform the court truly upon the question at issue. Starting, however, from this point, "Savigny" arrives at a very different conclusion from Forsyth. Allowing fully that the trial by jury, as well in Wales as in the rest of the island, re-

ceived its specific English form in the period between Henry II. and Elizabeth, he thinks that, although the Celtic element has contributed more to the formation of the institution than the Anglo-Saxon, yet the original germ is to be sought for in the laws and practices imprinted on the British during the Roman dominion—principally in the third and fourth centuries.

. . . Now, what I consider the distinctive merit of the author of the essay signed "Savigny" is, that he has brought forward, with much critical judgment, the claims of the Kymry; and, by so doing, has filled up an important chasm in the history of the judicial institutions of Great Britain. He has, besides, collected many interesting facts and specialities about the jury in Wales since Henry II.'s time. His merit in drawing the attention of the civilised world to the historical importance of the Cymreigyddion—also as regards the great principle of the co-existence of popular and professional judgments—is the more worthy of approbation as, even in Forsyth's work, the Kymric institutions have been passed over in silence. I can, consequently, have no hesitation in awarding the prize to the excellent essay signed "Savigny," which I trust may, without delay, be prepared for the press; and I conclude with expressing my hope that the publication of such a work will go far to show the importance of the Cymreigyddion y Fenni, and that it will encourage the members and friends of that society to lay before the public, both in the original language and in faithful translations, the great documents of the glory of ancient Kymry.

BUNSEN.

The President mentioned that he had received a letter from Chevalier Bunsen, in which he spoke very-highly of Mr. Stephens's production; and desired him to mention to Mr. Stephens that he was so much struck with the tone and learning displayed in it, that he hoped, if he should be in London, he would call at his Excellency's residence, Carlton Terrace, as he wished to have an opportunity of making the acquaintance of so distinguished an essayist.

Stephens was a man of great amiability and of modest benevolence. No one who deserved help or charity applied to him in vain. To young men struggling in poverty for better positions in life he ever gave his friendly aid, and the cry of distress he quickly heard. I have now before me letters and papers about an appeal which he successfully made to the "patrons of Welsh literature on behalf of a Welsh writer and bard," and a contributor to Welsh periodicals, "who had always been a vigorous promoter of a standard of Welsh orthography." This worthy man had removed to London, and had there been reduced to a state of great want and privation. Contributions duly flow in—one coming from that distinguished man Dr. Connop Thirlwall, the Bishop of St. David's—and the Welsh writer living in Somers Town, London, is relieved. "I have an overpowering desire," writes the poor bard in his wretched dwelling in town," to see the hills of Gwent and Morganwg again, but that, I fear, will never be.

CHAPTER V.

IN politics Stephens was a philosophical reformer. His abstract theories with regard to political justice were far in advance of those around him, who often mistrusted him because of his apparent want of party zeal. But he was prepared to accept good results even when produced by anomalous conditions; and he was in no haste to see change until favourable opportunities arose for it. I would class him with the philosophical Radicals, were it not that, while they believe in the possibility of realising some day all the schemes of their books, Stephens, coming out from his long study of all the histories, had grave doubts about the attainment of perfection for any human institution. His career as an active politician may be said to have begun and ended with the representation of Merthyr Tydfil by Mr. H. A. Bruce—now Lord Aberdare. From 1851 to 1868 Mr. Bruce was the member for Merthyr, and during that time he had no more steadfast supporter than Stephens. There existed between them the most perfect confidence, and the member soon learnt to appreciate the sterling worth of his friend. Mr. Bruce has been no dreamer. He has taken his part in the discussion of burning questions, not without glory, but his attention has been chiefly directed to the doing of practical good. In all his efforts to promote education, sanitary reform, and good habits among the people, to improve the relations of master and servant, to protect the children, and to secure the well-being of the collier and miner, he had the warm support of Stephens.

The practical career of Mr. Bruce, accompanied as it was with undoubted sincerity and earnestness of purpose, won his admiration. The correspondence which during all these years passed between them was of a very confidential character, and I have no right to publish it. In questions of difficulty the member frequently wrote to Stephens for his opinion. "I am glad," says Mr. Bruce in one letter before me, "to escape from the heated atmosphere of party and to have the cool opinion of my Merthyr friend, who has nothing but national interests and honour to guide him in his judgment." When Stephens was in any difficulty about procuring books necessary for his studies, Mr. Bruce was usually asked to make a search for them. "I wish to obtain," wrote Stephens, "'Baga de Secretis.'" "I will do my best," replied Mr. Bruce, "to get you 'Baga de Secretis.' It is not a blue-book, but, whatever be its description or colour, I will get it for you." But Baga is not so easily to be found, because in a subsequent letter thus wrote Mr. Bruce: "'Baga de Secretis' keeps his own secrets so successfully that I cannot unearth him. The librarian of the House of Commons knows not Baga, neither can

I find anyone else who does. He has certainly never been bound in blue."

At the Abergavenny Eisteddfod in 1853 Stephens won the prize for an "Analysis of the Remains of the Writings of the Welsh Poets from the Earliest Period to the Present Times, with Reference to the Elucidation of Welsh History." The Rev. Chancellor Williams, in awarding the prize, spoke of this essay in very high terms. It contained a minute and elaborate history of the first great era of Cambrian bardism, in addition to the required analysis of the poetry of that period and of the others subsequent to it. There was a general desire that the essay should be printed as a companion to the "Literature of the Kymry." This was, however, never done; and it now remains in manuscript among the other unpublished works of the author.

In August 1856 Stephens took a tour through Ireland. This tour was ever afterwards associated in his mind with many stories of Irish character, which he would recount at times. He lost no opportunity of seeing life, for I observe a play bill of the theatre at Tralee, which he attended, still preserved among his papers. The prices of admission charged on the occasion were, for the pit, fourpence, and for the gallery twopence. I wonder whether he verified in Ireland the following opinion, expressed to him at this time by a distinguished Welshman, whose name I had better withhold! "A South Wales man is by nature straightforward and candid, but a North Wales man cannot possibly shake off his duplicity under any circumstances whatever. Cunning is the study of all classes north of the Dovey. The inhabitants of Carnarvonshire and Anglesey are Irish in origin, and in character are like that people."

Nowhere was the learning of Stephens more appreciated than it was among the scholars of France. In his "Etudes d'Archéologie Celtique" Henri Martin said of him: "I am glad to pay here a debt of gratitude. Mr. Thomas Stephens, author of the 'Literature of the Kymry,' is one of those men who are surrounded by conditions the least favourable, yet by their indomitable vigour and capacity win entirely by themselves and are the sons of their courage and persevering will." The following letter to Stephens from M. de la Villemarqué, one out of a large correspondence, is not without its interest:

Au château de Keransker, près Kemperlé (Bretagne):
le 17 mai 1856.

Monsieur,—Quand même il n'existerait pas une *république des lettres*, dont tous les membres sont frères, il y aurait pour nous, Bretons-Armoricains, et pour vous, Kymrys-Bretons, une mère-patrie commune dont nous sommes les fils; nous devons donc nous aimer et nous entre-aider. Vous m'avez prouvé que ces sentiments sont les vôtres, en voulant bien parler de moi d'une manière aimable dans votre excellent livre "The Literature of the Kymry:" et moi-même j'ai été très-heureux de pouvoir louer ce livre dans ma traduction française des "Poèmes

des Bardes Bretons du IV^e Siècle," publiée à Paris par Renouard, rue de Tournon, en 1850. Dernièrement encore j'ai eu occasion de citer vos travaux, comme des modèles de critique, dans une lecture que j'ai faite à l'Institut de France sur les monuments de la langue des anciens Bretons

C'est donc avec un véritable chagrin que j'ai lu dans le "Cambrian Journal," revue distinguée, éditée par un homme si intelligent et si impartial, ce me semble, une lettre à l'éditeur où vous êtes traité d'une manière inqualifiable. Non ! quelques dissentiments qui puissent exister sur certains points de détail, vos "Studies in the British Biography" ne sont point indignes de vos études précédentes ; vous continuez à marcher dans la bonne et large voie, et vous y marchez même d'un pied plus assuré et plus indépendant ; vous perpétuez la saine école d'Edward Lhuyd, à laquelle appartenait aussi mon excellent et à jamais regrettable ami Thomas Price, et vous partagez avec d'autres l'honneur de cette renaissance cambrienne qui attire sur votre beau et intéressant pays les regards de l'Europe savante. Mais j'espère que ce nuage élevé entre compatriotes s'est dissipé depuis longtemps, et que vos contradicteurs auront fini par juger, comme les étrangers, qu'une sévérité, même poussée à l'excès, vaut mieux qu'une complaisance fâcheuse ou qu'une déplorable flatterie. Je serais bien aise de l'apprendre de vous, car je n'aime point les querelles de famille :

"Cas bethau Breton
Gwrth ac ymryson
Rhwny cydvrodorion."

Vous savez qu'on attribue ces vers à un de vos sages et de vos saints qui vint nous prêcher au VI^e siècle, et qui est mort chez nous. Je les cite souvent. Pour vous, monsieur, si, comme je n'en doute pas, vous avez fait la paix avec vos critiques, revenus à des sentiments plus équitables, à ceux du temps où ils vous regardaient "*with pride as the future historian of Wales*," vous pouvez dire, en le leur prouvant, avec le sage des Kymry :

"Nerth cryv, ei drugaredd."

Veillez agréer l'assurance de mon estime et de la sympathie avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être, votre serviteur,

Le Directeur de l'Association bretonne,

VTE. HERSART DE LA VILLEMARQUÉ.

In the year 1857 Stephens consented to be one of the adjudicators of a prize offered for the best critical analysis in Welsh on Hebrew prophecy. "You will have," Dr. Rowland Williams wrote to him, "as colleagues two clergymen and two Dissenters, and it will be your business to keep the peace between them, and to aid in the adjudication of the prize with reference to literary and general merit and to the dissemination of truth rather than that of any particular view or theory." After accepting the office of adjudicator Mr. Stephens received the following letter from Professor David Williams, of Lampeter College:

St. David's College, Lampeter: June 22, 1857.

Sir,—As judges of the best essay on Prophecy, for which Dr. Williams, our Vice-Principal, has propounded a prize, it will be necessary for us and our colleagues to exchange our thoughts and opinions on certain preliminary

arrangements as soon as we conveniently can. But I trust you will pardon me if, before we enter upon the consideration of any business connected with that essay, I venture to ask you one question. I have no doubt, from all I have heard of you, that you will frankly avow your religious sentiments, if necessary, whatever they may be. I do not know whether you will be surprised to hear that you have been represented to me by several people as holding certain opinions on religion which, if you do, it may be a question whether I may not be prevented from acting with you in adjudicating upon the essay. Will you, therefore, kindly answer me one question, which shall be expressed in few words? Do you believe the Christian religion to be of Divine origin? I hope you will give me credit for having asked this question in no uncharitable spirit, but simply for the sake of ascertaining whether you and I do not hold opinions so opposite that it may be either unwise or impossible for us to act together in deciding upon the merits of theological essays. I may add that I write this without the knowledge of Dr. Williams.

I am, Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

DAVID WILLIAMS, Professor of Welsh.

THOMAS STEPHENS, ESQ.

To this Stephens sent the following reply :

July 28, 1857.

Sir,—I have to apologise to you for not having replied to your note earlier. With reference to your enquiry whether or not I believe in the Divine origin of Christianity, I have to remark that, though I should have no difficulty in replying to this or any other question of a similar nature, I cannot reconcile my giving you a reply at all with my sense of independence. For you to institute an inquisition into my religious opinions is a grave infringement of the liberty of conscience, which Protestants claim as a right and believe it their bounden duty to preserve. It appears to me that you are attempting to exercise an authority which you do not possess and which I ought not to recognise.

Yours, &c.,

T. STEPHENS.

To the Rev. D. WILLIAMS.

To this Mr. D. Williams sent the following reply :

Pontarddulais, Llanelly: July 30, 1857.

Sir,—On my return home last evening I found your letter of the 28th inst. I must confess I regret you do not think fit to give me a direct "yes" or "no" to the question I put to you. But I think this may have arisen from my not having made myself understood. I did not ask that question because I was afraid the differences of opinion between you and myself in adjudicating upon the essays would be so great as to render it impossible for us to act together. I have no reason at all to fear that. But what I wished to say was, that you are reported to hold opinions which I consider would make it unwise and positively wrong for a *clergyman* at least to co-operate with you as a judge of theological essays. It is very probable I should agree with you in thinking that the judges ought to act independently of each other. But, before I take a single

step in the matter, you will excuse me for saying that I must have, as you will probably admit I have a right to claim, a direct answer to the question I put to you.

I had rather not apply to Dr. Williams for your answer, as I think it is a matter to be settled entirely by you and myself. I have only to add that if you do not think proper to give me a direct answer, the only alternative left me will be to resign my office as judge.

I am, Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

DAVID WILLIAMS.

THOMAS STEPHENS, Esq.,

Dr. Rowland Williams, then professing with some courage those charitable sentiments and opinions which eventually led him to the "Essays and Reviews" difficulties, tried in vain to induce Mr. David Williams to make peace. "I regret exceedingly," he wrote to Stephens, "that anything should have occurred to hurt your just susceptibilities. It is foreign to all my habits of thought to institute unauthorised inquisition into any man's conscientious relations to his Divine Judge." But Dr. Rowland Williams's amiable efforts were in vain. Mr. David Williams preferred to adhere to the straight and narrow road that leads to no difficulty in the Church, and retired from the position of adjudicator. Such example, as is usually the case, was followed, and Stephens was left alone with the Rev. David Lloyd, LL.D., principal of the Carmarthen College, a Unitarian like himself, to decide about this prize. In their adjudication, which was approved of by Dr. Rowland Williams, they say, "We accepted the office of judges from a sense of the importance of Hebrew prophecy, and of the desirability of having the views of Biblical scholars made known to our countrymen in their own language. Knowing that since the retirement of the majority of the judges originally appointed considerable distrust arose from the supposition of our holding extreme opinions on the subject, we thought it becoming in us to announce that we would not allow our doctrinal views to have any influence upon our decision. We are pleased to find that the competitors accepted our declaration in good faith, and honestly wrote out their convictions. As it happens, we are under no temptation to depart from our pledge. Not one of the essays represents our own views."

CHAPTER VI.

THOMAS STEPHENS did more than any man of his time to elevate the tone of the Eisteddfod, and to win for it the confidence of scholars. "The nonsense talked at Welsh gatherings," wrote to him Mr. Clark, of Dowlais, a well-known antiquarian and an austere critic, "makes an English man of business ashamed to support them. But you have done so much to

introduce common sense and the principles of sound criticism into Welsh literature, that I entertain a hope that an Eisteddfod promoted by yourself will be an exception to the general rule." Stephens won prizes at every Eisteddfod of any importance at which he chose to compete. I have given a list of many of his prizes: I could add many more, but I care not to do so. After the European fame that he had won, the medal of an Eisteddfod, and the praises of the judges there, appear not to me to be of much moment. But I must not pass over the incident connected with the Madoc prize at the Llangollen Eisteddfod in 1858. There is a notion—nay, a firm belief—among some Welsh bards that the discovery of America was made by the Welsh people in the twelfth century under the leadership of Prince Madoc. They believe that many Welshmen settled there then, and that they are now represented by a tribe of Welsh Indians. It is further believed that these Welsh Indians have been visited by Welshmen in recent times, and that a conversation in the Welsh language was carried on between them.

Accordingly, a prize of 20*l.* and a silver star were offered for presentation at the Llangollen Eisteddfod, in 1858, "for the best essay on the Discovery of America in the Twelfth Century by Prince Madoc ap Owen Gwynedd." Stephens investigated the subject with his wonted critical skill, and came to the conclusion that the whole story rested upon no reliable historical evidence. He sent in an essay to the Eisteddfod in competition for the prize, in which he contended—with success, as most reasonable men thought at the time—(1) that Prince Madoc never left his own country—that he came to a violent death at home, and that a bard was tried on a charge of having murdered him; (2) that no hint of the discovery of America appears in Welsh literature until after the time of Columbus; and (3) that the story of the Welsh Indians was unsupported by any evidence, but that a young Welshman, of the name of John Evans, in 1798 spent a winter among the alleged descendants of Madoc's followers, and found no trace of anything Welsh about them or their language. When it became known that this essay had been sent in, and that the judges thought it the best, great was the alarm among the Welsh enthusiasts at the Eisteddfod. "The discovery of America," said one illogical bard, "is a jewel that our mother race has long worn, and it is not to be taken from her except on the clearest possible proof."

The Rev. John Williams ab Ithel, intolerant in his national wrath, denounced the suggestion that the essay should win the prize, or should be admitted into the competition at all. The discovery of America by Madoc as a fact was a postulate at the Eisteddfod, and everyone who questioned it was ineligible as a candidate for the prize. Mr. Silvan Evans was one of the judges, and he thus ably states the facts with regard to this controversy:

 THE MADOC ESSAYS.

TO THE SECRETARIES OF THE LLANGOLLEN EISTEDDFOD.

GENTLEMEN,—Inasmuch as a controversy has arisen respecting the adjudication on the Madoc essays, and as one of the grounds alleged by the Llangollen Committee for withholding the prize from the author of the best essay is an imputed informality in my award, I, as one of the appointed judges, consider it to be my duty to the competitors and to myself again to lay before the Committee a formal statement of my views.

The subject was announced in these terms: "For the best essay on the Discovery of America in the Twelfth Century by Prince Madoc ap Owen Gwynedd, 20*l.* and a silver star."

Six essays were forwarded to me. Five of the writers took the affirmative side, and laboured, with more or less ability, to show that Madoc ap Owen had discovered America; but one of them, under the signature "Gwrnerth Ergydlym," by far the ablest writer, took the opposite side, examined the subject fully and candidly, displayed throughout a deep acquaintance with all the evidences bearing upon the question, and manifested no small amount of critical sagacity.

While the essays were under consideration I received a note from one of the secretaries stating that both he and his colleague were of opinion that a treatise "sent in on the *non*-discovery of America" "ought not to be received, there being no such subject in the programme." This interference with the functions of the judges appears to me to have been irregular and improper, and implied that those to whom the adjudication of these essays had been entrusted were not capable of deciding whether they were on the proposed subject or not. I therefore claim for myself, and for those who acted with me, the right to interpret the terms of the announcement in accordance with their obvious meaning and the spirit of the age in which we live; I am decidedly of opinion that the negative essayist ought to participate in the competition, and I emphatically deny that the competitors were bound to commit the immorality of adopting any conclusion that seemed to them not warranted by the premises.

I do not think it necessary to enter into the comparative merits of the affirmative essays. All of them, whether we take them singly or collectively, appear to me to fall far short of establishing the points which their respective writers have undertaken to prove; and as literary compositions none of them will bear comparison with the masterly essay of "Gwrnerth Ergydlym."

Having read the whole of the essays with as much care as the circumstances permitted, the impressions left on my mind are these:

That the existence of the so-called Welsh Indians has not yet been established;

That Madoc's alleged discovery of the American Continent rests upon bare conjecture; and,

That it is still an open question whether he ever left his own country.

If these essays exhaust the subject to which they refer, I can draw no other inference from their contents than that these points cannot, with our present stock of knowledge, be proved to the satisfaction of unbiassed minds. I am

therefore of opinion that one decision alone is possible, and that the prize ought to be awarded to "Gwrnerth Ergydlym."

In this sense, but less fully, I had expressed myself in the communication which I addressed to you in the earlier part of the Eisteddfod week; and I must be permitted to observe that my decision in this case was as formal as in the case of Barddas and the Diarebion Cymraeg, of which I acted as one of the judges, and no complaint was made that my verdict in reference to those subjects was deficient in point of formality.

I now confirm my former judgment, and must be understood to affirm emphatically—

1. That the essay of "Gwrnerth Ergydlym" is strictly upon the subject and entitled to compete;
2. That it is by far the best essay sent to me;—and,
3. That the author is fully entitled to the prize of 20*l*. and the silver star.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your faithful Servant,

D. SILVAN EVANS.

Llangŷan : Dec. 8, 1858.

But all reasoning was of no avail. The Committee of the Eisteddfod, led on by Mr. John Williams ab Ithel, withheld the prize from Stephens, on the ground that no essay could be admitted in competition which did not labour to support the discovery of America by Prince Madoc. When this announcement was made at the Eisteddfod, Mr. Stephens stepped on the platform and claimed permission to say a few words. The chairman begged him to refrain from doing so, and one leading man ordered the brass band present to strike up, in order to drown his voice. There were, however, many present who wished to hear him, and, yielding to their cry, the chairman allowed him to speak. He said "the real objection to his essay was that the conclusion arrived at was at variance with the preconceptions of the Committee. The Eisteddfod was not an arena for special advocacy, but for the promulgation of truth. He raised his indignant protest against the right claimed by the Committee to award their prizes for the advocacy of one-sided views of disputed questions. *Gwir yn erbyn y byd* (Truth against the world) was a common motto at the Eisteddfod, and he honestly wrote his opinions upon the supposition that their object was to arrive at the truth. The first affirmation of Madoc's discovery was made in 1559, sixty-seven years after the discovery of America by Columbus, and the person who made this affirmation referred to Lopez de Gomara, a Spanish historian of New Spain. His ambition was to be the interpreter of the claims of the language and literature of Wales to the neighbouring and Continental nations; this he had hitherto endeavoured to be to the best of his ability. He was proud to be considered a firm exponent of well-founded claims on the part of the Welsh people, and he would still continue to urge strongly and persistently every merit honestly

pertaining to the history and national character of the Kymry; but it lowered them as a people to claim what they could not prove belonged to them, and they tarnished their own reputation in attempting to deprive Christopher Columbus of the great glory of his discovery." Applause, loud and long, was won from the audience by this manly speech. But it was all of no avail. The Committee withheld the prize. Ab Ithel's enthusiasm carried all before it, and the brass band which was at his command struck up again, to the general delight. After this Stephens sought no more Eisteddfod laurels. He retired to his severe studies, his literary criticism, and the practical and benevolent duties of his daily life. He found in his experience the truth of his own quotation from De Foe: "If a man resolves to venture upon the dangerous precipice of telling unbiassed truth, let him proclaim war with mankind!"

The virtues of private citizenship usually remain unsung. In towns and villages are to be seen schoolrooms, infirmaries, libraries, chapels and churches, and halls, all the work of silent heroes, who, though unrecognised by Carlyle, exist throughout the land, working faithfully for no reward in the discharge of what they believe to be their duty. Stephens, during the many years which he passed at Merthyr, never lost an opportunity of doing his part to improve the town and to elevate its inhabitants. He had to educate it in the way of sanitary reform, and had to fight manfully against the powerful cry that his schemes would increase the local rates. In conjunction with Dr. Dyke, a learned medical practitioner there, and a few other thoughtful men, he succeeded in securing for Merthyr the advantages of a Local Board of Health. When a new cemetery was required he advocated the selection of the present site at Cefn, in opposition to the views of many of the ratepayers. His letters published in the public papers upon this subject are powerful appeals to his fellow-townsmen not to allow an unwise economy to interfere with their best efforts to promote the general health of the town. He was for many years an earnest advocate of the cause of temperance among the colliers and miners, and he was active in promoting the construction of the Temperance Hall. He spared no effort to advance the usefulness and success of the Merthyr Library, of which, as we have seen, he was one of the founders. His excellent addresses and lectures to the young men of the district are now remembered by them with gratitude. One of the anomalies springing up from the sudden rise of populous towns in the mineral districts of Glamorganshire is that they remain without any of the advantages of municipal corporations. At Merthyr, however, there exists the habit of treating the chief constable of the upper division of the hundred of Caerphilly with the honours of a quasi-mayoralty. The principal men of the town are in successive years appointed to this office. Stephens was high constable in 1858.

Mr. N. R. Williams, the Unitarian minister of Merthyr, found in

Stephens not only one of the chief supporters in his chapel, but also a profound theologian, to whom he could ever resort for information and advice. Stephens had read deeply in Biblical criticism and had mastered the history of the creeds. He was strong in his own belief as a Unitarian; and I have letters of his, published in the papers, now before me which show with what vigour and learning he could maintain his argument in support of it. He made the Unitarian chapel the centre of many of his good deeds. The care of the poor, the instruction of the young by the lending of books and by his own never-failing attendance at the Sunday school, were duties never neglected by him. Among the earnest and intellectual people who attend that little chapel his manly and genial countenance will long be missed and his noble example long remembered. "He was," says Mr. N. R. Williams, "my friend and support when I first came here, young and inexperienced in life; and such he continued to be for fifteen years."

Mr. C. H. James, who has worked with Stephens for years in many a good cause at Merthyr Tydfil, thus writes to me about him:

I knew Mr. Stephens for a great number of years, and worked with him in various good causes up to the time that his powers failed him, and during the whole course of time that we were so engaged there never occurred the slightest ruffle in our intercourse.

We were engaged together for many years in the management of the Merthyr Library—he as secretary, and I as one of the subscribers and committee. The establishment of that institution was due in a great measure to his zeal and persistent devotedness to its objects; and its maintenance in the efficiency in which it was maintained was also owing almost wholly to his constant supervision. He was for many years the very soul of the society, and without him it would have collapsed.

It is impossible to estimate the influence for good which he exerted in this way. Had everyone in Merthyr exerted himself with the same singlemindedness and devotion to institutions equally productive of good, the place would by this time have worn a different aspect.

The same desire of enlightening young people which impelled him to give so much time and thought to the Library urged him to Sunday school-teaching.

This, too, he continued for many years in Twynyrodin Unitarian chapel. In this way he got about him a number of intelligent young men, and I have no doubt that many not only in Merthyr, but in parts far away, would acknowledge that the lessons received from Mr. Stephens in these classes have quickened their intelligence and assisted them very materially in the struggle which they have had in life to establish and root themselves in the communities where Providence has placed them.

As a Welsh scholar and critic his works are the greatest testimony to his powers, and by them the world will judge him. Besides, however, those works, he was always ready, when, occasion required, to assist his neighbours by delivering lectures, mostly for the benefit of the Library, and these always showed the scholarly mind which marked everything which came from him.

The characteristic which most struck me in him was the evenness of his mind and temper. Nothing ruffled him. Conscious, I presume, of the intention to do what was right and just on all occasions, he seemed above the petty jealousies and passions which cloud the minds of so many men who have otherwise many admirable traits in their character; and knowing him as I did for many years, seeing him as I did, on some occasions, at meetings of various kinds, when many were raging and storming, my old friend Stephens was always placid, and frequently in a few kindly words, weighty with sense, poured oil on the stormy waters. It was, I suspect, this evenness of his temperament which aided him so greatly in applying his critical faculty to the historical problems which came before him to be solved. He was a Welshman, but he was a truth-loving man, and he never knowingly permitted the patriot to stifle those higher claims which truth and historical impartiality claim from all true men. His judicial attitude as a critic was admirable, and was, I think, in his writings that feature for which he is entitled to the highest praise which such works are entitled to.

CHAPTER VII.

On the 19th day of February, 1862, the banks of one of Mr. Crawshay's great pits—called Gethin Pit No. 2—were crowded by wailing women and children—waiting for the dead, who were being sent up from the workings below. An explosion of fire-damp had taken place. Forty-nine persons had been killed; and by their death twenty-eight women and sixty children had been deprived of their natural support. The destitution of these people in the depth of this winter was great; and their misery aroused the best energies of Stephens. He became the life of a movement that was set on foot for their relief. He dedicated himself to it night and day; and it is thought by some that, by over-exertion, he then inflicted an injury upon his constitution from the effects of which it never really recovered. He was honorary secretary to the Gethin Relief Fund, and, to the honour of the inhabitants of Merthyr and of the Glamorganshire hills, he was well supported. In a short time the sum of 7,528*l.* was subscribed; and up to his death this fund, with the assistance of a committee, was administered by Stephens. With it the women have been sustained and the children educated and brought up to useful occupations. Standing in his shop, I have seen the Gethin recipients come to him for their money with happy faces. He knew them all—their story, their wants, their anxieties—and had a kind word for all. He never neglected or forgot them. Even during the last month of his illness, when he could scarcely speak, he would insist upon seeing that the Gethin money was paid, and the last act of his business life was the signing of the cheque for the poor widows.

He was about this time carrying on a large correspondence with learned

men with regard to the importance of arriving at some degree of uniformity and correctness in the orthography of the Welsh language. Without a very cautious regard to the derivations of words it is difficult for a person even well versed in the Welsh language to avoid grave mistakes in spelling. As a matter of fact, the number of men who are masters of Welsh orthography are few. It was Stephens's desire to adopt rules founded upon classical investigation, which should be a universal guide. He took the initiative and forwarded a printed circular to all who were likely to be interested in the subject. Thence followed a weighty correspondence—very dry, but of interest to some who may like to investigate it some day. He was also greatly concerned in endeavours to arrive at a correct account of the Druidic religion—of its origin and influences. To him there appeared to be a subtle metaphysical and ethical system behind the vague and rough sketches we have of it in unlearned histories. He made large purchases of books bearing on this subject, and seemed to entertain the idea of publishing a work upon it. He investigated the historical origin of the Welsh mythological hero or demigod *Hu Gadarn*. This is a kind of Welsh Proteus, whose history varies in different ages. He is said by some to have been the leader of the Kymry to Britain; and by others he is described as “Hu the Mighty, Jesus the Son of God—the least in respect of His worldly greatness whilst in the flesh, and the greatest in heaven of all visible majesties.” Mr. Stephens's view was that all the stories about this personage originated in the romance of Charlemagne. In the *Mabinogi* of Charlemagne (*Llyfr Coch o Hergest*) he figures as the Emperor of Constantinople. The legend is that when the Emperor of the West visited him, he found *Hu Gadarn* ploughing in a field; but the plough was made of gold, and he followed it in a golden chair supported by mules. The Welsh Triads, as I have already said, were subjected to the severe criticism of Stephens; and although they had been thought to be prehistoric in their character, he succeeded in convincing most people who were disposed to accept truth before prejudice, that nearly all of them were of a mediæval origin. The results of his study were contributed to various reviews and periodicals, and often merely by letter to some of the most eminent Welsh scholars. In addition to his many occupations he took, in 1864, the management of the “*Merthyr Express*,” a weekly newspaper at Merthyr, which Mr. C. H. James, himself, and a few others had successfully established in that year.

It is interesting to note how much Stephens was sought for information and opinions upon all Welsh subjects. “I want you to tell me,” wrote Mr. H. A. Bruce, “what Kymric bard was born at *Ecclefechan*, and what evidence there is of the fact. I startled Carlyle very much the other day by stating that several of our Welsh bards were geographically Scotchmen, and that one of them was his townsman. He said that *Eccle-*

fechan did not mean 'little church,' but the church of a sainted Fechan." In another letter the same writer asks, "What say you to the University for Wales? I do not think it would do for Wales what the Scotch Universities have done for Scotland, unless it were attached to some considerable town. It might then become an intellectual centre and do much for us. A mere building in the wilderness would only further provincialise us, and do more harm than good. I believe the want of a common centre of Welsh thought has been the chief, if not the only, cause of that dearth of men of real eminence in Wales which every candid man must admit to have existed." A correspondence was always kept up between Mr. Stephens and Viscount Villemarqué and M. Henri Martin, and other Continental scholars, chiefly upon Celtic literature and tradition. But towards the end of the year 1864 the efforts of this worker and student received a check. He had overtaxed his strength. His ever active brain was receiving no rest. Even when attending to the duties of his shop there was always upon his desk, in a retired nook, some learned book or manuscript, to which he resorted whenever he had a moment's time. He never spared himself when there was work to be done or when there was a task of learning to master. His medical attendant observed a change in him. He had received a slight attack of paralysis. The effect, however, of it was scarcely perceptible to many. His power of thought and of work remained; but some observed that much of his vivacity had gone. He became more retiring and diffident. The doctor ordered him to abandon literary work, but this he would not do. His physical health rallied, and it was only those who were well acquainted with the former activity of his brain, his ready wit and freedom of speech, who knew that a great change had come over him.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON September 11, 1866, Mr. Stephens was married at Llangollen Church to Miss Margaret Davis, of Merthyr Tydfil. This lady, possessed herself of a vigorous mind and of literary tastes, appreciated with her whole heart his career and character. Never did wife render to husband deeper veneration and devotion than she did to him. They were old friends. Her relations were his chief companions, and one of the lessons of her youth had been to honour this man of learning. Her father, known for much charity in his day, died young; and her mother lived to bring up his children well. It is right to note of her mother that she was descended from an old family—the Williamses of Penyrheolgerrig. In the time of the Commonwealth these had been stout Puritans and Parliament men; and their descendants have abided by the principles of freedom. They loved

to patronise literary men; and it is recorded that old Iolo Morganwg was a frequent visitor at their house.¹ From this stock came the wife of Stephens. She was worthy of him. His own happiness was complete, and the cloud which his attack of illness had cast over his life vanished for a time before the sunshine which she brought.

Merthyr Tydfil was in 1868 the scene of a strange political contest. Mr. H. A. Bruce had represented the constituency in Parliament for many years with advantage and success. Few members were more secure in their seats than he, and everyone regarded his continued representation of Merthyr Tydfil under any circumstances as one of the most certain of future events. Mr. Disraeli, however, assigned by his Reform Act an additional member to this constituency; and forthwith great excitement arose as to the candidate that should be selected. A panic seemed to seize the leading political spirits. It was at first conceded by all that Mr. Bruce was to retain his seat, and that the sole question was the election of his coadjutor; but forthwith a considerable portion of the constituency found itself pledged to a line of conduct which was dangerous to Mr. Bruce's interests. Mr. Fothergill brought powerful means to secure his return. Influential deputations waited upon him and strong committees were formed. But the Nonconformists were also on the alert, and formed an irresistible combination for the return of a man who should represent their interests. In the constituency their numbers were overwhelming; and they selected for their candidate Mr. Henry Richard, a patriotic Welshman of great powers and an earnest Dissenter. A better man for the success of this party could not have been chosen. But many who thus got pledged to Mr. Henry Richard as Nonconformists had already unwittingly got pledged to Mr. Fothergill, or were soon made to feel the influences that were brought to bear in his favour. The supporters of Mr. Bruce apprehended the danger, but too late. While every effort was being made by the supporters of Mr. Richard and of Mr. Fothergill on their behalf, Mr. Bruce's supporters were content to rely upon the eminent services of their man and upon the undoubted claims which he had upon the constituency. Stephens was the most earnest and devoted advocate of Mr. Bruce's cause. He was indefatigable in his efforts. He spoke at meetings, and wrote much, both in English and in Welsh, in favour of his friend. This was the last effort of his public life, and in it all the energies of his former years seemed for a while to return. But all was in vain. The day of election came; Bruce was defeated, and those who were his colours or were known to be his supporters could scarcely walk on that day through the streets of Merthyr with safety. "No event,"

¹ See Waring's Iolo Morganwg, p. 171.

writes Mrs. Stephens, "grieved and disappointed my husband as much as this. It had the effect of deadening his interest in the public affairs of Merthyr, and he never more interfered in them."

After holding the office of honorary secretary to the Merthyr Library for twenty-five years Mr. Stephens tendered his resignation of it. This was made the occasion by his friends of raising a testimonial for him—a new ordeal through which some good and many vain and foolish men have in these days to pass. Stephens at first refused to receive any testimonial at all, but at last he was prevailed upon to accept a bust of himself executed by his old friend Mr. Joseph Edwards. Mr. Edwards entered upon this work not only with the skill and spirit of a real artist, but also with the zeal of a friend. He entertained for Stephens a profound regard, and he studied hard to give to his work those touches which perpetuate in marble character and thought. Eminently has he succeeded; and it is pleasing to know that Stephens lives not only in his writings and in the memory of those who knew him, but also in this work raised by the skill of one who was at the same time an accomplished artist and a loving friend.

In 1870, while Stephens was taking a walk in company with his wife in the neighbourhood of Vaynor, near Merthyr, he was again stricken by paralysis. This time the attack was severe in its character. Although he recovered to the extent of being able to pursue his studies for some time longer, he rarely attempted to write. During the years of suffering that followed he was watched with the greatest tenderness and care by his devoted wife. Dr. Thomas, of Merthyr, was unremitting in his attention to him. Several visits were made to London for the purpose of obtaining eminent medical advice. But all was in vain. Stephens succumbed at last to a long and painful illness, and died at Merthyr on January 4th, 1875.

In the town in which he had lived for many years his influence as a man of character and learning was felt. He often advocated views that ran counter to the prejudices of its inhabitants, but they failed not to recognise his broad charity and the true nobility of his nature. Swayed though they are by influences which many condemn, the inhabitants of Merthyr are an energetic and generous people. There is much intellectual activity among them. They honoured their distinguished townsman and were proud of the fame that he had won. He intruded not himself upon the rich or the poor, but his manly character had won for him the respect of both. No man stood higher than he did in the universal esteem of his neighbours; and when he died, Merthyr truly sorrowed for him. It was known and felt then that in all his actions he had been influenced only by the love of truth and by the most enlightened patriotism.

The Rev. M. Williams, known to fame as "Nicander," wrote the following letter to Stephens while he was engaged in the Madoc controversy.

Llanhyddlad Rectory, Holyhead: Aug. 31, 1860.

Dear Sir,—I never was a believer in the discovery of America by Madoc; your remarks seem quite decisive of the point. It is a misfortune that we so little value historical criticism in our researches. Too much prejudice and too little knowledge have, on the other hand, puffed us up to take credit for many things that really do not belong to us. How often, for instance, have the words of Tacitus been applied to the Kymry: "Cimbri parva nunc civitas, sed gloriâ ingens." Tacitus here makes not the remotest allusion to the Welsh, who in his time were by no means a "parva civitas;" he is, in fact, speaking of a tribe of Germans.

I remember being much struck with your identification of *Aedd Mawr* with the Roman general *Aëtius*. There seems to me to be more common sense in this view than in that of Dr. Meyer, who suggests that the *Ædui* of Gaul were so called from a god *Aed*, whom they worshipped, and whom he identifies with the *Aedd Mawr* of the Triads. These *Ædui*, he thinks, gave this island the name of *Aeddon* or *Eiddin*, which is perpetuated in the word *Edinburgh*.

Most of our scholars, in endeavouring to grasp at distant shadows, disregard, and therefore miss, the substance that is nearer home and really available for our true history. What a havoc Niebuhr would have made of our traditions, and what materials he would have found for Welsh history where one would have least expected to find any.

It is amusing to see how some actually good scholars receive all our crudest traditions as sound articles of historic faith, and defend them as such with all zeal and earnestness.

I remain, dear Sir,
Truly yours,

M. WILLIAMS.

THOMAS STEPHENS, Esq.

This letter, written by a patriotic Welshman, indicates the field of enquiry in history and literature that was open to Stephens. The illusions and dreams of Welsh historians and bards had become a joke for the world. But mixed up with them and underlying them, often but dimly traceable, there were fragments of historic truth that it were well to preserve. Upon his work Stephens boldly entered, fearless to do what was right and to ascertain the truth. For the task he had qualified himself by years of laborious study. I count but little the alleged disadvantages connected with his keeping of the chemist's shop at Merthyr. Great scholarship has not been usually achieved in luxurious rooms amid gilded books; it has more frequently adorned empty garrets and filled with grandeur lives of poverty. The accidents of place affect but little the real student. Give him but the books, and soon will he become a ruler in a great kingdom. Stephens was able to collect a valuable library of his own and to visit great libraries in London and elsewhere. He mastered

several languages, and had at his ready disposal a store of antiquarian learning such as few possessed. He had a retentive memory, a sound judgment, and capacities for profound thought. He thus became the first Celtic critic of his day, and as such his name will be honoured and preserved. The work of his life was completed before he was forty-three years of age, for after his first attack of illness in 1864 he did nothing which will add to his fame. He died, moreover, at the age of fifty-three. "Et ipse quidem quamquam medio in spacio integræ ætatis ereptus, quantum ad gloriam longissimum ævum peregit."

A LIST OF THE MSS. ESSAYS AND WRITINGS OF
THOMAS STEPHENS.

1. *An Analysis of the Remains of the Welsh Poets* from the Earliest Period to the Present Time, containing all the Bardic Biography known to exist, being, in fact, a Comprehensive History of the Bards.
2. *Biographies of Eminent Welshmen*, with an Introductory Essay.
3. *An Essay on the alleged Discovery of America* by Madoc ap Owen Gwynedd in the Twelfth Century.
4. *The Gododin of Aneurin Gwawdrwydd*: an English Translation, with copious Explanatory Notes. A Life of Aneurin and several lengthy Dissertations illustrative of the Gododin and the Battle of Catteraeth.
5. *A History of Trial by Jury*: its Origin and Progress in the Principality of Wales ; and also the History of Trial by Jury in England.
6. *An Essay on the Origin of the English Nation*.
7. *The History of the Town and Castle of Cardiff*, with Appendix.
8. *An Essay on the Names of Places in South Wales*, to illustrate the History, Local Traditions, and Legendary Lore of the Principality, taken from the Note-book of a Rambling Pedlar.
9. *An Essay on the Working Men of Wales* compared with those of England, Scotland, and Ireland.
10. *The History of Wales* from the Earliest Period to the Present Time, with an Introduction containing the History of the Migrations of the Kymry prior to their arrival in the Isle of Britain.
11. *An Essay on the Advantages of a Resident Gentry*.
12. *A Welsh Essay on the Part taken by Welsh Chieftains in the Wars of York and Lancaster*.
13. *An Essay on the Scientific Value of the Chemical Theories and Discoveries of Baron Liebig*.
14. *An Essay*: Druids, Druidic Customs ; Symbols and Alphabet.
15. *Translation of a Treatise on the Position which the Welsh Language occupies among those of Celtic Origin*, with their Branches among the Indo-European, or, as they are generally called, the Indo-Germanic Languages.

Several Welsh Essays and materials for an Essay on the Neo-Bardic Theosophy.

CHAPTER I.

SECTION I.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WELSH LITERATURE PRIOR TO THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

THE facts of history, apart from the circumstances from which they sprang, can afford no instruction; for our knowledge of effects is not complete, until we add to it some acquaintance with their causes. And therefore, as the phenomena visible in the twelfth and following centuries, are the products of agents set in operation in a previous era, it becomes of importance to ascertain what those were, and what the state of literature was, when we commence our criticism.

It is said that there are remaining some portions of genuine Druidic lore; but as I am able neither to deny nor confirm that assertion, it will be wiser to abstain from giving any opinion upon the subject, and proceed at once to the Bards of the sixth century. The genuineness of the compositions, which go under the names of these bards, was denied many years ago by Mr. Malcolm Laing, and the *Critical Review*; but as they could have known nothing of the matter, their opinions were not of much value. Mr. Sharon Turner,¹ an Englishman of great learning and rare impartiality, has devoted an extensive essay to this enquiry; and as he has ratified the conclusions of Welsh critics, we may now take it for granted, no one disputes that such persons as Aneurin, Taliesin, and Llywarch lived at the time stated. Many of the pieces imputed to Taliesin are undoubtedly not older than the twelfth century, as will be here-

¹ *Vindication of the British Bards*, by Sharon Turner, F.A.S.

after shown; but it is also equally evident that other pieces must be referred to a much earlier date. The bards who lived in the sixth century were Aneurin, Taliesin, Llywarch, Myrddin, Kian, Talhaiarn, Meugant, and Kywryd.

The poems of LLYWARCH HEN are undoubtedly old, and in referring to an age of whose manners we have but few other transcripts, are very valuable, nor are they destitute of poetic excellence. Though a warrior, and treating of warriors, his *forte* does not lie in heroic poetry; his descriptions of manners are happy, and the incidental allusions are strikingly illustrative of the age; but his chief power lies in pathetic lamentation, and his elegies have many fine sentiments. He cannot, however, take a high rank in bardic literature; for either from want of capacity, or in compliance with a bad usage, he begins long strings of verses with the same words, such as "Eryr Pengwern," "Eiry Mynydd," "Eglwysau Bassa," and with better effect, "Ystavell Kynddylan." He has some very affecting verses with this commencement, many of which bring out the facts of the time with great clearness.

The hall of Kynddylan is dark to-night
Without fire, *without songs*;
Tears afflict the cheeks.¹

From this we learn that the order of the bards existed in his days.

ANEURIN takes a higher position in the roll of poets, and his Gododin, a poem detailing the adventures of the Ottadini, a tribe of the Kymry, before their immigration from Cumberland and the adjoining country to that portion of this kingdom now known as Wales, justly entitles him to the precedence among the bards of his day; the next being TALIESIN. Any criticism on this poem, which did not treat the subject at length, could not fail to be unsatisfactory; I shall therefore only pause to offer a few remarks on what the object of the composition seems to be. The Rev. Edward Davies conceives the Gododin to refer to the reported massacre of three hundred Cambrian chiefs, by Hengist and the Saxons, who invited them to a feast at Stone-

¹ Owen's *Heroic Elegies of Llywarch Hen*, p. 78. The original runs thus:

Ystavell Cyndylan ys tywyll heno,
Heb dan, *heb gerddau*,
Digystudd deurudd dagrau.

henge; but the Rev. Thomas Price dissents from that view, though acknowledging that he has seen no satisfactory explanation of the meaning of the word "Cattraeth." Methinks the acuteness which discovered the meaning of "Dyvynaul Vrych," might easily have overcome that difficulty, for I believe the following to be the key to the Gododin. We know that a tribe called the "Ottadini" occupied the shores of Northumberland, from Flamborough Head to the Frith of Forth; we know further that Deivyr and Bryneich were adjacent territories; and lastly we know that in the adjoining county of York, there was a Roman town of note, named *Cataracton*,¹ and now called Catterick. The bard says, "The men of Gododin went to Cattraeth;" now Cattraeth must have been somewhere near. Many phrases countenance this assumption:

Gwyr a aeth Gattræth gan ddydd. (Twice repeated.)

Men went to Cattraeth *at break of day*, or with the day.

and

Gwyr a aeth Gattræth gan wawr. (Thrice repeated.)

Men went to Cattraeth *with the dawn*.

It therefore appears to me perfectly clear, that the subject of the Gododin is an expedition of the Ottadini against the town of Cataracton, then held most probably by the Brigantes. Taliesin says:

Arwyre gwyr Cattraeth gan ddydd.

I will extol the men of Cattraeth who with the day, &c.

and we cannot suppose that this is simply an allusion to Aneurin's poem, and not to real personages who might with propriety be said to be of "the men of Cattraeth." The whole scene and actions are laid in the North; and there is not the slightest reason for believing it can have had any reference to the reported massacre at Stonehenge in Wiltshire. Aneurin also makes allusions to bards existing in his time:

Hyfeidd hir etnygir tra vo *kerddawr*.

Hyfeidd the Tall will be known while there are minstrels.

¹ It is but justice to an old bard to acknowledge that I was anticipated in this remark by Iolo Morganwg, *Lyric Poems*, ii. 16

and again :

Blwyddyn bu llawen llawer *kerddawr*.

That year many minstrels were merry.

Both Aneurin and Taliesin¹ have been honoured with the title of "King of the Bards," but in my opinion the title has been given with least propriety to the latter; for he has no single work to compare with the Gododin, though he has several small poems possessing more real poetry than any portion of that poem. His life seems to have been more exclusively devoted to the profession; and unlike Aneurin he does not seem ever to have handled the spear. His poems show more skill in composition, finer ideas, bolder images, and more intense passion than any poet of the same age. The historical value of the Gododin is greater; poetical merit belongs more exclusively to Taliesin. There are nearly eighty pieces attributed to him, most of which belong to a much later date; but the "Battle of Gwenystrad," the "Battle of Argoed Llwyvain," the "Battle of Dyffryn Gwarant," and some of the Gorchanau, seem to be genuine remains.

Under the name of MERDDIN, the editors of the *Myvyrian Archaiology* place the "Hoianau," the "Avallenau," "Kyvoesi Merddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer," the "Gwasgargerdd," and "I Ysgolan." The Hoianau, which were supposed to be as old as the sixth century, will, with the Avallenau, be shown to belong to the thirteenth century, and the Kyvoesi to the tenth; the Ysgolan here alluded to will be found identical with the Ysgolan, whom our poets and historians have conjured up in the Tower of London to destroy an imaginary heap of books; and the real Ysgolan of actual history will be produced in the third chapter to answer for himself. From this it would seem that not one of the poems which are attributed to Merddin, is likely to be his.

We have but few remains of the labours of other authors, much too few to form any useful estimate of their poetical merits. KUHELYN, LLEVOED, ELAETH, TYSSILIO, GWYDDNO, and GWDION AB DON, were bards who lived about the same time. A

¹ The name *Telesinus* occurs in Roman history, that of Pontius Telesinus, "dux Samnitium," the opponent of Lucius Cornelius Sulla (Keightley, *Hist. Rome*, 349). A Roman consul of the same name is mentioned by Tacitus.

little later lived AVAN VERDDIG, who has left an elegy on Cadwallon, of which Ieuan Brydydd Hir has formed a favourable opinion; and still later lived GOLYDDAN.

It is also said that Cadwaladr held an Eisteddvod some time during his reign.¹ The abdication of this monarch left the Kymry in great difficulties; and the two succeeding centuries are barren of literary productions. We are not, however, to infer, that the order of bards was extinct, for on the contrary, it seems to have grown considerably. The bard had, in fact, become a necessary element in Welsh society; and, as we learn from the Laws of Howel Dda, had obtained an eminent social position. These laws throw much light upon the character and office of the bard, and show him to have formed an essential member of the royal household. Minstrels attended the monarch whenever he went from home; but the chief minstrel should not be confounded, as he sometimes is, with the Bardd Teulu, for it was the latter and not the former that was a member of the household, one of the twenty-four officers of the court. This expression, Bardd Teulu (the Family Bard), at once shows the estimation in which that personage was held; and his position will be still more clearly understood from the following notices in the Welsh Laws.²

The domestic Bard shall receive of the family, a beast out of every spoil in which he shall be present; and a man's share like every domestic.

If there should be fighting, the Bard shall sing *The Monarchy of Britain* in front of the battle.

When a Bard shall ask a gift of a prince, let him sing one piece; when he asks of a baron, let him sing three pieces; should he ask of a villain, let him sing until he falls asleep.

His land shall be free; and he shall have a horse in attendance from the King.

The Chief of Song shall begin the singing in the common hall.

He shall be next but one to the patron of the family.

He shall have a harp from the King, and a gold ring from the Queen, when his office is secured to him. The harp he shall never part with.

The protection of the domestic Bard, is to conduct a person to the patron of the family.



¹ "The prince held his court—that is, received his vassals—three times a year, Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost." The laws originated thus, and these were fitting times for Eisteddvodau.—*Myv. Arch.* iii. 363; VILLEMARQUÉ, *Ronde Table*, 311.

² Wotton's *Leges Wallicæ*.

The domestic Bard, and the physician, shall be in the lodging of the patron of the family.

The steward of the household, judge of the court, headgroom, chief of song, master of the hawks, page for the chamber, and domestic chaplain; the satisfaction of their insult and murder are the same, and their heriots the same; and their daughters are alike in rank.

In satisfaction for their insult shall be paid nine cows, and nine score pence of money.

In their satisfaction for murder shall be paid nine hundred and nine cows, with three advancements.

A pound is the heriot of each of them.

A pound is the maiden fee of their daughters, their covert fee is three pounds, their jointure is seven pounds.¹

We have here clear evidences of the high estimation in which the Bardic Order was held in the tenth century; and it would seem that the profession had been organised to a considerable extent, so that there were at that time various degrees of bards. The copies of the laws consulted by Dr. Wotton, and also the one given in the first volume of the *Cambrian Register*, are somewhat defective; and their account of the domestic bard, the presiding bard, and the chief of song, is so confused that one might suppose them to be various names for the same person. A copy of the laws in the Welsh School in London, supplies the deficiency, and enables us to see with more clearness into

¹ Bardd teulu a geif eidyon y gan y teulu o bop anrheith yd vo yndi, aran gwr mal pob teuluwr. Enteu a ddyly canu unbenaeth prydein o byd y wlad rac bron y gad.

Ban a archo bard y teyrn caned un-canu; ban archo breyr caned tri chanu. Od eirch ytaeawc, caned nny gysgo.

Y dir yn ryd amarch bith osseph ygan y brenhin.

Y penkerd a dechreu canu yn y neuad kyssevin.

Eil nesaf ir penteulu yd.

Telyn a geif y gan y brenhin, amodrwy eur ygan y vrenhines, pan gwystler yswyd idaw. Y delyn ni ad byth ganthaw.

Nawd y bard teulu yw kanhebrwng dyn hyd ar y penteulu.

En llety y penteulu ybydant y bard teulu a'r medic.

Dystain, ygnad llys, Pengwastrawd, Penkynyd, Penkerd, Hebogyd, Gwas ystarell, Effeirad teulu, vn sarhaed, ac vn galanas, ac vn ebediwr, ac vn vreint eu merched.

En eu sarhaed ytelir naw muw, a nawugaint aryant.

En eugalanas ytelir naw muw anaw ugaint muw gan dri dyrchavael.

Punt yw ebediwr pob un onadunt.

Punt yw gobyr eu merched; teir punt yw eu kowyll; seithpunt yw eu hagwedi.

their actual conditions ; and from this we find the differences between these functionaries to be the following :

The chief of song was not one of the twenty-four officers of the court.

The chief of song and the bard president might be the same person, if he should have obtained in bardic contests the chair of presidency ; but they were frequently different persons. The being a bard president entitled the bard to a seat at the royal table, though the chief of song was not permitted to enter the hall.

The *bardd teulu* was distinct from both. At the table the *bardd teulu* sat below the pillars with the inferior officers of the court, while the bard president sat above.

It is somewhat singular that the bards who lived at this time, and under the guardianship of so able and accomplished a prince, should have left no traces of their poetical labours. It will perhaps be suggested that their poems have been lost ; but I cannot countenance such an assumption. We shall presently see, in the first work of Meilir, that the poetry of the bards one hundred and fifty years later was very rudimental, and may therefore conclude that the age was not honoured by any extraordinary intellectual exhibitions. The greatness of the age was concentrated in Howel ; and perhaps we shall not be far wrong, if we attribute to the bards of that day no higher aims than “*Englynyon y Clywed*,” and such moral lessons as “*Chwedlau y Frân*,” or the Aphorisms of *Cattwg*. These verses, though indicating no great intellectual capacity, are in their way exceedingly curious, and instructively show how an intelligent people supplied the defect felt in the want of a written literature. For this purpose we subjoin the following :

Hast thou heard what Avaon sung,
The son of Taliesin of just lay ?
The cheek will not conceal the anguish of the heart.¹

That is one of the Verses of the Hearing, and here follows one of the Fables of the Crows :

¹ A glyweisti a gant Avaon
Vab Taliesin, gerdd gyfion,—
Ni chel grudd gystudd calon.

A crow sang a fable on the top
 Of an oak, above the junction of two rivers,—
 Understanding is more powerful than strength.¹

This is one of Cattwg's aphorisms :

Make the best on all occasions
 Of what you already possess :—
 Better than nothing is the shelter of a rush.²

Cattwg the Wise sang it.

Possibly some of these may be later than the time of their reputed authors ; but some of them may lay claim to high antiquity.

These however rather confirm than disprove the assertion, that after Howel, darkness covered the land. King Alfred informs us that there were but very few able to read in his day, and we may thence infer that there were no exertions made to cultivate literature, or diffuse information. Perhaps, we have no right to expect more than the Laws of Howel, the Life of Alfred, and the writings of Asser, from so barren an age. Some persons have, in a most uncritical manner, referred the poems sometimes called mythological to the time which intervened between the death of Howel and the appearance of Meilir ; for this they assign no better reason than that a number of poems exist to which there has hitherto been assigned no date, and

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<sup>1</sup> Brân a gant chwedd ar uwchder  
 Derwen uwch deuffrwd aber,  
 Trech deall na grymusder.

<sup>2</sup> Gwna y goren ym mhob angen,  
 O'r peth a fo'n dŷ berehen,  
 Gwell no dim gwasgawd lŵwynen.

*Cattwg Ddoeth* a'i cant.

We must reject the pretension of the Bardic school, that this is the wisdom of Cattwg, though we may hesitate as to the correct merit to assign them, whether to charge them with a design to pander to national vanity in assigning to Cattwg the merit that really belonged to Des Cartes and Spinoza, or whether, if the outcry against Spinoza had begun so early, we are to credit them with courage in giving the protection of the honoured name of "Cadoc the Wise" to a philosophy which saw the light much too soon for the world to recognise its merit as a grand contribution to the fund of European thought. In either case we must concede to the bards of Glamorgan this decisive merit, that they had the capacity to appreciate the merit of Spinoza two centuries before appreciative Germany, and possibly three or more centuries before the exhaustive system of that bold thinker became recognised in England. See Lewis i. 187.

that there is a gap which ought to be filled by something or another :—they, it would seem, not being cognisant of the fact, that the internal evidence of these poems contradicts such an assumption. Their true character, and probable date, will be shown in a subsequent chapter.

Another part of the literature of these centuries, was composed of the prose histories of Gildas, Nennius, and Tyssilio, and the sources from which they derived their information. I know not for certain, what class of persons Gildas means by the “*seculares*” (men of the world), to whose fables monks and princes were so prone to listen; but there can be no mistake when Nennius speaks of “*antiquis libris nostrorum veterum,*” *the old books of our ancestors.* Such old books there must have been. Mr. Price has advanced as a proof that Nennius was less an original historian than translator, that his statement of the likeness of the Virgin being borne on Arthur’s shoulders, is probably a translation of “*ysgwyd,*” a shield, which he is supposed to have found in a Welsh history, and mistaken for “*ysgwyt,*” shoulder, or “*ysgwydd,*” as it is now written. This opinion is to my thinking extremely probable, and is confirmed by the occurrence in Nennius of such words as “*Cat Coet Celyton,*” where the Welsh is not translated into Latin equivalents at all. If these conjectures are correct, then it would result that the Welsh had in addition to their poetry valuable prose histories, in their own language, about A.D. 858. We also find mention of many learned men during these years; but they for the most part belonged to the Church.

We have not many memorials left by which to judge of the fortune of the bards during the stormy period, which succeeded the death of our legislator, though an occasional ray darts through the gloom, and enables us to form an imperfect notion of the character of the order. There is an assertion sometimes made that there was an Eisteddvod held in the ninth century, at which presided Geraint, usually called *Bardd Glas*, or the Blue Bard, and at which *cynghanedd* was established as a constituent part of verse.<sup>1</sup> How much truth there may be in the former statement, as to the fact of an Eisteddvod having been held, I am unable to ascertain; but that which relates to *cynghanedd* as an element in, though not as yet a necessary consti-

<sup>1</sup> *Cambrian Register*, i. p. 400.

tuent of, Welsh poetry is correct. It is however pretty well ascertained that Bleddyn ab Kynvyn held an Eisteddvoð in 1070, and issued some regulations for the better government of the order.

The important truths we learn from the preceding digest of facts, are that in the eleventh century, the Welsh had an ancient literature; a language which had been forming for many centuries, and was always used as the vehicle for the transmission of thought; and an order of bards possessing great influence over the popular mind, very numerous, and held high in public estimation. Add to these, intelligent princes, a people of subtle genius, an educated priesthood, and an intimate intercourse with Ireland, the then favourite seat of learning, and some preparation will have been made to appreciate the facts and intellectual phenomena which will be unfolded in the following pages.

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## SECTION II.

WELSH POETRY FROM A.D. 1080 TO A.D. 1194.

FROM the remarks in the preceding section, it would appear that no poems of any great merit except those of the bards of the sixth century had appeared prior to the appearance of MEILIR, and the very inferior character of the first poem we have belonging to Meilir, will infallibly lead to the conclusion that at that time bardism was at a low ebb. It may therefore be safely inferred that no poems of any moment, belonging to the tenth or eleventh centuries, have been lost, for it was scarcely probable that any existed. The tranquillity of the reign of Howel, and the stormy period which succeeded, are both equally barren of literary fruit. Brighter times are now about to appear. Gruffydd ab Kynan returned from Ireland to claim the patrimony of his father from the usurper Trahaearn, whom he at length defeated in the battle of Carn;<sup>1</sup> and Meilir, the bard of the

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<sup>1</sup> Mynydd Carn is in Pembrokeshire, situated between Fishguard and Haverfordwest.



latter prince, in a lament upon his patron's fall composed soon after the battle, furnishes us with the first poem demanding critical remark. He narrates briefly, and with evident sincerity, the fall of his patron; and though the poem possesses but little merit of a poetical character, it will be found useful for the facts it mentions, and as an illustration of the manner in which men and things were contemplated in his day. Meilir was a man of some repute, and held in considerable estimation; but this short piece affords no trace whatever of the poetical capacity which he afterwards showed:

I will adore my God, King of air;  
 The Lord knows my distress;  
 In trouble I grieve greatly,  
 For my kind lord, the ruler of many.  
 O that they should have come across the sea a second time,  
 The restless (untractable, uneasy) people of Nanhyver,<sup>1</sup>  
 The Gwyddelians, the black devils;<sup>2</sup>  
 And the Scots, a people half strong.  
 A battle there was in Carn mountain,  
 And Trahaearn was slain,  
 And the son of Rhywallawn, a spirited leader,  
 Came not away from the conflict;  
 Thursday, three weeks since,  
 Towards night, was he slain.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Nanhyfer is in the parish of Nevern, of which I am the vicar. Nanhyfer, the Valley of Hyfer. Hyfer is the name of the river that flows through the valley."—*Tegid's Note*, Nov. 7, 1849.

<sup>2</sup> That is, the Danes.

<sup>3</sup> I DRAHAEARN A MEILYR.

Meilyr Brydyt agant yr Awdyl hon yn y lluyt y llas Trahaearn uab Caradawc a Meilyr uab Rhiwallawn vab Cynvyn.

Gwolychaf ym Ren rex awyr  
 Arglwyt a wyr uym pryder  
 Pryder pryderaf yn fawr  
 Am fy Arglwydd llawr lliw niuer  
 Ny dotynt dros uor etwaith  
 Pobyl anhyaeth nanhyuer  
 Gwytyl dieuyl duon  
 Ysgodogion dynion lletfer  
 Cad a uyt ym mynyt Carn  
 A Trahaearn a later  
 A mab Rhywallawn rwyf mygr  
 O'r gyfergyr nyd aduer  
 Difei ympen y teir wythnos  
 Tu a nos yd ith later.

The attentive reader will notice the orthography of the original, that he may be better prepared for a dissertation upon the language, which will form an introduction to the fourth chapter; and also bear in mind that the "u" coming before "y" and the vowels is to be read as "v," and the "t" frequently is to be sounded as "dh." \*

Apart from its historical value, the most noticeable feature is the metre. It does not rhyme at the ends of the lines; but the last word of a line rhymes with a word towards the middle of that which succeeds. This "awyr" rhymes with "wyr," "fawr" with "llawr," and so on throughout the poem. In the language of the bards this recurrent rhyme is called *Ban Kyrch*; and with me it has ever been an especial favourite.

We have two other poems by Meilir, one an elegy on the death of his second patron Gruffydd ab Kynan,<sup>1</sup> and the other on the near approach of his own. Meilir must have been an old man when he wrote the latter; a wide gap of fifty-seven years separates the dates of these and his former poem; but, as has been clearly shown by the author of *Hanes Cymru*, there is no difficulty here presented which may not be explained on the assumption that he was a young man at the death of Trahaearn. The battle of Carn<sup>2</sup> was fought 1080, and the death of Gruffydd ab Kynan took place in 1137. Now if we assume that Meilir was twenty years old at the former period, he must have been seventy-seven at the latter; and when we know that the king himself was quite as old, an octogenarian poet is by no means an unaccountable phenomenon. However, I am less solicitous about the age of the poet, than about the very striking difference which appears between the poems of the same man. What his first poem was, we have seen; the first was tame and uninteresting; the latter are full of poetic traits, vigorous thought, and weighty observations. Youth is impressed upon one, the others indicate maturity. We shall select as an example the poem entitled the "Death Bed of the

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Evan Evans (*Dissertatio*, p. 106) says that Meilir on one occasion officiated as an ambassador from G. ab Kynan to Henry I.

<sup>2</sup> "E mynydd hagen i bu y frwydyr ynddaw, a eilaw (hwnnw a eilw, *y.a.*) ciwdawt y wlat y Mynydd Carn, sef yw hynny Mynydd y Garnedd, canys yno i mae dirfawr Garnedd o fein adan (Gerrig a than) yr hon i claddwyd rhyeswr yng cynnoesoedd gynt."—*Myv. Arch.* ii. 594.

Bard," for we shall have elegies on monarchs in abundance as we proceed.<sup>1</sup>

The King of kings is accessible to be adored ;—  
 To my Lord supreme I will prefer a prayer :  
     Sovereign of the region of necessity,  
     The most exalted circle of bliss,  
     Beneficent Being, make a reconciliation  
         Betwixt Thee and me !

Returning memory iterates a groan, that Thou shouldst  
 Be contemned for my sake, yet repenting it was done !  
     I deserved shame,  
     In the presence of God the universal Ruler,  
     In not serving truly  
         In my devotion !

Thou wilt serve me nevertheless, my Protector and King,  
 Ere I am become an earthly clod !  
     A faithful prediction  
     To Adam and his race,  
     Foretold in ancient days  
         The prophets.

The being of Jesus in the womb of martyrdom ;—  
 The good Mary the burden did sustain.

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¹ Rex Regwm rybyt rwyf i voli :—
 Ym Arglwyf uchav archav weti.
 Gwledic gwlad orvod
 Goruchel Wenrod :
 Gwrda gwna gymmod
 Ryngod a mi !

Advrev advant cōv dy rygoti
 Erov, ac edivar y dīgoni !
 Digonais geryt
 Yggwyt Duw Dovyf,
 Vy iawn grevyt
 Heb i weini.

Gweinivi hagen, ym reen ri,
 Cyn bwyf deierin divenyfni !
 Diheu darogant,
 I Adav a'i blant,
 Y rydraethasant
 Y profwydi.

Bod Iesu yn mru merthyri ;—
 Mair mād ymborthes i beichiogi.

A burden have I accumulated
 Of tormenting sin :
 Severely have I been agitated
 By its perturbations.

Sovereign of all life, how good art Thou when worshipped !
 May I worship Thee ; may I become pure before I am tried !
 The King of all chiefs
 Knows that He will not refuse me,
 Of His mercy
 For my evil deeds.

I have received heaps of gold and velvet,
 From frail princes for loving them !
 But after the gifted muse I feel another impulse ;
 Faltering is my tongue, urging me to silence.
 I Meilir the Poet am a pilgrim to Peter,
 A porter that regulates appropriate merits.

On that appointed day, when there shall rise up
 Those who are in the grave, I will then look forward,
 When I am in my allotted rest,
 There waiting for the call
 To strive and win the goal
 In time of need :—

Baich rygynnullais
 O bechawd annovais,
 Ry dy ergrynais
 O'i gymhelri!

Rwyv pob wa mor wyd da wrth dy ioli
 A'th iolwyv : ry purwyv cyn nom poeni !
 Brenin holl riet,
 A'm gwyr na'm gomet,
 Am i drugaret
 O'm drygioni.

Cevais i liaws awr aur a phali
 Gan vreuawl riau am eu hoffi !
 Ac wedy dawn awen amgen yni :
 Amdlawd vyn tavawd ar vyn tewi !
 Mi, Veilyr Brydyt, berierin i Bedyr,
 Porthawr a gymedyr gymmes deithi.

Pryd y bo cyvnod yn cyvodi
 Ysawl y sy 'met, armâa vi,
 As bwyv yn adev
 Yn aros y llev,
 Y lloc a achev,
 Aches wrthi :—

And let that be a solitude, by passengers not trodden,
 And around its walls the bosom of the briny sea ;
 The fair isle of Mary ;
 The holy isle of saints,
 The type of renovation,
 There to rest in happiness.

Christ the predicted Cross,
 Will recognise me there
 And guard me from the rage of hell,
 A place of exiled beings ;—
 The Creator who formed me, will give me room among
 The community of the inhabitants of Enlli !¹

This poem is infinitely superior to the preceding. It contains poetical sentiments, a mastery of the metre, and skill in the use and application of the language ; and if we subtract the bardic colouring, the conception of the attributes of the Deity would not discredit a more enlightened age. His chosen resting-place is quite a poet's thought ; and I should like the reader to peruse the verse a second time.

A very striking improvement had taken place in Welsh poetry during the life of Gruffydd ab Kynan ; and the muse which limped so lamely in 1080, after a lapse of fifty years, takes such flights, that but few succeeding bards have been

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 Ac yssi didryv, didraul ebri  
 Ac am i mynwent mynwes heli :  
 Ynys Vair Virain :  
 Ynys glân y glain,  
 Gwrthrych dadwyrain.—  
     Ys cain yndi.

Crist, croes darogan,  
 A'm gwyr, a'm gwarthan,  
 Rac ufern afan,  
     Wahan westi  
 Creawdyr a'm crewys a'm cynnwys ym plith  
 Plwyv gwirin gwerin Enlli!

<sup>1</sup> For much of the above translation, I am indebted to the *Cambrian Register*. "The region of necessity," is a phrase from the bardic mythology ; and "the circle of bliss" is a term for heaven in the doctrine of transmigration. "Enlli" was the Welsh name for the isle of Bardsey. There was formerly a religious house in it, where it was customary for people of note to be buried ; and the bards in particular. The Celtic people seem to have had a general desire of being interred in solitary islands ; for we find similar burying-grounds on the coasts of Ireland and Scotland.

able to equal them. Upon the causes which had a general tendency towards improvement, we shall hereafter treat; but much of the excellence exhibited is owing to the individual capacities of the poets themselves. Favourable circumstances may afford facilities for the exhibition of original powers; but general causes cannot produce genius. Meilir in his latter poems shows great ability; yet he was greatly distanced by his son. Few men have ever shown a greater mastery over the Welsh language than GWALCHMAI, and he has left us twelve pieces, most of which are excellent.<sup>1</sup> We shall draw attention to two of them. The poem called "Gorhoffedd Gwalchmai" shows a love of nature, which reminds one of passages in *L'Allegro*, and of some of the sweet small poems of Wordsworth,—so natural are the sentiments, so smooth and flowing the diction, and so poetic the ideas. We shall quote a few of the lines:<sup>2</sup>

GWALCHMAI'S DELIGHTS.<sup>3</sup>

Thou early rising summer sun! hasten,  
 The melodious talk of birds—the glorious season of song.  
 I am of the golden order fearless in battle,  
 I am a lion in the front of the army,—ardent in my advance,  
 Anxiously have I, at night, watched the boundary  
 Fords of the murmuring waters of Dygen Vreiddin,<sup>4</sup>  
 Where the untrodden grass was supremely green, the water limpid,  
 And excessively talkative the nightingale well versed in odes;  
 And where the sea mews were playing on a bed of streams,  
 In love-united groups with glittering plumage.  
 I love the nightingale of May, with his long white face,

<sup>1</sup> *Cambrian Register*, i. 497.

<sup>2</sup> Mochddwyreawg huan ddyfestin  
 Maws llafar adar mygr hyar hin  
 Mi ydwyf eurddeddf diofn fy nhrin  
 Mi ydwyf llew rag llu lluch fy ngorddin  
 Gorwyliais nos yn achadw ffin  
 Gorloes rydau dwfr Dygen Freiddin  
 Gorlas gwellt didryf dwfyr neud iesin  
 Gordyar eaws awdyl gynnefn  
 Gwylain yn gware ar wely lliant  
 Lleithrion eu pluawr pleidiau edrin.  
 Caraf Eos Fai, forehun ludd

<sup>3</sup> Translated in Pennant, iii. 223.

<sup>4</sup> Dygen Vreiddin was not far from Shrewsbury, but within the Radnorshire boundary; and the name remains to this day attached to the Breiddin Hills.

At the break of day, and at evening's close ;  
 I love the sweet musicians, who so fondly dwell  
 On clear plaintive murmurs, and the accents of woe ;  
 I love the birds, and their sweet voices  
 In the soothing lays of the wood.

Lines such as these have at this day a double merit, that of being in themselves poetical, and of showing that occasionally the bards turned from war and turmoil to commune with the sweet choristers of the grove. Many of the bards were men of good social position;<sup>1</sup> and from such examples as are furnished by Gwalchmai, we may infer, that some of them were men of learning and of cultivated tastes,—men with eyes to see the beauties of nature, and minds to appreciate them as objects worthy of the poet's affection. There is a world of poetry and truthfulness in that little line :

Cathl foddawg coed ;

the epithet "soothing" as applied to the "lays of the wood" being so beautifully descriptive, and so strictly appropriate. It should however be observed, that Gwalchmai is better known among Cambrian critics by his ode upon the battle of *Tal y Moelvre*. It is not clearly ascertained what battle the bard alludes to, since Welsh history supplies no account of any engagement of sufficient magnitude at that time, to justify the language of the poet. The editor of the *Cambro-Briton* (vol. i. p. 231) gives it as his opinion, that the poem refers to a series of engagements; but I am of opinion, with the Rev. Moses Williams, that the poet treats of the defeat of the fleet entrusted by Henry II. to Madoc ab Meredydd in 1157, and which attempted to land at Abermenai.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Price, I am happy to perceive, came to the same conclusion; and the fact that Howel ab Owain, a contemporary bard, has a poem refer-

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Agolygon hwyr hirwyn ei grudd ;
 Caraf eilon mygr maith armadudd,—
 Eiliwed asserw, a seirch cystudd :
 Carafi yr ednan, a'u llarian lais
 Cathl foddawg coed.

¹ Gwalchmai says he was descended from Kynan ab Coel Godeboc.—*Myv. Arch.* i. 194.

² The battle of 1157 or 1159 is expressly called the Battle of *Tal y Moelvre* in a MS. chronicle in the Red Book of Hergest.—*Cambro-Briton*, ii. 220.

ring to the same event, very clearly shows that Mr. J. Humphreys Parry was wrong when he designated the engagement as a mere skirmish. The following translation, which I have altered where it did not seem sufficiently literal, is by Mr. Parry.

ODE TO OWAIN GWYNEDD, KING OF NORTH WALES.¹

The generous chief I sing of Rhodri's line,
 With princely gifts endowed, whose hand
 Hath often curbed the border land,
 Owain, great heir of Britain's throne;
 Whom fair Ambition marks her own,
 Who ne'er to yield to man was known;
 Nor heaps he stores at Avarice's shrine.

Three mighty legions o'er the sea-flood came,
 Three fleets intent on sudden fray,
 One from Erin's verdant coast,
 One with Lochlin's armed host,
 Long burthens of the billowy way:
 The third, from far, bore them of Norman name,
 To fruitless labour doom'd and barren fame.

'Gainst Mona's gallant lord, where lo! he stands,
 His warlike sons rang'd at his side,
 Rushes the dark tumultuous tide,
 Th' insulting tempest of the hostile bands;
 Boldly he turns the furious storm,



¹ ARWYRAIN I OWAIN.

Ardwyreav hael o hil Rodri,
 Ardwyad gorwlad, gwerlin teithi.
 Teithiawe Prydein
 Twyth avyrdwyth Ywein
 Teyrnein ni grein
 Ni grawn rei.

Teir llong y daethant, liant lestri;
 Teir prav priv lynges wy bres brovi.
 Un o Iwerton;
 Arall arvogion
 O'r Llychlynigion,
 Llwrw hirion lli;

A'r drydet dros vôr o Normandi
 A'r drafferth anverth, anvad iti,
 A dreic Môn, mor drud i eisyllyd yn aer
 Y bu tervyse taer, y haer holi.

Before him wild Confusion flies,
 While Havoc rears her hideous form,
 And prostrate Rank expiring lies :
 Conflict upon conflict growing,
 Gore on gore in torrents flowing,
 Shrieks answering shrieks, and slaughter raving,
 And high o'er Moelvre's front a thousand banners waving.

Now thickens still the frantic war,
 The flashing death-strokes gleam afar,
 Spear rings on spear, flight urges flight,
 And drowning victims plunge to night ;
 Till Menai's overburthened tide,
 Wide-blushing with the streaming gore,
 And choked with carnage, ebbs no more ;
 While mail-clad warriors on her side,
 In anguish drag their deep-gash'd wounds along,
 And 'fore the King's Red Chiefs are heap'd the mangled throng.

Thus Loegria's onset, Loegria's flight,
 The struggle doom'd her power to tame,
 Shall with her routed sons unite
 To raise great Owain's sword to fame :
 While sevenscore tongues of his exploits shall tell,
 And all their high renown through future ages swell.

Before entering into a minuter criticism of this poem, it might not be uninteresting for the English reader to know that "The Triumphs of Owen" in Gray's poetical works is a

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A rhacdo rewys dwys dyvysgi,  
 A rewin, a thrin, a thranc Cymri,  
 Ar gad gad graunde ;  
 Ar gryd gryd graende,  
 Ac am dal Moelfre

Mil Vanieri !

Ar lât lât llachar ar bar beri ;  
 Ar fwyr fwyr fyrvawt ; ar vawt voti ;  
 A mensei heb drei o drallanw gwaedryar ;  
 A lliw gwyar gwyr yn heli ;

A llurygawr glas a gloes trychni ;  
 A thrychion yn dut rac reitru ri.  
 O dygyvor Lloegr a dygyvrang â hi,  
 Ac eu dygyvwrw yn astrusi,  
 Y dygyvod clôd clety diwri,  
 Yn seith ugein iaith wy veith voli,

translation of the above. Of the two versions, that of Mr. Parry is the more correct generally, though the finest image in the poem is better, and more accurately rendered by Gray. Mr. Parry's version is tame and diffuse; Gray's is nearly as nervous, terse, and bold as the original:

Check'd by the torrent tide of blood,  
*Backward Menai rolls his flood.*

This ode, when presented to the English public by the Rev. Evan Evans, won the admiration of several literary men. Gray translated it; and another critic of no less taste than that poet was known to possess, has written a flattering criticism upon it, which I here copy at length. It occurs in a letter from the Rev. Thomas Percy, Bishop of Dromore, and editor of Percy's *Reliques*, to the Rev. Mr. Evans already mentioned, and is as follows:

“I admire your Welsh ode very much; it contains a large portion of the sublime. The images are very bold and animated, and are poured forth with such rapidity, as argues an uncommon warmth of imagination in the bard, whose mind seems to have been so filled with his subject, and the several scenes of the war appear to have so crowded in upon him, that he has not leisure to mark the transitions with that cool accuracy, which a feebler genius would have been careful to have done. It is one continued fiery torrent of poetic flame, which, like the eruptions of *Ætna*, bears down all opposition. . . .”

The writer then corrects an error respecting the characteristics of epic and lyric poetry, and continues: “On the other hand, it is the essence of the ode to neglect circumstances, being more confined in its plan, and having the sublime equally for its object. In order to attain this, it is obliged to deal in general terms, to give only such hints as will forcibly strike the imagination, from which we may infer the particulars ourselves. It is no demerit or disparagement in your bard to have neglected the minute circumstances of the battle, because it would have been impossible for him to have described them within the narrow limits of his ode. Here lies his great merit, that the hints he drops, and the images he throws out, supply the absence of a more minute detail, and excite as grand ideas as the best description could have done. And so far I agree with your critical friend that no poet ever hit upon a grander image

than that of *A Menai heb drai o drallanw*, &c., nor could take a nobler method to excite our admiration at the prodigious cause of so amazing an effect.”<sup>1</sup>

There is another feature connected with Welsh poetry, with which the Bishop does not seem to have been made acquainted ; but which is essential to a thorough understanding of the literature of the country. In the Laws of Howel, we find that it was customary to have songs after meals: “The chief of song shall begin the singing in the common hall. When a song is called for, the bard president should begin ; the first song addressed to God, the next to the king to whom the court belongs, or if there is not one, to another king. After the bard president, the domestic bard is to sing three pieces on different subjects. If the queen should desire a song, let the domestic bard go aside and recite without music, and softly, so as not to disturb the hall.” Now we have here, as in many other places, proof that singing, and singing to the harp, were established customs ; there must therefore have existed many songs at that period, though we have now not a single specimen, unless Gwalchmai’s ode may be accounted one. I am inclined to think this was sung to the harp. For such a purpose condensation was an object which a judicious poet would not neglect, as a heap of expletives and connectives would only render the most energetic poem tame and insipid, while, on the contrary, the mind which could marshal great thoughts together, giving each palpability and individuality like the ghosts raised before the eyes of Macbeth, and suggesting rather than describing the links of connexion, would exhibit the most perfect mastery of his art :—the highest art being an abandonment of the mind to its natural tendency, for great ideas make their own appropriate expression, and, as Milton finely expresses this truth, there are

————— thoughts that voluntary move  
Harmonious numbers.

The abrupt transitions of this ode, when sung in accompaniment to the harp, were rather beauties than defects. Every hearer would readily supply the connecting links as best suited his own taste ; and when an enthusiastic people had bold images

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¹ *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. pp. 175-6.

presented to their minds in nervous language, and in such a manner that by an easy transition each auditor would find responses to the sentiments in his own noble and ardent feelings, the effect must have been electric.

But this ode has other merits; for not only is it poetical; it is also true to nature, as all genuine poetry must be. It is a reflection of the time, place, and circumstance. This truthfulness to the manners, customs, and minutiae of everyday life, is a fine feature in the poems of the bards, which is strikingly apparent in the line—

A thrychion yn dut rac *reit rut* ri,

which I have translated into—

And 'fore the King's *Red Chiefs* are heaped the mangled throng.

The learned reader will perceive that this differs from every other translation yet given. The Rev. Evan Evans translates "*Reit rut Ri*," into "the king's red lance;" Mr. Price, into "red streams of blood;" Dr. Pughe, Mr. Parry, and Mr. Ryder render it by "red-stained chief;" while Mr. Gray adopts the version given by Mr. Evans. To my thinking, not one of these conveys a correct idea of the original meaning; which, for the reasons which follow, appears to me to be that given above. I cannot help thinking that the chiefs and nobles of the country are to be here understood; and among other contemporary allusions there is a line in Owain Kyveiliog's *Hirlas*, where the words *reit rut* occur in a connexion which confirms my view, and discountenances each of the others.

Achubeit pob reit rut eu harveu,
Ec' edwynt rag terfysg eu tervynau,

Each of the red chiefs was prompt to use his arms,
And keep their boundaries free from turmoil.

This line of itself is enough to decide the question; but as national dresses and costumes are always objects of interest, I will continue the quotation of extracts of the same purport. "*Reit*" is evidently the plural of "*rei*," a chief, a word in popular use among the bards. In the *Avallenau* mention is made of "*riau Rhydderch*," the chiefs of *Rhydderch*; *Meilir* speaks of God as *King of all chiefs* "*Brenin holl riet*," and in another place—

Cefais liaws awr aur a phali,
Gan vreuawl *riau* am eu hoffi.

I have received heaps of gold and velvet
From various princes for my friendship.

Einion ab Gwalchmai terms Nest the daughter of Howel "reid y meini," *the chief of the pearls*, and even Gwalchmai himself in this very ode says :

Ni grawn rei.
The King hoards no treasures.

From these it is pretty apparent that "reit" refers to persons, and not inanimate objects, or qualities; and if we wanted express testimony on the point we have it in Kynddelw:

Gwirawd an gwrthvyn, gwrth syr a lleuad
Gan rwyv *rad rut* vyhyr.

Liquor is pressed upon us, by the light of stars and moon,
By the ruler of the impetuous red chieftains.

and again :

Ninth tribe of the red-clad chiefs of battle,
Before death became their fate,
Tyngyriawn of triumphant destiny,
Tyngyr was no lover of peace.¹

The Tribes of Powys.

It therefore only remains for us to see if the notion of red clothing is consistent with the idea of the *reid* being chieftains, warriors, or knights. Apart from the quotations already given, in which the words *reit rut* three times occur in the sense here expressed, there are other testimonies which clearly show that the most honourable dress among the Welsh were red garments.² Kynddelw in praise of Howel ab Owain says :

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<sup>1</sup> Nawved eu riued rut wet yg Kyfranc  
Kyn bu tranc eu trosedd  
Tyngyriawn tyngned orvolet  
Ni charws Tyngghyr tangnevet.

*Gwelygorteu Powys.*

<sup>2</sup> Red coats were in use as early as the time of Queen Elizabeth. How much earlier?—*Notes and Queries*, May 9, 1868.

Gwnawd im ri *ruddfeirdd* o faran,  
A rhoddi *rhuddwisg* am danan.

My prince transformed us into red bards,  
By putting red garments about us ;

and leaves us to infer that this was a mark of great honour ;  
and Llywarch Hen says :

Gwedy meirch hywedd, a *chochwedd ddiillad*  
A phluawr melyn,  
Main fy nghoes, nid oes ym dremyn.

This verse is thus translated by Dr. Pughe :

After delighting in the sleek tractable steeds, and garments  
of ruddy hue,  
And the waving yellow plumes,  
Slender is my leg, my piercing look is gone.

Which thus combining the two ideas of red clothing, and warrior wearers, conclusively proves that red was the most honourable colour of military garments. But this colour was not confined to the men, for red was also in favour with the fair sex. The reader knows the story about the landing at Fishguard of the French in 1797, and of the army of "Red-whittled" old women who frightened them to submission, and it is to be presumed knows that the red stripe<sup>1</sup> is the exclusive wear of the women of Pembroke and Carmarthenshire ;—the women of Pont ar Dawe, and Cwm Tawe generally, are also noticeable for the glaring red of their gowns and petticoats. Probably the taste of the modern females is inherited from their ancestors ; Howel ab Einion Lygliw speaks of the "scarlet dresses" of Myvanwy Vechan ; and Gruffydd ab Meredydd, in Marwnad Gwenhwyvar, is very clear on this point :<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As female wear, there are two articles extensively used in Carmarthenshire, one known as "minko" where the red predominates over the blue in the stripe, and another where the *blue* predominates. In each stripe there are *red* and *blue*, as in the poem.

<sup>2</sup> Lle bu ra a gwyrdd, lle bn *rudd a glas*,  
Neud gloes angau gystudd ;  
Lle bu aur am eu deurudd,  
Lle bu borffor ——— cor ai cudd.  
Lle bu filweh degweh, deigr a wylir  
A phorphor a rhudd, neud grudd grodir.

The wearer of white and green,<sup>1</sup> of red and blue,  
Is now in the painful confinement of death ;  
She whom gold so adorned,  
The wearer of velvet, the church conceals her.

We mourn in tears that the flush of beauty's gone,  
That the wearer of velvet and red is no more.

Whence came the *red* dragon of Cadwaladr ? Why was the Welsh dragon in the fables of Merddin, Nennius, and Geoffrey described as *red*, while the Saxon dragon was *white* ? Has this anything to do with the *red* and *white* roses ? Whence the derivation of the *red* uniforms of English soldiers ? Should these conjectures be founded in truth, then should we have in this line the double merit of being true to actual facts, and of suggesting a train of reasoning, which has thrown light upon a national custom of an interesting character. We think living warriors more dignified than inanimate spears, or streams of blood, and therefore adhere to the reading above given.

Bardism had now become an honourable calling, and excellence in poetical composition was thought not unworthy of kings and princes ; for we find persons of no less note and influence than Owain Kyveiliog, Prince of Powys, and Howel, one of the seventeen sons of Owain Gwynedd, aspiring to the laurel crown.

OWAIN KYVEILIOG took a prominent part in the military and political affairs of his day. He was the son of Gruffydd ab Meredydd, prince of one of the three divisions of Wales, called Powys. His father died while his elder brother ruled over the country, and therefore on the death of Madoc ab Meredydd, we find him taking an active part in the affairs of his district. There is reason to believe that his father was held high in favour at the English court, as most of the Powysian princes were ; and that Owain may therefore have thus contracted the regard for the Saxons, which he sometimes showed in his after life. The first mention of him occurs in the year 1162. A little before that, Cadwallawn ab Madoc ab Idnerth was apprehended by his brother Einion Clud, and transferred to Owain Kyveiliog. He sent him to England, and got him imprisoned at

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¹ Llewelyn ab Iorwerth wore green and white.—*Prydydd y Moch*. (*Myv. Arch.* i. 303.)

Winchester; but by the assistance of some of his friends he escaped and returned to his own country. This Cadwallon, on whom *Kynddelw* has a long elegy, belonged most probably to the tribe of *Elystan Glodrydd*; for we find in 1162, that *Howel ab Ievav ab Cadwgan ab Elystan Glodrydd*, whose territories lay between the *Wye* and the *Severn*, laid siege to *Walwern* castle in *Kyveiliog*, the district which gave *Owain* his name, and destroyed it. *Owain* in return led an army into the territories of *Howel*, destroying whatever came in his way, on which the country people, led by their chief, followed *Owain* to his encampment on the banks of the *Severn*. A bloody conflict ensued, in which *Howel's* forces were beaten, and compelled to seek safety in the woods, and *Owain* returning to his own country, fortified his castle. In the following year *Owain Kyveiliog*, with two other Welsh chieftains, took the castle of *Carreg Hova*, near *Oswestry*, then in the possession of *Gruffydd Maelor*.

In consequence of an incursion in 1165 into *Tegeingl*, then in the possession of the King, by *David* the son of *Owain Gwynedd*, the King of North Wales, *Henry II.* determined to subjugate the Principality; large preparations were made for this purpose, and in addition to the men furnished by the barons of England, he sent for levies from *Normandy*, *Flanders*, *Anjou*, *Gascony*, *Guienne*, and *Scotland*. With these he came to *Oswestry*, intending wholly to destroy the people of Wales. On the other hand, the Welsh chieftains were not idle. The princes of the three divisions of the country joined their forces to receive him. *Owain Gwynedd*, and his brother *Cadwaladr*, brought the men of North Wales; the Lord *Rhys* those of South Wales; *Owain Kyveiliog*, *Iorwerth Goch*, and the sons of *Madoc ab Meredydd* brought the men of *Powys*; and to these were added the men between the *Wye* and *Severn* led by the sons of *Madoc ab Idnerth*. These forces having joined, marched to *Corwen* (*Merionethshire*) to meet the King. Here the two armies lay in sight of each other for some time, neither daring to attack. The King being at length tired of this inactive life, and knowing that it was the object of the Welsh princes to prevent supplies coming to his camp, moved his army to *Aberceiriog*, whence he was followed by the Welshmen, and a skirmish, commenced between some straggling parties, led to a general engagement in which the King's forces were so severely handled, that he retreated to the *Berwyn* moun-

tain. The skirmish was commenced between some men who had been sent to cut down the trees which grew so plentifully near Aberceiriog, as the King was anxious to avoid the inconvenience which had previously befallen him, in Eulo wood; and the Welsh, knowing the advantage it gave them, determined to preserve the wood. Henry was much chagrined at the result, and wantonly caused Cadwallawn and Kynwrig, two sons whom Owain Gwynedd had on a previous occasion given to him as hostages, as well as Meredith the son of the Lord Rhys, and other young princes, to have their eyes pulled out, and to be otherwise maltreated! Soon after, harassed by the Welsh, and suffering from the heavy rains and want of provisions, he found his position to be untenable, and completely discomfited returned homeward; and it would seem as if the English chroniclers shared his discomfiture, for *Matthew Paris* does not say a word about the expedition, and *Matthew of Westminster* simply says, "*Rex in Walliam expeditionem fecit*"—the King made an expedition into Wales.

It is conjectured that the poem of *The Hirlas Horn* was composed on the occasion of this battle of Crogen,¹ as it is called; and Mr. Price, to whose *History of Wales* I am indebted for the preceding facts, confirms the belief. But as the poem relates only to Powysian chiefs, indicates that the prince was at home at the time, and affords no trace of the presence of the allied army, it appears to me to have been intended for a less public occasion.

So after the pressure of the English forces had been removed, we find the Welsh princes, in their usual manner, quarrelling among themselves; for two years afterwards we see Owain Kyveiliog, and his cousin Owain ab Madoc, making war upon their neighbour Iorwerth Goch, driving him away, and dividing his lands among themselves, Mochnant above Rhaiadr being given to Owain Kyveiliog, and Mochnant below Rhaiadr to Owain ab Madoc. The Princes of North and South Wales, being made acquainted with these facts, determined to punish the malefactors, and invading Powys, Owain Gwynedd and his brother Cadwaladr, with the Lord Rhys, compelled Owain Kyveiliog to seek refuge in England, and made Owain ab Madoc

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<sup>1</sup> See Powell's *History of Wales* for an interesting passage respecting Crogen, p. 223.

leave the castle of Caereinion in the hands of Owain Gwynedd. Shortly after Owain Kyveiliog returned assisted by a body of Normans, and soon reconquered his lands, took Caereinion castle, and burnt it to the ground.

Three years afterwards we find a dispute between the Lord Rhys and Owain Kyveiliog, the reason given in the Chronicle of Caradoc being, "for as often as Owain could oppose the Lord Rhys he would do so." Rhys led an army into his country, and compelling Owain to give hostages for good behaviour in future, considerably retired without inflicting any injury on the property of his opponent. This magnanimity, it would seem, had the desired effect, for we hear no more of Owain for nearly eighteen years.

In 1188, Archbishop Baldwin, accompanied by Giraldus, visited the Principality with the view of enlisting soldiers for the Crusades. They succeeded in getting three thousand volunteers, and were well received wherever they went. Several of the Welsh princes showed them much respect, and all came forth to meet them, except Owain Kyveiliog: he would not come, and therefore says the ecclesiastic, "we excommunicated him." Owain seems to have seen through the hollowness of their pretences, and to have deemed it wiser to protect his own countrymen. The other princes gave them warm receptions; but refused to enlist personally in the cause. The Lord Rhys had some intention of going to Palestine, but his wife dissuaded him from going, and thereby drew upon her head the censure of the Church. Owain, however, would neither go himself nor induce others to go; and probably was much too intelligent to be frightened by the anathema of the disappointed Archbishop.

Judging from the commendations bestowed upon him by Kynddelw, Owain Kyveiliog must have shone conspicuously among the warriors of his day, for skill and personal prowess; and the same authority represents his court as being distinguished for generous hospitality:

Yn y mae yved heb neued heb nag  
Heb nebawd eisiwed.

There was drinking without regret, without refusal,  
And without any kind of want.

Yet it seems singular that Kynddelw, who sang the praises of Owain himself, and afterwards of his son Gwenwynwyn,

should have left no elegy on his death. Latterly he owned allegiance to Henry II., and was on friendly terms with that monarch, who admired the wit and conversational powers of the Cambrian chieftain. He died in 1197, and his son inherited his possessions.

But though Owain Kyveiliog was a prince renowned for warlike achievements, his claim upon the notice of posterity chiefly rests upon his poetical labours. The *Hirlas* is one of the longest poems we have of the twelfth century, and has more than ordinary merit. Its plan is eminently original and curious. The prince imagines all his warriors assembled at night in his palace, after an engagement which had taken place in the morning. Himself presiding, he gives instructions to his cup-bearer to fill the *Hirlas* horn, and as the cup is taken to each chief in succession, he enumerates the warrior's feats. He begins each verse with "Diwallaw di venestr," *Fill, cup-bearer*, and first of all ordering it to be taken to a chieftain named Rhys, he narrates that chief's exploits, and in going over the names of the various chiefs shows much tact in diversifying the praise bestowed upon each. One of the verses thus appropriated to individual praise, has a fine touch of pathos, which speaks volumes for the poet's taste. In going round the circle, it became the turn of a chieftain named Moreiddig to be mentioned; and this the poet does in the following lines:

Fill, cup-bearer, as you would avoid death,  
 Fill the horn of honour at our banquets,  
 The long blue horn, of high privilege, of ancient silver,  
 That covers it not sparingly;  
 Bear to Tudur, eagle of slaughter,  
 A prime beverage of florid wine.  
 Thy head shall be the forfeit, if there come not in  
 The most delicious mead.

Having thus, to enhance the compliment, threatened death to his cup-bearer if he brought not in the appropriate mead, he proceeds:

To the hand of Moreiddig, encourager of songs;—  
 May they become old in fame before they leave us!  
 Ye blameless brothers of aspiring souls,  
 Of dauntless ardour that would grasp ev'n fire;  
 Heroes, what services ye have achieved for me!

Not old, disgustingly, but old in skill;  
 Unwearied, rushing wolves of battle;  
 First in the crimsoned ranks of bleeding pikes,  
 Brave leaders of the Mochnantians from Powys,  
 The prompt red chiefs to use their arms,  
 And keep their boundaries free from turmoil,  
 Praise is your meed, most amiable pair.

Having thus recited the merit of Tudur and Moreiddig, he turns to greet them; but their places are vacant, and suddenly he recollects they had fallen in the morning's conflict, he hears their dying groans, his triumphant exultations cease, his hilarity flies, and the broken tones of mournful exclamations suddenly burst out:

Ha! the cry of death—And do I miss them;  
 O Christ! how I mourn their catastrophe;  
 O lost Moreiddig—How greatly shall I need thee!<sup>1</sup>

This poem affords us a curious insight into the mode of living in Wales; and in perusing the lines which follow, I could

<sup>1</sup> This translation, slightly altered, is taken from Turner's *Vindication*; the original is—

“ Diwallaw di venestr na vyn angau  
 Korn can anrydet ynghyvetau  
 Hirlas buelin breint uchel hen ariant  
 Ai gortho nid gortheneu  
 A dytwg i Dudur eryr aereu  
 Gwirawd gyssevin o'r gwin gwineu  
 Oni daw i mewn or met goreu oll  
 Gwirawd o ban dy ben vateu  
 Ar llaw Voreiddig llochiat certau  
 Kertyn hyn i glod cyn oer adnau  
 Dieithr vrodyr vryd ucheldeu  
 Diarchar arial a dan daleu  
 Cedwyr am gorug gwasanaetheu  
 Nid ym hyn dihyll nam hen deheu  
 Kynnivieid gyrthieid vleinieid vleitiau  
 Kynvaran creulawn creulyd vereu  
 Glew glyw Mochnannwys o Bowys beu  
 O glew gwnet arnatunt deu  
 Achubieit pob rheid rhut eu harveu  
 Echedwynt rag tervyse eu tervynau  
 Moliant yw ei rann y rei gwynnau  
 Marwnad vu neud mi newid y dau  
 O chan Grist mor drist wyv o'r anaelen  
 O goll Moreiddig mawr ei eisieu.”

almost fancy myself reading some old Scottish legend of "Black Mail:"

Llys Owain a borthwyd eirioed ar *braid*  
Porth mil a glywi—pyrth agored.

Owain's court has ever been fed on *prey* ;  
And open wide his gates are flung,  
In Cambria's peaceful days.

It would, perhaps, be well to state that the *Hirlas* was a drinking-horn—long, blue, and rimmed with silver, and is thus described :

This hour we dedicate to joy ;  
Then fill the Hirlas horn, my boy,  
That shineth like the sea ;  
Whose azure handles, tipped with gold,  
Invite the grasp of Britons bold,—  
The sons of liberty.

And the poem concludes with the following apostrophe :<sup>1</sup>

For Daniel fill the horn so green,  
Of haughty brow, and angry mien ;  
While less'ning tapers shine  
Fill it up with generous wine ;  
He no quarter takes nor gives,  
But by spoil and rapine lives.  
Comely is the youth and brave,  
But obdurate as the grave.  
Hadst thou seen in Maelor fight  
How we put the foe to flight !  
Hadst thou seen the chiefs in arms  
When the foe rush'd on in swarms !  
Round about their prince they stood,  
And stained their swords with hostile blood.

<sup>1</sup> This passage in the original runs thus :

Gwr ni dal ni dwng, ni bydd wrth wir  
Daniel dreig cannerth, mor ferth hewir  
Menestr mawr a gweith yd ioleithir.  
Gwyr ni oleith lleith ; oni llochir,  
Menestr medd anwyn a'n cydroddir,  
Gwrth dan gloyw, goleu, gwrddloyw babir,  
Menestr gwelud dy gwyth yn Llidwm dir  
Y gwyr a barchaf wynt a berchir,

Glorious bulwarks! to their praise  
 Their prince devotes his latest lays.  
 Now, my boy, thy task is o'er;  
 Thou shalt fill the horn no more.  
 Long may the King of kings protect,  
 And crown with bliss my friends elect:  
 Where Liberty and Truth reside,  
 And Virtue, Truth's immortal bride!  
 There may we altogether meet,  
 And former times renew in converse sweet.—*R. W.*

This prince has left us another poem upon an interesting national custom. At this early period, the King was compelled to visit his subjects in various parts of his dominions to receive his revenue at stated periods, and also to hold his court. Owain has finely described his circuit, and named one by one the various places he was in the habit of visiting. The subject being novel, I insert the poem at length, in a translation by *R. Fenton, Esq.*, a gentleman favourably known in literature as the author of *Fenton's Pembrokeshire*.

THE CIRCUIT THROUGH POWYS.<sup>1</sup>

To share the festal joy and song  
 Owain's train we move along;  
 Every passion now at rest,  
 That clouds the brow, or rends the breast;  
 But oppression's foes the same,  
 Quick to kindle into flame:  
 Setting off from Mortyn, say  
 Whither shall we bend our way?

~~~~~

Menestr gwelud dy galchdoed Cyngrein,
 Ynghylchyn Owain gylchwy enwir,
 Pan breiddwyd Cawres, taerwres trwy dir,
 Preidd ostwng orlwnng a orfolir,
 Menestr nam didawl, nim didolir,
 Boed ym mharadwys in cynhwysir,
 Can pen teyrnedd, poed hir eu trwydded,
 Yn i mae gweled gwaranred gwir.

¹ I GYLCHAU KYMBRY.

Tenlu Ywein llary lluoet anhun treis—
 Yn eu traws arovun
 Fyrt kyrt kyvetau duhun
 Pa fort yt awn o Vortun,

Quick dispatch thee, boy ; take heed,
 That thou slack not of thy speed,
 Or with idle gossip greet
 The loit'rer thou mayst chance to meet,
 Onward push, and look not back ;
 Let nought divert thee from thy track.

To Keri hie thee, lad, and say,
 Thither will we bend our way.

Keri greeted, onward haste ;
 Thy time will not admit of waste ;
 With no vulgar message sent,
 On thy duty be intent ;
 Dread our anger to excite,
 Lest our vengeance on thee light.

Then announce that in our rounds,
 We visit next Arwystli's bounds.

Thy errand told, stay not long,
 Herald of a princely throng :
 But onward still thy steps pursue,
 Ceredig's confines in thy view ;
 Thither with speed increasing go,
 Swift as arrow from a bow :

And to Penwedig tidings bear
 Of our approach and visit there.

Hence without delaying, boy,
 To toil familiar by employ ;
 Scorn fatigue, and unsubdued
 Be thy painful march renewed :

.....
 Dos was yn ebrwydd heb roti—geirda

Yr gwrda y sy yndi

Dywan wan trywan trwydi

Dywed an dyvot i Geri

Dos was o Geri ac archwn wrthid

Rac an llid an llochi

Diwet y doetham i ti

Dywed y down Arwystli

Dygychwyn gennad gan vawrrydic doryf

Y dervyn Keredic

Dywan ar wylt ar wallt pic

Dywed y down Benwedie

Dos o benwedie boen ouyt—gennad

Gan yth wna kewilyt

Then with shout as hunter's loud,
 Publish this our message proud :
 That Meirion's mountains shall detain
 The course of our convivial train.

Quick proceed, the mountain crost,
 That not a moment may be lost ;
 Fast by the margins of the deep,
 Where storms eternal uproar keep.
 The road to shorten mend thy pace,
 Be thy speed contracting space ;
 And faithful to thy message, say
 We take Ardudwy in our way.

No delaying, boy, push on ;
 Ardudwy visited, be gone ;
 Haste the region to survey,
 Which Mervyn gloried erst to sway,
 To Nevyn go, inquire for Nest,
 And lodging there become her guest,
 By which untold it may be seen,
 That we are on our road to Lley.

Messenger, set off again,
 Forerunner of our gallant train,
 Hurry at our chief's command,
 Prince of liberal heart and hand :
 And as through Arvon winds thy way,
 Armed knight, we charge thee stay,
 That having journeyed many a mile,
 We mean to visit Mona's isle.

~~~~~  
 Dywan ar gyman gynyt  
 Dywed y down Veiryonny

Dygychwyn gennad gyvyl mordwy—gwynt  
 Gordyar y gylchwy  
 Dywan yr traean tramwy  
 Dywed y down Ardudwy

Dygychwyn gennad gein dervyn y wlad  
 A wletychwys Mervyn  
 Dos y west ar nest Nevyn  
 Dywed an dyvod Lley

Dygychwyn gennad o gylch dragon—a llary  
 Lluossawe y galon  
 Dos varchawe arwawc Arvon  
 A dywed an dyvod Von



We are Owain's princely host ;  
 Spoils of foes the wealth we boast ;  
 Tyrant Lloegyr overthrown  
 Gives us title to renown ;  
 Then our toilsome marches o'er  
 Can we want an opening door ?  
     Shall we not find in Rhos a bed,  
     Whereon to lay the weary head ?

Thy prince commands thee to depart  
 (Except the mistress of his heart  
 Haply thou shouldst chance to meet),  
 With strictest orders none to greet ;  
 But quickly mount the fleetest steed,  
 Not confiding to thy speed ;  
     To Llanerch tidings to convey  
     That we shall stop there on our way.

Off again, that region face,  
 Nurse of a renowned race,  
 Who, for many a gallant deed,  
 Deserve the horn, the hero's meed ;  
 Thither haste with our commands,  
 Quitting Tyno Bedwal's lands,  
     And say we purpose to regale,  
     And taste of social joys at Iâl.

But tarry not, no respite take,  
 This witching region quick forsake,  
 Howe'er her sons to charm thy stay,  
 May throw temptation in thy way ;

~~~~~

Teulu Ywein hael hawl dioleith—Lloegyr
 Lluossawc am anrheith
 A ennir wedi hirdeith
 A annwny yn Ros nosweith
 Dos was y gennyf ac nac annerch—nep
 Ony byt vvg gort(er)ch
 Dywan ar vuan Veinerch
 Dywed an dyvod Lannerch
 Dygychwyn gennad gadyr ardal—teulu
 Teilwng met o vual
 A dywan Dyno Bydwal
 A dywed an dyfod Ial
 Kychwyn yw thervyn pathawr—eu hoewet
 Hirvelyn eu gwaewawr

We forbid thy lingering there
 Beyond the opening of the year ;
 To Maelor then thy steps direct,
 That she our coming may expect.

This performed, yet loiter not,
 Be thy very food forgot :
 Every hindrance put away,
 All that can create delay.
 To stop at Maelor's not allow'd,
 For further still extends thy road ;
 To visit Kynllaith we propose,
 Then haste the message to disclose.

Thy progress then, with counsel due,
 And forms that suit our rank pursue ;
 Worthy of our commission prove,
 For not like petty tribes we move ;
 Prompt to discharge the duty go,
 And borrow fleetness from the roe,
 That Mechain in her turn may hear
 Of our intended visit there.

What though our prince, with prosperous rounds,
 Has measured Cambria's lovely bounds,
 Though conquer'd realms enrich our train,
 Heaven's kingdom yet is ours to gain,
 Which to possess may we aspire,
 Faith lending pinions to desire ;
 Where we, our earthly journeys past,
 May find eternal rest at last.

~~~~~  
 Dywan diw Calan Ionawr  
 Dywed an dyvod Vaelawr

Dos was na olut na oleith—dy lwrw  
     Dy lutyaw nyd hawtweith  
 Dywan o Vaelawr rawrdeith  
 Dywed an dyvod Gynlleith

Dos was a chynghor na chynghein—an toryf  
     Val teiluoet bychein  
 Dywan dwe rybut hytwein  
 Dywed an dyvod Vochein

Teulu Ywein rwyf rwystrassam—wladoet  
     Poed gwlad nef a welam  
 Kyrch kyfrwyf kyflwyf adlam  
 Kylch Kymry kymerassam.

This mode of sending messages was practised among the farmers of the counties of Carmarthen and Cardigan, during the "Rebecca riots;" and the reader who has read Scott's exhortation in *The Lady of the Lake*, and followed Malise over the Highland crags, will not fail to relish a similar exhortation written under actual circumstances *six hundred years ago*. The practice of proclaiming war by sending an arrow round the houses of the chiefs, which is said to have been prevalent in Wales, is now found among the Indian tribes, also among those whom Catlin supposes to have been the Madogwys, or *Madocians*—"the gentlemanly Mandans."

We now come to another poet prince, HOWEL AB OWAIN. He was the son of Owain Gwynedd, King of North Wales, by a lady named Pyvog, the daughter of an Irish chieftain. He was distinguished in early youth for skill and ingenuity, and he began his warlike career while yet a very young man. In 1144, we find him and his brother Kynan leading an army into South Wales, defeating the Flemings, and taking Carmarthen castle from the Normans. This feat is referred to by Kynddelw :

Am byrth Caer Fyrddin  
Porthes gwyr gwaedlin  
A gwawr trin bu trechaf.

About the forts of Carmarthen  
Were collected warlike men,  
And the hero of battle was victorious.

In 1155, Rhys ab Gruffydd and his brothers, the princes of South Wales, sent to desire his assistance to destroy Tower castle, Howel having obtained great reputation for engineering talents and for military skill. Not long after, we find him engaged in besieging his uncle Cadwaladr in Kynvael castle, wherein he was successful, as appears from the ode above alluded to, which Kynddelw addressed to this prince :

Thunderlike was the sound of the generous prince's army,  
And heavy it was to hear Kynvael's towers fall;  
Flames crackled all around,  
And arms were there to aid fire's destructive powers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Twrwf Tonn torchawc hael—trwm oet y clywet

Twr Kynvael yn kwytaw  
A flameu o drin yn edrinaw  
Ac angert ac ongyr yn llaw.

Just about the same period occurred the battle of Tal y Moelvre, at which he was undoubtedly present, as appears from Gwalchmai's ode, wherein he says :

A draig Môn, mor ddrud ei eisyllydd yn aer,  
And the chief of Mona's son so earnest in battle.

This clearly refers to Howel. The same fact is proved by one of Howel's own poems, which could scarcely have been so written had he not been on the spot ; and of which I have attempted a translation in *Ban Cyrch* metre, such as is seen in the following lines :

Pan ruddlam ruddflam flamychei hyt nef  
Yn addef ny noddei,

where the "nef" at the close of the first line, rhymes with the last syllable of "addef" in the second.

#### THE BATTLE.

The ravens croak'd, and human blood  
In ruddy flood, poured o'er the land ;  
Then burning houses war proclaim'd,  
Churches inflamed and palace halls ;  
While sheets of fire scale the sky,  
And warriors cry, " To Battle ! "

They clearly heard the conflict's roar  
On Menai's shore from Seiont's fort ;  
Three hundred ships, so heroes say,  
The third of May, were set on fire.  
Ten hundred times as many fled,  
And not a beard staid on Menai.<sup>1</sup>

~~~~~  
¹ Pan vei lawen vrein pan vrysei waed
Pan wyar waryei
Pan ryvel pan rudit e thei
Pan ruddlan pan rudlys losgei

Pan rudlam ruddflam flamychei hyt nef
Yn addef ny noddei
Hawdd gweled golenlose arnei
O gaer wenn geir emyl menei

Treghissant trydydyd o vei trichanllong
Yn llyghes vordei
A deckant kymant ae kilyei
Kyuaryf heb un varyf ar venei.

Owain Gwynedd died in 1169, after a prosperous reign of fifty-two years; and after some disputes had taken place respecting the succession, Howel, being the eldest son, seized the reins of government, and ruled the country for two years, during which there prevailed perfect peace. At the end of that time his grandfather dying, he went to Ireland to take possession of the property which now became his mother's. During his absence, David, a younger brother by Owain's second wife, but who had the merit of being a legitimate son, aspired to deprive Howel of the sovereign power. Neither of them had in reality any legal claim to rule; but this was a period when hereditary monarchy was very little respected, unless the son at the same time inherited the father's ability. In this case, it would seem that the children of Owain's first wife were incapable. Howel, therefore, though illegitimate, having the double qualification of being the eldest son, and, what was better in a warlike age, being possessed of military skill, and used to command, found no great difficulty in being made King of North Wales. Being now from home, David, who also seems to have had more daring than his elder brothers, availed himself of the first opportunity afforded by Howel's absence, called together the friends of his mother, and being joined by some discontented spirits, proclaimed himself King of North Wales. Howel hearing of this, returned with all possible despatch, but meeting David with a much larger army than he had been able to muster, Howel was defeated and mortally wounded.¹

This young prince was not only talented himself, but seems to have won the affections of many other men of talent. We have alluded to Kynddelw's ode to him already; and in the *Myvyrian Archaiology* there is a poem by PERIV AB KEDIVOR mourning his death, in truly elegiac strains, and with all the marks of genuine feeling. From this poem it would seem that his body was buried in Bangor, with two other sons of this Kedivor. And now, while speaking of these sons of Kedivor, whose affection for this young poet prince has linked them inseparably in my thoughts with Howel ab Owain, perhaps I may be allowed to quote another poem written upon the death of the

¹ These facts are taken from an extract in *Hanes Cymru*, from the *Llyfr Aberpergwm*, a manuscript which Mr. Price thinks former historians had not consulted.

prince. The editors of the *Archæology* attribute the poem to Llewelyn Vardd in one place, and to Einiawn ab Gwgan in another; but the arguments urged by Mr. Price seem to me to be conclusive,—there being more reason for attributing them to one of the sons of Kedivor, than to any other person. Periv, the author of the elegy already mentioned, was most probably the author of the following Englynion: ¹

While we were seven, three sevens could not beat us,
 We would not fly;
 Unfortunately there now remain unkill'd
 But three out of the seven.

Seven men we were, faultless, firm,
 And irresistible in our outset,
 Seven immovable men, who would not fly,
 Nor tolerate an insult.

Since Howel suffered death
 While we were with him,
 A great loss has befallen us,
 But he is in the better company of the family of heaven.

The sons of Kedivor, numerous children
 In the hollow above Pentraeth,
 Fought desperately in the battle,
 And were slain with their foster brother.²

original:

Tra vuam ein seith triseith nyn beitei
 Nyn kilyei kyn an-lleith
 Nid oes yssywaeth o'r seith
 Namyn tri trin dioleith.

Seithwyr y buam dinam digythrut
 Difyflut eu kyflam,
 Seithwyr ffyryf ffo diadlam,
 Seith gynt ny gymmerynt gam.

Can etiw Hywel hwyl diotef kad,
 Kyd vuam gyd ac ef,
 Handym oll goll gyvadeff
 Handid tegach teulu nef.

Meibion kedivor kyd ehelaeth blant
 Yny pant uch pentraeth,
 Buant brwysgyon breise arvaeth
 Buant briw ger ei brawd maeth

² Kedivor was Howel's foster father.

There was deep treachery, and unchristian
 On the part of the sons of Cristin,¹
 There is not a man living in Mona,
 Of the freckled Brochvaelians.

But little good will come even now
 Of holding unjust power,
 And woe be to the false David, for spearing
 That hawk of war, Howel the Tall.

Caradoc, old Kedivor's son,
 Leader of armies of border troopers,
 Hawk of the family, kind relation,
 We are loath to part with thee.

The original is in very intelligible Welsh, and forms an important fact to support the opinion that the language of Wales, seven hundred years ago, is easily understood by a Cymro of the present day, when, as in these Englynion, it is to be had free from the refinements, technicalities, and affectations of the more celebrated bards.

It is now time for us to review the poems of this poet prince, for whom I have a great liking. He is the most sprightly and charming poet I shall have to notice. We have already seen that his talents as an engineer, his skill as a commander, and his courage as a warrior, had won him a great reputation among his countrymen; and it will now be seen that he shines as eminently as a poet as in any of the other characters. The short poems he has left us are the sweetest pro-

~~~~~  
 Yny bernid brad brython ag cristyawn  
 O Cristin ae meibyon  
 Ni lo dyn y myw y mon  
 Or Brychvaelieid brychvoelyon.

Yr a del o da o dala tir present  
 Preswylvod anghywir  
 Y gwaew gwae Davyt enwir  
 Gwan gwalch ryvel Hywel hir.

Caradoc vab kedivor  
 Gwalch bydyn gwerin goror  
 Hebawe teulu ku Keimyn  
 Anhawd genhym dy hepcor.

*Myv. Arch.* i. 418.

<sup>1</sup> Cristin was David's mother, Owain Gwynedd's second wife.

ductions of the age; and free from verbal intricacies, and affected images. While full to overflowing of a love of natural scenery, and gay humour, they are really very delicious little morsels. They could scarcely have found admirers among the more pedantic bards; but they will be relished by every man of taste, who looks for feeling in poetry, and desires rhymed compositions to be something better than jingling nonsense.

The first we shall notice is "Gwladgarwch Hywel," or Howel's Patriotism, which is finely expressed in an admiration of the many good things which existed among the Welsh. And if we may judge of Wales from this poem, it was rather a comfortable sort of place to live in.

#### HOWEL'S DELIGHT.<sup>1</sup>

A white foam-crowned wave flows o'er the grave  
Of Rhuvawn Bevyr,<sup>2</sup> chief of rulers.  
I love the hated of Lloegr, the land of the north, this day,  
With a people involved in every wile;  
I love the land where I had the much-desired gift of mead,  
Where the shores extend in tedious conflict;  
I love the society and the numerous inhabitants  
Therein, who obedient to their Lord,  
Direct their views of peace.  
I love its sea coast and its mountains,

<sup>1</sup> Ton wen orewyn a orwlych bedd  
Gwyddfa Rhufawn Befyr, Ben Teyrnedd.  
Caraf trachas Lloegyr lleudir goglet hetiw  
Ac yn amgant y lliw lliaws callet.  
Caraf am rotes rybuded met  
Myn y dyhaet myr meith gywryset  
Caraf y theilu ae thew anhet yndi  
Ac wrth vot ri rwyfaw dyhet  
Caraf y morfa ae mynytet  
Ac chaer ger ei choed ae chaen diret

<sup>2</sup> Rhuvawn Bevyr, son of Gwyddno Garanhir, was apparently a hero of note; but the most specific notice of him is contained in the following Triad:

"Tri Eurgelein Ynys Prydain: Madawe mab Brwyn, Ceugant Beillawe, a Rhufawn Befyr ab Gwyddnaw Garanhir, sef yu gelwid felly achaws rhoddi eu pwys yn aur am danynt o ddwyllaw a'u lladdes."

Which translated means: The three golden corpses of the isle of Britain:—Madoc, the son of Brwyn; Keigant Beillioe; and Rhuvawn Bevyr, the son of Gwyddno Garanhir; and they were so called because there was given for their bodies, to those who slew them, their weight in gold.



Its cities bordering on its forests, its fair landscapes,  
 Its dales, its waters, and its vales,  
 Its white seamews, and its beauteous women.  
 I love its warriors and its well-trained steeds,  
 Its woods, its strongholds, and its social domicile ;  
 I love its fields clothed with tender trefoil,  
 Where I had the glory of a lasting triumph.  
 I love its cultivated regions, the prerogative of heroism,  
 Its far extended wilds, and its sports of the chase ;  
 Son of God ! great and wonderful,  
 How majestic the sleek deer, and in what plenty found !  
 I achieved with a push of a spear the task of honour  
 Between the Chief of Powys<sup>1</sup> and fair Gwynedd ;<sup>2</sup>  
 And if I am pale in the rush of conflict,  
 'Tis that I know I shall be compelled to leave my country,  
 For it is certain I cannot hold out till my party comes ;  
 A dream has revealed it, and God says 'tis true.  
 A white foam-crowned wave flows o'er the grave,  
 A white bright foaming wave boldly raves against the town,  
 Tinted the time it swells like glittering hoar.  
 I love the marches of Merioneth,  
 Where my head was pillowed on a snow-white arm,

~~~~~

Ac dolyt ae dwuyr ae dyffrynnet
 Ae gwylein gwynnyon ae gwypm wraget
 Caraf y milwyr ae meirch hywet,
 Ae choed ae chedyrn ae chyfannet
 Caraf y mensyt ae man veillyon arnaw,
 Mynyd gafas ffaw ffyryf orfolet
 Caraf y brooet breint hywret
 Ae diffeith mawrfeith ae marannet
 Wy a un mab Duw mawr a ryvet
 Mor yw eilon mygyr meint y refet
 Gwncuthum a gwth gwaew gweith arderchet
 Y rwng glyw Powys a glwys wynet
 Ac y ar welw gann gynnif rysset
 Gorpwyf ollyngdawd o alltudet
 Ni dalyaf diheu yny del ymplaid
 Breutwyd ae dyweid a Duw ae met
 Tonn wenn orewyn a orwlych bet
 Tonn wen orewyn wychyr wrth drefyt
 Gyfliw ac arien awr yd gynnyt
 Caraf y morva y meiryonuyt
 Men yd bu vreich wenn yn obeunyt.
 Caraf yr eaws ar werryaws wyt

¹ Powys comprised Radnor, Montgomery, and Merionethshire.

² Gwynedd was that portion of North Wales not included in Powys.

I love the nightingale on the privet wood
 In the famous vale of Cymmer Deuddwfr.¹
 Lord of heaven and earth, the glory of Gwyneddians,
 Though it is so far from Keri² to Caerliwelydd,³
 I mounted the yellow steed, and from Maelienydd⁴
 Reached the land of Reged⁵ between night and day.
 Before I am in the grave, may I enjoy a new blessing
 From the land of Tegygyl⁶ of fairest aspect!
 As long as I am courteous and travel as a craftsman,⁷
 God will watch over my destiny.
 Fair foam-crowned wave of impetuous course,
 I will implore the Divine Supreme,
 Precious from being a king,

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Yg kymer Deudfyfyr dyffrynt iolyt  
 Arglwyt nef a llawr gwawr gwindodyt  
 Mor bell o geri gaer Lliwelyt  
 Esgynnais ar velyn o vaelyenynt  
 Hyd ynhir Reged rwng nos a dyt  
 Gorpwyfy kyn bwyf bet butei newyt.  
 Tir Tegygyl teccaf yny elfyt  
 Ked bwyfy karyadawc kerted ofyt  
 Gobwylled fy nuwy fy nihenynt.  
 Ton wenn orewyn wychyr wrth drefyt  
 Cyfarchaf yr dewin gwerthefin  
 Gwerthfawr wrth y fod yn frenhin  
 Kyssylltu canu cyssefin

<sup>1</sup> Cymmer Deuddwfr is in Radnorshire, and is now called Cwm Deuddwr.

<sup>2</sup> Keri is in Montgomeryshire.

<sup>3</sup> The Rev. Evan Evans (*Dissertatio de Bardis*, p. 36) says Caer Lliwelydd means Carlisle. I cannot say in what part of Wales it lies, but feel assured it is not Carlisle in Cumberland. May it not be Llywel in Breconshire?

<sup>4</sup> Maelienydd is the old name of a district in Radnorshire.

<sup>5</sup> The late Rev. T. Price, whose sudden death since this work was put into the press every Welshman must deeply deplore, said that it is difficult to find the geography of Rhaged, and considered it to be the present county of Cumberland. (*Hanes Cymru*, p. 278.) But this poem shows it to have been within a night's ride of Maelienydd, mentioned in the preceding note, which accords with the locality assigned to it in the recently published volume called *Iolo Manuscripts*, wherein it is stated that it was situated in the district between the rivers Tawy and Towy, and comprised the territories of Gower, Kidwely, Carnwyllion, Iscennen, and Cantrev Bychan.

<sup>6</sup> A cantrev in Flintshire.

<sup>7</sup> Artisans in Wales could travel anywhere, and had admission everywhere. It is this privilege the bard alludes to; and this respect for artisans is strikingly shown in the Mabinogion. A knight knocking at the gate of a castle is told, "The knife is in the meat, and the drink is in the horn, and there is revelry in the hall of Gwrnach the Giant; and *except for a craftsman bringing his craft* the gate will not be opened to-night."—*Mabinogion*, vol. ii. p. 293.

To create a primitive muse,  
 For a song of praise, such as Merddin sang,—  
 To the women who have so long claimed my bardic lore,  
 And who are so tardy in dispensing grace.  
 The most eminent in all the west I name,  
 From the gates of Chester to Portske Witt :<sup>1</sup>  
 The first is the nymph who will be the subject of universal praise,  
 Gwenllian, whose complexion is like the summer's day ;  
 The second is another of high state, far from my embrace,  
 Adorned with golden torques.<sup>2</sup>  
 Fair Gweryl, from whom nor token nor confidence  
 Have I obtained, nor has any of my race ;  
 Though I might be slain by two-lipped shafts,  
 She whose foster brother was a king should be my theme.  
 And Gwladys, the young and modest virgin,  
 The idol of the multitude ;

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Kert folyant fal y cant mertin
 Yr gwraget ae met fy martrin mor hir
 Ilyyr wetawe ynt am rin
 Pennaf oll yn y gorllewin
 O byrth caer hyd borth ysgewin
 Un ywr fun a fyt kyssefn foliant
 Gwenllian lliw hafin
 Eil ywr llall or pall pell vy min y wrthi
 Y am ortherech eurin.
 Gweryl dec fy rec fy rin ni gefeif
 Ni gafas neb om llin
 Yr fy llat a llafnau deufin
 Rym gwalaeth y gwreic brawdfaeth brenin
 A Gwladus wetus wyl febin vabwreic
 Gofyneic y werin
 A chenaſ ucheneid gyfrin

¹ Portske Witt is near Chepstow, in Monmouthshire.

² Torques were rings or chains of gold worn about the neck among the ancient Welsh, as a mark of nobility. They were worn alike by males and females. In 1692 one of these antique chains was found in a garden near Harlech Castle; it weighed eight ounces of solid gold, and measured four feet in length. It is now in the possession of the Mostyn family in Flintshire. The lady of Sir Rhys ab Thomas, in the tomb at Carmarthen, is represented with a square cap on her head, and a chain round the neck; a short gown tied at the waist by a golden string, the ends of which reach her knees; and a long mantle with large sleeves covers the whole.

"It is my impression that further inquiry might lead you to the opinion that a torque is *neither* a ring nor chain, but a piece of metal having hooks at the two ends, by which, when worn, it was connected. I have seen several of gold beautifully twisted, and I recollect last year handling an Irish specimen which was flat, likewise of gold; but in every instance they had a hook at each end."—*Note from Mr. G. G. Francis*, Dec. 3, 1849.

I will utter the secret sigh ;
 I will greet her with the yellow blossoms of the furze.
 Soon may I see my vigour rouse to combat,
 And my hand on my blade,—
 And the bright Lleucu my sister laughing,
 Though her husband laught not from anxiety.
 Great anxiety oppresses me, makes me sad,
 And longing, alas ! is become habitual,
 For the fair Nest, like the apple blossom sweet,
 For Perwewr, the centre of my desire,
 For Generys the chaste, who will not grant me a smile,—
 May continence not overcome her,
 For Hunydd, whose fame will last till the day of doom,—
 For Hawys, who claims my choicest eulogy.
 On a memorable day I had a nymph ;
 I had a second, more be their praise ;
 I had a third and a fourth with prosperity ;
 I had a fifth of those with a skin white and delicate ;
 I had a sixth, bright and fair, avoiding not the temptation ;
 Above the white walls, she arrested me ;
 I had a seventh, and this was satiety of love ;
 I had eight in recompense for a little of the praise which I sung ;
 But the teeth most opportunely bar the tongue.¹

Mi ac mawl a melyn eithin.
 Moch gwelwyf am nwyf yn etein y wrthaw
 Ac ym llaw am fy llain
 Lleucu glaer fy chwaer yn chwethin
 Ac ni chwart y gwr hi rac gortin
 Gortin mawr am dawr am daerhawl
 A hiraeth yssywaeth yssy nawd
 Am nest dec, am debic a fallulawd.
 Am berwewr bervet ymhechawd
 Am enerys wry ni warawd ym hoen
 Ni orpo hi diweirdawd
 Am hunyt defnyt hyd dytbrawd
 Am hawis vy newis devawd
 Keveysy vun duun diwyrnawd
 Keveis dwy handid mwy en molawd
 Keveis deir a phedeir a ffawd
 Keveis bymp o rei gwympeu gwyn gnawd
 Keveis chwech heb odech pechawd
 Gwenglaer uwch gwengaer yt ym daerhawl
 Keveysy seith ac ef gweith gordygnawd
 Keveysy wyth yn hal pwyth peth or wawd yr geint
 Ysda deint rac tavawd.

¹ Slightly altered, where not sufficiently literal, from the translation of Dr. Pughe.

I should conjecture from several parts of this poem that it was sung or composed on his return from Ireland to defend his crown. He had a presentiment of his own death. It would also seem that he was travelling in disguise. These facts would explain the melancholy tone which pervades the poem, in which, though the ruling passion is manifest, it yet shines with a subdued light. The poem has many fine lines, and several very elegant and forcible images, and cannot fail as a whole to produce a favourable impression.

Most of Howel's poems are devoted to the passion of love. The following has a delicacy, and gaiety which are quite charming: ¹

Give me the fair, the gentle maid,
 Of slender form, in mantle green;
 Whose woman's wit is ever staid,
 Subdued by virtue's graceful mien.
 Give me the maid, whose heart with mine
 Shall blend each thought, each hope combine;
 Then, maiden, fair as ocean's spray,
 Gifted with Kymric wit's bright ray,
 Say am I thine?
 Art thou then mine?
 What? silent now?
 Thy silence makes this bosom glow.
 I choose thee, maiden, for thy gifts divine;
 'Tis right to choose; then, fairest, choose me thine.²

This image of the water-spray, was a very great favourite with the bards, and occurs in the amatory poems of most of

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<sup>1</sup> Fy newisi riain firain faindeg,  
 Hirwen yn y llen lliw ehoeg;  
 A'm dewis synwyr synhyaw arwreigedd,  
 Ban dywed o fraidd weddaidd wofeg;  
 A'm dewis gydran gyhyd reg â bun,  
 A bod yn gyfrin am rin, am reg.  
 Dewis yw genyfi harddliw gwaneg,  
 Ydoeth i'th gyfoeth, dy goeth Gymraeg.  
 Dewis genyf y di;  
 Beth yw genyt fi?  
 Beth, a dewi di? Deg y gosteg?  
 Dewisies fun, fal nad attreg genyf;  
 Lawn yw dewissaw—dewis dyn deg.

<sup>2</sup> The above very faithful translation, is by Mrs. Llewelyn, of Llangynwyd Vicarage, Glamorganshire.

them. Howel himself has used it no less than three times, once in the above, once in the preceding poem, and once in the poem called "The Choice," in the line:—

*Gorewynawg ton tynhegyl ebrwydd.*

The Rev. Edward Davies, the learned author of the *Mythology of the Druids*, a gentleman whom I shall have frequent reason to quote in the following pages, is of opinion that some passages in the poems called "Awdl Hoffder Hywel," and "Y Dewis," countenance the assumption that the worship of Druidism prevailed in the twelfth century. I am sorry to be obliged to doubt the accuracy of his conclusions; my reasons will be found stated in another place.

Hereditary talent is not an ordinary phenomenon; yet we find such a fact in the bardic history of this period. Meilir the father, Gwalchmai the son, and Einion and Meilir the grandsons, were all bards, and bards too of considerable repute. Of Meilir and Gwalchmai we have already treated; and we will next notice the writings of EINION AB GWALCHMAI.<sup>1</sup> Five of his poems have escaped the ravages of time; the best of which we here lay before our readers, who will then have had religious musings, warlike odes, didactic narratives, love songs, and elegiac strains, laid before them; and when to these we add some most exquisite Englynion, presently to be noticed, it is to be hoped they will not quarrel with the selection, or complain that the feast is either plain or scanty. The elegy is written upon Nest the daughter of Howel: who the Howel is, is not clear; but from her being styled "Gwynedd Anrhydedd," *Gwynedd's Glory*, I am led to suppose the lady Nest, "Queen of Pearls," to be the daughter of Howel ab Owain, the poet-king. It is not necessary to enter into a detailed criticism of the poem; here and there throughout the piece there are few poetical ideas, but for the most part it is a series of unconnected sentiments of a commonplace character, heaped together without any very apparent link of connexion, and it contains nothing truly poetical except the introductory lines:<sup>2</sup>

The spring returns, and May with its long days,  
The trees are in their bloom, and the forest in its beauty,

<sup>1</sup> See *Iolo Manuscripts*, p. 176; *Cambrian Register*, iii. 221, i. 442, iii. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Amser Mai maith ddydd, neud rhydd rhoddi,  
Neud coed nad ceithiw, ceinllyw celli;

The birds chaunt, the sea is smooth,  
 The gently rising tide sounds hollow, the wind is still.  
 The best armour against misfortune is prayer;  
 But I cannot hide nor conceal my grief,  
 Nor can I be still and silent.  
 I heard the waves from Gwenonwy land,  
 At the confines of the land of the sons of Beli :<sup>1</sup>  
*The sea flowed with force, and conveyed*  
*A hoarse complaining noise on account of a gentle maiden.*  
 I have passed the deep waters of the Teivi with slow steps.  
 I sang the praise of Nest ere she died.  
 Thousands have resounded her name like that of Elivri.  
 But now I must, with a pensive and sorrowful countenance,  
 Compose her elegy, a subject fraught with misery.  
 The bright luminary of Cadvan<sup>2</sup> when array'd in silk,  
 How beautiful did she shine on the banks of Dysynni !<sup>3</sup>  
 How great was her innocence and simplicity,  
 Joined with consummate prudence !  
 She was above the base arts of dissimulation.  
 Now the ruddy earth covers her in silence.  
 How great was our grief,

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Neud llafar adar, neud gwar gweilgi,
 Neud gwaedddgreg gwaneg, gwynt yn odwi,
 Neud arfau doniau, goddau gwedi,
 Neud argel dawel nid meu dewi,
 Endeweis i wenyg o Wynnofi dir,
 I am derfyn mawr meibion Beli
 Oedd hydreidd wychr llyr yn llenwi,
 Oedd hydr am ddylan gwynfan genddi,
 Hyll nid oedd ei deddf hi hwyreddf holi,
 Hallt oedd ei dagrau, digrawn heli,
 Ar helw lun araf uch bannieri ton,
 Tynhegl a gerddlais i gorddwfr Teifi ;
 Ceintum gerdd i Nest cyn noi threngi.
 Cânt cant i moliant mal Elifri,
 Canaf gan feddwl awrddwl erddi,
 Caniad i marwnad, mawr drueni !
 Canwyll Cadfan lan o lenn bali
 Canneid i synnieid gar Dysynni,
 Gwan, wargan, wry gall, ddeall ddogni,
 Gwreig nid oedd un frad gariad genthi,
 Gweryd rhudd ai cudd gwedi tewi,

¹ Where is the great boundary of the sons of Beli ?

² Cadvan is the saint of Towyn in Meirionydd.

³ Dysynni is the name of a river that runs by Towyn.

When she was laid in her stony habitation !
 The burying of Nest was an irreparable loss.
 Her eye was as sharp as the hawk's,
 Which argued her descended from noble ancestors.
 Virtue and goodness added to her native beauty,
 She was Gwynedd's ornament and pride.
 She rewarded the bard generously.
 Never was pain equal to what I suffer for her loss.
 Oh death ! I feel thy sting, thou hast undone me,
 No man upon earth regretteth her loss like me,
 But hard fate regardeth not the importunity of prayers,
 Whenever mankind are destined to undergo its power.
 O generous Nest, thou liest in thy safe retreat ;
 I am pensive, and melancholy like Pryderi.¹
 I store up my sorrow in my breast,
 And cannot discharge the heavy burden.
 The dark, lonesome, dreary veil,
 Which covereth thy face is ever before me,—
*A face that shone like the pearly dew on Eryri.*²
 I make my humble petition to the Great Creator of heaven and
 earth,
 And my petition will not be denied,

Gwael neuedd maenwedd mynwent iddi,
 Golo Nest goleu direidi.
 Golwg gwaleh dwythfaleh o brif deithi,
 Gwenned gwawn ai dawn o'i daioni,
 Gwynedd anrhydedd, oedd rhaid wrthi
 Nid oedd ffawd rhy gnawd rhin y genthi,
 Gnawd oedd dâl eur mâl er i moli
 Ni ryfu dognach er i dogni poen,
 Penyd a fo mwy no'r meu hebddi,
 Neum gorau angau anghyfuertli,
 Nid ynglyw dyn byw o'r byd fal mi,
 Ni chyfeirch angen iawlwen ioli,
 Er neb rhy barther i rhyborthi,
 Nest yn ei haddawd, wenwawd weini,
 Ydd wyf pryderus fal Pryderi.
 Pryderwawd ceudawd, cyfuertli ni wnn,
 Nid parabl yw hwn ni fo peri.
 Llen argel issel y sy'm poeni,
 Lludd Gwen lliw arien ar Eryri.
 Archaf im Arglwydd culwydd celi,
 Nid ef a archaf arch egregi,
 Arch, ydd wyf un arch yn i erchi

¹ One of the heroes of Romance, and son of Pwyll, Prince of Dyved

² Eryri—Snowdon.

That he grant that this beautiful maid,
 Who glitter'd like pearls,
 May, through the intercession of Holy Dewi,¹
 Be received to his mercy,
 That she may converse with the prophets,
 That she may come to the inheritance
 Of the All-wise God with Mary and the Martyrs.
 And in her behalf I will prefer my prayer,
 Which will fly to the throne of Heaven.
 My love and affection knew no bounds.
 May she never suffer. St. Peter protect her ;
 God himself will not suffer her to be an exile
 From the mansion of bliss. Heaven be her lot.

E. EVANS.

There are in the *Myvyrian Archaiology* twelve Englynion in praise of Madoc ab Meredydd, Prince of Powys, which, with Gwalchmai's ode, and the sweet flowing sonnets of Howel ab Owain, I account the most interesting pieces belonging to the twelfth century. They throw much light upon the military history and habits of the country, show the influence of the Norman manners in their proximity to the people of Powys, and of the intercourse of the Powysian princes with the English court, and are capable of being turned to good purpose by such as understand their real significance, and can appreciate their merits. In the whole range of our literature we have not as lively a portrait of a chieftain; the minutest features are noticed, without the *tout ensemble* being lost sight of, and Llewelyn ab Madoc stands as palpable before us, as if his portrait had been painted on the canvas. In the easy flow of

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Am archfein rlein, reid y meini,  
 Trwy ddiwyd eiriawl deddfawl Dewi  
 A deg cymmaint seint senedd *Frefi*,  
 Am fun a undydd i hammodi,  
 A'r gystlwn pryffwn y prophwydi,  
 Ar gyfoeth Duw doeth i detholi,  
 Ar anghyweir Meir a'r Mertyry,  
 Ae yn i goddau gweddi a dodaf.  
 Am dodeis nwyf im addoedi.  
 Ni bu dyn mwr gu gennyf a hi  
 Ni bu poen oddef, Pedr wy nodi,  
 Ni bu da gan Dduw i ddiidoli,  
 Ni bo ddiidawl Nest, nef boed eiddi.

<sup>1</sup> St. David, the patron saint of Wales.

the language, the minuteness of the description, and the spirit of the whole delineation, we have a collection of merits not frequently to be met with in the works of the bards; and the prince described seems so deserving of being the idol of a poet's fancy, that the poet and his subject share our unbounded admiration.<sup>1</sup>

Does no one ask,—are men so unconcern'd  
 Before unsheathing their swords,  
 Who is yon mail-clad youth?  
 Who is the haughty warrior before us?

A glorious prince full of intelligence,  
 None will be allowed to lead him;  
 He is a prince, valiant, powerful, and war-loving,  
 Llewelyn, the enemy of Gwynedd.

Whose swift moving shield is that,  
 And bright shining spear?  
 Who is the determined warlike chief,  
 Who holds it by its armlets?

It is the shield of Llewelyn, the brave  
 Protector of his country's rights;  
 A shield with a man's shoulder behind it;  
 A shield which carries terror before it.

~~~~~  
¹ Govynnwys nebun ný raen gan rei
 Kyn rudaw haearngaen
 Pa was a wisg e lasgaen
 Pa walch yw y balch o'r blaen.

Lleissiawn werennie o ranned dyall
 Nid arall ae harwed
 Llyw glyw glew anhangnyved
 Llewelyn gelyn Gwyned.

Pieu yr ysgwyt egutwal kynwan
 Ar kanwaew am y thal
 Pwy'r glew llew lit aer ddywal
 Ae deily kyfrwng dwy brennyal.

Ysgwyt Llewelyn liw kadeithi bro
 Eu honno yw honni.
 Ysgwyt ac ysgwyd yndi
 Ysgwyt ac ysgryt recdi.

Whose is the flashing sword which cuts the air,
 A sure wound-inflicter?
 An emblem of honour it will ever be,
 And in that right hand will destroy enemies.

He who handles it, is the defender of his country,
 Renown'd for downward strokes;
 A courageous soldier in the day of battle,
 Is the hero of Mechain,—his country's pride.

Whose is that red helmet of battle
 Surmounted with a fierce wolf?
 Who is the rider of the fierce white steed?
 What is his name? how wonderful his appearance!

He is called long-handed Llewelyn,
 The irresistible leader of conflict,
 Commander of men of the terrible shout,
 Devastator of England; faultless, and perfect is he.

Whose is the suit of complete armour?
 He will not fly from the battle-field.
 Who is this hero of princely race?
 I ask you all, whence sprang he?



Pieu y cleddyf cleu a dravodir
 Klwyfhir diamheu
 Klotvawr klywitor nat geu
 Kavas llad ar llaw deheu.

Yssek ae trevyt trevat amddiffyn
 Am diffwys gymmynat
 Gweilch argae yn dyd aergat
 Gwalch mechein gorwyrein gwlat.

Pieu y rodawc rud varan aervle
 Ae haervleid gyr y ban
 Pwy briw uwch browysvarch can
 Pwy y henw hynot gyvrann.

Yssek y gelwir llawhir Llywelyn
 Llyw tervyn tervyse dir
 Llawr gawr goruchel y wir
 Lloegr ddiva ddivevyl gywir

Pieu yr arven arrot heb gilyaw
 Ni gylyant hyd angeu
 Pwy wr pennaetheid geneu
 Rac pawb pieu y dechreu.

He is a renowned and valiant prince,
 Famed for bravery, and slaughtering ;
 The majestic Chief, dreadful in the fight,
 Is the son of Madoc ab Meredydd.

Whose is the war-steed, fastest in the race,
 Which so haughtily paws the ground ?
 Who the prince so loved by his army,
 With the spear which pierces without warning ?

He is a known, ambitious chief,
 Who, as long as God supports him,
 Will be famed as conqueror, brave and glorious—
 Worthy of the men of Tyssiliaw.

We can now easily understand the feeling which won for this young prince, the name of being the "sole hope of the men of Powys," for every line of the above Englynion, free from bardic affectation and stamped with sincerity, clearly shows that Llewelyn was a young chief of no ordinary promise.

The authorship of the verses is involved in some degree of obscurity. LLYWARCH LLAETY, the reputed author, lived between 1290 and 1340; and therefore so long after the death of Llewelyn, as to render it quite impossible for him to be the author of lines which were written during this prince's lifetime. The poet gives his name, as is shown by the subscription to the Englynion, as Llywarch Llew Cad; and therefore, as Carnhuanawc suggests, either Llywarch Llaety and Llywarch Llew Cad were different persons, or the former lived a hundred years earlier than the date usually given to his compositions. I

Ysseg yw hwnnw honneit nud or glyw
 Ef yw glew a llofrud
 Mygyr gawr var trablawr trablud
 Mab Madawc rab Maredud.

Pieu y katvarch, catvlaen ae gorveid
 Ar gortot dihavarch
 Ar gwr ar gwyr am y barch
 Ar gwaew ar gwan anghyvarch,

Ysseg yw hwnnw hancit gan llaw draws
 Dra savo Duw ganthaw
 Gwyr orvod gwrđ glot gludaw
 Gwr rac gwerin dyssiliaw.

therefore incline to the opinion that the author is the person called *Llywarch Llew Cad*; though I have no further knowledge of that personage, for we know but little of the biography of most of the bards.

The last remark indicates a sad defect, which is felt by every one who attempts to give anything like a correct historical sketch of our bardic literature. Few facts are so unsubstantial as the bards; like shadows they come and like shadows depart. We know something of Davydd ab Gwilym, Iolo Goch, and Lewis Glyn Cothi; but who was Meilir? Where lived his son Gwalchmai? Llywarch ab Llywelyn, where was he born? Whose son was Kynddelw? When was Davydd Benvras born? When did Gruffydd ab yr Ynad die? We cannot tell. Rhys Goch came from the neighbourhood of Eryri; Davydd Nanmor wrote extravagant panegyrics; Tudur Aled was liked by Sir Rhys ab Thomas; Gutyn Owain wrote history; and Davydd Llwyd lived at Mathavarn; but beyond these scanty hints we have no materials to construct biographies. The lives of the most worthy are written in their poems;—the lower grade, or *clerwyr*, many of them were spies, beggars, and wanderers; they lived from house to house, composed songs for weddings, and importuned farmers for beds, cows, guns, saddles, bridles, and horses; they ate and drank whatever came in their way, and were jealous of their rivals—the monks; but beyond these facts, which hold good of all, we know nothing. Particular incidents we have not; and therefore biographical sketches are impossible.

Having thus passed in review such portions of the poetry of the twelfth century as seemed most deserving of notice, we now come to speak of such other employments as composed, with poetry, the intellectual life of the Welsh. Of these the science of music first demands attention.

SECTION III.

MUSIC.

OF literature and civilisation, music has ever formed a part; and in most countries, the popular sentiment has very closely allied a love of music with the love of virtue. Plato, in one of his dialogues, makes Socrates express a regret that he had not

paid sufficient attention to the science ; Polybius attributes the advancement in civilisation of an Arcadian tribe, to their love of music ; and Quintilian commends the science of harmony to the notice of the learned. The poets of Italy make frequent allusions to its civilising tendency ; it has been acknowledged in other countries that “ music has charms to soothe the savage breast ; ” and Shakespeare, followed by Congreve, has borne testimony in favour of the same doctrine. The poets of Wales have not been behindhand, as is shown in these verses, translated from the Welsh :

The man to whom the harp is dear,
 Who loves the sound of song and ode,
 Will cherish all that's cherished there,
 Where angels hold their blest abode.

But he who loves not tune or strain,
 Nature to him no love has given ;
 You'll see him while his days remain,
 Hateful at once to earth and Heaven.

Nor is this affection, which greatly prevails at the present day, a thing of recent origin. It is inseparably linked with our literature and history ; and the first poem we have conveys the intelligence of a prevalent love of music. We have seen these allusions to the *Cerddorion* in the extracts from the early bards ; and the fact that a *pencerdd*, or doctor of music, was recognised by the Laws of Howel, is full of significance. Towards A.D. 1100, we find Gruffydd ab Kynan, King of North Wales, turning his attention to the subject of musical regulations ; and from his paying more attention to music than to poetry, we may infer that he was partial to the former, and was perhaps himself a competent judge of musical excellence. He was born and educated in Ireland, of Welsh parents,—his father having sought a refuge there ; and he had, it is probable, imbibed a taste for sweet sounds in the Emerald Isle.¹ In fact he seems to have fallen in love with the pipe—the bagpipe, and when the country became somewhat pacified, he made an attempt to inoculate the people of North Wales with a similar taste. We learn this from the account of his life by Robert ab Gruffydd :

¹ T. Price on the “ Welsh Harp,” *Cambrian Quarterly Magazine*, ii, pp. 113, 122.

“Gruffydd ab Kynan, King of North Wales, held an Eisteddvod, for the purpose of regulating minstrelsy, at Caerwys, whither travelled all the musicians of Wales. There came also some from England and Scotland. At that time the Welsh disliked the pipes, and in fact forbade their use; and therefore it was a Scot that won the prize, and the King gave him a silver pipe as a reward for his skill. The laws then enacted, continue in force now, and are binding upon, and guides to, the Welsh minstrels at the present day. Gruffydd did not attempt to make these regulations binding in South Wales, on account of its being in the possession of strangers; nor can the Princes of South Wales lay claim to the obedience of the North Welsh minstrels.”

In the first volume of the *Cambrian Register* (p. 386) we find a more specific statement:

“Observe, this is the book called the Repertory of string Music—that is to say, the harp and crwth—within the three principalities of Wales, which was drawn up from the science of music, at the desire of four musical performers, on the harp and crwth, who were unanimous in opinion, and desirous to render song more perfect, to preserve, to play it with correctness, and to elucidate it. The names of these four doctors were Allon y Cenaw, Rhydderch Voel, Matholwch the Gwyddelian, and Olav the Minstrel; and the auditors were Henri Gyveurydd, Carsi the Harper, and many others who assisted by their counsel and their art. And through the advice of these teachers, and the science of the doctor of music, and the four professors with their art, by unanimous consent, the twenty-four musical canons were made, and to give stability to these, the twenty-four measures were formed. For three causes were they made: in the first place, to compose music; secondly, to know music; and thirdly, to preserve it; and their names follow in the language of Ireland; and *Murchan* the *Gwyddelian* was a Sovereign in Ireland at that time,¹ who confirmed them at a place called *Glyn Achalch*, by all his power and offices, and commanding all to maintain them.”

At that time, Ireland was famed as the seat of learning; and though it is said that “Cadivor, Abbot of Llanveithin, a

¹ About 942; see the poem of the *Circuit of Ireland*.

wise and learned man, and of great piety, sent six young men who were students with him, to instruct the Irish, A.D. 883,"¹ the visit of Sulien, afterwards Bishop of Saint David's, to Ireland, and his having remained there ten years to study, prove Archbishop Usher to have been perfectly correct when he said, that "in the eleventh century Ireland was full of pious and learned men."² Considered in the light thus afforded as to the intellectual state of Ireland, the above statements respecting the part taken by Irish minstrels in organising the minstrelsy of Wales, become very probable; and therefore it behoves us to inquire what influence the labours of Gruffydd ab Kynan, and the Irish teachers whom he had imported, had upon the music of Wales? This is a disputed point; and therefore we must approach it with becoming caution.

It was Dr. Powell's opinion that "these musicians (i.e. the Irish) framed in a manner all the instrumental music now in use among the Welsh;" while the Rev. Thomas Price most positively denies, that the music of the Welsh is in any way indebted to these Irish teachers. The words "in a manner" are not by any means clear; while the assertion that all the instrumental music of Wales is of Irish origin, is evidently untrue. Mr. Price has discussed the subject fairly, and at much length, in his *History of Wales*; but I am as unable to follow him into one extreme as I am unwilling to be led into the other by the weighty name of Dr. Powell. Mr. Price, however, admits that the names of several of the metres are Irish; and that the framers of our musical code were guided by the principles of the Irish system to some extent in framing their own. I think we ought to admit more than this; and though concurring with Carnhuanawc in the belief that there was no revolution effected in the musical taste of the Welsh, it appears to me that we are to refer the introduction of the pipes among the Welsh, to the reign of Gruffydd ab Kynan. In the account of the Feast of Cadwgan ab Bleddyn in 1107, we find no mention made of any but stringed instruments; nor yet in the history of the Eistedd-vod held under the auspices of Gruffydd ab Rhys in 1135. Up to that date the bagpipes were unknown in South Wales; but between 1135 and 1177 they had made some progress in popular opinion.

¹ Price's *History of Wales*, p. 464.

² Moore's *Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 181.

The pipes were coming into use, not *instead* of the *crwth* and the harp, but *with* those instruments; and we find harpers, violinists, and pipers invited to the court of the Lord Rhys at the latter date. I am strongly inclined to think that the pipes were first introduced here, at the *Caerwys Eisteddvod*; and I am further of opinion that the “*Ysgodawg*” mentioned by the biographer of *Gruffydd ab Kynan*, as having won the silver pipe, came not from Scotland, but from Ireland, as a portion of the Irish people were known by the name of Scots in the twelfth century. This appears from a poem by Bishop *Sulien’s* son, descriptive of his father’s visit to Ireland:

His ista digestis *Scotorum* visitat arva ;

and from *Meilir’s* poem already quoted:

Gwytyl dieuvil duon
Ysgodogion dynion lletfer.¹

The pipe was never greatly liked among the Welsh; they treated it with contempt at *Caerwys*, and the bards always raised their voices against it; and *Lewis Glyn Cothi* has left us an excellent satire upon a piper. The poem occurs at p. 389 of his collected works; and has been thus spiritedly translated by *Mrs. M. C. Llewelyn*, which translation is here given with her kind consent.

THE SAXONS OF FLINT.

A man, like others, formed by God,
On Sunday morning last I trod
The streets of Flint; an ill-built maze—
I wish the whole were in a blaze!
An English marriage feast was there,
Which, like all English feasts, was spare.
Nought there revealed our mountain land,
The generous heart—the liberal hand—
No *hirias* there was passed around
With richly foaming mead high crowned.
The reason why I thither came
Was something for my art to claim—
An art that oft from prince and lord
Had won its just—its due reward.

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<sup>1</sup> For translation see p. 11.

With lips inspired I then began  
To sing an ode to this mean clan :  
Rudely they mocked my song and me,  
And loathed my oft-praised minstrelsy.  
Alas ! that through my cherished art  
Boors should distress and wound my heart.  
Fool that I was to think the muse  
Could charm corn-dealers—knavish Jews ;  
My polished ode, forsooth, they hissed,  
And I midst laughter was dismissed.  
For William Beisir's bag they bawl,  
“ Largess for him ! ” they loudly squall ;  
Each roared with throat at widest stretch  
For Will the Piper—low-born wretch !  
Will forward steps as best he can,  
Unlike a free ennobled man :  
A pliant bag 'tween arm and chest,  
While limping on he tightly prest.  
He stares—he strives the bag to sound ;  
He swells his maw—and ogles round ;  
He twists and turns himself about,  
With fetid breath his cheeks swell out.  
What savage boors ! his hideous claws  
And glutton's skin win their applause !  
With shuffling hand and clumsy mien  
To doff his cloak he next is seen ;  
He snorted ; bridled in his face,  
And bent it down with much grimace ;  
Like to a kite he seemed that day,  
A kite, when feathering of his prey !  
The churl did blow a grating shriek,  
The bag did swell, and harshly squeak,  
As does a goose from nightmare crying,  
Or dog, crushed by a chest, when dying ;  
This whistling box's changeless note  
Is forced from turgid veins and throat ;  
Its sound is like a crane's harsh moan,  
Or like a gosling's latest groan ;  
Just such a noise a wounded goat  
Sends from her hoarse and gurgling throat.  
His unattractive screeching lay  
Being ended, William sought for pay ;  
Some *fees* he had from this mean band,  
But *largess* from no noble hand ;

Some pence were offered by a few,  
 Others gave little halfpence too.  
 Unheeded by this shabby band,  
 I left their feast with empty hand.  
 A dire mischance I wish indeed  
 On slavish Flint and its mean breed ;  
 Oh ! may its furnace be the place  
 Which they and Piper Will may grace !  
 For their ill luck my prayer be told,  
 My curses on them, young and old !  
 I ne'er again will venture there ;  
 May death all further visits spare !<sup>1</sup>

The pipe has now disappeared from the land ; and the fact is an admirable proof of an improvement in the musical taste of the people ; for it really is impossible that the bagpipe could be a favoured instrument, where the clear tones of the harp had once been heard.

The harp was almost the sole instrument in the tenth century known to the Welsh ; and after the pipe had lingered here for seven hundred years, the harp and the violin, the modern representative of the crwth, are left in undisputed possession of the popular will. The harp never lost its hold upon the affections of the people, is now the favourite instrument, and will probably continue to be so while “the language of the soul dwells on its strings.” That line, in the original—

Iaith enaid ar ei thannau—

occurs in one of the Englynion which competed against the Rev. Walter Davies, and is superior to any single line in his Englyn, though the whole Englyn is inferior to the veteran bard of Mechain's victorious verse, which ran as follows :

Plethiadau tannau tynion—y delyn,  
 I'r dilesg veddylion,  
 Odlau saint yw adlais hon,  
 Llais yn vawl llys nevolion.

<sup>1</sup> I have omitted Tegid's prefatory summary, as the reader will easily get at the facts from the poem ; and it is scarcely necessary to state that I do not participate in the slander cast upon the English ; for, not having shared the disappointment of the bard, my temper is unruffled. The furnace alluded to is one of the furnaces used in smelting lead ore, for which, even in the bard's day, Flint was famous.

But the finest compliment paid to the harp is to be found in "Marwnad Sion Eos," where the poet admirably manages to compliment both harper and harp at the same time :

Nid oes nac angel na dyn,  
Nad wyl pan ganai delyn.

Neither angels nor men could refrain from weeping,  
When he (John the Nightingale) played the harp.

But we must revert to the subject of the influence of Irish music. Much stress has been laid upon the language of Giraldus, who being a contemporary writer, a lover of music, and one intimately acquainted with the music of both countries, is looked upon as an authority. On the one part it is confidently claimed that he supports Powell's assertion, while the defenders of the integrity of Welsh music deny that any such conclusion can fairly be drawn from his words. The question is therefore one of interpretation, and easy of solution when fairly entertained. His words are these :

Notandum vero, quod Scotia et Gwallia, hæc propagationis, illa commectionis et affinitatis gratia, Hiberniam in modulis, æmula imitari nitantur disciplina.

Which may be thus translated :

It should be observed notwithstanding, that the Scotch and Welsh, this from being of the same origin, and that from intercourse and relationship, are emulous to imitate the Irish in musical proficiency.

Now what does this passage signify? Mr. Price states that we are not justified in understanding it to mean that they *imitated* the style of the Irish musicians; but simply that they were emulous to cope with them, in the *skilful practice of another*—i.e. the native music of Wales. Sorry as I am to differ from our national historian, the *imitari* seems to me to be positive and conclusive; for at the period of Giraldus's visit, as I have already shown, the pipes were spreading over the land, and the Irish doctors of music had undoubtedly exercised considerable influence upon the music of this country. We must therefore, in my opinion, concede, that *some* of the musicians of Wales were imitators of the Irish music; but it is contrary to all experience, and contrary to an express declaration made by Giraldus in this very essay on the state of Ireland, that the

Welsh had a native music which differed essentially from that of Ireland, to suppose that the whole of a country can be described in such few words, or that these words hold true of *all* the Welsh musicians. Giraldus's language is just what we might from other facts have expected. Gruffydd ab Kynan, to reform, discipline, and improve the music *already existing*, imported some teachers of Irish music. These men, teachers of a science which appears to have been very perfect, and patronised by a powerful monarch, who was anxious to diffuse his own taste among his subjects, must have had some influence among the Welsh; and therefore I should have anticipated that many minstrels desirous of the favour of the king would have humoured his prejudices, even if Giraldus had not said that they found imitators in Wales. Many of the Irish then introduced never returned to their own country; and we have already noticed the Irish extraction of Howel ab Owain, and Cadivor Wyddel, with his seven sons. They would of course be patrons of the pipes; and the prevalence of these towards the close of the twelfth century, and for many centuries afterwards, attests the fact, that the influence of Gruffydd ab Kyan and his hired teachers was by no means insignificant.

The point at issue seems to me to be one of degree; that a taste for the music of Ireland had been introduced among the Welsh appears to be an ascertained and well-authenticated fact; but that it became so prevalent as to displace the native music in popular estimation, is an assertion quite unsupported by evidence. Such a taste was prevalent, but at no time did it displace or even become a formidable rival of the Welsh music; for beyond the circle of Gruffydd's influence it commanded no respect. The bards always derided it; and they are much the best criteria of public taste. The disputants on both sides have omitted the consideration of a fact which would have gone a long way to reconcile them. In the term Wales, there must have been included many districts occupied by persons not Welshmen, such as the Flemings of Glamorgan and Pembroke, the Saxons of the North and of Powys, the Normans, and the Irish, who seem to have remained in the Principality in sufficient numbers to have formed a distinct class. The musical taste of this foreign population differed essentially from that of the native Cambrians; and the incautious observer might be led to state, that the pipe was popular in Wales,

from neglecting to distinguish between the foreign and native inhabitants, the uninformed reader being thereby led to believe that that instrument was in favour with the Welsh, while in reality it only found admirers in the other part of the population. That this was really the state of the case appears from many passages in the bardic writings. We have seen it exemplified in the case of the Saxons of Flint; Davydd ab Gwilym brings out this difference of taste with great clearness; when deriding "the leather harp," he says:

Ni luniwyd ei pharwyden,  
Na'i chreglais ond i Sais hen.

Its trunk was not formed, nor its hoarse sound,  
*But for an old Saxon.*

We have here a distinction very carefully drawn, between the musical taste of the two nations; and again, in the same poem he compares its tones to

Sain gŵydd gloff, anhoff yn yd,  
Sonfawr *Wydddeles* ynfyd.

The shrill screech of a lame goose (caught) in corn,  
*Horribly noisy, mad Irishwoman!*

thereby strongly insisting upon the same point. We therefore learn that the taste for foreign music still lingered in the land, though the public taste was adverse. The same distinction is made by Lewis Glyn Cothi, in satirising the bands of itinerant minstrels and monks, who went begging about the land:

By the door would be one with a *crazy fiddle*,  
And another dirty chap with a *hurdy gurdy*;  
And close by one with a *pipe*,  
And some carcase with a *hautboy*.<sup>1</sup>

Here these various instruments are held up to ridicule; but the harp was an honoured instrument never mentioned save in commendation. The real state of the case will now be apparent; there was a taste for foreign music, but it was not *the taste of*

<sup>1</sup> Wrth y drws, un â'i grwth drwg,  
A baw arall â'i berwg;  
O'r lle bai arall â'i bib,  
A rhyw abwy â rhibib.

the Welsh people; nor can Giraldus be fairly represented to have said so. He mentions the existence of a native minstrelsy among the Welsh; and we ought not to assume that he either believed or asserted that the taste of a nation can be easily altered, where his words fall short of saying so.

There are many passages in the writings of Giraldus, and those too written subsequent to his tract on Ireland, clearly showing that the harp was the national instrument of Wales, and leading us to infer that its music was so deeply rooted in the public affection, as to render any attempt to dislodge it, hopeless and impracticable. The remarks hitherto quoted from Giraldus, were written in 1187; but the reader will be pleased to bear in mind that the following was given to the world in 1204, subsequent to his tour through Wales with Archbishop Baldwin, and when he had had sixteen years' additional knowledge, information, and experience:

“The strangers, who arrived in the morning, were entertained until evening with the conversation of young women, and with the music of the harp; for in this country (Wales) almost every house was provided with both. Hence we may reasonably conclude, that the people were not much inclined to jealousy. Such an influence had the habit of music on their minds, and its fascinating powers, that in every family, or in every tribe, they esteemed skill in playing on the harp beyond any kind of learning.”

The fair conclusion to be drawn from these facts is, that Mr. Price enunciates a substantial truth when he asserts the integrity, and national origin of the music of Wales; while there is more foundation in fact for the other view, than his warm patriotism allowed him to admit.

Having thus spoken of the instruments, it may not be out of place to say a few words on the characteristic features of the music of Wales. Any person in some degree acquainted with the history of the English drama, must know how the noble compositions of Shakespeare and his imitators were, for a time, nearly superseded in England by the rhyming tragedies, which were baser imitations of French models. Nearly similar to the temporary eclipse which obscured the genuine Shakespearian drama, was that which nearly sent to oblivion the finest cathedral music of the same country; but happily for England, she can boast that in respect of Church music, she possesses as truly

as any other country in the world, what may be termed national, or at least, a body of sacred melodies sufficiently characteristic of the genius of her composers, to distinguish them through all time from those of other countries; so may she boast, but not so triumphantly, of her secular music, inasmuch as the sea songs, and several of the pastoral lyrics of England, are sung to airs that bear no resemblance to those of any other country, with which she was connected by commerce or scientific intercourse. But during the years in which additions were made to these national melodies, many of the most popular English composers were servile imitators of every thing that was foreign, while such men as Purcell and Lily were forgotten. However, they were forgotten only to be remembered again with deeper gratitude, and higher exultation; and such precisely appears to me to have been the fate of the music of Wales; for although we possess but few of the most ancient (if they must be recognised by the names given them in the curious MSS. in the Welsh School, London),<sup>1</sup> we possess very old melodies, which I believe to have been composed at periods, when the Welsh were less inclined to imitate the Irish, than they may be supposed to have been during the reign of Gruffydd ab Kynan, and as different in style and character from the melodies of Ireland, as the cathedral music of England is from that of Scotland. Affected as appears to most men of good taste the network of Welsh alliteration, it cannot be denied, that the finest Welsh airs, viz. *Ar hyd y Nos*, *Glan Meddwdod Mwyn*, *Morva Rhuddlan*, *Y Gadlys*, *Codiad yr Hedydd*, *Divyrwech Gwŷr Harlech*, &c., are specimens of such simple, pure, and unaffected melody as neither Ireland nor Scotland did ever produce, though in sweetness, tenderness, and voluptuousness the melodies of these two countries may even excel those of Wales. Be that as it may, no one who is capable of comparing the tunes of the three nations, can for a moment doubt that those of Cambria are distinguished by characteristics so thoroughly distinct from those of Ireland, that it would not be more absurd to believe that our oaks have sprung from hips and haws, than to say that our best airs are of Irish origin.

It is gratifying to find that eminent English critics have

<sup>1</sup> *Cambrian Register*, vol. i. p. 391.



expressed the same opinion, with respect to the essentially distinct character and beauty of Welsh music. Jones, in the *Relics of the Welsh Bards*, quotes a highly flattering opinion given in its favour by Dr. Armstrong; and I was glad to perceive that so fastidious a critical authority as the *Athenæum*, viewed our music in the same light: "There is the same animation in its music; and though we allow the excellent effect of the Scotch, and the power of the Irish in noting the transitions from rage to despair, and in describing their irritable temperament, we must say of the Welsh music, that there is in it an antique superiority which adorns every thing it approaches. It breathes the spirit of a people yet proud of their former pastimes, who treasure up as precious gold the traditions of their forefathers, and with that a coldness to strangers, and strange habits."<sup>1</sup>

But in addition to having found favour with the musical authorities of England, it has elicited a response from the public opinion of the musical circles of the metropolis, as appears from the following announcement in the *Examiner*: "The Welsh air 'Strike the harp,' with its chorus, quite delighted the audience, and cold must they have been had they not felt its effect."<sup>2</sup>

It is therefore unnecessary to adduce further evidence of the sweetness, beauty, and sublimity of our national music.

The characteristics of the Scotch and Irish melodies, are the frequent recurrence of leaps to thirds and fifths, and often fourths and sixths above and below the key note, and the prominence given to those notes; and this appears to have been occasioned by the necessity under which the composer felt himself of making the passing discord, with respect to the drone-note of the bagpipe, as short as possible. The bass consisting only of one note, made it necessary that certain notes in the melody should be as transitory as they could be made to be; while on the other hand, the melodies that had basses of many intervals given them, are not distinguished by these faint transitions, but have notes of every length on every interval of the diatonic scale, while in their composition appears no avoidance of a pause on one more than the other. Dr. Franklin was of opinion that the superiority of the Scotch airs, was attribut-

<sup>1</sup> *Athenæum*, November 2, 1834.

<sup>2</sup> *Examiner*, a London literary newspaper, May 13, 1848.

able to this frequent recurrence of the principal notes of the common chords in them, but musicians of the highest eminence in this as well as other European countries, could tell him that the Old Hundredth, God Save the King, Luther's Hymn, and many of the best Welsh melodies—yea, even those which continue to this day to be admired by Englishmen as well as Welshmen—are quite destitute of what he deemed so essential to true melody. Although so many of the airs of Ireland have the peculiarities noticed above in common with those of Scotland, the Irish melodies are more commonly in triple time, than either those of Scotland or Wales; and often have a wildness which is at once sad and seductive. Inasmuch as it cannot be doubted that Ireland once possessed excellent harpers, one cannot help asking where are the tunes that were their favourites? for it cannot be denied that the published tunes of that country are more playful and pastoral in their character, than we can possibly believe the gravest compositions of her harpers to have been. In other words, a country whose harpers were so celebrated should have preserved more of the pieces in which their skill was oftenest displayed. The music of Ireland and Scotland seems to have been composed expressly for the bagpipes; but that of Wales must have been from its very structure intended for the harp.

In the twelfth century the inhabitants of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales seem to have attained to considerable perfection in the art of musical performance: but the following very fine descriptive criticism by Giraldus, seems to point to the harp, as the difficulties could not be overcome by any other instrument then in use. His words are these:

“By the sweetness of their musical instruments, they soothe and delight the ear; they are rapid, yet delicate in their modulation; and by the astonishing execution of their fingers, and their swift transitions from discord to concord, produce the most pleasing harmony. This cannot be better explained than by what I have said in my topography of Ireland, concerning the musical instruments of the three nations. It is remarkable that in all their haste of performance, they never forget time and musical proportion; and such is their art that with all their inflection of tones, the variety of their instruments, and the intricacy of their harmony, they attain perfection of consonance and melody, by a sweet velocity, an equable disparity, and a

discordant concord; as if the strings sounded together fourths or fifths, they always begin with B flat and afterwards return to it, that the whole may be completed under the sweetness of a grand and pleasing sound. They enter into a movement and conclude in so delicate a manner, and *play the little notes so-sportively under the blunter sound of the base strings, enlivening with a wanton levity, or communicating a deeper internal sensation of pleasure*, that the perfection of their art appears in the concealment of it; for---

Art profits when concealed,  
Disgraces when revealed.

“From this cause those very strains, which afford deep and unspeakable mental delight to those who have looked far, and skilfully penetrated into the art, fatigue rather than gratify the ears of others, who though they see do not perceive, and though they hear do not understand.”<sup>1</sup>

It is asserted that the Welsh were acquainted with counterpoint prior to Guido's supposed discovery of it, as one of the twenty-four ancient games, in which Welshmen were ambitious to excel, was to sing a song in four parts with accentuations (*Canu Cywydd pedwar ac acen*).

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## SECTION IV.

### HUD A LLEDRITH; OR, AN INCIPIENT DRAMA.

IN the account of the feast given by Gruffydd ab Rhys in 1135, there occur these remarkable words:

A chynnal pob chwareuon Hud a Lledrith, a phob arddangos.

And there were performed all sorts of plays of illusion and phantasm, and every kind of exhibition.

I have as yet seen no attempt to explain what is meant by these words; but that others may not be compelled to stumble in the dark as I have done, an attempt will be here made to throw a ray of light upon the subject. It seems to me that

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¹ Quoted in Jones's *Relics of the Welsh Bards*.

these exhibitions were similar to the plays known as masks and mysteries, or the still earlier miracle plays among other nations; and this opinion is confirmed by the facts, that in the writings of the bards, we find frequent mention of "miragl," in connexions which forbid our supposing they refer to the miracles of Scripture.

On looking over the history of English literature, we find that plays were instituted in London as early as A.D. 1180. William Fitz-Stephen in his *Life of Archbishop Becket*, written between 1170 and 1182, alludes to similar practices among the monks. Matthew Paris, and Bulæus state (*Historia Universitatis Parisiensis*) that the miracle respecting Saint Catherine was played at Dunstable as early as 1119, and the latter states that there was nothing new in this; while we learn from the *Annales Burtonensis* that strolling players were common towards the middle of the thirteenth century. There is therefore nothing improbable in the supposition that the "Hud a Lledrith a phob arddangos" here mentioned were things of this description; on the contrary, there are strong reasons for the belief. The language of the historian is positive, and "arddangos" cannot be predicated without impropriety of any thing else. Assuming therefore this conjecture to be correct; we shall proceed to enquire how far these displays were founded in nationality. Did they come from the Welsh soil? Or were they borrowed from the English court?

There is nothing *à priori* impossible, in the assumption of a native origin for these exhibitions. Monks covered the surface of Wales as well as England; these miracles originated among the monks in England; and as the Welsh monks had hitherto shown much more literary activity than the English, as witness Gildas, Nennius, Asserius, Walter Mapes of Oxford, Giraldus, and Geoffrey, why may not these miracles have sprung from them? The drama of the middle ages was a spontaneous product;¹ the classic writings had been laid aside for many centuries previously, and their study was not revived for centuries after this date; and therefore these facts, coupled with the existence of a rich dramatic literature among the Hindoos, tend to prove, as A. W. Schlegel, a well-known German critic, has

¹ Müller, *Hist. of the Lit. of Ancient Greece*, p. 287, says it sprang from obscure traditions of antiquity.

stated, that "we are by no means entitled to assume that the invention of the drama was made once for all in the world, to be afterwards borrowed by one people from another." On the contrary, as that able writer very clearly shows, "The invention of dramatic art, and of the theatre, seems a very obvious and natural one. Man has a great disposition to mimicry; when he enters vividly into the situation, sentiments, and passions of others, he involuntarily puts on a semblance to them in his gestures. Children are perpetually going out of themselves; it is one of their chief amusements to represent grown people whom they have had an opportunity of observing, or whatever strikes their fancy; and with the happy pliancy of their imagination, they can exhibit all the characteristics of any dignity they may choose to assume, be it that of a father, a schoolmaster, or a king. But one step more was requisite for the invention of the drama, namely, to separate and extract the mimetic element from the separate parts of social life, and to present them to itself again collectively in one mass; yet in many nations it has not been taken."¹ Among both the English and Welsh in the twelfth century the step was taken; was it spontaneous in both, or did one borrow from the other?

The Welsh princes had frequent intercourse with the English Court, and there can be no doubt adopted some of its manners; but I confess myself inclined to believe that at this period Wales had an incipient drama belonging to itself. It is admitted, by the best critics of the day, that Europe owes its romantic literature to the Welsh and Bretons, why not the romantic drama? and particularly as such dramatic remains as we have are exclusively romantic? The *Mabinogion* are full of dialogues; it required no great stretch of fancy to get similar dialogues put into the mouths of living speakers. In every other department of literature, the Welsh were in advance, and greatly too, of their neighbours; whence arises the difficulty of conceiving that a people who could invent for themselves romances, and tales, could also imagine the possibility of spoken dialogue? But, however we may decide this question, it is certain that dialogues could only have originated under such circumstances, and that we have such dialogues among our literary remains; and the fact that they are not transla-

¹ *Dramatic Literature*, lecture ii.

tions, but original compositions, goes a long way to prove my view of the origin among us of a national drama, or at all events of what would, with proper care, have become so. If, on the contrary, the reader inclines to believe the idea of representation before audiences, borrowed, he will readily admit that in intellectual entertainments, the Welsh princes were not behind the monarchs of England.

Written dialogue seems to indicate the existence of a drama of some sort, and the fact that among the Welsh remains there were several dialogues of undoubted antiquity has always appeared to me inexplicable on any other hypothesis. Those we have are very simple, and certainly indicate a very rudimental state of the supposed drama; but I have not been able to ascertain whether in the libraries of our old families, there may not be more of them, and of a superior character. However, such as they are, they are now presented to the reader. The first specimen shall be the dialogue between Arthur the King, in his youth, and his second wife Gwenhwyvar, who was a girl educated by Melwas, King of Scotland.¹

ARTHUR.

Black is my steed, and bears me well,
Nor will he the water shun;
And for no man will he retreat!

GWENHWYVAR.

Green is my steed, of nature's hue.
May the boaster always be despised;
He only is a man who makes good his word!
Who will ride, and will be firm?
Who will march in the front of battle?
None but a hero can overcome Cai the Tall, the son of Sevin.

1

ARTHUR.

Du yw fy march, a da dana
Ac er dwr nid arswyda;
A rhag un gwr ni chilia.

GWENHWYVAR.

Glas yw fy march o liw dail;
Llwyrr ddirmygid mefl mawr air,
Nid gwr ond a gywiro ei air.
Pwy a ferchyg ac a saif?
Ac a gerdd ymlaen y drin?
Ni ddeil ond gwr e, Cai hir ab Sefn.

ARTHUR.

I will ride, and I will be firm, and will
March with speed along the bank of the ebbing tide ;
I am the man who will overcome Cai.

GWENHWYVAR.

Hold, youth ! It is strange to hear thee ;
Unless thou art more than thy appearance,
Thou couldst not overcome Cai with a hundred in thy train.

ARTHUR.

Gwenhwyvar of beauteous look,
Deride me not, though small I seem ;
I would myself a hundred take !

GWENHWYVAR.

Ha ! thou youth in black and yellow garb !
From having steadfastly viewed thy form,
Methinks I have seen thee before.

ARTHUR.

Gwenhwyvar, with sweet looks of mildness,
Inform me if thou knowest,
Where didst thou see me before ?

ARTHUR.

Myfi a ferchyg ac a sai
Ac a gerdda yn drwm geulan trai,
Myfi y gwr a ddaliai Gai.

GWENHWYVAR.

Dyd was ! rhyfedd yw dy glywed,
Onid wyd amgen no'th weled
Ne ddelit ti Gai ar dy ganfed.

ARTHUR.

Gwenhwyvar olwg eirian,
Na ddifrawd fi cyd bwyf bychan,
Mi a ddaliwn gant fy hunan.

GWENHWYVAR.

Dyd was ! a du a melyn.
Wrth hir edrych dy dremyn ;
Tybiais dy weled cyn no hyn.

ARTHUR.

Gwenhwyvar olwg wrthroch ;
Doedwch i mi os gwyddoch,
Yn mhale, cyn hyn ym gwelsoch ?

GWENHWYVAR.

I saw a man of moderate stature,
At the long table of Kelliwig, in Devonshire,
Distributing his wine to his friends around him.

ARTHUR.

Gwenhwyvar, charming in discourse,
From woman's lips we look for idle talk ;
There truly thou hast seen me.

Here there is very clearly implied an audience to relish the moralising at the commencement ; and it is difficult to conceive any other motive for the composition of the dialogue, than an intended personation. The following is of a different character :¹

Question.—Who is the Porter ?

Answer.—Glewlywd Gavaelvawr.

Question.—Who is it that asks ?

Answer.—Arthur and the blessed Cai.

Glewlywd.—If thou shouldst bring with thee
The best wine in the world,
Into my house thou shalt not come,
Unless it be by force, &c.

There is a very pretty play on the word “gwin” in the original. When Arthur says it is, “Arthur a Chai gwyn,” Glewlywd affects to believe that he had said, “Cai gwin,” or “Cai of the wine,” instead of “the blessed Cai.”

GWENHWYVAR.

Mi welais wr graddol o faint
Ar fwrdd hir Celliwig yn Dyfnaint
Yr rhannu gwin iw geraint.

ARTHUR.

Gwenhwyvar, barabl digri,
Gnawd o ben gwraig air gwegi,
Yno y gwelaist ti fi.

¹ Pagwr yw y Porthawr ?
Glewlywd Gavaelvawr,
Pagwr ai govin ?
Arthur a chai *gwyn*
Pa indda genhit
Gwin goreu im bid
Yn ty ny ddoi
Onis gwaredy, &c.

Mr. Davies endeavours to show, in his ingenious and learned work, that there are references to Druidic worship here ; and the reader will form his own judgment as to the comparative merit of our widely different explanations. The dialogue between Gwalchmai and Trystan, in the presence of Arthur, shows a still further stage of development. Of a still different character is the following dialogue between Llewelyn and Gwrnerth, two Powysian saints :¹

LLEWELYN.

Mountain snow, wind about hedges,
The Creator of Heaven is my strength ;
Does Gwrnerth sleep ?

GWRNERTH.

Mountain snow, God is greatest,
And to Him I will pray ;
I am not sleeping, I cannot sleep.

LLEWELYN.

Mountain snow, wind about the house,
As you speak so,
What, Gwrnerth, makes you look so ?

GWRNERTH.

Mountain snow, wind in the south,
I speak important words,
I think it is death, &c.

~~~~~  
LLEWELYN.

Eiry mynydd, guynt am berth,  
Cany creawdyr nef am nerth  
Ai cysgu a wna Gwrnerth.

GWRNERTH.

Eiry mynydd, Duw yn bennaf,  
Canys attaw gweddiaf,  
Nac ef, cysgu ni allaf.

LLEWELYN.

Eiry mynydd guynt am ty  
Kanys llevery velly  
Beth Urnerth a wna hynny.

GWRNERTH.

Eiry mynydd guynt deheu  
Kanys traethaf prif eiryeu  
Tebekaf yu mae agheu.

The original of the next specimen, is older than any of the preceding, and purports to be a dialogue between Taliesin and Myrddin; but we know not the author or authors of any of these. According to Mr. Davies, Myrddin, in this dialogue, deploras the persecution of the Druids: I adopt his translation.<sup>1</sup>

MYRDDIN.

How sorrowful I am! how woful  
Has been the treatment of Kedwy and the boat!  
Unanimous was the assault with gleaming swords,  
From the piercing conflict, one shield escaped,  
Alas, how deplorable.

TALIESIN.

It was Maelgwn whom I saw, with piercing weapons before the master  
of the fair herd; his household will not be silent.

MYRDDIN.

Before the two men, in Nentur they land, before the passing form,  
and the fixed form, over the pale white boundary. The grey stones they  
actually remove. Soon is Elgan and his retinue discovered, for his  
slaughter, alas, how great the vengeance that ensued!

TALIESIN.

Thou that rushest forth, with one tooth (thou boar) thy shield has  
overwhelmed. To thee, complete liberality had been extended. Ex-



<sup>1</sup>  
MYRDDIN.

Mor truan genhyf, mor truan  
A dery am kedwy a chavan!  
Oedd llachar kyvlavar cyvlavan,  
Oedd yscuid o Tryvrwyd, o truan!

TALIESIN.

Oed Maelgwn a welwn, yn ymwan,  
Y deulu, rac ter y vulu, ni thawan.

MERDDIN.

Rac deuwr, yn nentur, y tiran,  
Rac Errith a Churrith, y ar welugan  
Meinwineu, yn ddiheu, a ddygan,  
Moch gweler y niver gan Elgan,  
Och, oe laith, mawr ateith y deuthan!

TALIESIN.

Rys undant, oedd rychuant y tarian,  
Hyd attad y daeth rhad cyflawn,

cessively is the slaughter of Kyndur deplored. Slain are three men who were liberal in their lives, even three eminent men, highly esteemed by Elgan.

MYRDDIN.

Through and through, wide and pointed, they came advancing and surrounding the only wise Bran, the son of Elgan. Dywal the son of Erbin, with his retinue did they slaughter, in their last assault.

TALIESIN.

The host of Maelgwn, exulting, advanced; and severely did the embattled warriors pierce in the bloody inclosure. Even the battle of Arysderydd, which is at hand, with the utmost energy will they prepare.

MYRDDIN.

A host of flying darts, in the bloody plain, prepare the banquet of gore. A host of warriors destroy the tottering Sidan. Many a festive horn is broken; many a horn-bearer is put to flight, whilst the host is forcing them back to promiscuous slaughter.



Llas Cyndur, tra messur, y cwynan,  
Llaes haelon o ddynon, tia fuan  
Trywyr nod, mawr eu clod, gan Elgan.

MYRDDIN.

Trwy a thrwi, vug a rug, y daethan,  
Traw a thraw, undoeth Bran a Melgan,  
Llad Dyvel, oe diwed cyflafan  
Ab Erbin, ae werin, a wnaethan.

TALIESIN.

Llu Maelgwn, bu ysewn y daethan :  
Aerwyr cad, trybelidiad, gwaedlan,  
Neu gwaith Arysderydd,  
Pan fydd, y deunydd,  
O hyd y wychydd,  
Ydarparan.

MYRDDIN.

Lliaws peleidrad, gwaedlad gwaedlan,  
Lliaws aerwyr bryw breuawl Sidan.  
Lliaws ban briwher ;  
Lliaws ban foher,  
Lliaws eu hymchwel,  
Yn eu hymwan.

## TALIESIN.

The seven sons of Eliffer, seven heroes, when put to the test, shun not the seven spears, in their seven stations.

## MYRDDIN.

Seven blazing fires will counteract seven battles; the seventh is Kynvelyn, in the front of every mount.

## TALIESIN.

Seven piercing spears shall fill seven rivers; with the blood of leading heroes shall they fill them.

## MYRDDIN.

Seven score liberal heroes are now become wandering spirits; in the forest of Caledonia they met their fate.

Since I, Merddin, am next after Taliesin, let my prophecy be received in common with his.

We shall have occasion again to refer to the last verse, and therefore the reader will be pleased to bear it in mind, when we come to speak of the "Avallenau."

## TALIESIN.

Seith meib Eliffer,  
Seith gwyr, ban broffer,  
Seith gwayw ni ochel,  
Yn ei Seithran.

## MYRDDIN.

Seith tan ufeliñ  
Seith cad cyferbin,  
Seithfed Cynfelin,  
Y pob cinhvan.

## TALIESIN.

Seith gwaew gowanon  
Seith loneid afon  
O gwaed Cinreinon,  
Y dylanwan.

## MYRDDIN.

Seith ugein haelon  
A aethan yg willon;  
Ynghoed Celyddon,  
Y darfuan.  
Canys mi Myrtin,  
Gwedi Taliesin,  
Bythawd cyffredin  
Fy darogan.

Quite as old as the preceding, i.e. as old as the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, is another dialogue, between Ugnach, the son of Mydno, of Caer Seon, and Taliesin, of Caer Deganwy. All are metrical in the original.<sup>1</sup>

TALIESIN.

O knight, who approachest the city with white dogs, and large horns, I know thee not: to my eyes thou art not familiar.

UGNACH.

Thou knight, who reapest to the river's junction, on a stout warlike steed, come with me; I take no denial.

TALIESIN.

At present that is not my road; abstain from an injurious act, for the blessing of heaven and earth.

UGNACH.

O thou who hast not often seen me, thou who resemblest one of the initiated, how long wilt thou absent thyself, and when wilt thou come?

TALIESIN.

When I return from Caer Seon, from contending with Jews,<sup>2</sup> I will come to the city of Leu and Gwydion.

1

TALIESIN.

Marchawe, a girch y Dinas,  
Ae con gwinion, ae cirn bras  
Nyth adwaen: ni rythwelas.

UGNACH.

Marchawe, a circh i'r Aber,  
Yar march cadarn, cadfer,  
Dabre genhiw, nim gwatter.

TALIESIN.

Mi nid aw ina in awr:  
Gollew gweith y godriceawr,  
Elhid bendith nev a llawr!

UGNACH.

Y gwr nim gwelas beunit,  
Y tebic i gur deduit  
Ba hyd ei dy, a phan delit?

TALIESIN.

Ban deuaw o Caer Seon,  
O imlat ac itewon,  
I tan Caer Leu a Gwydion.

<sup>2</sup> Jews and Saracens were conjoined in the time of the Crusades. See *Myv. Arch.* ii. 438, year 1188.

UGNACH.

Come with me into the city; thou shalt have mead which I have prepared, O thou with pure gold upon thy clasp.

TALIESIN.

I know not the confident man, with his mead, fire, and couch—fair and courteous are thy words.

UGNACH.

Come with me to my dwelling, and thou shalt have wine that briskly sparkles. Ugnach is my name, the son of Mydno.

TALIESIN.

Ugnach, a blessing attend thy throne, thou teacher of liberality and honour! I am Taliesin, who will repay thy banquet.

UGNACH.

Taliesin, chief of men, thou victor in the contention of song, remain here till Wednesday.



UGNACH.

Dabrede genhiw i'r Dinas,  
A thuit met ara phellas  
Ac eur coeth, ar di wanas.

TALIESIN.

Mi nid adwen y gur hy,  
A meteu tan y gweli,  
Tec a chwec y dywedi.

UGNACH.

Debre genhiw im tino  
A thuit gwin goros gelho,  
Ugnach yw fy heno, mab Mydno.

TALIESIN.

Ugnach, bendith ith orset,  
Athrod rad ac enrydet!  
Taliesin viw inheu, talaw iti dy gulet.

UGNACH.

Taliesin, penhav or gwir  
Beitat yng kort kyvrgir,  
Tric yma hyd dyw Merchir.

## TALIESIN.

Ugnach, whose harmony is the greatest, on thee may the Supreme Ruler bestow His bounty ! I merit not the booth. I may not stay.

There are several other dialogues among the Welsh, between Myrddin and Ysgolan, between Myrddin and his sister, between Arthur and Trystan, and between Arthur and Madoc ab Uthr.

But whatever we might consider the object of these dialogues to have been, the frequent occurrence of the word "Miragl" in the writings of the bards, very clearly shows that dramatic exhibitions were in existence among the Welsh. Of this we have positive proof in an old Welsh poem, addressed to some Sir Walter, vicar of Bryn Buga (Usk), to which is appended the following explanation : "Composed by Meredydd ab Rhosser, to the miracle performed by Sir Walter, at Bryn Buga, which miracle is in Welsh called Hud a Lledrith." We are told by Mr. Taliesin Williams, that among his father's papers is the following entry : "In many manuscript tracts on musicians and minstrels, or reciters, Chware Hud a Lledrith, is expressly said to be the same thing as *anterluwt* (interludes.)" The "miragl" was a step in advance of these ; and we are informed on the same authority, that the "poem above alluded to displays a considerable degree of imaginative energy ; blended, however, throughout with strong superstition. Sir Walter's miracle consisted, according to this poem, in the exercise of that degree of extreme magic, which ultimately reduced the prince of darkness himself to strict bondage. The rampancy of the evil spirit, who it is said had most inveterately laid siege to the town and neighbourhood, and the awful spells practised by Sir Walter, to counteract his operations, are mentioned in the poem with fear and trembling."<sup>1</sup> A few extracts will show more clearly the nature of this composition. The poet asks :

## TALIESIN.

Ugnach, moihav y alaw,  
Ath ro rad y gulad penhaw ;  
Ni haetaw Kabit, ny thrigiaw.

<sup>1</sup> Williams's *Colyn Dolphyn*, p. 126.

Who of virtuous conduct,  
By strength of learning, can bind the Devil?<sup>1</sup>

and Sir Walter replies :

What an exertion of gift ! to exhibit a miracle !  
Ten thousand crimes, and their causes, all in flames,  
Have I seen through its means ; and to the very bottom,  
The circle of the depravities and error that exist ;  
And also their fate. Woe betide the knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

The poet in wonder remarks :

Fully manifested to my view appeared  
The intuitive genius of devils.<sup>3</sup>

Ab Iolo gives it as his opinion, that the plays of *Hud* and *Lledrith* "were dramatic representations, rather in imitation of the Roman dramas, that must have been familiar to the Britons ;" and should this conjecture turn out to be founded in truth, we shall have discovered a link of connexion between modern and ancient Europe, hitherto unsuspected.

In the meantime, we shall be content with having shown the strong probability of our having had in the twelfth century, such miracle plays as were known to other nations. Compared with contemporaneous princes, the Welsh kings were intellectually superior, the country was more civilised, their literature abundant, and their bards in high estimation ; may we not therefore conclude that *Hud a Lledrith a phob arddangos* are striking proofs of their being as far advanced in the appreciation of dramatic displays, as were their most intelligent neighbours ? The miracle plays of England have been published, and ably edited by Hone and others ; and possibly there may be compositions of this class still lingering in the libraries of Wales.

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¹ Pwy, wrth fuchedd rinweddol,
O rym Dysg, a rwym y Diawl ?

² Dawngais mawr, dangos miragl ;
Drygau myrdd, a'u ffyrdd yn ffagl ?
Gwelais yn hon, i'r gwaelod,
Gyleh drygau beiau sy'n bod ;
A'u diwedd. Gwae ! o'u deall.

³ Amlwg i'm golwg fe gaid
Athrylith y Cythreuliaid.

The *Comus* of Milton is a well-known mask, or a drama in a much higher stage of development.

Since the above was written, the *Iolo Manuscripts* have been published; and in that volume, I find the terms "Hud a Lledrith" thus explained, on the authority of Ieuan Vawr ab y Diwlith's treatise on the Welsh metres, which, according to Mr. Edward Williams, must have been written about A.D. 1180. "Hud a Lledrith (illusion and phantasm), a poetical composition, in which a number of persons, assuming characters different, with regard to rights, grades, and condition, from those which really belong to them, carry on contentions and consultations, is called a poem of Illusion and Phantasm. In such representations, persons, under disguise, dispute with each other, either for or against the subject submitted to their consideration; so as to develope its just and unjust, its cheering and its disconsolate tendencies, with regard either to chance, congeniality, and necessity, or their opposites; so as eventually to confer honour and reward on virtue, and reflect disgrace, loss, and punishment on vice; and thus to portray the misery of all persons of evil habits, actions, and dispositions, and the prosperity of the good. A poem of this description, is carried on by question and answer; for and against; for and for; opposition and co-opposition; that the subject or event under discussion may appear in its true form and semblance; and that the persons attracted thereby, may, from first to last, perceive things in their real characters, and be led to acknowledge that the whole of the disguised representation tended to unfold the truth. For these reasons compositions of this sort were variously called poems, plays, and arguments of Illusion and Phantasm, in older times; but now the place of performance, including the actors, is called, the Hillock of Illusion and Phantasm, and the representation, a Play of Miracles."

CHAPTER II.

SECTION I.

BARDS AND BARDISM.

IN going through the preceding pages, the reader cannot fail to have noticed the striking difference which exists between the position of the poets of the past, and those of the present time. Now, the patronage of kings, lords, and commons sinks into insignificance by the side of public approbation; then, the nobles were the chief patrons of literature, and the stern castle was the seat of poesy. Now, the exalted by birth are frequently outstripped in the race of intelligence; then, they led the way. Now, the popular author may laugh to scorn the frowns of the great; then, the poet was an appendage to the lord of a small domain. Strange things have taken place in the interval; but all tend to the same point; the substitution of intelligence and moral worth for rank and wealth, in public estimation. This is the strange eventful phenomenon which future years will more fully develop: the history of authorship in modern Europe begins with the bards. By-and-by, when the author, as such, takes a firmer hold of public regard, the history of the class will become more and more interesting; and the bards,—the pioneers of intellectual dominion, will, I trust, become objects of profound interest and respect. In order therefore to facilitate in some measure the development of auctorial history, I shall detain my reader for a little time, and turn his attention from the work to the worker, from bardism to the bard.

The respect shown to men of letters is a fair test of civilisation. In Sparta, where "Captain Sword" was high in the ascendant, it was accounted unworthy of a freeman to learn a

mechanical art—the helots or slaves being the artisans; and at a much later date in the history of the world, the same feeling prevailed, and may to some extent be said to prevail even at the present day. We can therefore credit the statement, that Sir Walter Scott enunciated a striking historical truth, when he put in the mouth of Douglas these lines :

A letter forged ! Saint Jude to speed,
 Did ever knight so foul a deed !
 At first in heart it liked me ill
 When the King praised his clerkly skill.
 Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
 Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line ;
 So swore I, and so swear I still,
 Let my boy bishop fret his fill.

In Wales a better spirit seems to have prevailed ; and in direct contrast, *it was here penal for a slave to assume the profession of a scholar, a smith, or a bard.* This respect for artisans enforced by the laws of Wales was also a popular sentiment which has found a prominent place in the lighter literature of the country. In the Mabinogi of Killwch and Olwen, the hero knocking at the gate of Arthur's palace, bids the porter, "Open the portal." "I will not," replies Glewlwyd Gavaelwaur. "Wherefore not?" "The knife is in the meat, and the drink is in the horn, and there is revelry in Arthur's hall ; and none may enter therein but the son of a king of a privileged country, or a *craftsman bringing his craft.*" And we find it was reduced to practice in common life, for Howel ab Owain, when his person was in danger, relies upon this sentiment for protection :

As long as I am courteous and travel as a craftsman,
 God will watch over my destiny.¹

From the same laws we learn that the bard was in repute at the king's court, and ranked next to the judge in the royal hall. We have seen that from a very early period, the bards were much respected, and at the time of which this essay treats, it would appear that they were numerous. It is certain the profession was considered reputable, for we find King Gruffydd ab Kynan framing laws for the government of the poets, and among

¹ See p. 44.

them we find many influential names. Meilir mentions his having been sent on important missions; and both Meilir and Kynddelw speak of their having figured among the warriors and chieftains of the various provinces. Howel ab Owain, and Owain Kyveiliog, shed lustre on the profession; and bardism must have been of importance, when princes thought the art worthy of their ambition. If additional names were wanting to prove this position, we might cite the case of Iolo Goch and Rhys Goch o Eryri, two able and accomplished bards; and men who though independent, thought it not unbecoming in them to shine among the bards of Owain Glyndwr. By the Laws of Howel the Good it was the duty of the bard to sing the national anthem on going forth to battle, for which service he was to have an extra share of the spoil which might be taken; and perhaps Gwalchmai and Kynddelw were present at the engagements they mention, in discharge of this professional duty. These facts show that the poet was a man of note; the respect shown to the professors of bardism indicates worth in the bards and refinement among the ruling powers; and this exalted appreciation of the importance of *the Author's* civilising mission, reflects infinite credit on the character of the ancient Welsh.

The domestic bard had the care of the historical documents pertaining to the tribe and its chief, and was the historiographer of his patron, as well as his laureate. It also very frequently happened that the bard was the teacher of the chieftain's children—in fact, this was one of the bard's duties; and the reader will at once bring to mind the unfortunate attachment of the bard Davydd ab Gwilym for Morvydd, the daughter of Ivor Hael, who had imprudently honoured the bard, by entrusting to him the education of his heiress. This relationship will account for the more than friendly feeling which frequently connected the bards with the young chieftains, and is so frequently shown by the occurrence of poems addressed to young princes, who would not have been otherwise known to posterity. Kynddelw was warmly attached to the young prince Howel ab Owain; and Llywarch ab Llywelyn has several poems addressed to Prince Rhodri, another of the sons of Owain Gwynedd. We have already quoted the verses of Llywarch Llew Cad, to his patron Llewelyn ab Madoc; and we find again that that gallant young chieftain has elicited the approbation of the old bard Kynddelw, by an act of liberality, indicating at the same time the generosity of

Llewelyn, and the respect generally entertained for the bardic profession. Happening to be hunting one day, Llewelyn ordered his huntsman to give Kynddelw a stag which they had slain close by the poet's house; in gratitude for which he sang the praises of the chieftain's horn.

The bards, besides being the teachers of the young princes, were also their companions. Llywarch ab Llywelyn gives an account of a quarrel between the sons of Owain Gwynedd of which there would seem to have been no other witness; and Philip Brydydd, in his remonstrance to his patron Rhys Gryg, says:

Hate me not, be patient—passionate chief, refrain,
 Rhys of Rhos and Eppynt;
 I have been thy bard, and many know it,
And a hundred times thy companion formerly.

At the court of Maesaleg,

Bounteous Ivor made the bard,
 Steward o'er his wealth to guard;

and further, that chieftain seems to have given Davydd many other privileges, which are recorded in verse, strikingly illustrative of the manners of the times:

Honours great for me are stored
 (If I live) from Ivor's hand,
 Hound and huntsman at command,
 Daily banquet at his board,
 Princely baron! at the game
 With his piercing shafts to aim;
 And to let his falcons fly
 On the breezes of the sky.
 Every melody that rings
 From the harp's sweet treble strings,
 Every "solo" that is sung,
 His Maesaleg's halls among,
 Dice and draughts, and every sport
 Of Maesaleg's joyous court,
 Will the host who governs there,
 Freely with the poet share.¹

JOHNES.

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<sup>1</sup> Mawr anrhydedd am deddyw  
 Mi a gaf, o byddaf byw,

But great as were these honours, Lewis Glyn Cothi contends that still greater were shown to himself.

In the earlier stages of bardism there was an evident and close connexion, between the poems of which some have come down to us, and the feasts of princes and chieftains. A very large majority of the poems which have been passed in review for the first three chapters of this essay, are panegyrics upon living chieftains, and the remainder, excepting religious poems, a few love songs, and a single satire, are elegies upon those who had died. The first class were evidently calculated to produce effect, and were therefore in all probability recited at the public feasts. We should easily have arrived at this conclusion from the difficulty of assigning any other origin to these poems, had we no other data to guide us in forming an opinion than the express enactments in the Laws of Howel the Good (see p. 14) : but when, in addition, we have the direct testimony of an eye-witness, there need be no doubt as to the correctness of the conclusion. The words of Giraldus are clear and specific : “One day when Llewelyn, Prince of Gwynedd, held a full court,<sup>1</sup> there came forward before all, at the conclusion of the dinner, a certain man of fluent speech, such as those who in the British language are called bards, of whom Lucan says :

The bards poured forth many songs.<sup>2</sup>

On the same authority we learn, that there were written

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Hel a chwn, nid haelach ior,
Ac yfed gydag Ifor.
Saethu ei geirw saethynt,
A bwrw ei weilch i'r wybr wynt ;
A cherddau cildannau'n deg
A *solos* ym Maesaleg,
Chwaraau ffrisial a thawlbwrdd,
Yn un gyflwr a'r gwr gwrdd.

D. ab Gwilym.

¹ Eisteddvods were usually held on *Calan Ionawr* :

Ninheu ueirt prydein pryduis eiryau berth
Gwŷr a byrth uy rwyf ym pob Calan.

Prydydd y Moch, i Ll. ab Iorwerth (*Myv. Arch.* i. 299).

² Processit in fine prandii coram omnibus vir quidam linguæ dicacis eujusmodi lingua Britannica sicut et Latina Bardi dicuntur unde Lucanus :

“ Plurima concreti (securi) : fuderunt (fudistis) carmina Bardi.”

Giraldus, *De Jure et Statu Menev. Eccl.* apud Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*, vol. ii. p. 559.

records among the Welsh as well as historical singing. When at a meeting of the British princes, for the purpose of supporting Giraldus's ecclesiastical claims to the Bishopric of St. David's, Gwenwynwyn, Prince of Powys, spoke strongly in favour of Giraldus's long struggle against King John, and said of his exertions in favour of the independence of the see of St. David's, that "as long as Wales shall stand, this noble deed will be transmitted with deserved praises and applauses by historical writings, and by the mouths of those singing."¹

The elegies were, we may readily infer, composed at the request of the surviving relations; and the only bards who seem to have been under the influence of pure inspiration, are Owain Kyveiliog and Howel ab Owain.

But in addition to having fixed patrons and places of abode, the bards had a practice of making the tour of the country once in three years; this was called "Clera." In the process of time they framed regulations for the maintenance of these circuits, by which a chief bard or pencerdd had the range of the houses of the chieftains, but was allowed to enter no house of less note; and the lower grade of bards debarred from entering the mansions of the nobility, were equally jealous of the visits of the superior grade to the domiciles of the common people. Originally the practice was not much objected to; but by degrees it became a burden to poor people; and this offensive view of it has survived to the present day, for we not unfrequently find old people saying of some worthless person, "Clera wyv yn ei chovio hi y vaiden ddiffaeth." "It is as a beggar I recollect seeing the worthless creature." On leaving the halls of his patron, the bard did not usually forfeit his place; for his chair was generally kept for him until his return. Rhys Gryg, it would seem, objected to this practice, thinking Philip Brydydd, his bard, should have but one master; but the bard stands upon his privileges, and almost defies his patron to give the chair to another. Wherever he went the bard was a welcome visitor, and he had by virtue of his office free admission into the palaces of the chieftains of the country. We find Kynddelw and Llywarch ab Llywelyn eulogising South Welsh, as well as

¹ "Quod, quamdiu Wallia stabit, nobile factum hujus et per historias scriptas et per ora canentium dignis per tempora cuncta laudibus atque preconiis efferetur."—GIRALD. *Ibid.*

North Welsh and Powysian princes; and on the other hand, the bards of South Wales used to visit North Wales. This migratory custom bears considerable resemblance to the practices of the Trouveres of the North, and the Troubadours of the South of France; and the bards, clerwyr, and minstrels of Wales correspond pretty closely to the bards, rhymers, and jongleurs of the age of chivalry.

The bards were also the frequent bearers of messages from one chieftain to another, the bard being in fact looked upon as the agent or representative of his patron. Meilir describes in glowing terms his reception by King Gruffydd ab Kynan when sent on an errand to his court:¹

From the hand of the prince I drank in golden horns
 (His ministering hand dared the boars),
 In the Court of Aberffraw, for the glory of the prosperous;
 I went there on the part of an enthroned ruler!
 A second time I went as a messenger,
 From the splendid leader of battle—a righteous prince,
 With fingers encircled with golden rings.

It must, however, be admitted that the relative position of chieftain and bard, were unfavourable to the growth of truthfulness and mental independence in the latter; and we accordingly have much reason to doubt the sincerity of the professions made by the bards on some occasions. There occur to my mind one or two instances of this want of sincerity. Gwalchmai and Kynddelw have both sung the praise of Madoc ab Meredydd, Prince of Powys;—and also with equal if not greater zeal, that of his enemy Owain Gwynedd, King of North Wales. Now the question arises, how could they do this in consistency, or in candour? Mr. Price, who is usually candid, has given answers in both cases, the highest praise that can be given to which is that they are plausible. Of Kynddelw, he has stated

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<sup>1</sup> Yfais gau deyrn o gyrn eurawe  
 Arfod faet feisiad anghad weiniawe  
 Yn Llys Aberffraw yn ffaw ffodiawe  
 Bum o du gwledig yn lleithiawe  
 Eilweith yt aethum yn negessawe  
 O leufer llyw camawn iawn dywysawe  
 Bysedd eurgylchwy yn fodrwyawe.

*Marwnad Gruffydd ab Cynan.*



that his praises of Madoc may be attributed to the favour shown to the bards by that prince, and also to the fact that Kynddelw was a native of Powys; but this is not the question to be discussed. How came Kynddelw to sing the praise of Owain Gwynedd with much greater fervour? This is the real matter at issue. It cannot be said that Mr. Price has evaded the question, for his remarks give it more significance, than it previously possessed; but having raised this point, and stated it with fairness and candour, he seems to have forgotten to give the explanation. As regards Gwalchmai, his words are more definite and complete; and he attributes the apparent insincerity to a supposed relationship between the bard and Madoc; but here again the reply is unsatisfactory, for supposing the relationship to exist, and admitting that the bard was thereby biassed to do, what he would not otherwise have done, that would form an admission of the charge rather than a justification of the offence. We may therefore, notwithstanding Mr. Price's defence,<sup>1</sup> consider these bards obnoxious to the accusation of insincerity; and it remains for us to show the grounds, upon which such apparent treachery was then held to be justifiable. These will be found in a code of bardic morality. A bard by right of his profession had free egress and ingress to the palaces of the great; and it is to be feared that the bardic code permitted the bard to become the advocate of whoever paid him. He stood in the same relation to his chieftain as a lawyer does to his client; and seems to have been the willing advocate of whoever honoured him with his patronage. We may almost go the length of saying this, from a perusal of Meilir's ode already quoted:

Cevais i liaws awr aur a phali,  
Gan vreuawl riau, er ei hofi.

I had heaps of gold and velvet,  
From frail princes, for loving them.

And if there were room for doubt, the venal conduct of Gwalchmai and Kynddelw prevents any more charitable conclusion. In all countries, and at all times, the standard of moral principle has ever been higher than the practice; but it is to be regretted

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<sup>1</sup> *Hanes Cymru*, pp. 564-6.

that such sophistry as professional privileges is used to stifle the voice of duty, block up the path of morality, and supply substitutes for faithfulness and sincerity.

From their positions, the bards had much power for good or evil. They might have raised the standard of moral and intellectual greatness among their countrymen, and have pointed out more becoming pursuits than those in which they indulged; but instead of preaching peace, they were too frequently the abettors of war; instead of healing dissensions, they were prone to widen the breaches already made; and instead of leading the way to grander views, and principles of conduct, they have on too many occasions been the echoes of popular prejudices, and the tools of ambitious chieftains. This is a light in which their conduct is seldom presented; it is nevertheless the truth. It should not, however, be concealed that, as in the case of Iolo Goch, they have occasionally given the chieftains good advice, though these cases, unfortunately, form the exceptions rather than the rule. Now and then, they also had the courage to remonstrate with the princes, as appears from the following lines imputing blame to Llewelyn ab Gruffydd, for imprisoning his brother:

A man is bound by the Chief of Snowdon;  
 A man, if free, like Rhun the son of Beli;  
 A man that would not suffer England to burn his frontier,  
 A man of the race of Mervyn, magnanimous like Benlli.<sup>1</sup>

But I am sorry that the rarity of such occurrences, prevents my forming a more favourable estimate of the truthfulness of the bards.

It would appear that they were much more numerous, than the scanty remains of poetry would leave us to expect; for we sometimes find mention of bards as being celebrated in their day, of whose works not a vestige has escaped the ravages of time. In 1157, we are told that "Gwrgant ab Rhys ab Iestyn, the best and most learned bard of his time, was slain by Ivor ab Meurig of Sainghenydd;" and in relating this fact, Mr.

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¹ Gwr yn rhwym gan Rwyf Eryri
 Gwr pe rhydd, fal Rhun fab Beli,
 Gwr ni adai Loegr losgi ei derfyn
 Gwr o hil Mervyn, mawrfryd Benlli.

Price adds the following comment: "Where is the work of Gwrgant ab Rhys, the best poet of his day? We do not find as much as a line of it. And there can be no doubt that many other excellent compositions have been lost; for it is scarcely credible, that from 1080, the time when Meilir first sang, to 1157, the date of his son Gwalchmai's ode to Owain Gwynedd, the brilliant deeds that were performed, should have elicited no more bardic compositions, than the few which have descended to us."¹ The same historian again relates another fact of a similar character. "Madoc ab Iddon, King of Gwent, was killed by a blow given by his brother Thomas, during a fit of intoxication, A.D. 1184. Madoc was a man who knew many arts and sciences, and there was not found his equal in his time; and he was the best poet and wit of any in Wales." The fact can scarcely be doubted, and yet not a vestige remains, wherewith to test the justice of the criticism. During these periods, the bards continued to increase in number; and had become so numerous towards the time of Edward the First, that on the submission of the Welsh, that monarch found it necessary to order "that the Westours, Bards, Rhymers, and other idlers and vagabonds, who lived upon the gifts called Cymmortha, be not supported, nor sanctioned in the country, lest by their invectives and lies they lead the people to mischief, and burden the common people with their impositions."² It is to be observed that this really salutary prohibition is directed against the irregular and wandering bards, and not against those who were more orderly; and in the assertion made by Sir John Wynn in the *History of the Gwedir Family*, and repeated by Carte in his *History of England*, that many bards were put to death by this monarch, there does not seem to be a word of truth; for we find many bards of note living at the date of the alleged massacre, A.D. 1294-1300. Similar proclamations were issued by Henry IV., Henry VIII., and Elizabeth;³ but all concur in making a distinction between the orderly and disorderly bards, censuring the oppressive exactions of the latter, and proving the lower grade of bards to have been a numerous and not very conscientious class of persons; and,

¹ *Hanes Cymru*, p. 560.

² This law is printed in Wotton, *Leg. Wall.* 548. See also Price.

³ See note to No. 127 Hengwrt MSS., *Cambrian Register*, iii. 296.

unfortunately for the account of the massacre, the friendly proclamations of Elizabeth and her father are as harsh against the wandering minstrels, as the reported inimical ones of Edward I. and Henry IV.

Of the numbers of the bards at these periods, some idea may be formed from the following list, of such as have left poems behind them, to attest their existence.

FIRST PERIOD, A.D. 510 TO A.D. 1080.

510	560	Aneurin, one long heroic poem, and some moral verses
520	570	Taliesin, 77 poems, of which the larger portion belong to later periods
520	560	Heinyn, bardd Maelgwn Dygynnelw
550	640	Llywarch Hen, 12 poems, all apparently genuine
530	600	Myrddin, 6, most of them doubtful
520		Gwdion ab Don
520		Gwyddno
560	630	Golyddan
600	650	Meigant Avan Verddig ¹
640	700	Elaeth
660	720	Tyssilio
770	800	Cuhelyn
	800	Cynllwg
900	940	Llevoed
Divwg (tenth century), the bard of Morgan Mwynvawr. ²		Anonymous pieces, 15 in number.

SECOND PERIOD, A.D. 1080 to 1400.

1080	1160	Meilir, 3 poems
1090		Bleddyn Ddu, 2 poems ³
1150	1190	Gwalchmai, 12 do.

¹ See Evans, *Dissertatio*, 78; and Llwyd, *Arch. Brit.* 255.

² See *Cambrian Biography*, p. 874.

³ "Bledhyn dhŷ. *po. an.* 1090. I Dhyŷ, i Abad Aber Konŷ, &c. L. K. H. Col. 1249, 1284." Llwyd, *Arch. Brit.* 255. Casnodyn's poems at col. 1249 in the *Llyvr Coch*, where those attributed to Bleddyn Ddu begin; and as in the *Myv. Arch.* he has an ode to "Ieuan Abad Aber Conwy," the same poem is probably given to the two bards. See Contents of "Llyvr Coch," *Cambro-Briton*, ii. 75, 106.

SECOND PERIOD—*continued.*

1150	1200	Kynddelw, 49 do. most of them long ¹
1150	1197	Owain Kyveiliog, 2 do.
1150	1200	Daniel ab Llogwrn Mew, 2 short poems
1157		Gwrgant ab Rhys ²
		Madawc ab Iddon ³
1160	1220	Gwynvardd Brycheiniog, 2 long poems
1160	1220	Gwilym Ryvel, 2 short do.
1140	1172	Howel ab Owain Gwynedd, 8 do.
1160	1220	Llywarch ab Llywelyn, 32 long do.
1170	1240	Davydd Benvras, 12
1170	1220	Meilir ab Gwalchmai, 8 short
1170	1220	Einiawn ab Gwalchmai, 5 ditto
1170		Periv ab Kedivor, 2 ditto
1170		Gwgawn, 1 ditto
1170		Llywarch Llew Cad, 1 ditto
1170	1210	Seisyll Bryffwrch, 3 ditto
1170	1220	Elidir Sais, 11 ditto
1200	1240	Dewi Mynyw, 1 ditto (Elegy on Rhys Gryg, died 1233)
	1250	Cynddelw Brydydd Llychwin
		Einion Meirion
1200	1260	Einiawn ab Gwgawn, 1 ditto
1200	1250	Einiawn Wan, 6 ditto
1220	1270	Llygad Gwr, 5 long
1230	1280	Llywelyn Vardd, 7 ditto ⁴
1250	1290	Bleddyn Vardd, 13 short
1210	1260	Gruffydd ab Gwrgeneu, 2 short poems
1200	1250	Phylip Brydydd, 6 ditto
1210	1260	Prydydd Bychan, 21 ditto
1230	1270	Einiawn ab Madawg Rhahawd, 1 ditto
1240		Adda Vras ⁵

¹ For life of Kynddelw, see Walter Davies in *Camb. Quart. Mag.* i. 443-4.

² See *Myv. Arch.* iii.

³ *Iolo MSS.*

⁴ Rees, *Welsh Saints*, p. 214.

⁵ In Llwyd's *Archæologia Britannica* are the following entries :

"Adha Vrás, *po. an.* 1240; Vaugh. *Membr.* p. 254. Hanesyn Hén, Vaugh. *Membr.* 8° [4 in al. aduers.] Llyvyr (medh Mr. William Moris) yn kynuys yn gynta Aꝑe Seint ynys Bryden lhe mae henue Plant Bryꝑan Bryꝑeiniog, &c. 2. Brýd ne amserolieth byr, viz. : O Oes *Gurtheyrn Gurthene*, &c. 3. Oꝓdꝓl a gant Adha Vrás. 4. Anrheg *Urien Reged*, a marꝓad *Iago ab Lhodhi* [ne Iago ab Belí] o *waith Taliesyn*. 5. Aꝑe Lhyꝑelyn ab Iorꝓerth. 6. O oes *Gurtheyn*, &c. hyd Gád Gamlan. 7. Englynion dýad. 8. Brenhinoedh Ynys Bryden. 9. Llyvyr Theophrastus am neithiore.

SECOND PERIOD—*continued.*

1240	1280	Hywel Voel ab Griffri, 1 ditto
1250	1300	Madawg ab Gwallter, 3 ditto
1260	1300	Gruffydd ab yr Ynad Coch, 9 long ditto
1270		Gwerneg ab Clydno, moral verses
1270		Ednyved Vychan
1270	1300	Madog ab Selyv (<i>Llwyd</i> and <i>Owen</i>)
1280		Cadwgan ab Cynvrig
1280	1320	Gwilym Ddu, 3 long poems
1290		Cadwgan ab Ednyved
1280		Llywelyn Brydydd Hodnant, 2 short
1280		Hillyn, 2 ditto
1280		Heilyn Ddu
1290	1340	Iorwerth Vychan, 2 ditto
1290	1340	Llewelyn Ddu, 1 ditto
1290	1340	Casnodyn, 5 long
1290	1340	Rhiserdyn, 1 ditto
1290	1340	Rhys Goch ab Rhicert, 20 ditto
1290	1340	Gruffydd ab Meredydd, 26 (A.D. 1400, <i>Llwyd</i>)
1290	1340	Iorwerth Beli, 1 ditto
		Tudur Wiawn (<i>Myv. Arch.</i> i. 476)
1290	1340	Gruffydd ab D. Tudur, 5 ditto
1290	1340	Madawg Dwygraig, 10 ditto
1290	1340	Prydydd Breuan, 1 ditto
1300	1350	Y Proth, 1 ditto
1300	1350	Davydd y Coed, 7 short
1300	1360	Trahaiarn Brydydd Mawr, 2 ditto
1310	1360	Goronwy Gyriawg, 2 ditto
1320	1360	Iorwerth Gyriawg, 2 ditto
1320	1370	Sevnyn, 3 ditto
1310	1360	Llywarch y Nam, 1 ditto
1310	1360	Iorwerth Llwyd, 1 ditto
1310	1360	Meurig ab Iorwerth, 1 ditto
1320	1370	Goronwy Ddu, 2 ditto
1330	1370	Mab y Clochyddyn, 1 ditto (<i>see Llwyd</i>)
1330	1370	Howel ab Einion Lygliw, 1 long
1330	1370	Llywelyn Goch ab Meurig, 6 ditto
1330	1370	Howel Ystoryn, 1 ditto

10. Kronike býu: O oes Arthyr, &c. 11. Porxelhane Myrdhyn uýlht. Uedi i gaiady yn Lhynden gan Mr. R. Vaugh. modv. o drûx. *W. M.*" P. 256.

What has become of this book? How did it escape the notice of the editors of the *Myvyrian Archaeology*? See *Cambrian Register*, i. p. 445. *Cambrian Biography*. See an account of the Hengwrt MSS., *Cambrian Register*, iii. 281.

SECOND PERIOD—*continued.*

1340	1380	Tudur Ddall
1340		Davydd Ddu o Hiraddug, 1 ditto
1350		Gruffydd ab Llywelyn Llwyd
1362		Y Mab Cryg, ¹ 3 short
1362		Bergam o Vaelor, ² 1 ditto
1362		Ieuan Trwch y Daran, 1 ditto
1380		Y Iustus Llwyd, 2 ditto
1380		Tudur ab y Gwyn Hagr
1380		Cadwgan Henvoel
1380		Iokyn Ddu ab Ithel Grach
1380		Mab Clav ab Llywarch ³
1390		Rhys Meigen
1390		Gruffydd ab Adda ab Davydd
		Y Melyn ⁴

By a natural transition we are led to look more closely into their manners; and we find the picture drawn to be anything but favourable. The language of the proclamations is strong, explicit, and condemnatory of the lower grade of bards and minstrels; but coming from strangers, they may be looked upon as prejudgments. We will borrow a description, from the satire of Taliesin on the bards of Maelgwn Gwynedd:⁵

Minstrels persevere in their false custom,
 Immoral ditties are their delight,
 Vain and tasteless praise they recite,
 Falsehood at all times do they utter,
 Innocent persons do they ridicule;
 Married women by their flattery,
 Through mischievous intent, they deceive;

¹ Gruffydd Gryg? See Llwyd.

² *Iolo MSS.* 559.

³ Llwyd has a note on this: "Maklav ab Lhywarch, *po. an.* 1380. An corrupté pro Mâb Klâv Lyuarx?" What is the authority for 1380? Why have the editors of the *Myv. Arch.* placed his works at the close of the first volume? Is there any warrant for believing this Llywarch to be Llywarch Hen?

⁴ *Iolo MSS.* 660.

⁵ Cler o gam arfer a ymarferant
 Cathlau aneddfof fydd eu moliant
 Clod orwas diflas a ddatcanant
 Celwydd bob amser a ymarferant
 Gorchmynau ddedfau Duw a dorant
 Gwragedd priodol wrth ei moliant
 Drwy feddwl drygbwyll a fawr dwyllant

The pure white virgins of Mary they corrupt,
 Those who believe them they bring to shame;
 They cause uneasiness to moral men
 As they pass their lives away in vanity;
 At night they get drunk, they sleep the day,
 In idleness without work they feed themselves,
 At courts they inquire after feasts,
 Every senseless word they bring forward,
 Every deadly sin they praise,
 Every vile course of life they lead,
 Concerning the days of death they think not,
 Neither lodging nor charity do they give,
 And from no sensuality do they refrain.
 Tithes and other proper offerings they do not pay,
 And righteous people they delude,
 Indulging in victuals to excess.¹
 The birds do fly, the fish do swim,
 The bees collect honey, worms do crawl,
 Everything travels to obtain its food,

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Morwynion gwynion mair a lygrant  
 A goelio iddynt a gwilyddiant  
 A gwirion ddynion a ddyfalant  
 Ai hoes ai hamser yn offer treuliant  
 Y nos y meddwant y dydd y cysgant  
 Segur heb lafur yr ymborthiant  
 Yr eglwys a gashant ar dafarn a gyrchant  
 A lladron ffelision y cydsyniant  
 Llysoedd a gwleddoedd a ymofynant  
 Pob parabl dibwyll a grybwyllant  
 Pob pechod marwol a ganmolant  
 Pob pentre pob tre pob tir a dreiglant  
 Pob salwedd ofer a ymarferant  
 Gorchmynau y Drindod a ddifrodant  
 Gwiliau na Suliau nis addolant  
 Am ddyddiau angeu nis gofalant  
 A phob glothineb nis arbedant  
 Gormod o fwydydd i ddiodydd a fynant  
 Degwm ag offrwn teilwng, nis talant  
 Deddfolion ddynion a ddyfalant  
 Adar a hedant gwenyn a felant  
 Pysgod a nofiant pryfed a mlysgant  
 Pob beth a ymdaith i gynnull i borthiant  
 Ond cler ac oedion, a lladron difwyniant  
 Ni chabla ich mysg dysg na cherddwriaeth

<sup>1</sup> The petty bards were called "Beirdd Yspsyddaid," smell-feast or small-beer poets.—*Myv. Arch.* i. 377.



Except minstrels, and useless idlers.  
 I deride nor learning, nor minstrelsy,  
 For they are given by Heaven to lighten thought ;  
 Be silent, then, ye unlucky rhyming bards,  
 For you cannot judge between truth and falsehood.

The scene of this poem is laid in the sixth century ; and the bards mentioned are those of Maelgwn Gwynedd, King of North Wales ; but it was composed in the thirteenth century, and is intended to satirise the bards of the writer's own day.<sup>1</sup> It was usual to attribute this poem to Taliesin ; but it is now known to be the production of a later author. A monk, Ionas Mynyw, being the reputed author, would scarcely paint flattering portraits of the bards, for they were sworn enemies ; but I cannot help thinking that there is much truth in what is here said. And this is confirmed by Madog Dwygraig, a poet who lived between 1290 and 1340, and who, speaking of the rewards bestowed by his patron upon the bards, says :

In the wooden town honour was awarded to us,  
 Whilst uninstituted bards were pursuing vanity,  
 Swifter than the sudden gale, that sweeps the valley.<sup>2</sup>

But it should in candour be admitted that these remarks were not intended to apply to the regular bards, and have a pointed reference only to the disorderly, and less reputable poets and minstrels.

The more respectable bards were at all times anxious, to

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Cans Duw ai rhoes gloes argyllaeth
 Ond sawl syn arfer o gam arfaeth
 Am watwar Iesu ai wasathaeth
 Tewch chwi Bosfeirddion ffelision anhylwydd,
 Ni wydochi farnu rhwng gwir a chelwydd.

¹ Prydydd y Moch is fierce against the minor bards ; and from this and other circumstances I conclude that this fictitious poem of Taliesin belongs to his age, if not written by him :

Ny ystyr llythwyr uy llethrid ym kert
 Gyrr di yr cart y wrthid
 Ac onys gyrry di gyrraf wrid
 Yth deurnut ath dewrwarth ganlid.

Prydydd y Moch, i Gr. ab Cynan (*Myv. Arch.* i. 287).

² Yn nhrevgod i'n rhoed anrhydedd a—digeirdd
 Ym ac virein Veirdd am overedd
 Yn gynt na'r llechwynt ar llechwedd—Ystrad.

mark the distinction between their less orderly brethren and themselves; and there was a perpetual feud between the bards and the minstrels. Both laid claim to much popular respect, and we can believe that the chieftains were occasionally thrown into some perplexity by their rival claims. In this sort of conflict, the bards seem to have had the advantage, and there is an amusing story told, and probably invented by, the bards of Maelgwn Gwynedd,¹ who one day, when pestered by the rival candidates, hit upon a very original method of settling the dispute:

When Maelgwn went to Ceredigion,
 He bade the whole of the number
 To swim the river.
 When they landed on the opposite bank,
 The harps were not worth a halfpenny,
 In consequence of the strings being wetted;
 But the bards could sing and poetise
 As well as before, and therefore were they declared
 Entitled to the pre-eminence.²

The bards used to relate this story with a peculiar gusto, and with willing auditors; the logic seems generally to have been convincing.

In the monks, the bards found bitter, and much more powerful enemies; and a most angry war of words seems to have been carried on between them. We have seen that the bards received but few compliments from the clergy; and it will now appear that the former were quite as ready to pick out the faults of "the grey brothers." Their greediness is the standing topic for abuse, and the author of the "Avallenau," in one sweeping line describes them as—

False, luxurious, and gluttonous monks.
 Myneich geuawg, gwydawg, gwydus.

Kynddelw was on very bad terms with them; and Davydd ab Gwilym relates an encounter he had with a monk, which ended in the consignment of the bard to the bigots' ready receptacle for all troublesome censors. Davydd's opinion of the monk was not much more complimentary:

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<sup>1</sup> See Lewis Morris on Traeth Maelgwn, *Camb. Reg.* iii. 541.

<sup>2</sup> Iorwerth Beli, *Myvyrian Archaeology*, vol. i. p. 476.

With a false form of holy life,  
O'er all the wide world they are rife—  
Dull Friars.

Sion Kent, half monk, half bard, had no very high opinion of his brethren. He was, like Iorwerth Vynlwyd, Twm Ivan Prys, and many of their contemporary bards, tainted with Lollardism. Indeed, the bard was generally a heretic, and much given to looking through the deeds of the clergy; and therefore we need not much wonder that Sion Kent tells his brethren in very intelligible Welsh, that they must either forsake their luxurious living, or give up all hope of the kingdom of heaven; but then, as since, those gentlemen seemed to have preferred the former alternative. As monks and bards increased in number, they became more and more enraged against each other; they were rival beggars, and therefore in each other's way. Lewis Glyn Cothi has a graphic description of one of these begging exhibitions: <sup>1</sup>

One Friar sells little glass images,  
Another carves a garbless relic from a piece of alder wood,  
One has a grey Curig (St. Curig) beneath his cloak,  
And another carries Seiriol (St. Seiriol),  
*With nine cheeses under his arm;*  
And, by impressing unity upon the Trinity,  
*A load of wool, or perhaps a bag of meal.*

In these encounters the monks were overmatched, for the wit of the bards was aided by the popular contempt into which the mendicant friars had fallen. The reader of Chaucer will perceive that the same sentiments prevailed on the other side of the Severn.

Another fact merits attention. Not only were the bards

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¹ Un a bryn, er na bai'r wedd,
Delw o wydr er dwy lodwedd;
Arall a wnai, o'r lle noeth,
O gwr gwernen grair gwarnoeth.
Un a arwain, yn orïog,
GURIG lwyd dan gwr ei glog;
Gwas arall a ddwg SEIRIOL
A naw o gaws yn ei gôl;
Drwy undeb erchir Drindawd
Cnuv o wlan acw, neu flawd.

numerous, but they were divided into classes, and seem to have attained to complete organisation. The Rev. Evan Evans states,¹ that by the Law of Gruffydd ab Kynan, the bards were classified as Prydydd, Teulüwr, and Clerwr. The "Teulüwr" was the family bard; the "Clerwr" was the wandering bard; but the Prydydd took a higher rank than either. The "Clerwr" was the vagabond bard, who went from house to house, and subsisted upon the charity of the chieftains, whose praises he sang for the bread he ate. Generally speaking this was the lowest grade of the bardic profession, though we find bards of considerable repute, and who had a local habitation, travelling from place to place; but, as in the case of Davydd ab Gwilym, more for pleasure than from necessity; the "Clerwr" corresponded nearly to the modern wandering vocalist, and considered with reference to him, bardism was truly an "idle trade."

The "Teulüwr" was the family bard kept by the princes, in their palaces, and is well described by Giraldus: "This also appears to me worthy of notice, that the Welsh bards, and singers, or reciters, have the genealogy of the above-mentioned princes in their most ancient and authentic books, and that too written in Welsh."² It is therefore to be inferred, that this *bardd* was a local functionary, and an appendage to the court, or castle.

Distinct from these, and holding a more honourable title and position, was the Prydydd. We have seen what he was in the time of Gruffydd ab Kynan; and Lewis Glyn Cothi shows that the Prydydd held the same superiority in his day:

Tri ffrwythlawn gerddor a ragorant,
Un yw *Bardd* ei hun ac a henwant;
Ail yw *Storiawr* ac a elwant;
Trydydd *Teulüwr* cywydd os cant.³

Here we see the "Teulüwr" still occupying his former place; but Lewis being himself a *Clerwr*, with much tact omits that offensive distinction, and insinuates that there was no distinction between him and the more honourable *Prydydd*, here designated by the more comprehensive term *Bardd*. We also here

¹ *Dissertatio de Bardis*, p. 81.

² Schulz's *Essay on Welsh Tradition*, p. 29.

³ The *Storiawr*, the *Clerwr*, and the *Cantores historici* of Giraldus appear to be the same class of persons.

find another class making its appearance, viz. the *Storiawr* or the fabler, which corresponds with the second class, described by Sion Kent as *liars*, or writers of tales :

Awen arall, nid call cant,
Ar gelwydd, vudr argoeliant.

Among the class Prydydd, may be ranked Meilir, Gwalchmai, Howel ab Owain, and Owain Kyveiliog ; and I am inclined to think that when they wished to distinguish themselves from the Cler, and the *Storiawr*, the family bards classed themselves as Prydyddion, as in the case of Kynddelw, and most of the other bards, who had talent enough to vindicate their position.

But even among the Beirdd, properly so called, there was another distinction set up during the period embraced by this chapter—that of Priv-vardd. In the contest between Seisyllt and Kynddelw for the *chair* of Powys, the former claims a superiority on account of an alleged descent from the primitive bards :

It is my right to be master of song,
Being in the right line, of the true tribe, a bard of the inclosure ;
But Kynddelw the great, the giant of song,
Is of a race which has produced no bards.¹

Mr. Davies² is of opinion that the Priv-veirdd, or chief bards, here and in other places alluded to, were the Druids ; but to me it appears that they were the three chief bards of Britain, Myrddin ab Morvryn, Myrddin Emrys, and Taliesin Ben Beirdd. But to proceed, we find the same distinction urged in the “Awdl Vraith :”

Puny bards, crows of the district,
Why do you not take to flight ?

* * *

If you be primary bards, formed by Heaven,
Tell your king what his fate will be.³

¹ Mi biau bod yn Benceerdd,
O iawnullin o iawnullwyth Culvardd ;
A hŷn Cynddelw vawr, cawr cyrdd,
O hon ni henyw beirdd.

² *Mythology of the Druids*, p. 12.

³ Beirdd bychain, brain bro,
Py nad ewch ar ffŷo ?

* * *

Od ych brif feirdd ffydd o waith Dofydd,
Gwedwch i'ch brenin pa ei dramgwydd.

and again by Phylip Brydydd :

The chair of Maelgwn was prepared for bards,
 And it was not intended for poetasters;
 And if they aspired to the chair this day,
 They would be proved by truth and privilege to be unfit;
 The grave Druids of Britain would be there,
 And those would not attain it, though their wings ached.¹

From the supposition that the chair of Maelgwn was filled by Taliesin; and from the mention in the same poem of "the three chief fountains," we derive confirmation of the opinion above advanced respecting the chief bards; though it is probable that they were said, and believed to be Druids as well.

Those who could claim a descent from the chief bards, set up for themselves another distinction—that of being Druids. It is possible that some of them might really claim a descent from the Druids; and it is certain that the influence of Druidic ideas is observable in the poetry of these centuries; but the facts which in Davies's opinion prove the existence of Druidic worship in the twelfth century, admit of a different, and more probable explanation. In a careful analysis of the mental phenomena of this period, we everywhere see in full activity the influence of tradition; and we accordingly find in this fact, the explanation of what puzzled the acute author of the *Mythology of the Druids*,—the peculiarity of the Druidism which now presented itself. It was not the real Druidism of history; but that of tradition purified, modified, and altered to suit the taste of a more refined age, and superior intelligence; there was probably as much difference between the moody and tyrannical Druid of reality, and the gentlemanly Druid of the age of chivalry, as there was between the latter and the democratic Druid of Iolo Morganwg. Both the latter were fictitious; they were psychological—not historical truths. I find it difficult to believe, that Druidism had continued to be practised as a form of worship to the twelfth century; though the ideas

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<sup>1</sup> Cadair Faelgwn hir a huberid—i *Veirdd*  
 Ac nid i'r goveirdd yd gyverchid;  
 Ac am y gadair honno heddyw bei heiddid  
 Bod se ynt herwydd gwir a braint yd ymbrovid  
 Byddynt Derwyddon pruddion Prydlain  
 Nis gwayw yn adain nid attygid.

which formed the theology of the bards, lingered for a long time after the introduction of Christianity, just as the cries "Hey Bull Biger" and "Hey Jack and Lantern" have come down to the present day, though the controversies between John Calvin and his "inward light," and the Church of Rome, which gave rise to these party cries, are nearly forgotten. Druidism in the twelfth century only survived in the bardic theology; and mythology with romance had appropriated to their respective uses, the facts of history, and the stories of tradition. It was revived for the purposes of a class, and used to give additional dignity to those who were admitted to the fraternity of *priv-veirdd*, or primitive bards. Some passages in the poets seem to warrant a belief in the celebration of mysteries; and it is certain the bards encouraged such a belief. They attributed to the primitive bards what did not belong to them; and "pair Keridwen" is not much older than the eleventh century.

The perusal of the bardic remains has led me to the following conclusions:

First, that the Druidism of the twelfth century was confined to the bards.

Secondly, that the institution was of recent origin; and if the reader will look over the proofs which will be here produced, I think he will adopt the same views.

1. From a variety of evidences, we conclude that the bards were desirous of forming some exclusive distinction for themselves, and the traditional veneration of Druidism was suited to their purpose. They seized upon this, and breathed new life into the old belief, and threw a halo of mystery round their own persons. At the period now under consideration, it would seem that the order was pretty numerous, or what is more probable, that the bards wished to make that appear to be so; and we learn this from *Kynddelw*:

Excepting God and the divines of the land,  
 And sedulous Druids,  
 None know of the golden troop of gold-torque bearers  
 Our numbers<sup>1</sup> in the billows of the stream.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Not the *number of the bards*, but of the torque-wearing knights of *Maedoc ab Meredydd*.

<sup>2</sup> Nis gwyr namyn Duw a dewinion—hyd  
 A diwyd Derwyddon  
 O eurdorv eurdorehogion  
 Ein rhiv yn rhyveirth avon.

There would have been no such doubt and uncertainty, if they were known and had been long established, nor among princes favourable to their cause, need there have been any concealment; we therefore must look upon this declaration, not as the result of fear, for the bard avows himself one of the Druids, but as a systematic attempt at mystification. "Pair Keridwen," in the language of the bards, is equivalent to our phrase "the fount of inspiration," and is in fact the bardic name for the muse. This will appear from innumerable passages in their writings,—Llywarch ab Llywelyn desires :

Duw Dofydd dyn rydd reitun Awen—ber  
Val o bair Ceridwen.

God the Ruler, give me a ray of melodious song,  
As if from the cauldron of Keridwen ;

and in another poem, the same bard terms Keridwen, "the Ruler of Bardism." Elidir Sais attributes the melody of his lines to this source :

Llethraid vy marddair wedi Merddin  
Llethrid a berid o bair Awen.

Flowing is my bardic lay after the model of Merddin,  
A smoothness produced from the cauldron of the Awen.

Here we have "pair Awen,"<sup>1</sup> having the same signification as, and supplying the place of "pair Ceridwen." In another passage, allusion is made by Kynddelw to "cyrdd Keridwen," the songs of Keridwen. This is also the sense in which we are to understand the allusion to Keridwen by other bards; and there is not a shadow of a valid reason for the belief that Keridwen was an object of worship. One peculiarity of the new Druidism is the fact that the characters of the bard and Druid are united, and the bards, i.e. the *priv-veirdd*, are always members of the order. Llywarch ab Llywelyn is very careful to certify this, and stoutly asserts his being one of the fraternity :

My tongue pronounces judgment upon Britons,  
From the British Channel to the Irish Sea ;  
To my institute, I am (entitled) without contention (being)  
Of the chief bards, my principal companions.

<sup>1</sup> Pair pedrydan.—CYNDDELW, *Myv. Arch.* i. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Vy nhavawd yn vrawd ar Vrython  
O vor Ut hyd vor Iwerddon,  
Mi i'm deddy yw diamryson  
O'r priv-veirdd, vy mhriv gyfeillion.



Kynddelw speaks of Druids and bards, as praising Owain Kyveiliog, and in another passage, shows that the two characters were identical :

Bards are constituted the judges of excellence,  
 And bards will praise thee, even Druids of the circle,  
 Of four dialects, from four regions.  
 A bard of the steep mount will celebrate thee,  
 Even Kynddelw, the first object in the gate.<sup>1</sup>

From these facts we may see, that this new Druidism was a thing of limited significance, and so obscure as to require explanations; and a little reflection will show that it was instituted by, and maintained for, those who wished to distinguish themselves from the less gifted bards. We further learn from the last extract, that Kynddelw was the high priest of the new hierarchy; and this perhaps may, if borne in mind, throw light upon those poems which are rendered so obscure by the Druidic allusions.

2. Two fallacies pervade Mr. Davies's very ingenious work. Of these, the first is the assumption that Druidism existed as a form of worship in the twelfth century; and the second, the assumption that the mythological poems are the productions of Taliesin. We shall by-and-by show, that these poems cannot be older than the twelfth century; and had he looked upon them as the completion of a system of mythology, which time had gradually developed, his work would have assumed a more coherent character, and his theory would have been much more correct and valuable. Our present business has reference to the former assumption. In the preceding pages an attempt has been made to show, that the Druidism of the twelfth century was a bardic fiction; and we shall here follow up that view by endeavouring to show, that the fiction was of recent origin. This view of the matter derives its chief support from one of the poems of Kynddelw, being a conciliatory address to Rhys ab Gruffydd, the Prince of South Wales :

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¹ Beirnaid amrhegydd Beirdd am ragor,
 Ath volant Veirddion, Derwyddon dor,
 O bedeiriaith dyvyn, o beder ôr
 Ath gyvarwyre bardd bre breudor,
 Cynddelw cynhelw yn y cynnor.

O thou consolidator of the comely tribe! since I am returned home into thy dominion,
 To celebrate thee under heaven,
 O thou with the golden protecting spear, hear my bardic petition!
 In peace let us taste the cauldron of Prydain's tranquillity,
 Round the sanctuary of the uneven number, thy sovereign power extend.
 It (the bardic sanctuary) loves not vehement loquacity;
 It is no cherisher of useless sloth,
 It opposes no precious concealed mysteries (Christianity).
 Disgrace alone is excluded from bardic worship.
 It is the guardian bulwark of the breaker of shields,
 It is wise and zealous for the defence of the country, and for decent manners,
 A foe to hostile aggression, but the supporter of the faint in battle.¹

We find here the same anxiety to distinguish between the bards proper and the less reputable class; and the poem has been termed "a general intercession for the *cause*, the *mysteries*, and the *worship* of the bards." It is more than that; it is an answer to calumnies heaped upon it by some person or persons—an attempt to disabuse the prince's mind of some prejudices he seemed to have against the cause, or an answer to certain questions he seemed to have asked—and an exposition of what the bardic ceremony *was not*. Now, if it were Druidism, a thing known by every Cymro, and instilled into the Cymry with their mothers' milk, what need was there for such an explanation? If it were not new, and its principles utterly unknown to the Prince, what need of such assurances that it did not clash with Christianity? And if it was already recognised and established,

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<sup>1</sup> Corv eurdorv can dothwv i adrev  
 Ith edryd ith adrawd is nev  
 Par eurglawr erglyw vy marddlev!  
 Pair Prydain provwn yn nhangnev  
 Tangnefedd am nawdd amniverwch—riv:  
 Riallu dyheidwch.  
 Nid achar llachar llavarwch,  
 Nid achles avles arawch,  
 Nid achludd eurgudd argelwch  
 Argel carth cerddorion wolwch;  
 Dor ysgor ysgwyddeu amdrwch,  
 Doeth a drud am dud am degwch,  
 Tarv aergawdd aergwl gadarnwch.

what need could there have been for the prince's sanction? Any explanation other than the above involves us in endless perplexities.

Mr. Davies lays much stress upon several of the poems of Howel ab Owain, which, in his opinion, clearly prove that Druidism existed as a form of worship in the twelfth century. I am unable to draw the same conclusion from them, but as they are not destitute of poetic merit, the poems are here given in the translations of Dr. Owen Pughe:<sup>1</sup>

I love the white glittering walls near the pleasant shore,  
Where bashfulness loves to observe the seamew's course;  
It would be my delight, though I have met with no return  
of love,

In my much-desired visit on the sleek white steed,  
To behold my sister of flippant smile;  
To talk of love since it has come to my lot,  
To restore my ease of mind,  
And to renew her slighted troth with the nymph,  
As fair as the hue of the shore-beating wave.  
From the country of her who is bright,  
As the coldly drifted snow upon the lofty lill,  
A censure has come to us,  
That I should have been treated disdainfully in the hall of  
Ogyrvan.

Playful from her promise was now torn expectation:  
She has taken away my soul, and I am wretched!

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¹ Carafi gaer wenglaer o du gwenylan
Mynydd gar gwylded gweled gwylan
Ydgarwny ryned kenym kared yn rwy
Ry eitun ovwy y ar Veingann
Y edrych vy chwaer chwerthin egwan
Y adrawt caru can doeth ym ran
Y edryt vy lledvryd ae llet ovrwy
Y edryt llywy lliw tonn dylann.
Llifyant oe chyfoeth a doeth atann
Lliw eiry llathyr oerfel ar uchel vann
Rac val ym cotidy yn llys Ogyrvann
Chweris oe hadaw hi adoed kynrann
Ethyw am eneidy athwyv yn wann
Neud athwyv o nwyv yn eil garwy hir
Y wenn am llutir yn llys Ogyrvann.

Am I not become like Garwy Hir,¹
 For love of the fair one, of whom I am debarred in the halls of
 Ogyrvan?²

This differs slightly from the translation given in the *Mythology of the Druids*, where Llywy, here translated "fair," is made, in the face of scores of passages which contradict the assumption, to be a proper name. That author also translates Ogyrvan into "the mysterious God;" but in the passage:

Gwrdd i gwnaeth uch Deudraeth Dryvan,
 Gwr hydwf gwrhydri Ogyrvan;
 He bravely achieved above Deudraeth Dryvan,
 The feats of the renowned Ogyrvan,

Llywarch ab Llywelyn, evidently compares Llewelyn ab Iorwerth's valour⁴ to that of a renowned and real warrior:⁵ therefore, as far as it depends on this poem, his conclusion is not supported. The next poem from which he attempts to prove his assertion, is the following:

I love the fort of proud workmanship in the Kyvylchi,
 Where my own assuming form is wont to intrude;
 The high of renown eagerly seek admittance there,
 And near it speaks the mad resounding wave;
 It is the chosen place of Llywy of splendid qualities, and fair.

¹ Garwy was one of the most courteous knights of the court of Arthur. In a poem addressed by Howel ab Einion Lygliw to Myvanwy Vechan, he says:

Neud wyf ddihunwyv, hoen Creirwy hoywdeg,
 Am hudodd mal Garwy.

I am without spirit, O thou that hast enchanted me,
 As Creirwy enchanted Garwy.

I am not aware that the story of this enchantment of Garwy by Creirwy, "one of the three immaculate ladies of the Isle of Britain," is now in existence; but it was evidently well known to this bard, and also two hundred years earlier to Howel ab Owain, for it is to that he refers.

² Ogyrvan was contemporary with Arthur, and father of one of his wives; and the halls of Ogyrvan were probably the residence of an earthly damsel.

³ Carafi gaer valchweith or Gyvylchi
 Yny bylcha balchlun vy hun yndi
 Enwawe drafferthawe a dreit iddi
 Anwar don lavar levawr wrthi
 Dewisle lywy loyw gydteithi.

⁴ Gwrhydri Ogyrvan (*Myv. Arch. i.* 298).

⁵ Madoc ab Meredydd of Powys is compared to Ogyrvan by Cynddelw (*Myv. Arch. i.* 210).

Glorious her rising from the verge of the torrent,
 And the fair one shines upon the now progressing year,
 In the wilds of Arvon, among the Snowdonian hills.
 The tent does not attract, the glossy silk is not looked on
 By her I love, with passing tenderness;
 If her conquest could be wrought with the muse's aid,
 Ere the coming night, I should next to her be found.¹

There is certainly nothing mystical in this; and instead of there being any propriety in supposing "the proud wrought *Caer* of the *Gyyvlchi*" to have been a Druidic sanctuary, we find in the very spot indicated in the poem—in the wilds of Arvon, among the Snowdonian hills, and on the sea-shore, a fortification of great extent, of which a warrior like Howel might have felt proud, and which proved of immense service to his countrymen after his death.² His other proof was drawn from a single word, in the last of Howel's poems: ³

I love the time of summer, when the steed
 Of the exulting chief, prances in the presence of a gallant lord,
 When the nimbly moving wave is covered with foam,
 When the apple tree wears another aspect,
 And when the white shield is borne on my shoulder to the conflict.

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<sup>1</sup> Glaer gloew y dwyre o du gweilgi  
 Ar wreic a lewyrch ar eleni  
 Vlwyddyn yn ynyal Arvon yn Eryri  
 Ni dirper pebyll ni syll pali  
 Nep a rwy garwy yn vwy noti  
 Pei chwaerei y but yr barddoni  
 Nebawd nossweith y byddwn nessaf iddi.

<sup>2</sup> Dwygyvylchi is the name of a parish in the upper part of Carnarvonshire. It is also the name of a place near which, on a hill called Braich y Dinas, rising out of Penmaen Mawr, are the ruins of a castle, the fortifications of which were capable of containing 20,000 men. The remains of walls are still standing, and a well that supplied the garrison is full of constant water, furnished by the condensed vapour of the mountain. (Gibson's *Camden*, vol. ii. p. 804.) This was considered the strongest post possessed by the Welsh in the district of Snowdon; it was of great magnitude, and so strong by its natural position, that a hundred men might have defended themselves against an army; in that age it was deemed impregnable, and here it was that the remains of the Welsh army were posted, pending the negotiation between Edward and Llewelyn.—EVANS'S *Tour in North Wales*, p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> Carafy amser haf amsathr gorwyt  
 Gorawenus glyw rac glew Arglwyt  
 Gorewynawg tonn tynhegyl ebrwyt  
 Gorwisgwys avall arall arwyt.  
 Gorwenn vy ysgwyd ar vy ysgwyt y dreis

I have loved ardently, but unsuccessfully,  
 A tall and white-necked fair, of slowly languid gait;  
 Her complexion vies with the mild light of the evening hour,  
 Bright, slightly formed, feebly bending, white-hued, knowing one.  
 In stepping over a rush she would nearly fall,  
 The small and delicate one of feeble step;  
 But though small, she is older than a ten-year old man,  
 And though child-like in appearance, is full of propriety;  
 From her childhood she has learned to give freely,  
 And the virgin would rather impede her own prosperity,  
 Than utter one sentence of unseemly import.  
 I will be a pilgrim worshipper at the place of meeting;  
 How long shall I worship thee? Stop, and think of thine office;  
 If I am unskilful through the dotage of love,  
 Jesus, the well-informed, will not rebuke me.

The Druidism in this poem is said to be in the seventh line. In the original, it will be observed, that the line begins with the word "Kecidwen," white-necked. But our mythologist reads "Keridwen," the Druidical mother of all created things, whose mysteries were the supposed objects of Howel's love. We have already shown that if the word had been "Keridwen," his hypothesis would not have been much benefited thereby; but it is of importance to ascertain the proper reading of the passage. I do not know whether our author has MSS. authority for his reading; but as that name frequently occurs in the poems of this period, and as Mr. T. L. Jones in *Ceinion Awen y Cymry*, Dr. Pughe in his translation of this line, and Mr. Davies, who is generally scrupulously accurate in his quotations,

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Kereis ny gefeis gefeiawyt
 Kecidwen hirwen hwyrwann ogwyt
 Kyfeiliw gwenn wawr yn awr echwyt
 Klaer wanllun wenlletyf wyulliw kywyt
 Wrth gamu brwynen breit na dygwyt
 Bechannigen wenn wann y gogwyt
 Bychan y mae hyn no dyn degmlwyt
 Mabineit luncyit lawn gweteitruyt
 Mabdyse oet iti roti yn ruyt
 Mabwreic mwy yd feic fennedic rwy ar wen
 No pharabl oe phenn anghymhenrwy
 Petestric iolyt am byt y eilwyt
 Pa hyd yth iolaf saf rac dy swyt
 Adwyfy yn anvedret o ynydrwy caru
 Nym ceryt yessu y cyfarwyt.

have all written the word "Keridwen," it is but fair to assume that there is such authority. Yet, as the editors of the *Archæology* saw nearly every Welsh manuscript in existence, and therefore this particular one, if such existed, the adoption by them of a different reading is conclusive of the question. Besides, "Kecidwen" is much more in unison with the tenor of the poem, and therefore deserves the preference.

Having gone thus minutely over this ground, we have now no other alternative than to believe, that the Druidism of the twelfth century was simply a name, and not a reality. The bards undoubtedly did call themselves Druid-bards, have done so from that time to this, and do at the present day; the late Mr. Edward Williams used to say, that he was the only living personage of genuine Druidic descent; his son claimed the same privilege after his death; and if I may judge from a Welsh placard which lately came under my notice, in which he is termed "Y diweddar Dderwyddfardd dysgedig Ab Iolo," *the late learned Druid-bard Ab Iolo*, the claim was allowed; but in neither the twelfth century, nor in this, did they pretend to restore Druidism as a form of religious worship. There are societies of men who call themselves Druids in our large towns; but they are Druids in nothing but the name. It was something similar that prevailed among the early bards, who might have been, as Kynddelw asserts they were, very good Christians, notwithstanding this politic profession.

Kynddelw, if not the originator of this distinctive characteristic of the chief bard, had certainly much to do with its propagation. We find him seeking the countenance of Prince Rhys in the preceding lines, and the enmity of the monks of Ystrad Marchell has been with much plausibility attributed to the prominent part he took in supporting and extending this cause. That theological objections had been urged against renovated Druidism, clearly appears from Kynddelw's defence.

At a subsequent period, the bards introduced another species of exclusiveness, as appears from the following regulation :

Whoever, says he, is an heraldic poet should know the genealogies of kings and princes, and have received instructions from the three chief bards of the Isle of Britain, viz. Myrddin ab Morvryn, Myrddin Emrys, and Taliesin, Chief of Bards.¹

¹ Pwy bynag a ddywetto ei fod yn arwyddfardd gwybydded achoedd Brenhinedd

This very idle and foolish regulation, must soon have been seen to be practically inoperative ; but it is useful as serving to show the exclusive spirit, by which the leading bards were actuated.

With the regulations of the bardic chair of Glamorgan I shall not have much to do ; but it would be improper for me to close this sketch of the bards, without entering a protest against the pacific character claimed for them by Iolo Morganwg and Dr. Pughe. Such an assumption is at variance with the ordained functions of the bards, with the tenor of their conduct, and with their own works and declarations.

In the social constitution of Wales, the bard was an important and a necessary element. The bards were the depositaries of the knowledge of the country ; and as each family of any note had a domestic bard, whose business it was to keep the family records, praise his patron, and instruct the children, they must have formed a very useful and almost indispensable class of persons. Many of them were for their age learned men. Whatever was known they knew ; their theology was evidently in advance of that of the Church ; and though their speculations about "the four elements," and upon matters pertaining to the natural sciences, were crude, undigested, and of but little value, yet were they as far advanced in knowledge as any contemporaneous class of persons. They were exceedingly anxious to acquire knowledge ; and when acquired, they possessed much skill in the art of imparting it to others. One of them has given a graphic description of the manner in which he picked up his knowledge :

LEWIS GLYN COTHI TO DAVID AB RHYS OF TRE'R DELYN, RADNORSHIRE.

Reading both of us, the bard and a learned chieftain,
Carefully through the books, we spent the time ;
Suppressing all noise, we had sensible conversation,
And where there was a verse that I did not understand,
Davydd with the poem of Gwion (Taliesin)
Would explain to me its proper signification.

Works, p. 235.

a thywysogion, a chyfarwyddyd oddiwrth y tri Phrifardd Ynys Prydain, nid amgen, Myrddin ap Morvryn, a Myrddin Emrys, a Thaliesin ben Beirdd.

There is also a strong probability that the Welsh bards, were many of them classical scholars. Gwilym Ddu mentions one bar das being reputed for writing Latin verses, and takes upon himself to pass a critical opinion upon their merits, pronouncing them to be correct in prosody, and compact in sense; and Davydd ab Gwilym inviting the Nun to

the knotted birchen tree
 To learn cuckoo and woodland piety;
 There in the green bush will thy mind
 A path to heaven, O lady, find;
 There Ovid's volume shalt thou read,
 And there a spotless life we'll lead

(*Works*, p. 19.)

appears to imply, that Ovid's being in Latin was no obstacle to its perusal. Many of the poems attributed to Taliesin are thickly sprinkled with Latin words; and as that was the language of the age, there seems to be no difficulty in the way of assuming, that some of the bards had added a knowledge of Latin to that of their native tongue. In the use of their parent language, the bards of the twelfth and succeeding centuries, exhibit a proficiency which is quite extraordinary; for at a time when all the languages now spoken in Europe, were beginning to be formed, the people of Wales had not only a copious language fully developed, but also a class of men enriching its literature with poetical compositions, exhibiting a classical severity of style, and developing in the diction the wonderful etymological richness of the Cambrian speech. These poets prided themselves upon the smoothness of their lines, the correctness of their syntax, and the strength of their language. A pretended standard of perfection was raised in the names of the early bards; and though their own verses were much superior, the later bards feigned to tread in the footsteps of their predecessors. Howel ab Owain pretends to follow Merddin; Elidir Sais in a line already quoted does the same; Kynddelw says:

I particularly, shall be called the powerful—the quick,
 Of blithsome course in the joy-inciting dispute,
 In the ways of songs of the plaintive muse,
 A poet, a primary bard of learning.

And again, addressing Madoc ab Meredydd, Prince of Powys, he says:

My bardic voice 'neath heaven has not been faltering ;
 My bardic word on thy behalf is neither feeble nor dishonourable.

Llywarch ab Llywelyn very frequently boasts of his versification, and not without cause. In addressing Davydd ab Owain Gwynedd, he says :

I am engaged upon a wise and precious song ;
 and again :

Base men will not consider *the polish* of my song.

The same feeling peeps out in their disputations, and doubtless prevailed to a considerable extent in their day ; and therefore, as pride in literary composition is of necessity an evidence of refinement, we must award to these Cambrian poets a respectable position among civilised communities.

The influence of the earlier bards among their contemporaries must have been very great. Their poems were nearly always incentives to war ; frequently they uttered their exhortations at the instigation of the Welsh princes ; but there is no reason to doubt their readiness at all times to hurl defiance at the Saxons. We have abundant evidences of their hatred of the English ; but though the chieftains frequently betrayed their country, and allowed the kings of England to direct their enmities against each other to the advantage of the common enemy, there is not a single instance of a bard having betrayed his native land. On all occasions they fanned the flame of national hatred, and considered no man a hero who was not "a killer of Lloegrians," *llofrudd Lloegrwys*. A better spirit now prevails ; and at the present day, the inhabitants of the Principality, yield in loyalty to no people owning the supremacy of our gracious Queen. Then the case was different. England was then inferior in intelligence, in literature, and in refinement,—superior in numbers alone. Patriotism was then the highest wisdom ; and while the superiority in comfort, personal freedom, and literary recreations was on their side, the Welsh would have been culpable not to have resisted the aggressions of the English. Of this patriotic spirit, the bards were the chief supporters ; by the directions of their chieftains they prophesied, in the name of Taliesin and Merddin, the coming again of Arthur, Cadwaladr, and Kynan ; and as it is difficult to conceive of a people at once intellectual and enslaved, they found it an easy task to

inoculate their countrymen with their own fervent love of home and hatred of the stranger. In this respect they were of inestimable service to their countrymen, during their arduous struggle for independence. During the revolt of Owain Glendower, and the wars of the Roses, the bards played a very conspicuous part; and Lewis Glyn Cothi, who was in the pay of the Lancastrian party, with his brethren are known to have been of signal service to their friends, and to have done much to influence the result. We therefore owe an immense obligation to the bardic order, both for having defended their country while it was possible, and for having, when resistance was no longer advisable, been instrumental in forming so high and honourable a national character, as to have earned the privilege of being united on terms of perfect equality, to the English crown. The Welsh have a proverb:

Cas gwr na charo y wlad a'i maco.

Hateful is the man who loves not the land of his birth.

The late poet laureate, in the *Doctor*, said he never knew a good man who had not a taproot in the love of his native land; and in conclusion, I will add, that he who does not feel and promptly acknowledge a debt of gratitude to the bards of Wales, is unworthy of the name of Kymro. I have freely pointed out their faults, and attempted to portray their virtues; but notwithstanding all their demerits, I can, after communing with the finer and greater minds of England and the Continent in modern days, and of Greece and Rome in the past, still feel a pleasure in running over their labours, and be proud as ever of these "old men eloquent." And when it shall have been shown that before Gower sung, Chaucer wrote, or England had a literature of her own, there were poets in Wales, who left behind them in the course of two hundred years, upwards of four hundred poems, many of which are more than three hundred and fifty lines in length, it is hoped that some little will have been done towards obtaining for the early literature of the Principality the respect and sympathy of a larger circle of admirers.

This sketch of the bards will form an appropriate introduction to a critical review of the poetry of the reign of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth.

SECTION II.

WELSH POETRY FROM A.D. 1194 TO A.D. 1240.

MANY bards of note flourished during the agitated period embraced by this chapter: and among the literary remains, we have twelve poems by Davydd Benvras, one poem by Einion the son of Gwgan, five odes by Einion the son of Gwalchmai, six by Einion Wan, two by Gwilym Ryvel, two by Gruffydd the son of Gwrgeneu, two by Gwynvardd Brycheiniog, seven pieces by Llywelyn Vardd, three by Seisyll, and six by Phylip Brydydd. Llywarch ab Llywelyn, commonly called "Prydydd y Moch," has left thirty-two poems; and Kynddelw Brydydd Mawr, or the Great Poet, has enriched our mediæval literature with nearly fifty meritorious productions. Each of these would merit a separate notice; but as the plan of the essay admits such only as reveal traits of national character, many of them must be left without further remarks. No practical purpose can be served by an indiscriminate collection; we shall therefore confine our attention to such as, on the grounds of literary merit, and historic truthfulness, appear most worthy of perusal.

The frequent mention of KYNDELW in the preceding sketch of bards and bardism, must have created a desire to know more of him; and truly he is the bard whose merit claims precedence. He was a man of note and influence in his own day, and was possessed of great and varied powers. His compositions as well as his conduct are distinguished by a vigour of thought, independence of mind, and profundity of reasoning, which reflect much credit upon himself, and upon the order of which he was an influential and illustrious member. Indeed, this seems to be characteristic of the bards; for we not unfrequently find very original ideas in their poems; and their theological notions soar far above the dark and bigoted age in which they lived. All else had been enslaved by the Romish priesthood; but these choice spirits would have no such instructors. The bard and the priest were sworn enemies; and the productions of the former teem with sneers at the monks, while the latter not unfrequently show their petty malignity against their rivals in popular estimation. One instance of this is mentioned by Kyn-

ddelw. The monks of the abbey of Ystrad Marchell had sent to tell him, that his body should not be buried in their abbey; and in reply the bard sent the following Englyn :

If he had not promised to come against me,
And the blessed God knew it;
It were more becoming in a monk
To demand, than to refuse my body.¹

We have here a consciousness of intellectual worth, and a dignified self-reliance which rises into heroism, and transcends all feelings of dislike, and hatred; and some lines, wrongly attributed to Merddin, in strength of moral indignation, and elevated theological conception, reach absolute sublimity :

I will not receive the Sacrament
From excommunicated monks
With their togas on their knees;—
*I will commune with God Himself!*²

Kynddelw has a poem addressed to the Deity, which I here quote, as a specimen of the prevalent theology of the bards :

TO GOD.³

One God prosperous, and righteous,—a Sovereign,
Who rules without fear;
One Son of Mary, a dauntless Being,
One eternal, and merciful Deity,
One King, Ruler of heaven and earth.

¹ Cen ni bai ammod dyfod—i'm herbyn
A Duw gwyn yn gwybod;
Oedd iawnach i fynach fod,
I'm gwrthfyn nac i'm gwrthod.

² Ni chymeraf gymmun,
Gan ysgymmun fyneich
A'u twygau ar eu clun,
A'm cymmuno Duw ei hun.

³ I Dduw.
Un Duw cyfrwydd cyfreithgar,—wledig
A wledych heb afar;
Un mab Mair, meidrawl diarechar,
Un Dofydd tragwydd trugar
Un Rien rwyf nef a daear.

Before weakness, the condition of happy age, overtakes me,
 I will be God's servant, in a banqueting-house without complaint,
 Before I become needy, with a mild necessity,
 And life, age, and complexion, give place to inanimation,
 Before the necessity of a merciful death,
 And the mention of the azure hue of dissolution,
 Before the time for the great covering of the sky,
 Before I am brought to the last prison,
 Before the cold closing up, and the frigid funeral,
 And the confinement in a dress of oak and gore,
 I will devote my tongue to wise conversation,
 And to unlimited and unceasing praise;
 I am the praiser of vigour in the garb of sadness;
 I will praise God, the impartial in judgment;
 The joy of the heavenly angels will enliven me,
 In Thy blessed state, and Thy blessed habitation.

Several of the preceding lines have in them much beauty; the metaphors "frigid funeral," and "oaken dress" are very striking; the description of death as a state in which he will have no warmer covering than "the great sky above," is exceedingly happy; and the epithets, "prosperous, righteous, fearless," and "impartial," applied to the Deity, bespeak an enlightened theology.

The language of this bard is exceedingly intricate, and difficult to be understood; and though he wrote on a variety of topics, to unravel his meaning, in the very involved diction of his poems, is not an easy task. It is therefore difficult

~~~~~

Cyn bwyf gwan esgus gwyn esgar  
 Bwyf gwas Duw, gwesti dialar  
 Cyn bwyf angenawg angenwar,  
 Hoedl hoedran hoen eban abar  
 Cyn angen angeu athrugar,  
 Arglywed gloes glaswedd glar,  
 Cyn dirfawr gyfwawr gyfysgar,  
 Cyn no'm dwyn i'm diwedd garchar,  
 Cyn oergawdd angladd anghlaear,  
 Yn ngwasg yn ngwisg derw a gwyar :  
 Iawn o'm dawn, doeth arlafar,  
 Iawl heb dawl, heb doli arwar,  
 Iolydd wyf o nwyf yn afar,  
 Iolafi Dduw y difwyn ei far,  
 Llawenydd lluw nef llawena fy mryd  
 Yth wynfyd yth wynfa.

*Myv. Arch.* i. p. 249.

to form a right estimate of his abilities; certain it is, however, that this very complicated verbiage has prevented him from succeeding in all he undertook; and we dismiss such lighter portions of his poetry, as his address "I Verch," as harsh, clumsy, and pedantic. He succeeds better on weightier subjects, as may be seen by his elegy on Owain Gwynedd, a portion of which here follows. It would be well, perhaps, to premise, that when the bards wished to compare their princes to well-known heroes, they called their rulers by the names of those heroes. Here our bard calls Owain Gwynedd by the name of Gwalchmai, and by the names of several other celebrated warriors: <sup>1</sup>

The lion made numbers perish in the encampment of thick hosts,  
 Like an intrepid warrior Gwalchmai <sup>2</sup> withstood the shock,  
 The numerous host of Gwrvan <sup>3</sup> triumphed.  
 He was impatient for the signal of battle,  
 Which like the shout of Erov <sup>4</sup> would collect warriors together;  
 It was a glorious victory, and the golden treasures lay exposed.  
 There was wasteful work; the warriors were energetic, and their arms  
 glittering.

The impetuosity of the attack broke the foremost ranks,  
 And the rushing swords, making fresh carnage,

Hewed down whatever they met.

*The green flood of Teivi <sup>5</sup> was thickened,*

*The river was filled with the blood of men,*

*The blood-stained waterfowl called aloud for a glut of gore,*

~~~~~

¹ Gwersyll torfoedd tew llew lladdai,
 Gorsaf tarf, taerfalch fal Gwalchmai,
 Gorfaran Gwrfan gorfyddai,
 Gwr yn aer yn aros gwaeddfai,
 Bryd Erof gryd, arf greu a ddodai,
 Brwydr eurgrwydr, eurgrawn ni guddiai
 Bradog waith gwynniaith gwynnygai,
 Brys briwgdad, brig bragad briwiai,
 Brwys lafneu ynghreu ynghrai celanedd
 Cymminedd cymmynai.
 Gwyrdd heli Teifi tewychai
 Gwaeddlan gwyr, a llyr ai llanwai
 Gwyach rudd gorfudd goralwai,

² Gwalchmai ab Gwyar, one of Arthur's knights.

³ Gwrvan Wallt Awwyn, one of the agents of Arthur in the ancient Welsh romances.

⁴ Erov is mentioned, *Myv. Arch.* i. p. 69, as "Erov the Fierce."

⁵ A river in Cardiganshire.

And swam with toil on waves of blood.

The wooden horses of the wave were overthrown,

By him who is as fierce as Gwythur.¹

The English, men weak as woodbines, will have many funerals ;

He who used to feed the wild wood-dogs, is no more ;

He who lies in a wooden bed had won my sympathies,

And might have had my possessions.

I lost a wise lord, who ever regarded me ;

Attired in gold, he used to give gold to me.

I am troubled by the memory of the battle's rage. He who loved me,

Friend of the songster, songs have greeted him.

The shout of dispersion and the gleaming of arms sheltered me,

The obstructing strength of Dillus² ab Evrai,

~~~~~

Ar donniar gwyar gonofiai  
 Gwyddfeirch tonn torrynt yn ertai,  
 Gwythur naws fal traws ai treisiai,  
 Gwyddfid Eingl ynghladd au trychai,  
 Gwyddgwn coed colled au porthai,  
 Gwyddwal dyfneual dyfnasai fy modd,  
 Fy meddiant a gaffael.  
 Collois Arglwydd call ni'm collai,  
 Corf eurdorf, eurdal am rhoddai,  
 Cof cadffawdd am cawdd, am carai  
 Car Cerddawr, cerddai ai cyrchai,  
 Gryd wasgar, llachar, a'm llochai,  
 Grym dilludd Dillus fab Efrai

<sup>1</sup> "Gwythur ab Greidiol, a warrior who served under Arthur, and the father of one of his three wives called Gwenhwyvar. His grave is noticed in the Englynion y Beddau, *Myv. Arch.* i. p. 81. He is also a distinguished character in Welsh romance. See the Mabinogi of Kilhwch and Olwen, ii. 305." Extracted by permission from the *Biographical Dictionary* by R. Williams, M.A., Llangadwaladr, a most valuable work.

<sup>2</sup> Dillus ab Evrai, called also Dillus Varchawe, and Dillus Varvawc. He is mentioned in the Mabinogi of Kilhwch and Olwen; and as that is the only notice I have seen of him, I will quote it here. Before Kilhwch could marry Olwen, it was necessary to obtain the comb, the scissors, and razor, which were between the ears of the Boar Trwyth; this boar could only be successfully hunted with Drudwyn, the cub of Greid the son of Eri; this cub could only be held by a leash made of the beard of Dillus the bearded; and this beard must have been plucked with wooden tweezers, while the owner was still living. Kai and Bedwyr, two of Arthur's knights, one day spy Dillus, "the greatest robber that ever fled before Arthur," asleep in a wood, dig "a pit under his feet, the largest in the world," and having struck him a violent blow, squeeze him into it. "There they twitched out his beard completely with the wooden tweezers, and after that they slew him altogether. And from thence they both went to Gelliwic, in Cornwall, and took the leash made of Dillus Varvawc's beard with them, and they gave it into Arthur's hand. Then Arthur composed this Englyn:

Kai made a leash  
 Of Dillus son of Evrei's beard ;  
 Were he alive, thy death he'd be.



And the friendly disposition of Greidwyr,<sup>1</sup> Kywyr,<sup>2</sup> and Kai.<sup>3</sup>  
It was the worthy practice of the leader of those who delight in broken shields,

To resort to the pleasant, and enthusiastic banquets.

Happy was he who enjoyed them.

The fierce fort beyond the sea, beyond Menai,  
Is in a wild region from which I have profited,  
While lived Owain the Great who owned it ;  
Mead, and wine, and liquor were there, in  
Gwynedd the white, with its intelligent inhabitants.  
After the hero, who fought a great battle in its defence,  
What patriot—hero of the houses of excessive whiteness,  
What sovereign will rule over it ?

This poem regarded as an elegiac composition is a sad failure, and is utterly destitute of pathos. It displays a perfect mastery over words and skill in versification ; but the perpetual straining to make each line terminate alike, has led to the introduction of many words which serve no useful purpose, though they confuse the meaning. Indeed, the whole of the poetic merit of this extract, is comprised in the four lines descriptive of the battle of Aberteivi, fought on the banks of



And thereupon Kai was wroth, so that the warriors of the Island could scarce make peace between Kai and Arthur. And thenceforth, neither in Arthur's troubles, nor for the slaying of his men, would Kai come forward to his aid for ever after." (*Mabinogion*, ii. p. 305.) From this collective mention of so many romantic names found in the tale, I should infer that the Mabinogi of Kilhwch and Olwen was familiarly known in A.D. 1169—the date of Owain Gwynedd's death.

Greddf Greidwyr, a Chywyr, a Chai,  
Glew ddefawd glyw oesdrawd aedrai  
Ystre hynt, wastad, westei gwynfydig  
Gwyn ei fyd bieufeï.

Gwyth ysgor tra mor, tra Menai,  
Gwlydd elfydd elwais o honai  
Tra fu Owain mawr ai meddai  
Medd a gwin, a gwirawd fyddai  
Gwynedd wen Gwyndyd len ledpar,  
Gwedi gwawr, cadfawr ai cadwai,  
Pa wladwr, arwr arwyndai,  
Pa wledig a wledych arnai ?

*Myv. Arch.* i. p. 208.

<sup>1</sup> Greidwyr probably means Greidiol, one of Arthur's warriors, or Gwrhir Gwalstawd Ieithoedd, another of those chiefs.

<sup>2</sup> Most likely this is Kynyr Keinvarwawe mentioned in Kilhwch and Olwen.

<sup>3</sup> One of the "coroneted chiefs of battle," and chief of Arthur's cooks.

the river Teivi, near Cardigan; but it must be confessed that these four lines beginning, "The green flood of Teivi," &c., set forth a very vivid picture. Here the bard is perpetually aiming at effect, and evidently staggers under the weight of his subject; but his verses to Rhys ab Gruffydd, Lord of South Wales, flow with more ease, and are much more readable. A few of these are here subjoined :<sup>1</sup>

I invoke the protection of God! undoubted are thy talents,  
 And I am thy talented bard,  
 On thy men—the eagles of battle,  
 On thy land—discreet ruler.

I invoke, and make great supplication to the Cause  
 Who caused heaven and earth,  
 Protection from thy anger, friend of the songster,  
 On thy halls, and on thy porters.

I invoke, and supplicate, for I am called The Asker,  
 Sincere and permanent protection,  
 On thy gold-adorned portals,  
 And on thy door-keeper; thou in whom the beauty of the land  
 is reflected.

I invoke your protection, that your favour may not be denied,  
 As it is not becoming to withhold.  
 Officers of the palace! procure silence;  
 Bards! be silent: it is a bard you hear.



<sup>1</sup> Asswynaf nawdd Duw diamheu dy ddawn  
 Ath ddoniauwg wyf finnau  
 Ar dy wyr eryr aerau  
 Ar dy wlad wledig deheu.

Asswynaf archaf arch fawr i beryf  
 A beris nef a llawr  
 Nawdd rac dy var car cerddawr  
 Ar dy byrth ar dy borthawr.

Asswynaf archaf eirchiad ym gelwir  
 Nawdd cywir cyngwastad  
 Ar dy ddryseu aur drwsiad  
 Ar dy ddrysawr gwawr gwenwlad

Asswynaf awch nawdd na chelwch awch porth  
 Can perthyn attregwch  
 Gostegwyr llys gostegwch  
 Gosteg beirdd bardd a glywch.

I invoke the ready protection of the southern chieftains,  
 For thee, judicious patron of bards,  
 And for thy troops of shield-bearers,  
 And thy hosts, and thy royal sons.

I invoke ready protection, liberal justiciary,  
 Whom kings will not withstand,  
 On thy army, *thou impersonated contention!*  
 On thy family, who are worthy of possessions.

Clear mead is their drink, mead-horns they circulate;  
 They will be golden rulers.  
 Thou wilt be illustrious in government,—  
 A valiant leader, and a bold ruler.

Royal scions of Britain, I will compose your eulogy,  
 And will celebrate your virtues;  
 I will be your bard and counsellor,  
 And will merit your patronage.

These Englynion, though possessing but little poetical merit, are favourable specimens of smooth versification, and flowing language; as well as being plain evidences of the manners of the people, the state of the country, and the relative positions of bard and chieftain. One other poem shall conclude our selection from this poet. It is addressed to Owain Kyveiliog, refers to his banquets, and is a companion sketch to Owain's own *Hirlas*. Like the preceding it consists of a series of Englynion;

~~~~~  
 Asswynaf nawdd hawdd haelion Deheubarth
 Diheuborth cerddorion
 Ath dwrf oth dariannogion
 Ath dorf ath deyrnfeibion

Asswynaf nawdd hawdd haeloned worsaf
 Nith orseif teyrnedd
 Ar dy dorf corf cywrysedd
 Ar dy deulu teilwng medd.

Meddgyrn eu gwirawd meddgyrn au gw
 Au gwarcheidw yn eurdyrn
 A gloyw y fed yn edyrn
 A glyw dewr a glew deyrn.

Teyrnweilch Prydain prydaf awch prif gerdd
 Awch prifglod a ddygaf
 Awch bardd awch beirniad fyddaf
 Awch porth perthyn yw ataf.

Myr. Arch. i. p. 234.

the lines read smoothly, the language is unusually simple for this bard, and the description is both animated and striking :¹

The liquor of Owain, yonder beyond mount Digoll,²
 How frequently it cheers us ;
 Of clear sparkling wine without lacking,
 Of mead, all from the buffalo's horn.

The liquor to me shall be appropriated ; it shall come from a patron,
 Who gives it me out of his white hand ;
 The chief of battle distributing treasures,
 He is the head of the circle : I am chief bard to him.

Liquor will be brought to us plenteously,
 Wine out of the goblet, a gracious gift ;
 In the court of the lord of Lleision,³ the benefactor of chieftains,
 In the hand of the lion of conflict, are the overflowing horns of liberality.

The liquor of Owain the mild is joyfully distributed
 In the land by the side of the Severn,—
 With a truly amiable profusion ;
 And yonder are they bringing it.



¹ Gwirawd Owain, draw dra Digoll vynyt,
 Mor vynyeh i harvoll :
 O win cyvrgain, nid cyvrygoll,
 O vet : o vuelin oll.

Gwirawd am daerawd, a'm daw gan rebut,
 Am rybuch o'i wenllaw ;
 Peniadur cad, ced wallaw,
 Pen côr ; pencerd wyv idaw.

Gwirawd a dygyr a digawn atan ;
 Gwin o ban, ran radlawn ;
 Yn llys, lles glyw, llyw Lleisiawn,
 Yn llaw llew cad cyrn llad llawn.

Gwirawd Ywain llary, llawen yd rotir
 Yn y tir tu Havren,
 A thraul hygar yw hagen
 A thraw y daw a dygen

² Mynydd Digoll is not far from the town of Montgomery. "On this mountain may be said to have expired the liberties of Wales ; for here was the last contest against the power of the Conqueror."—PENNANT'S *North Wales*, vol. iii. p. 208.

³ "The palace of the Princes of Powys in the county of Montgomery, now called Llysin Park, the patrimony of Lord Powys."—*Dissertatio de Bardis*, p. 20.

The liquor of Owain the mild, whose tumult
 Is a gleaming flame on the borders of his foe;
 Proudly it comes in the wrath-dealing hand,
 Whose host is exhilarated, and whose circling wave is mead.

Liquor is pressed upon us by the light of moon and stars,
 By the ruler of the impetuous red chieftains;
 About Hirvryn¹ the eagle is great and stately,
 About Severn happy is the smile of men.

In the hand of Owain the generous, who manfully asserts his claims,
 Is the golden flagon;
 Splendid is the honour of bearing wine,
 A sovereign's prime and precious gift.

Behold my prince this day mounted on his cars,
 Not a lion beneath the moon will dare to assail him;
 With couched lance in the day of trial will he lead the assault
 Of the impetuous thrust, in his golden mail.²

LLYWARCH AB LLYWELYN was a bard of a very superior order. His compositions are neither so numerous nor so various as the writings of Kynddelw, but in depth of feeling, power

Gwirawd Ywain llary, llachar i dervysge
 Ai dervyn i esgar
 Balch y daw yn llaw lluchvar,
 Metw i thoryv, met a thoniâr.

Gwirawd am gwrthvyn, gwrth syr a lleuad,
 Gan rwyf rad rut vyhyr;
 Am Hirvryn hirvraisc eryr;
 Am Havren hyvryd gwen gwyr.

Ar llaw Ywain hael, hawl dilyn gwrvalch
 Y mae gorvlwch eurin;
 Anrydet gwyp arwet gwin;
 Anrec brivdec breyenin.

Ut yssim etiw ar geir,
 Nis arvait llew o dan lloer
 Gwaew crwm yn dyt trwm, trwy fwyf
 Gwan fyse, yn eurwyse yn aer.

Myv. Arch. i. p. 234.

¹ Another name for Mynydd Digoll.

² In this, as in preceding translations, I have availed myself of those inserted in the *Cambrian Register*, making only such alterations as seemed to be necessary; thus in the second lines of verses the first and sixth, I have been compelled to differ widely from Dr. Pughe, whose translations are generally very faithful.

of delineation, and beauty of conception, they are much superior. His address to Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, Prince of North Wales, is too long to copy entire; but the reader will be presented with an extract. The invocation contains sentiments, which, familiar then, strike us now as being very strange:¹

May Christ, the Creator and Governor of the hosts of heaven and earth,
Defend me from all disasters;
May I through His assistance be prudent and discreet,
Ere I come to my narrow habitation.
Christ, the Son of God, will give me the gift of song,
To extol my prince, who giveth the warlike shout with joy;
Christ, who hath formed me of the four elements,²
And hath endowed me with the deep and wonderful gift of poetry:
Llewelyn is the ruler of Britain and her armour.

The bard then proceeds to give his hero's pedigree, and afterwards gives the following vivid description of the battle of Porth Aethwy:³

Llewelyn was our prince ere the furious contest happened,
And the spoils were eagerly amassed,
Purple gore ran over the snow-white breast of the warriors,
And after the shout the havoc and carnage was general;
The particoloured waves flowed over the broken spear,

~~~~~

<sup>1</sup> Crist Greawdr, llywawdr llu daear a nef,  
Am noddwy rhag afar,  
Crist celi bwyf celfydd a gwar,  
Cyn diwedd gyfyngwedd gyfar  
  
Crist fab Duw am rhydd arllafar.  
I foli fy rhwyf rhwysg o ddyar  
Crist fab Mair am pair o'r pedwar defnydd,  
Dofn awen ddiarchar,  
Llywelyn llyw Prydain ai phâr.

<sup>2</sup> Man was made of a soul, and the four elements—fire, air, earth, and water; but late materialists have excluded the soul, contrary to the opinion of the old bards. The body only was composed of the four elements.

Rodri hael ei hafal ni wnaid,  
O *ddwyfr*, ac *awyr*, ac eneid a *phrid*  
A ffrawddus *dân* ni phaid.

*Prydydd y Moch*, i Rodri.

<sup>3</sup> Ef yn llyw cyn llid gyfysgar,  
Ysglyfion ysglyfiant llwrw bar,  
Oedd rynn rudd ebyr or gwyr gwar,  
Oedd ran feirw fwyaf o'r drydar,  
Oedd amlw tonnau, twm amhar eu neid,

And the warriors were silent ;  
*The bring wave came with force,*  
*And met on its way one mixed with blood.*  
 When we went to Porthaethwy<sup>1</sup> on the steeds of the main,  
 Over the great roaring of the floods ;  
 The spear raged with relentless fury,  
*And the tide of blood rushed with force.*  
 Our attack was sudden and fierce ;  
 Death displayed itself in all its terrors,  
*So that we doubted whether any of us would die of old age.*

An enumeration of the battles which Llewelyn fought follows, and the poem concludes with these sentiments :<sup>2</sup>

Happy was the mother who bore thee,  
 Who art wise and noble,  
 And freely distributest rich suits of garments,  
 With gold and silver.  
 And the bards celebrate thee  
 For presenting thy bred steeds, when they sit at thy tables ;  
 And I myself am rewarded for my gift of poetry,  
 With gold and distinguished respect ;  
 And should I desire of my prince the moon as a present,  
 He would certainly bestow it on me.

~~~~~

Neud oeddynt dilafar,
 Ton heli ehelaeth i bar,
 Ton arall gwall, goch gwyar,
 Porth aethwy pan aetham ni ar feirch mordwy,
 Uch mawrdwrf tonniar,
 Oedd ongyr, oedd engir ei bar,
 Oedd angudd godrudd gwaedryar,
 Oedd enghyrth ein hynt, oedd angar,
 Oedd ing, oedd angau anghymar
 Oedd ammau ir byd bod abar o honam,
 O henaint lleithiar.

¹ Porthaethwy is in Anglesey.

² Mad yth ymddug dy fam, wyd doeth,
 Wyd dinam, wyd didawl o bob chwant,
 O borffor o bryffwn fiant,
 O bali ag aur ag aryant,
 O emys gochwys gochanant dy feirdd,
 Yn tyrddoedd i caffant.
 Minnau om rhadau rhymfuant,
 Yw rhuddaur yn rhwydd ardduniant :
 O bob rhif im Rhwyf im doniant,
 O bob rhyw im rhodded yn gant

Thy praise reacheth to Lliwelydd,¹
 And Llywarch is the man who celebrates thee in songs ;
 My praises are not extravagant,
 To thee the prodigy of the age :
 Thou art firm in battle like the elephant ;
 When thou arrivest at the period of thy glory,
 When thy praises no longer employ the bard and the harp,
 My brave prince, ere thou comest,
 When the last hour approaches to confess thy sins,
 After thou hast vanquished thy enemies,
 Mayest thou at last become a glorious saint !

Of his address to Davydd ab Owain, whom he praised as highly while tyrannising over his nephew, the above-mentioned Llewelyn, as he afterwards praised the nephew for displacing his uncle, we shall treat when the "Avallenau" come under consideration.

In a poem addressed to Rhodri the son of Owain Gwynedd, there is a passage said to refer to the departure of Madoc ab Owain Gwynedd for America. It runs thus:

Two princes of strong passion broke off in wrath ;
 The multitude of the earth did love them ;
 One on land in Arvon allaying ambition ;
 And another, a placid one, on the bosom of the vast ocean
 In trouble great and immeasurable,
 Earning a possession easy to be retained,
 The enemy of all who contemn me (the bard).

~~~~~

Cyd archwyf im llyw y lloergant yn rhodd,  
 Ef am rhydd yn geugant.  
 Lliwelydd dy foliant  
 Llywelyn, a Llywarch ae cant.  
 Munerawd ym marw fy mwyniant fal yn byw  
 Lleissiawn ryw Run blant  
 Nyd gormod fy ngair it gormant !  
 Teyrn wyd tebyg Eliphant,  
 Can orfod pob rhod yn rhamant,  
 Can folawd a thavawd a thant,  
 Cein deyrn, cyn bych yngreifant,  
 Can difwyn o ysgwn esgarant,  
 Can duw ren yw ran westifiant,  
 Can ddiwedd pob buchedd, bych sant.

*Myv. Arch.* i. p. 297.

<sup>1</sup> See note to "Howel ab Owain's Delight," p. 44.



These two princes most probably were Howel and Madoc. I have not paid sufficient attention to the evidence, to form any opinion as to the credibility of the popular story of Madoc's emigration; but Mr. Catlin, in the second volume of his *American Indians*, has imparted renewed interest to the subject. He believes the tradition, and is firmly convinced that the Mandans, whose manners differ so widely from those of the other tribes of Indians, are the remnants of Madoc's emigrants. The late Lieut. Ruxton, author of the spirited sketches of "Life in the far West," which lately appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*, is said to have fallen a victim to this seductive theory, and to have firmly believed that he would be able to prove the Mowqua Indians to be the descendants of those who accompanied the Cambrian prince. How much of truth there may be in this, I am unable to determine; but that Madoc disappeared from his native country is proved beyond a doubt, by some allusions in another poem by this bard. It is addressed to "The Hot Iron," and exhibits an extraordinary alternation of belief and scepticism, which seems to imply the recent introduction into Wales of that ordeal.<sup>1</sup> In some places he seems to consider the hot iron as a manifestation of Christ; and yet, no sooner has he said that, than doubts again recur to his mind, which, in thus wavering, shows us in an interesting manner, how the ordeal was looked upon in the twelfth century, by a shrewd and sensible man:

TO THE HOT IRON.<sup>2</sup>

Creator of Heaven! Thy servant is a believer;  
 Shall we believe in this, as we believe in Jonas?  
*Steel magistrate! of cheap ordinances*, blessed by the God of Heaven,  
 Subdued I am before the transfixed One.  
*Consecrated truth, glowing hot!*  
 My song delights in Thy blessedness.

<sup>1</sup> See an account of an ordeal in "Brut y Saeson" (*Myv. Arch.* ii. 512-13).

<sup>2</sup> Creawdyr nef crededun y was  
 Credwn y hwn val y credwn yonas  
 Dur ynad detyf rad ry swynas douyt  
 Dof wyf yt yn wanas.  
 Dywynnyc dy wir dy wynnyas  
 Dy wynnyd yn kywyd nyd kas

Reflect when thou judgest, the number of my kindred,  
*Hot wounding creature, who created thee?*  
 I will ask advice through Peter, of Christ  
 Who was appointed to bear the cross;  
 And of the fair interceders Thomas and Philip,  
 And Paul and Andrew,  
 Lest my hand be misplaced, and I be slain by the bright sword,  
 And my kinsmen pay the retribution fee for murder.  
 Good iron! exonerate me  
 From the charge of having slain Madoc,  
 And show that he who slew the fair prince,  
 Shall have no part of heaven, nor its nine kingdoms;  
 But that I shall obtain the society of God,  
 And escape his enmity.

From this it would seem that Madoc had gone away the first time by stealth, and that the bard, from being perhaps the last person seen in his company, was suspected of having murdered him. The passage first quoted appears to have been written after this, and looks as if it had been written after Madoc's return, for it describes the newly found territory as "easily guarded." The line—

Yn esguraw hawl hawt adnes,  
 Earning a possession easily retained,

seems more decisive of the question than any other evidence that can be adduced, as the description seems applicable to a new and thinly populated country. Too much stress has been laid upon the poem of Meredydd ab Rhys, both by the opponents, and the advocates of this story; for after all, it simply

Edrych pan vernych veint vyn tras  
 Creadur poeth gur path greas.  
 Archaf arch y bedyr o berthynas Crist  
 A dug crog yn urtas  
 Trwy cîrawl ymyawl tomas a phylip  
 A phawl ayr andras,  
 O aflen fy llaw a llavyn wyn las  
 O afeith goleith galanas  
 Da haearn diheura pan llas  
 Lleith madawc nad om llaw y cawas  
 Noc ae ceif cain ae glas  
 Rann o nef ae naw teyrnas  
 A minheu mynnaf gyweithas  
 Bot duw ym a dianc oe gas.

states the fondness of Madoc for the sea, and leaves the question of his discovery of America just where it was before. That Madoc left the country is quite clear from the concurrent testimony of the bards, and the following triad :

“The three missing ones of the Isle of Britain : . . . Third, Madoc ab Owain Gwynedd who went to sea with three hundred men in ten vessels, and *it is not known whither they went* ;” for the annals of the country leave his landing-place unknown. We must therefore look elsewhere for proofs of his discovery of the American continent. There are abundant evidences that the Welsh had numerous ships, and frequently went back and fore to Ireland ; as the passage from America to this country has been made in a boat, there is no insuperable difficulty interposed by the distance between the two continents ; and as late researches tend to show, that the American continent was discovered by the Northmen, three or four hundred years before the voyage of Columbus, the tale is not improbable. The arguments in favour of the Cambrian story are forcibly and ingeniously urged by an old traveller, who shall speak in his own quaint language. The passage, though principally devoted to Madoc, also illustrates the political history of Wales during this period with tolerable accuracy ; but Sir Thomas Herbert is slightly in error in making Howel ab Owain fall in contending for the succession. Howel succeeded in obtaining the crown, and kept it for two years ; and the cause of his death has been already (p. 39) more fully related.

He first quotes Seneca's predictions, as given in the *Medea* of that philosopher :

Venient annis  
 Secula seris, quibus Oceanus  
 Vincula rerum laxet et ingens  
 Pateat Tellus, Typhisque Novas  
 Detegat Orbes. Nec sit Terris  
 Ultima Thule.

Which he thus translates :

The time shall one day be,  
 Guided by Providence, when man shall see  
 The liquid ocean to enlarge her bounds,  
 And pay the earth a tribute of more grounds  
 In ample measure. For the sea Gods then,  
 Will show new worlds and rarities to men,

Yea, by His leave who everything commands,  
See Thule far less north than other lands.

And then he proceeds to say, that these words are—

“Dim lights to show the way to the western world. So that upon the whole it may be granted, the discovery of that vast continent was reserved for a succeeding generation. The first we meet with is Madoc son of Prince Owen Gwynedd, who for thirty years ruled Wales after his father, Griffith ab Cynan, had at St. David’s done homage to William the Conqueror, for lands he held on the other side of the Severn. The annals of those times acquaint us, that Owen was no sooner dead, but that the custom of gavelkind induced the numerous sons of that prince to claim a division of his dominions among them. Iowerth Drwyndwn, or Edward the Broken-nosed, the eldest son of Owen, was set aside, and denied the right of succeeding to his father’s throne on account of that blemish and other imperfections, when Howel claimed the throne, but was objected to on account of his illegitimacy, being the son of Owen by an Irish concubine. David opposed the pretensions of Howel, and in the war that followed between them, the latter was killed. David having married Emma Plantagenet, the sister of Henry II., was supported in his usurpation by the arms of England, in addition to those of his own adherents. However, as soon as Llewelyn the son of the unfortunate Iorwerth arrived at the age of manhood, he dethroned his uncle David, and became, with the general consent of the country, Sovereign Prince of Wales. These intestine broils were no way pleasing to Madoc, another of the sons of Owain, who seems to have foreseen that the ruin of their country would be the consequence of their discord and fraternal rage. Therefore, to avoid the storm and provide for himself, he resolves upon a sea adventure, hoping to find some place abroad, where he might fix himself securely, and not be liable to invasion. Thus says tradition. It is not unlikely but that Madoc was acquainted with the prophecy or ‘dim lights’ which led to the discovery of the western world. Madoc having provided ships, men, and provision, put to sea from Abergwilly, in the year 1170. Wind and sea favouring his design, after some weeks’ sailing due west he descried land, probably Newfoundland; but whatever it was it overjoyed him. Madoc then ranging the coast, so

soon as he found a convenient place sat down to plant, meaning, fixed on a spot to form his intended settlement. After he had stayed there awhile to recruit the health of his men, he fortified his settlement and left 120 men there to protect it. And by providence (the best compass) he returned in safety to his own country. Having recounted his voyage, the fruitfulness of the soil, the simplicity of the savages, the wealth abounding there, and facility of enlargement, after some months' refreshment, in ten barques laden with necessary provisions they put to sea again, and happily recovered their settlement. They found but few of those whom they had left remaining, their death, it is conjectured, being by an incautious indulgence in the produce of a novel climate and country, or the treachery of the natives. Madoc, with the assistance of his brothers Eineon and Edwal, put things once more in comparative good order, and remained there some time, expecting the arrival of more of their countrymen from Wales, for which they had made arrangements previous to their departure; but they never came, and caused grievous disappointment. The cause of this failure is said to have been the wars which ensued, and which called for the service of every man for the defence of his country, but which ended in the subjugation of Wales by the English.

“But though Madoc and his Cambrian crew be dead, and their memory moth-eaten, yet are their footsteps plainly traceable, which the language they left, the religion they taught, and the reliques they found do clearly evidence. Otherwise how are we to account for the British words, not much altered from the dialect used at this day, among the Mexicans? Whence had they the use of beads, crucifixes, &c.? All which the Spaniards, as we read in Lopez de Gomeza and others, found amongst those, Acusano and Calhuaeana at their first landing in America. Yea, whence comes that tradition amongst the Mexicans, that a strange people came thither in corraugles who taught them the knowledge of God, and by whose instruction they became civilised, as is related by Columbus, Postellus, Francus, Lopez, Cortes, and other Castilians?

“That of Herniando Cortes, who A.D. 1519 was ambassador and general for Ferdinand and Isabella, is most remarkable. In some discourse between him and Montezuma, the second son of Antzol, and father of Quabutimoc, the last

King of Mexico, Cortes, observing the Indians to have many ceremonies which the Spaniards used, demanded who instructed them. The answer was, that many years before, a strange nation landed there, who were such a people as induced his ancestors to afford them a civil reception. But how they were called, or whence they came, he could not satisfy. Another time, in a panegyric which Montezuma returned them, he had this expression: 'One chief cause of my affection to your nation is, I have heard my father say, how that he had heard his grandfather affirm, that some generations before, his progenitors came thither as strangers in company of a nobleman who abode there awhile, and then departed, but left many of his people behind. That upon his return, most of those he left there died; and that from him or some of them they supposed themselves to be descended.' By which narrative it may be presumed, the people he meant were Welsh rather than Spaniards. And the records of that voyager writ by many bards and genealogists confirm as much, as may appear by the learned poems of Cynwric ab Grono, Guttyrn Owain, who lived in Edward IV.'s time; and Sir Meredith ab Rees, who lived in 1477, of Madoc had this eulogy.

Madoc ab Owen called was I;  
 Strong, comely, brave, of stature high;  
 No home-bred pleasures proved my aim;  
 By land and sea I won high fame.<sup>1</sup>

By their language also, Welsh names being given to birds and beasts, rivers and nooks, &c. &c., as pengwyn, a bird that has a white head; craigwen, a white rock; gwynddwr, white water; nev, heaven; llwynog, a fox; wy, an egg; calaf, a quill; bara, bread; trwyn, a nose; mam, a mother; tad, father; dwr, water; pryd, time, and many others. There are islands called *Corrhoeso*, and a cape Britain. Buwch, a cow; and clugar, a heathcock, &c. Nor is it a phansie of yesterday, since learned men both of late and former times have taken notice. Such are Cynwric ab Grono, Meredith ab Rees, Guttyrn Owain, Lloyd, Howell, Prys, Hackluit, Broughton, Purchas, Davy, and others, whose

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¹ Madoc wif mwydic wedd
 Iawn genau Owain Gwynedd
 Ni funnwn dyr fy enaid oedd
 Na da mawr ond y moroedd.

learning and integrity have credit, and abundantly convince the ingenious, so as no doubt had it been known and inherited, then had not Columbus, Americus Vesputius, Magellan, nor others carried away the honour of so great a discovery. Nor had Madoc been defrauded of his memory, nor our kings of their just title to a portion of the West Indies.”¹

I have already pointed out the looseness of logic, in the supposition that the words of Meredydd ab Rhys prove anything more than Madoc's departure; and now it only remains to correct the quotation made from that poem. In Theophilus Evans's *Drych y Prif Oesoedd*, the lines are said to have been found upon Madoc's tombstone. The assertion was too flagrantly untrue to receive credit; and therefore Herbert rejected the statement, but copied the lines. Originally, they formed part of a poem composed in acknowledgement of a fishing-net, which the bard received as a gift, and stood thus:

Let Evan of generous growth,
 Hunt upon the fair land, like his father;
 With kind consent, at proper hours,
 I will be a hunter upon the waters.
 Madoc the brave of the weather-beaten countenance,
 The rightful issue of Owain Gwynedd,
 Would have no land (he was my own soul!)
 Nor great wealth, except the seas.²

When the bards were out on their circuits, they used to stay for a month or two at a time in the same house, their stay being in proportion to the hospitality shown them; and when they took their leave, they generally left behind them an ode, or some verses, in praise of their host. Our bard has left us a favourable specimen of this class of poems, which is here trans-

¹ From *Travels into Africa and Asia the Great*, especially describing the famous empires of Persia and Industan, as also divers other kingdoms in the Oriental Indies, and the isles adjacent. The 3rd edition, further enlarged by Sir Thomas Herbert, Bart. London, printed in the year 1677. Pawb yn y arver.

² Helied Ifan, hael dyfiad
 Ar y tir teg, wedi'r tad;
 Mewn awr dda minnau ar ddwr,
 O fodd hael a fydd heliwr
 Madog wych, mwyedig wedd,
 Iawn genau Owain Gwynedd
 Ni fynnai dir f' enaid oedd
 Na da mawr, ond y moroed'.

lated. Llywarch was a Northwallian; and the lines are addressed—¹

TO RHYS GRYG, PRINCE OF SOUTH WALES.

Christ Creator, Emperor, who owns us,
 Christ the mysterious, pillar of peace,
 Christ son of Mary, who causest our pure nobility,
 Sensible in the detection of untruth,
 Crowned Jesus, watch over me!
 From Keirionydd² I have bent my steps,
 And first I will go to the palace of the South,
 To the skilful ruler of kingdoms,
 Rhys the son of Rhys of violent course;
 The assaulter of battle, of the race of Cadell.³
 The travelling bards resort to his assembly,
 Which is as gentle, as it is a frequent resort.
 Thou wentest to the barren covert of Rhos,⁴
 And to Pembroke in the height of triumph;
 Thou brokest Carmarthen, and its hosts from France,⁵
 And many a Frenchman was slain on the return.
 And Swansea, a tranquil town,
 Was broken in heaps, and then we made peace with the people;
 And Saint Clears⁶ with its bright white lands,

~~~~~  
<sup>1</sup> Crist creawdyr ymerawdyr an met  
 Crist keli kolofyn tangnevet  
 Crist mab meir am peir pur vonhet  
 Synwyr—kyn synhwyaw enwired  
 Caranhawe yessu car ym wet  
 Keirionnyt kyrcheis vym buchet  
 Kyrchaf yn gyntaf kyntet deheubarth  
 Diheubenn teyrnet  
 Kyrchaf Rys vab Rhys om rysset  
 Kyrchyad cad Cadell edivet  
 Kyrchynveirt kyrchant wy orset  
 Kyrchvawr llawr ys kyrchu llaryet  
 Kyrcheist ros ditos divaet  
 A phenvro a phen gorvolet.  
 Torreist gaer vyrthin torvoet ar freinc  
 Llawer franc an adwet  
 Ac abertawy tref dyhet  
 Tyryoet briw a hetiw neud het  
 A saint Cler ar clauer wyndiret

<sup>2</sup> In the upper part of Carnarvonshire.

<sup>3</sup> Cadell, the son of Roderick the Great, was the father of Howel the Good.

<sup>4</sup> Rhos is in Pembrokeshire.

<sup>5</sup> By French the bards mean Normans.

<sup>6</sup> St. Clears is in Carmarthenshire.



It is not Saxons who possess it.  
 In Swansea, the strong key of Lloegria,  
 We made widows of all the wives.  
 The Eagle of men loves not to lie, nor sleep,  
 Nor an idle retinue.  
 There was a raising and shaking of swords,  
 At the fortified breastplate of royalty.  
 We accustomed the spear of valorous enthusiasm,  
 To pierce through them in a twinkling.  
 His hand taught the bloody-stained blades,  
 To make the Germans move to exile;  
 His army slew till they were satiated,—  
 The grey whelps had circumspection.  
 The dreaded Eagle is accustomed to lay bodies in rows,  
 And to feast with the leader of wolves,  
 And with hovering ravens glutted with flesh,—  
 Butchers with keen bodings for carcasses;  
 Three days he feasted, with bards  
 At his board at his residence,  
 With his prey, delicious wine, and his feast,  
 This greatly beloved ravager,  
 His red gold, his good fortune, and his wealth,  
 And his sleek stallions of well trained restlessness;

~~~~~

Nyd Saeson y maon ae met
 Yn Abertawy terwyn allwet Lloegyr
 Neud llwyr wetw y gwraget
 Ny char eryr gwyr gorwet na chysgu
 Na chosgort heb wnet
 Gnawd ysgyn ac ysgwyd ar glet
 Yn ysgor brondor brenhinet
 Gnawd gwaewawr gwryawr gwythlonet
 Gwan trwywan trwydun gythrymet
 Gnawd oe law y lavur cochwet
 Y gychwyn allmyn i alltudet
 Gnawd y lu y lat eu tachwet
 Y lwydyon canaon callet
 Gnawd eryr ebyr abar gwet bangnaw
 Y bencud wy gyvet
 A chicvrein kyvwyrein kiewlet
 Kicytyon coelyon kalanet
 Trydyt gnawd cannrrawd Kynrawet o veirt
 Am y vwrvt kyvannhet
 Ae breitin ae wlytwyn ae wlet
 Ae breityawr gorvawr gorhoffet
 Ae eur rut ae vut ae veuet
 Ae enys hywetvrys hywet

And I of my talents had no peace,
 But was obliged to sing an infinity of songs.
 This is a fair region for a bard to meet with splendid gifts;
 Prince-like, he will not let me experience one want;
 Chief of elegance, I will tell when I return to Gwynedd,
 How in a court name, and wonderful grandeur,
 I go with the chief.
 Chief of rulers, thou excellest in daring
 The bold riders of thy proud saddles;
 On a rising course free from obstruction,
 When once determinedly started, thou art not easily interrupted.
 Princes who are thy opponents,
 Fall before thee like the stars of creation.
 Rhos was destroyed and Pembroke,—the people,
 A baptised people fond of meat,¹ were pardoned.
 The court of Haverford² of the surge, and its houses,
 Were also burned to the ground.
 The whole of what the inhabitants had was taken,
 And divided among the followers.

~~~~~  
 A minheu om donyeu dym het  
 Gnawd ym daw anaw anvedret  
 Or deheu yrdanc haelonet  
 Ardal hart y vart am verthet  
 Por eissor un eissyau nym gwet  
 Penn elyf pan elwyl wynet  
 Un llysenw a run nyd ryvet vy mod  
 Yn mudaw am reuet  
 Reuet teyrnet ti bieu y dreis  
 Ar draws valch gyfriau  
 Rysva dygyn dugost wy gotau  
 Rusgleth gwrt nyd ymhwrt amheu  
 Riuet syr syrthiasant yg creu  
 Oth gynnygyn oth gynnevodeu  
 Ros divro Penvro penn vateu pybyl  
 Pobyl vedyt rwy kigleu  
 Llys hawrfort y berw fyrt neud teu  
 Llwyd llosged y thudwet hitheu  
 Llwtwyd kymynwyd kwbyl yn eu pobed  
 Pob kenveint yn ychreu

<sup>1</sup> This expression might amuse a stranger; and yet it affords an interesting insight into the manners of the Welsh. Their diet was of rather a pastoral character, being bread and milk, without meat; the want of the latter article prevented the Earl of Leicester from keeping an army of Englishmen in Wales, when Llewelyn ab Gruffydd and himself were confederates. Warrington is wrong when he says (vol. ii. p. 179) it was want of bread; for of that, as Giraldus shows, they had plenty.

<sup>2</sup> Haverfordwest in Pembrokeshire.

The Castle of Gwys<sup>1</sup> thou didst quickly humble,  
 And Arberth<sup>2</sup> of the light gossamer.  
 Death is the natural consequence of thy enmity,  
 And of that of thy retinue—best of rulers.  
 Rhys the Little<sup>3</sup> art thou called, but falsely,  
 For thou art Rhys the proudly great, towering in arms in the battle.  
 Rhys the Hoarse<sup>4</sup> they call him—pillar of state,  
 Not Rhys the harsh attempting oppressions.  
 Rhys that not ten thousand nor double will drive back,  
 A warrior that does not give his warriors  
 A destiny of idleness.  
 A hero before whose bloody wide-spreading sword,  
 Chieftains fall like shooting stars.  
 Hero of Dinevor,<sup>5</sup> with the hand unused to except,  
 By seeing thee am I not become  
 The first chief of the faith,  
 Of a Cambrian from a Cambrian multitude?  
 From every kingdom tribute comes to our sovereign,  
 And he protects those who give it.  
 His favours are scattered among suitors,

~~~~~

Kastell gwis kystyngeist yn gleu
 Ac Arberth gosymerth goleu
 Anghen yn aghen yn anghew oth gas
 Ath osgort rwy goreu
 Rys Vychan y galwant ys geu
 Rys vawr valch yg calch yg cadeu
 Rys Gryg y galwant golofyn peu
 Nyd Rhys Gryg yn kynnyc kameu
 Rys nys kil na deng mil na deu
 Pan el Rys yn rwyse arveu
 Arwawc kymynawg kymened osswyd
 Oes vdtut nyd tynghed
 Aerwr syr syrthyws eu riued
 Ar y law ae lafyn wyarlled
 Arwr dinevwr dinamhed adaf
 Neud athwyf ath weled
 Yn bennaf yn bennaeth or gred
 O gymro o gymry giwed
 O bob teyrnas teyrnged yn rwyf
 Nwy rotwy gogeled

¹ In Pembrokeshire.

² Narberth in Pembrokeshire.

³ When father and son were of the same name, the son was called the "Little," *Vychan*.

⁴ This is a pun, as in the preceding case, upon the word "Gryg," which may signify either hoarse or harsh.

⁵ The royal seat of the Princes of South Wales. It is in Carmarthenshire.

His red gold, his bounty, and his society.
 I being anxious to return home,
 The liberal prince was so pressing,
 That to stay he offered me gold and silver in abundance,
 And stallions of headlong haste pampered with corn,
 Men and land, and an extensive township,
 And frequent admission to his society,
 With a lordship well known and fruitful ;
 Without limit and enough for the wisest
 Were given to me by the potent ruler ;
 A golden mirror, and three hundred garments.
 He is the best prince ever born,
 Since the meek Arthur, the leader of the nation ;
 He pours his gold into the lap of the agitated bard,
 As ripe fruit falls from the trees.
 Llewelyn, ruler of baptism and belief,
 Son of Iorwerth, my strength and protection,
 Thou, too, shouldst come to the South ;
 The renowned meek one would give thee permission :
 Thou wouldst meet with abundant honour,
 And live on terms of equality, an age of generosity.
 Thou art like Mordav¹ and Nudd, givers of red gold,

~~~~~  
 Y eirchion y eirchyeid ar lled  
 Ae eur rut ae vut ae vynwed  
 A minheu ked mynhwyf vyned  
 Am radeu ryeu ry daenred  
 Yssym eur ac aryant nyd fled  
 Ac emys grawhuryrs grawnvyged  
 Yssym wyr a thir a threfred ehang  
     Ac ehofyn ystlyned  
 Yssym ut digut digaled  
 Digryno digawn y doethed  
 Am rotes ryodres riued  
 A drych eur ar drychant tuted  
 Ef goreu rieu ry aned  
 Er Arthur llary modur lliwed  
 Ef dihytyl y eur yn arfed frawt feirt  
     Val frwyth coed llawn adved  
 Llywelyn llyw bedyt a chred  
 Vab Iorwerth vy nerth vy noted  
 Y titheu ut deheu dyred  
 Clod wr llary om llwry yth drwyted  
 Ny bytud wrthut vut vyged  
 Yth eissor yth oes o haelhed  
 Wrth vordaf a nut pan roted ratureu

<sup>1</sup> Mordav, Nudd, and Rhydderch were the three generous princes of the Isle of

And Rhydderch of equal fame,  
 And thy stature and powerful frame,  
 Is like Ercwlf<sup>1</sup> the dreaded  
 And Samson, wood dogs of the most glorious cause,  
 And Hector when the trial came;  
 And from the time thou hast proved thy courage,  
 Jesus has not left thee to want.  
 In the communion of the three, in a band so fair,  
 Have I not left thy support?  
 Grand consociate of the respected Kymry,  
 Terrible opposing leader—give me thy hand.  
 Rhys the son of Rhys, to whom Britain is certainly indebted,  
 Is the favourite of the poets;  
 Rhys of Derllys,<sup>2</sup> I should deserve his reward,  
 Rhys the Protector deserves Dyved;<sup>3</sup>  
 Ruler of Dyved! thy ravages, thy praise, thy enemies,  
 Thy progress is wonderful;

~~~~~

A ryterch afneved
 Yth wrthyd yth wrt gadarnhed
 Mal gwrhyd Ercwlff ergrynهد
 A Samswn gwytgwn gogonet achaws
 Ac echdor pan broved
 Ac or pryd y provaf nad fled
 Nath adws Yessu eissywed
 Yn hygant y tri yn tecced adaf
 Neud adwyf yth ganred
 Run gymrawt gymry ovyged
 Rynn wrthyd llyw ryd llaw roted
 Rys vab rys dilys dylyed prydein
 Prydytyon eituned
 Rys derllys dyrlytwn y ged
 Rys rebyt ef dyrlyt dyved
 Dyved rwyf dy glwyf dy glod dy gynygyn
 Dy gynnif ys hynod
 Dy gletyf ry glywssam arvod
 Ath waew rut yn rynn ym wossod
 Dy arwyt ech awyt uchod
 Ys ar grad y gad y ganvod

Britain. Their courteous dispositions were such, that they did not fail to grant anything whatever to any person who solicited it of them, if they had it in possession, or could obtain it by gift, loan, or present, whether the applicants were friends or foes, relatives or strangers.—*Triad* 30.

¹ Hercules.

² There is a farmhouse of this name about five miles from the town of Carmarthen.

³ The district of Dyved latterly comprised all South Wales except Glamorgan-shire.

Thy sword of which we have heard so much,
 And thy red spear always ready for conflict;
 Thy crest, the pervading spirit above,
 Is easily seen on the field of battle;
 The protector of the orderly pleasant places,
 Is thoroughly known to the men of England;
 Three hundred times has thy shield been fractured,
 In three hundred hostile encounters.
 Thy red gold lying uncounted in thy palace,
 And thy prancing stallions,
 And thy flocks playfully skipping along,
 And thy herds, and thy wide domains:
 Thus wert thou when I found thee,
 And I am voluntarily impelled to sing thy praise.
 How energetic the man who overcomes
 All the unruly people;
 May God protect thee,
 And assist thee to prepare for thy end,
 Since there is no promise to tarry here.
 Dragon of Britain, look before thee;
 And when thou shalt have run thy life of fair converse,
 Of which I would not have concern without thee,
 In heaven may thy permanent mansion be, and thy summer dwelling,—
 A prince of the kingdom of God above.

Canhorthwy gordwy gordirod
 Can wyr lloegyr ys llwyr adnabod
 Dy ysgwyd rwygwyd ragod trychanweith
 Trychangwyth gyvarvod
 Ath eur rut dilut divyth od yth lys
 Ath emys amgyrvod
 Ath breityawr yn dyrawr dyvod
 Ath preitin ath braf dy ofod
 Mal yt wytt yt wyf yth ganvod
 Yth ganmawl ny gannwf gorvod
 Mor huysgwr gwr yn gorvod ar bawb
 Or bobloet anghydvod
 Cynnhyad Duw ys diheu y vod
 Yth gannerth cyn darmerth darvod
 Canyd oes yma ammod y drygiaw
 Dreic prydein syll ragod
 Pan vyytych oth vyd hart gydvod
 Or bythwn ny hebwn hebod
 Boed yn nef ath bendref ath havod teyrn
 Teyrnas duw uchod.

Mgv. Arch. i. p. 294.

EINION AB GWGAN does not seem to have gained much renown in his own age ; but he has contributed one fine poem to the store of Cambrian literature. This is a long heroic address to Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, the commencement and conclusion of which are really fine specimens of poetry :¹

I invoke the assistance of my Lord, the God of Heaven,
 Christ, the mysterious love-promoter, whom to neglect is impious
 (The gift is true which descendeth from above,
 The gifts that are given me are immortal),
 According to the words of Paul,
 To prove all things,
 And to celebrate my prince, the ardent ruler,
 Who avoids not the battle, nor its danger ;—
 Llewelyn the generous, the maintainer of bards.
 He is the dispenser of happiness to his subjects ;
 His noble deeds cannot be sufficiently extolled ;
His spear flashes in a hand accustomed to martial deeds.

His numerous battles are then related, and the poem concludes with the following summary of the hero's character :²

Protector of our country, may God protect thee !
 Britain, fearless of her enemies, glories in being ruled by
 A chief who has numerous troops to defend her,
 By Llewelyn, who defies his enemies from shore to shore ;
 He is the joy of armies, and, like a lion in danger,
 He is the emperor and sovereign of sea and land.



¹ Cyfarchaf om naf, am nefawl Arglwydd,
 Crist celi culwydd, cwl i ddidawl,
 Celfydd leferydd o le gweddawl,
 Celfyddydau mau ni fo marwawl
 I brofi pob peth o bregeth Bawl,
 I foli fy rhi, rhwyf angerddawl
 Rhyfel ddiocchel, ddiocchwyth hawl,
 Llywelyn heilyn hwylfeirdd yaddawl
 Llawenydd y dydd, deddyf ai mawl,
 Llewychedig llafn yn llaw reddfawl.

² Rhy chyngein Prydein yn ddibryder,
 I Briodawr llawr yn llawn nifer,
 Llywelyn gelyn yn i galwer
 I gelwir am dir am dud tymer.
 Llawenydd lluoedd llew yn bryder,
 Llywiawdyr ymmerawdr mor a lleufer,

He is a warrior that may be compared to a deluge,
 To the surge on the beach which covereth the wild salmon.
 The sound of *his approach is like that of the roaring wave that*
rusheth to the shore,
That can neither be stopped nor appeased ;
He puts numerous troops of his enemies to flight,
Like a mighty wind.
 Warriors crowded about him, zealous to defend his cause ;
 Their shields shone bright on their arms ;
 His bards make the vales resound with his praises ;
 The justice of his cause, and his bravery in maintaining it,
 Are deservedly celebrated ;
 His valour is the theme of every tongue ;
 The glory of his victories is heard in distant climes ;
 His men exult about their eagle,—
 To yield or die is the fate of his enemies.
 They have experienced his force by the shivering of his lance ;
 In the day of battle, when no danger can change his purpose,
 He is conspicuous above the rest,
 With a large, strong, crimson lance.
 He is the honour of his country ; great is his generosity,
 And he is never sued in vain.
 Llewelyn is a tender-hearted prince ;
 He is wise, witty, and ingenious,

I ddylif cynnif cynhebyecer
 I ddylan am lann, am leissiaid ffer.
 Terfysc tonn dilyse dyleinw aber ;
 Dylad anwasdad ny osteceer,
 Terwynt twrwr rhywynt yn rhyw amser,
 A rhialluoedd lluoedd llawer.
 Torfoedd ynghyhoedd ynghyflawnder
 Tariannau golau wal i gweler :
 Ry folant anant, anaw cymer,
 Ry molir i wir i orober
 I wryd yn rhyd yn rheid nifer,
 I orofn gwraf yn ydd eler,
 I orfod goffod glod a glywer,
 I wyr am eryr ni amharer
 I warae orau pan waraer
 I wayw a orau yn ddau hanner,
 Dinidr yn nydd brwydr yn yd brofer,
 Dinodyng perging, pargoch hydrfer,
 Dinas droig urddas, eurddawn haelder
 Dinac efynag pan ofynner.
 Dyn yw Llywelyn llywiauwr tyner,

And diffuses happiness as he circulates his wine.
 May He that bestowed on us a share of His heavenly revelation
 Grant him the blessed habitation of the saints above the stars.

Next in point of literary merit is *DAVYDD BENVRAS*, who has also composed a fine poem in honour of this prince. In the preceding portions, I have contented myself with presenting literal prose versions; but, in order to afford a little variety, I will give Davydd Benvras's ode, in a very faithful metrical version by Mr. Maurice Roberts of Llwynrhudol:¹

Creator of that glorious light,
 Which sheds around his vivid rays,
 And the pale moon, which rules the night,
 Oh, deign to animate my lays!
 Oh, may my verse like Merddin's flow,
 And with poetic visions glow!
 Great Aneurin, string my lyre,
 Grant a portion of thy fire!
 That fire which made thy verse record
 Those chiefs who fell beneath the sword
 On Cattraeth's² bloody field:
 Oh! may the muse her vigour bring
 While I Llewelyn's praises sing,
 His country's strongest shield!
 Ne'er was such a warrior seen,
 With heart so brave and gallant mien;
 From a regal race descended,
 Bravely he the land defended;

~~~~~

Doeth coeth cywrennin, gwin a gwener  
 Ar gwr ai rhoddes in ran or pader,  
 Ai rhoddo ef gwenfro gwynfryn uch ser.  
<sup>1</sup> Gwr a wnaeth llewych o'r gorllewin,  
 Haul a lloer addoer, addef iessin  
 Am gwnel radd uchel rwyf cyfychwyin  
 Cyflawn Awen, awydd fyrddin  
 I ganu moliant mal Aneirin gynt  
 Dydd y cant Ododin  
 I foli gwyndawd gwyndyd werin  
 Gwynedd bendefig ffynnedig ffin  
 Gwanas deyrnas deg cywrennin  
 Gwreidd teyrneidd taer ymrwydin  
 Gwrawl ei fflamdo am fro freiddin  
 Er pan oreu Duw dyn gyssefin  
 Ni wnaeth ei gystal traws arial trin  
 Gorug Llywelyn orllin—teyrnedd

<sup>2</sup> See chap. i. p. 3.

Kings have learnt his pow'r to dread,  
 Kings have felt his arm and fled.  
 Loegria's king, with conquest flush'd,  
 Boldly to the battle rush'd;  
 Then was heard the warlike shout  
 (Signal of the approaching rout);  
 Great Llewelyn raged around,  
 Bravest chieftains press'd the ground;  
 None his valour could withstand,  
 None could stem his furious hand;  
 Like a whirlwind on the deep,  
 See him through their squadrons sweep.  
 Then was seen the crimson flood,  
 Then was Offa<sup>1</sup> bathed in blood,  
 Then the Saxons fled with fright,  
 Then they felt the monarch's might.

Far is heard Llewelyn's name,  
 Resounded by the trump of fame;  
 Oft the hero chased his foes,  
 Where Sabrina<sup>2</sup> smoothly flows.  
 Could I poetic heights attain,  
 Yet still unequal were my strain  
 Thy wondrous deeds to grace.  
 E'en Taliesin, bardic king,  
 Unequal were thy praise to sing,

~~~~~

Ar y brenhinedd braw a gorddin
 Pan fu yn ymbrofi a brenin Lloegyr
 Yn llygru swydd erbin
 Oedd breisc weisc ei fyddin,
 Oedd brwys rwysc rhag y godorin
 Oedd balch gwalch, golchiad ei lain,
 Oedd beilch gweilch, gweled ei werin,
 Oedd clywed cleddyfau finfin
 Oedd clybod clwyf ym mhob elin
 Oedd briw rhiw yn nhrabludd odrin
 Oedd braw saw saeson clawdd y Cnwccin
 Oedd bwlech llafn yn llaw gynnefin,
 Oedd gwaedlyd pennau, gwedi gwaedlin rhyw
 Yn rhedeg am ddeulin.
 Llywelyn, ein llyw cyffredin
 Llywiawdr berth hyd borth ysgewin
 Ni ryfu gystal Gwstennin ag ef
 I gyfaill pob gorllin

¹ Offa's Dyke.

² The river Severn.

Thy glories to retrace.
 Long and happy may he live,
 And his hours to pleasure give !
 Ere his earthly course is sped,
 And he lies number'd with the dead ;
 And ere upon his honoured tomb
 Herbs shall rise, and flowers shall bloom.
 May the Redeemer intercede,
 And unto God for mercy plead !
 And when the Judgment Day shall come,
 When all attending to their doom,
 Then may Llewelyn, warrior brave,
 In glory live beyond the grave ;
 Oh, may the hero's sins be then forgiven,
 And may he gain a seat with blessed saints in heaven !

The diction here is dignified, well-sustained, and appropriate; but in the original of this, as in many compositions of the same, and later ages, the versification is elaborated at the expense of sentiment, and a jingling of similar sounds is made to conceal a poverty of ideas; yet Davydd Benvras is more coherent and concise than most of his contemporaries. What he has to say, he puts into a few nervous words; and if his thoughts fall short of sublimity, they must be admitted to be less trite and commonplace than those which pervade many of the bardic remains. Twelve of his poems have been preserved; most of them are addressed to Llewelyn the Great, but there are a few moral verses, which, if they have no other merit, are smooth, flowing, and suited to the subject.

~~~~~

Mi i'm byw be byddwn ddewin  
 Ym marddair ym marddawn gyssefin  
 Adrawd ei ddaed aerdrin ni allwn,  
 Ni allai Daliesin.  
 Cyn adaw y byd gyd gyfrin  
 Gan hoedyl hir ar dir daierin  
 Cyn dyfynfedd eseyrnwedd yserin  
 Cyn daer dyfnlas arlessin  
 Gwr a wnaeth or dwfr y gwin  
 Gan fodd Duw a diwedd gwirin  
 Nog a wnaethbwyd treis anwyd trin  
 Ymhresent ymhrysur orllin  
 Ni warthaer hael am werthefin nos,  
 A nawdd saint boed cyfrin.

MORAL VERSES.<sup>1</sup>

All will come to the earthen ship ;  
 Poor little people will perish :  
 Who owns great wealth will cease to be,  
 And in one hour be swallowed up.

The hosts of earth will have an end,  
 And all we loved or followed ;  
 Do we not pass to a cold tenement ?  
 There is no life to man.

Every man will have a cold habitation,  
 With death for his companion,  
 And though he owns the land above,  
 He'll end his days in that beneath.

ELIDIR SAIS has left eleven poems, of which many are on religious subjects. Of those which relate to temporal matters, we will take the first on the list in the *Archaiology*.

AN ATONEMENT TO LLEWELYN AB IORWERTH.<sup>2</sup>

Natural is the quaffing of the clear bright wine  
 From the horn of the buffalo,  
 From the fold of the bugle,  
 Natural is the singing of the cuckoo in the beginning of summer,

<sup>1</sup> Pawb a ddaw yr ddaear long  
 Poyl vchein druhein a dreing  
 A vacco treul gywro trang  
 Yn unawr y llawr ae llwng.

Llyngvawr daearawr dervyn a garaf  
 A gereis ych hanlyn  
 Neut eddyf yn oer dyddyn  
 Nid oes dim enioes y ddydn.

Pob dyn oer dyddyn neud eiddaw anghen  
 Anghyveillwr iddaw  
 Y veddu dayar arnaw  
 Y vedd or diwedd y daw.

<sup>2</sup> DADOLWCH I LLYWELYN AB IORWERTH.  
 Gwnawd yr yfawdd glyw gloyw win o fual  
 O fuarth buelin.  
 Gnawd cathleu cogen cyntefin

Natural is the increasing growth of the springing blade,  
 Natural to the wise is his intellectual wealth,  
 But not natural, not tranquil is it to be sorrowful.  
 Regret has done me great injury,  
 For the brothers of dignity, the best men of the west;  
 Brothers separated in lamentable terror by foes,  
 O God, and Mary, and the sisters! can I smile?  
 Can I rejoice with a mind full of anxiety?  
 He came as a lion with lightning impelling,  
 The excelling hawk, the victorious hawk of enterprise,  
 Llewelyn, the gentle sovereign,  
 Of courteous manners; the director of the banquet (or the filling of the  
     circulating glass),  
 I am not accustomed to the habit of soaring (or whirling round);  
 I have not been roaming,  
 To view the paths of the songs of Taliesin;  
 Lo! I am not so sprightly  
 As prior to the end of the frail conflict of Breiddin,<sup>1</sup>  
 To express myself in the bardic strains of Merddin.  
 I will give thee counsel, who art most excellent in disposition,  
 Whose dread spreads beyond the sea!  
 Consider, when you oppress beyond the borders,  
 To make everyone extend his head to his knees;

~~~~~

Gnawd y tyf tywys o egin
 Gnawd y doeth cyfoeth cyfyewin
 Ni nawd nid llonydd a llwyfin
 Hiraeth am ry wnaeth rewin
 Braint brodyr gwellwyr gollewin
 Broder de braw aele elin
 Duw a mair a chwair yn chwertthin
 Chwerthid bryd o bryder chweurin
 Dothyw llew a lluchig gorddin
 Detholwalch buddugfalch byddin
 Llywelyn llyerw freyenhin
 Llary ddefawd llyw gwyrddrawd gwydrin
 Nid wyf gynnefawd gynnefin amchwyf
 Ni rybum gerddennin
 Edrych cyrdd cerddau Taliesin
 Edrych ni mor wyf eddein
 Ry ddarfod brau gyfnod Breiddin
 Ry ddywawd oi farddwawd Ferddin
 Cyssil ath roddaf oth rin wyd goreu
 Gorofn tra nierin
 Ystyrych pan dreisych dros ffin
 Ystwng pawb hyd ben ei ddeulin

¹ The same place as the Breiddin mentioned by Gwalchmai in chap. i. sect. 2.

Be to the weak an equal distributor of the spoil ;
Be truly mild to the songs of the right line ;
 Be of ardent courage in the slaughter, adhere to thy labour ;
Destroy England, and plunder its multitudes ;
 Mercy be to thee in thy stony fortress
 For loving the prophetic Deity !

THE SAME SUBJECT IN A DIFFERENT METRE.

Llewelyn the affable, permit me to remain in the country
 Of the obstructors of the great Ca-esar,¹
 And honour me, thou whose course is like the fiery flame,
 With thy gift, and thy favour, but not thy anger ;
 Thy anger, Llewelyn, has been heavy,
 And nearly annihilated me.
 Thou, whose golden tributes are wrung from every land,
 Hast nearly exterminated a youth in his manhood.
 Manliest of men, supporter of the tents of Avarwy,²
 His anger is dreadful ;

~~~~~

Bydd wrth wann gyfran gywrenin  
 Bydd iawn llary wrth gerddau iowullin  
 Bydd wrddrud aer ddylud ddilin  
 Dilein Lloegr a llwgr oi gwerin  
 Trugaredd ath fo oth feinin gaerwedd  
 O garu Duw Ddewin

KYNGOGION OR DADOLWCH.

Llywelyn hyddyn haedd am par cywlad  
 Cyffuddion Udd Kessar  
 Om rhoddud rwysg ufeliar  
 Da rodd dy fodd heb dy far  
 Dy far Llywelyn a fu fawr i drwm  
 Ei drymed am diddawr  
 Eurdreth o drymyn pob llawr  
 Aer drange gwr ieuange gwriawr.  
 Gwr gwraf gorsaf gwerysll Afarwy  
 Ei fareu om erchyll

<sup>1</sup> Welsh literature furnishes additional proofs of the propriety of sounding the C hard in Latin words. The bards, who usually adhered strictly to sounds, always say Kesar. It sounds strange to say Kikerò, and yet that seems to be the proper pronunciation.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Biographical Dictionary* of the Rev. Robert Williams, Avarwy, upon the authority of the Triads, is represented to have been the same person as the Androgeus of the Chronicles ; but though doubtful of the soundness of that view, I cannot stay to inquire into its correctness. It is, however, certain that the Avarwy to whom

Nimble slaughterer of the hosts of Loegria,<sup>1</sup>  
 Though the red-armed chief accuses he will not lose me.  
 Than to be sent away by him who pays me from his riches,  
     It is more likely far,  
 That he will leave me to want nothing,  
 But make me, like Gwgan,<sup>2</sup> live an age of prosperous generosity.

Llewelyn is compared, was not Androgeus, but Arviragus; for a Welsh bard would scarcely think it a compliment to compare Llewelyn ab Iorwerth to one of "three arrant traitors of the Isle of Britain." He was the son of Kynvelyn (Kymbelinus—the Cymbeline of Shakespeare), King of Britain. Arviragus is placed by Geoffrey in the reign of the Emperor Claudius. His brother Gwiderius (Gwydyr) and Arviragus (Avarwy) having refused to pay tribute to the Romans, Claudius came against him with a large army. In the battle that ensued, Gwiderius was slain treacherously by Hamo, a Roman general; but Arviragus, having put on his brother's armour, continued the conflict, and defeated the Romans. He subsequently married the daughter of Claudius, and gave his assistance to the Emperor in reducing the Orkneys. He afterwards rebelled against the Romans, and acquired great fame as a warrior; but after fighting an indecisive battle against Vespasian, who had been sent to oppose him, he, through the good offices of his wife, made peace with that general. Afterwards, when he grew old, he began to show much respect to the Senate, and to govern his kingdom in peace and tranquillity. He confirmed the old laws of his ancestors, and enacted some new ones, and made very ample presents to all persons of merit. So that his fame spread over all Europe, and he was both loved and feared by the Romans, and became the object of their discourse more than any king in his time. Hence Juvenal relates how a certain blind man, speaking of a turbot that was taken, said :

"Omen habes, inquit, magni clarique triumphi,  
 Regem aliquem capies, aut de temone Britanno  
 Excidet Arviragus."

Thou hast here an omen of a victory great and glorious;  
 Arviragus shall from his British chariot fall,  
 Or thee his lord some captive king shall call.

In war none was more fierce than he, in peace none more mild, none more pleasing, or in his presents more magnificent. When he had finished his course of life, he was buried at Gloucester, in a certain temple which he had built and dedicated to the honour of Claudius. Such is Geoffrey's story, which, though some of it may be imaginary, is evidently that to which the bard refers.

Aerflawdd Lloegr lluoedd erfyll  
 Arfrudd er cyhudd nim cyll.  
 No cholled alaf elw freuner om tal  
 Tebygach ym lawer  
 Heb eisieu neb neuom ner  
 Oes Wogawn hwyldawn haelder

<sup>1</sup> Lloegria (Lloegr) is the Welsh name for England.

<sup>2</sup> "Gwgan Gwron, the son of Peredur vab Eliver, distinguished with Llywarch Hen and Manawyddan, as the three unambitious princes of Britain; who having devoted themselves to bardism, refused to accept of regal power when offered them. He was also one of the three heralds who regulated the laws of war; the other two

Most generous were Mordav<sup>1</sup> and thy honoured father ;  
 They would not bid me seek another land.  
 Impeller of armies, hero of slaughterers,  
 Eagle of warriors, send me not away.  
 Let me not be exiled, without having deserved thy hatred,  
 From thy large and wide domain,  
 Brave leader of the great tribe of Mervyn,  
 Llewelyn, hero of Lliwelydd.

We shall speak of the religious poems of this bard hereafter. Of the cause of this anger on the part of Llewelyn there seems to be no information ; but it is possible that the prince was suspicious of his integrity, for, as the name Elidir Sais (Heliodorus the Englishman) indicates, the bard either was not of Welsh parentage, though he had acquired a pretty complete knowledge of the language, or he had spent much of his life in England.

GWYNVARDD BRYCHEINIOG, another bard of this age, has left us two long poems ; one addressed to the Lord Rhys of Dinevor, and the other to the memory of St. David. The latter is a curiosity, and a good specimen of an historical poem. In the following lines the poet shows much skill in his enumeration of the churches dedicated to this saint in his day :

Dewi (or David) the great of Menevia, the wise sage,  
 And Dewi of Brevi<sup>2</sup> near the plains,  
 And Dewi is the owner of the superb church of Kyvelach,<sup>3</sup>  
 Where there is joy and great piety.

~~~~~  
 were Greidiol and Trystan. He flourished about the close of the sixth century."—
 OWEN'S *Cambrian Biography*, p. 161.

¹ One of the three generous princes of the Isle of Britain.

Haelaf oedd Fordaf ath fawrdad am ged
 Nym gedynt arallwlad
 Eryf llu arwr lleiddiad
 Eryr ar gedwyr nam gad
 Nam gad i wybraw eb obryn dy far
 Oth fawr ehang derfyn
 Glew llawr cenedl fawr Ferfyn
 Glyw Lliwelydd Llywelyn.
 Dewi mawr Mynyw, syw sywedydd,
 A Dewi Brevi, gar ei broydd
 A Dewi bieu balch lan Gyfelach,
 Lle mae morach a mawr grefydd.

² In Cardiganshire.

³ Glamorganshire, near Swansea.

And Dewi owns the choir that is
 At Meidrym,¹ a place affording sepulture to multitudes ;
 And Bangor Esgor ; and the choir of Henllan,
 Which is a place of fame for sheltering yews ;
 And Maenor Deivi,² void of steep declivities ;
 And Abergwili,¹ containing mildness and modesty ;
 And fair Henvynyw,³ by the side of the Glen of Aeron,
 Fields prolific in trefoil, and oaks productive of acorns ;
 Llanarth,³ Llanarthney,¹ churches of the patron saint ;
 Llangadog,¹ a privileged place, enriched by chiefs ;
 Llanvaes,⁴ a lofty place, shall not suffer by war ;
 Nor the church in Llywel⁴ from any hostile band,
 Garthbrenge,⁴ the hill of Dewi, void of disgrace,
 And Trallwng Cynvyn⁴ by the dales ;
 And Llanddewi⁵ of the Cross, with a new chancel ;
 And Glasgwm,⁵ and its church by Glas Vynydd (the green mountain),
 A lofty sylvan retreat, where sanctuary fails not ;
 Craig Vuruna⁵ fair is here, and fair its hilly prospects ;
 And Ystrad Vynydd,⁵ and its uncontrolled liberty.⁶

Next on the list stands the name of PHYLIP BRYDYDD, or Philip the Poet. We have six poems by him on various topics, none possessing any great degree of poetical merit, and yet each

~~~~~

A Dewi bieu Bangeibyr y sydd  
 Meidrym, le a'i mynwent i luossydd,  
 A Bangor Esgor ; a Bangeibyr Henllan,  
 Y sydd i'r clodfan y clyd ywydd  
 Maenawr Deifi di orfynydd ;  
 Abergwylly bieu gwylwlydd ;  
 Henvynyw deg o du glennydd Aeron,  
 Hyfaes ei mellion, hyfes goedydd ;  
 Llanarth, Llanadneu, llanau llywydd ;  
 Llangadawg, lle breiniawg rannawg rihydd ;  
 Nis ar'eidd rhyfel Llanfaes, lle uchel ;  
 Na'r llan yn Llywel, gan neb lluydd ;  
 Garthbrenge, bryn Dewi, digywilydd ;  
 A Thrallwng Cynfyn ger y dolydd,  
 A Llandewi y Crwys, Llogawd newydd,  
 A Glascwm ai eglwys ger glas fynydd  
 Gwyddelfod aruchel, nawdd ni achwydd,  
 Craig Furuna deg yma, teg ym mynydd,  
 Ac Ystrad Fynydd, ai ryddid rydd.

*Myv. Arch.* vol. i. p. 127.

<sup>1</sup> Carmarthenshire.

<sup>2</sup> Pembrokeshire.

<sup>3</sup> Cardiganshire.

<sup>4</sup> Brecknockshire.

<sup>5</sup> Radnorshire.

<sup>6</sup> The translation is taken from Williams's *Dissertation on the Pelagian Heresy*.

possessing some feature of sufficient interest to deserve notice. He seems to have been considered in his own day to possess considerable talent; and though he will not now bear comparison with the great luminaries of the world, yet has he in him something more than the run of common men. He was the family bard of that turbulent chieftain Rhys Gryg, Lord of South Wales, and seems to have given offence to his patron by his leaving the court of Rhys to travel the regular bardic circuit, the chieftain objecting to the celebration of any praise but his own; the following poem contains a species of remonstrance on the part of the bard:

ATONEMENT TO RHYS GRYG.<sup>1</sup>

Why seekest thou, bloodstained rallying-point of the  
 Blood-soiled spear, that I should leave thee?  
 Why, patron of bards, wolf of the Lord,  
 What fault foundest thou in me?  
 I will take upon me, eloquent Rhys, to answer;  
 It is rendering to him in his own court  
 Ready and certain services,  
 And singing the great praises of the Lord Rhys.  
 Rhys, the honoured of England, and gentle host of the banqueting  
 house of numbers,  
 The shield of Ystrad Towy;  
 From thy fury, loving patron of song,  
 May God protect me as if I were helpless.  
 I have been thy supporter, thou maintainer of armies

<sup>1</sup> KYNGHORION DADOLWCH A GANT PHYLIP PRYDYT Y RHYS GRYG GWEDI SORRI  
 WRTHAW AM BRYDU Y NEB NAMYN ITAW EF.

Pa gessidy vi vodrydaf kreugar  
 Kroewgoch gwaew oth adaf  
 Pa ham veirt adlam vleit naf  
 Pa gam a gefeisty arnaf.  
 Arnaf kymeraf kymhenrys attel  
 Hyd ettaw yny lys  
 Myned dyled dilys  
 A mawrglod ym arglwyd rys.  
 Rys vvg Loegyry westyng lary westi torvoet  
 Taryan ystrad Tywi  
 Rac dy var kar kert loehi  
 Mal gwiryon gwared dduw vi  
 Mi ath fum borthwr borthyad riallu  
 Ni ellir y ddiwad

(It cannot be denied),  
 When, well-known ruler, lion of battle,  
 Thou wert involved in all sorts of wars.  
 For thy fame, great hero, dishonour me not,  
 Nor treat me with contempt;  
 Radiant eagle, sheltering hand,  
 Let me not feel thy ire.  
 I cannot continue to eat the bread of Rhys,  
 The crimson-spotted one of battles:  
*For pleasureless to me is all good,  
 While disliked by him who used to love me.*  
 Hate me not; be patient, passionless one; refrain.  
 Rhys of Rhos and Eppynt.<sup>1</sup>  
 I have been thy bard, and many know it,  
*And a hundred times thy companion formerly.*  
 First I will save my important privileges from the rage  
 Of the descendant of Casnar<sup>2</sup> of the dreaded thrust;  
 The protection of the great God of the ten shades of midnight  
 Be given me, and that of nine thousand saints!  
 And beware, heroic ruler, blood-furious Rhys,  
 Who ragest like the great sea monster,

~~~~~

Pan oed lyw kyhoet lew cad
 Ym pob riw ryvel arnad.
 Ar dy vavlar par pymillyg nam gwartha
 Nam gwrthod yn ddurvyg
 Eryr llewyr llaw bergyng
 Erreityeisty ehang o yng
 Ys yng yn ystwg ystic vara rys
 Rutvoawc cadurva
 Ys amlys im ddim da
 Os am carwys am cassa.
 Nam cassa pwylla pyllawd edvynt rys
 Y rwng ros ac eppynt
 Bart vum itt trimud tremynt
 A chedymddeith kanweith kynt
 Kyntaf achubaf echel vreint rac bar
 Hil casnar cas wytheint
 Nawt duw mawr dengwawr-deweint
 Gyda nawt naw mil o seint.
 Synnya di roti rwyf gwawr carannawc
 Kerennhyt yth gerddawr
 Rysva kyrt kalan yonawr

¹ Carmarthenshire.

² Casnar is in the Mabinogion called Prince Kasnar, and in other places Kasnar Wledig. He is mentioned in a poem attributed to the pseudo-Taliesin, called "Marwnad Uthr Pendragon," with Gorlaix and other romantic heroes; and was the father of Llary, one of Arthur's warriors.

That thou givest coronal greeting to thy minstrel,
*When, in the course of song, he comes on the eve of January.*¹
 More than the relics of the faith, I believe thee,
 Supporter and the pillar of battle;
He is one who will keep my chair for me ;
 I know he will not break his word.
 If in a vain mood I heedlessly said a word, to cause
 Offence to the golden pillar of the Kymry,
 I can easily alter that ;
 God above will take the unkind.

This bard in his own day was a distinguished champion of the privileges and pretensions of the chief bards. A portion of one of his invectives against the inferior grade, or poetasters, has been already given ; and it is hoped that the interest of the next poem will atone for its insertion. The object of the poem is to state, that he would, at Christmas, meet the poetasters at the court of Llewelyn, when he engages to expose their incapacities, and bring them into utter discredit. It would appear that he had been twitted with the statement, that the bard Golyddan had given a blow with the hand to Cadwaladr the Blessed. The fact is stated in this Triad :²

The three accursed battle-axe strokes of the Isle of Britain : the stroke of Eiddyn ab Enygan on the head of Aneurin Gwawdrydd ; the stroke of Cadavael the Wild on the head of Iago ab Beli ; and the stroke on the head of Golyddan the Bard, for the palmstroke he had given to Cadwaladr the Blessed.

~~~~~

Rys rut bar rwyse morvar mawr  
 Mawr fwy y credaf ne chreir ked  
 Nerthyad echel kad ked adneir  
 Gwr yssy ym kadw ym kadeir  
 Gwn itaw goreuraw geir  
 O dywedeisy eir ar wekrei heb porth  
     Parth eurgolofn Kymry  
 Diwygaf honnaf hynny  
 Difwyn a gymer duw vry.

<sup>1</sup> On the first day of every new year, each prince held a feast, after which, on the departure of the guests, there was a general distribution of presents. On these occasions the bards and other officials received presents of new garments, harps, and money ; and accordingly the first day of January was anxiously expected. Children still run about Wales for new year's gifts.

<sup>2</sup> Tair Anfad Fwyellawd Ynys Prydain : Bwyellawd Eiddyn ab Enygan ym mhen Aneurin Gwawdrydd ; a bwyellawd a roddes Cadafael Wylt ym mhen Iago ab Beli ; ar Fwyellawd ym mhen Golyddan Fardd achaws y balfawd a roddes efe ar Gadwaladr Fendigaid.—*Triad* 78.

We find the same fact stated in another Triad at greater length. It appears from the Triads that this palmstroke was fatal: <sup>1</sup>

The three mischievous palmstrokes of the Isle of Britain: the palmstroke of Matholwch the Irishman on Bronwen the daughter of Llyr; the palmstroke which Gwenhwyfach gave Gwenhwyvar, and which caused the battle of Camlan; and the palmstroke which Golyddan the Bard gave Cadwaladr the Blessed.

The passage in the poem is a reply to an accusation of this want of respect, shown by a bard for that monarch: <sup>2</sup>

Lord of heaven and earth, great and wonderful  
 Like the Ca-esars, the causes of all mischief;  
 Hear, red-speared lord of sovereignty,  
 The disputing of the bards and the poetasters.  
 Since the time that Elphin was in the contention of Maelgwn,  
 Babbling has not produced such extensive woe;  
 Many a wise and simple story should have trickled in the speech  
 Of the snow-white women of Gwynedd,  
 Before this should have come from the carols  
 Of lying bards, ignorant of the Creator and His honours.  
 If Golyddan did the mischievous act,  
 Strike Cadwaladr, the pillar of war—  
 One who was capable of making similes,—  
 And already suffering anguish,—  
 On his soul be the iniquity.  
 To disqualify the talents given by God is not in man;

<sup>1</sup> Probert's *Ancient Laws of Cambria*, p. 393.

<sup>2</sup> Arglwydd nef a llawr mawr a ryved  
 Val y Keissyr cam pob camwedd.  
 Andawt nd gwaywrud gwawr teyrned  
 Y goveird ar beird yn kywryssed  
 Yr pan vu Elffin ynghywryssed Maelgwn  
 Neus porthes pepprwn pell dyfryded  
 Llavar merinnyeu gwynnyeu gwraged  
 Llawer chwedel annoeth a doeth Wyned.  
 Kyny deley hwn o achened  
 Geuveird anghyfrwys y bery ae henryded  
 O gwnaeth Golyddan gyflavan diryeit  
 Bit ar ei eneit yr enwired  
 Taraw Kadwaladyr colofn elyflu  
 Gwr oed yn gallu y dyvalied  
 Ac eissoes eissoes yny dygned  
 Dîreiniaw dawn duw nyd dyn ae med

Yet how severely is discord experienced,  
 Since the presidency of the Cambrian song is fallen to false superfluity.  
 The lord of truth, Prince of Gwynedd,  
 And descendant of Madoc,<sup>1</sup> of abundant riches;  
 Llewelyn, the glorious long-sworded lion of war,  
 Whose fame is known in distant parts,  
 Will not give false judgment; he will speak firmly;  
 He is one whose fame will be popularly known,  
 One who owns the taxes of the port of London,—  
 The worthless land of Britain and its residences,  
 One who knows the sense of the Senate of saints,  
 One who uses the privilege of sovereignty;  
 I love best of all things to recline in the halls  
 Of the lion of the tribe of Tewdwr<sup>2</sup> the Great—the heroic protector.  
 I am competent to sing!  
 A song for support and rich patronage,  
 The old song of Taliesin, the elementary sovereign.  
 It was new nine times seven years,  
 And if death does not consign me to the fated earthy mansion,  
 Before the ungentle meeting of parleying,

~~~~~

Mor dygawn y mae digymroded
 Wedi penkeyrdeth kymry ynghamryssed
 O byd arglwyd gwir gwyned dywyssawc
 Eissylyd Madawc rywyawc reuved
 Llywelyn llew gwawr clodvawr cleddyfin
 Pell yd etmyger y atchwedled.
 Gwr ny varn kamvarn kadarn yt ved
 Gwr a vyd y enw yn edryssed
 Gwr biheu tretheu trathoed Llundein
 Diffeithdir prydein ae chyvanhed
 Gwr yn llwyr a wyr synnwyr sened Seint
 Gwr a wys y vreint o vreninied
 Goreu yw gennyfy gorwed neuadawr
 Llyw llwyth Tewdwr mawr gwawr gwaradret
 Kynnedyf yw gennyf y k— derganed
 Kanu kerd am borth am byrth nened
 Hengerd Talyessin y teyrned elvyd
 Hi a vu newyd naw seith mlyned
 Ac onym agheu y anghenved daear

¹ Madoc Brwyn, a chieftain who lived in the middle of the sixth century. (*Cambrian Biography*, p. 220.) For further information see note on Rhuvawn Beyer, p. 42. Madoc ab Meredydd of Powys was the maternal grandfather of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth.

² Tewdwr was father to Rhys ab Tewdwr, and grandson to Howel the Good. He was slain when fighting under his uncle Meredydd, Prince of South Wales, against Idwal, King of North Wales, in the year 997.

*The muse shall not cease from lavishly flowing,
While sun and moon keep their places in the circle ;
And if lies do not overpower truth,
Or a cessation of the talents of God before the end,
I will bring disgrace in the contest
Upon the raw and false bards and their vain affectations.*

This bard has left among his poems an elegy on Rhys Ieuanc, in which there occurs a striking thought. On seeing the body he exclaims, "Can this be real "

*Is it not an image in a mirror that I see ?
Was it not to-day that I saw him at the head of his army ?
(Life is but grass) ; now I support the body of a lifeless king !*

EINIION WAN, described by one of his contemporaries as "Einion of unexceptionable talents," is the author of several small poems of a pleasing character. They are principally addresses to, and elegies on, warriors ; and among them occurs an elegy on Madoc ab Gruffydd Maelor,¹ of Powys, which is here translated :²

Will not the tribes weep for the loss of Madoc,
Hawk of battles, bold and powerful chieftain ?
Have not my heart's tears ebbed completely away,
And is not my heart bursting through his loss ?
The loss of Madoc, sorrowful recollection,
Makes the heart wither from regret.
Hero of the earth, prosperous chieftain ;
Miserable is his valley, and his foster brother ;

~~~~~  
Kyn anwar kyfar kyflavared  
Ny dervyd awen ty ar darwød treul  
Tra ro lloer a heul ar y rodwed  
Ac onyt trech kelwyd na gwiryoned  
Neu darvot dawn duw yn y diwed  
Ys my a veflawr or gyngheused  
Gweryt yr gwagveird y gwaghoffed

<sup>1</sup> Gruffydd Maelor, lord of Bromfield, is called (Ll. C. MS.) "yr haelaf o'r Kymry." His corpse was carried to Meivod, and honourably interred there, being attended by most of the persons of quality in the country.—*Powell*, p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> Neud rhaid am Fadawg trengi ciwdodoedd  
Gwalch cadoedd cadrfaelch ri  
Neud trai calon donn dug fi  
Ac neud trwydoll o'i golli.  
O golli Madawg edgyllaeth cofion  
Gwyw calon gan hiraeth

Cherished Madoc, wilful, but courteous to his leader,  
 And swelling with rage like a lion ;  
 A warrior who scared the enemy from extensive boundaries,  
 The best of warriors, though a hundred years old.  
 Being a hundred years old, it became him  
 To preserve beneficial peace.  
 Hawk of the hill of the king of the wilderness,<sup>1</sup>  
 Pity he is not alive,—*is not the world about to be wrecked?*  
 Blunt is the man, the hero, and regulator of the people,  
 Best of a father's son ;  
 He was the lion of war in the path of battle,  
 He was in the front rank of the land of the fifteen.<sup>2</sup>  
 Madoc used to be unlike the chiefs  
 Of other countries of the world ;  
 Parted from his region, he no longer exists,  
 Guardian of the bulwark with his worn and broken shield.  
 Broken is the harness of his shield from the tempests of battle.  
 He lies in a bed cold and unshapely,  
 One who will be made like Gwair the son of Gwestl,<sup>3</sup>

~~~~~

Gwawr llawr llwyddedig bennaeth
 Gwae ei fro ri frodyr maeth
 Maeth Madawg mynawg mynudrwydd wyrthlyw
 Ac wrth lew ymorchwydd
 Arf tarf terfyn ehangrwydd
 Aerwr oreu pei canmlwydd
 Canmlwydd ydd oedd raid ruddelwch i fod
 I fad gynnal heddwch
 Gwalch brynn brenin ynialwch
 Gwael nad byw byd neud amdrwch
 Trwch yw'r gwr arwr ardwyad gwerin
 A goreu o fab tad
 Ef oedd aerllew arllwybr cad
 Ef oedd arlleng pumthengwlad
 Gwlad oedd ni debyg glud oeddliw ym myd
 Madawc oedd cyn heddiw
 Esgor oi dud nad ydiw
 Ysgor gadw ysgwyd fradw friw
 Briw galch ei rodawg o ryw tymhestl cad
 Cynnoer wely diddestl

¹ A knight templar, I should presume.

² The fifteen tribes of Powys.—See KYNDELW's *Privileges of the Men of Powys*, a poem.

³ Gwair was one of the three coroneted warriors of the Isle of Britain, renowned for being of a dismal disposition.—GUEST's *Mabinogion*, vol. ii. p. 140; and *Myv. Arch.* ii. p. 12.

Heroic men on the floor of Llan Egwestl.¹
 We mourn our defender is not raging,—the generous chief
 I loved, is not living ;
 Daring wolf, active in the violent tumult,
 Three terms of existence he lived.
 I entertain much heavy grief, and enduring indignation,
 For the slaughterer—the hero of the tribe,
 For the eagle of the men of victorious work,
 For the aged elected guardian of war.
 Elected prince of the kingdom of the red arms of battle,
 He was fond of war while he had strength,
 And the world regrets that he has been obstructed ;
 The angry, the gentle Madoc, son of Gruffydd.
 For the son of Gruffydd, the gentle encourager of judges,
 I know that no smile is seen on my face ;
 Is not the end of every prince accustomed to prosperity
 Ordained to be in a ruddy grave ?

In this rapid survey of the works of the numerous bards,
 who flourished under the powerful and genial sway of Llewelyn
 the Great, we have been compelled to leave many of the minor
 poets without a special notice ; and can now do no more than
 offer a few remarks upon them collectively.

~~~~~  
 Gwr a wnair fal Gwair fab Gwestl  
 Gwyr wawr yn llawr llann Egwestl  
  
 Diwestl ei ysgor yscwynais nad byw  
 Hael or rhyw rygollais  
 Blaidd blaengar blawdd trydar trais  
 Trei hoeddyl ei hoed yr borthais  
  
 Porthais alar trwm tramawr odrig gwyh  
 Am wawr llwyth a lleithig  
 Am eryr gwyr gwaith fuddig  
 Am ior aerddor urddedig  
  
 Arddas teyrnas teyrn arfrudd cad  
 Tringyrchiad tra fu fudd  
 Trymfryd byd bod yn achludd  
 Traws maws Madawg mab Gruffydd  
  
 Am fab Gruffydd lary lawch ynaid i'm ken  
 Nid mau wen wedd honnaid  
 I bob rhwyf rhwysg orddyfnaid  
 Diwedd nod rhuddfedd neud rhaid.

*Myv. Arch.* i. p. 334.

<sup>1</sup> Llanegwestl is Valle Crucis Abbey, near Llangollen, in Denbighshire.—*Archæologia Cambrensis*, vol. i. p. 13.

DANIEL AB LLOGWRN MEW has a short elegy on Owain Gwynedd; GWILYM RYVEL, who appears to have been more highly thought of by his contemporaries than the existing remains seem to warrant, has two odes to David, the son and successor to that prince; GWGAN BRYDYDD has a short ode to Llewelyn ab Iorwerth; and SEISYLL BRYFFWRCH has three poems of rather an ordinary character. It is difficult to conceive, judging from the specimens we now have of his poetry, how Seisyll could have defeated Kynddelw in a bardic contest for the chair of Powys; and we can scarcely avoid concluding, either that the decision was partial, or that the story is unfounded. Notwithstanding the claim to superiority—that of being a chief bard—set up by Seisyll, I am inclined to adopt the latter alternative; for if he had competed for and obtained the chair of Madoc ab Meredydd, we should surely have found some allusions to Powys and its prince in his poems. One of his poems being an elegy on Owain Gwynedd, another an elegy on Iorwerth ab Owain, and the other being addressed to the Lord Rhys, of South Wales, are facts which countenance that conclusion.

GRUFFYDD AB GWRGENEU has two small poems, one addressed to Gruffydd ab Kynan, and the other a lament on the loss of his companions. The latter is not unworthy of quotation: <sup>1</sup>

The death of the ever-mild Merwydd<sup>2</sup> incessantly wets my cheeks,  
 With tears which flow fast and frequent;  
*It is not the age of man which causes them,*  
*For man is no longer lived than a shadow.*  
 Let us consider and condole; we shall share the entertainment of  
 the Lord.

For God will not let us be lost;  
 Tens of thousands die, and the majesty of song will be unheeded.  
 Merwydd is dead—dead we shall all be.



<sup>1</sup> Marw merwyd hirwlyd am hirwlych dagreu

Digrawn ynt a mynych  
 Nyt heneint gwr ae gwrthrych  
 Nyt hyn oes dyn noc oes drych  
 Ystyrywn kwynwn ketwyr arvoll naf  
 Ny ad duw yghyvr goll  
 Marw myrd mawred kyrd kardgoll  
 Marw merwyd meirw vyddwn oll

<sup>2</sup> I know not who Merwydd was.

Far from Powys, lifeless and concealed, is the man ;  
 We should avenge his heart's blood ;  
*In a house floored with silent sand*  
*Is the ruddy bed of Gwilym Ryvel.<sup>1</sup>*  
 I saw a place to-day, and sorry am I in consequence ;  
 I can easily weep.  
 A red grave of precious appearance was by,  
 And a bier under a body.  
 Death will be the lot of greatness and power ;  
 The death of Griffri<sup>2</sup> is saddening ;  
*And Einion<sup>3</sup> of faultless muse being gone,*  
*There is nothing of any good remaining.*

Three Englynion have been left by GWERNEG AB CLYDNO, but they possess no merit.

Towards the close of this period, we find a newer and freer species of verse starting into existence. The involved and frequently obscure diction of the more pedantic bards, was but little in unison with the buoyant and bustling spirit of the times. Llewelyn's courage and ability had restored confidence to his subjects, and the contest between him and the Kings of England developed the talents of his countrymen, and impelled the literary men of the day to keep pace with other forms of activity in an age of progress and animation. I allude to those loose rhymes which the Prydydd Moch, and Davydd Benfras, introduced among their countrymen, who soon got so enamoured of them, that they formed the nuclei of the versified tales of a

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Pell yw o Bowys pwyll argel y dvn
 Ymddial gwaed avel
 Gwaelawt ty tywawt tawel
 Gwely rud gwilym ryvel
 Gweleis le am de am danaw heddiw
 Hawdd y gallaf wylaw
 Rudved werthvawr wed wrthaw
 Ac edenawc y danaw
 Kanys marw mawred agrym
 Griffri y trenghi oet trwm
 Marw vyd Einiawn dawn dinam
 O dyn a ni byd da dim.

¹ The bard of that name.

² Either Howel ab Griffri or his father.

³ Einion Wan, I presume.

later day. Literary merit these rhymes have none; but they have the property of elasticity, and could not fail to have been popular. That by Llywarch ab Llywelyn is called "Y Canu Bychan," the Little Song; it is dedicated to the praise of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, and begins thus: ¹

I will address my lord
 With the great greeting muse,
 With the dowry of Keridwen,
 The ruler of bardism,
 In the manner of Taliesin,
 When he liberated Elphin,
 When he overshadowed the bardic mystery
 With the banners of the bards.

Then follows a rhymed chronicle of the prince's exploits—things of no present interest. Seisyll Bryffwrch has verses in a similar metre, but in neither of these cases do the verses possess any poetic merit; nor yet those of Davydd Benfras. His poem is addressed to the last Prince of Wales, and, as it enumerates twenty-one of his military excursions, makes up in historical worth for poetic demerits. A few of the verses are here subjoined: ²

Fifth Glamorgan,
 A perpetual conflict;
 And though he did much harm,
 He has not finished.

Sixth journey,
 Sixth place of conflict

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<sup>1</sup> Cyvarchav i'm Rhen  
 Cyvarchvawr Awen,  
 Cyvreu Cyrridwen  
     Rwyv Barddoni  
 Yn dull Taliesin,  
 Yn dillwng Elphin,  
 Yn dyllest Barddrin,  
     Beirdd vanieri.

<sup>2</sup> *Pummed Forganwg*  
 Parhaus gilwg;  
 Er a wnel o ddrwg  
     Nis diwedda.  
*Chweched* i dramwy  
 Chwechad yn Adwy

At Swansea,—  
 A pleasant place.  
 Seventh, Kidwelly,  
 Burnt on this seventh excursion,  
 And Ystrad Towy  
 Saw hard fighting.  
 Eighth, cruel journey,  
 To Carnwyllion;  
 For Ceredigion  
 We came hence.

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### SECTION III.

#### MYTHOLOGICAL POEMS.

ALTHOUGH the easy rhymes last noticed exhibit but little poetic merit, they contain many historical facts, and are extremely useful as showing in the persons of known bards the existence of a mental tendency, which will explain the origin of other poems of doubtful parentage. *The Mythological Poems, the "Awdl Vraith," and the "Avallenau," are the offsprings of the same state of mind as that which gave rise to the flowing rhymes of Llywarch ab Llywelyn and Davydd Benvras.* Some of them may be earlier than this period; but most of the poems classed as mythological belong to the age of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth and his successors; and a large number of the poems assigned to TALIESIN in the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, will come under this designation.

Presently we will speak of the romances and the Mabi-

~~~~~  
 Yn Aber Tawy
 Teg esgorva.

Seithved, Gedweli
 Seithgad i'w llosgi
 O Ystrad Tywi
 Tew ei haerfa.

Wythved, hynt greulawn
 I Garnewilliawn
 O Geredigiawn
 Y dug yma.

nogion. These poems belong to the same era, and sprang from the same cause. The romance treated of external actions, and the popular manners; in the mythological poems we see the same mental impulse, operating upon the theological belief of a lively and imaginative people. Of this we have satisfactory evidence in the fact that the chief characters in both are the same. In the romance, Arthur is the prime mover; in the poems, there is a fervent admiration of the same personage. The geography of the romance is very confused, and sometimes there is no place mentioned; the same indefiniteness belongs to the poems. The language of the Mabinogion is free and flowing; that of these poems is much clearer and smoother than any of the bardic remains of the same age. The mythological poems are also conversant about the same things, and treat of the same topics as the Mabinogion—in a similar romantic strain; and in the Mabinogi of Taliesin, we see the characteristics of both combined in one poem.

The matter, of course, was of older date, and of gradual growth. Every age had added new ideas to its mythology, clothed in statelier garb its ghastly forms, and added new features to the tales of tradition. There was nothing wanting to give them embodiment in the national literature, but the aid and countenance of the more skilful bards. But this was possible at no time previous to the twelfth century, when there was a great movement in art, science, and literature. Mental activity showed itself in a variety of ways; old traditions were revived, chastened, and adorned; superstition was called upon for liberal contributions to the national literature; and to supply the popular demand for intellectual food, magic, and the remains of Druidic theology, were made the subjects of songs and tales. These appear to have been considered as light exercises by the bards, who were their undoubted composers, as appears from the perpetual jealousy of inferior artists, which finds expression in them. In nearly every one of these poems, this distinction is studiously drawn; and this feeling corresponding with the position of the *priv-veirdl*, and with the mention of Arthur as the hero of romance, compels us to refer their origin to the twelfth and succeeding centuries. The anachronisms in several are most glaring, and in one we find the following boast:

I am a bard, and I am a harper;
I am a *piper*, and play the crwth.

It does not appear that there were *pipes* here before the time of Gruffydd ab Kynan; and if so, this alone, to say nothing of smooth versification, allusions to the Arthur of romance, and easily intelligible diction, settles the question of age. Simplicity is a quality that may be predicted of the diction of these poems; the meaning of the passages may not always be clear, and the allusions may be obscure, but the language is much plainer than that of any bard earlier than the end of the fourteenth century. Some of them, I am satisfied, were composed as late as the time of Sion Kent (1350), and from his remarks I should imagine them to have been those which celebrate the praises of Hu the Mighty. We hear nothing of Hu until after the fall of Llewelyn ab Gruffydd; but soon after Hu sprang into notice. The bards of this period frequently mention him; Iolo Goch is loud in his praise; and we may infer from the following lines, by Sion Kent, that this admiration of Hu was at its height in his day:

Two active impulses truly
 There are in the world, and their course is manifest;
 An impulse from Christ—joyful is the theme,
 Of a right tendency—an energetic principle.
 Another impulse there is—indiscreetly sung,
 Of falsehood, and base omens;
 This has been obtained by the men of Hu,
 The usurping bards of Wales.

It will not be necessary to advance further arguments to settle the date of these poems, and thereby in fact point out their true signification. One needs but to compare them with the Mabinogion to see at once their meaning. Mr. Turner was quite right when he supposed that the Mabinogion would throw light upon the poems falsely attributed to Taliesin; but he does not seem to have suspected that the bardic mythology was romanticised, and the vulgar belief in conjuration symbolised, in the surprising narratives of Taliesin's transmigrations and transmutations.

Many of these poems seem to be nothing else than the narrated wonders of magic, which, among persons unacquainted with science, have always found believers. The story of Gwion the Little (the poet Taliesin), who successively transformed himself into a hare, a fish, a bird, and a grain of wheat, has its counterpart in the tale of the "Second Royal Calender," in the

Arabian Nights. Gwion,¹ a male conjuror, was pursued by Keridwen, a female magician; and in the Indian tale the male magician assumes the form of a lion, a scorpion, a cat, a fish, a worm, and a seed, to escape the vengeance of a female persecutor. The resemblance is very striking; and in both we see the play of rich and imaginative minds. Some persons may see more, but I cannot. Mr. Davies sees in everything an allusion to the Ark. In many Welsh Triads there are evident references to Noah and the Ark, and the allusions are not unfrequent; but they are by no means so numerous as that ingenious author imagined. A theorist may see concealed meanings in "Little Red Riding Hood," and "Jack the Giant Killer;" several of the poems called mythological are in no respect more mysterious than those favourites of childhood; and it is to be feared that they are not more worthy of notice than the common stories of conjuration; but, lest we should be too sceptical, let the reader judge for himself.

Gwion, perceiving her at a distance, transformed himself into a hare, and doubled his speed; but Keridwen instantly becoming a greyhound bitch, turned him, and chased him towards a river.

Leaping into the stream, he assumed the form of a fish; but his resentful enemy, who was now become an otter bitch, traced him through the stream, so that he was obliged to take the form of a bird, and mount into the air.

That element afforded him no refuge; for the lady, in the form of a sparrow hawk, was gaining upon him. She was just in the act of pouncing upon him, when, shuddering with the dread of death, he perceived a heap of clean wheat upon the floor, dropped into the midst of it, and assumed the form of a single grain.

Keridwen took the form of a black, high-crested hen, descended into the wheat, scratched him out, distinguished and swallowed him. And as the history relates she was pregnant of him nine months, and when delivered of him she found him so lovely a babe that she had not resolution to put him to death.

She placed him, however, in a coracle, covered with a skin, and, by the instigation of her husband, cast him into the sea, on the twenty-ninth day of April.

This was he who afterwards became the great Taliesin.

¹ See the Tartar tale of *Sidi Kur* in Thom's *Legends*, and the editor's remarks, p. 21. The *Arabian Nights* were certainly known in Europe when the Mabinogi of Taliesin was written.

The Mabinogi of Taliesin is the most interesting of the Welsh metrical romances; and the story, taken up where we have now left him, will justify a little delay.

Gwyddno Garanhir, a prince, part of whose dominions was an extensive tract of land on the sea coast of Merioneth and Cardigan, had a profligate son named Elphin. One part of this property was a fishing-weir, in which was usually taken, on the night preceding every May-day, a draught of fish equal in value to one hundred pounds. Elphin being in want of funds, obtained from his father, by the advice of his counsel, the draught of this weir for one May-day Eve. The eventful hour having arrived, Elphin approached the weir, which was found to be empty,—on seeing which one of the weir-keepers remarked, “Elphin, thou hast never been thoroughly unfortunate till this night; for thou hast destroyed even the virtues of this weir, which has hitherto ever produced the worth of one hundred pounds every May-day Eve.” “What now?” said Elphin, pointing to a skin bag on one of the poles of the weir; “perhaps there is equivalent to one hundred pounds there.” The bag was opened, and he who opened it seeing a child, exclaimed, “Here is a fair forehead.” “Fair Forehead (Tal Iesin) be his name, then,” replied Elphin, and took up the child, carrying him homeward towards his father’s house. Seeing the young prince depressed by failing to capture any fish, the child addressed him in the following words: ¹

O Elphin fair! lament no more;
 No man should e’er his lot deplore;
 Despair no earthly good can bring;
 We see not whence our blessings spring;
 Kynllo’s ² prayer deem not unheard,
 God will maintain His sacred word;
 In Gwyddno’s weir was never seen
 As good as there to-night has been.

~~~~~  
<sup>1</sup> Elphin deg taw ath wyllo  
 Na chabled neb yr eiddo  
 Ni wna les drwg obeithio  
 Ni wyl dyn dim ai portho  
 Ni fydd goeg gweddi Cynllo  
 Ni thyrr Duw ar addawo  
 Ni chad yngored Wyddno  
 Erioed gystal a heno.

<sup>2</sup> “Kynllo was the tutelar saint of the three churches of extensive endowments in

Fair Elphin, dry thy tearful face;  
 No evil hence can sorrow chase;  
 Though deeming thou hast had no gain,  
 Grief cannot ease the bosom's pain;  
 Doubt not the great Jehovah's power;  
 Though frail, I own a gifted dower.  
 From rivers, seas, and mountains high,  
 Good to the good will God supply.  
 Fair Elphin, blest with genius gay,  
 Unmanly thoughts thy bosom sway;  
 Thou shouldst dispel this pensive mood,  
 The future fear not—God is good.  
 Though weak and fragile now I'm found,  
 With foaming ocean's waves around,  
 In retribution's hour I'll be  
 Three hundred salmons' worth to thee.



Elphin deg sych dy ddeurudd  
 Ni weryd bod yn rhy brudd  
 Cyt tybiaist na chefaist fudd  
 Nith wna da gormod cystudd  
 Nag ammau wyrthiau Dofydd  
 Cyt bwyf bychan wyf gelfydd  
 O foroedd ac o fynydd  
 Ac o eigion afonydd  
 Y daw Duw a da i ddedwydd.

Elphin gyneddfau diddan  
 Anfilwraidd yw d'amcan  
 Nid rhaid yt ddirfawr gwynfan  
 Gwell Duw na drwg ddarogan  
 Cyd bwyv eiddil a bychan  
 Ar fin gorferw mor dylan  
 Mi a wna'f yn nydd cyfrdan  
 Yt well no thrychan maran

Radnorshire, viz. Nantmel, Llangynllo, and Llanbister. He was also the founder of Llangynllo and Llangoedmor, in Cardiganshire; to the latter of which the neighbouring churches of Mount and Llechryd, both dedicated to the Holy Cross, were formerly subject. Kynllo is commemorated in the Calendar, July 17, under the name of Kynllo Frenin, or the king; and as he belonged to a powerful family, it is probable that he was originally a chieftain, and might afterwards, according to the practice of the age, have embraced a life of religion. The pseudo-Taliesin says of him:

'The prayer of Kynllo shall not be in vain,'

a proof that in after times his intercession was considered efficacious."—REES'S *Welsh Saints*, p. 133.

O Elphin ! prince of talents rare,  
 My capture without anger bear ;  
 Though low within my net I rest,  
 My tongue with gifted power is blest.  
 So long as I to thee am near,  
 Thou never wilt have cause to fear :  
 Bear thou the triune God in mind  
 And fear no earthly foe to find.

This elegant translation is from the able pen of Mrs. Llewelyn ; and the conclusion of the second verse :

O voroedd ac o vynydd  
 Ac o eigion avonydd,  
 Y daw Duw a da i ddedwydd,

which I would translate thus :

From the seas, and from the mountains,  
 And from the depths of rivers,  
 God brings good to the virtuous,

contains a psychological truth, in addition to much poetical beauty. All things are coloured by the imagination ; and objects are pleasing or painful, as the mind is cheerful or depressed. Shakespear's expression of the same sentiment has elicited world-wide admiration :

Books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in every-thing,

as has the "Thanatopsis" of Bryant, the American poet ; and Wordsworth's whole works are but various expressions of similar grand, ennobling, and profound truths. A love of the beautiful was prevalent among the ancient Welsh ; and I shall be glad to see the day when their descendants show as great a love of nature as is found in this poem, and in those of Gwalchmai, Howel ab Owain, and Davydd ab Gwilym. It was a pity

~~~~~  
 Elphin gynneddfau hynod
 Na sorr ar dy gaffaelod
 Cyt bwyf gwan ar lawr fy nghod
 Mae rhinwedd ar fy nhafod
 Tra fwyf fi yth gyfragod
 Nid rhaid yt ddirfawr ofnod
 Drwy goffhau enwau'r Drindod,
 Ni ddichon neb dy orfod.

that the narrow spirit of bardism crushed the buoyant and elastic spirit of romance. This love of nature is eminently characteristic of romance literature; for the waving woods, the grass of excessive greenness, the limpid streams, and opening blossoms, have often made the hearts of Trouveres bound as joyously as did those of some of our bards, or as does the heart of Wordsworth when it "dances with the daffodil."

Some time after this, Elphin was taken prisoner by his uncle Maelgwn Gwynedd; on hearing of which misfortune, Taliesin, as in duty bound, flew to his patron's assistance. No sooner had he arrived than he commences a diatribe against the bards of Maelgwn, and, in order to show his vast superiority, commences a narrative of his casualties: ¹

First, I have been formed a comely person ;
 In the court of Keridwen I have done penance ;
 Though little I was seen, placidly received ;
 I was great on the floor of the place to where I was led ;
 I have been a prized defence, the sweet muse the cause,
 And by law without speech I have been liberated
 By a smiling black old hag, when irritated,
 Dreadful her claim when pursued :
 I have fled with vigour, I have fled as a frog,
 I have fled in the semblance of a crow, scarcely finding rest ;
 I have fled vehemently, I have fled as a chain,
 I have fled as a roe into an entangled thicket ;
 I have fled as a wolf cub, I have fled as a wolf in a wilderness,
 I have fled as a thrush of portending language ;
 I have fled as a fox, used to concurrent bounds of quirks ;

¹ Cyntav ym lluniwyd ar lun dyn glwys :
 Yn llys Ceridwen ym penydiwys ;
 Cyd bach ym gwelid, gwyl vy nghynnwys,
 Oeddwn vawr uch llawr llan ym tywys ;
 Prid bum parwyden per awen parwys,
 Ac o gyvraith heb iaith ym rhyddawys
 Hen widdon ddulon, pan lidiwys
 Engiriawl ei hawl pan hwyliwys ;
 Foais yn gadarn, foais yn llyfan
 Foais yn rhith bran braidd orphowys ;
 Foais yn derwyn, foais yn gadwyn,
 Foais yn iyrchwyn, mewn llwyn llychwys ;
 Foais yn vleiddyn, foais vleiddawr yn nifaith,
 Foais yn vronvraith, cyviaith coelwys ;
 Foais yn gadno, cydnaid ystumiau,

I have fled as a martin, which did not avail :
 I have fled as a squirrel, that vainly hides,
 I have fled as a stag's antler, of ruddy course,
 I have fled as iron in a glowing fire,
 I have fled as a spear-head, of woe to such as has a wish for it ;
 I have fled as a fierce bull bitterly fighting,
 I have fled as a bristly boar seen in a ravine,
 I have fled as a white grain of pure wheat,
 On the skirt of a hempen sheet entangled,
 That seemed of the size of a mare's foal,
 That is filling like a ship on the waters ;
 Into a dark leathern bag I was thrown,
 And on a boundless sea I was sent adrift ;
 Which was to me an omen of being tenderly nursed,
 And the Lord of Heaven then set me at liberty.

Having thus stated the changes he had undergone, he in the next place sets forth his grandest pretensions : ¹

Primary chief bard
 Am I to Elphin,
 And my original country
 Is the region of the summer stars ;
 Joannes the diviner
 Called me Merddin ;

~~~~~

Foais yn velau, mal na thyciwys ;  
 Foais yn wiwair, ni chynnydd celwys,  
 Foais yn gorn hydd, rhudd ym rhwyvwys,  
 Foais yn haiarn mewn tan tywys,  
 Foais yn ben gwaew, gwaew ei puchwys ;  
 Foais yn darw taer chwerw ymladdwys,  
 Foais yn vaedd gwrych mewn rhych rithwys,  
 Foais yn ronyn gwyn gwenith glwys :  
 Ar ael llen carthen ym carvaglwyn  
 Cymaint oedd ei gweled a chyveb rhewys,  
 A yw yn llenwi val llong ar ddyrrwys ;  
 Mewn boly tywyll lle ym tywalltwys,  
 Ac mewn mor dylan ym dychwelwys ;  
 Bu goelvain im' pan ym cain vagwys,  
 Arglwydd nev yn rhydd ym ryddygwys.

<sup>1</sup> Priv vardd cyssevin  
 Wyy vi i Elfin,  
 A'm gwlad gynnevin  
 Yw bro ser hevin ;  
 Ioannes ddewin  
 Ym gelwis Merddin,

At length every king  
 Will call me Taliesin.  
 I was with my Lord  
 In the highest sphere,  
 On the fall of Lucifer  
 Into the depth of hell ;  
 I have borne a banner  
 Before Alexander ;  
 I know the names of the stars  
 Of the North and the South.  
 I have been on the Galaxy  
 At the throne of the Distributor ;  
 I was in Canaan  
 When Absalom was slain ;  
 I conveyed the Divine Spirit  
 To the level of the vale of Hebron ;  
 I was in the court of Don<sup>1</sup>  
 Before the birth of Gwdion.  
 I was instructor  
 To Eli and Enoch ;  
 I was at the place of crucifixion  
 Of the merciful Son of God ;



Bellach pob brenin  
 Ym geilw Taliesin.  
 Bum gyda vy Ner  
 Yn ngoruchelder,  
 Ar gwmp Lucifer  
 I ufern ddyvnder ;  
 Bum yn dwyn baner  
 Rhag Alexander ;  
 Mi wn enwau ser  
 Gogledd ac awster  
 Bum yn nghaer Gwdion  
 Gan orsedd Deon ;  
 Bum mi yn Nghanon  
 Pan las Absalon ;  
 Mi dygum Heon  
 I lawr glyn Hebron ;  
 Bum mi yn llys Don,  
 Cyn geni Gwdion.  
 Bum mi baderog  
 Eli ac Enog ;  
 Bum mi ar van crog  
 Mab Duw trugarog ;

<sup>1</sup> Llys Don is the bardic appellation of the constellation Cassiopeia ; and so Caer Gwdion is the Galaxy.

I have been loquacious  
 Prior to being gifted with speech ;  
 I have been winged by the  
 Genius of the splendid crosier ;  
 I have been for three periods  
 In the court of Arianrod ;<sup>1</sup>  
 I have been the chief director  
 Of the work of the tower of Nimrod ;  
 I am a wonder  
 Whose origin is not known.  
 I have been in the Ark  
 With Noah and Alpha ;  
 I have seen the destruction of  
 Sodom and Gomorra ;  
 I was in Africa  
 Before the foundation of Rome ;  
 I am now come here  
 To the remains of Troia.  
 I have been with my Lord  
 In the manger of the ass ;  
 I strengthened Moses  
 Through the waters of Jordan ;



Bum mi lavarog  
 Cyn bod tavodog ;  
 Bum mi adeiniog  
 Awen ceinvaglog ;  
 Bum mi dri chyvnod  
 Yn llys Arianrod ;  
 Bum mi ben ciwdod  
 Ar waith twr Nimrod ;  
 Mi wyv ryveddod,  
 Ni wyddis vy hanvod.  
 Bum mi yn arca,  
 Gan Noah ac Alpha ;  
 Mi gwelais ddiva  
 Sodom a Gomorra ;  
 Bum yn Africa  
 Cyn seiliad Roma ;  
 Mi ddaethym yma  
 At weddillion Troia.  
 Bum gyda vy Rhen  
 Yn mhreseb asen ;  
 Mi nerthais Moesen  
 Drwy ddwvr Iorddonen ;

<sup>1</sup> The constellation called the Northern Crown ; literally, the Court of the Silver Circle.

I have been in the firmament  
 With Mary Magdalene ;  
 I have suffered hunger  
 For the Son of the Virgin.  
 I have obtained the muse  
 From the cauldron of Keridwen ;<sup>1</sup>  
 I have been bard of the harp  
 To Leon of Lochlin.  
 I have been on the White Hill,  
 In the court of Kynvelyn,  
 In stocks and fetters,  
 For a day and a year.  
 I have been a teacher  
 To the whole universe ;  
 I shall be until the day of doom  
 On the face of the earth ;  
 My body it will not be known  
 Whether flesh or fish.  
 I have been in an easy chair  
 Above the ecliptic,  
 And this revolves

Bum ar yr wybren  
 Gyda Mair Vadlen ;  
 Mi cevais newyn  
 Am Vab y Vorwyn.  
 Mi cevais awen  
 O bair Ceridwen ;  
 Bum mi vardd telyn  
 I Léon Llychlyn ;  
 Bum yn y Gwynvryn,  
 Yn llys Cynvelyn,  
 Mewn cyf a gevyn,  
 Un dydd a blwyddyn.  
 Mi a rum dysgawd  
 Yr holl vedysawd ;  
 Byddav hyd ddydd brawd  
 Ar hyd daiarawd ;  
 Ni wyddis vy nghnawd  
 Ai cig ai pysgawd.  
 Bum yn nghadair vlydd,  
 Goruwch caer sidydd  
 Hon yn troi y sydd

<sup>1</sup> The account of the cauldron of Keridwen is a close copy of the transformation of Seylla (*Ovid*, book xiv.) The fable of Keridwen has a resemblance to a tale in the *Arabian Nights*, xiii.



Between three elements;  
 Then I was for nine months  
 In the womb of the hag Keridwen;  
 I was originally little Gwion,  
 And at length I am Taliesin.<sup>1</sup>

A question here arises as to the meaning of these mutations. The Druids undoubtedly believed in the transmigration of souls, as do the Jews at the present time;<sup>2</sup> and there is no reason to doubt that the belief lingered among the bards. In the thirteenth century it must, however, have been faint, and the language of the Mabinogi is less that of a believing professor, than that of one who infuses new life into old traditions, playing with known opinions, and alluding to persons and names of places which still found favour in the popular mind. We do not require that Virgil should have believed the whole of the *Æneid* to be historically correct, nor that Milton should swear that *Paradise Lost* contains no statement not founded on fact; and I must protest against the system adopted by Davies, and subsequently by the Rev. Vernon Harcourt,<sup>3</sup> of allowing no play for the imagination of the Welsh poets, and assuming every word to be true to actual phenomena. Even if we could believe, as with a singular want of critical discernment they do, that the writer of this Mabinogi lived in the sixth century, it would be inconsistent with our knowledge of human nature to suppose that the poet had simply reflected the opinions of others, without impressing them with his own individuality; but when we feel certain that this poem belongs to the thirteenth century, when Druidism was a thing of tradition and not of actual belief, we should not too literally interpret its meaning. The changes said to have been undergone by the Taliesin of the tale, it is very possible may have reference to the doctrine of

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Cyvrwg tri elvydd;
 Bam naw mis haiach,
 Yn nghroth Ceridwen wrach;
 Bum gynt Wion bach,
 Taliesin bellach.

¹ This and the preceding translation were written for the *Cambrian and Caledonian Quarterly Review*, by the late lamented Dr. Pughe, and occur at pages 370-2, vol. v.

² *Blackwood's Magazine*, vol. xxxiii. p. 628.

³ *Doctrine of the Deluge*, vol. i. p. 397.

transmigration; but we shall certainly fall into an error, if the fact be overlooked that we have here *the romance of the metempsychosis*, and not an exposition of the doctrine itself. This must be evident from the fact that the changes are not forced on the person by some superior power, but are quite voluntary, as was seen in the case of Gwion and Keridwen; and we also find from frequent instances in the Mabinogion, that the assumption of shapes was a matter of choice, and not a compulsory act. Menw ab y Teirgwaedd and Gwrhyr Gwalstawd Ieithoedd voluntarily assume the forms of birds in order to get close to the boar Twrch Trwyth; and the latter gets into conversation with the young boars! We therefore miss the solemnity which accompanies theological belief.

The poet then states the object of his journey:¹

Puny bards, I am trying
 To secure the prize, if I can;
 By a gentle prophetic strain
 I am endeavouring to retrieve
 The loss I may have suffered;
 Complete the attempt, I hope;
 Since Elphin endures trouble
 In the fortress of Teganwy;²
 His confinement may not be over much.
 Strengthened by my muse I am powerful;
 Mighty on my part is what I seek;
 For three hundred songs and more
 Are combined in the spell I sing.

~~~~~

<sup>1</sup> Culveirdd, ceisiau yr wyv  
 Cadw y gamp neus gallwyv;  
 Darogan dawelwyv  
 Ei rygeisiau yr wyv  
 Y golled a gafwyv;  
 Cwbl geisydd rhygoelwyv,  
 Neud Elfin yn nghystwy  
 Sydd o gaer Teganwy,  
 Arno na ddoded rwy,  
 Cadr vy ngorawen wyv.  
 Cadarn ym a geiswyv;  
 Sev tri chant cerdd a mwy  
 Yw y gerdd wawd a ganwyv

<sup>2</sup> The ruins of the fort of Teganwy; there are still some remains of it on the northern side of the estuary of the Conwy river.

There ought to stand where I am  
 Neither stone and neither ring;  
 There ought not to be about me  
 Any bard who may not know  
 That Elphin, son of Gwyddno,  
 Is in the land of Artro,<sup>1</sup>  
 Secured by thirteen locks,  
 For praising his instructor:  
 And then I, Taliesin,  
 Chief of the bards of the West,  
 Shall loosen Elphin  
 Out of a golden fetter.

And he eventually obtains his patron's release.

It was this occasion that gave rise to the following very fine apostrophe to the Deity:<sup>2</sup>

THE MEAD SONG.

To Him who rules supreme; our Sovereign Lord,  
 Creation's Chief—by all that lives adored,  
 Who made the waters, and sustains the skies,  
 Who gives and prospers all that's good and wise,—  
 To Him I'll pray that Maelgwn<sup>3</sup> ne'er may need  
 Exhaustless stores of sparkling, nec'trous mead,

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Nis dyl sav lle ydd wyv
 Na maen ac na modrwy;
 Na bydd i vy nghylchwy
 Nebun bardd nas gwypo
 Mae Elphin ab Gwyddno
 Sydd yn naiar Artro,
 Tan dri ar ddeg elo,
 Am ganmawl ei athro;
 A minnau Taliesin,
 Pen beirdd y gorllewin,
 A ollyngav Elfin
 O hual goreurin.

¹ A small estuary, two miles south of Harlech, in Meirion.

² CANŶ Y MEDD.

Gwolychaf wledig pendefig pob fa,
 Gwr gynnaill y nef, Arglwydd pob tra
 Gwr a wnaeth y dwfr i bawb yn dda,
 Gwr a wnaeth pob llad ac ni llwydda;
 Meddwer Maelgwn Mon, ac an meddwa,

³ Maelgwn Gwynedd, the son of Caswallon Law Hir, a celebrated king of the

Such as with mirth our hours has often crown'd,
 When from his horns the foaming draught went round.
The bee, whose toils produce it, never sips
The juice ordained by Heaven for human lips.
 Delicious mead! Man's solace, and his pride,
 Who finds in thee his every want supplied.
 The wants of every creature God supplies,
 And earth's vast progeny His goodness praise;
 Both the grave and the gay, the wild and tame,
 To choral strains attune His mighty Name;
 And man, for life and raiment, meat and drink,
 Will of his gracious Maker ever think.
 O Power Supreme! Prince of the realms of peace,
 Let Elphin's bondage, I beseech Thee, cease;
 Who to the beauteous steeds given heretofore,
 And wine and ale, would also give me more;
 He in the paths of fame, if Heaven so will,
 Myriads of feasts shall give with honour still.
 Elphinian knight of mead! thou'lt yet be free,
 And Heaven will grant thee life and liberty.

The original of this poem is here and there adulterated with Latin words; but generally the language is pure, and so smooth, lucid, and copious, as to make it a matter of surprise that an acute critic could believe it to be an ancient poem. Of the

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Ai feddgorn, ewyn gwirlyw gwymha.  
 Ai gymull gwenyn ac nis mwynha  
 Medd hidlaidd, molaid molud i bob tra,  
 Lleaws creadur a fag terra;  
 A wnaeth Duw i ddyn er ei ddonha;  
 Rhai drud, rhai mud, ef ai mwynha,  
 Rhai gwyllt, rhai dof, Dofydd ai gwna,  
 Yn dillig iddynt yn ddillad ydd a,  
 Yn fwyd yn ddiod hyd frawd barha.  
 Golychaf i wledig pendefig gwlad hedd,  
 I ddillwng Elphin o alltudedd  
 Y gwr am rhoddes y gwin, a'r cwrwf, a'r medd,  
 A'r meirch mawr modur mirain eu gwedd;  
 Am rhothwy etwa mal diwedd,  
 Trwy fodd Duw, rhydd trwy enrhydedd,  
 Pum penhunt calan ynghanam hedd,  
 Elphinawg farchawg medd, hwyr dy ogledd!

Britons, who reigned over North Wales from A.D. 517 till about 546; and as sovereign over the Britons from the last-mentioned date to the year 560, when he died of the Mad Velen, or Yellow Plague.—OWEN'S *Cambrian Biography*, p. 235.

sentiments, I need scarcely say that they reflect the highest credit upon their age, their author, and his country.

In a poem called "Angar Kyvyndawd" the bard enumerates twenty-one of his transmutations. Mr. Davies looks upon this as the circle of transmigration, or the stages of initiation. To me they seem to indicate an imaginative mind revelling in the marvellous. Men invent fictions in the present day; why may they not have done so in the past? At the time when romances were in demand, we can conceive that such tales would have been produced; but if they were such recondite matters as he supposes them to be, for what purpose were they written? The Druids were not allowed to reveal their mysteries to the world; among themselves there was no need of revelation. They would not have been intended to teach Druidism indirectly; for the lessons could not have been understood. There were chieftains to reward the bards for their heroic odes; but if we reject the notion that these are Mabinogion embodying superstition, and gratifying credulity, there remains no conceivable motive for the composition of these poems.

One of the least intelligible of the mythological poems is the one called "Preiddeu Annwn," or the Victims of Annwn.<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Praise to the Lord, Supreme Ruler of the high region:  
 When the chief went beyond the shore of the world,  
 Complete was the prison of Gwair in Caer Sidi.<sup>2</sup>  
 Through the permission of Pwyll and Pryderi  
 No one before him went to it;  
 A heavy blue chain firmly held the youth,  
 And for the spoils of Annwn<sup>3</sup> gloomily he sings,  
 And till doom shall he continue his lay.

~~~~~

¹ 1 Golychaf wledig, pendefig, gwlad ri
 Pe ledas y pennaeth, tros draeth Mundi
 Bu cywair carchar Gwair ynghaer Sidi
 Trwy ebostol Pwyll a Phryderi
 Neb cyn nog ef nid aeth iddi
 Y gadwyn drom las cywirwas ai cedwi
 A rhag Preiddeu Annwn tost yd geni
 Ac yd frawd, parhau yn barddweddi,

² Caer Sidi must be on the Cardigan coast. *Sedia*, a man's name.—*Cambro-British Saints*, p. 554.

³ Compare "Preiddeu Annwn" with the Argonautic expedition, and that of Ulysses to Tartarus.

*Thrice the fulness of Prydwen¹ we went into it ;
Except seven, none returned from Caer Sidi.*

- 2 Am I not a candidate for fame, to be heard in the song,
In Caer Pedryvan² four times revolving !
It will be my first word from the cauldron when it expresses :
By the breath of nine damsels it is gently warmed.
Is it not the cauldron of the chief of Annwn in its fashion ?
With a ridge round its edge of pearls !
- 3 It will not boil the food of a coward not sworn ;³
A sword bright flashing to him will be brought,
And left in the hand of Llemynawg,⁴
And before the portals of hell the horns of light shall be burning.
And when we went with Arthur in his splendid labours,
Except seven, none returned from Caer Vediwid (or the inclosure
of the perfect ones).

~~~~~  
Tri lloneid Prydwen ydd aetham ni iddi  
Namyn saith, ni dyrraith o Gaer Sidi.

2 Neud wyf glod geymyn cerdd, o chlywid,  
Ynghaer Pedryfan pedyr y chwelid,  
Ynghynueir or pair pan leferid  
O anadl naw morwyn gochynesid,  
Neu pair pen annwfn pwy y vynud ?  
Gwrym am ei oror a mererid,

3 Ni beirw bwyd llwfr, ni rydyngid,  
Cleddyf lluch, lleawe, iddaw ryddyehid  
Ac yn llaw Llemynawg ydd edewid  
A rhag drws porth Uffern llugyrn lloseid  
A phan aethom ni gan Arthur trafferth llethrid  
Namyn saith, ni ddyrraith o Gaer Vendiuid

<sup>1</sup> Messur Prydwen, a place.—*Lib. Land.* 461.

<sup>2</sup> "Pedryal bid" and "tros traeth Mundi" must be the Pembroke and Carligan coast :

Bed Owain ab Urien ym Pedryal bid  
Dan guerid Llan Morvael  
Yn Abererch Rhydderch Hael.

Morvael is in Pembrokeshire, east of Fishguard; Abererch, two miles east of Pwllheli, Carnarvonshire.

<sup>3</sup> See "Thirteen Royal Treasures." *Mabinogion*, ii. 353.

<sup>4</sup> This was one of Arthur's knights.

- 4 Am I, not a candidate for fame, to be heard in the song,  
 In the quadrangular inclosure, in the island of the strong door,<sup>1</sup>  
 Where the twilight and the jet of night moved together?  
 Bright wine was the beverage of the host;  
 Three times the fulness of Prydwen we went on sea;  
 Except seven, none returned from Caer Rigor (or the inclosure of  
 the royal party).
- 5 I will not have merit with the multitude in relating the hero's deeds;  
 Beyond Caer Wydr<sup>2</sup> they beheld not the prowess of Arthur.  
 Three times twenty hundred men stood on the wall;  
 It was difficult to converse with their sentinel.  
 Three times the fulness of Prydwen we went with Arthur;  
 Except seven, none returned from Caer Colur<sup>2</sup> (or the gloomy in-  
 closure).
- 6 I will not have merit from the multitude with trailing shields;  
 They know not on what day, or who caused it,

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4 Neud wyf glod geimyn cerdd glywanawr
 Ynghaer Pedryfan, ynys Pybyrddor
 Echwydd a muchedd cymysgettor,
 Gwin gloyw eu gwirawd rhag eu gosgor
 Tri lloneid Prydwen ydd aetham ni ar fôr
 Namyn saith, ni ddyrraith o Gaer Rigor.

5 Ni obrynaf lawyr llen llywiadur
 Tra chaer wydr, ni welsynt wrhyd Arthur
 Tri ugeint canhwr a sefi ar mur;
 Oedd anawdd ymadrawd ai gwiliadur
 Tri lloneid Prydwen ydd aeth gan Arthur,
 Namyn saith, ni ddyrraith o Gaer Golur.

6 Ni obrynaf i lawyr llacs eu cylchwy
 Ni wyddant hwy y ddydd peridydd pwy,

¹ *Ynys Pybyrddor*, Manorbeer, or Penbrus Head, Pembrokeshire. See Gwynvardedd Brycheiniog (*Myv. Arch.* i. 269):

Pebyrdor pedrydant pebror.
 (To Arglwydd Rhys.)

² *Caer Wydr* must have been one of those vitrified forts so often named in Adamnan's *Life of Columba*. Myrddin's *Tŷ Gwydryn* was the *holy* house in Bardsey; *Ynys Wydryn*, Glastonbury. *Craig Gwydryn* is mentioned in the *Myv. Arch.* i. 194. Cynddelw (*Myv. Arch.* i. 245) says that Tyssilio made "Llan Trallyr ha lliant uydrlenn" (wyrddlen, *Ll. E. D.*); and there is a *Tŷ Wrдын* near Holyhead.

³ Llandegwyn was formerly called Caer Godolawr or Caer Godolaur. Ceindrych verch Brychan was buried at the latter place (Bonedd y Saint, *Myv. Arch.* ii. 32); and it is said she lived at Llandegwyn.—REES, *Welsh Saints*, p. 150.

Nor what hour in the splendid day Cwy¹ was born,
 Nor who prevented him from going to the meanders of Devwy.
 They know not the brindled ox, with his thick head-band,
 And seven score knobs on his collar.
 And when we went with Arthur, of mournful memory,
 Except seven, none returned from Caer Vandwy² (or the inclosure
 resting on the height).

7 I will not have merit from men of drooping courage ;
 They knew not what day the chief was caused,
 Nor what hour in the splendid day the owner was born ;
 What animal they keep of silver head.
 When we went with Arthur, of mournful contention,
 Except seven, none returned from Caer Ochren (or the inclosure of
 the shelving side).

8 Monks pack together like dogs in the choir
 From their meetings with their witches ;
 Is there but one course to the wind, one to the water of the sea,
 Is there but one spark to the fire of unbounded tumult ?

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 Py awr, yn meinddydd, y ganed Cwy,  
 Pwy gwnaeth ar nid aeth dolau Devwy  
 Ni wddant hwy yr ych brych, bras ei benrhwy  
 Seith ugein cygwn yn ei aerwy  
 A phan aetham ni gan Arthur afrddwl gofwy  
 Namyn saith, ni ddyrraith o Gaer Vandwy.

7 Ni obrynaf i llawer laes eu gehen,  
 Ni wddant py ddydd peridydd pen  
 Py awr ym meinddydd y ganed perchen  
 Py fil a gadwant ariant y pen  
 Pan aetham ni gan Arthur, afrddwl gynhen  
 Namyn saith, ni ddyrraith o Gaer Ochren

8 Mynaich dychnud, fal cunin cor  
 O gyfranc uddud ai gwyddanhor  
 Ai un hynt gwynt, ai un dwrf mor,  
 Ai un ufel tan, twrwr diachor !

<sup>1</sup> *Cwy*, a river, *Lib. Land.* 149, 401 ; a man's name, *ibid.* 429. *Guy*, the river Wye ; or *Guy* of Warwick ?

<sup>2</sup> Porth Meudwy, or, as it is commonly called, Porth Neudwy, was the creek or harbour from whence they usually took boat for Bardsey in former times, as the bard Thomas Celli informs us :

Mudais i Borth y Meudwy,  
 Aber mawr, heb arhoi mwy.

(To Porth y Meudwy I then in haste repair,  
 And soon I reached its harbour great and fair.)

"Hell's Mouth" is still the name of the place. [The Welsh name of Hell's Mouth is Porth Neigwl.—Ed.]



Monks pack together like wolves,  
 From their meetings with their witches ;  
 They know not when the twilight and the dawn divide,  
 Nor what the course of the wind, nor who agitates it,  
 In what place it dies, on what region it roars.  
 The grave of the saint is vanishing from the foot of the altar.  
 I will pray to the Lord, the Great Supreme,  
 That I be not wretched ; may Christ be my portion.

Mr. Davies does not believe the last line to be genuine ; but though it differs in final rhyme from the others, it is connected by the sense with the two lines which precede it.

This poem has hitherto remained without any satisfactory explanation of its contents, or its object. Mr. Turner abandons it in despair with the question, "Could Lycophron, or the Sibyls, or any ancient oracle be more elaborately incomprehensible?"<sup>1</sup> and the author of the *Mythology*, with more courage,<sup>2</sup> has attempted an explanation, which exhibits much of the ingenuity with which his laborious work abounds, yet leaves the object of the poem in as much obscurity as before. He states that "the subject of the poem is the mythology of the Deluge, and the mysteries which were celebrated in commemoration of it."<sup>2</sup>

In the course of his criticisms he endeavours to show that the Arthur mentioned is another name for Noah, and that the adventure of Arthur and his men is the entrance of Noah and his children into the Ark. But we need go no further than the first verse to explode the whole theory. The entrance to the place to which Arthur and his men were going was in the keeping of Pwyll and Pryderi.<sup>3</sup> Now Pwyll was Prince of Dyved, and Pryderi was his son ; and as neither the Garden of Eden

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Myneich dychnud fab bleiddawr
 Na bwyf trist Crist am gwaddawl.
 O gyfranc uddud ai gwyddyanhawr
 Ni wddant pan ysgar deweint a gwawr
 Neu wynt pwy hynt, pwy oi rynnawr
 Py va ddifa, py dir y plawr
 Bed Sant yn ddifant o bet allawr
 Golychaf i wledig penderig mawr.

¹ *Vindication*, p. 243.

² *Mythology of the Druids*, p. 514.

³ See Arthur's raids in the *Lives of the Cambro-British Saints*, 312 ; and his voyage to Ireland in "Prydwen," *Malinogion*, ii. 307.

nor Mount Ararat is in Pembrokeshire, this prince and his son must have been guardians of something nearer here than the Ark.

It seems more reasonable to conclude that the Arthur here mentioned is the hero of romance, and that the expedition which he and his men had undertaken in this large ship had for its object the exploration of the infernal regions. Among the Greeks and Romans, it seems to have been a necessary portion of a hero's character that he should have braved the dangers of a journey to the lower world; and as we know the bards were acquainted, by name at least, with the *Odyssey* and the *Æneid*, and with the expeditions of Ulysses and Æneas, there is an *à priori* probability in favour of the above assumption. And there are other features in the literature of this period which go far to confirm it; Davydd Benvras dwells delightfully on the supposed sufferings of Christ in those regions, and Gruffydd ab yr Ynad Coch gives a minute description of the scene presented to the Saviour's sight on His descent into hell. The theological opinions of that day had in them nothing that would discountenance the belief of the possibility of Arthur's successfully attempting this feat, as must be abundantly evident to the reader of the *Divina Commedia* of Dante, and of the religious poetry of the bards. There are therefore no reasons of any moment against this supposition, while the arguments in its favour are numerous and cogent; as we find from the romance of St. Brandan, and other poems of the same age, that heroes were required to visit the Stygian shores. Pwyll, Prince of Dyved, was King of Annwn, the world unknown, or hell; and we learn from the *Mabinogion*¹ that he was at his death succeeded in this office by his son Pryderi. We discern this in the romance of Pwyll, in which there is an account of that prince's visit to the lower regions. The larger portion of the romance has long been before the public in the translation of Dr. Owen Pughe;² on this occasion therefore we shall quote the description of the place, in the later and more elegant translation of Lady Charlotte Guest. Pwyll being out hunting in the vale of Cuch, between Pembroke and Carmarthenshires, met Arawn, King of Annwn, or Hell. A conversation ensues, and Arawn proposes that they should change places for twelve months, Pwyll taking

¹ *Mabinogion*, vol. iii. p. 70.

² *Cambrian Register*, vol. ii. p. 177.

his place in Annwn, Arawn ruling in Dyved instead of Pwyll, and each of the kings exchanging his own for the other's form. Pwyll, having accepted the proposal, is led from the vale of Cuch without any delay into Annwn :

“So he [Arawn] conducted him [Pwyll] until he came in sight of the palace and its dwellings. ‘Behold,’ said he, ‘the Court and the kingdom in thy power. Enter the Court; there is no one there who will know thee; and when thou seest what service is done there, thou wilt know the customs of the Court.’

“So he went forward to the Court, and when he came there, he beheld sleeping rooms, and halls, and chambers, and the most beautiful buildings ever seen. And he went into the hall to disarray, and there came youths and pages and disarrayed him, and all as they entered saluted him. And two knights came and drew his hunting dress from about him and clothed him in a vesture of silk and gold. And the hall was prepared, and behold he saw the household and the host enter in, and the host was the most comely and the best equipped that he had ever seen. And with them came in likewise the Queen, who was the fairest woman that he had ever yet beheld; and she had on a yellow robe of shining satin; and they washed and went to the table, and they sat, the Queen upon one side of him, and one who seemed to be an earl on the other side.

“And he began to speak with the Queen, and he thought from her speech that she was the seemliest and most noble lady of converse and of cheer that ever was. And they partook of meat, and drink, with songs, and with feasting; and of all the courts upon the earth, behold this was the best supplied with food and drink, and vessels of gold and royal jewels.

“And the year he spent in hunting, and minstrelsy, and feasting, and diversions, and discourse with his companions.”¹

We thus perceive that the journey to the lower regions was not considered impossible. The story goes on to state that on returning home “Pwyll was ever after called Chief of Annwn.” Being chief of Annwn, it was the entrance thither that was in the keeping of Pwyll and Pryderi; and therefore the permission which they had previously given to no one but the prisoner Gwair was a permission to enter into Annwn. Arthur and his

¹ *Mabinogion*, vol. iii. p. 41.

men sought admission to the same place. Gwair ab Geirion had attempted the journey, and failed to make his escape; and of the number who accompanied Arthur, only seven succeeded in returning home. The body of the poem is taken up in describing the objects which the adventurers saw on their way; and it must be confessed that the two pictures of the inferior world given in the *Mabinogi* of Pwyll and in the poem differ materially, though this difference need not affect the explanation. There appears to have been a story in circulation that Arthur did attempt such feat, as we may learn from the following Triad:

“The three supreme prisoners of the Island of Britain: Llyr Llediaith, in the prison of Euroswydd Wledig (probably Ostorius); and Madoc or Mabon, son of Medron; and Geyr, the son of Geyrybed or Geiryoed; [and one more exalted than the three, and that was Arthur, who was for three nights in the Castle of Oeth and Anoeth, and three nights in the prison of Wen Pendragon, and three nights in the dark prison under the stone of Echemeint, and one youth released him from these three prisons; that youth was Goreu, the son of Constantine, his cousin.]”

That portion which is inclosed in brackets, if not the whole of the Triad, may be pronounced to be not genuine; it has evidently been composed from the following:

“Three royal families were taken prisoners from great-grandfathers to great-grandsons, and not one of them escaped: First, the family of Llyr Llediaith, who were taken prisoners to Rome by the Cæsars. Second, the family of Madawg ab Medron, who were in the custody of the Picts in Scotland. Third, the family of Gair the son of Geirion, Lord of Geirionydd, by the verdict of the country and the nation, confined in the prison of Oeth and Anoeth;² and of these neither the one nor the other escaped; and the closest imprisonment that ever was known was the imprisonment of these families.” (*Triad* 61.³)

¹ Tri goruchel garcharawr Y. P. Llyr Llediaith yng Carehar Oeurowsydd Wledig, ar eil Madog mab Medron, ar trydydd Geyr mab Geyrybet, ac un oedd oruchelach nar tri sef oedd hwnnw Arthur a fu deirnos yng Caer Oeth ac Annoeth. A theirnos y gen Wen Bendragon, a theirnos ygcarchar kudd dan y llech achymmreint ag un gwas ae dillyngwys or tri charchar hynny, sef oedd y gwas Goreu vav Cystenin, y gefnderw.—*Triodd*, 50.

² See *Myv. Arch.* 80, verse 30.

³ Tri Theulu Teyrnedd a ddyged yng ngharchar o'r gorhendaidd i'r gorwyron, heb

The composer of the first triad either condensed this triad himself, or wrote at a period when such a condensation had taken place in the popular tradition, and added to it the portion relating to Arthur, which, as is apparent, makes the prisoners four instead of three; but though the triad is clumsily framed, it indicates that in the tradition of the country the fortunes of Arthur and Gwair were, as in the poem, connected together. It now only remains for us to inquire what the prison of Oeth and Anoeth was, to conclude the proofs in favour of the above interpretation of the poem. This is comparatively easy, as we find it described in the *Iolo Manuscripts* as having been made of the bones of the numerous Romans slain by Caractacus and his men, which were collected by Manawyddan ab Llyr. "It was of a circular form and wonderful magnitude, and the larger bones were on the outer face of the walls, and within the circle many prisons of lesser bones, and other cells under the ground, as places for traitors to their country; this was called the prison of Oeth and Anoeth (open or concealed), in memorial of what the Kymry and Caradoc, their king, had done for their country and race in defeating the Romans as easily when the trees from the shores of the Severn to the banks of the Towy were so completely burnt down, that there was not a sprig left standing large enough for a gnat to stand upon, as when the Britons were protected by their woods. And in that prison were confined those who were taken in war as enemies to the race of the Kymry, until the judgment of a court should be obtained upon them; and if it should be found that anyone of those foreigners was practising treachery, he would be burned; if he was taken in open battle, and it should be found true by the judgment of the court, he would be returned to his country in exchange for a Briton; and after that they imprisoned there everyone who should be found a traitor to his country, and were not burned by judgment of the court. They were kept there during their lives; and that prison was demolished several times by the Cæsarians, and the Kymry would afterwards

adu yn nianc un o honynt; Cyntaf, Teulu Llyr Llediaith a ddyged yng ngharchar hyd yn Rhufain y gan y Caisariaid; Ail, Teulu Madawg ab Medron, a fuant yngharchar y gan y Gwyddyl Ffichti yn yr Alban; Trydydd Teulu Gair ap Geirion arglwydd Geirionydd y gan Raith Gwlad a Chenedl yng ngharchar Oeth ac Anoeth; ac o'r rhai hynny nag un nag arrall y honynt yn nianc; a llwyraf carcharu a wybuwyd erioed a fu ar y Teuluoedd hynny.—*Trioedd*, 61.

reconstruct it stronger than before. And in the course of a long time the bones became decayed, so that there was no strength in them, and they were reduced to dust. Then they carried the remains and put it on the surface of the ploughed land; and from that time they had astonishing crops of wheat and barley, and of every other grain, for many years. Thus it ends.”¹

This was evidently the Oeth ac Anoeth in which Gwair was imprisoned; but the romantic spirit soon overstepped the literal accuracy of the Triadic story, and instead of being a prison easy of access, and used for the retention of criminals, made it nearly, if not wholly, synonymous with Annwn. It would be glaringly improper to make the hero Arthur a traitor to his country, nor could there be any glory in forcing a passage into that prison, since ordinary mortals such as the Romans, two of whom in the words of the above story were not equal to one Welshman, several times destroyed it. Therefore the Oeth ac Anoeth of the romances was something very different; and to have been there was the highest heroism, for we find Glewlwyd Gavaelawr boasting of it at Arthur’s table.² From these facts, coupled with the names and offices of Pwyll and Pryderi, and the description of hell in the poem itself, we cannot well draw any other conclusion than that the poem is a romance descriptive of Arthur’s descent into Annwn, or the unknown world. The title of the poem, had not mistaken learning covered it with obscurity, would have been sufficient to indicate its object; for Preiddeu Annwn means not “Spoils of the Deep,” but “the Prey or Victims of Annwn.”

The vessel in which he and his party went does not appear to have been “Prydwen,” Arthur’s favourite ship, for the poem expressly states that this vessel contained three times as many men as “Prydwen” would hold; we must therefore conclude that the vessel was one of glass, constructed for the occasion, for the poet says, he “will not have merit with the multitude in relating the hero’s deeds, because they could not see his prowess after he had entered Caer Wydr, or the vessel of glass.” Glass

¹ Here is an interesting fact for agricultural chemists; the ancient Welshman who wrote the tale, I feel assured, had never heard of Liebig; yet the experience of the Kymry justifies the hypotheses of the German philosopher. This story in the *Iolo MSS.* pp. 597-600, is admirably told, and is a fine specimen of national bravado.

² *Kilhwch and Olwen*, p. 256.

vessels, with romance writers, were things very easily constructed. Merddin went to sea with nine bards in a vessel of glass; and *Juan Lorenza Segura de Astorga*, in the Spanish Romance of Alexander, which, as we learn from Sismondi, was written in the thirteenth century,¹ has a long passage, the import of which is that—

“Alexander being desirous of seeing how the fish lived, and in what manner the great fish behaved to the little ones, ordered a *vessel of glass* to be made, and fastened with long chains to his ships, that it might not sink too deep. He entered it with two chosen servants, leaving orders that the ships should continue their course, and draw him up at the end of fifteen days.”²

This romance seems to have been known to the bards, for among the poems attributed to Taliesin is one referring to this very event:³

THE VERY WONDERFUL THINGS OF ALEXANDER.

I wonder that there is no acknowledgment,
From Heaven to Earth,
Of the coming of the ruler of conflict,
Alexander the Great!⁴
Alexander the Nourisher,
Passionate and iron-talented,
Celebrated for sword-strokes,
Went beneath the sea.
Under the sea he went,
In searching for science;



¹ *History of the Literature of the South of Europe*, vol. ii. p. 126.

² Southey's *Madoc*, vol. i. p. 276.

³ ANRHYFEDDODAU ALEXANDER.

Rhyfeddaf na chiawr
Addef nef i lawr
Addyfod rhwyf gawr
Alexander Mawr.
Alexander Magidawr,
Hewys haiarnddawn
Cleddyfal enwogawn
Aeth dan eigiawn
Dan eigiawn eithyd
I geisiaw celfyddyd

⁴ The romance of Alexander is supposed to have Persian elements.

In the pursuit of knowledge
 His mind was greatly disturbed;
 He went, with the wind above him,
 On an adventure among the spawn of frogs,
 To look for sights!
 (That which was) present did not satisfy him,
 Yet no sights did he see.
 He saw, wonderful to say,
 Classes among fish!
 What his mind desired
 He obtained from the world,
 And at his death
 Mercy from God.

It seems to have been intended for a satire.

There does not appear to be any other part of the poem requiring explanation, except perhaps the proper names at the close of each verse. Lady Charlotte Guest¹ considers that Arthur made separate expeditions to several distinct places; but the greatness of the undertaking, the uniformity of the result, and the fact that the words are but various descriptions of the same place,² render more than one journey improbable. *Caer Sidi*, sometimes meaning the zodiac, seems to have occasionally borne other significations; the pseudo-Taliesin says he has a bardic *chair in Caer Sidi*, which is perfect, with the currents of the sea flowing round its borders;³ and the composer of *Preiddeu Annwn* evidently considers *Caer Sidi*, in which the prison of *Gwair* was also perfect, to have been in

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O geisio celfyddyd  
 Bid o iewin ei fryd  
 Eithyd odduch gwynt  
 Rwngeu deugriff ar hynt  
 I weled dremynt  
 Dremynt ni weles  
 Present ni chymhes  
 Gweles ryfeddawd  
 Gorllin gan bysgawd  
 I eiddunwys yn ei fryd  
 A gafas or byd  
 A hefyd oi ddiwedd  
 Gan Dduw drugaredd.

<sup>1</sup> *Mabinogion*, vol. ii. p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> Davies's *Mythology*, p. 516.

<sup>3</sup> "Yscyweir fy nghadeir ynghaer Sidi.  
 Ac am ei bannau ffrydiau gweilgi."



Annwn, if it was not the same place as Annwn. In giving it this signification, the poet wrested it from its general meaning; but this is not the only liberty he has taken with the facts, for Gwair, who in the triad is punished for treason, and "by the verdict of the country and the nation," is in the poem represented to have been a just man. In thus violating the tradition, the poet has fallen into grievous error, for he commits the absurdity of representing a just man to be *unjustly* imprisoned by *just* powers; yet the error may have arisen from a misconstruction. In Davies's translation, the word "cywir," just, perfect, or correct, is predicated of "gwas," the youth; but if we translate the line thus:

Y gadwyn dromlas cywir was ai cedwi.

The heavy blue chain (firmly or perfectly) held fast the youth,

making the word "cywir" to be predicated of the imprisonment, we reconcile the poem with the triad, and save the consistency of the poet.

Having thus shown some reasons for believing this chosen specimen of mythology to be a romance, it will not be necessary to dwell at much length upon others of a similar character. The so-called "mythological poems" are, exclusive of the twenty-five which form the Mabinogi of Taliesin, twenty-eight in number. Many of them contain allusions which are now unintelligible, though a large portion of them, and the intentions of the whole, may be understood. They were written when the language was in an advanced stage of development, as most of the words are in use at the present day; and, as will be seen, they cannot be supposed to have been prior to the twelfth and succeeding centuries. "A song concerning the sons of Llyr" has the following lines:

Gwyddy, a Brython, a Romani  
A wahan dyhedd a dyvysgi.

The Gwyddelians, the Britons, and Romans  
Disturb our tranquillity with their tumults;

and the same lines occur in the Hoianau, falsely attributed to Merddin, in a connexion which shows that they refer to the ecclesiastic dispute between Giraldus and King John respecting the see of St. David's. If that fact were not enough to show

its comparatively modern date, there is another proof afforded in the lines :

Bum i gan Vran yn Iwerddon,  
 Gweleis pan laddwyd Morddwyd Tyllon.  
 I was with Bran in Ireland ;  
 I saw when Morddwyd Tyllon was slain.

This refers to the Mabinogi of Bronwen, the daughter of Llyr ; and the allusion to the tale as a thing well known fixes the date of the poem within the romance era. The poem called *Myg Dinbych* (the Prospect of Tenby) must also be modern, as the form of the verse, the sentiments, and the smoothness of the language, indicate a more recent author than Taliesin.

In *Cadair Teyrn On*, the repeated mention of "the blessed Arthur," and the allusion to the loosening of Elphin, show it to have been written after those tales had come into circulation. The mention in *Canu y Meirch* of "the horse of Gwythur," "the horse of Gwarddur," and "the horse of Arthur," renders minuter examination unnecessary. The writer of *Marwnad Uthr Pendragon* speaks of being a piper, and of Casnar, Gorlais, and other romantic characters, and must therefore have been written after the reign of Gruffydd ab Kynan ; and the sneer at "the loquacious bards" in *Buarth Beirdd* points unerringly to the quarrels which prevailed in the thirteenth century. In *Cad Goddeu* we meet again with the name of the national hero, and Druids are exhorted to "predict to Arthur." In *Marwnad Aeddon o Von* there prevails the same mixture of Welsh and monkish Latin, which has been already seen in the verses of the pseudo-Taliesin. The *Gwawd Lludd Mawr* repeats the prophecy of the coming again of Cadwaladr and Kynan, with which the predictions attributed to Merddin, the Mabinogi of Taliesin, and the poems of Gwalchmai are studded ; and *Angar Kyvyndawd* is only a repetition of the transmigrations already noticed, prefaced by a string of questions, such as we find asked by the pseudo-Taliesin, to the bards of Maelgwn.

These questions form one of the singular features of these metrical Mabinogion, and indicate much more clearly than any other portion of the ancient literature of Wales the nature of the speculations of the bards upon philosophical subjects.

In these the bard may adroitly manage, where he has that desire, to bring others to the discredit of being ignorant, with-

out exposing the smallness of his own knowledge. He puts the questions very pompously, insinuating at the same time his own competency to solve the questions proposed; and if his audience fail to answer, he acquires a reputation for learning. The philosophy of the bards, being of this interrogative character, is not very satisfactory, and at this day we can only learn that they were not idle, since the important problems which inductive science solved centuries after occupied their thoughts. And the reader who recollects the anxiety with which Virgil sought to discern the laws of natural phenomena,<sup>1</sup> or has smiled good-naturedly at the eagerness of the inquiring spirits of the middle ages, will find no difficulty in believing that the zeal of the bards for a knowledge of natural philosophy was very great. The questions they proposed to themselves were these:<sup>2</sup>

O skilful son of harmony,  
 Why wilt thou not answer me?  
*Knowest thou where the night awaits*  
*The passing of the day?*  
 Knowest thou the token (mark or character)  
 Of every leaf which grows?<sup>3</sup>  
 What is it which heaves up the mountain,  
 Before the concussion of elements?  
 Or what supports the fabric  
 Of the habitable earth?  
 Who is the illuminator of the soul?  
 Who has seen—who knows him?  
 What is the extent of the earth?  
 What is heaven, its thickness?

<sup>1</sup> *Georg.* ii.

<sup>2</sup> Eilywydd celwydd  
 Py'r nam dywedd?  
 Awyddosti cwddrydd  
 Nos yn aros dydd?  
 Awyddosti arwydd  
 Pet deilen y sydd?  
 Py drychevis mynydd  
 Cyn rhewiniau elwydd?  
 Py gynneil magwyr  
 Dacar yn breswyl.  
 Enaid pwy gwynawr  
 Pwy gwelas ev—pwy gwyr?

<sup>3</sup> Dacar pwy ei lled,  
 Nen pwy ei thewed?

Who is the regulator between heaven and earth?  
 Where do the cuckoos which visit us in the summer  
 Retire during the winter?  
*Who carried the measuring-line of the Lord of Causes?*  
*What ladder was used when the heavens were reared aloft?*  
*And who supported the curtain from the earth to the skies?*

These old poems merit a more minute discussion than the number of other topics demanding attention permitted me to give; but the key to their signification has been supplied. They stand to mythology and philosophy in the same relation as romance stands to history; and if regarded in that light, more meaning may be extracted out of them than they have hitherto furnished. They are conversant with the same subjects as the romances, and it is to the romantic ideas of these ages that we are to look for explanations. In both the mystic and the military romance the *animus* is the same, the difference being merely external, and arising from the operation of the same mental tendency upon varying materials.

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#### SECTION IV.

POEMS FICTITIOUSLY ATTRIBUTED TO MERDDIN, TALIESIN, ANEURIN,  
 LLYWARCH, MEUGANT, AND GOLYDDAN.

READER, be attentive to what I am about to write, and keep a watchful eye upon the sentences as they rise before you; for the daring spirit of modern criticism is about to lay violent hands upon the old household furniture of venerable tradition.

Among Welshmen there is a very prevalent misconception respecting MERDDIN; and I perceive that a French writer<sup>1</sup> on

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Gagawr attrevnawr
 Rhwng nev a llawr?
 Gogur gogau haf,
 A fyddant y gauaf?
 Pwy dyddwg rwynnon
 Baran achwysson?
 Pa ysgawl oddev
 Pan ddyrchavwyd nev?
 Pwy fu fforch hwyl
 O ddaear hyd awyr?

¹ The Comte de Villemarqué, *Barzaz Breiz*, Introduction, p. xii. vol. i.

Welsh traditions has been misled by it. It is commonly asserted that the Merddin the son of Morvryn, or Merddin the Wild of the Welsh bards, is a different person from the Merddin Emrys, or Merlin Ambrosius of Nennius, Geoffrey, and the romances; but there are many reasons for rejecting this assumption. Both Merddin ab Morvryn and Merddin Emrys lived about the same time; both lived in the same locality, the north of England; both were conversant with the same facts—the doings of the Strathclyde Britons and their subsequent fortunes; both were diviners; both had more than ordinary attributes; both predicted the same events, in nearly the same order; and most probably both names represent but one person. In the predictions of Merddin Emrys there is no allusion to Merddin ab Morvryn, nor, on the other hand, does the latter seem to have been aware of the existence of any such person as the former. The arguments in favour of this conclusion are numerous.

I. Merddin Emrys appears as a *boy* before Vortigern about the year 480;¹ and Merddin ab Morvryn at the court of Rhydderch Hael in 570² is an *old man*, whose “hair is white as winter hoar,”³ and who is on the point of death.⁴ It is therefore much more probable that both names belong to the same person than that there should be two persons endowed with supernatural powers, living in the same locality, at the same time. And there is nothing improbable in the supposition that he might have lived to be ninety years old, when the average age in the vale of Glamorgan was a hundred and twenty years.⁵

II. Merddin ab Morvryn is apparently the person whose character formed the nucleus from which the other was developed. In the appellation “ab Morvryn,” we evidently have a fact; but he soon loses his reality. At the court of Rhydderch Hael he was called *Laloiken*, or *The Twin*; and that appellation,



¹ Llwyd, p. 263. ² Ibid. p. 263. ³ Kyvoesi, v. 13. ⁴ Ibid. v. 138.

⁵ Morgan the Great was 129 at death; Howel ab Rhys, 124; another son of Rhys, 120; Howel ab Morgan, 130; Iestin ab Gwrgant, 129; Ivan Yorath, 180; John Sherry, 104; Thomas Watkin, 100; Elizabeth Yorath, 177; Cicill Llewelyn, 107; Peter Meare, 103; Anna Richman, 120; Kate Butler, 106; Thomas French, 100; John Roberts, 118; Matthew Voss, 129; William Edwards, 168; Vaughan Edwards, Gent., 83; Thomas ab Jevan Prys, the prophet, 141; Elizabeth Davies, 111; Rev. Edward Davies, 108; and Henry Jenkins, 169.—MALKIN'S *South Wales*, vol. i. p. 55, and vol. ii. pp. 545-551.

though at the present day the Welsh predicate nothing of twin births but good fortune, evidently had considerable significance ; for in the dialogue between Merddin and his sister, Gwenddydd perpetually calls him my *world-famed twin-brother*. Castor and Pollux, Romulus and Remus, Esau and Jacob, all famous, are cases in point. In that poem Merddin ab Morvryn is invested with all the attributes which were afterwards centred in the person of Merlin the enchanter ; but as the ancient Welsh would scarcely invest two men of the same name with supernatural power, we are compelled to conclude that the Merddin who has a parent is the only real personage. This is clearly the germ of the latter creation ; and as the bards of the twelfth and succeeding centuries put the predictions which Merddin Emrys utters in Geoffrey's book into the mouth of Merddin ab Morvryn, and this more than a century after that history had been given to the world, they would appear to have considered them to be identical. Further, the "white lady" who is mentioned as the companion of Merddin Emrys, in both the verses of the graves¹ and in the later romance, is the same person as Gwenddydd, *the lady of the day*, the sister of the son of Morvryn.

III. Merddin Emrys is evidently a mythic personage, the substratum of fact being the name Merddin and the surname Emrys, derived from his patron Ambrosius Aurelianus. Nennius's account of him contains several very gross blunders. A boy *without a father* is brought before Vortigern, and on being asked, "What is your origin?" replies, "My father was a Roman consul;" and again, the boy being asked his name, said it was Embresguletic (Emrys Wledig). In both these cases the chronicler has fallen into the error of confounding Merddin Ambrosius with Ambrosius the King ; for Emrys Wledig means Emrys or Ambrose the Ruler, and Ambrosius was of Roman descent. His narrative is also slightly at variance with that of Geoffrey. It was a popular belief among the Jews, propagated, say writers more candid than polite, to cover the indulgences of the priesthood, that children born of virgins, or rather without acknowledged fathers, were destined to be illustrious. Subsequently this opinion prevailed in these islands ; Sir Walter Scott gives two instances of such occurrences in Scotland, attended with superstitious associations ; and it is with an evident reference to these examples that Merddin was brought to

¹ *Myv. Arch.* vol. i. p. 78.

the world without a father. The fiction is certainly ecclesiastical, as for many centuries after Nennius had slept with his fathers Welsh tradition clung to a less marvellous version of Merddin's birth; but it appears in Nennius in a ruder form than it afterwards assumed in Geoffrey. In the earlier writer the lady does not know how she became pregnant; this accords nearly with the account given by the mother of Bryan the Hermit in the "Lady of the Lake;" but Geoffrey adorns the story, introduces a vision of "a beautiful young man," and confirms the whole narrative by causing the bard Meugant to state that "in the books of our philosophers, and in a great many histories, I have found that several men have had a like original." The account given of St. Samson, Bishop of Llandaff, in the *Liber Landavensis*, is a similar instance of scriptural plagiarism among Welsh monks; his mother had long been barren; but an angel visits her, and promises a son; and that son then turns out to be a prodigy of talent and piety! Merddin's end corresponds to his birth, as he went to sea in a glass vessel, and was never afterwards heard of. Merddin Emrys therefore is only a mythological character engrafted on, or rather prefixed to, Merddin ab Morvryn, who in his youth might perhaps have been in attendance on Ambrosius.

IV. The only obstacle that remains to be removed, is the mention in the Triads of two Merddins, and of the voyage of Merddin Emrys and his nine bards in the vessel of glass; but as these Triads were not composed until a late period, and are simply echoes of the romances, they are of no weight. None of the middle-age bards give any countenance to the assertion; and therefore we may safely conclude that Merddin ab Morvryn, Merddin Wyllt, Merddin Sylvester, or the Wild, Merddin Emrys, and Merlin the Enchanter, are but various names for one person.

It is somewhat strange that Nennius should make no mention of Merddin among the bards of the sixth century. His words are: "At that time, Talhaiarn Cataguen was famed for poetry, and Neirin, and Taliesin, and Bluchbard, and Kian, who is called Guenith Guaut, were all famous at the same time in British poetry." Talhaiarn (Tad Tangwn) was the bard of Coel Godebog, and also of Urien Rheged, and the three next are Aneurin, Taliesin, and Llywarch; but Kian, in other MSS. called Gweinchgwant, was not otherwise known than by this notice, an allusion in Aneurin, and some lines in the Angar Kyvyndawd of the pseudo-Taliesin. No mention at all is made

of Merddin as a bard, and perhaps that was a character subsequently added. It is not improbable that Merddin and Kian may have gone to Brittany, since we have no authentic remains of either; Merddin reappears in Breton poetry, and, thanks to the intelligence and industry of De Villemarqué, what our own literature had failed to furnish is now supplied from thence; for the Gwenchlan of the Bretons is evidently the same person as the Gweinchgwant of Nennius.

It is generally believed by Welsh critics that we have several poems really composed by Merlin, the great magician, so well known to the readers of romances; and there are in the *Myvyrian Archaiology* six poems attributed to this important personage, viz. a Dialogue between Merddin and Ysgolan;¹ Predictions delivered when in his grave; a Dialogue between Merddin and Gwenddydd, his Sister; the Apple Trees; the Songs of the Pigs; and the Burrowings. In addition to these, Llwyd, in his account of the MS. called "Y Kwta Kyvarwydd o Vorganwg," says it contained a prediction uttered by Merddin before Arthur; but this does not seem to have been published. We shall have occasion to quote the first of these in the third chapter, and therefore will here only state that its spuriousness is admitted. Several of the others, and particularly the fourth and fifth, are supposed to be genuine; but as their antiquity admits of doubt, we shall enter minutely into the question, and discuss it at some length. First in the order of time is the dialogue between Merddin and his sister. It evidently contains all that tradition had preserved respecting Merddin, though the details are much less full than they subsequently became. It commences with a diatribe against Rhydderch Hael, the reasons for which will be presently unfolded; and the poem then proceeds thus:²

GWENDDYDD.

I will ask my fame-proclaimed twin-brother,
The fierce in battle;
After Rhydderch who will be?

¹ The titles in Welsh are, I Yscolan, Gwasgargerdd Vyrddin yn y Ved, Hoianau neu Borchellanau Myrddin ap Morfryn, Kyvoesi Myrddin a Gwendyd y Chuaer, Avallanau Myrddin, Gorddodau Myrddin.

GWENDDYDD.

² Cyvarchaf ym Klotleu llallauc
Anuynauc yn lluyd
Neu wedi Rydderch puy vyd

MERDDIN.

As Gwenddoleu was slain in the battle of Arderydd,
And I have come from among furze,—
Morgan the Great, son of Sadurnin,
Will come from Edinburgh.

GWENDDYDD.

I will ask my famous twin-brother,
Bardic president about the waters of the Clyde,
Who will rule after Morgant?

MERDDIN.

As Gwenddoleu was slain in the bloodfray of Arderydd,
The voice of the country
Will dispose of the power to Urien.

GWENDDYDD.

Thy head is of the colour of winter hoar;
May God relieve thy necessities,—
Who will rule after Urien?



MYRDDIN.

O leas Gwendoleu y gwaetffreu Arderyd
Handuf o eithin
Morgant vaur vab Sadurnin

GWENDDYDD.

Kyvarchaf ym Klotleu llalluc
Kerdglyt Klyt liant
Puy wledych uedy Morgant

MYRDDIN.

O leas Gwendoleu y gwaetffreu Arderyd
A synnu paham ym ken gualadyr
Gwaet gwlat y Uryen.

GWENDDYDD.

Kyvliu dy ben ac aryen gaeaf
Gwares Dyv dy anghen
Puy wledych wedi Uryen

MERDDIN.

Heaven has pressed heavily upon me,
 And I am ill at last,—
 Maelgwn Hir will rule over Gwynedd.

This is a pleasant enough plan of teaching history, and in this manner the poem proceeds, until Merddin has named, in their historical order, Rhun, Beli, Iago, Cadvan, Cadwallon, and Cadwaladr, Kings of Britain; and also, Idwal, Howel ab Cadwal, Rhodri, Kynan, Mervryn Vrych, Rhodri the Great, Anarawd, and Howel the Good, Princes of Wales. So far the list is in unison with history; but from Howel the Good downwards the account becomes obscure, if not confused; and the rulers are no longer mentioned by their proper names. After Howel comes Bargodyein (literally, a man from the borders), Brehyryeit (of baronial descent), Kynan of the Dogs, Brenin o Vreyr (a king from among barons), Serven Wynn, White-shouldered Beli, Gruffydd, Gwyn Gwarther¹ (the blessed chevalier), Two Iddases, Gylmin, Two-halved Macwy, a lord of eight chief fortresses, Owain from Manaw (Isle of Man), a ruler of good qualities, Beli Hir, and Cadwaladr. The last mentioned was to appear in Carmarthenshire.²

GWENDDYDD.

Do not separate from me abruptly,
 Without speaking about the conference;
 In what part will Cadwaladr alight?

MERDDIN.

When Cadwaladr shall alight
 In the vale of the Towy,

MYRDDIN.

Digones Dofyd diened arnaf
 Klaf wyf o'r diued
 Maelgwn Hir ar dir Gwyned

¹ Gwyn Gwarther is alluded to by Cynddelw, *Myv. Arch.* i. 223, 232.

GWENDDYDD.

² Nac ysgar yn antruyadyl
 A mi o anguarth yn gynnadyl
 Pa du i disgyn Cadwaladryr

MYRDDIN.

Pan ddescynno Cadwaladryr
 Yn nyffryn Tywi

Fords will be heavily burdened,
And he will scatter with his tumult the striped Britons.

It also appears that he was making a pretty long stay :¹

GWENDDYDD.

Do not separate abruptly from me,
Without speaking about the conference ;
How long will Cadwaladr rule ?

MERDDIN.

Three months, and three years,
And three hundred years complete,—
And light will be his rule.

After Cadwaladr were to come Kyndav and Catrav ; and then the heavens would fall to the earth, there would be no more kings, and the end of the world would be at hand.

The learned Llwyd, believing the latter names to be purely imaginary, concludes that the poem was written by an unknown author, living about 948,² or during the reign of Howel the Good ; but as those names clearly refer to historical persons, his opinion is not quite satisfactory. The Bargodyein were Ievan and Iago, the sons of Edwal Voel, King of North Wales ; the rightful heir was their brother Meyrick, and their claim to the throne which they usurped only *bordered* on a rightful title. The Brehyrieit were Howel and Cadwallon, the sons of the above-named Ievav ; and as their father's right was disallowed, they were only barons. Macwy the Two-halved was a king of the Danes of Anglesey ; he is called Maccus by Matthew of Westminster, and Macht ab Harallt in the Welsh Chronicles.

~~~~~  
Biawt tra thrwm ebyr  
Gwascarawdd ai brythawd Brython brithwyr.

GWENDDYDD.

<sup>1</sup> Nac ysgar yn antruyadl a mi  
O anguarth i'r gynnadyl  
Pa hyt y guledych Kadawladyr.

MYRDDIN.

Tri mis teir blyned teithyon  
A thrichant mlynedd kyflawn  
Kadeu gweithu guledychant.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Brit.* p. 257.

Serven Wynn must be the Siverth King of Dyved, who lived about the same time; and Gilmyr was probably "Glumayn, son of Abloic," a small potentate mentioned in *Hanes Cymru* (p. 423.) Kynan of the Dogs was probably Kynan ab Iago, who made two attempts on North Wales in 1042 and 1050; and the celebrated Gruffydd was that famous prince Gruffydd ab Llywelyn ab Seisyllt. Gwyn Gwarther means probably Bleddyn ab Kynvyn,<sup>1</sup> and Beli Hir was perhaps his nephew Trahaearn, for they claimed a descent from Beli the Great; Owain of Manaw was Owain the son of Edwin, a descendant from Howel the Good. Thus most of the names are traced to real persons; and I doubt not, if time permitted, the remainder could be as completely and satisfactorily ascertained. We must therefore place the author of these verses a hundred and thirty years later, or about A.D. 1077. The celebrated antiquarian, Vaughan of Hengwrt,<sup>2</sup> has fixed a still later date for this poem; but in asserting that the author lived in the reign of Henry II., his reasoning was based upon, and he was probably misled by, the fourteen verses preceding verse 85, which seem to be interpolations. The Owain of those verses is certainly Owain Gwynedd ab Gruffydd ab Kynan; but the Owain of the subsequent verses, 85 and 86, was evidently Owain ab Edwin, a prince who had lived seventy years before. We must therefore reject his conclusion, and place the poem earlier by more than half a century. There is a little confusion in the order in which the names are placed, which bespeaks that the writer was not living in Wales at the time of writing. This is very evident in one of the later notices; Owain, it is said, will bring an army from the Isle of Man; but though Owain fled to the Isle of Man, he seems to have died there, for it was Rhys, his son, who brought an army from thence in 1172; and therefore from this fact, and from

<sup>1</sup> Brut y Tywysogion (*Myv. Arch.* ii. 423) calls him Bleddyn ab Kynvyn *Gwyn*.

<sup>2</sup> "The prophecies attributed to Merddin Sylvester, alluded to in this argument as foretelling the accession of Anarawd, are evidently the production of some person in the reign of Henry II. The succession of the Princes of North Wales are detailed by name in the form of a dialogue, in the precise manner in which they reigned, down to Owen Gwynedd; from which time the narrative is too mysterious to admit of exemplification, for the plain reason that the compiler's powers of penetrating futurity were not more acute than those of other people." (*British Antiquities Revived*, p. 79.) The assertion in the first part of the second sentence is incorrect; for, as will be seen in the list given in the text, the proper names are only clearly distinguishable as far as Howel the Good; but most of the mysterious names have now been identified.

the erroneous statement that Kynan, who made the unsuccessful attempts on North Wales, became king, it seems as if he knew more of what was doing externally than internally. He must, however, have been situated at a considerable distance from Wales, where he was dependent upon rumour for intelligence; he could scarcely have been in Ireland without knowing more about Kynan; in the Isle of Man he would have been more accurately informed respecting the movements of Owain ab Edwin and his sons; and therefore must we conclude that he was in the distant province of Brittany.

In Brittany, just at this time, there was a man who watched most intently the motions of factions in Wales, and soon afterwards made his appearance among his countrymen. He was lineally descended from Howel the Good; he had fled to Brittany in 993, at the death of his father; and in 1077, after an absence of eighty-four years, he returned to the land of his ancestors, to claim the throne of South Wales. He brought with him an immense reputation for wisdom and learning; he brought more than that, for he brought with him *the marvellous history of Arthur and the Round Table*. I do not mean to assert that that prince was the author of this dialogue, but I will assert that it was written to further his interests, and that the people of Wales first heard predictions of the speedy reappearance of Cadwaladr in the vale of Towy, when a rightful and popular claimant to the throne of Deheubarth was announced in the person of RHYSAB TEWDWR. It will be observed that the dialogue has a special reference to him; for Cadwaladr was to come, at the very time that he came, to the very place where he landed, and for the very purpose which he had in view.

The germs of most of the predictions contained in "The Apple Trees," and "The Songs of the Pigs," are to be found here; the prediction at the close of the twenty-third verse of the latter occurs in the sixty-fourth verse of this dialogue; the mention of the Sibyl occurs in the sixty-third; and the allusions to the falling of the sky, the son of Henry, and the bridges on the Taff and Towy, in the Hoianau, are borrowed from the seventy-fourth, and the hundred and nineteenth verses of this poem. It will also be observed, that the prediction respecting Cadwaladr appears here in a much simpler form than it afterwards assumed; here the last King of Britain is to come alone, but soon afterwards Kynan was given to him

as a companion. This is the form in which it is seen in Geoffrey's History, 1157, and subsequently in the Avallenau and Hoianau. We also learn from this dialogue how the idea of the conference originated: <sup>1</sup>

GWENDDYDD.

On seeing thy cheek so care-worn,  
If I were not concerned I would not ask,  
Who will rule after Cadwallon ?

MERDDIN.

A tall man holding a conference,  
And Britain under one ruler,—  
The best of a Cambrian's son, Cadwaladr.

There is a tradition that he held a bardic congress; but if this verse represents history correctly, the meeting was a political conference; and Cadwaladr the first having held a conference in the seventh century, the second Cadwaladr would, it was thought advisable to state, do likewise. In this poem the place of meeting is not named, neither is it in Geoffrey; and the fixing of it at Rhyd Rheon was an afterthought of the North Welsh bards.<sup>2</sup>

For the student this dialogue is the most valuable poem of the series; as it undoubtedly is *the earliest existing record* of the Welsh tradition respecting Merddin. Merddin is here termed *Supreme Judge of the North, Syw, or diviner of every region, Bardic President about the waters of the Clyde, and Interpreter of the Army of the God of Victory.* Throughout the poem there is a

~~~~~  
GWENDDYDD.

¹ O uelod dy rud mor greulaun
Y dau ym bryt neut annogaun
Puy wledych uedy Katwallaun

MYRDDIN.

Gwr hir yn cadu Kynnadyl
A Phrydain yn un Paladyr
Goreu mab Kymro Katwalatyr.

² The Morien and Morgeneu named towards the end of the poem appear to have been living a little before the time of Bleddyn ab Kynvyn, who gave a handsome bridal present to Gwernwy ab Morien ab Morgeneu. See Prichard, *Heroines of Welsh History*, p. 323.

constant reference to some speedy separation which was to take place; and towards the close we learn what this was :¹

GWENDDYDD.

Alas! dearest, the cold separation,
When comes the day of tumult;
Thy imprisonment *beneath the earth*,
By a monarch valiant and fearless. (v. 126.)

Here it would appear that he was shortly to be confined; but the legend subsequently assumed another form. According to the latter, as it appears in Spenser, at a place—

—That is by chance of name
Cayr Merdin called.

There the wise Merlin whylome wont, they say,
To make his wonne, low underneath the ground,
By a deep delve, far from the view of day,
That of no living wight he mote be found,
When so he counsell'd with his sprights encompast round.

He had a mistress, the Lady of the Lake, whom he was accustomed to call the White Serpent, and who treacherously converted this cave into his tomb, after he had imparted to her some of his secrets. Sir Thomas Maelor and Ariosto have also repeated this story, which in this dialogue is much simpler. It is not, however, always consistent with itself; for after having regretted the imprisonment by a powerful monarch, she bids him—²

Arise from thy prison, and unfold the books
Of the Awen without fear;
And the speech of Bân, and the visions of sleep. (v. 129.)

And yet after this she says :³

GWENDDYDD.

- ¹ Och anwyl or oer escar
Guedi dyvot yn trydar
Gan unben dewr diarchar
Dy olo di y dan dayar
- ² O olóchuyt kyvot a thravot llyvreu
Awen heb arsuyt
A chuedyl Bun a hun breuduyt
- ³ Ym byn nyth diovrydaf
A hyt vraut yth goffaaf
Dy ffosaut trallaut trymmaf.

While I live I will not be unmindful of thee,
 And to the Day of Judgment will bear in mind
 Thy intrenchment,—heavy misfortune. (v. 136.)

The germ of the latter legend appears here; but the imprisonment is not brought about by the lady's agency. Gwenddydd, in another place called

Gwenddydd Wen adlam cerddeu (v. 133.)
 White Lady of Day, the refuge of songs,

is evidently to be here understood as his sister, for she, in the dialogue, calls him her *Llallogan* (Laloiken), or twin-brother. I do not know whether the assertion in the life of St. Kentigern, written about 1180, by Jocelyn, of Furness Abbey, that at the court of Rhydderch Hael there was a maniac named *Laloiken*, is, or is not, founded on this dialogue; if not, we have another proof that the dialogue contains a few facts of authentic biography; for since the *Scotochronichon's* identification of this *Laloiken* with Merddin the Wild, and Mr. Price's ingenious proof,¹ that *Laloiken* is another form of the Welsh word *Llallogan*, there can be no doubt that we are here on safe ground. At the close of this poem there seems to be an interpolation of several verses, or an attempt to reconcile two different traditions; and in the *Avallenau* and *Hoianau* we find several facts, not mentioned here, and different attributes are given to the sister. In the *Avallenau* we are told that "Gwenddydd does not love him," since "her son was slain by his accursed hand;" but in the dialogue there is not the slightest hint of this want of love on the part of the sister, nor any mention of her having a son. There is either death, or imprisonment, alluded to in the dialogue; but in the others his motions are free; and yet the story of the *White Serpent* is shadowed forth in the *Hoianau*, for the word *pierce*, in the line—

(A) grey (wolf?) is my protection; Gwenddydd will not pierce me—

implies other than feminine attributes. Throughout the whole, although there is much of fact, there is also much of fiction.

Next in chronological order should come "The Predictions



¹ *Hanes Cymru*, p. 209.

uttered by Merddin out of his Grave.”¹ This poem either originated in the hundred and twenty-ninth verse of the preceding, which has just been quoted, or that verse is an interpolation, as they both appear to be closely connected; and perhaps we ought, by the grave, to understand the above-named prison. It is clearly posterior in date, for it refers to *Coch o Normandi*, meaning William II., the *red* king from Normandy; there is also an allusion to Henry I., but the poem contains no striking features. A few of the predictions may not, however, be uninteresting:²

The world shall come towards the end,
When from adversity men shall die young,
And cuckoos *die of cold* in the month of May.

The world shall be when men shall delight in hounds,
And build cottages in the wilderness;
And shirts without great cost cannot be obtained.

Truth shall disappear, and error spread;
Men shall be weak of faith, and disputing on alternate days,—
And they shall delight in fine garments.

Lords shall be litigious, and agents vagabonds,
Bards empty-handed, and priests gay;
Truth shall vanish, and denials be frequent.

The world will be, without too many storms;
Much ploughing will not be required, nor railings on the sea-shore;
And an acre shall be land enough for nine.



¹ In the *Cambrian Register*, iii. 190, it is said that he was buried at the Isle of Bardsey, for an account of which see the same paper. See also *Cambrian Register*, i. 330.

² Byd a vyd a gorphen byd
Pallant ieuaine rac advyt
Mei marw cogeu rhac annuyt

Byt a vyd byt wrth erchuys
Y adeilaur yn dyrys
Heb werth maur ni chaffaur crys

Eu divanaut gwir lledaut gen
Guann ffyd bob eildyd datleu
Byt a vyd bryt wrth dillad

Kyghaus argluyd Maer chuiuiat
Guaclau Bard hard offeiriat
Difannawr e wir lledawr gwad

Byt a vyd heb wynt heblau
Heb ormod eredic heb drathreulyau
Tir digaun vid un erw y nau

When men grow, they shall grow up without virility,
 And cornfields take the place of trees;
 Feasts will be prevalent in peaceful districts.

When the cubit shall be held in estimation,
 The man who has it will not regret
 That corn springs up on the sides of mountains.

As printed in the *Archaiology*, this poem consists of forty-four verses; but the twelve last refer to the injuries done by the Danes to the monastery of Llandudoch in 987, and were not in the MSS. of Mr. Lewis Morris or Mr. Edward Llwyd. They therefore seem to be subsequent additions; as the fourteen verses, from the seventy-first to the eighty-fifth of the *Kyvoesi*, undoubtedly are; for they refer to the reign of Owain Gwynedd and to the son of Henry, and are not in the MS. of Mr. D. Jones, of Llanvair.

THE AVALLENAU.

On reading these verses some years ago, I was much pleased with their quaint simplicity, with the fine vein of sentiment which runs through them, and with the diction, which is much superior to that of poets who have written at a later period, and obtained great repute. But repeated perusals led me to doubt their antiquity; the allusions to historical characters in the shape of prophecies could not have been Merddin's; and the composition, so clear, intelligible, and elegant, as compared with the genuine poems of Aneurin, Taliesin, and Llywarch, wore an air by no means ancient. With the view of enabling the reader to estimate the value of my criticism, I will first quote the verses.

THE APPLE TREES.¹

- 1 Was there such a gift given to anyone as at the dawn of day
 Was given to Merddin ere age had overtaken him?

~~~~~

Pan dyvo yr gwyr heb wryt  
 Ac yn lle coet cael yr yt  
 Ymhob hedd guled a gyvyt

Pan fo cyfelin gymyrredd  
 Y gwr ai gweryd ni ommedd  
 Gwrthfyd yd ym mynyddedd

*Myv. Arch.* vol. i. p. 133.

<sup>1</sup> 1 A rodded i neb yn un plygeint  
 A roid i Ferddin cyn no henaint

Seven score and seven sweet apple trees,  
 Of equal height, age, and magnitude,  
 They are a mark of a sovereign's benevolence,  
 And are overshadowed by lovely foliage.  
 A maid with beauteous ringlets watches over them,  
 Gloewedd by name, with teeth of pearly whiteness.

- 2 Sweet and excellent apple tree !  
 Thou wilt be heavy when laden with fruit,  
 And I am full of care and trouble for thy safety,  
 Lest the woodmen  
 Should destroy thy root, and injure thy seed,  
 And prevent any more apples from growing on thee ;  
 And I tear myself wildly with anxiety ;  
 Anguish pains me, and no clothes protect my body ;  
 These were the gift of Gwenddoleu, the free giver,  
 Who is now as he was not.
- 3 Sweet apple tree, of delicate growth,  
 Thy shade is celebrated, profitable, and comely ;  
 Princes will combine upon false pretences,  
 With false, luxurious, and gluttonous monks,  
 And idle talkative youths, to get thy fruit ;  
 They all prophesy warlike exploits to the Prince.



Saith afallen beren a saith ugaint  
 Yn gyfoed gyfuch gyhyd gymmaint  
 Trwy fron teyrnedd y tyfeddaint  
 Un ddoled uched ai gorthoaint  
 Un forwyn bengrech ai gorchedwaint  
 Gloywedd ei henw gloyw wyn ei daint

- 2 Afallen beren, bren y sydd fad  
 Nid bychan dylwyth sydd ffrwyth arnad  
 A minnau wyf ofnawg am gelawg am danad  
 Rhag dyfod y coedwyr goed gymmynnad  
 I gladdu dy wraidd a llygru dy hâd,  
 Fal na thyfo byth afal arnad  
 A minnau wyf gwyllt gwrthrychiad  
 I'm cathrudd cythrudd nim cudd dillad.  
 Neum rhoddes Gwenddolau gorthlysau yn rhad  
 Ac yntau heddyw fal na buad.

- 3 Afallen beren bren addfeinus  
 Gwasgadfod glodfawr buddfawr brydus  
 Cyd wnant benaethau gan gyf esgus  
 A myneich geuawg bwydiawg gwydus  
 A gweisionain ffraeth bid arfaethus  
 Yd fyddant wyr rhamant rhidd rhwyfanus.

- 4 Sweet apple tree, of vigorous growth and verdant foliage,  
Large are thy branches, and beautiful thy form ;  
It was beautiful to see thee in a robe of vivid green,  
Ere war had caused my heart to grieve ;  
But my wrongs shall yet be avenged,  
And the legions of Pengwern shall revel on mead.
- 5 Sweet apple tree, growing in the lonely glade,  
Valour shall still secure thee from the lords of Rhydderch.  
Bare is the ground around thee, trodden by mighty warriors ;  
Their heroic forms strike their foes with terror.  
Alas ! Gwenddydd loves me not, greets me not ;  
I am hated by the chiefs of Rhydderch ;  
I have ruined his son and his daughter.  
*Death relieves all ; why does he not visit me ?*  
For after Gwenddoleu no princes honour me.  
I am not soothed with diversion,  
I am no longer visited by the fair ;  
Yet in the battle of Arderydd I wore golden torques,  
Though I am now despised by her who is fair as snowy swan.
- 6 Sweet apple tree, covered with delicate bloom,  
Growing unseen in the sequestered wood,  
At break of day the tale was told me,  
That the high-commissioned chief of Menwydd is offended with me ;

- ~~~~~
- 4 Afallen beren bren hydwf glas  
Purfawr ei changeu iw chain wanas  
Candid cain arwel yn mhrid gorlas  
Cyn berw bryd cymmrwyn ffwr alanas  
A mi ddysgoganaf cad am dias  
Pengwern cyfedd grudd medd ei haddas.
- 5 Afallen beren bren a dyf yn Llannerch  
Angerdd ei hargel rhag rhieu Rhydderch  
Amsather yn ei bon maon yn ei chylch  
Aedd aeleu iddudd dulloed dihefeirch  
Mi nim ear Gwenddydd ac nim hennyrch  
Wyf gas gan wasawg gwaesaf Rhydderch  
Ry rewiniais ei fab ef ai ferch  
Angeu a ddwg pawb pa rag nam cyfeirch  
A gwedy Gwenddolau neb rhiau nim peirch  
Nim gogawn gwarwy nim gofwy gorddyrch  
Ac yngwaith Arderydd oed aur fy ngorddyrch  
Cyd bwyf aeleu heddyw gan eiliw eleirch.
- 6 Afallen beren blodau esplydd  
A dyf yn argel yn argoedydd  
Chwedleu a gogleu yn nechreuddydd  
Rysori gwasawg gwaesaf Menwydd

Twice, thrice, yea, four times, in one day,  
 It rung in my ears ere the sun had marked the hour of noon.  
*O Jesus! why had I not been destroyed*  
*Before I had the misfortune to slay the son of Gwenddydd?*

- 7 Sweet apple tree, which formest a stately grove,  
 The wild dogs of the wood seek shelter about thy roots,  
 Yet shall my prophetic song announce the re-coming  
 Of Medrawd and Arthur,<sup>1</sup> leader of hosts;  
 Again shall they rush to the battle of Camlan,  
 And only seven escape from the two days' conflict.  
 Let Gwenhwyvar remember her crimes,  
 When Cadwaladr resumes possession of his throne,  
 And the religious hero leads his armies.  
*Alas, my lamentable destiny! hope affords no refuge;*  
*Gwenddydd's son is slain, and by my accursed hand.*
- 8 Sweet apple tree, of richest fruit,  
 Growing in the lonely woods of Celyddon,  
 All seek thee<sup>2</sup> for the sake of thy fruit,  
 But in vain until Cadwaladr comes to the conference of Rhyd Rheon,

~~~~~  
 Dwywaith a theirgwaith pedeirgwaith yn undydd
 Amglyw o'm dargau cyn haul nawnydd
 Och Iesu! na ddyfu fy nihenydd
 Cyn dyfod ar fy llaw llaith mab Gwenddydd.

- 7 Afallen beren bren ailwyddfa
 Cwn coed cylch ei gwraidd dywasgodfa
 A mi ddysgoganaf dyddaw etwa
 Medrawd ac Arthur modur tyrfa
 Camlan darwerthin difiau yna
 Namyn saith ni ddyrraith o'r gymmanfa
 Edryched Gwenhwyfar wedi ei thraha
 Ban at fedd Cadwaladyr
 Eglwysig bendefig ai tywysa
 Gwaith imi a dderfydd heb esgorfa
 Lleas mab Gwenddydd, fy llaw ai gwna.

- 8 Afallen beren beraf ei haeron
 A dyf yn argel yn Argoed Celyddon
 Cyt ceisier ofer fydd herwydd ei hafon
 Yn y ddel Kadwaladr i gynadl Rhyd Rheon

¹ The Arthur here mentioned is the hero of romance. Modred was his nephew; he conspired against his uncle, and at the battle of Camlan gave the wound of which Arthur afterwards died, not, however, before he himself had been slain. The crime of Gwenhwyvar was unfaithfulness to Arthur's bed, she having deserted her husband and fled with Modred. Cadwaladr and Kynan will be noticed hereafter.

² Either Gruffydd ab Rhys or Gruffydd ab Kynan.

And Kynan advances to oppose the Saxons ;
 Then shall Britons be again victorious,
 Led by their graceful and majestic chief ;
 Then shall be restored to everyone his own,
 And the sounder of the horn of gladness proclaim
 The song of peace, the days of happiness.¹

- 9 Delicious apple tree, with blossoms purely white,
 To those who eat them sweet are the apples
 That have always grown on trees
 Which grow apart, with wide-spreading branches.
 The nymph who appears and disappears, prophesies explicitly
 In signs of troublesome times which will surely come ;
 A fleet with anchors will come on the sea,
 Seven ships, with seven hundred sailing over the waves ;
 They will descend on the shore under flights of arrows,
 And of those who come there shall not return
 More than seven to their former home.²

- 10 Delicious apple tree, of splendid growth !
 Its root has fed both it and me
 When, with shield on my shoulder and sword on my thigh,
 I slept all alone in the woods of Celyddon.

~~~~~

Kynan yn erbyn cychwyn ar Saeson  
 Kymry a orydd kain vydd e dragon  
 Kaffant pawb ei deithi llawen fi brython  
 Kaintor cyrn elwch kathl heddwch a hinoñ

- 9 Afallen beren burwen o flodeu  
 Ir ai hys melys ei hafalau  
 A dyfant eirioed a choed  
 A dyf ar wahan yn llydan ei changau  
 Dysgogan Chwibleian cyfan chwedlan  
 Dyddiau arwyddion brithfyd diau  
 A llynges dros for ag angorau  
 Seithlong a ddeuant a seithgant dros donau  
 Descynnant ar draeth y dan saethau  
 Ar sawl a ddeuant ni atter yn neu  
 Namyn saith eilwaith og eu hen a dreu.

- 10 Afallen beren a dyf dra run  
 Cymeythuleis yn ei bon yr bodd y wun  
 Ac ysewyd ar fy ysewydd am cledd ar fy nghlun  
 Ac ynghoed Celyddon i cysgais i fy hun

<sup>1</sup> The first eight verses were translated by the late Mr. Edward Williams (*Iolo Morganwg*).

<sup>2</sup> The allusion here is to the battle of Tal y Moelvre in 1157, which has been already noticed.

Hear, little pig! rouse from thy sleep,  
 And list to the diverting birds expressing their mutual wishes:  
 A sovereign across the sea<sup>1</sup> will come on Monday;  
 Blessed will Wales be from that design.<sup>2</sup>

- 11 Apple tree, of pure white sprigs growing cleverly to a moderate height,  
 I am more accustomed to the saddle and ashen spear of royalty  
 Than to see rustics of raven hue on the branches,  
 And a prayer from the lady of commanding aspect,  
 For I am not destitute of either talent or emulation.
- 12 Apple tree, growing by a brook-side,  
 With greatly desired leaves and yellow apples,  
 I have been beloved by Gwnem<sup>3</sup> and Kutum,  
 But my complexion is faded from long weeping;  
 Am I not deserted by my former friends,  
 Wandering among spectres, who know me not?
- 13 Delicious apple tree, that avoidest attack,  
 Growing at the junction of streams, without being protected by  
 vegetation,

~~~~~

Hoian Borchellan pwyllud dy hun
 Andaw di adar difyrr yn ei hymeutun
 Teyrnedd dros for a ddaw dduwllun
 Gwyn eu byd Cymru or arofun

11 Afallen burwen ei brig a dyf ygymes yn fessig
 Gnodach im onnwy gyfrwy gwledig
 No gwyr bro bran lliw ar riw ei trig
 A gweddi gan riain ran parhedig
 Nid wyf diddawn a dieiddig.

12 Afallen a dyf ynglan nant
 Ei hafalau melyn ai deil yn chwant
 Am gwnem am kutum am carassant
 Ni ethyw fy hoen o hir lifiant
 Neut wyf ddigariat gan fy nghanant
 A minneu gan wyllyon nim adwaenant.

13 Afallen beren bren dileteyn
 A dyf yn Haber heb ardyfu cylchyn

¹ Gruffydd ab Kynan.

² The address to the little pig seems to be out of place here. The blessed king is Cadwaladr; and the event alluded to is a prediction in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of Britain*.

³ I know not what *Gwnem* and *Kutum* mean.

I will prophesy a battle between the Britons
 Defending their boundaries and the men of Dublin.
 Seven ships will come across the wide lake,
 And seven hundred over the sea to subdue;
 Of those who come, they shall take with them
 But seven empty vessels after the contest.¹

- 14 Delicious apple tree, teeming with buds;
 Yellow its fruit, not to be chewed by the multitude;
 I was nourished at its base with choice men;
 And when Devon shall be called "the stony city,"
 The minstrel will be paid his new year's gifts.
- 15 Delicious apple tree,² that will not wither:
 Four hundred years it will be in peace,
 Growing apart, and widely outspreading;³
 Its root is oftener surrounded by the wolf⁴ which violates
 Than by the youth who can enjoy its fruit.
 And I will prophesy that a youth shall come
 From the flowers of Cadvan, who, when he grows up,



A mi disgoganaf cad ym Mhrydyn
 Yn amwyn ei terfyn a gwyr Dulyd
 Seithlong i deuant dros lydan lyn
 A seithgant dros for i orescyn
 Or sawl a ddeuant nid ant y genhyn
 Namyn seith letwag wedi lletcynn.

- 14 Afallen beren biborig
 Melyn ei haeron nid maon ei messig.
 Cymathyleis yn ei bon a dynion dewissig
 Aphan alwer Dyfnaint dinas cerrig
 I talawr gerddawr ei galennig.
- 15 Afallen beren bren ni grino
 Pedwarcant mlynedd yn heddi bo
 A dyf ar wahan ys llydan ei gorho
 Gnodoch yn ei gwraidd y blaidd ai treissio
 Na maban mynych a mwynhao
 A mi a ddysgoganaf maban a fo
 O flodau Cadvan pan gynyddo
 Gruffydd ei enw o hil Iago
 Ni wna annoes pan pseudo.

¹ See note to verse 9.

² This "Afallen" was Gruffydd ab Kynan.

³ Wide-spreading trees are part of the stock in trade of romance writers.

⁴ Hugh, Earl of Chester.

- Will be known as Gruffydd of the line of Iago :¹
 There will be no tyranny when he comes.
- 16 Delicious apple tree, that will be known
 Until water impregnates the duck's fluttering feather,²
 I will prophesy that the time is near,
 And that I am in fear of it,
 When God the Supreme will take me from trouble,
 To become the confidant of His Son.
- 17 Delicious apple tree, of luxuriant green growth,
 Large are thy branches, and beautiful thy form ;
 And I will prophesy that in a clamorous battle
 Pengwern,³ celebrated for mead and carousals, will be despoiled,
 And in the conflict many will be slain,
 By the Chief of Eryri, hated challenger.
- 18 Delicious apple tree, growing on a river's bank,
 The provost of an army would not thrive on the splendid fruit
 Which I enjoyed from its trunk while my reason was entire,
 In company with an elegantly pleasing, delicate, and beautiful maid ;
 Ten years and forty, with my treasures,
 Have I been sojourning among ghosts and sprites



- 16 Afallen beren bren a honneit
 Neus gorwlych dwfyr rynn pluyn hweyt
 A mi a ddysgoganaf ei bod yn nessaf
 Ac i mae arnaf ei harynneig,
 Pan fo Duw Dewin ym diffryt i rhag trin
 Hyd na bwyf gyfrin ag eissifleit.
- 17 Afallen beren hydwf glas
 Plu fawr ei changeu ai chain wanas
 A mi ddysgoganaf cad am dias
 Pengwern cyfeddgrud medd eu hadlas
 Ac amgylch cymminawd cymyn leas
 Gan pendefig Eryri eri atgas
- 18 Afallen beren a dyf ar lan afon
 Yn llwry ny lluydd maer ar ei chlaer aeron
 Tra fo om pwyll wastat am bwyat yn ei bon
 A bun wenwarwys feinwys fanon
 Deg mlynedd a deugein my gein anetwon
 Ydd wyf yn ymdeith gan wylleith a gwillon
 Gwedi da ddigawn a diddan cerddorion

¹ Gruffydd ab Kynan, the grandson of Owain Gwynedd, I should presume, is the person here described.

² That is, the water would not drown Gruffydd ab Kynan.

³ Pengwern was a royal palace in Powys.

After having enjoyed abundant riches and the pleasant society of
the tuneful tribe.

I have been here so long that sprites do not shock me,
And I tremble not at the dragon sprites
Of the princes Gwenddoleu and his brethren,¹
Who have bred a pestilence in the woods of Celyddon ;
May I become a blessed servant of the sovereign of splendid retinues.

- 19 Delicious apple tree, of delicate blossoms,
Which grows on the sward amid the trees,
The Sibyl prophesies—words which will come to pass—
“Mental design shall cover the green assemblies,
From the princes in the beginning of the tempestuous hour ;
The Darter of Rays shall vanquish the profane man ;
Before the Child of the Sun, bold in his courses,
Saxons shall be eradicated and bards shall flourish.”
- 20 Delicious apple tree, of crimson hue,
Growing concealed in the woods of Celyddon,
The attempts to discover it, by its seed, will be all in vain,
Till Cadwaladr, the supreme ruler of battle,
Comes to the conference of Cadvaon,

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Mi feum nam gwiw gwall gan wyllion  
A gwylleith rwyfeu na chrynaf y dragon  
Fy arglwydd Gwenddoleu am browy frodorion  
Gwedi porthi heint a hoet amgylch Celyddon  
Bwyf was gwynfydig gan wledig orchorddion.

- 19 Afallen beren blodau ysplydd  
A dyf y gweryd a hŷt y gwit  
Dysgogeu Chwimleian chwedleu o ddyfyd  
Yd cychennawr gan fryd gwyrdd erfit  
Rhag rhieiu ar ddechreu origieiu tewydd  
Gorwyt grat wehyn dyn digrefydd  
Rhag maban huan heolydd arfeidd  
Saeson ar ddiwreidd beirdd ar gynnydd.

- 20 Afallen beren a prenn ffion  
A dyf dan gel ynghoed Celyddon  
Cyt ceissier ofer fydd herwydd y haton  
Yny ddel Cadwaladyr y gynnadyl cadvaon

<sup>1</sup> This story also occurs in Geoffrey's *History of Arthur*. A party of Saxons flying before him halted at the wood of Celidon, and made a brave defence under the protection of the trees ; but Arthur seeing this, ordered the trees to be cut down, and surrounding them with a rampart of timber, caused them when nearly dying of hunger to sue for release on condition of leaving the island.

With the eagle of Towy and Teivi rivers,<sup>1</sup>  
 Till ranks be formed of the long-shanked ones,  
 And the wearers of long hair be divided into *gentle* and *fierce*.

- 21 Delicious apple tree, of pure white flowers,  
 Thy sweet fruits are the prisoners of words.  
 The ass will arise to remove men out of office;<sup>2</sup>  
 And this I know from the best authority,  
 That an eagle from the sky will play with his men,  
 And bitter will be the sound of Owain's arms;  
 Numerous are his men, but he cannot converse  
 With those who are coming across the seas.
- 22 A veil covers the tree with green branches;  
 There will be treason in sovereignty, and mead in cities,  
 When Burgundy<sup>3</sup> comes with the men of Arras;  
 And I will fortell the harvest when the green corn shall be cropped;  
 When the he eagle and she eagle shall arrive from France,  
 They will scarcely return without having done good.
- 23 Delicious apple tree, of delightful branches,  
 Budding luxuriantly, and shooting forth renowned scions,

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 Eryr Tywi a Theifi afon
 A dyfod grande o aranwynion
 A gwneuthur gwar a gwyllt a gwallhirion.

- 21 Afellen beren burwen o flodeu
 Melus ei haeron carcharorion geireu
 Yr assen a gyfyd i symmud swyddeu
 Y fineu au gwyr ny synnwyr goreu
 Eryr or wybyr au wyr whareu
 Wherw bydd sein Ywein arveu
 Amyl i wyr ni wyr ddadleu
 Cynnedloedd dros foroedd a fordwyueu
- 22 Afallen beren llen ar bren briglas
 Bradawg teyrnedd medd yn ninas
 Pyn ddaw Byrgwyn a gwyr Aras
 A mi ddsyggoganaf cynhaeaf eneifir yr yd glas
 Pan ddel yr Eryr ar Eryres
 O Ffreinc odyt a dieinc yn ddiles.
- 23 Afallen beren per ei changeu
 Puwawr mawr weiriawg enwawg inveu

¹ Gruffydd ab Kynan and Rhys ab Tewdwr, or their sons.

² This is a reference to the Prediction of Merddin, as reported in Geoffrey.

³ It may appear strange that I should translate *Byrgwyn* into Burgundy, and yet it seems quite correct. Arras is an important town in France, situated within the province of Artois; and the Dukes of Burgundy being also counts of Artois, would be the natural leaders of the men of Arras.

I will predict that the owner of Machreu¹
 Will in Machawy on Wednesday create
 Joy to Lloegria with blood-red blades.
 Hear, little pig! There shall come on Thursday
 Joy to Kymru of great suffering;
 There will be swords swiftly plying in the conflict,
 And in the battle Saxons will be slain in such numbers
 That their heads will be used as balls to play with.
 I prophesy truth without guile,
 The elevation of the son of the eminently beneficial South.²

It will be observed that verses 4 and 17, with verses 8 and 20, bear a considerable resemblance to each other.

These verses give us an insight into the political movement of the time, and exhibit a surprising amount of skill, capacity, and daring on the part of the Welsh princes; for not only was Owain Gwynedd not content with withstanding the attacks of England, but he must needs entertain a grand scheme of policy, place himself in diplomatic relations with France, and with the assistance of the French king strike a mortal blow at the English crown. The project failed; but the attempt was worthy of success, and must exalt that prince in public estimation. Mr. Davies supposes that "Merddin in these verses is foreboding the restoration of his lord Gwenddoleu's cannibal eagles;"³ but a different, and perhaps more instructive, explanation may be found in the following extract:

After the rupture of the peace of Montmirail (A.D. 1165-1170), Louis VII. received from a country with which, until then, he had had no sort of relations, and of which he was hardly aware of the existence, a (Latin) despatch conceived in these terms: "To the most excellent the

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A mi ddysgoganaf rhag perchen Machreu  
 Yn nyffryn Machawy Mercherddydd creu  
 Gorfoledd i Loegyr gorgoch lafneu  
 Oian a pharchellan dyddaw dywieu  
 Gorfoledd i Gymru gorfawr goden  
 Yn amwyn Cymminawd cleddyfawd cleu  
 Aer o Saeson ar onn fereu  
 A gwaryawr pelre ar eu peneu  
 A mi ddisgoganaf gwir heb geu  
 Dyrchafawd Maban madfan y Deheu.

<sup>1</sup> Query Mathri, between St. David's and Fishguard?

<sup>2</sup> Rhys ab Gruffydd.

<sup>3</sup> *Mythology of the Druids*, p. 489.

King of the French, Owen, Prince of Wales, his liege-man and faithful friend, sends greeting, obedience, and devotion.

“The war which the King of England had long meditated against me broke out this last summer without any provocation on my part; but, thanks to God and to you, who then occupied his forces abroad, there perished on the fields of battle more of his people than of mine. In his spite he has wickedly mutilated the hostages he held from me; and retiring without concluding either peace or truce, has ordered his soldiers to be ready to march against me next Easter. I therefore beg of you, through your royal clemency, to announce to me by the bearer of these presents if it be your intention to make war upon him at that time; in order that I, on my side, may serve you by doing all the mischief that you shall wish. Let me know what you advise me to do, and also what succours you will furnish me; for without aid and counsel from you, I doubt that I shall be sufficiently strong against our common enemy.”

This letter was brought by a Welsh priest, who presented it to the King of France in solemn audience. But the King, having scarcely ever heard of Wales, suspected that the messenger was some impostor, and would recognise neither him nor the despatches of Owen. The Welsh prince was therefore obliged to send a second missive, to confirm the contents of the first. “You thought” he said, “that my letter was not really mine. However, I assure you it was truly so, and I call God to witness thereof!” The Cambrian chief persisted in calling himself the faithful servant and vassal of the King of France. This trait is worthy of citation, principally because it may serve to teach us not to interpret literally, without serious examination, the formulas and mode of speech of the middle ages. The words vassal and lord often really denoted a relative condition of subordination and dependence; but often, too, they are merely a polite form of expression, especially when the feeble claimed the alliance of the more powerful.<sup>1</sup>

The passages in verses 21, 22, and 23 have an evident reference to this embassy; but if M. Thierry had not supplied the above account, we should not have so easily understood their real signification.

What are the subject and object of these sonnets? I coincide with Mr. Davies in believing them to be to some extent mythological, or more properly speaking allegorical; but I cannot believe that the Avallenau are the work of Merddin; and totally dissent from his assertion that Mr. Turner had *proved* their authenticity.

<sup>1</sup> Thierry's *History of the Norman Conquest*, book vii.

It appears to me that the Avallenau are as late as even the latter part of the reign of Owain Gwynedd. The verses state the trees to be one hundred and forty seven in number; and their antiquity is rationally questioned when we find this to be one of the mystic numbers. We have The Seven Sleepers, The Seven Wise Men, The Seven Champions, and, not to wander into Revelations, The Seven Stars. Again we find mention of "the seven score knobs in the collar of the brindled ox, the seven score and seven poems to Morvydd by D. ab Gwilym, the seven score stones at Stonehenge, the seven score languages alluded to by Gwalchmai, and the seven score mystical personages" of the pseudo-Taliesin in "Angar Kyvyndawd." We must therefore be pardoned for our scepticism as to the historical value of the statements; and if, contrary to Carnhuanawc's<sup>1</sup> plan of proving facts by the evidence of the poem, we use facts to test the poem itself, every vestige of antiquity will disappear. There is much reason to believe that the bard, whoever he was, has made use of an old tradition, which he has modified and extended; and if this conjecture be correct, as I think it is, Merddin will have but little claim to the poem. This tradition is found in one of the dialogues—the one between Merddin and Taliesin, wherein Merddin says :

Seven score chiefs  
Were changed to sprites ;  
In the wood of Celyddon  
Were they transformed.<sup>2</sup>

We have here one of the elements from which the poem was composed; and as Prydydd y Moch alludes to the tradition in this form at his day :

The next conquest where noble feats were achieved  
Was on the hill of Bryn yr Erw, where they saw thee,  
Like a lion, foremost in piercing thy enemies,  
Like a strong eagle, a safeguard to thy people ;  
Upon this account they will not dispute with thee ;  
They *vanish before thee like the ghosts of Celyddon*—

<sup>1</sup> This word has been used once before. It would perhaps be well to inform the English reader that it is the bardic name of the late Rev. T. Price of Crickhowel.

<sup>2</sup> Seith ugein haelon,  
A aethau ygwylion ;  
Ynghoed Celyddon,  
Y darfuon.

these lines of authentic poetry go far to settle the question; and when, in addition to the words of the dialogue, we find such expressions as

Can wyllon <sup>1</sup> Celyddon cerddant

in a bard of the twelfth century, we become convinced of two things:

1. That the tradition, whatever it originally was, had at that time assumed no other form, and

2. That therefore the Avallenau must be as recent as the time of Llywarch ab Llywelyn. It should also be noticed, as a fact illustrative of traditional growth, that in the Avallenau the seven score and seven (whatever they might be) are *consequents* of the battle of Arderydd, while in the earlier dialogue (see Hud a Lledrith, 1st chapter) they are shown to *have existed previously*.<sup>2</sup>

Having gone thus far it becomes necessary to fix its date as nearly as possible. This can only be ascertained from internal evidence, which teaches that the orchard consisted of

Saith avallen beren, a saith ugaint,  
Yn gyvoed, gyvuwch, gyhyd, gymmaint.

Seven score and seven apple trees,  
Of equal age, height, and magnitude.

These lines—and many more might be quoted from the same poem—are fine specimens of mastery over words, and of fertility in language; and lead to the conclusion, from the connected train of thought here and in other places, that they could not have been written until prose literature became known. In the poems of even Gwalchmai there is an abruptness, not of ideas, but of words, arising from the imperfect formation of the language; in the historical pieces of Aneurin, Taliesin, and Llywarch, the want of conjunctions is painfully evident; but we have nothing in the language more smooth, flowing, and complete than the Avallenau. I would, however, direct attention to the line:

Yn gyvoed, gyvuwch, gyhyd, gymmaint,

<sup>1</sup> Robbers were afterwards thus called; see *Cambro-Briton*, i. pp. 184, 266, for 'Gwylliaid Cochion Mawddwy.'

<sup>2</sup> See also, note, p. 220.

with a view to show that if a taste for such rhythm at any time coincided with such command of language as is here indicated, and was characteristic of any period of our literary history, we should refer the composition of the Avallenau to that period. To be still more precise, let us endeavour to find a date beyond which we cannot go in the direction of modern days; and fortunately this is not difficult.

Our literary history, from the death of Llewelyn to the time of Davydd ab Gwilym, shows, in the department of poetry, a most striking feature. A complete revolution had taken place; and a period usually considered to be barren was one of earnest cogitation, zealous reforms, and diligent cultivation. In this interval was born the incubus of Welsh poetry; those days of silent gloom, and impenetrable darkness, were pregnant with *cynganedd* (alliteration). This portion of the literary history of Wales does not come within the scope of the essay; and we must therefore content ourselves with stating that the introduction of *cynganedd* forms the boundary line, beyond which we need not go. The Avallenau have no *cynganedd*; we must therefore fix their production somewhere between the years 1240 and 1350.

Between these periods there is a bard whose poems are full of such lines. Llywarch ab Llywelyn, whom we have already quoted, flourished during the reigns of Owain Gwynedd and the first Llewelyn, and has in his poems many such lines as the following:

*Gogyvarch teyrn, gogwyr teyrnvardd,  
Gogyvwrdd torment, gogyvrawr torvoedd,  
Gogawn teyrnveirdd, gogawn teyrnvro.*

Again, we have the word "teyrn" frequently repeated:

*Teyrnllu, teyrnedd, teyrnllaw, teyrnllin,  
Teyrnlliw teyrnas, tervysg torment.*

In Davydd Benfras's ode to Llewelyn ab Iorwerth there is a long passage of a similar structure, beginning with—

*Oedd breisg vreisg ei vyddin.*

And just prior to this time we find in Howel ab Owain this line:

*Claer wanllun, wenllytyv, wynlliw Kywyt.*



We may therefore conclude that these lines in the Avallenau must have been written when the public taste required such rhythms; and, in addition to the above extracts, we have the authority of Giraldus for the statement that the bards of the age "took pride in repeating the first syllable of words, and thought nothing perfect without."

The resources of criticism are not yet exhausted; and not only does the language betray the poem, but the ideas expressed are also such as were prevalent during the romance era. In the notion of the beautiful entertained among the Welsh of those days, trees of equal growth were essential elements. This appears from *Iarllles y Ffynnawn* (p. 40), where Kynon, relating his adventures, says:

And it chanced at length that I came to the fairest valley in the world, wherein were *trees of equal growth*.

Again, in another tale by Gruffydd ab Adda, a bard who was killed at Dolgellau about 1370, we are told:

In the furthest end of this forest he saw a level green valley, and trees of equal growth.

Chaucer has similar sentiments. He describes a bower, as,—

Wrethen in fere so well and cunningly,  
That every branch and leafe grew by measure,  
Plain as a bord, of an *height by-and-by*.

And speaking of an avenue of "okes" he says,

And an eight foot or nine  
Every tree well fro his fellow grew.

We have thus located the diction; and now fix the ideas in their appropriate age. It only remains for us to treat of the historical incidents mentioned.

In the seventh verse we are told that Medrawd and Arthur would reappear, and fight over again the battle of Camlan. Cadwaladr, too, was to revisit Britain, and Gwenhwyvar to repent of her sins. In no contemporary writer do we read of Gwenhwyvar and Medrawd; and even the mention of Amherawdwyr, in one of Llywarch Hen's Englynion, is suspicious. Here we see very clearly that Arthur had been the hero of romance

long before this was written. The names of Geraint, Urien, and Owen authenticate the poems of the early bards; their absence from the Avallenau throws discredit on that poem. Every one of Mr. Turner's arguments in favour of Aneurin, Taliesin, and Llywarch are against the claim of these verses to antiquity.

The mention of Cadwaladr and Kynan invites a closer examination. We have three distinct accounts of Cadwaladr's death, each differing from, and opposed to, the other. Nennius states that "during his (i.e. Oswy's) reign there was a dreadful mortality among his subjects, when Cadwaladr was king among the Britons, succeeding his father, and he himself died among the rest."

I give this in Dr. Giles's translation, and though the passage is so obscure as to make it a matter of doubt whether the person who died was Cadwaladr or Oswy, the balance of evidence seems to show that it was the former. In speaking of Phylip Brydydd, I quoted two Triads in which Cadwaladr's death was distinctly attributed to the blow given to him by Golyddan the bard, with the palm of his hand. Generally it may be assumed that the Triads are fair exponents of pure Cambrian tradition; and in this case we find from the language of Phylip (p. 159) that among his countrymen this was the received account of Cadwaladr's death. There is no inconsistency between the version in the Triads and that of Nennius; indeed, they may be said to confirm each other. The Triads speak positively of the King's death; and Nennius, though he says Cadwaladr died "among the rest," does not necessarily imply that the plague was the cause of his death. But in the twelfth century we meet with another tradition, varying most widely from both the preceding. This occurs in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the British Kings*, where it is said:

Cadwaladr fled to Brittany out of the way of the plague, which having subsided, he applied to Alan, King of the Bretons, for aid to recover his kingdom from the Saxons, who had taken possession of it during his absence. While he was preparing a fleet for this purpose an angel deterred him from his enterprise, ordered him to go to Rome to Pope Sergius, and said that when he should have died and been enrolled among the saints, his bones, with those of other saints, would be brought from Rome to Britain, and the Welsh would recover their lost supremacy in that country. Cadwaladr accordingly went to Rome, and having been

confirmed by Sergius, died on the twelfth before the Kalends of May, in the year 688.

The latter part of this story is ably shown by Professor Rees<sup>1</sup> to be a blunder, arising from the mistaking or misstating by Geoffrey of the history of Ceadwalla, King of Wessex, for that of Cadwaladr. The Saxon king did go to Rome, and actually did die on the twelfth of the Kalends of May, 688; but the flight to Armorica and promised return of Cadwaladr's bones has yet to be accounted for. This probably arose from the same confusion of narratives, and may have prevailed as a popular sentiment among the Kymry who emigrated to Brittany; but whence the extended prophecy of Merlin sprang, except it be attributed to the exaggeration of similar traditions by Geoffrey, I know not. It is, however, evident that the prophecy of the return of Cadwaladr, and recovery of their supremacy by the Kymry, must have come from Brittany; for we perceive from the Triads that the Cambrians had accepted Calwaladr's death as an actual fact, from which no such expectations could have been formed; and this argument becomes particularly forcible when it is considered that he had proved himself to have been a very sorry ruler. The conclusion, therefore, that the hope was generated and encouraged by the descendants of persons who had left this country when the Britons were an united people, and who, neglecting subsequent events, had only retained a lively recollection of the glory of that period, becomes highly probable. In Brittany refugees might have dreamt of British supremacy, but in Wales the stern reality of their condition was too apparent.

Geoffrey's book, joining Conant II. of Brittany to Cadwaladr, and flattering these ambitious expectations of the exiled Kymry, produced a very powerful influence upon the public mind; and having given a classic form to the popular expectations of the country, impregnated even the genuine bardic literature with visions of recovered greatness. In the prophecy of Merlin, as it is there given, it is said (in Dr. Giles's translation):

Cadwaladr shall call upon Conan, and take Albania into alliance; then there shall be a slaughter of foreigners; then shall the rivers run with blood. There shall break forth the foundations of Armorica, and they

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¹ *Welsh Saints*, p. 300.

shall be crowned with the diadem of Brutus. Cambria shall be filled with joy, and the oaks of Cornwall shall flourish. The island shall be called by the name of Brutus, and the name given it by foreigners shall be abolished. From Conan shall proceed a warlike boar that shall exercise the sharpness of his tusks upon the Gallic woods. For he shall cut down all the larger oaks, and shall be a defence to the smaller. The Arabians and Africans shall dread him; for he shall pursue his furious course to the farther part of Spain. There shall succeed the goat of the venerable castle, having golden horns and a silver beard, who shall breathe such a cloud out of his nostrils as shall darken the whole surface of the island. There shall be peace in his time, and corn shall abound by reason of the fruitfulness of the soil.

Now, this prediction of the coming of Cadwaladr and Kynan finds place in the Avallenau; and in the Hoianau we meet it afterwards, as well as in the poems of the pseudo-Taliesin. Whence arises this coincidence? Did Geoffrey borrow the prediction from Merlin? Or did the writer or writers of the Avallenau take it from the Kyvoesi and Geoffrey? Mr. Turner has entertained the first question, and answered in the affirmative. Let us therefore lay aside the suspicions of their modernity excited by the smoothness of the verses, and various other reasons for scepticism, and see what it is that he assumes in that reply. The prediction states that "Cadwaladr and Kynan shall come to the conference of Rhyd Rheon." Now, it is implied that Cadwaladr had gone to Brittany, about A.D. 668; from thence he would come again; therefore the prophecy implies a knowledge of that event. But if we inquire a little minutely, we shall find a small inconsistency in the matter of dates. The Avallenau, assuming their genuineness, must have been written long after the battle of Arderydd, which occurred in 577, as Merddin is made to say that he had been in the woods of Celyddon fifty years in consequence; that would make the date of the poem to be 627; but such was not the fact. Everywhere throughout both the Avallenau and Hoianau the poet speaks of Rhydderch Hael as being still living, and it is therefore a warrantable supposition that the bard died before him; that prince died in 601, and therefore the prophecy must have been uttered previously. It will therefore now appear that a prediction uttered in A.D. 600 to persons then living, assumed their possession at that time of a knowledge which could not have been acquired for at least sixty-eight years afterwards. Here

I make the supporters of the genuineness of these verses a gift of the assumption that Merddin could predict events at all, though, in common with most of my contemporaries, I am a little sceptical. There are in Wales men who believe in the "wise man" of *Cwrt y Cadno*, and there are people in England who have faith in "Raphael;" but in neither country are these the intelligent classes. It is possible that some persons may still attribute these predictions to Merddin, and continue to assert the antiquity of the *Avallenau* and *Hoianau*; I must with all respect hold a different opinion.

But if they are not to be attributed to the age of Merddin, may they not have been written soon after the death of *Cadwaladr*? No, it would not have been said then that he would come from *Brittany*; for the men of that age knew he had not gone there. And it would not have been said that he would assist the Britons to recover their supremacy, for they knew that he was a coward, and that *Golyddan* had killed him. To what age, then, are they to be attributed?

The publication of *Geoffrey's* book produced an extraordinary sensation throughout the civilised world. We behold traces of its influence in the literature of every country in Europe; but unless the sanction given to these prophecies by their adoption in his book was the chief cause which inspired the production of the *Avallenau* and *Hoianau*, we shall have to recognise as a fact what would be ten times more strange than any difficulty involved in this hypothesis, that a book which put every other country into a ferment produced no effect at home. Prior to the appearance of *Geoffrey's* history the more intelligent portion of his countrymen had no notion of calling *Cadwaladr* from the dead, that expectation existing only among the vulgar; but soon after we find *Prydydd y Moch* saying that the Druids were prophesying the coming of a great king to the *Kymry*, and pointing to *Llewelyn ab Iorwerth*. We also find *Gwalchmai* (1160) saying of *Madoc ab Meredydd* that there shall be no one like him:

Hyd pan ddel Cynan cain addfwyndawd
A Chadwaladr mawr mur pob ciwdawd.

Until Kynan, the kindly courteous, shall come,
And Cadwaladr the great, the pillar of all armies.

This expectation was general in Wales soon after the appear-

ance of the *Historia Britonum*; and, unless we believe the Kymry had two Cadwaladr fevers, there seems no other alternative than to refer these verses to this period.

Another argument in support of the same conclusion, may be drawn from a source which, had I time to investigate it carefully, would most probably throw much light upon this part of our literary history. I refer to the traditions of Brittany. It will have been observed that most of the facts mentioned in the Avallenau are to be found in Cambrian history. The battle of Arderydd, the seven score chiefs who perished in the Caledonian woods, Gwenddoleu, Rhydderch Hael, Cadwaladr, Kynan, and Arthur, are mentioned elsewhere; but neither in the other pieces attributed to Merddin, such as the Kyvoesi and the Gwasgargerdd, nor in the historical documents, is there any allusion to the apple trees given to him. But in the Brut of Geoffrey we find Merlin prophesying that—

The renowned city shall be rebuilt by Eric, loaden with apples, to the smell whereof the birds of several woods shall flock together. Eric shall *hide* his apples within it, and shall make subterraneous passages.

And among the Breton popular songs lately given to the world by the Comte de Villemarqué I find two poems connected with the name of Merddin, in one of which occurs this passage: ¹

MERLIN *loq.*

Silence my son, lest your steps frighten him;
He is fast asleep in the dormitory.
He has swallowed three of my apples,
Which with him who bakes them turn to ashes.
And those who eat my apples,
Behold! follow me everywhere.

In both these cases the name of Merddin is connected with apples; and it is therefore probable that the author of the

¹ The original in the Cornish dialect:

“Tevet ma mab, na sponted ket
Gand ann mourgousk e' ma dalc'het;
Lonket en deuz tri *aval* ru.
Meuz pohaet dean touez al ludu;
Lonket eu deuz ma *avalou*
Chetu hen d'hon heul e'peb-brou.”

COMTE DE VILLEMARQUÉ, *Barzas Breiz*, tom i. p. 80.

Avallenau added this portion of the Armorican tradition to such other traits of Merddin's history as he found among his own countrymen. The date of the Breton lay, furnished to De Villemarqué by a lady living in the environs of Morlaix,¹ is uncertain; but the date of Geoffrey's work would show that this amalgamation was not likely to have occurred prior to the twelfth century.

Another, and the last, argument is derived from the structure of the verses, each of which, it will have been observed, commences with "Avallen beren." This of itself does not prove their recent origin; for Aneurin in the sixth century begins many of his verses with "Men went to Cattræth," and "Men went to Gododin;" Llywarch Hen does this so frequently as to have provoked our critical censure; and such anonymous verses as the series commencing "Eiry Mynydd," with the "A glyweisti a gânt," &c., of the Verses of the Hearing, have the same peculiarity. The simple fact of the repetition of the initial line is not, therefore, a sufficient proof of their late composition; for, on the contrary, all other things overlooked, the presumption would rather be in favour of the antiquity of those verses. But the same practice prevailed in the twelfth century, with an additional peculiarity. Gwalchmai begins several verses with "Llachar vy nghleddyv," &c.; Kynddelw has the line, "Gorvynawd drythyll," &c., at the commencement of each verse in the address to Eva, the daughter of Madoc ab Meredydd; Owain Kyveiliog begins each verse of the *Hírlas Horn* with "Diwallaw di venestr," or "Diwallaw di'r corn;" and Howel ab Owain frequently repeats the line "Tonn wenn orewyn." In the anonymous poems we find the same rule prevailing; each verse of the Hoianau begins with "Oian a parchellan;" in the poem called "Myg Dinbych" the verses begin with "Addvyn gaer;" and in "Preiddeu Annwn" several begin with "Neud wyv glod geymyn cerdd." Now the distinction between the poems of the two periods is this: in the bards of the sixth century the line is connected with, and forms necessarily a part of, what follows; but by the twelfth century the practice had become so hackneyed that the initial line had no connexion with what came after. This is seen very clearly in Howel ab Owain's "Delight," where

¹ "Nous avons été mis sur la trace de ce chant et du moreceau précédent par une dame des environs de Morlaix."—*Barzas Breiz*, tom. i. p. 92.

the "fair foam-crowned wave" has no relation whatever to the succeeding lines; and if the initial lines in the Avallenau were struck out, the sense would suffer but little thereby. These verses also resemble the mythological poems. In verse 7 we meet the line "Namyn saith ni ddyraith o'r gymmanva;" and this identical line ends each verse of "Preiddeu Annwn," the last words being varied. Another resemblance between the Avallenau and the poems called mythological is found in the prediction of universal peace. In the last line of the eighth stanza it is said that, after Kynan should come to the conference of Rhyd Rheon,

The sounder of the horn of gladness should sing of happiness and peace;

and the poems called "Cadair Taliesin" and "Cadair Keridwen" have similar closing sentiments. They also resemble each other in another respect; in both the "Preiddeu Annwn" and the Avallenau the monks are the objects of bitter and especial hostility. A reason why apple trees were chosen as the subjects for celebration may also be inferred from the fact that Fairyland went among the bards, since the appearance of Geoffrey's history, by the name of "Ynys yr Avallon" (the Island of the Apple Trees), which English romancists, not knowing the meaning of Avallon, call "the woody isle of Avalon;" and this furnishes another link in the chain of evidence which proves to my complete satisfaction that the Avallenau belong to the age of romances, or, in other words, to the latter part of the reign of Owain Gwynedd. Orchards exist in great abundance and luxuriance between Lanark and Glasgow; and it was probably the recollection of these among the Kymry, who had been compelled to abandon that country, "distance lending enchantment to the view," that led to the invention of "the woody isle of Avalon." If this reasoning should be thought to be conclusive, the speculations of Davies as to the object of the verses will not require a lengthened discussion. He supposes the apple trees to have been used by Merddin to signify the principles of Druidism, which are, according to his view, celebrated under the name of apples; but as the chief force of his arguments depends upon the assumption that the verses were written soon after the subversion of Druidism by the introduction of Christianity, his reasonings become nearly pointless when this supposition is shown to be erroneous. But, independent of the arguments

furnished by the lateness of the composition against his hypothesis, there is another argument which ought to be conclusive. It will be admitted that a bard of considerable repute in the thirteenth century must be a much better expositor of the meaning of these verses than persons living in the nineteenth can be supposed to be; and therefore the evidence of Madawg Dwygraig must carry with it much weight. He has a satire upon some "Mallt, the daughter of David, "who had robbed his orchard of apples, and thereby excited the ire of the poet; and this poem is exceedingly curious as being a *parody* upon the very verses now under consideration. In this he says: ¹

Three delicious apple trees were eaten of against the will,—
 They would not be given freely, nor would they be given at all;
 One was born among the trees in Paradise,
 To the injury of old and young;
 The second bearing green leaves was *given* to Merddin,
 To be protected from the common populace;
 The third handsome one was in my own garden.

We learn from these lines that the Avallenau were understood and interpreted literally in the thirteenth century; therefore, the mystical and far-fetched explanation of a later date must be abandoned. It may also be inferred, from the fact that the verses were parodied, that the bard did not consider them to be the sacred writings of Merddin; for, on the contrary, he seems to have looked upon them as forming a Mabinogi. He begins each verse with "Avallen beren;" and having described Mallt to be a lady of easy virtue, he furnishes us with a counterpart to the seven score apple trees, by charging her with having bestowed her favours upon seven score lovers. Such liberties would not have been taken with the Avallenau, had they been considered to have been the works of Merddin, by the intelligent men of that age. They knew better; and the name of Merddin was only used to influence the multitude.

~~~~~  
<sup>1</sup> Teir afallen per pored o anfodd  
 Ni roddid o fodd ai ni roddid  
 Un ym Mharadwys a aned yngwydd  
 Rhwng hen a newydd yn eniwed  
 Ail yn dwyn rhyddail rhodded i Fyrdin  
 Buchedd gyffredin werin wared  
 Trydedd hardd i'm gardd, &c.

What, then, is the object of the verses? It is probably an address to the tree of liberty,<sup>1</sup> to which as many biographical details have been added as would make it appear to be a romance of Merddin, and obtain the sanction of his name for the predictions of universal peace and happiness, with the speedy triumph of the Welsh arms and restoration of British supremacy.

#### THE HOIANAU.

These resemble the *Avallenau* in style, structure, and object, and differ from them only in variation of the initial line. We have already stated that the line "Avallen beren" forms no essential part of the verse, the sense being complete without it; and this is proved to be the case by the occurrence of other verses, with different initial lines, though similar in age, language, and ideas. They are a little later than the preceding; those refer to events in the reign of Owain Gwynedd, and these were composed in that of his grandson, Llewelyn ab Iorwerth.

In the *Archaiology* they are called "Hoianau, neu Borchell-anau Myrddin;" i.e. The Listeners, or the Piglings of Merddin; but popularly they were called "The Songs of the Pigs." All the arguments in the preceding dissertation as to the date of the *Avallenau* apply with equal force to these; it will not, therefore, be necessary to go again over the same ground, and I will only offer such special remarks as seem to be required.

#### THE SONGS OF THE PIGS.<sup>2</sup>

- 1 Listen, O little pig! O happy little pig!  
 Burrow not in sight on the mountain tops,  
 Burrow in secret in the woods,  
 Lest Rhydderch Hael, the Christian prince, should see thee.  
 And I will predict, and it shall be true,

<sup>1</sup> This view is fully supported by verses 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 19, and others.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Oian a phorchellan a pharchell dedwydd  
 Na chladd dy redkyr ym mhen mynydd  
 Cladd yn lle argel yn argoedydd  
 Nac erwys Rydderch Hael rwyfadur ffydd  
 Ami ddysgoganaf fi a gwyr fydd  
 Hyd yn Abertaradr rhag traws eu Prydein  
 Cymru oll yn eu cyflwydd  
 Llywelyn ei enw o eissillydd  
 Gwynedd gwr dygorbydd.

In Britain a daring prince shall ride as far as Abertaradr;<sup>1</sup>  
 And Cambrians shall be prosperous;  
 His name is Llewelyn of the line of Gwynedd,  
 One who shall not be overcome.

Rhydderch Hael, as we have already seen, was one of the three generous princes of the Isle of Britain. He was king of the Strathclyde Kymry, and having been converted by St. Columba from Druidism to Christianity, became the ardent advocate of the latter; and in its defence fought the battle of Arderydd against Gwenddoleu ab Keidiaw, an upholder of the ancient faith, who was assisted by Aeddan ab Gavran, King of the Scots. This battle was fought in A.D. 577, and Gwenddoleu, with seven score chiefs, perished, it is said, in the woods of Caledonia. In consequence of Rhydderch's success, Merddin, according to the tradition, was compelled to hide himself in the forests, where he was accompanied by a little pig. Mr. Davies is of opinion that the pig in these verses is a symbol of Druidism, but it appears to me that the pig in these verses allegorically represents the Kymry who inhabited the Principality. The popular opinion of all countries has assigned to magicians and sages familiar spirits, and Merddin has been no less fortunate than others; but he has different companions in different places. In Wales he has his mother (the nun<sup>2</sup>) for an associate, a grey wolf, his sister Gwenddydd, and a little pig; and in Brittany his companions are his "poor grandmother,"<sup>3</sup> his "poor little boy,"<sup>4</sup> his daughter,<sup>5</sup> his harp,<sup>6</sup> and his *black dog*.

<sup>1</sup> Abertaradr is in Herefordshire; see *Liber Landavensis*, 376, 396, 439. In one of the fictitious poems, the "Cywrysedd Gwynedd a Dehenbarth," these lines occur:

"O ryd ar Teradyr  
 Hyd ym mhorth Wygyr ym Mon."

<sup>2</sup> Bed an ap llian ymnewais  
 Vynydd lluagor llew Emreis  
 Prif ddewin Merddin Emreis  
*Myv. Arch.* vol. i. p. 78.

The grave of the son of the nun,  
 The companion of the lion of Emrys,  
 The chief diviner, Merddin Emrys, is in  
 Newys mountain.

Breton original (Cornish dialect.)

<sup>3</sup> My poor grandmother,—do you  
 love me,  
 Or my poor heart will break.

Na mann gouz paour m'ar em c'heret,

Rag ma c'halonik zo rannet.

<sup>4</sup> My poor little boy, do not weep,  
 Because your harp is unstrung.

Ma mabik paour na welet ket,  
 Ann de'len a vo distaget.

<sup>5</sup> If thou wilt give the ring to me,  
 I to thee will give my daughter.

Mar gazez he' vijou d'ime'  
 Te po ma merc'h diganime.

<sup>6</sup> If thou wilt bring Merlin's harp  
 Which is held by four chains of fine  
 gold.

Mar gazez d'in, te'len Merlin  
 Dalc'het gant pider sugaour fin.

*Barzas Breiz*, tom. i. p. 70.

The poem in which this last occurs is very interesting; and as we shall again have reason to refer to it, it is here translated. De Villemarqué supposes it to be intended for a dialogue between St. Columba and the Sage; there is such a dialogue in the Welsh, which shall be given hereafter:

MERLIN THE DIVINER.

Merlin ! Merlin ! where art thou going  
So early in the day, with thy black dog ?  
Oi ! oi ! oi ! oi ! oi ! oi ! oi ! oi ! oi ! oi !  
Ioi ! oi ! oi ! ioi ! oi !

I have come here to search for the way  
To find the red egg,<sup>1</sup>  
The red egg of the marine serpent,  
By the seaside in the hollow of the stone.  
I am going to seek in the valley  
The green water-cress and the golden grass,  
And the top branch of the oak  
In the wood by the side of the fountain.

Merlin ! Merlin ! retrace your steps ;  
Leave the branch on the oak,  
And the green water-cress in the valley,  
As well as the golden grass ;  
And leave the red egg of the marine serpent<sup>1</sup>  
In the foam by the hollow of the stone.  
Merlin ! Merlin ! retrace thy steps ;  
There is no diviner but God.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The red egg is probably the *anguineus* said by Pliny, lib. xxix., to have been in so much favour with the Druids.

<sup>2</sup> The Breton original, in the Cornish dialect :

MERLIN-DIWINOUR.

(Jas Kerne.)

Merlin, Merlin, pélec'h et-hu,  
Ken beure'-zé, gand hō ki du ?  
Ou ! ou ! ou ! ou ! ou ! ou ! ou ! ou ! ou !  
Iou ! ou ! ou ! iou ! ou !

Bed onn bet kas kahout ann tu,  
Da gahont treiman ann wi ru,  
Ann wi ru ann aer vorek,  
War lez ann od toull aun garrek.

This last line is found in Llywarch Hen;<sup>1</sup> and as that coincidence, coupled with the character of the sentiment, indicates considerable antiquity, we may presume that this alliance of the magician with a black dog represents correctly an old tradition, perhaps an actual occurrence. We shall presently see that in the Druidic mythology the pig occupies a prominent position; but whatever constituted the link of connexion between Druidism and the swinish tribe, it must be evident that the pig in the text typifies the Welsh people. In the first part of the verse the author connects with Merddin that which was attributed to him in the popular tradition, and was well understood among the Welsh; but as the mythology of Merddin was only used as a medium for the introduction of something more important, he develops his purpose in the prediction of the greatness of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, who became King of North Wales A.D. 1194.

2 Hear, O little pig! it is necessary to flee  
 From the hunters of Mordai, lest we should,  
 If our presence be suspected, be pursued and discovered;  
 And if we escape we shall not complain of fatigue.  
 And I will predict in the presence of the ninth wave,  
 In the presence of the single white beard of exhausted Dyved;  
 There shall be exalted an apartment, not in the lodging-house of faith,

~~~~~  
 Mont a ran da glask d'ar flouren,
 Ar béler glaz ha 'nn'aour géoten,
 Hag ar war-huel ann derwen,
 E'kreiz ar c'hoad lez ar feuten.

Merlin! Merlin! distroet eun drou;
 Losket ar war gand ann de'rou,
 Hag ar be'ler gand ar floren,
 Kerkoulz hag ann aour-geoten,
 Hag ann wi ru ann aer-vorek,
 Touez ann oen toull ar garrek.
 Merlin! Merlin! distroet enn-drou,
 Né deuz diwinour némed Dou.

VILLEMARQUÉ, *Barzas Breiz*, tom. i. p. 60.

¹ Namyn Duw nid oes dewin.—*Myv. Arch.* vol. i. p. 124.

2 Oian a phorchellan oedd raid myned
 Rhag cynyddion Mordai pei llafased
 Rhag dyfod erlid arnam ni an gweled
 Ac or diagwn i ni chwynwn i ein lludded
 A mi ddysgoganafi rhag ton nawfed
 Rhag unig bariffwyn gwchyn hyfed
 Dyrchafwyd llogawd nid ir lletiered

In a house long a desert upland frequented by wild animals.
 But until Kynan comes to it, to see it,
 There will never be a restoration of its townships.

In the introductory lines the bard, assuming the truth of the story about Merddin's flight from the persecution of Rhydderch, elicits from the magician some very natural expressions. Does Mordai signify sea houses, or does it refer to Mordav Hael? At this distance of time it is difficult to ascertain what ideas the men of the twelfth century connected with the ninth wave; but at the present day it is a frequent custom to watch the waves, and it is said that the ninth wave is larger and stronger than the others, and comes further ashore. The bards frequently mention it with respect; Rhys Goch ab Rhiccert calls the gull

Queen of the ocean,
 Whose throne is on the ninth wave of the sea;

and in one of the anonymous poems, belonging to the era now under consideration, it is said:

Addfwyn gaer y sydd ar don nawfed.
 A holy city there is above the ninth wave.

The number nine, the square of three, was held in considerable estimation by the Kymry; the ninth descendant of a foreigner became a free man; the legal fines were extended through nine degrees of relationship; Bedo Brwynllys promises to fast for nine days; and Lewis Glyn Cothi, as a mark of great honour, describes a patron as "ninth Lord of Dinevor."

What "the single white beard of Dyved" means I know not, unless its meaning can be found in Geoffrey, who says:

A hoary old man, sitting upon a snow-white horse, shall turn the course of the river Perion, and shall measure out a mill upon it with a white rod.

And again:

(After Cynon) there shall succeed the goat of the venereal castle, having golden horns and a *silver beard*.

The latter part may be understood by a reference to the last

~~~~~  
 Yn ty yn hir gwrthdir a gwystfled  
 Yn y del Cynan iti oe chyn gweled  
 Ni bydd atcor byth ar ei threfred.

lines of the 18th verse, where it is said that "Kynan shall create dolorous music in Dyved ;" and the words "exhausted Dyved" may be considered to be anticipatory. The other allusions may possibly refer to what is prominently noticed in Merlin's predictions—the removal of the see from Caerleon to St. David's.

3 Hear, O little pig ! I cannot easily sleep,  
 On account of the tumult of grief which is on me :  
 Ten years and forty have I endured pain ;  
 Therefore the joy I now have is an evil.  
 Life will be given to me by Jesus, the most trustworthy  
 Of the kings of heaven, of highest lineage.  
 It will not be well with the female descendants of Adam  
 If they believe not in God in the latter day.  
 I have seen Gwenddoleu, with the precious gifts of princes,  
 Gathering prey from every extremity of the land ;  
 Beneath the red turf is he now resting,  
 The most gentle of northern sovereigns.

Here it will only be necessary to point out the anachronism which the poet has committed by making the Druid a devout Christian. Gwenddoleu was Merddin's patron ; and it was in consequence of this chieftain's defeat in the battle of Arderydd that the story makes the sage a wanderer.

4 Hear, O little pig ! it was necessary to pray,  
 For fear of five chiefs from Normandy ;  
 And the fifth going across the salt sea,  
 To conquer Ireland, of gentle towns,

~~~~~

3 Oian a pharchellan ni hawdd cysgaf
 Rhag godwrdd y galar yssydd arnaf
 Deng mlynedd a deugain yd borthais i boen
 Ys drwg o arhoen yssydd arnaf
 Oes imi gan Iesu gaffu gwaesaf
 Brenhinoedd nefoedd achoedd uchaf
 Ni mad rhianedd o blant Addaf
 Ar ni chredo i ddofydd y dydd diweddaf
 Yd weleis Weneddoleu ym merthic rhiau
 Yn cynnull preiddiau o bob eithaf
 Y dan fy ngweryd rhudd nu neud araf
 Pen teyrnedd Gogledd llaredd muyhaf.

4 Oian a pharchellan oedd raid gweddi
 Rhag ofn pump pennaeth o Normandi
 Ar pumed yn myned dros for heli
 I oresgyn Iwerddon dirion drefi

There to create war and confusion,
 And a fighting of son against father. The country knows it.
 (They will) also be going to the Lloegrians of falling cities,
 And they will never go back to Normandy.

This verse alludes to the conquest of Ireland by the Normans; and the singular accuracy of the historical detail must afford the reader much pleasure, as it shows the verse to have been written at that very time. Our poet, it will be seen, only makes the *fifth* Norman chieftain go to *conquer* Ireland; and this accords with the actual facts. When Dermot MacMorrogh quarrelled with Roderic, King of Leinster, he came over to Pembroke, and invoked the assistance of the Normans, who had recently settled in that district. They agreed with him for the rate of pay and time of service, and embarked to the number of four hundred, knights, esquires, and archers, under the command of Robert Fitzstephens, Maurice Fitzgerald, Hervé de Montmarais, and David Barry.¹ These *four* went over, A.D. 1169, to assist Dermot in subjugating Leinster. In gratitude for their services he gave them allotments of land larger than they had elsewhere; but having been thus induced to stay, they sent for Richard Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, to become their leader. Richard, the *fifth* Norman chief, went to Ireland, A.D. 1170, and commenced the work of conquest.²

5 Hear, O little pig! sleep not too long;
 There comes to us a lamentable report
 Of little chieftains full of perjury,
 And husbandmen that are close-fisted of the penny.
 When there shall come across the seas men encased in armour,
 With war-horses under them having two faces,

~~~~~  
 Ef gnawhawdd rhyfel a dyvysgi  
 O ymladd mab a thad gwlad ai gwybi  
 A myned i Loegrwys diffwys drefi  
 Ac na bo gwared byth i Norddmandi.

<sup>1</sup> Thierry's *Norman Conquest*, book x. Hume, *History of England*, chap. ix., gives different names of the two last adventurers, and also a version of the whole affair, slightly differing from the above.

<sup>2</sup> Thierry, book x.

5 Oian a pharchellan na vyt hunawc ryd  
 Dybyt attam ny chwedyl dyvrydauc  
 Pennaetheu bychein anudonauc  
 Meiri manged am pen keiniauc



And two points to their spears, of unsparing havoc,  
*Gardens are reaped in an unpacific world,*<sup>1</sup>  
*And the grave will be better than the life of him who sighs,*  
*When the horns call men to the squares of conflict ;*  
 And when the sons of Eidog shall be travellers on the seas,  
 There will be a severe morning in Caer Sallawc.

In this very interesting verse there are several striking features ; the allusion to the close-fistedness of the husbandmen reveals the feeling of disappointed bards ; the succeeding lines show the actual impression produced upon the popular mind by the coats of mail, great Flemish horses, and lances eight cubits long of the Norman knights ; and the latter portion describes in language powerful and poetical the miseries of war. What the two last lines refer to I have not been able to ascertain.

6 Hear, O little pig ! thou tranquil pig,  
 A Sibyl has told me a story, of what is very wonderful,  
 And I will predict an angry summer,  
 Between brothers treachery in Gwynedd.  
 When the Gwyndodians shall long have withheld tribute,  
 There shall come seven hundred ships with a northern wind,  
 And at Milford they shall assemble.

The first part is a just rebuke of the petty quarrels so prevalent among Welsh chieftains, and at this time so frequent in North Wales between the sons of Owain Gwynedd ; and the latter refers to the invasion of Menai, A.D. 1157.

~~~~~

Pan dyffon dros for gwyr eneirchiawc
 Cad veirch y danunt deu wynebawc
 Deu vlaen ar eu gwaew anothleithyawc
 Erddi heb vedi ymyd diheddawc
 Gwell bedd no buchet pob ochenauc
 Kyrn ar y gwr a get pedrifannau,
 A phan von gorforyon meibion Eidawc
 Y byt bore taer rac Caer Sallawc.

¹ Extract in Price's *Literary Remains*, ii. 412.

6 Oian a pharchellan a parchell dyhed
 Rym dyweid chwimbleian chwedyl anrhyfed
 A mi ddysgoganaf haf gwythloned
 Kyfrwng brodoryon brad o Wyned
 Ban diholer tagwystyl yn hir o tir Gwynedd
 Dybyt seith ganllong o hynt gan wynt gogledd
 Ac yn Aber deugleddeu eu Kynadlet.

- 7 Hear, O little pig! thou blessed little pig,
 A Sibyl has told a tale which frightens me ;
 When Lloegria shall encamp in the land of Ethlyn,
 And the city of Dyganwy shall be made to wake,
 By the conflict of Lloegr and Llewelyn,
 There shall be a moving of sons, sisters, and wives ;
 When Deiniol, the son of Dunawd Deinwyn, becomes enraged,
 Franks shall fly the way they do not seek ;
 In Aberdulais there shall be spearing to exhaustion,
 And a reddening of the appearance of their white garments.

These verses were composed at different times ; the fourth and fifth verses were most probably written in or about the year 1170 ; but the above could not have been written prior to the year 1211, as it refers to the following event. Numerous complaints having been made to King John of the depredations of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, who attacked the English subjects in the Marches, and carried fire and destruction wherever he went, that monarch determined to punish him for his audacity. For this purpose he collected all the forces of England, and with them brought Gwenwynwyn, the exiled Prince of Powys, Howel ab Gruffydd, a grandson to Owain Gwynedd, Madawc ab Gruffydd Maelawr, Meredydd ab Rhotpert of Kedewain, and Maelgwn and Rhys Gryg, the sons of the Lord Rhys of South Wales. With this army he marched to Chester, with the full intention of exterminating all the people of Wales. Unable to resist a force composed both of a foreign enemy and of his own vassals who had basely deserted their late engagements, Llewelyn prudently retreated, after having ordered the inhabitants of what are now called Denbigh and Flintshires to remove with their goods and cattle to the vicinities of Snowdon. The English army marched without any obstruction as far as Rhuddlan Castle, and from thence to the Castle of Dyganwy, opposite to

- ~~~~~
- 7 Oian a pharchellan a parchell gwynn
 Rym dywot chwimbleian chwedyl am dechryn
 Pan bebyllo Lloegr yn tir Ethlyn
 A gwneuthur Dyganwy Dinas dehyn
 O gyfranc Lloegr a Llywelyn
 Advyd mab ar war a char a chychwyn
 Pan sorro Deinoel mab Dunawd Deinwyn
 Ad vyd franc ar fo fort ny ovyn
 Yn Aberdulais gwanas gwehyn
 Cochwet yn eu cylchwet yn eu cylchwyn.

the country of Snowdon, where they remained for some time. But while the English forces lay there, the policy of Llewelyn began to be felt. The Welsh prince cut off their communication with England; and infesting the road with his light parties, reduced John and his forces to the greatest difficulties. If the soldiers stirred from the camp, they were liable to be cut to pieces; the Welsh being posted on the eminences, saw their every movement; and from the suddenness of their attacks, and their better knowledge of the country, Llewelyn's men had the advantage in nearly every skirmish. John's situation thus became day by day more intolerable; eggs in the camp sold for three halfpence each, in a year when four hens could be had for *two* pence, and a sheep for *six*; and so scarce had provisions become that the flesh of horses was deemed a luxury. Cooped up in this way, and reduced to a miserable plight, the King had no alternative but to retreat; and accordingly he returned to England, stung to the heart by the disgrace, and vowing most bitterly that he would be revenged.¹ The verse refers to this expedition, the defeat of which was of course hailed as a national triumph. According to the concurrent testimony of all the authorities, the celebrated military tactician was Dunawd the father; and not Deiniol the son, who was Bishop of Bangor. Llywarch Hen mentions his prowess and courage:

Fiercely was it said, in the passage of Lech,
Dunawd the son of Pabo never flies;

(*Elegy on Urien.*)

and therefore the poet has either made a mistake or used a poetic license in comparing Llewelyn to Deiniol ab Dunawd; but if he intended the father, the comparison is exceedingly happy, as that personage was renowned for his bravery and famed for his knowledge of military tactics.

8 Attend, little pig! listen to the Oi! oi!

For the crime of the necessitous God would make remissions.

(The two other lines are imperfect.)

¹ Warrington's *History of Wales*, vol. ii, p. 22; and Price's *Hanes Cymru*, p. 626.

8 Oian a pharchellan hoian hoiau
Bei ychenawg Duw gwnai ymchwelau
Y . . . llyssy wyf byddawd mau
Yn hwn yssy . . . ceissed yntau.

As this verse calls for no other remark, this will be the best place to consider a question which demands an answer. Mr. Davies asserts that "Oian" is an Irish word; but, in a discussion which took place many years ago between him and the late Mr. Price, Dr. Pughe denies that; and there certainly seems no great reason to go out of the Welsh language to look for it. The cries Hey, Hoi, Hai, Ha, seem to pertain to many languages; and as the Welsh termination "an" corresponds to the English participle "ing," it may be very easily understood how the words "Hoian" and "Oian" would be naturally formed. There seems, however, to be some propriety in the application of this call of Oi! oi! here; but whether it was a general cry to bring swine together is not clear.¹ We have seen in the Breton lay, given in a preceding page, that the cry of

Ou! ou! ou! ou! ou! ou! ou! ou! ou! ou!
Iou! ou! ou! iou! ou! ou!

is applied to Merddin himself; but De Villemarqué says he can give no explanation of it;² and, as I am no wiser than himself, it must be left an open question whether it was the cry used by the Druids to call their congregations together, or simply a common cry having no definite signification. In Wales at this time it does not appear to have borne any peculiar meaning; but though Davydd ab Gwilym uses it thus:

Gyr y gwartheg o'r egin,
Oi! oi! tro y lloi o'r llin.

Drive the cattle out of the corn,
Oi! oi! drive thé calves out of the flax,

there must have been some signification attached to it originally. In the verse under consideration it seems only to refer to the pig; and there is reason to believe that some such cry was used to call swine together; for Welsh pig-drovers even now say Ow! ow! Many persons have been captivated by the pretty chant called "Hob y deri dando," which was an especial favourite with Mr. Braham; but, until Parry threw out the



¹ Og in North Wales is still used to designate a little pig (hog).

² "Nous ne saurions expliquer le refrain Ou! ou! ou! ou! ou! ou! C'est aujourd'hui un cri de joie. Les Latins criaient Io! io! ou! evohé!"—*Barzas Breiz*, tom. i. p. 63.

suggestion, no one thought of inquiring the meaning of these words. "Hob" now only survives in *hanner-ob*, a fitch of bacon; is a word which is quite obsolete; and we learn from the *Mabinogi* of *Kilhwch* that it was out of use even in the twelfth century, for it is there said:

Hobau y gelwid hwynt, ac weithian moch eu gelwir.

Formerly pigs were called *hobau*, but now they are called *moch*.

There are therefore reasons for believing that the words "Hob ir deri dando" are as old as the Druidic era.¹ The words translated mean, "Pig (go or come), to the oaks under cover," and may possibly be a portion of a species of song used in calling the herds together at night, to which the cry of *Oi, oi*, was probably attached. Some idea of the air which is attached to those words may be formed from the following:

DUETT.²

She—Men are false, and oft ungrateful;
Derry derry dando.

He—Maids are coy, and oft deceitful;
Derry derry dando.

She—Few there are who love sincerely;
Down a derry derry down.

He—Say not so—I love thee dearly;
Derry derry down, &c.

The popular English ditty of "Derry Down" is supposed by Mr. Parry to have been derived from this quaint and early chant.

9 List, little pig (it is broad daylight),
To the song of the birds, of diverting voices;
They say that for many years



¹ See an illustrative passage in Williams's *Ecclesiastical Antiquities of the Cymry*, p. 300.

² Parry's *Welsh Melodies*, p. 40.

9 Oian a parchellan neu dyt goleu
Andaw di lleis adar deivyr leissen
An byt ny blwynydet a hir dieu

Hoar frost will surely destroy the fruit ;
 Bishops will encourage dastard thieves in churches,
 And monks will compensate for loads of sins.

There is a peculiar propriety in this exhortation, which the student of natural history will not be slow to appreciate. Swine have a singular propensity to listen. They will stand still for a considerable length of time, listening most intently to every passing sound ; and the observation of this habit by the Kymry has given rise to a proverb, "Y mae yn gwrndaw fel mochyn mew'n soff," i.e. he listens like a pig in stubble. In Carmarthen-shire the proverb is differently worded, and they say, "Y mae mor sifil a hwch mew'n soff," i.e. she is as civil as a sow in stubble. Our bard was therefore evidently a close observer of the habits of these animals. Another feature in this verse calls for a word of comment ; the sage not only listens to the "birds of diverting voices," but he also understands their language. In former times this was a frequent accomplishment, and we repeatedly find persons mentioned in the Mabinogion who were invested with this knowledge ; Gwrhryr Gwalstawd Ieithoedd and Menw ab y Teirgwaedd could both understand the language of birds, and speak it ; and when Gwrhryr took the form of a bird to converse with the boar Trwyth, the genius of romance, to which all things were possible, enables the young boars to understand the language and carry on the conversation. This knowledge, according to a most interesting note which I met with in the French annotations, on the Breton lay already quoted, was thus acquired :

This (the *herbe d'or*, golden grass) is a medicinal plant, which the peasant Bretons hold in great estimation. They pretend that at a distance it shines like gold ; and it is for this they give it the name. If one should happen to tread upon it, he will fall asleep, and come to understand the languages of birds,¹ dogs, and wolves. It is but rarely to be met with,

~~~~~  
 Arien enwir edwir ffrwytheu  
 Ac escyp llawch lladron diffaeth llanneu  
 A myneich a obrum beich o pechodau.

<sup>1</sup> The language of birds was Latin, i.e. the language or song of birds.

E cantino gli angelli  
 Ciascuno in suo Latino.

DANTE, *Canzone i.*

This fair kinges daughter, Conace,  
 That on hire finger bare the queinte ring,  
 Thurgh which she understood wel every thing

and then only early in the morning; to gather it, it is necessary to go barefooted and in a shirt; and it should not be cut, but plucked out from the root. It is said that holy men only will be able to find it. It is no other than the selage.<sup>1</sup> Also, in going to gather it barefooted, and in a white robe, and fasting, no iron should be employed, the right hand should be passed under the left arm, and the linen could only be used once.<sup>2</sup>

Strictly speaking, this superstition is only shown to apply to Brittany; but it may, I think, be taken as a fair exposition of the belief of the Cambrians as well.

10 Hear, O little pig! go sharply to Gwynedd,  
 Have a bed-fellow when thou goest to rest.  
 It is but little that Rhydderch Hael, now at his nocturnal feast,  
 Knows that last night I lay sleepless  
 Among thistles, and knee-deep in snow,  
 With icicles dropping from my garments; sad is my fate!  
 Shortly will come Tuesday—the day of angry contention

~~~~~

That any foule may in his *leden* sain,
 And coulede answere him in his *leden* again,
 Hath understonden what this faucon seyd.

CHAUCER, *The Squire's Tale*, 10746.

Chaucer, it will be observed, uses the Anglo-Saxon form of the word. *Leden* was employed by the Anglo-Saxons in the sense of language generally, as well as to express the Latin tongue. In the German version of Sir Tristram, Latin is also used for the song of birds, and is so explained by Ziemann: "*Latin*, Latein; für jede fremde eigenthümliche Sprache, selbst für den *Vogelgesang*. Tristran und Isolt, 17365." Ziemann, *Mittelhochdeutsche Wörterbuch*. See *Notes and Queries*, No 191, June 25, 1853; Fairfax, *Tasso*, book xvi. stanza 13; Scott, *Tristram*.

¹ The word "selage" is not in the Dictionary of the Academy; and if it be not the name of a plant, I am not French scholar enough to know what it is. (See *Selago*.)

² "L'herbe d'or est une plante médicinale. Les paysans bretons en font grand cas; ils prétendent qu'elle brille de loin comme de l'or; de là, le nom qu'ils lui donnent. Si quelqu'un, par hasard, la foule aux pieds, il s'endort aussitôt, et entend la langue des chiens, des loups et des oiseaux. On ne rencontre ce simple que rarement, et au petit point du jour: pour le cueillir, il faut être nu-pieds et en chemise; il s'arrache et ne se coupe pas. Il n'y a, dit-on, que les saintes gens qui le trouvent. Il n'est autre que le selage. On le cueillait aussi, nu-pieds, en robe blanche, à jeun, sans employer le fer, en glissant la main droite sous le bras gauche, et dans un linge qui ne servait qu'une fois."—*Barzas Breiz*, tom. i. p. 62.

10 Oian a parchellan llym i Wynedd
 Cywely a fynnut pan elutti i orwedd
 Bychan a wyr Rydderch hael heno y ar ei wledd
 A bortheisi neithwyr o anhunedd
 Eiry hyd ym hen clun gan ran caledd
 Pibonwy yn niblau blin fy rhyseidd
 Rhy ddybedd dydd mawrth dydd gwythlonedd

Between the ruler of Powys and the region of Gwynedd,¹
 When the meteor will rise from his long lying
 And defend from its enemy the boundaries of Gwynedd.
 If the Lord does not in mercy protect men,
 Woe to me towards the latter day.

The reference here is to one of those feuds between the Princes of Powys and Gwynedd which, about this time, forced Gwenwynwyn, the son of Owain Kyveiliog, to seek a refuge at the English court from the power of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth. (See also the fourth and seventeenth verses of the Avallenau.)

11 Hear, O little pig! be not open-mouthed
 When thou hearest my voice from Carmarthen
 (Where I shall be) skilfully training two youths,
 Of the line of Rhys, the fierce stay of the army.
 When Saxons are slain in the conflict of Kymmer,²
 Blessed will be the lot of the people of Cambria.

These youths were probably Meredydd and Rhys Gryg, the sons of the Lord Rhys, of South Wales.

12 Hear, O little pig! blessed little pig of the country,
 Sleep not late in the mornings,
 Nor burrow in the roads,
 Lest Rhydderch Hael and his sagacious dogs
 Should cause thee to sweat,
 And get between thee and the wood.

¹ Llewelyn and Gwenwynwyn, or Owain Gwynedd and Madoc ab Meredydd

Cyfrwng glyw Powys a chlas Gwynedd
 A chyfod hiriell oi hir orwedd.
 I amwyn ei Elyn derfyn Gwynedd
 Ae oni'm cudd gan fy rhi rhan trugaredd
 Gwae fi ban ym bwy tra fy niwedd.

11 Oian a parchellan ni byt cyvin
 Ban glyw yn llavar o Gaerfyrddin
 Y ardwyaw deu geneu yn cywrhenin
 A hil Rys aerllut aerllit byddin
 Pan later y Saeson yn ynghymer trin
 Gwyn eu hyd hwy gymryw werin.

² Is not this the conflict at Kymmer Abbey in the reign of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth?

12 Oian a pharchellan a pharchell gwyn gwys
 Na chysgu hun fore
 Na chladd ym mrysg rhag dyfod
 Rhydderch Hael ai gwn cyfrwys
 Gan gaffael o honatti y coed
 Rhedawdd dy chwys.

This sage exhortation, exhibiting a prettiness of fancy on the part of the poet, should teach us not to interpret the poem too literally.

- 13 Hear, O little pig ! blessed pig,
 Hadst thou seen as much treachery as I have,
 Thou wouldst not burrow on the mountain, nor sleep long in the
 morning;
 Thou wouldst not forsake the precipitous lake for the moor.
 When Saxons cease from their serpent cunning,
 And the Castle of Collwyn¹ comes from a distance,
 Clothes will be nimble and the black pool clear.²
- 14 Hear, O little pig ! listen thou to me now ;
 When the men of Gwynedd lay down their work,
 There will be a sharp conflict—horns will be sounded,
 Armour will be broken by sharp missiles ;
 When Normans come over the broad lake,
 There will be an opposing of armies,
 Britain will be subjected to gentle squires,
 And there will be an atonement for the faults of London.
 I will prophesy that two rightful princes³
Will produce tranquillity from heaven to earth,
 Kynan and the especial Cadwaladr of Cambria ;

~~~~~

13 Oian a parchellan a pharchell gwyn  
 Bei gwelud a welais o dreis dengyn  
 Ni chysgutti hun fore ni chladdut ar fryn  
 Ni chyrehud ddiffaith o ddiffwys lynn  
 Ban eisteddo Saeson yn eu sarffren  
 A chyrrhu o bell gastell gollwyn  
 Atfydd dillad hoyw a gloyw dullin.

<sup>1</sup> Collwyn Castle is in Radnorshire ; but I am not acquainted with the story, the existence of which is here implied. The reference may be to Rhys at Gruffydd, 1196.

<sup>2</sup> Can the black pool refer to any lake in Radnorshire ?

14 Oian a parchellan andaw de yn awr  
 Pan dodynt wyr gwynet eu gweith yn awr  
 Llafneu y verd drin kyrn a ganawr  
 Briwawd Llurugeu rac llym waewawr  
 Ban dyffo Nortmyn y ar lydan lyn vad  
 Advydd ym wrthryn yna gan vid dinawr  
 A goresgyn Prydein i wyron yswein  
 Ar wall o Lundein a diatawr  
 Ann disgoganaf deu priodawr  
 A luniont tangnefedd o nef hyd lawr  
 Kynan Kadwaladr Kymry benbaladr

<sup>1</sup> Gwalchmai embodies this prediction in his ode to Madoc ab Meredydd.

*Whole worlds will watch their counsels,  
Reforming the land, checking the flow of blood,  
And abolishing armies and theft ;  
And from that time forth we shall be freed from all our ills,  
And from the prevalence of generosity none shall want.*

Here again we meet the prediction of the coming of Cadwaladr to the conference of Rhyd Rheon, to expel the Saxons from the island, and to bring peace among men; and perhaps it would be well here to offer a few remarks on the origin of these predictions. The bards, as we have shown, were an important class of men, high in favour with the Cambrian princes, possessed of their confidence, and frequently their willing instruments. In the hands of the princes, the knowledge they possessed, and the influence they exerted over the multitude, was turned to account, and the bards became their political agents. The hint having been once given of the reappearance of Cadwaladr and the coming again of Arthur, the idea was immediately put in practice of coining predictions of national restoration. Bolder than Geoffrey, they made Merddin predict special events, such as we have seen; and though the idea of universal peace is found among the predictions in his book, the expansion and filling up of his outline, in the above verse, belongs to the poet. These predictions were about this time frequent, and their fulfilment had been promised in the persons of both Owain Gwynedd and Llewelyn ab Iorwerth; in this verse the allusion is to the latter, and in the Avallenau to the former; but those princes having died without realising the expectations thus created, the predictions were applied to their successor, in whom we are positively informed by Llygad Gwr they would surely be accomplished. This assertion occurs in the following lines of a long ode, which we shall hereafter quote:

Parawd fydd meddiant medd Beird im rhi  
Pob cymman darogan derfi.

The bards prophesy that the sovereignty is prepared for my king,  
And every prediction will be completely fulfilled.

~~~~~  
Bydawd eu cynnadyl a edmycawr
A chyweiriaw gwlad a chustudyaw gwad
A llu a lledrad a ddewalawr
An bi ny ynaeth gwarded gwedi gwaeth
Neb o haelonaeth ni di dolawr.

This was a master-stroke of policy on the part of the Welsh princes, as must be apparent to anyone who knows us intimately. The Cambrian is brave, jealous of his liberty, and not averse to war; but he is a creature of impulses, and acts spasmodically. What was said of the Britons by Tacitus,¹ that "they rushed with impetuosity into danger, but were timid in its presence," holds true of us at the present day; and therefore we may conceive the difficulty which their rulers had in managing the Kymry during prolonged contests. At the beginning of a war all were ready and full of fire, but they wanted perseverance; and therefore was there much wisdom shown in directing the bards to circulate predictions among the people of speedy national triumphs, the expulsion of the Saxon race, and the establishment of perpetual peace. These predictions, we may conclude without much doubt, *were the verses now under consideration*. They were made brief, so as to adapt them for circulation and repetition from mouth to mouth; and that the English chroniclers asserted the truth when they said that these prophetic sayings of Merddin made a profound impression on the public mind, and set on fire the souls of the Kymry, may easily be believed, when we know that some of the lower order still wait impatiently for their accomplishment. Mr. Evan Evans tells us that this practice continued until the accession of Henry VII. to the English throne.² That monarch possessed the confidence and received the assistance of the Welsh, and therefore there was no motive for further predictions.

15 Hear, O little pig! is not the mountain green?
 My cloak is thin, and I am uneasy.
 Grey is my plaid; Gwenddydd will not pierce me;
 And when the men of Bryneich come to bring disgrace upon us,
 Cambrians will conquer. Bright be their day.

It will have been noticed that in the Avallenau he charges

¹ "In deprecandis periculis eadem audacia, et ubi advenere in detrectandis eadem formido."—*De Vita Agric.*

² *Dissertatio de Bardis*, p. 40.

15 Oian a parchellan neud glas mynydd
 Teneu fy llen i mi nid llonydd
 Llwyd iw fy mlaidd nim traidd Gwenddydd
 Ban ddyffont gwyr Bryneich in gwarth luydd
 Cymry a orfydd cain bydd eu dydd.

himself with having slain the son of his sister Gwenddydd, and it is on this account that he dreads her enmity. The "men of Bryneich"¹ were the inhabitants of Bernicia, a British kingdom in the sixth century—now Northumberland. When the tribe of Kymry, prior to their immigration into Wales, resided in the north of England, they were frequently at war with the Bernicians; and having carried a traditional hatred with them, they applied the term Bryneich to the Princes of Powys and such of their own kindred as allied themselves to the enemies of their country, the inhabitants of Deira and Bernicia, who joined themselves to the Saxons, being Britons. The word is thus used by Llygad Gwr, when he says of Llewelyn ab Gruffydd :

Thou madest the crows rejoice, in vomiting the blood
Of the Bernicians, on whose bodies they feasted.

Coelfein brain Bryneich gyfogi,
Celennig branes, berthles borthi.

- 16 Attend, little pig ! rude little pig,
Bury not thy snout, but if thou wilt refuse,
Love no pledge, love no play ;
Covet not what I give to Gwenabwy ;
Be not playful, cheerful, haughty, or delighting ;
And I will prophesy the battle of Machadwy,
When there shall be seen red biers in broad day ;
From the contention of spear-points, and swelling breasts on
saddles,
There will befall a crimson morn ; and, oh ! woeful visitation,
A bear from the south (of Wales) shall be exalted ;
His men shall encamp in the lands of Monmouth ;²

¹ The appellative Bryneich is a strong evidence of a current acquaintance for the Gododin ; and this intense hatred most probably springs from the strong language of Aneurin in verse 8.

- 16 Oian a parchellan a pharchell garwy
Na chladd dy ret kyr nag iste fynwy,
Nac a char waes na char warwy
Na chussyl a roddafi i Wenabwy
Na fid ieuange serchawg syberw wawrwy
A mi ddisgoganaf gwaith Machadwy
Adfydd gelorawr rhudd yn rhiw dydmwy
O gyfrane y Kynfrain bronrheino cyfrwy
Adfydd bore coch ac och ofwy
Arth o ddeheubarth a dderchafwy
Ry lletawdd ei wir ef tra thir Mynwy

² Mynwy, *Menevia*, most probably in the which direction Rhys ab Gruffydd was

Happy will be the lot of the sprightly Gwenddydd,
When the Prince of Dyved comes to rule.¹

There is a chieftain named Gwenabwy the son of Gwen, who is said by Aneurin deeply to deplore the battle of Cattræth; ² and there is a Gwenavwy mentioned as one of the daughters of Caw, ³ a saint who lived in the middle of the sixth century; but the allusion here is to Gwenddydd, the White Lady of Day, noticed in the Avallenau and in the Kyvoesi. What the latter part of the verse refers to is not clear, nor who is the Prince of Dyved here mentioned; but in the prophecy of the Eagle at the building of Winchester ⁴ times of prosperity are promised during the advent of a bear.⁵

17 Attend, little pig! are not the buds of thorns
Excessively green, and the mountains exquisitely bright?
I will predict the battle of Llwyvain Wood,⁶
With ruddy biers from the rush of Owain,
When there shall be short disputing among stewards,
False swearing and treachery among the children of the land;
And when Cadwaladr comes to the subjugation of Mona,
The Saxons shall be destroyed from gentle Britain.

The battle of Llwyvain Wood was fought by Urien Rheged and his son Owain against Ida, King of the Northumbrians. It is celebrated by Taliesin in one of the few poems which I consi-

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then extending his conquest of the land from the Nomans and Flemings. Ionas Mynyw is often called Ionas Mynwy.

<sup>1</sup> Rhys ab Gruffydd, 1196.

Gwyn ei byd hi Gwenddydd a arhowy  
Pan fo pendefig Dyfed ar gwledy chwyr.

<sup>2</sup> *Myvyrian Arch.* i. p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Owen's *Cambrian Biography*, p. 156.

<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey in his history rejected this prediction.

<sup>5</sup> Price's *Hanes Cymru*, p. 318.

<sup>6</sup> This refers to a battle of Owain Gwynedd's:

Gwelais aer uch Caer uch coed Llwyfain.

CYNDELW, *Myv. Arch.* i. 204.

17 Oian a parchellan neud blodau drain  
Gorlas can fynydd elfydd neud cain  
A mi ddisgoganaf Cad Coed Llwyfain  
A gelorawr rhuddion rhac rhuthr Owain  
Pan gwnelont meiriau dadleu bychain  
Anudon a brad gwlad feibionain  
A phan ddel Cadwaladr i oresgyn Mon  
Dileawr Saeson dirion Brydain.

der to be properly attributed to him; and as it is probable that the reader, having seen his name mentioned so often, would be glad to see some of this bard's real works, I have quoted this poem.

ON THE BATTLE OF ARGOED LLWYVAIN.<sup>1</sup>

On the morning of Saturday ensued a great battle,  
Which lasted from the rising to the setting of the sun.  
Flamddwyn hastened in four divisions  
To fight the forces of Goddeu<sup>2</sup> and Rheged;<sup>3</sup>  
They reached from Argoed<sup>4</sup> to Arvynydd,  
But they lived only one day.  
Flamddwyn<sup>5</sup> boastfully called aloud,  
"Will you give pledges? are you ready?"  
Owen,<sup>6</sup> brandishing his spear, replied,  
"We have not been, we are not, we will not be ready!"  
And Kynan<sup>7</sup> the son of Coel would be a raging lion  
Before he would give hostages to anyone.  
Then shouted Urien,<sup>8</sup> lord of the plain,

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¹ Y bore Dduw Sadwrn cad fawr a fu
Or pan ddwyre Haul hyd pan gynnu
Dygrysowys fflamddwyn yn bedwarllu
Goddeu a Rheged i ymddullu
Dyfwy o Argoed hyd Arvynydd
Ni cheffynt eiryoed hyd yr undydd
Attorelwys fflamddwyn fawr drybestawd
A ddodynt yngwystlon a ynt parawd
Yr atebwys Owain ddwyrain ffossawd
Nid dodynt nid ydynt mid ynt parawd
A Chenau mab Coel fyddai cymwyawg lew
Cyn attalai o wystl nebawd
Attorelwys Urien udd yr echwydd

² Goddeu was the name of a country in North Britain, and the scene of the battle of Goddeu mentioned in the Triads.—*Mr. Lewis Morris's Note.*

³ Rheged is supposed to be Cumbria, dow Cumberland.—*L. M.* Rheged must be the Roman *Rigodunum* in Lancashire.

⁴ Argoed and Arvynydd are places somewhere in that neighbourhood.—*L. M.*

⁵ Flamddwyn is supposed to be Ida, King of Northumberland. The word means flame-bearer.—*L. M.*

⁶ Owen was the son Urien, King of Rheged. This is the Ywaine of Romance.—*L. M.*

⁷ Kynan ab Coel was, probably, the general of the Goddeu men.—*L. M.*

⁸ Urien was King of Rheged or Cumbria, a district which reached as far as the Clyde, to the northward of which were the men of Goddeu, whom I take to be the Gofini of Ptolemy.—*L. M.* Rheged is also a district in Gower.

“ We relations will unite our forces,
 And will erect our banner on the hills,
 And will assist, and turn our faces to the opposing ranks,
 And will raise our shafts above men’s heads,
 And will oppose Flamddwyn and his army,
 And kill (fight) with him and his auxiliaries.”
 And because of the battle of Argoed¹ Llwyvain
 There happened many a dead corpse,
 And the ravens were reddened with the war of men,
And the common people ran about hastily with the news.
 I will remember this year to the end of my days;²
 And till I grow old, and meet inevitable death,
 May I never smile if I praise not Urien.

The allusion to the conquest of Mon is the consequence of its conquest by the Normans under the Earl of Chester.³

18 Attend, little pig ! great wonders
 Shall be in Britain, and I shall be unconcerned ;
 When the inhabitants of the lands about Mon
 Come to question the Britons, there will be troublesome times ;

~~~~~

O bydd ynghyfarfod am garennnydd  
 Dyrchafwn eidoed odduch mynydd  
 Ac ymorthwn wyneb odduch emyl  
 A dyrchafwn beleidr odduch ben gwyr  
 A chyrchwn fflamddwyn yn ei luydd  
 A lladdwn ag ef ai gyweithydd  
 A rhag gwaith Argoed Llwyfain  
 Bu llawer celain  
 Rhuddei frain rhag rhyfel gwyr  
 A gwerin a grysswys gan ei newydd  
 A rinaf y blwyddyn nad wyf kynnydd  
 Ac yn y fallwyf hen  
 Ym dygn angeu angen  
 Ni byddif ym dyrwen  
 No molwyf Urien.

<sup>1</sup> Argoed Llwyvain was the country of Llywarch Hen before he was driven out of it by the Saxons; and from another passage in Taliesin we learn it was a district of considerable magnitude.—*L. M.* There is an Argoed in Powys.

<sup>2</sup> I have adopted Mr. Price’s reading in this line (*Hanes Cymru*, p. 280) instead of that of Mr. Morris (*Myv. Arch.* i. p. 54), which has been followed in the translation of the other lines.

<sup>3</sup> *Hanes Cymru*, p. 415.

18 Oian a parchellan mawr eryssi  
 A fydd ym mhrydain ac nim dorbi  
 Ban ddyffon Brodorion o amdiredd Mon  
 I holi Brython brithfyd dybi

A radiant dragon shall appear, causing prosperity;  
 Stout Kynan, from the banks of Teivi,  
 Will cause confusion in Dyved,  
 And create within it dolorous music.

Here the poet evidently means that portion of Dyved which was inhabited by the Flemings and Normans. The verses were apparently composed by the bards of North Wales, who called the South, "exhausted Dyved," in consequence of the settlement of those foreigners on its borders.

- 19 Attend, little pig! *how wonderful it is*  
*That the world is never long in the same condition!*  
 How far the Saxons proclaim the cause of strife  
 With the generous Britons, the sons of trouble!  
 And I will prophesy before my end  
 That the Britons will be over the Saxons, the speckled ones will  
 possess (the supremacy);  
 And that then we shall hear the sound of joyfulness,  
 After having been for a long time depressed.

The singular question put to the pig sounds strange to those who may not be acquainted with the almost eastern boldness of personification frequent among the Welsh bards, but among them it is quite usual to hold converse with various animals. With the Kymry the pig had a reputation for wisdom, as may be inferred from the sayings attributed to that animal.

Hast thou heard the saying of the pig,  
 Recoiling from dirty actions?  
 There is none so abominable as the drunkard.



Dyrchafawd draig ffawd ffaw u peri  
 Gwrdd Cynan faran o lan Teifi  
 Gwnahawd am Ddyfed dygyvysgi  
 Bid iddaw yn aelau eilon ynddi.

- 19 Oian a parchellan mor enrhyfedd  
 Na bydd un ennyd y Byd yn unwedd  
 Pelled son Saeson sail cywrysedd  
 Ar brithwn (*al.* Brython) haelon hil cymwyedd  
 A mi ddisgoganaf cyn fy niwedd  
 Brython dros Saeson brithwyr ai medd  
 Ac yna in dawni ddawn gorfoledd  
 Gwedi bod yn hir yn hwyr frydedd.



Also in reference to this saying :

Happy is the man who is as wise as the pig.<sup>1</sup>

20 Listen, O little pig ! hearest thou the melody  
 Which the feathered tribes<sup>2</sup> are making by *Caer Rheon* ?  
 One I have that I would place on the hill of the multitude,  
 To view the sprightly forms of the loving ones.  
 I will predict a battle on the sea,  
 And the battle of *Machawy*, and a battle on the river,  
 And the battle of *Cors Vochno*, and a battle in *Anglesea*,  
 And a battle of mutual thrusting, and the battle of *Caerlleon*,  
 And the battle of *Abergwaith*, and the battle of *Jaethon*,<sup>3</sup>  
 And when at the land's end there shall be an end of roebucks  
 An endearing child shall be exalted among the Britons.

We have already seen in the *Avallenau* that the conference between *Cadwaladr* and *Kynan* was to be held at the *Ford of*

<sup>1</sup> *Iolo Manuscripts*, p. 667.

<sup>2</sup> During the romance era we find very frequent notices of spreading trees covered with birds. Geoffrey mentions a wide-spreading tree ; and St. Brandan, in his voyage in search of Paradise, saw a wide-spreading tree, with leaves speckled red, and covered with beautiful birds—

“ So purely white  
 No man ere saw a fairer sight.”

In the middle ages the superstition of endeavouring to pry into futurity was very prevalent, and much dependence was placed on lots and omens. Bernard de Ventadour, the celebrated Provençal poet, says:

“ I shall never trust again  
 To an omen or lot ; ”

and among Welsh bards the author of the line—

“ The ravens bespeak a coming plague ”—

in the *Gorrdodau*, shows that among his countrymen birds were used for the purpose of divination.

20 Oian a parchellan andaw di yr eilon  
 A gread adar gyr *Caer Rheon*  
 Un yssym a rown mynydd Maon  
 I edrych drychynnawg drych serchogion  
 A mi ddisgoganaf fi cad ar y don  
 A chad *Machawy* a chad afon  
 A chad *Cors Fochno* a chad ym mon  
 A chad cyminawd a chad *Caerlleon*  
 A chad *Abergwaith* a chad *Jaethon*  
 A phan fo diwedd tir terfyn i eilon  
 Maban dyrchafawd mad i Frython

<sup>3</sup> Battle of *Jaethon*, won by Rhys ab Gruffydd 1196, or *Machawy*? Two years after *Gwenwynwyn* was defeated at or near the same place.

Rheon. It is referred to again, but I can offer no explanation of the selection of this spot, unless it was made on account of its being the burying-place of Kynan, and therefore the place where he was most likely to reappear. This notice is found among the "Englynion Beddau" (Verses of the Graves):

Bet Kinon in Reon Rid.

The grave of Kynon is in the Ford of Rheon.<sup>1</sup>

And we learn from Gwilym Ddu:

Neud gweigion Arfon is Reon Ryd.

Are not all the people of Arvon become insignificant below the Ford of Rheon?

that this place was in Carnarvonshire; but Mr. Evan Evans, who ought to have known that country well, said he knew of no river so called in his day.<sup>2</sup> Of the battles here predicted I cannot give much account; the reference to Caerlleon is intelligible, Llewelyn ab Iorwerth having taken that town in one of his expeditions<sup>3</sup>; the battle of Machawy is most probably the same as that of Machadwy, mentioned in a previous verse, and it is referred to in one of Llywarch ab Llywelyn's odes to that prince:

Priffwn y digreit praff y ddirwy  
Ger elvyt Mechydd a Machawy;

Cors Vochno is in Cardiganshire,<sup>4</sup> but I can find no other notice of this battle than another prediction. This occurs in one of the poems wrongly attributed to Taliesin, called *Anrheg Urien* (Urien's Gift):

From the battle of Cors Vochno<sup>5</sup>  
Whoever escapes

<sup>1</sup> *Hanes Cymru*, p. 725, note.

<sup>2</sup> *Dissertatio de Bardis*, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> One battle of Machawy is placed in 1046 (*Cambro-Briton*, ii. 229; *Brut y Saeson*, 1053; *Llyfr Aberpergwm*, 1050). Machawy is in Radnorshire, in the lower part thereof. See Pughe's map.

<sup>4</sup> *Iolo Manuscripts*, p. 602.

<sup>5</sup> See *Archzologia Cambrensis*, N.S. ii. 204; "Poems of Taliesin," No. II. The battle of Cors Vochno was no other than the battle of Aberteivi, "tra Chors Vochno (beyond Cors Vochno), when Owain Gwynedd slew 3,000 Flemings; and this must be the "Cad Geredigion" of Meilir, who alludes to the scarcity of husbands. The scenes

Will be fortunate ;  
 Twelve wives—  
 And it will not be wonderful—  
 Shall cling to one husband.  
 The age of youth,—  
 Ungentle in coming time  
 Shall be its nursing ;  
 Spear-thrusts shall cause bereavement,  
 And in a hundred persons  
 There will scarce be one bearded warrior !<sup>1</sup>

Of the others I have no information, though it is probable that all occurred during the reign of the great Llewelyn. The last line, like that in the last of the Avalleuau, contains a prediction of the advent of a crowned babe, which was frequently repeated in succeeding years :

21 Listen, O little pig ! a period will come—  
 O that it should come ! yet come it will—  
 Wives shall be wantons and fair maids bald ;  
 Relations will not love their kindred,  
 Freemen will not be friendly to each other,  
 And *bishops will be worthless, faithless, and of a different language.*

The first part embodies a prediction which appears in Geoffrey ; and the latter, in common with the verse which follows, refers



of conflict in 1135, which ranged from the Dyvi to the Teivi, begun at Cors Vochno and ended at Cardigan.

<sup>1</sup> Gwaith Cors Vochno  
 O diango  
 Bydaud deduyd  
 Deudeng gwaged  
 Ac nyt ryved  
 Am un gwr vyd  
 Oes Ieuentid  
 Anghyvrydelit  
 Y vaeth dybyd  
 Beru ymdivant  
 Barwawc or cant  
 Nys ryuelyd.—*Myv. Arch.* i. 51.

21 Oian a parchellan bydan a fydd  
 Mor druan ei ddyfod ac ef a ddyfydd  
 Morwynion moelion gwagedd rhewydd  
 Carant ni pharchant eu carennydd  
 Rhwydd ni bydd digyfrwydd wrth i gilydd  
 Esgyb anghyfaith diffaith diffydd.

to the dispute, which about this time made a profound impression upon the Welsh mind, respecting the appointment of Giraldus, a man born in Wales, to the see of St. David. King John strongly opposed this, well knowing that that personage would not be as pliant a tool in his hands as English bishops had been, and would be, in making the solemnities of religion subservient to political intrigues. After a long and determined struggle the King succeeded in his object, and left our bard no other consolation than the expression of his hatred of English bishops. We will again recur to this topic when we come to speak of the religious poetry of the bards.

- 22 List, O little pig! little speckled one,  
 Listen to the voice of the birds of great intellectual energy;  
 Minstrels shall be out and meet no encouragement,  
 And though they stand in the doors shall have no rewards;  
 I was told by a sea-mew, that had come from afar,  
 That strange sovereignties will make their appearance:  
 Gwyddelians, Britons, and Romans  
 Will dispel peace and create confusion,  
 And in the names of gods will come  
 And perseveringly contend on both banks of the Towy.

The river Towy is in Carmarthenshire, and the allusion is to the ecclesiastical dispute mentioned in the note on the preceding verse.

- 23 Listen, little pig! stout-armed little pig,  
 Listen to the voices of birds clamorous as a great sea;  
 Minstrels will be going about unrewarded,  
 Deformity will prevail, and boys will be presumptuous,



- 22 Oian a parchellan bychan bryehni  
 Andaw di lais adar myr mawr eu hynni  
 Cerddorion allan heb ran teithi  
 Cyn safont yn y drws tlws nis deupi  
 Rym dywod wylan o bell ynni  
 Teyrnedd enrhyfedd eu cynyfeddi  
 Gwyddyl a Brython a Rhomani  
 A wnahont dyhedd a dyvysgi  
 Ae ynghyfenw diwiau dyfod iddi  
 Ae ymladd yn daer am ddwylan tywi.
- 23 Oian a parchellan bychan breichfras  
 Andaw di lais adar mor mawr eu dias  
 Kerddorion allan heb ran urddas  
 Gwrthunawd esspyd a bryd gan was

Without raising the face and without being elected;  
Then two brothers, two Iddases in the land,  
Shall by their sincerity nourish a lasting feud.

The spleen of the older bards against the younger aspirants for poetic honours peeps out at the commencement; and the allusion at the close is to Iddawe Cordd Prydain. Many persons may not know what is meant thereby, and therefore will we take the story from Iddawe's own mouth:

“I was one of the messengers between Arthur and Medrawd, his nephew, at the battle of Camlan; and I was then a reckless youth, and through my desire for battle I kindled strife between them, and stirred up wrath, when I was sent by Arthur the Emperor to reason with Medrawd, and to show him that he was his foster-father and his uncle, and to seek for peace, lest the sons of the kings of the island of Britain and of the nobles should be slain. And whereas Arthur charged me with the fairest sayings he could think of, I uttered to Medrawd the harshest I could devise. And therefore am I called Iddawe Cordd Prydain, for from this did the battle of Camlan ensue. And three nights before the end of the battle of Camlan I left them, and went to the Llech Las in North Britain to do penance. And there I remained doing penance seven years, and after that I gained pardon.”<sup>1</sup>

The reference is probably to the quarrels of the sons of Owain Gwynedd.

24 Listen, little pig! I shall not be afflicted,  
By hearing the voice of birds, so void of trembling,  
Thin is the hair of my head, my covering is not warm,  
My barn in the dales does not abound with corn,  
My summer collection has not been plentiful,  
Before parting from God of the unbounded knowledge;

~~~~~  
Heb godwyd wyneb heb ran urddas
Pan vo dau froder dau Iddas am dir
Megittor oi gwir hwy hir alanas.

¹ The Dream of Rhonabwy, *Mabinogion*, vol. ii. p. 398.

24 Oian a parchellan nim daw y cyngyd
O glybod llais adar mor ddierygryd
Teneu gwallt fy mhen fy llen nid clyd
Dolydd fy esgubawr nid mawr ei hyd
Fyngrawn haf a mi nyd ymweryd
Cyn ysgar a Daw didawl eywyd

And I will prophesy, before the end of the world,
Women without modesty and men without manliness.

These last lines, like the first lines of the twenty-first verse, are repetitions of the following prediction in Geoffrey :

“Women shall become serpents in their gait, and all their motions shall be full of pride. The camp of Venus shall be restored ; nor shall the arrows of Cupid cease to wound. Luxury shall overspread the whole ground, and fornication not cease to debauch mankind.”¹

In the original the antithesis of the last line is very forcibly expressed.

25 Listen, little pig ! O trembling little pig,
Thin is my covering, for me there is no quietness ;
For the battle of Arderydd I shall not be concerned,
Nor when the sky falls down, and channels are flooded ;
And I will prophesy that after Henry
A supreme king shall rule in troublesome times ;
When there shall be a bridge on Taff and another on Tcwy,
There will be an end of all war.

Of the battle of Arderydd we have already spoken ; the proverb about the falling of the sky may, it would seem, boast a very respectable antiquity ; but war has not ceased, though there are many bridges on the Taff in Glamorgan and the Towy in Carmarthenshire. The Henry mentioned I should presume to be Henry III. of England ; and, as he ascended the throne in 1216, we may assume that to be the date of this verse.

Having thus passed these verses minutely in review, it will not be necessary to make any special remarks here further than to point out their value as being what may be termed the lite-

~~~~~  
A mi ddisgoganaf cyn diwedd byd  
Gwragedd heb wyledd a gwyr heb wrhyd.

<sup>1</sup> Giles's translation, p. 199.

25 Oian a pharchellan a phorchell ryni  
Teneu yw fy llen nyd llonydd imi  
Er gwaith Arderydd mi nym dorbi  
Cyn syrthiai awyr i lawr a llyr yn lli  
A mi ddisgoganaf wedi Henri  
Breenhin na frenhin brith fyð dybi  
Pan fo pont ar Daf ac arall ar Dywi  
Y daw diwedd rhyfel iddi.

rature of the common people of Wales. The odes were addressed to the chieftains, and recited on the occasion of regular feasts and other special gatherings; but these were evidently intended to circulate among the peasantry, in order to be repeated and discussed at their firesides. As remnants of popular prejudices and superstition they cannot fail to prove interesting; and though many of them possess but little literary merit, there are a few very excellent verses.

We now come to treat of a question which has very probably long since forced itself upon the reader's attention; as Merddin is not the author, who is? There can now be but little doubt that the Avallenau and Hoianau have been here located in their appropriate age; and therefore we must seek their author among the bards of the reigns of Owain Gwynedd and Llewelyn ab Iorwerth. The Hoianau were, as we learn from a contemporary poem, called *Ceiniadon Moch*<sup>1</sup> (Songs of Swine); and as one of the first bards of this era was called in his own day *Prydydd y Moch* (the Poet of the Pigs), the authorship of those verses, unless there should be strong counter testimony, must be attributed to Llywarch ab Llywelyn. A wit, alluding to this fact, said that "the swine of Wales in the twelfth century had better poets than the English princes of the eighteenth."<sup>2</sup> There must have been some reason for the application of this epithet to that bard, but hitherto there has been no satisfactory explanation of the reason of his being so called. Several Welsh critics have attempted this, and unwilling to admit the literal application, have endeavoured to show that the words ought to be differently translated. The word "Moch" has three different meanings. It may, in addition to the popular acceptance, be translated *quick*, or brilliant; or it may be understood to mean *the men of Mochnant*, in Montgomeryshire; and the epithet "*Prydydd y Moch*" is most frequently rendered in one of these two last senses. But this bard cannot without impropriety be called "the poet of the Mochnantians," because, with one single exception, the address to Rhys Gryg of South Wales, all his poems are addressed to the royal family of Gwynedd. He was the family bard of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth; and there is not one poem addressed to the Princes of Powys or their sub-

<sup>1</sup> "Cywrysedd Gwynedd a Deheubarth," one of the poems of the pseudo-Taliesin.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. Walter Davies's *Essay on the Welsh Metres*, p. 23.

jects, the men of Mochnant. Nor can we suppose that he was known among his contemporaries as the "brilliant poet;" for it was quite unusual with the Welsh to convert judgments upon the literary merit of the bards into descriptive epithets; besides, if this view were correct, he would have been called *y Prydydd Moch* and not *Prydydd y Moch*. The words must therefore be taken in their more popular but less agreeable acceptation. The Hoianau were written during the reign of Llewelyn the Great; they were called at that time by the bards, who knew that they were not the productions of Merddin, the "Songs of the Swine," and therefore we may safely conclude that the "Poet of the Pigs," Llywarch ab Llywelyn, one of the leading bards of the day, was their author. They were intended to pass among the vulgar as the real productions of Merddin; and, strange to say, have up to the present time been so considered; but henceforth they should be attributed to the real author.

I was at one time inclined to attribute the Avallenau to the same bard on account of the occurrence of the line "Oian a pharchellan" in the tenth and twenty-third verses; but on reconsideration it seemed more consistent with other facts to conclude that those verses are out of their appropriate place. The latter were undoubtedly ranked among the Hoianau in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; for the poem in which the Hoianau are called the "Songs of the Pigs" contains a repetition of the interpolated part of the twenty-third verse of the Avallenau: and these were probably the productions of Llywarch. The Avallenau were composed at an earlier date; the words "the Sibyl" in the Hoianau presuppose an acquaintance with the description of that personage in the first verse of the Avallenau; and some of the latest of these, alluding to events which took place during the lifetime of Owain Gwynedd, must have been composed prior to A.D. 1169—the date of his death. Llywarch wrote after the death of that prince, and therefore the author of the Avallenau was most probably the bard Gwalchmai.

Having thus fixed upon the authors, it remains for us to decide how far the verses are original. Mr. Davies and Mr. Price suppose some portions, such as the commencements, to be the real productions of Merddin; but as these are not distinguishable in language or metre from the other portions, there seems to be no good reason for the belief. My own



opinion is that not a syllable of either the *Avalleuau* or *Hoianau* can be attributed to any other persons than Gwalchmai and Llywarch ab Llywelyn; nor of the *Gorddodau* to any other than Gruffydd ab yr Ynad Coch. But for the predictions the verses would never have been written; for without these the initial lines could have been called forth by no conceivable situation in the sixth century, and would have had no meaning.

THE GORDDODAU.

We now come to the *Gorddodau*. Like the preceding, these are attributed to Merddin ab Morvryn, but with as little propriety. They consist of nine verses. It will not be necessary to offer any comment upon them, as they are so clearly modern that nothing but the name of Merddin at the close would for one moment lead one to suppose they were the productions of the sixth century. The first verse runs thus: <sup>1</sup>

The restraint is nearly over; I cannot easily sleep;  
 When comes the Babe of British race, he will make a troubled world.  
 A hero who in that hour  
 Will be no regarder of Lloegrians,  
 Whom we will completely destroy.  
 A Briton will arise,  
 Large and powerful,  
 Active, and without haughtiness.  
 The Bryneich, the greatness of the island,  
 Will promise to aid the Saxons;  
 Multitudes will cover every hill,  
 Seeking no good;  
 They shall have their wish.

~~~~~  
¹ Gorddod bron gervod nid hawdd gysgaf
 Pan ddel maban o hil Bryton brithvyd a wna
 Gwr o fewn awr
 O Loegrwys nim dawr
 A llwyr ddiva
 Kyvyd Bryton
 Braise gowyddon
 Brys di draha
 Kyfyd Bryneich mawredd ynys
 Y fo addaw y Saeson
 Lliaws pob bron
 Lees ni wedda
 Kaman i boodd

The land cries out ;
 The borders will have the worst.
 Britain will arise, even the oldest priests,
 And nimbly brandish reddened blades ;
 From our fortresses I sing no songs,
 For the flight of ravens bespeaks a coming plague.
 Hasten to destroy them,
 Thou concealed Babe,
 Who wilt be a counsellor
 To the lower ranks,
 A free donor to those who are active,
 A fair divider of crops,
 One who will not warp
 The profound and perfect law,
 And will not learn pomposity ;
 A son of man
 Whom, though blamed, men admire.
 I love him greatly ;
 The pride of the nobility
 Of the whole land of Gwynedd
 Will he draw from their exile.
 Strangers will hate him, and refuse to join in his praise ;
 They will not co-operate nor assist ;

~~~~~  
 Y tir a waeddodd  
 Y terfyn gwaethaf  
 Kyfyd Prydyn y menyeh henaf  
 A rhuiddion lafnau yn rhywyllt  
 O'n Caerau gan nis traethaf  
 Ac ar ervin brain pla a welir  
 Brysia iw diva  
 Y maban o gudd  
 Kyffreddiwr y budd  
 I'r blaidd issa  
 Yn rhwydd y rhydd ef y rhai esgud  
 Mewn enaif cymwys  
 Gwr ni wna ymwys  
 Yn y gyfraith ddwys  
 Ni ddysg draha  
 Maban o dad  
 Er a veiont wy ai mad  
 Mawr yr hoffaf  
 Glendid Bonedd  
 Gwlad holl Wynedd  
 A dynn ef oll ou halltuedd  
 Aillt ai casa ef ni chyd ganan  
 Ni chyd archan gorchwil nis gwnan

Concord with Saxons,  
That unlovely work,  
Will cease.

I will give thanks, I will sincerely pray  
To the most generous protector,  
Of the chiefest lineage.  
Blessed are the Britons,  
Large is the crown,  
O heavenly God,  
Beneficent Preserver !  
It is pleasing to praise him,  
Lion of the red-handed work ;  
His occupation is war ;  
I will loudly laud him.

In poetic merit these excel every other composition attributed to Merddin. They are, in fact, verses of a very superior order, and such as would do no discredit to some of the distinguished poets of the day ; and I am only deterred by their extreme length from giving them entire. We have seen these predictions successively applied to Rhys ab Tewdwr, to Owain Gwynedd, and to Llewelyn the Great ; and now we find them referred to Llewelyn ab Gruffydd, the last Prince of Wales. Throughout this essay I have rather courted than shunned such passages as revealed the intense hatred entertained by the ancient Welsh against the Saxons ; but in so doing I had no wish to revive those traditionary enmities. I am the historian of the past ; these feelings were prevalent and sincere ; and as more than any other they reveal the breadth and depth of the national character, I should have been wanting in both duty

~~~~~  
Cydfod Saeson
Gwaith anhyron
A derfyna
Diolchaf archaf arch ddi drahaf
Cadwr haelaf
O'r hil penna
Gwyn eu byd Bryton
Braise yw'r goron
O Dduw nefol
Cadwr cedol
Mwyn ei ganmol
Llew llaw rhuddwaith
Milwr ei waith
Maith y molaf.—*Myv. Arch.* vol. i. p. 527.

and sound judgment were not the past, with all its faults and its virtues, faithfully reproduced. This sentiment stands forth very boldly in the course of this verse; and, in describing concord with Saxons as "unlovely work," the bard refers to a part of our last prince's career which gave rise to much dissatisfaction at home. Eleanor de Montford, daughter of Simon de Montford, Earl of Leicester, having been betrothed to Llewelyn, was intercepted by order of Edward on her passage from France to Wales, and taken to the English Court; from thence she would not be permitted to depart except on conditions somewhat dishonourable to the Welsh prince; and he, thus compelled to decide between love and patriotism, after much reluctance and a fierce war chose the former alternative. He was blamed for this; but, as our bard shows, the fidelity of the lover formed an apology for the weakness of the man. The marriage took place on the 13th of October, 1278; the bride being given away, and the expenses of the feast defrayed, by the English monarch. We have in these facts a clue to the date of the verses, which must have been written about the end of 1278; and, as metre, taste, and poetic fire testify, by the only bard of that age who could have written them—Gruffydd ab yr Ynad Coch.

In speaking of the Hoianau I ventured to suggest that the pig typified the Kymric race, and the fact that in each of the Gorrddodau the epithet "burrowing" is applied to the condition of that people, coupled with the prediction that the burrowing would soon be triumphant, strikingly confirms the correctness of that opinion.

This completes our survey of the poems attributed to Merddin, from which it results that none of them can be with propriety, after this examination, considered to be his. The succeeding portion of this section must be more meagre, but not, it is hoped, less satisfactory.

It has long been suspected that many of the poems attributed to TALIESIN could not have been produced in the sixth century. These conjectures, as we have already shown in the preceding section, were undoubtedly correct; but as many of the poems may upon most substantial grounds be shown to be genuine, it becomes of importance to distinguish between those which are and those which may not be of his production. I

have carefully read them; but as a minute examination of seventy-seven poems would require a volume for itself, I shall here only present the result. The classification, in the absence of the data on which it is based, can have no strong claims to attention apart from the weight attached to the opinion of the critic; my conclusions with respect to the poems of Taliesin are as satisfactory to myself as are those embodied in the analysis of the verses attributed to Merddin; but the actual value of that opinion, in either case, must be determined by the reader. I have, as the result of my examination, classed those poems thus:

HISTORICAL, AND AS OLD AS THE SIXTH CENTURY.

Gwaith Gwenystrad	The Battle of Gwenystrad
Gwaith Argoed Llwyvain	The Battle of Argoed Llwyvain
Gwaith Dyffryn Gwarant	The Battle Dyffryn Gwarant
I Urien	To Urien
I Urien	To Urien
Canu i Urien	A Song to Urien
Yspail Taliesin	The Spoils of Taliesin
Canu i Urien Rheged	A Song to Urien Rheged
Dadolwch Urien Rheged	Reconciliation to Urien
I Wallawg	To Gwallawg (the Galgacus of Tacitus)
Dadolwch i Urien	Reconciliation to Urien
Marwnad Owain ab Urien	The Elegy of Owain ab Urien

DOUBTFUL.

Cerdd i Wallawg ab Lleenawg (old)	A Song to Gwallawg ab Lleenawg
Marwnad Cunedda (old)	The Elegy of Cunedda
Gwarchan Tutvwlch	The Incantation of Tutvwlch
Gwarchan Adebón	The Incantation of Adebón
Gwarchan Kynvelyn	The Incantation of Kynvelyn ¹
Gwarchan Maelderw	The Incantation of Maelderw
Kerdd Daronwy	The Song to Daronwy
Trawsganu Cynan Garwyn (old)	The Satire on Kynan Garwyn

¹ The three incantations, Gorchan Kynvelyn, Gorchan Tutvwlch, and Gorchan Adebón, are attributed, on stronger evidence, to Aneurin. See Rev. T. Price's Address, delivered at the Brecon Eisteddfod, 1822. *Literary Remains*, ii. 106.—

ROMANCES BELONGING TO THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES.

Canu Kyn taf Taliesin	Taliesin's First Song
Dihuddiant Elphin	The Consolation of Elphin ¹
Hanes Taliesin	The History of Taliesin
Canu y Medd	The Mead Song
Canu y Gwynt	The Song to the Wind
Canu y Byd Mawr	The Song of the Great World
Canu y Byd Bach	The Song of the Little World
Bustl y Beirdd	The Gall of the Bards
Buarth Beirdd	The Circle of the Bards
Cad Goddeu	The Battle of the Trees
Cadeir Taliesin	The Chair of Taliesin
Cadeir Teyrn On ² (Tintern)	The Chair of Tintern
Canu y Cwrwv	The Song of the Ale ³
Canu y Meirch	The Song of the War-Horses
Addvwyneu Taliesin	The Beautiful Things (liked by) Taliesin
Angar Kyvyndawd	The inimical Confederacy
Priv Gyvarch	The Primary Gratulation

¹ The poem printed in the *Myv. Arch.* i. p. 21, under this name, contains also the Gorchan Tutwllch attributed to Aneurin. It is the former part only that is referred to Taliesin.

² See the end of Mabinogi Pwyll (*Mab.* iii. 63-69) for Teirnyon, King of Gwent. He gave his name to Nant Teyrnnon (ii. 106), Tintern Brook.—*Brut y Saeson*, about 1160.

³ The first part only of the poem thus called in the *Myvyrian Archaeology*, i. p. 39, forms the Canu y Cwrwv; the rest, beginning with "Teithi edmygant," and ending with the finely descriptive lines:

I saw mighty men
Who thronged together at the shout;
I saw blood on the ground,
From the assault of swords;
When they poured forth their radiating lances,
They tinged with blue the wings of the morning;
In three hundred festivals will be sung the high fame
Of Ynyr, whose feet are seen on the crimson-tinted earth.

Gweleis wyr gorfawr
A ddygyrchynt awr
Gweleis waed ar llawr
Rhag rhuthr cleddyfawr
Glesynt esgyll gwawr
Esgorynt yn waewawr
Trichant calan cyman clodfawr
Ynyr ar dir yn wir cochwawr—

constitute the "Battle of Dyffryn Gwarant."

TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES—*continued.*

Dihuddiant Elphin	Elphin's Consolation
Arymes Dydd Brawd	The Day of Judgment
Awdl Vraith	The Ode of Varieties ¹
Glaswawd Taliesin	The Encomiums of Taliesin
Divregawd Taliesin	Past and Future Ages
Mabgyvreu Taliesin	Taliesin's Juvenile Accomplishments
Awdl etto Taliesin	Another Ode by Taliesin
Kyffes Taliesin	The Confession of Taliesin

These seem to form portions of the Mabinogi of Taliesin, which was composed by Thomas ab Einion Offeriad.²

Cadair Keridwen	The Chair of Keridwen ³
Marwnad Uthr Bendragon	The Elegy of Uther Pendragon
Preiddeu Annwn	The Victims of Annwn (Hell)
Marwnad Ercwlf	The Elegy of Hercules
Marwnad Madawg Ddrud, ac Erov greulawn	The Elegy of Madoc the Bold, and Erov the Fierce
Marwnad Aeddon o Von	The Elegy of Aeddon of Mon
Anrhyveddodau Alecsander	The very Wonderful Things of Alexander
Y Gofeisws Byd	A Sketch of the World
Lluryg Alecsander.	The Lorica of Alexander ⁴

PREDICTIVE POEMS, TWELFTH AND SUCCEEDING CENTURIES.

Ymarwar Lludd Mawr	The Appeasing of the Great Lludd
Ymarwar Lludd Bychan	The Appeasing of Lludd the Little
Gwawd Lludd Mawr	The Praise of Lludd the Great
Kerdd am Veib Llyr	Song to the Sons of Llyr ⁵ ab Brochwel
Marwnad Corroi ab Dairy (old)	Elegy on Corroi the Son of Dairy
Mic or Myg Dinbych	The Prospect of Tenby
Arymes Brydain	The Destiny of Britain ⁶

¹ See Walter Davies on Awdl Vraith (fourteenth century), *Difregawd, Taliesin, &c. Works*, ii. 292.

² See the *Iolo Manuscripts*, p. 459.

³ This is the Mabinogi of "Math the Son of Mathonwy," versified and epitomised.

⁴ Alludes to the romance of Alexander.

⁵ Llyr is the King Lear of Shakspeare; the subjects of these seem to be taken from Geoffrey's History.

⁶ Mentions the coming of Kynan and Cadwaladr.

TWELFTH AND SUCCEEDING CENTURIES—*continued.*

Arymes	The Oracle ¹
Arymes	The Oracle ²
Kywrysedd Gwynedd a Deheubarth	The Contention of North and South Wales ³
Awdl	A Moral Ode
Marwnad y Milveib	Elegy on the Thousand Saints
Y Maen Gwyrth	The Miraculous Stone
Cân y Gwynt	The Song of the Wind; subject, Owain Gwynedd
Anrhec Urien ⁴	The Gift of Urien. ⁵

THEOLOGICAL. SAME DATE.

Plaeu yr Aipht	The Plagues of Egypt
Llath Moesen	The Rod of Moses
Llath Voesen	The Rod of Moses
Gwawd Gwŷr Israel	Eulogy of the Men of Israel.

Some of the reasons for this classification will have been seen in the preceding section, and others are here given in the remarks appended to the several poems. The Rev. Thomas Price was the only writer who had previously attempted to distinguish between the poems which are really genuine and those which are not; it is to be regretted that he had not done more in this direction than he has; but, as far as they extend, the few hints afforded in the earlier portions of *Hanes Cymru* are in perfect accordance with my own conclusions. The predictions attributed to Taliesin were, among the bards, held in higher estimation than those of Merddin. Of the latter, that on which they placed the most value was the rude though earlier *Kyvoesi*; it was to this that the bards of these centuries referred. Howel ab Owain speaks of the early or "primitive song of Merddin;" Rhiserdyn, of his "memorials;" Sevnyn, of "his cave;" Iorwerth Llwyd, of his "questions;" and Iorwerth Vychan alludes to verse 133, where Merddin speaks of the "great knowledge of Gwenddydd"—all referring to the dia-

¹ Similar sentiments. ² Speaks of Normans. ³ See Avalleuau, 23.

⁴ May not Marwnad Iago ab Beli be mixed up with this? See the account of the Hengwrt MSS. in the *Cambrian Register*, iii. 281.

⁵ See Hoianau, 20.

logue. Elidir Sais speaks of "the bardic strains of Merddin," and of his "polished style;" Davydd Benvras, of his "glowing music;" and Gwilym Ddu, strengthening our argument respecting Merddin, simply terms him one "of the line of Meirchion;" but Kynddelw and Llywarch, the supposed authors of the Avallenau and Hoianau, and Gwynvardd Brycheiniog only allude to the contents of those poems, or attach any value to the predictions of Merddin. These soon fell into disrepute, and the predictions of the pseudo-Taliesin alone enjoyed the bardic favour. This appears from the lines of Meredydd ab Rhys, who, addressing an old book of predictions, says: ¹

I would not give a rotten straw
For thousands of the words of Merddin,—
In thee there is a springing sermon,
Some of the mystery of little Gwion (Taliesin).

But if the bards treated him contemptuously, he has been amply avenged; for the popular mind of Wales now knows no diviner but Merddin.

Of the predictive poems, that which next to the Gorddodau excels in poetic fire, descriptive power, and elegance of diction, is *Arymes Prydain Vawr* (the Destiny of Great Britain). It is a poem of considerable length, treating (with considerable knowledge of the subject) of the wars between the Saxons and the Kymry, and predicting the final expulsion of the former from these islands. At this day the subject has no novelty, and therefore I will only give as a specimen a few of the concluding lines: ²

Cadwaladr and Kynan, mighty men in battle,
Whom prosperity attend, will be famed until the judgment day;
Two tenacious sovereigns, profound men in council,
Two who under Providence will conquer Saxons,

¹ Cred vi na rown welltyn erin,
Er myrdd o eiriau Myrddin,—
Mae ynod, bragawd bregeth,
O gyvrinach Gwiawn Bach beth.

² Cynan a Chadwaladr cadr yn lluydd
Edmyceawr hyd frawd ffawd ai deubydd
Deu unben dengyn dwys eu cussyl
Dau oresgyn Saeson o blaid Dofydd

Two generous men, two treasures of the merchants' country,
 Two fearless and ready men, of one faith and one object,
 Two overwhelming protectors of Britain's comely armies,
 Two bears whose perpetual barking will not displease.
 Druids predict the greatness of what will come to pass;
 In their hands will be all the land from Brittany to the Isle of Man;
 From South Wales to the Isle of Thanet will they possess;
 And their word shall extend from the celestial radiance to the
 surface of the earth.

Their chief will partly pay for the land,
 Kynon will denude them, Saxons will cease to be;
 The Gwyddelians (Irish) will return to their original stock,
 And the Kymry will raise up a powerful supporter.
 Armies will be disciplined, and warriors clamorous;
 To the kingdom of God, which kept its faith,
 The fleets of all countries shall be invited; tribulation shall cease,
 And Kynon will induce people to live in friendship.
 Kynon will not call in as combatants
 Any but the Kechmyn of Cadwaladr and his merchants;
 And every Kymro will be cheerful in his discourse;
 In the troubled island swarms will cease to be
 When their bodies shall perish in their native place;
 It will be rumoured as far as Aber Santwic
 That the Germans are moving out of the land

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Deu hael dau gedawl gwlad warthegeydd  
 Deu diarchar barawd un ffawd un ffydd  
 Deu orchwy nawd Prydain mirain luydd  
 Deu arth nis gwna gwarth cyfarth beunydd  
 Dysgogan Derwyddon maint a dderfydd  
 O Fynaw hyd Lydaw yn ei llaw a fydd  
 O Ddyfed hyd Ddanet hwy bieufydd  
 O wawl hyd weryd hyd eu hebyr  
 Llettalawt eu pennaeth tros yr echwydd  
 Attor ar Gynon Saeson ni bydd  
 Atchwelwynt Wyddyl at eu hennydd  
 Ryddyrchwynt Cymry cadr gyweithydd  
 Byddinoedd am gwrf orthrwyf milwyr  
 A theyrnedd Dewys ry gedwys eu ffydd  
 A wis i bob llynges tres a dderfydd  
 A chymmod Cynhon gan ei gilydd  
 Ni alwawr Gynhon yn gynnfwyr  
 Namyn Kechmyn Cadwaladr ai gyfnewidwyr.  
 Eil Cymro llawen llafar a fydd  
 Am ynys gymwyeid heid a dderfydd  
 Pan syrthwynt galanedd wrth eu hennydd  
 Hyt yn Aber Santwic swynedig fydd

Back again to the place of their birth ;  
 And Saxons with anchors will be perpetually seen.  
 The venerable Kymry will prevail until the day of doom ;  
 They will not want books, nor the songs of bards,  
 For their destiny will be none other than this.  
 We will praise Him who created heaven and the elements ;  
 May St. David be the prince of the warriors.  
 In the day of trouble God will be with Gelligaer :  
 He will not die, nor run away, nor be exhausted ;  
 He will not fade, nor fail, nor bend, nor tremble.<sup>1</sup>

This poem is now commonly attributed to GOLYDDAN, a bard who is said to have lived towards the close of the seventh century ; formerly it was ascribed to Taliesin. E. Llwyd attributes it to the latter, as does Dr. Pughe in the earlier part of his Dictionary ; but as that bard had gone “ to the tomb of all the Capulets ” long before Cadwaladr reigned, the poem, on the authority of the Rev. E. Davies, is now ascribed to Golyddan, that monarch’s bard. That author’s opinion appears to be erroneous. The poem was thought to be historical ; but as all its main features relate to the future, and not either to the past or the present, it is not so. Cadwaladr here is not the last monarch of Britain, but the mythological hero, and future deliverer of the Kymry ; and if our reasoning at the commencement of this section be valid, it must be classed among the predictive poems of the middle ages. Style and internal evidence support this assumption ; and so conclusive do I deem the proof of its late origin, that Mr. Turner’s ingenious defence of its antiquity alone induces me to dwell at greater length upon the subject. I regret being compelled to differ in opinion, respecting this and the poems

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Allmyn ar gychwyn i alltudydd
 Ol wrthol attor ar eu hennydd
 Saesson wrth angor ar fordd bennydd
 Cymry Gwenerawl hyd frawd gorfydd
 Na cheisswynt lyfrawr nag angawr brydydd
 Arymes yr Ynys honn namyn hyd ni bydd
 Iolwn ni a grewys nef ac elfydd
 Poed Tywyssawg Dewi i'r cynnifwyr
 Yn yr ing Gelli Kaer am Duw y sydd
 Ni threine ni ddieine ni arddispydd
 Ni wiw ny wellyg ny phlyg ni chryd.

¹ There is a translation of the first part in the *Cambrian Register*, ii.

of Merddin, from the eminent historian and critic, to whose learning, intelligence, and candour the literature of my native land is so greatly indebted; but it is a source of sincere gratification to reflect that, in nearly every other essential point, my own researches have tended to ratify his conclusions as to the genuineness of most of the poems attributed to the early bards, Aneurin and Llywarch, and many of those of Taliesin. This poem, which is evidently the production of an able and learned man, calls the Saxons, or more correctly speaking the German tribes who invaded Britain, by the name of *Allmyn*. At the present day the Kymry call Germany *Yr Almaen*; Germans, singular *Allmyn*, plural *Ellmyn*; and the German language, *Yr Ellumynaeg*.¹ This word appears to be derived from the name of the Alemanni, which among the present inhabitants of Germany survives in *Allgemein*, and though it originally only indicated a single tribe, the word was ultimately used to designate the whole German people; but as this was not the case much prior to the twelfth century, the antiquity of the poem in which the Saxons are designated by this general term may rationally be doubted, and a later date be assigned to it than the seventh century. To avoid this conclusion, which, if established, destroys the claim of Golyddan to be considered its author, Mr. Turner, who clearly saw its force, endeavoured to give the word another meaning. He supposed it to mean *All-man*, another place; but as there was manifestly no propriety in designating a Saxon by a term denoting "another place," a noun and a preposition, neither contained in the word nor implied by it, were added, so that the translation became "*men from another place*," or strangers. This procedure is not warranted by either the genius of the language or by the usage of the word; Dr. Pughe, indeed, under the word "Allman," says, it means "a stranger, one of another place, a German;" but as he cites no document in support of these readings, and I have met with no authority for such interpretations, they are inadmissible. Yet if the word *All-man* could be shown to mean *a stranger*, there would be nothing gained; for there would still remain a much greater difficulty in the

¹ See Kemble's *Anglo-Saxons*, vol. i.

question, What peculiar propriety is there in applying the term *strangers* to the Saxons, and withholding it from the Picts, Scots, Danes, and Normans? We have here conceded for the moment the assumption to be correct, that *Allman* could by any process be converted into *Allmyn* without losing its signification; but I know of no rule of Kymric Grammar which would permit this to be done: according to strict etymological construction, "Allman" means another *place*, and "Allmyn" another *desire*; "Allmyn," therefore, is a proper name derived from the Normans, and not a compound word regularly formed from Cambrian roots. This is the sense in which it is now used; it is thus used in the poems of the thirteenth century; and as there is no authority for the supposition that it was ever used in any other sense than as descriptive of Germans, the resemblance between Allmyn and Alleman, and particularly Allgemein, amounts to identity. This designation of the German people prevailed in the twelfth century. Geoffrey of Monmouth repeatedly calls the Saxons by this name:

"Six of his (Arthur's) posterity shall sway the sceptre, but after them shall arise a German worm." "The white dragon shall rise again, and invite over a daughter of Germany." "After that shall the German prince be crowned." "The German dragon shall hardly get to his holes, because the revenge of his treason (Harold's treachery to the Duke of Normandy) shall overtake him. At last he shall flourish for a little time, but the decimation of Neustria (Normandy) shall hurt him. For a people in wood and iron coats (the Normans) shall come, and revenge upon him his wickedness."

In the Welsh copies, however, the word is written *Germania*, and not *Allmyn*; but this is no insuperable difficulty. The Kymry have to each of the letters of the alphabet one single and definite sound; the letter *g* they pronounce hard, as *g* in get; and if pronounced by a Cambrian, as above written, it would sound more like *Kermania* than *Germania*. *Germania* in a Kymric work is therefore an intruder; and as the bards very studiously avoided the introduction of foreign sounds, we need not wonder that they preferred the more popular term *Allmyn*. This is the form in which the word occurs, in the address of Llywarch ab Lly-

welyn to Rhys Gryg, which must have been composed about A.D. 1194.

Gnawd oe law y llavur cochwet
Y gychwyn allmyn alltudedd.

His hand was accustomed to bloody toils,
And move Germans to exile.

It is singular that this same idea of driving "the Germans (i.e. Saxons) to exile" should be the thought which predominates in the poem under consideration; and unless we admit that this expectation was prevalent among the South Welsh, when the bard visited Rhys Gryg, and that Llywarch had seen this poem, it will be still more surprising that the above line should be identical, in words and sentiments, with several lines of the "Destiny of Great Britain." On comparing the line—

Allmyn ar gychwyn i alltudedd

with the above, it must be apparent that Llywarch has copied it from this poem; for in order to accommodate this line, which, like the poem, is composed of nine syllables, to the octosyllabic metre of his address, he transposes the words, and suppresses a syllable which is absolutely necessary to make the line intelligible. As he has it, the literal translation would be "to move Germans exile;" the preposition "i" of the original, which makes it "to exile," having to be supplied by the reader; and if, as is extremely probable, he borrowed the idea from this poem, it must have been popular in South Wales, and, therefore, most probably of recent origin. From this variety of arguments, the conclusion seems to be fairly deducible that the poem belongs to the latter part of the twelfth century.¹

Another singular feature in this poem is the frequent occurrence of the word *Kechmyn*. Mr. Price² conjectures the people thus designated to be the *Chauci*, or, as the word should be written to be correctly pronounced by English readers, *Chauki* or *Kauchi*; and after much consideration I am led to adopt the same view. The difficulties in the way are the required trans-

¹ See Kemble's *Anglo-Saxons*, vol. i.

² *Hanes Cymru*, p. 225.

position of the *ch* and *c*, and the appearance of the second syllable *myn*. The explanation of the first appears to be this;—there are several words in the Kymraeg beginning with *chw*, but none with *ch* alone; therefore if the Kymry were asked to pronounce Chauki, they would immediately transpose the consonants and say Kauchi, which would correspond to the first syllable of Kechmyn. Of the second difficulty, the explanation seems to be that the word is composed of *Kauchi* and *men*. Germanic races have a tendency very frequently to append this termination to proper names; thus Englishmen call others Frenchmen, Irishmen, and Scotchmen; Allemann is thus formed from *alle*, all, and *mann*,¹ man, plural men; and our neighbours call us Welshmen, although we, in the Latin manner, denote the relative meanings of Wales, Welshman, Welshmen, by simply altering the terminations of the words, and saying Kymru, Kymro, Kymry. Having thus arrived at *Kauchmen*, we easily trace the conversion of *men* into *myn*; in Glamorganshire, the people have a strong tendency to end words with *yn*, and frequently say *hunyn* for *hunain*, Scotchmyn, Coachmyn, Porthmyn, Hwsmyn, and the like; and therefore the dialect of Morganwg, which in Allmyn and Kechmyn converts *men* into *myn*, also seems to indicate the district in which the poem was produced. On looking at the map of ancient Germany, we find the Kauchi,² Kymry, Teutons, Angles, Jutes, Saxons, and Frisians, occupying the same sea coast; the Kymry left the Kymric Chersonesus to come hither; Sir Francis Palgrave has demonstrated that the Saxon invaders of Britain consisted of Angles, Jutes, and Frisians, as well as Saxons; and unless we are mistaken in identifying them with the “Kechmyn of Thanet,” mentioned in this poem, the Chauki will, upon this authority, have to be added to the number. They might easily have come, and while the neighbouring tribes were emigrating it is more probable than otherwise that some of these came with them; according to the poem they did so, but whence the information is derived I know not.

¹ The writer of the article ALLEMANNI, in the *Penny Cyclopædia*, though apparently right in the above derivation, was wrong when he asserted that *Ellmyn* is the Welsh plural of *Alltud*. Mr. Turner said it was the plural of *Allman*; but this writer has misunderstood him. There are other errors in the same paragraph.

² This is really the proper name of the people *Καῦχοι*. See Kemble. Zeuss says the *Καῦχοι* were Kelts, not Saxons; Kemble the contrary.

We have not yet discovered the author of the poem. If the assumptions in the preceding paragraphs be true, the poem was composed in the Glamorgan dialect, and seen by Llywarch ab Llywelyn during his visit to South Wales in 1214. Several passages in the poem countenance this view; the names of places all refer to the South; the poet bids both Dyved and Glewysig (Monmouthshire) not to fear; and ends by imploring the blessing of God on Gelligaer, a district between Caerffili and Rhymney, in Glamorganshire. Madoc ab Iddon, king of the district indicated by Gwent, Glewysig, and Gelligaer, was "a man who knew many arts and sciences, and there was not found his equal in his time," and died in 1184; "he was the best poet and wit of any in Wales;" and as this poem indicates much more than ordinary ability, and was evidently composed in his district towards the close of the twelfth century, may he not be its author?

It has been remarked that the bards of North Wales, during the centuries embraced by this essay, had produced more poems than those of South Wales; and Mr. Price reproaches the South Welsh with having been less careful of their manuscripts than their brethren of the North; but this reproach is not altogether deserved. There was unquestionably less poetry produced in the South, and that too of an inferior character; and this arose, perhaps, partly because the more turbulent character of the petty chieftains of that district was less favourable to the development of literary talent than the dignified sway of the brilliant series of North Welsh kings, Gruffydd ab Kynan, Owain Gwynedd, Howel ab Owain, Llewelyn the Great, and Llewelyn ab Gruffydd, who ruled during that period. But though the North bore away the palm in poetry, the South was most distinguished in bardic congresses and historians; it produced the *Brut Tyssilio*, the *Chronicles of Caradoc*, and the *British History of Geoffrey*; the book of the *Cwitta Kyvarwydd of Glamorgan*, the *Book of Llandaff*, and the *Black Book of Carmarthen*, may also be cited to the same purport. Many of the poems attributed to Taliesin are written in the dialect of Gwent,¹ and several appear to have been written in Pembroke and the western portions of Glamorganshires; the poem called *Mic* or

¹ *Iolo Manuscripts*, p. 466.

Myg Dinbych (the Prospect of Tenby) belongs to the former; and the lines—

Chwaryeis yn Llychwr,
Cysgais ym mhorphor.

I have played at Loughor
And slept in purple—

in “Kad Goddeu,” indicate a place within six miles of Swansea. The “Arymes,” or Oracle, given at p. 71 of the *Archaiology*, belongs to that district; and the first four lines are exactly the same as those at the commencement of “Arymes Prydein Vawr.” The Oracle of Britain must be referred to the same parentage, as will be seen in these lines :

Spears shall be launched forth,
And an armed band
Around Cogawn Penarth—
An army collected from afar,
Led by the cross of Christ,
And a flame from Bethlehem
And Jerusalem.¹

The allusion here is to the persons collected together at the instigation of Archbishop Baldwyn (A.D. 1188), who was eminently successful at Llandaff² in enlisting soldiers for the Crusades; and probably these embarked for Palestine from the Penarth Roads, near Cardiff. Penarth is a locality well known; and there is a place called Cogan Penarth in that vicinity. Glamorgan seems to have been the hotbed of predictions, and Geoffrey probably adorned his narrative with many of the traditional stories of the men of Morganwg.

There are two poems attributed to MEUGANT, a bard who lived about the commencement of the seventh century. One of them, mourning the death of Prince Kynddylan, has the marks

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<sup>1</sup> A phelydr yn rhydd  
A gosgordd  
Am cogawn pennardd  
A llu digyfor o bell  
A chroes Crist yn cymhell  
A fflam o Feddlem  
A chaersalem.—*Myg. Arch.* i. 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Hanes Cymru*, p. 601.

of genuineness; but the other forms a connecting link between the Kyvoesi of Merddin and the Avallenau with the latter predictive poems; and this was probably composed in the early part of the reign of Owain Gwynedd, for the language is modern, and that monarch is mentioned by name. The poem is valuable as supplying the link of connection between Cadwaladr and Kynan; Cadwaladr was the hero of the South, and Kynan that of the North, as is shown by the promises here given of triumphs for Kynan in Arvon, and by the express words "Cynan yng wyned" (Kynan in North Wales) of the Oracle of Britain above cited. There is a Kynan honourably mentioned in the Gododin; and it is clear that the Kynan of the later bards is the person buried at Rhyd Rheon; but the original "Conan" of these predictions was a different person. The author of the Hoianau in the line (verse 114)—

Kynan and the especial Cadwaladr of Cambria—

implies that the first was not a native of Wales; and Gwalchmai distinguishes "Kynan the kindly courteous" from "Cadwaladr the pillar of armies." An immense impulse was given to these ambitious hopes of the Kymry, and the predictions of their realisation, by the preparations made in Normandy for the conquest of England; this event took place in the reign of Conant II. of Brittany; and "Normans, Bretons, French, Flemings, Poitevins, Burgundians, and other Cisalpine people flocked to the transmarine war."<sup>1</sup> The King of the Bretons was the original Kynan. The author of the *Vita Merlini*<sup>2</sup> distinctly says so:<sup>3</sup>

The Britons their noble kingdom  
Shall for a long time lose through weakness,  
*Until from Armorica* Conan shall come in his car,  
And Cadwaladr, the honoured leader of the Kymry.



<sup>1</sup> W. Gemetensis, 286; and Oderic Vitalis, 494; quoted in Schulz's *Essay*, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> The author of *Vita Merlini* is said to have been Geoffrey of Monmouth; but Dr. Giles says that internal evidence (not specified) contradicts that view.

<sup>3</sup> Britones at nobile regnum  
Temporibus multis amittant debilitate  
Donec ab Armorico, veniet temone Conanus  
Et Cadwadrus Cambrorum dux venerandus.

*Vita Merlini*, p. 129, MS. in the Cotton Library, Vespasian E. 4. Turner's *Vindication*, p. 120.

And the prediction in Geoffrey's history—

Cadwaladr (coming from Rome) shall call upon Conan (in Brittany) and take Albania into alliance—

both receives light from this fact and proves the correctness of the positions here laid down. Conant reigned about A.D. 1066; the poem attributed to Meugant is therefore not older than the Norman conquest. The Kyvoesi mentions Cadwaladr without Kynan; and this names Kynan without Cadwaladr; but in later poems the two names are always mentioned together. In the *Archæology* there are two copies of this poem, the concluding part being exactly the same as the fragment from the Book of Gogerthan.

When numerous poems were wrongly attributed to Merddin and Taliesin, it would have been strange if none had been allotted to ANEURIN, "the king of bards and poet of the flowing muse." In the *Iolo Manuscripts*, lately published, there is a predictive poem, attributed by its monkish author to the author of the Gododin. The late Mr. Edward Williams pleads warmly for its antiquity; but, with all becoming deference for so renowned an authority, I must be permitted to assert that the metre, diction, and sentiments belong less to the sixth century than to the sixteenth. The Verses of the Months (*Englynion y Misoedd*) have clung with remarkable tenacity to the name of Aneurin; his fame must nevertheless rest wholly and solely upon the earliest of modern heroic poems—the Gododin—for these verses are not his. I do not know when they were first attributed to him, for they are not included in the earliest collections of his poems. Llwyd, *sub voce* "Aneurin Gwawdrydd," does not mention them; in enumerating the contents of the MS. known as the Book of Aneurin<sup>1</sup> to be the Gododin, the Incantation of Adebón, the Incantation of Kynvelyn, and the Incantation of Maelderw,<sup>2</sup> he states that it is written in a hand remarkably

<sup>1</sup> The description of the MS. is, *verbatim et literatim*, as follows:—"Llyvyr Aneyryn; ne Lyvyr y Gododhynne a'r Guarxane. Vaugh. *Membr. Svo. modv. o drûx.* Hyn a gynwys, 1. Y Gododyn. (*An legendum gydodhyn?*) o uaiith Aneyryn naudydh Myxderyn Beirrh. 2. Kaniad a eluir Guarxan Adhebon. 3. Guarxan Kynvelyn. 4. Guarxan Maelderu guedi i gaeady yn Llynden gan R. V. Llâu hen dros ben. W. M." — Llwyd's *Arch. Brit.* p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> In the ancient MS. of the poems of Aneurin belonging to the late Rev. T. Price,

old, but in neither case is there any allusion to these verses. Yet, if the following statement be founded in fact, they were attributed to him as early as the fifteenth century. The editors of the *Myvyrian Archaiology* say, but on what authority does not appear, that "Aneurin Gwawdrydd was the first who sang the Verses of the Months; and being good, they became so common that no one thought of writing them, until they could scarcely be distinguished, so that the twelve verses could not be had complete in Gwynedd and Powys, four of them being lost. Gutyn Owain composed the four last instead of those wanting; but after that the missing verses were found in South Wales, so that they are here all from the Green Book."<sup>1</sup> The verses seem calculated to have obtained popularity from their adaptation to fireside circles, and the moralising tone which conversation assumed when, at the close of the evening, men assembled in small parties around fire-places, and crowded the spacious hobs, for which the chimney-places in Welsh country houses are distinguished. In cities men have numerous objects attracting attention, and, from the variety of the causes which excite them, the talk becomes free and easy, sometimes frivolous and insipid; but among a people so shrewd and intelligent as the Kymry of country districts are and have been, when domiciles were scattered, and men collected together from distant places, their conversation must have been of a moral cast and of a graver character than sage reflections upon the frost of yesterday and snow of to-day. Science was unknown, but human life, to the observant mind, furnished ample food for reflection; and therefore, when this was the prevailing topic, moral apothegms, adorned with the poetry of the seasons, in compact verses, were likely to have given satisfaction.

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and which was once in the possession of Gwilym Tew and Davydd Nanmor, who flourished from 1430 to 1470, Gwarchan Tydwelch, Gwarchan Adebón, and Gwarchan Kynvelyn, are given immediately following the Gododin. Mr. Price was of opinion that Gwarchan Maelderw was written by Taliesin.

¹ "Aneurin Gwawdrydd a gant Englynon y Misoedd gyntaf ac rhag daed oedynt hwy aethant mor gyffredin, ag na cheisiodd neb eu hysgrifennu, oni bu agos idynt a cholli haiachen fel na fedrid cael y deudeg Englyn yn gwbl ym Mhywys a Gwynedd heb fod pedwar ar goll: a Gutyn Owain a wnaeth y pedwar olaf yn lle y llall; ac wedi hynny y caed yn Neheubarth y pedwar oed ar goll fel y maent i gyd yma rhag llaw. Allan or Llyfr Gwyrdd."—*Myv. Arch.* vol. i. p. 14.

Though not Aneurin's, these verses have considerable merit :

¹ January ! The vale is smoky,
 The butler weary, and the bard (*cler*) abroad ;
 The crow is thin, and seldom is heard the hum of the bee ;
 The cow is lean, and the kiln is cold ;
 The horse is slender, and the bird silent ;
 The morning is long, and short the afternoon :
 Truly was it said by Kynvelyn,
 " The best candle for man is prudence."

The Kymric princes and chieftains held their feasts on the first day of January, when the bards of the district were sure to be in attendance ; and as there were open houses for all comers, butlers, under the circumstances, might well be weary. Among my countrymen the candle is the favourite figure for mental guidance ; and the most popular of all Cambrian authors, the Vicar of Llandoverly, entitled his book, the *Candle of the Kymry*.

² February ! Dainties are scarce,
 And busy are the spade and the wheel ;
 Reproach is the usual result of too frequent intercourse ;
 The hired ox is unable to complain ;
 Three things produce injurious venom,
 A woman's counsel, murder, and treason ;
 Best is the dog in the morning, when the lambs are weak,
 And miserable is he who slayed his servant-maid.

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<sup>1</sup> Mis Ionawr myglyd Dyffryn,  
 Blin Trulliad, treiglad Clerddyn ;  
 Cul Bran, anaml llais gwenyn ;  
 Gwag Buches, diwres Odyn ;  
 Cynnwy march, distaw aderyn ;  
 Hir i blygain, byr brydnhawn ;  
 Gwira ddywaid Cynfelyn ;  
 Gorau canwyll Pwyll i ddyn.

<sup>2</sup> Mis Chwefror anaml Anewyn ;  
 Llafurus Pal ac Olwyn ;  
 Gnawd gwarth o fynych gysswyn,  
 Yr ych llog ni fedr achwyn,  
 Tri pheth a dry drwg wenwyn  
 Cyngor Gwraig, Murn, a Chynllwyn,  
 Pen ci ar fore gwanwyn  
 Gwae a laddodd ei Forwyn.

The seventh line has been variously translated, but without the least success in eliciting any sense out of the words. Mr. Probert renders it:

Best is the dog's head on a spring morning;

and if *Gwanwyn* had no other signification than spring, though these words are meaningless, the line would have been correctly translated; but as it may also mean *gwan*, weak, and *wyn*, lambs, some poetry and much truthfulness may be evoked out of the sentence. It is a fact well known to shepherds, and to persons acquainted with farming life, that the lambs thrown in February are, as the poet says, really much weaker than those thrown in the succeeding month. In the morning, when snow covers the ground, the shepherd, whose first duty it is to collect the sheep together, frequently hears the bleating of lambs, which, they being unable to walk, he cannot find. On such occasions I have heard it said that a sagacious sheep-dog is worth a dozen men. Another argument in favour of the same reading may be deduced from the fact that among the bards the first day of spring was the 10th of March;<sup>1</sup> the poet could not therefore have alluded to spring, as pertaining to the month of February. The poet was true to nature, and alluded to one of the most pleasing features in rural life. The somewhat flippant mention of murder is due to the facts that, according to the Cambrian laws, murder might be compensated for by heavy fees, and also that when villanage prevailed in Britain the servants were taken from among the slaves.

<sup>2</sup> March! Birds are full of audacity,  
 Bitter blows the cold blast o'er the furrows,  
 The fair weather will outlive the foul,  
 Anger lasts longer than grief,  
 But every terror will disappear,  
 Every bird knows its mate,

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¹ *Iolo MSS.* p. 434.

² Mis Mawrth, mawr ryfyg adar
 Chwerw oerwynt, ar dalar;
 Hwyl fydd Hion na Heiniar
 Hwyl peru Llid na Galar
 Pob rhyw Arynnaig a ysgar
 Pob edn a edwyn ei gymmar

And all things will come through the earth,
Save the dead—long is his imprisonment.

¹ April! Mist covers the high grounds;
The oxen are fatigued, and the land naked;
Feasts are common, but not invitations;
Lean is the playful and long-eared stag;
Numerous faults are found where there is no love;
Happy is he who is righteous;
Destruction is the lot of the children of untruth;
After extravagance follows lasting destitution.

May! The caller of the oxen is relieved from care,
And the hedge affords comfort to the friendless;
The old are cheerful though their garments be torn,
The cuckoo sings, and loud bays the hound;
Girls are proud from having numerous lovers,
Lovers are happy, and the trees covered with leaves;
And the skin of the lamb comes to market
As often as that of the sheep.

Cattle are turned out to grass in May; the allusion in the first line of the above will thence be intelligible.

² June! The fields are beautiful,
The sea smooth, and the fish sportive;



Pob beth a ddaw trwy'r ddaear,
Ond y marw, mawr ei Garchar.

¹ Mis Ebrill, wybraidd gorthir,
Lluddedig ychen, llwm tir,
Gnawd osb, er nas gwahoddir;
Gwael hydd chwareus elusthir
Aml bai lle nis cerir
Gwyn ei fyd a fo cywir
Gnawd difrod ar blant enwir
Gnawd gwedi traha, tranc hir.

Mis Mai difrodus geilwad,
Clyd clawdd i bob di gariad
Llawen hen di Archenad
Llafar cog, a Bytheiad
Balch merch o aml gariad
Hyddail coed, hyfryd anllad
Nid hwyrach daw ir Farchnad
Groen yn Oen, na chroen y ddafad.

² Mis Mehefin hardd tiredd;
Llyfnu mor, llawen maranedd,

The genial day is long, and women full of activity ;
 The lawns are dewy, and the bogs passable ;
 God ever loves tranquillity,
 But the Devil is the cause of all the mischief ;
 All men desire to be honoured,
 But every potentate will be powerless at last.

July ! Perspiration is becoming,
 The hay is scattered, and all are bustling ;
 Ants rush about, and strawberries are red ;
 Greyhounds lie inactive in every court ;
 Thin is the cheek of the spiteful,
 But blessed is he who is courteous,
 Though none shall be free from care.

August ! Foam whitens the seashore,
 Bees are merry, and the hives are full ;
 More useful is the reaping-hook than the (warrior's) bow,
 And ricks are more numerous than play-grounds ;
 Whoever this month is idle
 Will suffer poverty in the depth of winter ;
 For it was truth that St. Breda (Brenda, in the Llyfr Hir) declared,
 " Evil comes not less frequently than good."

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Hirgain ddydd, heini gwagedd ;  
 Gwlithog llwybrau hyffordd mignedd ;  
 Duw a gar bob Tangnefedd ;  
 Diawl a bar bob Cynddrygedd ;  
 Pawb a chwennych anrhydedd ;  
 Pob cadarn gwan ei ddiwedd.

Mis Gorphenaf teilwng chwys ;  
 Gweiriau ar dan, pawb mewn brys ;  
 Chwimwth morgrug, rhuddion mefus ;  
 Segur milgwn ymhob llys ;  
 Llwm yw gruidd dyn eiddigus ;  
 Gwyn ei fyd o fo cariadus ;  
 Ni bydd byth ddihelbulus.

Mis Awst molwynog morfa ;  
 Llon Gwenyn llawn modryda ;  
 Gwell gwaith crymman na bwa ;  
 Amlach das na chwareufa ;  
 A fo diog y mis yma,  
 A ddwg eisiau drymder ganaf ;  
 Gwir a ddywaid Saint Breda.  
 Nid llai cyrehir drwg na da.



September! The planets are wayward,  
 And enjoyment pervades both sea and township;  
 Men and horses know fatigue;  
 Every species of fruit becomes ripe;  
 A royal daughter was born,  
 Who will deliver us from our grievous captivity;  
 Truly did St. Bernard say  
 "God sleeps not when He relieves."

As this verse affords cogent reasons for rejecting the assertion of the antiquity of the poem, it may be well here to attempt assigning to it its true date. Mr. Humphreys Parry was the first to question its parentage. He said, "This poem obviously wants those innate evidences of genuineness which belong to the Gododin. The popular voice, however, has for centuries ascribed both productions to the same author, and it is now too late to dispute the decree."<sup>1</sup> The language, which is modern, and the allusions to historical facts scattered throughout, abundantly prove the correctness of his conclusion; and therefore we have here to do what he declined to undertake. In the first verse the poet terms the class of bards, described in the first section of this chapter, *Clerwyr*, or wanderers; but as this distinction was not known to the Laws of Howel, and first appears in the time of Gruffydd ab Kynan (1080 to 1137), we may doubt its being known in the sixth century. The customs incidentally alluded to were principally prevalent during the middle and subsequent ages; and the mention of Saints Breda and Bernard must set the question at rest. There is no saint of the name of Breda; this must therefore be either Brenda or Beda; the first was three generations removed from Gwgan ab Caradog Vreichvras, a man who was at the battle of Bangor Iscoed in 607, being Brenda ab Helig Voel ab Glanog ab Gwgan Gleddiv Rhudd;<sup>2</sup> and the second died, according to

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Mis Medi mynawc planed
 Mwynieithus mor a threfred
 Gnawd gwyr a meirch yn lludded
 Gnawd pob ffrwyth yn addved
 Merch frenhinawl a aned
 An duc o'n dygn gaethiwed
 Gwir a ddywed Saint Berned
 Ni chwsg Duw pan ro wared.

¹ *Cambrian Plutarch*, p. 39.

² Rees's *Welsh Saints*, p. 298.

the best authorities, A.D. 735; but whichever it was, neither of them was sainted in the time of Aneurin. St. Bernard was born in 1091, died in 1153, and was canonised by Pope Alexander III. in 1174. This brings us down to the twelfth century, and the internal evidence of the verses takes us still lower. It will be observed that the poem, unlike those which we have recently perused, not only does not breathe the spirit of war, but condemns it. We shall presently see that this was a characteristic of nearly all the Welsh poetry, from the fall of Llewelyn to the revolt of Owain Glyndwr; and therefore must we refer this poem to the beginning of the fourteenth century. The above verse speaks of grievous captivity; but as the Welsh experienced no captivity, except the submission to Edward I. and his successors, the poem could not have been written much prior to 1300. The "royal daughter" was probably Gwenllian,¹ the offspring of Llewelyn and Eleanor de Montford. The last lines of the next verse would scarcely be written by one of the bardic order; and the author of all these verses was probably a monk.

¹ October! Men seek sheltering places,
 The birch leaves turn yellow and the summer seat is widowed,
 Birds and fish are plump and fat,
 The milk of cow and goat becomes less and less;
 Woe be to him who lays in sin the root of discreditable eruptions,
 For death is better than frequent disgrace;
 Three things will melt every sin—
 Fast, prayer, and alms.

November! Swine become greatly fat,
 Shepherds go and minstrels come,



¹ *Hanes Cymru*, p. 707.

² Mis Hydref hydraid hydod
 Melyn blaen bedw, gwedw Havod
 Llawnvras adar a physgod
 Lleilai laeth buwch a gafrod
 Gwae a haed mefl er pechod
 Gwell marw na mynych difrod
 Tri pheth a dawdd pob pechod
 Ympryd, a gwedi, a chardod.

Mis Tachwedd moch mehinfawr,
 Aed bugail, delid cerdawr

Butchers' blades are bloody, and the barns full ;
 The sea is joyous, and marrowy the contents of every cauldron ;
 Long are the nights to prisoners of lively dispositions ;
 All who have treasures are respected ;
 Three men who are not often satisfied
 Are the sorrowful, the angry, and the miserly.

December ! Garments get soiled,
 The land is heavy, and the sun drowsy ;
 The vicious is poor, and the muscle quiet ;
 The cock is happy, and the feathered owl ;
 For twelve days we may rejoice,
 Because of the birth of the Destroyer of Satan ;
 It was truth that Ysgolan said,
 ' God is better than wicked predictions.'

The last line is probably a sneer at the partiality shown by the people for the predictions of Merddin and Taliesin.

We have already seen it stated that Gutyn Owain, a bard who lived about 1450, composed four verses instead of the last four of the preceding. The structure of Gutyn's sentences is superior to that of these, but in all other respects the merit of both is about equal. However, as some persons may wish to institute a comparison, and judge for themselves, we will quote the last :

¹ December ! Days are short, and nights are long ;
 Crows seek the germinating corn and rushes are on the moors,



Gwaedlyd llafn llawn escubawr
 Llon mor merlyd pob callawr
 Hirnos heinus carcharawr,
 Parchus pawb a fed drysawr
 Tri dun nid aml au didawr
 Trist, blwng, a chybyd angawr.

Mis Rhagfyr tomlyd archan,
 Trwm tir trymluoc huan
 Llwm gwyd llonyd llywethan
 Llon ceiliog a thwyllhuan,
 Au deudeng-nyd yn hoean,
 Am eni yspeiliwr Satan,
 Gwir a ddywed Yscolan
 Gwell Duw na drwg darogan.

¹ Mis Rhagfyr byrddydd, hirnos,
 Brain yn egin, brwyn ar ros.

Silent are the bees and the nightingale,
 There is bustling at feasts at the close of night,
 The house of the prudent is comfortable,
 The reckless is unfortunate through his own fault,
 And life, though it be long,
 Will end in day and night.

There is another set of a dozen verses attributed to Aneurin in the MS. of Mr. Davies of Bangor, and also in another old MS., though Mr. Rhys Jones, the collector of the specimens of British bards, called *Gorchestion y Beirdd*, ascribes them to Llywarch the Aged, without, however, giving his authority; but it is probable, judging from the smoothness of the language and the nature of the sentiments, that they were composed by neither, and that they were the products of the same age as that which gave birth to the Verses of the Months. In poetic merit the last set is decidedly superior; the sentences are more compact, the language more fluent, and the aphorisms seem to spring more naturally from the subject. Some lines in the last verse are finely descriptive of many a youthful career:

The youth who heeds not counsel
 Is like a ship on a swelling sea,
 Without rope, sail, or anchor.¹

I have already expressed a doubt as to the antiquity of the Gorchanau attributed to Aneurin. Some verses in the *Myvyrian Archaeology*, i. p. 541, taken from the MS. of Mr. William Maurice, are also ascribed to him, as appears from a note to the *Lyric Poems* of Mr. Edward Williams; but a moment's consideration would have suggested that Aneurin could not have written in the language of the fifteenth century, or known much about divisions of the country made several centuries after his death. A dialogue between Saints David and Kybi is also erroneously attributed to "the King of the Bards."

Tawel gwenyn, ac eos
 Trin ynghyfedd diwedd nos
 Adail dedwydd yn ddiddos,
 Adwyth diriad heb achos
 Yr hoedl er hyd ei haros
 A dderfydd yn nydd a nos.

¹ Unfodd a llong ar gefnfor
 Heb raff heb hwyl heb angor
 Ydyw'r ieuange digyngor.

Another set of triplets, ascribed by the collector of the *Gorchestion* to LLYWARCH HEN, belongs probably to the same era; as also do two sets of moral verses attributed by the editors of the *Myvyrian Archaeology* to the Mab Clav, or the Maer Glas, the son of that aged bard.¹

This unique manner of inculcating precepts is very agreeable; and had Dr. Johnson lived among the Kymry of those centuries, his desire for an *aphoristic* literature could have been easily gratified. Under these circumstances conversational talents must have had a fine field for development; and perhaps we ought to attribute partly to these fireside gatherings the fluency of speech noticed as remarkable among the common people, and the wit, which struck Giraldus so forcibly, of the Cambrian princes Rhys ab Gruffydd and Owain Kyveiliog. The Kymry generally, though they have no knowledge of rhetoric, are exceedingly metaphorical in their conversation, and use figures of speech with quite as much propriety, and much more naturally, than many very distinguished orators; their irony is perfect, and their sarcasm terrible; but they are more impulsive than persevering, and their mental qualities are more brilliant than profound. The didactic verses of the bards are smooth, graceful, and mellifluous; and in their hands, as in those of the Hebrews, moral science was perfectly reconciled to popular poetry.

I must now bring this section to a close; the results arrived at will probably startle many of my countrymen, but the reasons in each case have been fully stated, and a candid perusal will most probably show that my conclusions are uniformly correct. Our attention in the next place will be occupied by the chroniclers and historians of the centuries here considered.

SECTION V.

PROSE LITERATURE--THE CHRONICLES.

WE must not suppose that poetry was the only form in which the national mind made itself manifest; for there were the prose romances, which shall be noticed hereafter, and the

¹ *Myv. Arch.* vol. i. p. 545.

Triads. In addition to these there were chronicles and genealogical records, of which Giraldus makes mention. Of the former, Gildas, Nennius, Geoffrey, and Caradoc may be cited as examples; but as Gildas and Nennius had lived previous to the time included in this essay, our notice will be devoted to Geoffrey and Caradoc. Asser may justly be claimed for the literature of Wales, though he wrote in Latin; and there are several other historical records now slumbering in MSS.

Of a work so well known as GEOFFREY'S Chronicle it is unnecessary to give examples; and our principal efforts will be devoted to solve the *questio vexata*, is it a translation or an original work? The critics of Wales, England, and France have come to the decided conviction that it is full of fables; but it is still a matter of doubt who was the inventor of these fables. His own account is as follows: That while studying the history of the Kings of Britain, and wondering why Gildas and Bede had not made mention of the kings who lived in Britain prior to the Christian era, nor of Arthur and many others, he was agreeably surprised by a request from Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, a man of great eloquence, and learned in foreign histories, to translate a book in the British tongue, which Walter had brought from Brittany, and which related the actions of all the Kings of Britain from Brutus, the first king, down to Cadwaladr the son of Cadwallo. Now, is the story about the book being brought from Brittany true or not? On the negative side we have Dr. Giles, who thus states his objections:

There are lamentable defects of a grave character attending upon this British volume:

I. It was first made known six hundred years after the events which it relates.

II. No MS. copy is now in existence, nor any record of its ever having been multiplied by transcription.

III. It relates stories utterly at variance with acknowledged history.

IV. It abounds in miraculous stories, which, like leaven, ferment and corrupt the whole mass.

V. It labours under great suspicion from the mendacious character of the people, whose credit it was written to support.¹

On the affirmative side we have the names of Ellis, Turner, and the older names of Archbishop Usher, Leland, and several

¹ Bohu's edition, 1848, p. 292.

Kymric writers of note. Professor Rees, a most careful and acute critic, speaks positively upon the subject, and states that "a Welsh version of the original is preserved, which shows that (Geoffrey) merely made a free translation, inserting occasionally intepolations of his own." A foreigner of note, the Abbé de la Rue, in a work containing the results of forty years of study, called a *Historical Essay on the Bards, Jongleurs, and Trouveres, Norman and Anglo-Norman*, takes the same view of this matter. Living in Brittany, the Abbé had the means of forming an opinion upon the subject, and much importance should be attached to the conclusion at which he has arrived—that the British history of Geoffrey is in reality a translation of a collection of the ancient tradition of Bretagne. To prove the truth of this opinion, the author shows that Geoffrey's most bitter contemporary opponents charge him with *collecting fables*, not with *inventing* them. William of Newburgh expressly allows this; and Malmsbury merely says that Arthur was a monarch whose fame deserved rather to be set forth by the historian than by the fabulist. It must be borne in mind too, as the Abbé says—

That Geffry was a learned man, and his Latin poems prove him to have been well acquainted with the classical authors then in use. Now, if this writer, having learning and talent, had actually fabricated the works attributed to him, is it believable that he would not have endeavoured to give them an air of probability which they do not possess? Would he, as Mr. Ellis has well remarked, represent Italy as menaced with her Breton knights, at a period when the splendid and authentic exploits of Belisarius had filled the whole empire with his glory? Would he above all, Welsh as he was, have made Hoel, an Armorican prince, act the chief part in the Continental wars of Arthur, and represent him as but auxiliary to the first? Besides, how can it be said that Geffry *invented* these tales, when many of them may be read in the works of Nennius and the pseudo-Gildas, who wrote three hundred years earlier? It appears to me further, that if Geffry of Monmouth had wished to impose upon his readers, and to give his marvels the appearance of truth, he might have supported himself upon an authority which at this period would have given the greatest weight to his statements—I mean the lives of the saints. In truth, we find in the middle-age legends many tales relating to Arthur and his knights. Thus the exploits of Arthur are incorporated with the Life of St. Dubritius, and were sung in the cathedral of Llandaff centuries before Geffry translated his British history. In the Life of St. Gildas the seduction of Arthur's wife, by Melvas, Earl of Somerset, and the peace subsequently made through the mediation of the Saint, is to

be found. The Life of St. Pair, Bishop of Vannes, bears testimony to Arthur's deeds on the Continent, and the ravages committed in Armorica by Karadoc. In the Life of St. Paul of Leon the conversion of King Mark, husband of Yseult la Blonde, is met with; and in the Life of St. Kentigern we find how the jongleurs altered the names of the heroes of the Round Table. None of these are once altered by Geffry; and to the victorious argument of Mr. Ellis I will add a last which is unanswerable. We have seen how Gaiman stood in need of books and how his patroness sent to Walter l'Espece to obtain from the Earl of Gloucester the history which he had caused to be translated from the Welsh. This proves that a history of the British kings existed in Wales in the twelfth century; and the same Trouvere attests that he had also to aid him in his work the Brût brought from Bretagne, by Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, and that this second book had suggested several advantageous corrections of the first. This testimony suffices to repel the charge of imposture which is attempted to be cast upon Geffry of Monmouth.¹

We do not often find English writers favourable to the pretensions of Kymric literature; it is therefore pleasing to see so profound a critical authority as the *Athenæum* leaning to the same side:

We have always thought that the circumstance of a Welshman being called upon to translate Breton history is another corroboration of Geffrey's statement. Archdeacon Walter Calenius might have sought in vain among the English and Norman learned men for one who would condescend to learn a mere dialect of a French province; but to the scholar, who was a Welshman, the Breton was almost as familiar as his native tongue. And it is reported that, even during the late war, those prisoners confined at Brest who understood Welsh had no difficulty in making themselves intelligible to the people around them.²

Again, we have the authority of the Rev. T. Price, in an excellent digest of the authentic history of Arthur, in support of the same conclusion. This accumulated testimony makes out a very strong case; and an opinion so firmly founded upon a variety of cogent arguments cannot be devoid of truth.

According to the *ignoratio elenchi* contained in Dr. Giles's more candid than courteous fifth proposition, I ought to take the affirmative side; but my views on this long agitated question differ from all that I have yet seen. Geoffrey's statement appears to be partially, but not wholly true. In the earlier

¹ Quoted from a translation in the *Athenæum*, No. 425.

² *Athenæum*, No. 425, p. 939.

portions he has probably extended, and perhaps invented, some of the narratives; but still there appears sufficient reason to believe that the greater part cannot be purely imaginary. It would be well to inquire, in the first place, whether there are any statements in the book which may not have been obtained at home. From the words of Nennius it is abundantly evident that there were historical records among the Kymry as early as A.D. 796, that being the earliest date assigned to his history. His words, as translated by Dr. Giles, are: "I have presumed to deliver these things in the Latin tongue, not trusting to my own learning, which is little or none at all, but *partly from writings and monuments of the ancient inhabitants of Britain.*" Afterwards he says that he "had derived information from our ancient traditions;" and in a subsequent place writes, "I have learned another account of this Brutus, from the ancient books of our ancestors." There are many internal evidences that Nennius was indebted to Kymric documents, and it is clearly apparent that there were histories extant of the actions of the British kings. The Kyvoesi of Merddin, noticed in the preceding section, gives a list of British kings and princes, from Rhydderch Hael, A.D. 570 (the Rhydderthan of Nennius) to Rhys ab Tewdwr, A.D. 1077; this must have been compiled from some existing history; and as the list accords exactly with the authentic history given in the genealogical records of the British kings, written by the bards, whose duty it was to keep such records, there is no necessity for any further proof that the poem was drawn up from trustworthy documents. Coming down later, we find, on the authority of Geoffrey himself, that, prior to being shown the Breton chronicle, his mind had been fixed upon "the histories of the kings of the Isle of Britain," whose "achievements were deserving of praise, and *were preserved in writing by a great many people, who found it a pleasure to speak of them and to bear them in remembrance.*"¹ Another fact of considerable significance is the date at which Caradoc begins his chronicle; for if there were not in existence a satisfactory history of the kings preceding Cadwaladr, it is strange that he should have contented himself with beginning his chronicle at the time of that monarch's death. We may therefore set at rest the charge brought against Geoffrey of having invented the stories which he

¹ Translated from the copy given in the first volume of the *Cambrian Register*.

relates; for the quantity of material in existence rendered much exercise of the inventive faculties unnecessary. The story of the Trojan descent was ready; it is so full in Nennius that but little else is added to Geoffrey; and it must have been fuller in the former's day than he has represented it; for as it is absolutely incredible that public curiosity would have been content with such a skeleton of a recital, his version is more likely to be an epitome than a story at full length. Much of the history of Britain under the Romans is written by Nennius, and might have been easily expanded to the length we find it without Geoffrey's assistance, for the germs of all the facts stated may be found elsewhere; but the florid colouring and scholastic illustrations are undoubtedly his.

Geoffrey might have written a history of the British kings from native sources of information, and it therefore becomes of importance to determine whether he did or did not avail himself of these. The hypothesis of his being a historian, and not simply a translator, is opposed to the affirmative supposition, but Geoffrey's own work supports it. At the beginning of the seventh book he says: "I had not got thus far in my history, when the subject of public discourse happening to be concerning Merlin, I was obliged to publish his prophecies¹ at the request of my acquaintance, but especially of Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln, a prelate of the greatest piety and wisdom." Here our author is not a translator, but an original historian. The letter to Alexander brings out this fact still more clearly. In that he writes: "The regard which I owe to your great worth, most noble prelate, has obliged me to undertake the translation of Merlin's prophecies out of British into Latin *before I had made an end of the history which I had begun concerning the acts of the British kings*. For my design was to have finished that first, and afterwards to have taken this work in hand; lest, by being engaged on both at once, I should be less capable of attending with any exactness to either." Again he says, in the eleventh book: "Of the matter now to be treated of, most

¹ An interesting fact in connection with Geoffrey is, that in three out of four copies given in the *Myvyrian*, what is called the "Great Prediction" of Merddin is wanting. One only has it; and another, thus appearing to be a later copy, states that the copyist omits it on account of its length (*Myv. Arch.* ii. 261). This is the one called "Brut Gruffydd ab Arthur," and the prediction is that made before Gwrtheyrn. The same writer omits "prophwydoliaeth yr Eryr," because he deemed it untrue.—*Myv. Arch.* ii. 124.

noble consul, Geoffrey of Monmouth shall be silent; but will nevertheless, though in a mean style, briefly relate what he found in the British book above mentioned, and heard from that most learned historian Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, concerning the wars which this renowned king, upon his return to Britain after this victory, waged against his nephew." From these extracts we deduce several inferences, each utterly irreconcilable with the notion of his being simply a translator: 1. He has evidently admitted having written an original history. 2. He has done so with authorities independent of the Breton chronicle. 3. In embodying supplementary information from others he implies that the said book was not as complete as in the preface it is asserted to have been. 4. And he gives us clearly to understand that the Breton history was only followed in the latter part, the rest being Geoffrey's own work. There are other facts tending to the same conclusion. In speaking of King Hudibras, he says: "At this place an eagle spoke while the wall of the town was being built; and, indeed, I should have transmitted the speech to posterity had I thought it true, as the rest of the history." This prediction still exists; it is published in the second volume of the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, and a portion may be seen in Price's *Hanes Cymru* (p. 318); it contains allusions to the Normans, and could not therefore have been found in any book that was very old in Geoffrey's day; it is not contained in the Kymric MSS. of his history; and therefore it is much more probable that he met with it in collecting materials for this work than that it had been woven into any digested narrative. Again, in writing of Cadwaladr, he alludes to a prediction uttered by Merddin in the presence of Arthur; in his account of Arthur there is no mention made of such an occurrence; but as, according to Llwyd's account, a "Prediction of Myrdhyn before Arthyr" occurs in a MS. called "Y Kwttta Kyvarwydd o Vorganwg,"¹ which belonged to the cathedral of Llandaff, he probably met with this also under similar circumstances. The account of the Flamens and Archiflamens looks like an ecclesiastical fiction; and the description of Caerlleon, so graphic and circumstantial, must have been written much nearer home than Brittany.

¹ This may have been the original of the prediction of Merlin to Arthur given in the Bruts named by Sir Frederick Madden in *Notes and Queries*, July 5, 1856.

Numerous other facts countenance the same conclusion; and not the least important is the history of the book given by Mr. Aaron Thompson, of Queen's College, Oxford, a gentleman who, in 1718, published an English translation of Geoffrey's work. After stating that Geoffrey was overjoyed when he received the Breton MS., he states that, "At first he divided it into four books, written in a plain, simple style, and dedicated it to Robert, Earl of Gloucester, a copy whereof is said to be at Bennet College, in Cambridge, which was never yet published; but afterwards he made some alterations, and divided it into eight books, to which he added the book of Merlin's Prophecies, which he had also translated from British verse into Latin prose, prefixing to it a preface and a letter to Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln." The assertion of the translation of the prophecies from British verse can scarcely be correct, for no other prophetic verses exist among the Kymry than those given in the preceding section; and the prediction, as it appears in Geoffrey, exists only in one Cambrian MS. of his history. But passing that by, we still find that our author is a historian; for the making of new divisions, alterations, and additions in the text of a work is utterly inconsistent with the duties of a translator. These statements as to first and second editions are strikingly confirmed by the state of the Cambrian MSS. of this history, three of which have neither the dedicatory epistle nor the description of Britain now prefixed to the later copies of Geoffrey; one, the *Red Book of Hergest*, in Jesus College, Oxford, has only the descriptive chapter; and one alone, a copy known to have been written in 1613, has both. We also find the historian continually interrupting the narrative with his own reflections. In the account of Arthur's Continental wars, he says that it was a prevailing fault of the Britons to be eager to assault, but not persevering in following up the attack; and at the death of King Careticus he introduces a bitter invective against them. In the English translation this chapter is marked, "the author upbraids the Britons," but in the older Kymric MSS. the remarks are very short; in another they are expanded, and in the latest they assume their present form; but in none of these is there any mark to denote an intended interruption of the narrative.

These facts, revealing more of the original author than of the translator, tend to throw discredit upon the relation

respecting the Breton book ; and there are other facts which strongly confirm our suspicions as to its truth. It is highly improbable that a book so complete in all respects could have been written by an author without a name. The force of this objection has hitherto been evaded by the assertion that the author was Tyssilio ; but Tyssilio is not known to have written any such work, and if he had written a British history, we should not have had to go to Brittany for it. And this argument becomes still more forcible when the prediction of the eagle, omitted in translating the Breton work, but which was said to be delivered long before the advent of Christ, anticipated, and was therefore really consequent to, the Norman conquest. Another argument against accepting the story as being literally true is rather analogical than direct. In Geoffrey's day, and for many centuries afterwards—indeed, as late as the time of the Wizard of the North with Jedediah Cleisbotham—it was a very usual practice for writers to give extraordinary accounts of their originals, thus not only blunting the edge of criticism, but also creating a fictitious interest. Romance writers did this very frequently ; one Trouvere speaking of his book says :

Much was altered, much was lost, a long, long time ago ;
 But blessings on a learned clerk, who sought it out with care,
 And wrote it out—ay, verse by verse—until this story rare
 Was saved complete ; and then in book 'twas straightway written fair.
 And ken ye where I found it ? 'Twas in an abbey stored ;
 So well I wot no lie is here, nor foolish deed or word.¹

Hugh de Rotelande thus begins his “ Ypemedon : ”

Marvel strange it is, I trow,
 That learned clerks, who mickle know
 Of divers tongues, should ne'er have sought
 This goodly history out and brought
 It forth to light, for soothly we
 Have almost lost its memory ;
 And therefore, ye that are unlearned,
 Know that from Latin I have turned
 This goodly story, that ye well
 May understand it.

¹ I am indebted for this and the succeeding extract to the number of the *Athenæum* already quoted.

And when this was so common a practice that a book was scarcely considered to be properly ushered to the reading world without it, it is not going beyond the limits of fair deduction to say that Geoffrey would probably be influenced thereby. In support of this opinion there are several facts of considerable significance. We have seen that three out of five Cambrian MSS. have neither preface nor descriptive chapter at the commencement; one has only the account of Britain; and as that is distinctly termed "Y Ragarawd," the prefatory discourse, we may clearly infer that at the date of what appears to be one of the earlier of these MSS. no other preface was known to exist. The Breton story was not therefore as yet in existence. At the end of the earliest of our manuscript copies of Geoffrey's work is this entry: "I, Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, turned this book from Kymraeg to Latin, and in my old age retranslated it from Latin to Kymraeg;"¹ at the end of one that appears to be later the first translation from Kymraeg to Latin is omitted, and it is only said that "Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, translated it from Latin to Kymraeg, and I (Geoffrey) turned it back again into Latin;"² and in its latest form the story is that Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, brought a book from Brittany written in the British language, which could only be translated by one who knew Kymraeg and Latin.³ Hitherto antiquarians have only had to deal with the last and more perfect form of the story; but now that we have its infancy, youth, and manhood, we may hope for greater results. The first story is clumsy indeed, and, it will be observed, clashes in two important points with the last; in the first Walter Mapes is endowed with such a knowledge of Kymraeg that, for want of something else to do, he translates a book into Kymraeg, when such a work, according to the story, already existed, while in the second he knows no Kymraeg at all; and in the

¹ Myfi Gwallter Archiagon Rydychen, a droes y llyfr hwnn o Gymraeg yr Lladin. Ac yn vy henaint y troes i ef yr allwaith o ladin ynghymraec.—*Myv. Arch.* vol. ii. p. 390.

² Y llyvyr Kymraec hwnw yr hwn a emchweles Gwallter Archdiaon Ryt Ychein o Ladin eg Kymraec, ac ef ae traethws yn wir ac yn gwbl o istoria e rac dywedigion Gymry, a henny oll a datemchweleis inheu o Gymraec en Lladin, ac evelly y tervyna istoria Brut.—*Myv. Arch.* p. 389-90.

³ *Cambrian Register*, vol. i. p. 27, and Giles's translation of Geoffrey in Bohn's edition of *Six Old English Chronicles*, p. 292.

second point the first story gives the book a Cambrian original, having no reference made to Brittany, while the latter brings the book from Armorica, and implies that it could not have been produced at home. We might also make a remark on the word "old age." Walter outlived Geoffrey. The second story clashes with the last in the latter respect as well as in the former, but differs in giving less prominence to the Kymric acquirements of the Oxford archdeacon. These facts, coupled with the fact above noted respecting the preface, show that various origins had been assigned to the book previously; and these graduated assertions, ending in the assignment of an Armorican source, must show very clearly that Geoffrey was not unskilled in the art of advertising, and that no dependence can be placed upon the last version he had been pleased to give the world as to the antecedents of his history.

Yet does there appear to be something more than the artifice of the Trouvere in the allusion to this Breton volume, for several weighty considerations yet require to be satisfied. These are the following. The narrative of Geoffrey, particularly when it treats of Arthur, his immediate predecessors and successors, differs most materially in its facts and names from Nennius and the more authentic Kymric chronicles by being both more diffuse in some parts, palpably defective in others, and less minute in all. A portion of these discrepancies has been ably exhibited by Professor Rees. In the preface to his most careful and valuable work he says, "It is remarkable that in all the records of the Britons, both in Welsh and Latin, before the twelfth century, historical allusions abound, which are at variance with the narrative of the Armorican chronicle; even the most extravagant tales of Nennius are more limited than those of the late fabulist; and the various ways in which the same tales are related by the former prove that in his time they had not reached the consistency of history, whereas in the latter there is no hesitation, but every story is told as positively as if the writer were an eye-witness."¹ So far the discrepancies may be explained by Dr. Dunham's ingenious principle for the interpretation of fables:² Fables being in their

¹ Rees's *Welsh Saints*, Preface, viii.

² Dunham's *Europe in the Middle Ages*, vol. iv. p. 67.

character progressive from a short and simple to an expanded and complex form, acquire additional particulars whenever related. This fact will explain many historical phenomena, and demonstrate clearly that many of the legends in Geoffrey are extensions of those of Nennius, and those of Nennius only amplifications of the older Gildas; but in Geoffrey's work there are difficulties which cannot be thus explained. Some of these are also well stated by Professor Rees, in a passage full of pointed reasoning and admirable criticism. His words are: "Localities are very powerful auxiliaries in forming a constructive history. In this respect the Armorican chronicle is exceedingly deficient; for the few localities mentioned in it are certain towns and places which were well known and flourished at a late period, proving not only that the record was recent, but also that it was compiled in a distant country. The scene of the fable is laid down in Britain, but the places introduced are such as were of sufficient celebrity to be known abroad. The events of history do not always occur at distinguished towns, and it might be expected that places which were celebrated in past ages had afterwards become obscure."¹ These remarks apply with peculiar force to the prominence given to Caerlleon in the Arthurian romance in Geoffrey; such an assertion could not have originated at home, and the fact that long after Arthur became the hero of Cambrian romance his palace was fixed in Cornwall shows most clearly that it did not. Many of the Kymric romances or Mabinogion make no mention of Arthur, and it is evident that some of those in which his name appears are much earlier than the age of this chronicle; the earlier and shorter romances, the Dream of Rhonabwy, St. Greal, and Killwch and Olwen, fix the seat of Arthur at Gelliwig in Cornwall; in the dialogue between Arthur and the Eagle, Arthur describes the eagle as one who traverses the vales of Cornwall, and the eagle terms Arthur leader of the battles of Cornwall; in the dialogue between Arthur and Gwenhwyvar the lady says she had seen him at the long table of Gelliwig; and in the longest and latest only, such as Owain, Peredur, and Geraint, do we find Arthur seated at Caerlleon. These are not referred to by any bard prior to the appearance

¹ Rees's *Welsh Saints*, Preface, xi.

of Geoffrey's work, and were, I believe, written subsequently. We may therefore infer, from a comparison of the earlier romances with Geoffrey's chronicle, that the Arthurian portion of the latter was composed in Brittany. Arthur's history is much fuller in some respects in Geoffrey than elsewhere, and singularly deficient in others. The Roman wars of that hero, so full in his work, are altogether unknown to the native legends; and describing Paris, Burgundy, the Alps, Italy, and other places unknown to the Kymry, must have been composed by some person or persons abroad. The same conclusion is supported by the ignorance shown by the author of Arthur's Kymric history. In the days of Nennius, or more probably of Mark the Hermit, his editor, in the tenth century, Arthur was reported to have fought *twelve* important battles against the Saxons; but only *five* of these are mentioned by Geoffrey, and only *seven* if we include two skirmishes in which Arthur was not present. This will appear more forcible from a comparison of the two lists of the battles:

NENNIUS.	GEOFFREY.
1 River Glendi or Glem	1 Camlan (Camelford)
2 Duglas region of Liniuis	2 Duglas
3 do.	3 Skirmish (Cador, Duke of Cornwall, in command)
4 do.	4 Province of Lindisior (Lincoln)
5 do.	
6 River Bassa	5 The Wood of Caledon
7 Celydon	
8 Gurnion Castle	
9 Caerlleon	
10 Traeth Trevroit	6 Skirmish (Cador in command)
11 Breguin (Berwyn)	
12 Badan	7 Battle of Bath

Respecting the battle of Badon Nennius—or we should, I think, say his editor—states that Arthur bore on his shield the image of the Virgin, and that he slew with his own hand nine hundred and forty men. Geoffrey states the same respecting the shield, but reduces the number of Arthur's victims to exactly one-half, or four hundred and seventy. We have seen that, in relating the story of Arthur and Medrod *in* Britain, he has recourse to other authorities than that which had sufficed

for the account of the hero's Continental wars. In most Kymric copies there is no remark to this effect; in the last the authority is said to be Walter, the archdeacon; but in the earliest Cambrian MS. the truth seems to peep out in the words, "Here ends the story of Arthur and Medrod," thus, by the admission of an extra story, implying that some other authority had been used previously. This ignorance of true Kymric history again appears still more distinctly as we proceed. In the following table, where the list of kings given by Geoffrey is compared with the much more perfect one given in the poem called the *Kyvoesi of Merddin*, the discrepancy is most surprising. Of the three first in Geoffrey's list Kymric writers know nothing, while our traditions, triads, and historical documents are shown to be more authentic by the fact that Nennius names the same persons as the native authorities:

GEOFFREY.	THE KYVOESI OF MERDDIN.
Constantine	Rhydderch Hael
Aurelius Conan	Morgan ab Sadurnin
Wortiphorius	Urien Rheged
Malgo	Maelgwn
Careticus ab Gwallog	Rhun, son of Maelgwn
ab Lleenog	Beli, son of Rhun
	Iago, son of Beli
Cadvan	Cadvan, son of Iago
Cadwallo	Cadwallon, son of Cadvan
Cadwaladr	Cadwaladr, son of Cadwallon

There is no Careticus known to Kymric history except Caredig the son of Cunedda Wledig, who gave his name to Ceredigion (Cardiganshire), and who lived a hundred and fifty years before Maelgwn's death; there is therefore a hiatus of three reigns, of which Geoffrey's authority gives only a most confused account; and as Nennius had given a better history of that era, we have no alternative but to admit that our author was here led astray by some Breton document. Another trait of foreign origin is the legend of Cadwaladr's death and canonisation; Nennius had given an account of his death, and the Triads relate, with considerable distinctness and minute fidelity, his death and its cause; and therefore, as the story could not have originated at home, it must have sprung up among the Kymric fugitives in Armorica.

The explanation of all these facts seems to be a Breton book. In all the varied stories as to the origin of the history one fact continually appears—the name of Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford; he was a student of antiquities; it is probable he may have been in Brittany, and there collected the story of Arthur's Continental exploits, for he was among the first to introduce the Kymric romances in a Norman French dress. It is strange that his name should have been selected, if there were not some truth in the story; and it would have been still more strange if he had permitted his name to be so freely used without making any remonstrance, unless the assertion was to some extent correct. We may, therefore, I think, safely conclude that Geoffrey was less a translator than original author, that the ecclesiastical and scholastic flourishes are his own, that a great part of the work was derived from Kymric sources, and that in the wars of Arthur and the concluding portions he has borrowed from Armorican traditions, or probably translated some Breton manuscript.

At this distance of time, when the facts on which opinions should be based are so very few, we cannot hope to establish anything further than a considerable degree of probability; but if the views advanced above be correct, there could have been no complete Kymric original of Geoffrey. The earliest of our MSS., one of which was translated into English in 1811 by the Rev. Peter Roberts, are, I should imagine, translations of the first Latin copy of the history of the British kings.

The proper name of Geoffrey was GRUFFYDD AB ARTHUR. He is supposed to have received his education at the Benedictine monastery near Monmouth, where tradition still points out a small apartment as his study. He received the designation Geoffrey of Monmouth from being archdeacon of that place. After the above lengthened discussion of his history it were needless to say that he was distinguished for literary attainments. The first of his compositions in point of time is said to have been a Latin translation of the Prophecies of Merlin, which he undertook at the request of Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln; yet this must be an error, for he expressly states that he was previously engaged upon his history; but though it was not the first written, it may have been the first published. It is possible that it was this which obtained for him the regard of Walter Mapes. The *Historia Britonum* came next, a work,

says Dr. Giles, "from which nearly all our great vernacular poets have drawn the materials for some of their noblest works of fiction and characters of romance." It was dedicated to Robert, Earl of Gloucester; and as he died in 1147, must have been written before that year. A third composition has also been ascribed to him, the *Vita Merlini* in Latin hexameter verse; but the same author asserts that "internal evidence plainly proves it to be the work of a different author." Geoffrey's fame therefore rests upon the British history. It is commonly asserted by English authors that he was consecrated Bishop of St. Asaph, Feb. 24, 1152; but that is an error, the detection of which is due to the author of the *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen*. The correct account is given by the old chronicler Caradoc, who speaks of him in these terms: "In the year 1152,¹ Galffrai ab Arthur, the domestic chaplain of William ab Robert (Earl of Gloucester), was made Bishop (of Llandaff), but before he entered on his office he died at his house at Llandaff, and was buried in the church there. He was a man whose equal was not to be found for learning and science and every godly quality. He was the foster son of Uchtryd, Archbishop of Llandaff, and his nephew, being his brother's son; and on account of his learning and science an archdeaconry was bestowed upon him in the church of Teilo, at Llandaff, where he was the instructor of many learned men and nobles."²

The frequent occurrence of the name of WALTER MAPES in the preceding pages may possibly have created a desire to know more of him. He was the son of Blondil de Mapes, who came with Robert Fitzhamon to Glamorgan, and obtained the lands of Gweirydd ab Seisyllt, lord of Llancarvan; but he had the generosity to marry Fflur, the only living child of Gweirydd. By her Blondil had two sons, Herbert and Walter. Herbert dying without heirs, Walter inherited after his brother, and built the village of Trewalter, with a mansion for himself. He restored most of the lands of which he became possessed to the original proprietors; and he built the church of Llancarvan as it now stands. He is said to have translated a British chronicle

¹ *Brut y Saeson* and *Brut y Tywysogion* proper place his death in 1154. See *Myv. Arch.* ii. 566.

² *Myv. Arch.* vol. ii. p. 566.

into Latin ; but the truth of the story is doubtful. Dr. Pughe also asserts that he wrote a treatise on agriculture in Welsh, which is extant in several manuscripts.¹ He is known to have written, about 1170, his *Roman des diverses Quêtes du saint Graal*, in which the chief heroes of romance, Lancelot, Ywain, Gawain, Caradoc, Galaad, Bort, and Percival, that most worthy of knights who alone was honoured with success in the search, appear. This romance was also written in prose ; a singular circumstance, for Walter Mapes wrote verse, and it was put into metre by Chrétien de Troyes. Plantagenet, to whom this work was dedicated, was so pleased with it that he requested a continuation ; and then Walter Mapes wrote *La Mort d'Arthur*, as a conclusion of the history of the Round Table. Another favourite romance is also attributed to the prolific pen of this writer, the *Lancelot du Lac*.² Mr. Leigh Hunt has prettily versified some lines composed by him.

CARADOC of Llancarvan is the chronicler most in repute. He belonged to this age,³ as we learn from the conclusion of Geoffrey's history, where he is styled "my contemporary." His chronicle commences where the other leaves off, at the abdication of Cadwaladr ; and both writers seem to have been on intimate terms. "Of this work," as Mr. Malkin remarks, "there were several copies preserved in the abbeys of Conway and Ystrad Fflur, which generally agreed in matter, but differed in their phraseology and the period of their terminations. This apparent variance may be reconciled by supposing that such copies were so many different editions written by him, and distributed in the course of his life, which terminated, according to some accounts, in the year 1156 ;⁴ but probably the time of his death is taken for granted, because he ended his collections with that year. One of his works, printed in the *Welsh Archæology*, comes down to the year 1196 ; but David Powel, who

¹ *Cambrian Biography*, p. 341.

² I am indebted for these particulars to the *Athenæum*, No. 426.

³ Caradoc, if the hermit and the historian are the same man, died in 1124. See Giraldus.

⁴ This is said in the *Myv. Arch.* ii. 389 : "Oed Crist pan fu farw Caradoc 1156. Mae er hynny hyd heddyw 457 o flwyddau." Geiriau ar ymyl Ysgrif A o Vrut Sieffrey. This copy must have been written in 1613 ; but it is singular that no notice of his death occurs in any of the Welsh chronicles. The above date, however, cannot be right ; for if the Brut be any authority, he died before Geoffrey, who speaks of him in the past tense, "he was my contemporary." Geoffrey died 1152 or 1154.

corrected, augmented, and continued Humphrey Lloyd's translation, accounts for this circumstance by informing us that these successions and acts of the British princes were afterwards augmented yearly, and compared together every third year by the bards in their progress from one abbey to the other at the time of their triennial visitation. This species of register was continued in those abbeys till the year 1280, two years before the death of the last Llewelyn. There is another copy extant which contains the whole down to this latest period, but still without distinction of Caradoc from his continuator. In David Powel's time, which was that of Queen Elizabeth, there were at least one hundred copies dispersed over Wales; and when we consider that all these agreed in everything, but in form and literal phrase, and that Humphrey Lloyd inserted what was defective and corrected what was discordant from the authorities of Matthew Paris and Nicholas Trivet, we may reasonably believe that the present translation, improved as it is from records and authors consulted by David Powel, forms a sufficiently authentic compendium of Welsh antiquities."¹

After Caradoc's chronicles the most important document pertaining to this era is the *Liber Landavensis*, or Book of Teilo. The able historical sketch prefixed to it by the learned editor renders it unnecessary for me to do more than offer a few general remarks on its contents. It gives a minute account of the lives and fortunes of the Bishops of Llandaff for nearly five hundred years, ending about 1132. As might have been anticipated, it is full of monastic legends, many of them puerile, but all instructive when rightly considered. The document is evidently authentic, as the writer narrates some singular facts, strikingly illustrative of the age, but reflecting no great credit on the honesty and disinterestedness of the order, without the least consciousness that they would be censured by less reverent readers. It portrays in graphic sentences the manners of the times, the abject superstition of the people, the complete subjugation of princes and chieftains to clerical despotism, and the extraordinary ascendancy which the Papal clergy had obtained over the minds of men. It is a book which the student of history should read; his opinion of the dignity of the human nature may perhaps be lowered by

¹ *South Wales*, vol. i. p. 194, and Owen's *Cambrian Biography*, p. 40.

observing how abject it had become; but his aspirations for human perfectibility will be encouraged by seeing that men emerged out of even that chaos; and in any case he cannot rise from its perusal without being a wiser, and mayhap a better, man. This volume has lately been published by the Welsh MSS. Society, and is graced by the beautiful typography which has earned a deserved celebrity for the Llandoverly Press.

Pertaining to the same period is the chronicle called *Brut y Saeson*, which, say the editors of the *Myvyrian Archæology*, was so termed "not because that it was peculiarly a history of the Saxons, but from its connecting with the affairs of Wales a general review of the transactions of all Britain."¹ Llwyd mentions a MS. giving an account of "the wonderful times from the reign of Vortigern to that of Llewelyn ab Gruffydd;" and another "chronicle from the beginning of the world to the year 1200."

EDEYRN DAVOD AUR, or Edeyrn the Golden-tongued, lived during the thirteenth century, and wrote a work on British prosody. This ancient Cambrian grammar was written at the injunction and desire of Llewelyn ab Gruffydd (Prince of Wales from 1254 to 1282), Rhys Vychan, lord of Dynevor and Ystrad Towy, and Morgan Vychan, lord paramount of Glamorgan. Among the contents of the MS. called "Y Kwttu Kyvarwydd" is or was an old treatise on geometry. Ivan ab y Diwlith is said² to have written a treatise on the Kymric metres. Besides these, the Welsh MSS. Society has been recommended to publish the following:

LLYFR COCH LLANELWY, or the Red Book of St. Asaph.

CHRONICLES OF WALES, in the Lambeth Library.

CHRONICLES OF WALES in the thirteenth century, compiled in the Abbey of Strata Florida; in the Record Office.

The inedited matter of the LLYFR COCH o HERGEST, in the Library of Jesus College, Oxford.

REGISTRUM PRIORATUS DE BRECKNOCK.

ANCIENT RECORDS from the time of Edward III., belonging to the Manor Court of Ruthin.

MEDDYGON MYDDFAI, or a compendium of the Medical practice of the celebrated Rhiwallon and his sons, Cadwgan, Gruffydd, and Einion, of

¹ *Myv. Arch.* vol. ii. p. 7.

² *Iolo Manuscripts*, p. 88.

Myddvai, Carmarthenshire, Physicians to Rhys Gryg, lord of Dynevor and Ystrad Towy, son of Rhys ab Gruffydd, A.D. 1230.¹

The last volume promises to be a treat; for if the whole be as full of good sense as the last sentence, quoted by Llwyd, the work of these Cambrian Esculapii embodies much shrewd observation. Besides these, there is now in the press, edited by the Rev. W. J. Rees, compiled from ancient manuscripts, *The Lives of the Welsh Saints*.²

The preceding pages will have exhibited great mental activity among the Kymry. In the poetical department the remains are numerous; but the scarcity of prose literature leaves room for doubt that in a period of so much intellectual labour there must have been other prose compositions than have come down to us. The proofs of this are by no means scanty; and it is clear from Llwyd's catalogue of Cambrian MSS. that many valuable relics have either been lost or have not yet seen the light. Through the instrumentality of the Welsh MSS. Society we trust that many of the documents known to exist may be made public.

Having now shown the existence, nature, and extent of the prose literature of Wales, our attention will next be profitably given to the influence it exerted over that of other countries. It is not here intended to treat at length of the influence of Kymric tradition, the full consideration of that being left until we come to speak of the Mabinogion, but only of the immediate influence of Geoffrey's work upon his contemporaries. It is pretty generally known that the *Brut d'Angleterre* of Maister Wace is a translation of Geoffrey's history; but it has not until recently been surmised that many English authors drew largely from Cambrian sources. Now, it is conceded that Layamon in his *Brut*, a work of great power, has drawn liberally from Geoffrey, and also from other sources. The admission has recently been made by an English author, whom it would be but fair to quote in his own words. After stating that Layamon had borrowed from Geoffrey, he goes on to say—

That Layamon was indebted for some of these legends to Welsh

¹ Published by the Welsh MSS. Society in 1851. The Grammar of Edeyrn Davod Aur was issued under the auspices of the same society in 1856.—Ed.

² This work appeared in 1853.—Ed.

sources not recorded in Geoffrey of Monmouth, or Wace, is scarcely to be questioned; and they supply an additional argument in support of the opinion that the former was not a mere inventor. Many circumstances incidentally mentioned by Layamon are to be traced to British origin—as for instance, the notice of Queen Judon's death, the mention of Taliesin and his conference with Kimbelin, the traditionary legends relative to Arthur, the allusions to several prophesies of Merlin, and the names of various personages who do not appear in the Latin or French. References are occasionally made to works extant in the time of Layamon, but which are not now to be recognised.¹

From this fact we are of course justified in concluding that the Kymric literature of this period was much more copious and valuable than our scanty remarks would have led us to anticipate. But Sir Frederick Madden is not the only English critic who has recently shown a disposition to do justice to the early literature of the Kymry, for I lately had the pleasure of reading the following paragraph in the pages of the profound and erudite *Quarterly*. I make no apology for quoting the opinions of these eminent critics; for, circulating only among the higher ranks and literary circles, they can only be rendered accessible to the general reader by quotation. In the article on “Antiquarian Club Books” the writer² states:

We cannot conclude our remarks without a few words on the obligations of our literature and that of all Western Europe to a writer whom it has been greatly the fashion to abuse—Geoffrey of Monmouth. We leave entirely out of question the truth or falsehood of his narrative. Scarcely a Welshman of the old school could now be found to vouch for Brutus's colonisation of Britain; though we dare say it is to the full as true as the settlement of Italy by Æneas, and many other things gravely recorded by Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. The merit of Geoffrey consists in having collected a body of legends highly susceptible of poetic embellishment, which, without his intervention, might have utterly perished, and interwoven them in a narrative calculated to exercise a wonderful influence on national feelings and national literature. The popularity of the work is proved by the successive adaptation of Wace, Layamon, Robert of Gloucester, Mannyng, and others, and its influence on the literature of Europe is too notorious to be dwelt upon. It became, as Mr. Ellis well observes, one of the corner-stones of romance; and there is scarcely a tale of chivalry down to the sixteenth century which has not directly or in-

¹ Sir Frederick Madden's edition of Layamon, Preface, vol. i. p. xii.

² The late Rev. Richard Garnett.

directly received from it much of its colouring. Some matter of fact people, who would have mercilessly committed the whole of Don Quixote's library to the flames, Palmerin of England included, may perhaps think this particular effect of its influence rather mischievous than beneficial. We are far from sympathising with such a feeling. Whatever might be the blemishes of this species of literature, it was suited to the taste and acquirements of the age, and tended to keep up a high and honourable tone of feeling that often manifested itself in corresponding actions. Above all, we must not forget that it is to the previous existence of this class of compositions that we are indebted for some of the noblest productions of human intellect. If it were to be conceded that Wace, Layamon, and the whole cycle of romances of the Round Table, might have been consigned to oblivion without any serious injury to the cause of literature, we may be reminded that Don Quixote certainly, and Ariosto's Orlando most probably, arose out of them. Perhaps Gorboduc and Ferrex and Porrex might not be much missed from the dramatic literature of Europe; but what should we think of the loss of Lear and Cymbeline? Let us, then, thankfully remember Geoffrey of Monmouth, to whom Shakespeare was indebted for the groundwork of those marvellous productions, and without whose *Historia Britonum* we should probably never have had them. A spark is but a small matter in itself, but it may serve to kindle a "light for all nations."¹

Leaving Geoffrey, now that justice has been done to him, to rest in peace, I shall conclude this section with a short sketch of the intellectual characteristics and habits of the Kymry, as drawn by the graphic and not unfriendly hand of Giraldus. Pictures of national manners are always interesting, and become much more so when the manners are those of a remote age portrayed by the hand of a contemporary, intimately acquainted with the people and with opportunities in abundance to form just estimates. The description is lengthy, graphic, and complete, but, on account of having already quoted so freely, I shall confine the extracts to what has reference to the intellectual condition of the Kymry at the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century. The description is to the following purport:

They were a people of acute and subtle genius. In civil causes and actions they exerted all the powers of rhetoric; and in the conduct of these their talents for insinuation, invention, and refutation were conspicuous. In rhythmical songs, and in extemporary effusions, they are said to be ex-

¹ *Quarterly Review* for March 1848, p. 230.

cellent, both in respect to invention and elegance of style; and for these purposes bards were appointed; but beyond all other rhetorical ornaments they preferred the use of alliteration, and that kind more especially which repeats the first letters or syllables of words. They made so much use of this ornament in every finished discourse that they thought nothing elegantly spoken without it.

In private company, or in seasons of public festivity, they were very facetious in their conversation, with a view of entertaining the company and displaying their own wit. And persons of lively parts, sometimes in wild and sometimes in sarcastic terms, under the cover of a double meaning, by a peculiar turn of voice, or by the transposition of words, were continually uttering humorous or satirical expressions.

The lowest of the people, as well as the chieftains, were indebted to nature for a certain boldness of speech, and an honest confidence in giving answers to great men on matters of business or in the presence of princes.¹

These facts, coupled with the literature which we have already passed in review, give us an elevated conception of the Kymric character of the time of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, and fully justify the conclusion arrived at by M. Augustin Thierry,² that *the Welsh were the most civilised and intellectual people of that age.*



¹ Warrington's Translation, *History of Wales*, pp. 166-7, vol. i.

² *History of the Norman Conquest*, Whittaker's edition, p. 159.

CHAPTER III.

SECTION I.

HISTORY OF LITERATURE FROM A.D. 1080 TO A.D. 1322.

UPON casting a cursory glance over what we have written, the reader is invited to consider two facts:—First, the number of compositions produced within the time included between the arrival of Gruffydd ab Kynan and the death of Sir Gruffydd Llwyd, as compared with preceding periods; and secondly, their marked superiority. The sixth century formed one striking era in our literary history; but from the abdication of Cadwaladr, towards the middle of the seventh century, to the recovery of his patrimony by Gruffydd ab Kynan in the year 1080, we have only a few poems to show, and those of no great merit; nor have we much reason to believe that there were many poems produced during that period. But towards the commencement of the twelfth century a host of bards make their appearance, the compositions are of a superior character, literature becomes an honourable calling, and princes enter the arena of poetic contests. Such are the facts; what are their causes?

Not the least perplexing problem which offers itself, and demands solution at the hands of the historian, is the very striking change sometimes observable in the characters of nations; and the reader of Kymric history in the eleventh century, without having examined the tendencies of the agents then at work, will be but ill prepared for the phenomena exhibited in the succeeding century. The discord of centuries had been healed, the lassitude of ages had been replaced by activity and energy, petty animosities had been quelled, rulers of

ability overawed the turbulence of their subjects, and all seemed eager to forget personal enmities to further the national good. Great occasions develop great actors; and never was the influence of commanding talent and individual magnanimity more wonderfully exemplified, or more generally beneficial, than in the destinies of Wales during the two hundred and fifty years which we here pass in review. Never had Wales been placed in more imminent peril, never had the power of England been so united and so overwhelming, never had it been directed by so much ability; but with the danger rose the capacities of the Kymry, and the successive and successful repulses of the vast armaments of England afford undeniable proofs of skill and valour. An insignificant nation, an obscure people, and a scorned race in a few years carved out for itself an honourable position among the nations of Europe. It rose above itself, and rivalled the cherished glories of ancient Greece;—alas that it should have been the transient glare of the setting sun! Laws were cheerfully obeyed, the call to arms was readily responded to, industry was promoted, and order reigned over the whole Principality. Progress in one department generally betokens improvement in others; and the same age which witnessed the military prowess of the Kymry formed what has been termed, without regard to strict propriety, the second Augustan era of their literature.

The causes of these changes may be divided into two classes—general causes affecting the civilised world generally, and special causes in the personal characters of the Kymric princes.

When Gruffydd ab Kynan returned from Ireland, the old world was beginning to awake from what Heeren pithily terms the sleep which threatened to be its last; and Europe was about to assume another aspect. Such periods are not unfrequent in human history; for we find there periods of rest and periods of activity. For some time the world will be full of vitality; then comes the night at the close of day, the hour of rest, which again in its turn gives place to the renewed toil of the morrow. Our essay opens with one of these morrows. Europe had long been asleep; there were no evidences of energy and greatness, but on all sides there lay laziness and littleness. Parvanimity had set its mark on everything. Men were idle, books were unknown, and the wars of no account;

but the morrow morn appears, and Gregory VII. announces the coming of a new era. Hildebrand infused his own energy into the great minds of Europe; and contemporary with him we find the names of Scotus, Roscelin, and Abelard standing up for the liberty of thought and speech. At the same time there was a movement on foot to establish boroughs and diffuse public political power.

In all things we find movement. The arts flourished, sciences were studied, knowledge became more diffused, and a spirit was evoked whose beneficial labours have come down to the present day, and pervade the whole of our social constitution.

When once the potent spirit of revolution is set at work, it is impossible to define the limits of its operations; it seizes hold of everything that comes within its reach, and employs all things to accomplish new ends. Our knowledge is multiplied, new facts come to light, and the vast capacities of human nature are developed to their fullest extent. The enlightened reader is aware that at this period Europe was studded with numerous nations of different origin, whose presence became more and more known as the decline of the Roman Empire became more and more apparent. At this period the Latin language was the medium of communication between the learned men of various countries; but we now perceive the languages of the common people forcing themselves into the literature of the day. "Another epoch," says Ranke, "soon proclaimed itself in the national tongues, almost everywhere rising into importance at the same period. The idiom of the church gradually gave place to them, as they slowly but steadily forced their way into the manifold departments of intellectual activity. The common ties that bound nations together began to be dissolved, and there followed a separation in a higher sense than before. Up to this time the ecclesiastical element had overpowered the nationalities; it had altered their character and position; but now that they again assumed each its own distinct place, they entered upon a new career."¹ And the necessary consequence of the protrusion of new languages was the formation of a new literature more consonant with the spirit of the age than that of the Church. The literary history of England, France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal date from this period; the Romance Provençal and the Romance Wallon,

¹ Ranke's *History of the Popes*, vol. i. p. 34.

as M. de Sismondi terms the languages of the South and North of France, originated in these centuries; and, if we except Spain, no other European nation had previous to the twelfth century anything deserving the name of literature.

The Kymry were better prepared than most other European nations for the impulse which was now being given to every species of intellectual effort. They had among them an order of bards already numerous and well disciplined, and a language which was in use in all its fulness and richness among all classes of the people; and as a necessary consequence their literature became superior, more copious, and richer than that of any contemporaneous nation. In England and on the Continent the chief literature is composed of chronicles and romances, while in Wales the fabulous literature so prized by others was in no great repute, but gave way to the public preference for the more laboured and artistic productions of the bards. But besides chronicles, romances, poems of various characters, and *Mabinogion*, they had a large collection of moral and historical triads, and were in the habit of holding periodical *Eisteddvods*, where the bards and musicians displayed their skill to admiring critics. The Kymric princes busied themselves to reform the laws, improve the popular manners, patronise literary meetings, build castles, and discipline their armies, and were in no respect, with regard to knowledge or necessary art, inferior to their neighbours. Not only were they equal to other princes in these acquirements, but they have also claims to superiority, which are forcibly stated by the Rev. Thomas Price :

But while the Kymry were as far advanced in these respects as their neighbours, they excelled them in other things—particularly in the composition of their poetry and in the cultivation of their language. For while other nations were nearly destitute of regular languages, and struggling to form new tongues under excessive difficulties, the Kymry were possessed of a copious and expressive language, which had been polished by the intelligence of many centuries, and was now the treasury of a rich bardic literature, which had taken root among them from time immemorial. Consequently when this stimulus came, instead of having to frame a new language, they had one ready formed; and that now found embodiment in the polished diction of a classic literature.¹

¹ *Hanes Cymru*, p. 536.

The age was one of general activity; and not the least interesting feature manifested among the Kymry was the frequent occurrence of feasts, fêtes, and congresses. We have already noticed the Eisteddvodau said to have been held by Cadwaladr, Asserius Menevensis, and Bleddyn ab Kynvyn.¹ These occurred prior to the time treated of here; but subsequently a considerable impetus had been given to such meetings by Rhys ab Tewdwr, who assumed the sovereignty of South Wales in 1077. On his return to Wales from Brittany, "he brought with him the system of the Round Table, which at home had become quite forgotten, and he restored it as it is with regard to minstrels and bards, as it had been at Caerlleon upon Usk, under the Emperor Arthur, in the time of the sovereignty of the race of the Kymry over the Island of Britain and its adjacent islands; and it was placed under the protection of the church of Cattwg in the Vale of Neath, in Glamorgan, which was from the time of St. Teilo possessed of the privilege, ecclesiastically confirmed, that neither war nor weapons of slaughter could be brought into the parish of Cattwg, neither by the people of the adjacent country or any other whatever, under bond and pledged hand throughout all districts of the Isle of Britain. And then, after placing the system under the protection of the Church, an honourable Eisteddvod was held by proclamation of a year and a day, to which an invitation was given, under the protection of the State, to all bards to assemble in the hall of the church, where, according to the royal institution of the Round Table, degrees were conferred on the chiefs of song, and gifts and presents made them, as in the time of the Emperor Arthur. And after being there forty days, all returned to their houses."²

The splendid Eisteddvod held in 1100 at Caerwys (North Wales), under the auspices of King Gruffydd ab Kynan, has been already described (p. 57).

Soon after, in 1107, we find it stated that "Cadwgan ab Bleddyn, Prince of South Wales, had a great feast in Cardigan Castle during the Christmas holidays, to which he invited the

¹ See the History of Eisteddvods, *Cambro-Briton*, iii. 112; also *Cyfrinach y Beirdd*, Preface, pp. 3-10, and pp. 213, 218, 221, 223, 228, 238-40 of the same work; *Hanes Cymru*, and *Iolo MSS.*

² *Iolo Manuscripts*, p. 630.

princes and chieftains of all parts of Wales, and by way of showing every respect to his guests, he invited the best bards, singers, and musicians in all Wales, and set chairs for them, and instituted contests between them, as was the practice at the feasts of King Arthur. And having given them laws and privileges, and honourable gifts, they all departed for their respective homes. And each one who had been there returned laden with honours.”¹ Not long after that, we find another Eisteddvod in South Wales; and indeed it would seem that there was more respect paid to the bards in the South than in the North, since most of these congresses were held under the auspices of the South Wallian princes. The next statement runs thus :

After recovering his lands (in 1135), Gruffydd ab Rhys had a large feast prepared in Ystrad Tywi, whither he invited all to come in peace from North Wales, Powys, South Wales, Glamorgan, and the Marches. And he prepared everything that was good in meat and drink, wise conversations, songs, and music; and welcomed all poets and musicians; and instituted various plays, illusions and appearances, and manly exercises. And to that feast there came Gruffydd ab Kynan and his sons, and many chieftains of various parts of Wales; and the feast was kept up for forty days, when all were allowed to depart, and the bards, musicians, learned men, and performers of every sort were honourably rewarded.²

This, however, is not the only admirable trait that we find mentioned of these times; for the old chronicler goes on to mention another fact, strongly illustrative of the prevalent intelligence, and creditable to both the Welsh princes, Gruffydd ab Kynan and Gruffydd ab Rhys :

After the feast, Gruffydd ab Rhys invited the wise men and scholars, and consulting them instituted rule and law on every person within his dominions; and fixed a court in every cantrev, and an inferior court in every commot. Gruffydd ab Kynan did the same thing in North Wales; and the Normans and Saxons, sorry to see this, made complaint against these princes to King Stephen, who, stating that he knew not where the blame lay, declined to interfere.

In connexion with the Roll of Rhys ab Tewdwr there is a somewhat singular story told in the *Iolo Manuscripts*; and as it is countenanced by Iorwerth Vynglwyd’s elegy on the cele-

¹ Caradoc, *Myv. Arch.* vol. ii. p. 537.

² Caradoc’s Chronicle, *Myv. Arch.* vol. ii. p. 558.

brated bard Llawdden, it probably contains some truth: "And Iestyn, the son of Gwrgan, Prince of Glamorgan, took the Roll of the Round Table with him to his new castle in Cardiff, under a claim that he was prince of the territory—namely, that of the church and parish of Cattwg, in his dominion—and that the custody of the Roll belonged to him. And because the court of Caerlleon upon Usk, which was the court of Arthur, was within his dominions, he asserted that his court was that of Arthur continued down to his time; and so he took the Roll by fraud and by force to Cardiff Castle; and he suffered for that; for Rhys made a hostile expedition against Iestyn, the son of Gwrgan, and defeated him in the battle of Cadlas. Upon which Iestyn, the son of Gwrgan, sent to Robert Fitzhamon and the Normans for assistance against Rhys, and slew him in the battle of Cynllwyn Du (the black treachery). But the foreigners having heard what Iestyn had done of violence and devastation, took from him his castle and his territory, and expelled him. After that Robert, Earl of Gloucester, the son of Henry, the son of the Red King (William Rufus), married Mabli, the daughter of Robert Fitzhamon, and received the lordship of Glamorgan in right of his wife. He gave presents to the bards in Tir Iarll; and in a hall of his there he placed the Roll of the Round Table, in the custody of the bards of the Island of Britain; and from that the two systems were united—namely, that of the White Stones and that of the Round Table—as they exist there at present; so that with the bards of the chair of Tir Iarll, more especially than any of the poets of Wales, are the principal systems preserved in their completeness to this day." ¹

Forty years afterwards we find mention of another great feast which took place in South Wales; and it is scarcely necessary to inform the reader of the preceding pages that the interval is by no means destitute of intellectual wealth. This was held in 1177, under the auspices of the Lord Rhys, the son of the Gruffydd ab Rhys ab Tewdwr already mentioned, and who died 1136. It is described as follows: ²

And the Lord Rhys made a great feast at the Castle of Cardigan, when he instituted two species of contests—one between the bards and poets,

¹ *Iolo MSS.* p. 631.

² *Caradoc's Chronicle, Myr. Arch.* ii. p. 574.

and another between the harpers, pipers, and those who played upon the *Crwth*. There were also vocal contests. And he placed two chairs for the successful competitors, whom he enriched with honourable gifts. And it appeared that in this contest the bards of North Wales got the prize for poetry, while a young man belonging to Rhys's own household was adjudged to have excelled in the powers of harmony. The others were liberally rewarded, so that no one went away with any cause of complaint. And this feast was announced a full year before it took place, in Wales, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and many other countries.

Much of the excellence of the native literature is undoubtedly due to this enlightened patronage on the part of the Cambrian princes; and this will be still more apparent when we reflect on the intimacy which subsisted between the princes and some of the abler bards. We find this frequently in the poems of Kynddelw, in his address to Howel ab Owain, and in the poem addressed to the Lord Rhys, and particularly in the poem where Meilir describes his interviews with Gruffydd ab Kynan:

Yfais gan deyrn o gyrn eurawc.

I drank in golden horns from the hands of the king.

Another portion of this poem leads to the belief that the bards were numerous at that period, and that the king was popular among them:

Gan gerddau cyhoedd oedd ardderchawc
O ysgewin barth hyd borth Efracw.

In public songs he was honoured
From Portskewitt to the gate of York.

They were, it would seem, numerous, and somewhat disorderly, for we find that Gruffydd took in hand the work of prescribing rules for their observance. He formed a code of rewards and punishments, and he divided the bards into three classes—poets, family bards, and migratory bards. He also fixed the scale of remuneration for their labours, which was as follows: three shillings and fourpence to every disciple for a poem, and six shillings and ninepence to every master of song for a poem. He also was the first to order the formation of chairs for the victors in bardic contests, who were ever afterwards honourably distinguished as chair bards. These regulations were made at the Eisteddvod held at Caerwys, A.D. 1100, for the purpose of making rules and regulations for the govern-

ment of Welsh minstrelsy. Carnhuanawc disputes the propriety of this date, yet gives no more probable one himself; but however the date may be fixed, it is pretty certain that such an Eisteddvod did take place, and that the bards and musicians were thenceforth placed under more efficient control.

At the period we treat of Wales possessed a series of great men in Gruffydd ab Kynan, Owain Gwynedd, Owain Kyveiliog, Gruffydd ab Rhys, Rhys ab Gruffydd, Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, and Llewelyn ab Gruffydd. Indeed, the world at this time seems to have been unusually favoured with distinguished characters; for the Henries and Edward I., Kings of England, were also men of much more than average ability. Of the Cambrian princes Llewelyn ab Iorwerth deserves especial mention, as the stability of the country during his reign (from 1194 to 1240) was essentially conducive to its literary eminence. The reins of government were no longer in the hands of incapable rulers; turbulent vassals learned their true position with respect to a sovereign of commanding talent, and the power of Llewelyn was acknowledged even by the refractory Princes of Powys. When rebellion reigned throughout the land, and when the throne was the prize of daring, the social ties which bind communities together were loosened; men had not the consciousness of security essential to literary exertions; and the moral influence of superior minds was unfelt, because it did not exist. But now that a succession of great men had restored stability and order, strengthened the regal authority, and established a prestige of power, the elements of convulsion subsided, anarchy ceased, and men conscious of personal security could listen with pleasure to the songs of the bards, who flourished, increased, and improved under the genial influence of regal dominion and public intelligence.

Llewelyn ab Gruffydd, his successor, and the last Prince of Wales, though apparently less energetic, was a man of great intelligence and ability. He ascended the throne in 1246, and is said to have composed some Englynon himself; his correspondence with the Archbishop of Canterbury and Edward I. must give all who read it an exalted conception of his mental capacity. The bards who flourished during his reign are not numerous, though we do not in him find any lack of administrative talent. The standing army of Llewelyn ab

Iorwerth, described by Kynddelw, was an indication of power and stability; and the following statement of the character of the Cambrian army, by Matthew of Westminster, is no less illustrative of ability in Llewelyn ab Gruffydd:

The Welsh army consisted of twelve thousand armed cavalry, and a far greater number of infantry, all confederated, and having sworn upon the Gospel to fight courageously and faithfully, even unto death, for the liberty of their country and the preservation of their own laws, and that an honourable death was preferable to an unhappy and dishonourable existence.

This chivalrous feeling prevailed among the people, and has found an embodiment in both their lighter and more elaborate literature.

In addition to the special influence of the Kymric rulers, there came in at this period the religious sentiment, which precipitated so many thousands of men into the Crusades. This sentiment is not very apparent in the more classic poetry of Wales, though we find from Elidir Sais that it had taken deep root in the public mind:

Respecting the grave of Christ, there is sorrow;
The infidels have taken possession of it,
And ravage the land—
The Saracen oppressors under Saladin;

and it is inconsistent with the knowledge of the influence of these wars upon the literature of other countries to suppose that the poetry of the Kymry was not affected thereby.

The death of Llewelyn damped the ardour of the Cambrian poets, who had no longer the exalted theme of national independence to give them inspiration. Two poets only have left elegies on his death; and the bards are equally silent upon other topics, so that the period which will be embraced by this chapter is somewhat barren of literary fruit. This fact has been explained in two ways—First, by supposing that many of the bards were hanged by order of Edward I.; and second, by the supposition that many Welsh MSS. were sent to the Tower of London for the use of the Cambrian princes there imprisoned, and there destroyed by one Ysgolan. We shall briefly examine both of these statements.

I. The belief that Edward massacred the bards, on account of the great influence they possessed among their countrymen,

is founded on a statement by Sir John Wynn, of Gwedir, which runs as follows :

This is the most ancient song (i.e. one of Rhys Goch of Eryri's, a bard who flourished A.D. 1400) I can find extant of my ancestors since Edward I., who caused all our bards to be hanged by martial law, as stirrers of the people to sedition, whose example, being followed by the governors of Wales until Henry IV.'s time, was the utter destruction of that sort of men ; and sithence that kind of people were at some further liberty to sing, and to keep pedigrees, as in ancient times they were wont ; since which time we have light of antiquity by their songs and writings.¹

This paragraph is full of mistakes. The poem of Rhys Goch is stated to be the most ancient after the time of Llewelyn ; and yet I shall presently introduce the reader to several of the following : Gruffydd ab yr Ynad Coch, Bleddyn Vardd, Madawg Dwygraig, Casnodyn, Hywel ab Einion Lygliw, Davydd ab Gwilym, Iolo Goch, Gruffydd Llwyd, Gruffydd Gryg, and particularly Gwilym Ddu ; this order of men could not therefore have been destroyed. The statement that Edward caused all the bards to be hanged does not appear to be supported by a single contemporary historian ; and it is probable that the worthy baronet was led to form this conclusion from knowing that Edward had issued an edict against the bards. Aware of this fact, and not having met with many poems belonging to that period, he ranged the two facts as cause and effect, or rather as the major and minor premisses of a syllogism, and *inferred* that all the bards had been hanged. The facts that all the poets were not hanged, that the poems are not so scarce as he fancied, and that the law issued by Edward ordains no such punishment, go very far to invalidate this conclusion. In the introduction to the second chapter I have enumerated the various laws passed by Edward I., Henry IV., Henry VIII., and Elizabeth, all of which were passed not to injure the orderly bards, but to protect them from the excesses of the wandering vagabonds who plundered the people by their demands for "Cymmortha." All these edicts are discriminative ; the *bardd teulu* and the *prydydd*, the men from whom we have received all our specimens of orthodox bardism, are not cen-

¹ Barrington's edition of Sir John Wynn's *History of the Gwedir Family*, p. 386.

sured at all, and the whole weight falls upon the idle and wandering portion. The laws were indulgent even to these, as witness Tegid's edition of Lewis Glyn Cothi. Mr. Price has an acute discussion of this matter¹ in his history, and concludes that if *any* were hanged, they must have been the "*Clerwyr*." I am not convinced that any were executed; on the contrary, as the sole authority bases his conclusion upon a premiss known to be false, we may safely conclude that there were none.

There are other misstatements in this paragraph. The government of Edward was not as oppressive as is assumed; and instead of being "followed in cruelty by the governors of Wales," those very governors were objects of regard. Oppressions there probably were, but Edward II. and Edward III. were not disliked by the Kymric chieftains; and in the interval of eighty years between Sir Gruffydd Llwyd and Owain Glyndwr we find no popular revolts among them. We all know that Davydd ab Gwilym wandered through the country whenever it pleased him, from North to South; neither his poems nor those of any bard after Gwilym Ddu contain any complaints, and the bards whom he names as having met and contended against could have had no dread of this law. Besides, the proclamation itself soon got to be a dead letter; the surviving bards make no allusion to it; and the fact that on Owain Glyndwr's revolting Henry IV. issued two new edicts² against the bards proves that Edward's proclamation had long been forgotten. I cannot therefore trust either the logic or the history of the patriotic baronet as regards this statement, which Carte has repeated, upon which Warrington has moralised, and which has inspired one of Gray's finest odes. The language of Gwilym Ddu ought to set this question at rest for ever; for in a poem written during the time of the alleged massacre he has this line:

Are not the bards *prohibited* their usual entertainments?

The fact of prohibition we are prepared to anticipate; but Gwilym Ddu has not a word about executions.

II. The statement respecting Ysgolan and the MSS. is thus condensed in Warrington:



¹ *Hanes Cymru*, pp. 753-4.

² Printed in Wotton's *Leges Wallicæ*.

^aThe most eminent of the Welsh nobility were confined in different castles of England, where they remained some years, during the wars of Edward in Scotland, that prince no doubt regarding their confinement as the only sure pledge of their fidelity.^b The greater number of these chieftains were imprisoned in the Tower of London.^c To soothe their minds during their solitary confinement, banished from their country and their friends, the Welsh chieftains solicited the favour that their manuscripts might be sent to them out of Wales.^d They were indulged in this reasonable request, and as it is natural to conclude that they made a free use of this indulgence, in process of time the Tower of London became the principal repository of Welsh literature.^e This valuable collection is said to have been committed to the flames by one Scolan, a person who is only known to the world by having perpetrated so infamous an action, and who might have been instigated to do it by the same motive which impelled Herostratus to set on fire the Temple of Diana.¹

I have marked the sentences contained in this extract by the letters *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, and *e*; and the reader will perhaps be surprised to learn that there is not the slightest historical authority for any one of them, except the first.

Mr. Price states that the story has been impugned as incredible, on account of its having no historical foundation, but adds his belief that it contains some truth with much exaggeration.²

The story as given by Warrington is quoted from Jones's *Relics*, who borrowed it from a statement made by William Salesbury that the belief was current in his day³ (A.D. 1560); and the whole are based upon the following lines, written by Guto'r Glyn, A.D. 1450:

Llyfrau Cymru a'u llofrudd
 I'r Tŵr Gwyn aethant ar gudd;
 Ysgeler oedd i Ysgolan
 Fwrw'r twr llyfrau i'r tân.

Now what do we learn from this? And first of all, who was Ysgolan? In the reign of Edward I. there is no account of any such person; but there is such a person mentioned in the early literature of Wales, and that in such a connexion as will explain these lines.

Instead of being, as is asserted, unknown, there was to the

¹ Warrington's *History of Wales*, vol. ii. p. 341.

² *Hanes Cymru*, p. 756.

³ *Dissertatio de Bardis*, p. 60.

Kymry of the middle ages no person better known than Ysgolan. He is frequently mentioned by the bards; in the last of the Verses of the Months the author quotes one of the aphorisms of Ys, or St., Colan; and among the poems attributed to Merddin is a dialogue said to have taken place between him and this personage. To have conversed with that diviner, Ys Colan must have lived in the sixth century; and, upon looking over the distinguished characters of that age, we find no difficulty in recognising the object of our search in the celebrated Irish priest St. Columba. He was one of the most zealous of the Christian missionaries, and greatly exerted himself to dispel paganism and Druidism from the islands, and substitute in their place the Gospel of Jesus. It is possible that Merddin and himself might have met; but the following dialogue, which is of the utmost importance to the elucidation of this tale of incendiarism, cannot be anything like so old. Merddin speaks: ¹

Black is thy horse, and black thy cap,
 Black thy head, and black thyself;
 Black-headed man, art thou Ysgolan?

And Ysgolan answers: ²

I am Ysgolan the scholar;
 Light is my Scottish knowledge;
 My grief is incurable for making the ruler take offence at thee.

For having burnt a church, hindered school instruction,
 And caused a book to be drowned,
 I feel my penance to be heavy.

¹ Du dy farch, du dy gappan,
 Du dy benn, du dy hunan,
 Iad du, ai ti Yscolan?

² Mi Yscolan Ysgolheic
 Ysgafn ei bwyll ysgodie
 Gwae ai bawt a gawt gwledic.

O losci Eglwys a lludd buch yscol
 A llyfr rod i foddi
 Fy mhenyd ys trwm genni.

Creator of all creatures,
 And greatest of all supporters,
 Forgive me my fault.

A full year I have been
 At Bangor on the pole of a weir;
 Consider thou my sufferings from sea-worms.

If I had known as well as I now do
 How clearly the wind blows upon the sprigs of the waving wood,
 I should not have done what I did.

Here the Christian priest expresses his regret that he had burnt a church and drowned a book; and as in the last verse he says that, had he known of certain proofs of Druidic excellence, he would not have done so, we can easily account for the fact that the bards had a tradition that this missionary had destroyed a heap of British or Druidic books.¹ There was also a belief that Merddin was persecuted by Rhydderch Hael at the instance of Ysgolan; it is to this that the second verse alludes; and I think it will be found that this dialogue will throw light upon the reported burning of the books in the Tower.

We have here all that is essential to understand the origin of the story. This dialogue, which is evidently older than the time of Edward, shows the existence at an early date of the tradition that St. Columba had, in his zeal for the propagation of Christianity, destroyed some *Druidic books*. It had grown considerably ere it reached Guto'r Glyn's time, and been changed in its character; or, what is not improbable, Guto himself sought to gloss over the enmity which it indicated between the bardic and ecclesiastic character by connecting

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Creadir y Creadureu  
 Porthidon mwyaf  
 Maddeu di imi fy ngheu.  
 Blwyddyn llawn ym rhyddoded  
 Ym Mangor ar bawl cored  
 Edrych di poen imi gan morbryfed.

Bei ysgwypwn ar y wnn  
 Mor amluc gwynt y flaen brig gwydd ffalwn  
 Ar y wnaethum nis gwnawn.

<sup>1</sup> Davies's *Mythology of the Druids*, p. 472.

with it the name and story of the *Tŵr Gwyn* (the White Tower). In its original form the tradition of the bards evidently sought to enlist in its behalf a feeling inimical to monachism; and it is therefore reasonable to assume that, to keep out of sight the appearance of persecution on the part of the Church, some ecclesiastic thought proper to fix a different time, motive, and place for the deed. Guto, who was a monk's domestic bard, was not an unlikely person to do this; but whoever did it, the fact is certain that the statement, as insinuated by this poet, differs essentially from the original tradition. The old tradition was superseded, and is no more heard of. By the time it reached William Salesbury the tradition had grown again; and it is amusing to see the process of still further development under the hands of Warrington. In sentences *a* and *b* he confines himself to what had been previously said; but in *c* he assumes the *probability* of the collection of many MSS. in the Tower; and in *d* the hypothetical library—that which “it was natural to conclude” had been formed—loses all uncertainty, and becomes an ascertained fact; it becomes “This valuable collection, &c.”

It is also worthy of remark that there is a striking difference between the tradition, or rather assertion, in Guto's poem and the form afterwards assumed by the story. In A.D. 1450 the tale, as commonly understood, was—

The books of Cambria and their destroyer  
To the White Tower went concealed;  
It was cruel in Ysgolan  
To throw the heap of books into the fire.

But in 1567 we find William Salesbury stating that the books were taken to the Tower at the request of the Cambrian princes and with the consent of Edward.<sup>1</sup> Guto's story is artfully constructed. It states a fact, and then weaves with it a tradition. He does *not*, as has been generally supposed, charge Ysgolan with destroying the books taken to the Tower, for here *two* facts are distinctly stated; but he *insinuates* it. He well knew it would never do to assert that Ysgolan, who lived in the sixth century, had destroyed books in the thirteenth; but he skilfully placed the name of Ysgolan and the fact of books taken

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Davies in his Epistle published in 1567 has the same statement.

to the Tower together, and implied rather than stated that they were connected. Another proof of skill is shown in the idea of *concealment* here introduced; and in this his story differs essentially from that of his copyists. They never understood the whole of this passage; their versions are sad blunders, and impute no motive for the deed; but if they had studied Guto's lines more closely, they would have seen that by stating that the books were stealthily introduced into the Tower by the princes he makes *the discovery* of this concealed transaction *the motive* for the destruction of the books.

There is another and still more probable explanation; and if it were satisfactorily ascertained how the books went to the Tower, this would admit of no doubt. Sir John Wynn states that the Kymric documents were taken, probably by Edward I., from the Exchequer at Carnarvon to the Tower; but he does not say a word about the story of the Cambrian princes, or seem to be aware of a belief that any of the MSS. had been destroyed. Assuming, therefore, that Edward took with him some documents that he found at Carnarvon, the two first lines are intelligible:

The books of Cambria, and their destroyer,  
To the White Tower went concealed.

These show, however, very clearly that, in the opinion of the bard, the destroyer of the books was the person who took them—Edward himself—and therefore we must not interpret the two last lines too literally. The bard has told his story in the two first; the books had been taken away, and either the bard feared that Edward had destroyed them, or he chose, with more of patriotism than of integrity, to blacken the character of the monarch in the eyes of his countrymen by saying so. When afterwards, in moralising on the supposed act, he mentions the name of Ysgolan, he does not mean that the books were actually burnt by a man named Ysgolan, but that the deed was Ysgolan-like. This metaphorical personation is very frequent in the writings of the bards; when they wished to compare one man to some other, they called him by the other's name, the comparison being understood, though not expressed; and therefore we should read the lines:

It was cruel, Ys Colan-like,  
To throw the heap of books into the fire.

It must now be evident that there is no ground for connecting the name of Ysgolan with any books taken from Wales to the White Tower; the burden, unless it should appear that Edward has been unjustly execrated, must therefore fall upon the shoulders of the English monarch; but, before we proceed further, it would be well to ascertain whether these books be not still in existence.

Upon this subject we have the following information in the *History of the Gwedir Family*:

From the reign of Edward the First to Henry the Fourth, there is therefore no certainty, or very little, of things done, other than what is to be found in the Princes records, which now by tossing the same from the Exchequer at Carnarvon to the Tower, and to the offices in the Exchequer at London, as also by ill keeping and ordering of the late dayes, are become a chaos and confusion from a total neglect of method and order, as would be needful, for him who would be ascertained of the truth of things done from time to time. I have to my chardge done what I could, but for my travell have reaped little or nothing, as you see.<sup>1</sup>

From this interesting extract we learn that there were some Cambrian manuscripts taken to the Tower and to the Exchequer office; and we learn further that in the time of Sir John Wynn, A.D. 1626, one hundred and seventy years after Guto'r Glyn insinuated that they were destroyed, these records were in existence in the Tower, and some of them were, as he states, *copied for him* by J. Broughton, Esq., then Justice of North Wales. About the same time, or probably a little later, Vaughan of Hengwrt, who died in 1666, also copied some of these Tower MSS.; and Mr. Yorke, who relates this fact, expresses his disbelief of their reported destruction.<sup>2</sup> Edward I. has also been charged with having destroyed the ancient records and writings of Scotland, after his conquest of that kingdom. Sir David Dalrymple has ably refuted the latter accusation; and I think that this examination ought for ever to set aside the other: let St. Colan henceforth rest in peace.

It must now be apparent that the "unknown Scolan" is the well-known St. Columba; that the books destroyed, or

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Wynn's *History of the Gwedir Family*, in the Hon. Daines Barrington's *Miscellanies*, p. 387.

<sup>2</sup> Yorke's *Royal Tribes of Wales*, p. 127.

reported to have been destroyed by him, were originally understood to be Druidic; that the tradition respecting him is older than the time of Edward I.; that Guto'r Glyn has taken a poetic license with the story; that the legend, though not apprehended in the light Guto intended it to have been, has been subsequently modified, altered, and enlarged; and that though Kymric MSS. might, under the circumstances stated, have been taken to the Tower, we have no evidence to sustain the belief that any were there destroyed, the evidence being the other way.

In William Salesbury's letter there is an assertion of other ravages made among Cambrian MSS. It is to the following purport: <sup>1</sup>

And that in the common answer to the Welshe Bardes (for so they call their country poets) when a man shall object or cast in their teeth the foolysh uncertainty and the phantasticall vanities of their prophecies (which they call Bruts) or the doubtful race and kinde of their uncanonised Saynctes; whom that notwithstanding they both invoke and worship wyth the most hyghe honoure and lowliest reverence. Adding and allegyng in excuse thereof, that the reliques and residue of the books and monuments, as well as the Saynctes lyves, as of their Brutysh prophecies and other sciences, (which perished not in the Tower, for there, they say, certain were burned,) at the commotion of OWAIN GLYNDWR, were in like manner destroyed, and utterly devastat, or at the least wyse that there escaped not one, that was not uncurablye maymed, and irrecuperably torn and mangled.

Mr. Edward Llwyd had collected together one hundred and eighty volumes of MSS., and at his death bequeathed them to Sir John Seabright. They were afterwards transferred to the Havod library, but I have no means of knowing how far they were affected by the great fire, by which that fine library was partially destroyed. The Rev. Moses Williams's collection came into the hands of the Earl of Macclesfield, and still remains in that family. The MSS. collected by Mr. Lewis Morris, consisting of eighty volumes, are now deposited in the library of the Welsh School, London. Mr. Evan Evans's MSS. subsequently became the property of Paul Panton, Esq., of Anglesey; and the Rev. Richard Davies, of Bangor, was said to own many valuable documents. These facts are taken from

<sup>1</sup> Evans's *Dissertatio de Bardis*, p. 60.

the preface to the first volume of the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, written by the late Iolo Morganwg, who furnishes the reader with the following list of places where valuable MSS. are deposited :

NORTH WALES.—The collection of

Sir W. W. Wynn, at Wynnstay; Sir Thomas Mostyn, at Gloddaith; G. H. Vaughan, Esq., Hengwrt; Paul Panton, Esq., Plas Gwyn; — Leo, Esq., at Llanerch; Griffith Roberts, M.D., at Dolgellau; Mr. Rice Jones, at Blaenau, near Dolgellau; Rev. Richard Davies, Bangor; Davydd Thomas, Y Bardd; Thomas Edwards, Y Bardd.

SOUTH WALES.—The collection of

Thomas Johnes, Esq., at Havod; Herbert Hurst, Esq., Ceubalva, near Llandaff; David Thomas, Esq., at Trev Groes, Cowbridge; — Turberville, Esq., Llanharan; Mrs. Bevan, Tre'r Bryn, Cowbridge; Rev. Josiah Rees, Gelli Gron; Henry Williams, Esq., Crickhowel; Mr. Edward Williams, Flimston, afterwards in the possession of the late Ab Iolo, and now with his widow.

OXFORD.—The collection of

Jesus College; the Rev. Mr. Price, Bodleian Library; the Earl of Macclesfield, in Oxfordshire.

LONDON.—The collection of

The British Museum; the Welsh School; the late Mr. Owen Jones; the late Mr. Edward Jones.

The above list was published in 1801, since which period many of the MSS. have been lost by fire or otherwise, particularly a large portion of the Wynnstay collection, which had been sent to London to be bound. The state of the North Wales MSS. has since been more accurately ascertained from catalogues prepared by Miss Angharad Llwyd, and Aneurin Owen, Esq., which were published in 1828 and 1843, in the *Cymmrodorion Transactions*, Parts III. and IV. Some of the collections consist of only a few volumes, whilst others comprise several hundreds. They were, when the catalogues were made, preserved at the following places :

Actyn Bach, Bangor Iscoed, Bodrhyddan, Bodysgallen, Caerwys, Ceri, Chester, Chirk Castle, Coed Coch, Coed Llai, Denbigh, Downing, Galltfaenan, Glan y Wern, Gloddaith, Gwasanau, Gwerclas, Halston, Hengwrt, Llanasa, Llanerch, Llanrhaiadr ym Mochnant, Llansilin, Mostyn, Nant-

clwyd, Pale, Pant Avon, Penbedw, Pengwern, Ruthyn, Wrexham, and Wynnstay.

It is much to be regretted that similar catalogues have not been made of the MSS. in South Wales, as there are many valuable documents scattered throughout the country, and suffered to remain in oblivion and obscurity, not being preserved in any large collection. Those once belonging to the author of the *Celtic Researches* are, however, preserved at Casgob, Radnorshire; others are known to exist at Aberdare, Crickhowel, Cowbridge, Coedriglan, Llandovery, Llanharan, Stackpole Court, Merthyr Tydvil, and some other places in Glamorgan-shire, the possessors of which would do well to send catalogues of their contents to the Secretary of the Welsh MSS. Society, at Abergavenny. The late Iolo Morganwg's large collection was bequeathed by the will of his son, the late Ab Iolo, to be sold to the British Museum, but the managers having declined the purchase, it remains with his widow at Merthyr Tydvil; and, unless some measures are adopted towards its rescue and preservation, it is not improbable that the public may have ere long to lament its dispersion, if not its destruction. Such a collection ought most certainly to be preserved in some public repository, as was wisely done to the Myvyrian collection of the late Mr. Owen Jones, which has been transferred by the Cymmrodoriön Society to the British Museum. Sir Thomas Philipps, Bart., of Middle Hill, deserves honourable mention as a collector and preserver of ancient Kymric MSS., and has in his possession many of those once belonging to the late Mr. Edward Jones, of London.

From this examination we learn that neither of the suggestions already offered will account for the scarcity of poetry during the reign of the last Llewelyn; we have therefore no other alternative than to conclude that the less energetic character of our last prince was not so favourable to its development; and that his age did not, in reality, produce a much greater amount of written literature than we now possess. After his death matters became worse; the fountain of inspiration was stopped on the cessation of their national existence, and the bards could frequently find no loftier topics than the praise of petty chieftains.

But I cannot help thinking that the poems which have come down to us form but an imperfect reflection of the intel-



lectual activity of this period. Everywhere we find mention of "Cerddorion," "Cerddau cyhoedd," and "Cerdd Davawd;" but of these songs—a species of literature, which must have been, from its nature, more intensely national than the bardic remains—we have no remnants. The Kymry carried the art of singing to perfection, as appears from Giraldus:

They do not sing in unison like the inhabitants of other countries, but in different parts; so that in a company of singers which one frequently meets with in Wales as many different parts are heard as there are performers, who at length unite with organic melody in one consonance and the soft sweetness of B. In the northern parts of Britain beyond the Humber, and on the borders of York, the inhabitants use in singing the same kind of symphonious harmony, but with less variety, singing only in two parts, one murmuring in the base, the other warbling in the treble or acute. Neither of the two nations has acquired this peculiar property by art, but by long habit, which has rendered it familiar and natural; and the practice is now so firmly rooted in them that it is unusual to hear a simple and single melody well sung. Their children from their infancy sing in the same manner.

Now it is evident that these troops of singers "whom one frequently meets with in Wales"—the "clerwyr" of tradition, and "rymours, minstrels, and vagabondes" of the proclamations—must have had words set to music; and it is equally evident that these songs, which must then have existed in numbers, are not the poems which have come down to us. They were a distinct, and must have been a more popular, literature than the more finished productions of the bards. How, then, comes it that they are not preserved? Methinks the answer will be found in the cost of parchment, the scarcity of men able to write, and the cost of copying—circumstances which we know to have existed, which restricted the historians to one line for the events of every year, and which may therefore be reasonably supposed to have prevented the perpetuation of a literature which was most probably looked upon as evanescent, and of little permanent value. The fact I allude to is mentioned by M. de Sismondi.

The price of parchment compelled our ancestors to observe a singular economy of words; and in the archives of the Tower of London we see, in the *Rolls of Fines*, that each contract for sale of lands is always comprised in a single line; and from the eighth to the tenth century all annals of the Franks, written in the convents, followed the same rule;

whatever the number or importance of events, the same annalist was bound not to exceed the line for each year. It is easy to be conceived that men so chary of their parchment could find little room for poetry.<sup>1</sup>

This was, I apprehend, equally true in the twelfth century, when parchment, if not so scarce, was yet so much so as to be used only for such purposes as were deemed greatly important. Popular songs were seldom looked upon in that light; and wanting a knowledge of the art of printing and of paper-making, most of the light productions of Wales have been lost for ever; but the candid reader will see in the fact of their non-existence no very cogent proof that none such were ever known. I am quite convinced that there were many among a people so fond of songs as the Kymry are and have ever been.

The only compositions of this character which have come under my notice are two songs said to have been written by Rhys Goch, of Tir Iarll, Glamorganshire, and are published in the *Iolo Manuscripts*. They are peculiar compositions, and are here translated as nearly as possible in the metre and structure of the originals:<sup>2</sup>

SONG TO THE SUMMER.

1.

Summer I sing and its sway o'er the poet,  
Sing to its beauty where best we may view it;  
View the sweet blossoms where love's feet would wander,  
Down in the woodlands of green growth so tender;  
Tender's the sight where its verdure extendeth  
To every wide branch that over it bendeth;  
Bendeth for loved ones to form in their bowers,  
And hide with wild elves from the sun-gleams and showers.

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Literature of the South of Europe*, vol. i. p. 37.

1.

<sup>2</sup> Canaf yd haf wyd hoywfeirdd Bennaeth  
Canhewydd llwyn drain gain ganiadaeth,  
Caniadau adar gwâr gwydd irion  
Cynnadl cerddoriaeth cain dderw coedfron,  
Coedfron blagurlawn dawn dadeni  
Caeadfrig addien gwyrdd llen llwyni  
Llwyni llawn gwial gwelir beunydd  
Llennyrech lle i dygyrch Degau elfydd.

Strike the brook-note-strings of nine hill-brows sheeny ;  
Til de rum, tal de rum, now sings Tom Teeny.

## 2.

Bowers that the elves, the more love the more laden,  
And love with their gambols at moonlight to gladden ;  
Glad is the bard when 'tis hardest to reckon  
Beauties that aye for his frenzied glance beckon,  
Beckon from hillock and green mead so seemly,  
All hailing the season that reigneth supremely ;  
Supreme in its richness, its love, and its ardour,  
And of each disciple of song the rewarder.  
Strike the brook-note-strings of nine hill-brows sheeny ;  
Til de rum, tal de rum, now sings Tom Teeny.

## 3.

Come all the charms for which poesy sigheth,  
Out in the green walk these nature supplieth ;  
Supplieth from branches the kindly heat quickens,  
The hazels on which the full-nut-cluster thickens ;  
Thick is the foliage which song-birds make vocal,  
And warm is the wish which there would be local ;  
Local as man's, and free from commotion,  
The green church where feathered tribes practise devotion.



Taro tant alaw nant ael y naw twyni,  
Til dy rwm tal dy rwm canu twm teini.

## 2.

Elfyddem geimiad ceidwad coedydd,  
Elfyw dail meillion llon llawenydd.  
Llawen Bardd awen ewybr enau,  
Llywy maes arlwy ar lawr bryniau,  
Bryn a phant tyfant tewfawr waneg  
Brenin hin hoenus hynaws adeg,  
Adeg serchogion dynion dawngar,  
Ydwyd haf irlas ar lwyn adar.  
Taro tant alaw nant ael y naw twyni,  
Til dy rwm tal dy rwm canu Twm Teini.

## 3.

Adar bydafau heidiau hedant,  
A daw cain gogau dolau deilbant,  
Dail bawrlwyth garddlwyth amgyleh gwyrddlwybr.  
Deiliad gwlad gaead gywen loyw-wybr,  
Gloywybr mandes cynnes ceiniad anterth,  
Glas barlas berwlith blith brawd glynberth,  
Glyn, bryn, brwyn llwyn llawn llewyeh gwenhaul,

Strike the brook-note-strings of nine hill-brows sheeny ;  
Til de rum, tal de rum, now sings Tom Teeny.<sup>1</sup>

There are eight verses in the original song ; but these will be sufficient to indicate its character, as the remainder afford no peculiarities not exhibited here. Many of the verses are, however, exceedingly beautiful ; the description of " the birch tree, with its green-blue hair," is very fine ; and where the bard says :

Beautiful are thy notes, thou fair proud nightingale ;  
Come, *the woods are pining at thy long delay,*

he needs no praise of mine. The chorus is both original and unique ; and it will be observed that in the translation, which in that respect is a close copy of the Kymric original, each couplet begins with the last word of the preceding. This artistic structure of the verses renders translation difficult ; and in the next song it becomes more so, for the verses are triplets, the first word of each being the last of the chorus, and the last word of each choral strain corresponding to the triple rhyme of the antecedent verse. It is entitled—

A SONG TO HER FOR WHOM I AM DYING.<sup>2</sup>

Flora's hues at spring's renewal,  
Maid in dalliance never cruel,  
Brightness hers that blurs the jewel ;  
Alas the jewels  
Alas the jewels !

Glan bryd yn diffryd dyffryn araul.  
Taro tant alaw nant ael y naw twyni  
Til dy rwm tal dy rwm canu Twm Teini.

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted for the translation of this and the next song to my friend Mr. John Thomas (Ieuan Ddu), the author of a work well known and highly appreciated, the *Cambrian Minstrel*, which is a collection of national airs, with spirited and appropriate songs in English and Welsh. The above versions are not strictly literal, but they well reflect the spirit of the originals.

<sup>2</sup> Deuliw blodau meinion aelau  
Mwyn ei champau wrth gydchwarau  
Serw yng ngolau dan aur dllysau.  
Gwae fi tlysau  
Gwae fi tlysau.

Jewels she'd have despite expenses,  
 Where saw the flocks no village fences,  
 Her charms well-nigh have stolen my senses ;

Alas my senses,

Alas my senses !

Of sense bereft in greenwood meeting,  
 And, oh ! my life she makes more fleeting,  
 My heart quite full is of her greeting ;

Alas the greeting,

Alas the greeting !

Greeting Gwenddydd where I left her  
 In lays still milder, sweeter, softer,  
 And repulsing the first day after ;

Alas day after,

Alas day after !

After seek, but as I knew it,  
 See her not, and dying rue it,  
 Shall I yet be summer's poet ?

Alas the poet,

Alas the poet !

Poet now I'll be of satire,  
 I who lov'd would be a hater,  
 But of love I'm still narrator ;



Tlysau oedd rhaid im dyn gannaidd  
 Pentre nis caid wrth droi'r defaid,  
 A gwenn ni phaid a dwyn fenaidd,  
 Gwae fi fenaidd  
 Gwae fi fenaidd.

Fenaidd yw'r ferch ar gwr llannerch  
 Ac am wenferch marw o draserch  
 A mi'n llawn serch yn ei hannerch  
 Gwae fi annerch  
 Gwae fi annerch.

Annerch Wenddydd gan ei phrydydd  
 Annerch beunydd ar don newydd  
 A mwy ni bydd lle ddaf trennydd  
 Gwae fi trennydd  
 Gwae fi trennydd.

Trennydd ydd af gwenddydd ni chaf  
 Gwae fi'dd wy'n glaf a marw fyddaf  
 Ai chlod liw'r haf mwy ni chanaf,  
 Gwae fi canaf  
 Gwae fi canaf.

Canaf ogan im Bun eirian  
 O draws amean lle bum druan  
 Mwyn fy nghwynfan wrth ymddiddan,

Alas narrator,  
Alas narrator !

And thus the poet proceeds through as many more verses, all of which, a musical friend informs me, may be sung to the Kymric air of "Yr hen wr o'r coed."

The vale of Glamorgan has long been celebrated for song-writers, and the songs of William Hopkin, David Llewelyn, and James Turberville are frequently sung about the country, being orally transmitted from one to another; but as yet they have never been collected. In our own days the popular songs are treated with the same neglect; a few have been saved from oblivion by the late Mr. J. Howell, of Llandoverly; by Miss Williams, of Aberpergwm; Mr. J. Davies (Brychan); and Mrs. Llewelyn, of Llangynwyd; but if these last now give over their most laudable exertions, many songs at present sung by the young men and maidens of Morganwg will be lost for ever. We derive from these facts cogent arguments in favour of the opinion above advanced; for if such gems as Yr Aderyn Pur, the Maid of Cevn Ydva, the Maid of Sker, and other songs of recent origin have only found a place in our written literature through the industry and good taste of the ladies and gentlemen here named, we may safely conclude that many have been lost; as it is much more probable that numbers of popular songs were allowed to be forgotten, when the public taste was less refined and more pedantic, and when facilities for publication existed to a much smaller extent, than that the Kymry should have ceased to be true to their national character.

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## SECTION II.

WELSH POETRY FROM A.D. 1240 TO A.D. 1284.

WE here take up the history of our bardic literature from the date at which we left off in the preceding chapter. At the death of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth the sovereignty was given to

~~~~~  
Gwae fi 'mddiddan,
Gwae fi 'mddiddan.

Iolo. MSS. p. 250.

David, his second son, by his second wife, Joan, the daughter of King John. David ingratiated himself in the favour of the nobles, and caused his elder brother Gruffydd to be imprisoned. We have seen a similar fact occurring in the previous reign. The rightful heir of Owain Gwynedd was his eldest son, Iorwerth; but having a personal defect, and wanting the warlike qualities indispensable to a prince of that age, he was superseded by a younger brother. In the present case we see the father deliberately setting aside his eldest son, on account probably of his unruly temper, and preferring the second, who promised to show more prudence; but though the Kymry were reluctant to accept princes who wanted the capacity to rule, and the personal qualities which kings should have, the preference was uniformly given to such of the lineal heirs as had the vigour to vindicate their title; thus Llewelyn the Great ascended the throne which had been withheld from Edward the Broken-nosed, his father; and after David the son of Llewelyn had reigned for several years, Llewelyn, the son of the deposed Gruffydd, vindicated the claim of his father, and for nearly thirty years reigned sole King of North Wales.

The number of the poets who lived during his reign was not great, nor are the poems which we shall here have to pass in review generally distinguished for merit. In the early part of this period, they with difficulty attain to mediocrity; but towards the close of this monarch's reign, when the curtain fell upon the independent existence of the Kymry, we meet with several very fine compositions. This scarcity of good poems in the earlier part arose partly from the false taste which was creeping in among the bards, and which led them to give words for thoughts, and sonorous sentences for brilliant ideas, passion, and poetic fire; and partly from our being compelled to pass over the works of several bards, who lived during this reign as well as the last, on account of their having been already noticed. Among these were Davydd Benvras, Elidir Sais, Einion Wan, and Llywelyn Vardd.

The poems peculiarly belonging to this era are fifty in number, of which the Prydydd Bychan wrote twenty-one; Hywel the Bald, son of Griffri, two; Llygad Gwr left five poems; Gruffydd ab yr Ynad Coch is the author of eight extant productions, seven of which are on religious subjects; Bleddyn Vardd is the author of thirteen short poems; and the

moral verses of Gwerneg ab Clydno, misplaced in the last chapter, should have been placed here.

Of these, among the earliest in point of time, is LLYGAD GWR, whose ode to Llewelyn ab Gruffydd is dated, by the Rev. Evan Evans, at A.D. 1270. It is a long poem, but, as we shall not have many poems to discuss in this section, we shall quote it entire in Ieuan Brydydd Hir's translation.

AN ODE,

In five parts, to Llewelyn the son of Gruffydd, last Prince of Wales of the British line, composed by Llygad Gwr about the year 1273 :¹

I.

I address myself to God, the source of joy,
The fountain of all good gifts, of transcendent majesty :
Let the song proceed to pay its tribute of praise,
To extol my hero the Prince of Arllechwedd,²
Who is stained with blood, a prince descended from renowned
kings.

Like the great Cæsar, renowned for warlike deeds,
Is the rapid progress of the arms of Gruffydd's heir ;
His valour and bravery are matchless,
His crimson lance is stained with gore.
It is natural and customary with him to invade the lands of his
enemies.

He is generous, the pillar of princes ;
I never return empty-handed from the North.

¹ AWDLAU LLYGAD GWR I LYWELYN AB GRUFFYDD.

I.

Cyfarchaf i Dduw ddawn orfoledd,
Cynnechreu doniau, dinam fawredd,
Cynyddu canu, can nid rhyfedd dreth,
O draethawd gyfannedd,
I foli fy rhi Rhwyf Arllechwedd,
Rhuddfâawg freiniawg o frenhinedd,
Rhyfyg udd Caissar, treisfar trosedd,
Rhythrlym, grym Gruffydd etifedd,
Rhwysg, frwysg, freisg, o freint a dewredd,
Rhudd baran o beri cochwedd,
Rhyw iddaw diriaw eraill diredd,
Rhwydd galon, golofn teyrnedd.

¹ Arllechwedd, a part of Carnarvonshire.

My successful and glorious prince, I would not exchange on any conditions.

I have a renowned prince, who ravages England ;
He is descended from noble ancestors—Llewelyn, the destroyer of his
foes,

The mild and prosperous governor of Gwynedd,
Britain's honour in the field,

With his sceptred hand extended on the throne
And a golden sword by his side,

The lion of Cemais,¹ fierce in the onset

When the army rusheth to be bathed in red,
Our defence, who slighteth alliance with strangers.

He impetuously rages through his enemies' country ;
His just cause will be prosperous at last.

About Tyganwy² he has extended his dominions,
And his enemies fly from him with maimed limbs ;

And the blood flows over the soles of men's feet.

Thou dragon of Arvon,³ of resistless fury,



Nid wyf wr gwaglaw wrth y Gogledd,
O Arglwydd gwladlwydd, glod edryssedd,
Nid newidiaf naf un awrvedd a neb,
Anebwydd dangnefedd.

Llyw y sy ym ys aml anrhydedd,
Lloegr ddifa o ddifeffonedd,
Llywelyn gelyn, galon dachwedd
Llary wledig gwynfydig Gwynedd,
Llofrudd brwydr, Brydein gywrysedd,
Llawhir falch, gwreiddfalch gorsedd,
Llary hylgwydd, hael Arglwydd eurgledd,
Llew Cemmais, llym dreis drachywedd,
Lle bo cad fragad, friwgoch ryssedd,
Llwyr orborth hyborth heb gymwedd,
Gnaws mawrdraws am ardal dyhedd,
Gnawd iddaw dreiddiau drwyddi berfe dd
Am i wir bydd dir o'r diwedd,
Amgylchwy Dyganwy mwyfwy i medd,
A chiliau rhagddaw a chalanedd creu,
Ag odduch gwadneu gwaed ar ddarwedd.
Dreig Arfon orfod wythlonedd

¹ Cemais, the name of several places in Wales. The bard here means a caunterd of that name in Angiesey.

² Tyganwy, the name of an old castle near the mouth of the river Conway, to the east; it was formerly one of the royal palaces of Maelgwn Gwynedd, King of Britain, and was, as our old annals relate, burnt by lightning A.D. 811, but was afterwards rebuilt, and won by the Earl of Chester, who held it for a considerable time, but was at last retaken by the Princes of North Wales.

³ Arvon, the county now called Carnarvonshire.

With thy beautiful, skilfully trained, and well-made steeds,
No Englishman will get one foot of thy country.
There is no Kymro thy equal.

II.

There is none equal to my prince,
With his numerous troops, in the conflict of war.
He is a generous Kymro descended from Beli Hîr,¹
If you inquire about his lineage.
He generously distributed gold and riches,
The heroic war-wolf from Eryri.²
An eagle among his nobles of matchless prowess,
It is our duty to extol him,
Clad in golden vesture.
With his army he setteth castles on fire ;
He is the bulwark of the battle with Greidiawl's³ courage
He is a hero that with fury breaketh whole ranks,
And fighteth manfully,
His war march is rapid,
His generosity overflowing.
He is the strength of armies arrayed in gold.

~~~~~  
Dragon diheufeirch heirddeirch harddedd,  
Ni chaiff sais i drais y droedfedd o'i fro  
Nid oes o Gymro i Gymrodedd.

## II.

Cymrodedd fy llyw lluoedd beri,  
Nid oes rwyf cirioes, aer dyfysgi,  
Cymro yw haelryw o hil Beli Hir,  
Yn herwydd i brofi.  
Eurfudd oi oludd, olud roddi.  
Aerfleidd arweidd o Eryri,  
Eryr ar geinwyr gamwri dinam,  
Neud einym i foli.  
Eurgorf torf tyroedd olosci,  
Argae gryd, Greidiawl wrhydri,  
Arwr bar, taerfar, yn torri cadau,  
Cadarnfrwydr ystofi.  
Aer dalmithyr, hylithr haelioni,  
Arf lluoedd eurwisgoedd wisgi  
Arwymp Ner, hyder, hyd Teifi feddiant,  
Ni faidd neb i gopsi.

<sup>1</sup> Beli. This was probably Beli Mawr, to whom our bards generally traced the pedigrees of their great men.

<sup>2</sup> Eryri, Snowdon, which some suppose derived from Mynydd Eryrod, the Hill of Eagles ; but more probably from Mynydd yr Eiry, the Hill of Snow—Snow-down.

<sup>3</sup> Greidiawl is the name of a hero mentioned in Aneurin's Gododin.

He is a brave prince whose territories extend to the Teivi,<sup>1</sup>  
 Whom no one dares to punish.  
 Llewelyn, the vanquisher of England,  
 Is a noble lion descended from a race of kings.  
 Thou art the king of the mighty,  
 The entertainer and encourager of bards.  
 Omen to the crows that they shall feast on the bodies of the Bry-  
 neich.<sup>2</sup>  
 He never avoids danger in the storm of battle ;  
 He is undaunted in the midst of hardships.  
 The bards<sup>3</sup> prophesy that he shall have the government and sovereign  
 power ;  
 Every prediction is at last to be fulfilled.

~~~~~

Llywelyn Lloegrwys feistrioli,
 Llyw breiniawl, brenhinedd teithi,
 Llary deyrn cedyrn, yn cadw gwesti cyrdd,
 Cerddorion gyflochi.
 Coelfein brein Bryneich gyfogi,
 Celennig branes, berthless borthi.
 Ciliaw ni urug er caled gawr,
 Gwr eofo ynghyni.
 Parawd fydd meddiant medd Beirdd im Rhi,
 Pob cymman darogan derfi,
 O Bwlffordd osgordd ysgwyd gochi hydr,
 Hyd eithaf Cydweli.

¹ Teivi, a river in Cardiganshire.

² Bryneich, the men of Bernicia, a province of the old Saxons in the North of England. The inhabitants of Deira and Bernicia are called by our ancient historians Gwyr Deifyr a Bryneich.

³ "It was the policy of the British princes to make the bards foretell their success in war, in order to spirit up their people to brave action. Upon which account the vulgar supposed them to be real prophets. Hence their great veneration for the prophetic bard Taliesin, and the two Merddins. This accounts for what the English writers say of the Welsh relying so much upon the prophecies of Merddin. There are many of these pretended prophecies still extant. The custom of prophesying did not cease till Henry VII.'s time, and the reason is obvious."—REV. E. EVANS'S *Dissertation de Bardis*, p. 40. Some remarks have been already made (p. 252) upon this subject, and the following may be with propriety added thereto. Important successes having been gained over the English, "the hopes of the Kymry," says Warrington, "began to revive, and their views to extend, which were heightened still more by a prophecy of Merlin, long cherished among the Welsh, that Llewelyn (ab Gruffydd) should one day wield the sceptre of Brutus, the supposed founder of their empire. It is possible, too, that the Welsh prince himself indulge the same hopes, from a like delusive source, the prediction of a soothsayer. When he first began the revolt he consulted an aged woman, who was a reputed prophetess, respecting the issue of the war, who advised him to pursue the enterprise with spirit, and assured him also that in the event he would ride through Cheapside in London with a crown upon his head."—WARRINGTON'S *History of Wales*, vol. ii. p. 258.

The shields of his men were stained with red in brave actions,
 From Pulford¹ to the furthest bounds of Kidwelly.²
 May he find endless joys, and be reconciled to the Son of God,
 And enjoy heaven by His side.

III.

We have a prince possessed of great intelligence ;
 His lance is crimson, his shield is shivered to pieces ;
 A prince furious in action, his palace is open to his friends,
 But woe is the lot of his enemies.

Llewelyn, the vanquisher of his adversaries,
 Is furious in battle like an outrageous dragon.
 To be guarded against him availeth not,
 When he cometh hand to hand to dispute the hardy contest.
 May He that made him the happy governor of Gwynedd,
 And its town of excessive whiteness,
 Strengthen him for length of years,
 To defend his country from hostile invasion.
 It is our joy and happiness
 That we have a brave warrior with prancing steeds,
 That we have a noble Kymro descended from Cambrian ancestors,

~~~~~

Can gaffael yn dda dra heb drengi,  
 Gan fab Duw didwyll gymmodi,  
 Ys bo i ddiwedd ddawn berchi ar nef,  
 Ar neillaw Crist Geli.

## III.

Llyw y sy'n synhwyrfawr riydd,  
 Lliwgoch i lafnawr, aesawr uswydd,  
 Lliw deifniawg, lli diawg, lledled fydd ei blas,  
 Llwy'r waeth yw ei gas noi gorennnydd.  
 Llywelyn gelyn, galofydd.  
 Llwyrgyrech ddarogan cymman celfydd,  
 Ni thyeicia rhybudd hael rebydd rhagddaw,  
 Llaw drallaw drin wychydd,  
 Y gwr a'i rhoddes yn rhwyf dedwydd,  
 Ar Wynedd arwynawl drefydd,  
 A'i cadarnhao, ced hylwydd yn hir,  
 I amddeffyn tir rhag torf oswydd.  
 Nid anwiw, nid anhoff gynnydd,  
 Neud enwawg farchawg, feirch gorewydd,  
 I fod yn hynod hynefydd Gymro,

<sup>1</sup> Pwlfordd is the name of a place in Shropshire. There is a bridge of the name still in that county.

<sup>2</sup> Cydweli. the name of a town and a commot in Carmarthenshire.

To rule our country and its borders.  
 He is the best prince that the Almighty made of the four elements.  
 He is the best of governors, and the most generous ;  
 The eagle of Snowdon, and the bulwark of battle.  
 He pitched a battle where there was a furious contest,  
 To obtain his patrimony on Cevn Gelorwydd ;<sup>1</sup>  
 Such a battle never happened since the celebrated action of Ar-  
 derydd.<sup>2</sup>  
 He is the brave lion of Mona, the kind-hearted Venedotian,  
 The valiant supporter of his troops in Bryn Derwyn.  
 He did not repent of the day in which he assaulted his adversaries,  
 Like a hero descended from undaunted warriors.  
 I saw a hero disputing with hosts of men,  
 Like a man of honour in avoiding disgrace.  
 He that saw Llewelyn like an ardent dragon,  
 In the conflict of Arvon and Eiddionydd,<sup>3</sup>  
 Would have observed that it was a difficult task  
 To withstand his furious attack by Drws Dauvynydd.<sup>4</sup>

~~~~~

A'r Gymry a'u helfydd.
 Ef difeiaf Naf rhy wnaeth Dofydd,
 Yn y byd o bedwar defnydd,
 Ef goreu riau reg ofydd a wnn,
 Eryr Snawtwn aer gyfludwydd.
 Cad a wnaeth, cadarn ymgerydd,
 Am gyfoeth, am Gefn Gelorwydd,
 Ni bu gad, hwyliad hefelydd gyfred,
 Er pan fu weithred waith Arderydd.
 Breisclaw Mon, mwyfawr Wyndodydd,
 Bryn Derwyn clo byddin clodrydd,
 Ni bu edifar y dydd i cyrchawdd,
 Cyrch ehofn-essillydd.
 Gwelais wawr ar wyr lluosydd,
 Fal gwr yn gwrthladd cywilydd,
 A welei Lywelyn, lawenydd dragon
 Ynghymyse Arfon ac Eiddionydd,
 Nid hawdd oedd llew aerflawdd llüydd,
 I dreissiaw gar Drws Daufynydd,

¹ Cevn Gelorwydd, the name of a mountain ; but where it is situated I know not.

² Arderydd, Airdree near Glasgow, or Atterith, about six miles from Solway Frith, Scotland. This battle is mentioned in the Triads, and was fought by Gwenddoleu ab Ceidiaw, and Aeddan Fradawg, petty princes of the North, against Rhydderch Hael, King of Cumbria, who got the battle. Myrddin Wyllt, or Merddin the Caledonian, was severely handled by Rhydderch Hael for siding with Gwenddoleu, his patron, of which he complains in his Avallenau.

³ Eiddionydd, the name of a comot or district in Carnarvonshire.

⁴ Drws Dauvynydd signifies a pass between two mountains, as Drws Ardudwy Drws y Coed, Bwlch Oerdrws, &c. ; but where it lies is unknown.

No man has ever compelled him to submit :
 May the Son of God never put him to confusion.

IV.

Like the roaring of a lion in search of prey is thy thirst of praise,
 Like the sound of a mighty hurricane over the desert main,
 Thou profoundly learned and accomplished prince of Aberffraw.¹
 Thy ravage is furious, thy impetuosity irresistible.
 Thy troops are enterprising in brave actions,
 They are fierce and furious like a conflagration.
 Thou art the warlike and slaughtering prince of Dinevwr,²
 The defence of the people, the divider of spoils.
 Thy forces are comely, neat, and of one language.
 Thy proud Toledo sword is gilt with gold,
 Thou prince of Mathraval ;³ extensive are thy boundaries,
 Lord Llewelyn, ruler of people of four languages.
 He fought undauntedly against a foreign nation of strange language.
 May the great King of Heaven defend the just cause
 Of the warlike prince of the three provinces.

~~~~~  
 Nis plygodd Mab dyn bu doniawg ffydd,  
 Nis plyeco Mab Duw yn dragywydd.

## IV.

Terfysc taerllew glew, glod gynhymdaith,  
 Twrf torredwynt mawr uch mor diffaith,  
 Taleithawg deifniawg dyfniaith Aberffraw,  
 Terwyn anrheithiaw, rhuthar anolaith.  
 Tylwyth, ffrwyth, ffraethlym eu mawrwaith,  
 Teilwng blwng, blaengar fal goddaith,  
 Taleithawg arfawg aerbeith Dinefwr,  
 Teulu hysgwr, ysgwfl anrhaith.  
 Telediw gad gywiw gyfaith,  
 Toledo balch a bylchlafn eurwaith,  
 Taleithawg Mathrafal, maith yw dy derfyn,  
 Arglwydd Lywelyn, lyw pedeiriaith,  
 Sefis yn rhyfel, dymgel daith,  
 Rhag estrawn genedl, gwyn anghyfaith,  
 Sefid Brenin nef, breiniawl gyfraith,  
 Gan eurwawr aerbeir y teir taleith.

<sup>1</sup> Aberffraw, the name of the prince's chief palace in Anglesey.

<sup>2</sup> Dinevwr, the name of the Prince of South Wales's palace, pleasantly situated upon a hill above the river Towy, in Carmarthenshire, now in the possession of George Rice, of Newton, Esq., member of Parliament for that county. (At present it is in the hands of Lord Dynevor.)

<sup>3</sup> Mathraval, the seat of the Prince of Powys, not far from Pool, in Montgomeryshire, now in the possession of the Earl of Powys.

## V.

I make my address to God in commencing an eulogy,  
 In the best manner I am able,  
 That I may extol with truth, in suitable words,  
 My lord, the chief of men,  
 Who rageth like fire from the flashes of lightning,  
 Who exchangeth thrusts with burnished steel.  
 I am armed, like my prince, with the red spear of conflict.  
 He is a brave fighter, and the foremost in action.  
 Llewelyn, thy qualities are noble and energetic,  
 Making broad thy path with the edge of the sword.  
 The hoof-prints of my prince's steeds extend to Cornwall.  
 Numbers congratulate him upon his success, who is a sure friend,  
 The lion of Gwynedd and its extensive white territories,  
 The governor of the men of Powys and the South,  
 Who has a general assembly of his armed troops at Chester,  
 Who ravages Lloegria to amass spoils.  
 In battle his success is certain  
 In killing, burning, and in overthrowing castles.  
 In Rhos<sup>1</sup> and Penvro, and in contests with the Normans,  
 His impetuosity uniformly prevails.

## v.

Cyfarchaf i Dduw o ddechrau moliant,  
 Mal i gallwyr orau,  
 Clodfori o'r gwyr a geiriau  
 I'm pen, y pennaf a giglau,  
 Cynnwrf tan, lluch faran llechau,  
 Cyfnewid newydd las ferau,  
 Cyfarf wyf a rhwyf, rhudd lafnau yngnif,  
 Cyfoethawg gynnif cynflaen cadau.  
 Llywelyn nid llesg ddefodau,  
 Llwybr ehang, ehofn fydd mau,  
 Llyw yw hyd Gernyw aed garnedd i feirch,  
 Lliaws ai cyfeirch, cyfaill nid gau,  
 Llew Gwynedd gwynfeith ardalau,  
 Llywiawdr pobl, Powys ar Dehau,  
 Llwyrywys caer, yn aer, yn arfau,  
 Lloegr breiddiau am brudd anrheithiau,  
 Yn rhyfel, ffrwythlawn, dawn diammau,  
 Yn lladd yn llosgi yn torri tyrau,  
 Yn Rhos a Phenfro, yn rhysfâu Ffraine,  
 Llwyddedig i ainc yn llüyddau,  
 Hil Gruffydd, grymmus gynneddau,

<sup>1</sup> Rhos and Penvro, the names of two cantrevs in Pembrokeshire.

The offspring of Gruffydd, of worthy qualities,  
 Is generous in distributing rewards for songs ;  
 His shield shines, and the strong lances  
 Quickly meet the streams of rushing gore.  
 He extorteth taxes from his enemies,  
 And claimeth another country, as a sovereign prince.  
 Adorned by noble birth, he besieged fortified towns,  
 And his furious attacks, like those of Fflamddwyn,<sup>1</sup> reach far.  
 He is a prosperous chief with princely qualities ;  
 His bards are comely about his tables.  
 I have seen him generously distributing his wealth,  
 And his mead-horns filled with generous liquors.  
 Long may he live with his sharp sword,  
 To defend his borders, like Arthur with the lance of steel.  
 May he who is lawful King of Cambria, endued with princely qualities,  
 Have his share of happiness at the right hand of God.

This poem, full of gossip and flattery, is of no great poetic value. It is useful as a historical document ; and the names of places, persons, and battles will greatly facilitate the business of the historian. But it has no imagery, no strong link of connexion, nor much descriptive power ; and wanting these, it is only a long string of unconnected sentences, which, though they occasionally give us glimpses of contemporaneous manners, evince no great capacity in the artist. The allusion to the "four elements" shows us something of the bardic philosophy, and of their speculations upon the composition of the universe ; and the statement that Llewelyn ruled over a people of four

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Hael gyngor, gyngyd wrth gerddau,
 Hylathr i ysgwyd, escud barau gwrdd,
 Hylwm yn cyhwrdd cyhoedd waedffrau.
 Hylwrw fwrw far, gymmell trethau,
 Hawlwr gwlad arall gwledig riau,
 Harddedd o fonedd, faen gaerau dreisddwyn,
 Hirbell fal Fflamddwyn i fflamgyrchau.
 Hwylfawr ddreig, ddragon cyfeddau,
 Heirdd i feirdd yughylech ei fyrddau,
 Hylithr i gwelais ddydd golau i fudd,
 Ai feddgyrn wiroadau.
 Iddaw i gynnal cleddyfal clau,
 Mal Arthur wayw dur i derfynau,
 Gwir frenin Cymru cymmreise ddoniau,
 Gwrawl hawl boed hwyl o ddehan.

¹ Fflamddwyn, the name of a Saxon prince against whom Urien, King of Cumbria, and his son Owain, fought the battle of Argoed Llwyvain.

languages refers most probably to the Kymry, the English, the Normans or French, and the Flemish settlers on the borders of Wales.

EINION AB MADAWG AB RHAHAWD, a poet who lived between 1230 and 1270, and the author of some verses addressed to Prince Gruffydd, the eldest son of Llewelyn the Great, ought in strict propriety to have taken precedence of Llygad Gwr, as the latter addresses the son, while the former sang when the father was a youth. His poem has merit, and will bear perusal :¹

I will extol a generous prince, increasing in fame,
 The honoured of multitudes, the favourite of the army ;
 The season is suitable to circulate the goblet,
 The arms are piled, and the three colours of three armies wave aloft.
 The eagle of the men of Gwynedd, I know he is not near ;
 Though he may be appeased, he will not take an affront ;
 Though a youth, my ruler made an impression
 On the strangers by his bold horsemanship.
 Lord of wide Crugkaeth, dignified and steady,
 Monarch of Britain worthy of the muse,
 Gruffydd is the chief prince between the two seas,
 Chief golden breastplate of privilege and sociability ;
 Foes will shrink from a hero so sternly fierce
 When there shall arrive a day of battle and depredation.
 Leader of all mirth ; the crows will flock
 Around the warrior who is so easily served,
 And who is accustomed to drive his foes before him
 As flames of fire rush through dry reeds.

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<sup>1</sup> Arddwyreafy hael hwyglod ellwng  
 Ardduniant torvoedd tyrva eitwng  
 Arvod ysgymmod gorvod gorflwng  
 Arveu briw trilliw trillu gyhwng  
 Eyr gwyr Gwynet gwn nad echwng  
 Ked ef ddigoner ni chymmer vhwng  
 Yr yn vab ym rwyfy ry gwnaeth ystwng  
 Ar y estronyn ys drud echwng  
 Pendevic Crukyeith meith mygyr ddiwng  
 Pennyadur prydein prydest deilwng  
 Pennaf yw Gruffyt pennaeth rwng—deu vor  
 Pen eurddor bronddor breint a hebrwng  
 Pannu a vyt dir rac dewr gorvlwng  
 Pan vo dyt gorwlad a chad yn wng  
 Pennyal pob aryal crev allwng—branes  
 Amgylch lliw didres dwydreul gyfrwng  
 Gnawd yd gyrech cynnygyn oe gynnif pwng  
 Mal pan gyrech fflanddan fflamdo yspwng

He is accustomed to redden his bold sword and his horse's mane,  
 To strew his war-path with blood, and enforce silence by his voice ;  
 He is accustomed to triumph over all treachery ;  
 But his district is not accustomed to taxes and oaths of submission.  
 Through his bravery he made dreadful havoc among the Franks,  
 Whom he filled with fear, terror, and dismay.  
 He caused torrents of blood to flow at Trallwng Elvael,<sup>1</sup>  
 Where there was a fierce and confused conflict.  
 May God enable him to live without reproach,  
 And when he dies, end his days in honour ;  
 And when—invincible dragon—he is forty or sixty years old,  
 Receive the protection of bounteous Heaven.

This short poem very strikingly portrays the prevalent sentiments among the Kymry at a time when the armies of England, scouring over the plains, frequently compelled them to fall back upon those *palladia* of Cambrian liberty their mountain fastnesses. Our early literature breathes not a word of despair, not a hint at compromise, not a thought of submission ; on the contrary, the national spirit, gaining strength from adversity, kept pace with the occasion, and mounted highest when the danger was greatest ; and, true to the Spartan character, which made them think it “ a disgrace to die in their beds, but an honour to fall in the field,” preferred dying as freemen to living as slaves. In none of the poems which have

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Gnawd yd goch a glew gleif gad vung—gorwydd
 Gnawd goches rodwyt ruat ostwng
 Gnawd taw treissiaw tros bob ethwng
 Nyd gnawd oe ardal na thal na thwng
 Gwnaeth drwy einc ar freinc frawt anheilwng
 Ac ergryd a chryd a chreu dillwng
 Gwnaeth drallif gwyar uwch trallwng—Elvael
 Pan fu ymdravael drud ac erdrwng
 Gwnaed dduw y ddiwet ef ddifefyl hebrwng
 Yny vo y orffen ar ffort deilwng
 Yn dygant trigyant dreic diystwng
 Yn tee adef nef nawt orddillwng.

Myv. Arch. vol. i. p. 391.

¹ Elvael is on the borders of Radnorshire ; an old bard says :

Gnawd yn Elvael haelioni
 A march a merch a mynych roddi.
 Elvael is distinguished for generosity,
 For horses, and maids, and frequent gifts.

But it has not retained this character.

been perused for the purposes of the essay have there appeared the least traces of despondency ; but the same fierce defiance of Saxons, and Normans, or "French," as they are called, and the same exultation in successes, whether great or small, are as evident in those which remain as in those selected. In the Kymric camps there were too frequently treachery and intrigue, but fear and cowardice were alike unknown.

Y PRYDYDD BYCHAN, or the Little Poet, has contributed twenty-one short poems to the literature of his country. He lived between the years 1210 and 1260. His verses are nearly all addressed to the Princes of South Wales ; and it thence seems that he lived in Deheubarth ; but the subject of the following, and longest of his poems, is the brother of Prince Llewelyn :

ENGLYNION

Sung by the Prydydd Bychan, of South Wales, to Owen the Red, son of Gruffydd ab Llywelyn :¹

Gwynedd, famed for kind princes and abundant songs,
Thou wilt suffer no injury from the beautiful son of Gruffydd ;
The hawk, stern in armour in the battle,
Is the glory of the Perveddwlad.²

A resolute ruler, and a bold inhabitant, is Owen,
Whose sword attracts the ravens, the eulogised of numbers ;
He is a valiant governor, bold in the conflict,
And descended from a line of kings.

In the tumult daring, in the trial unperplexed,
The son of Gruffydd is the strength of his valley ;

~~~~~  
<sup>1</sup> Gwynet kein reuet kann rad—nyth arllut  
Mab Gruffyt mawrvut mad  
Gorvlwng walch yg calch yg cad  
Goruolet y beruetwlad.

Gwledic gwychyr hydric gwychnaws—yw Ywein  
Clet lith brein clod liaws  
O lyw glyw glewddrud gynghaws  
O lin breyennin trin traws.

Trawsvar yn trydar yn tro—dygythrut  
Mab Gruffut breisaut bro

<sup>2</sup> The Perveddwlad means the central land ; and the district so named comprised the present counties of Flint and Denbigh.

Kymric hawk, ardent, strong, and persevering,  
They will bring thee all that is thine.

The hawk of the valley shall have the privilege of the sovereignty  
Through the grace of the ruler, who dislikes not war—  
Fearless, and bold lord of a spacious palace,  
Which his golden sword has won.

You have seen the surpassing and destructive heroism  
Of the impetuous sons of Beli ;<sup>1</sup>  
Courteous hawks, proud frequenters of the feasts  
Of Mon ; eagles of Snowdon.

Eagle of golden tribute, spreader of carnage, is Owen,  
The omen of hawks, the hawk of conflict ;  
Fond of arms from his youth,  
The dragon of the court of Ffraw<sup>2</sup> does no good to the Frank.

The Frank dares not approach the camp of the crafty warrior,  
Whose tents are bound up in five pieces ;  
Nimble slaughterer, furious in battle as a raging sea,  
Strong and active against the enemy.

~~~~~  
Caer daer terwynwalch Gymro
Dygant yth vetyant ath vo.

Bo gwalch bro breint teyrnas
Drwy rad y rwyf cad nyd cas
Yn ddiofyn ehofyn ehangblas arglwyf
O eurglet ry cafas.

Kawssawch gorvuawch gwrhydri angut
Angert veibyon Beli
Mwynvawr weilch beilch balch westi
Mon eryron eryri.

Eryr eurdreth myr aerdranc—yw Ywein
Gweilch goelvein gwalch gyfranc
Drud yn arveu yn yeuanc
Dreic llys fraw drwe ar lles franc.

Franc nyth veit kyfranc kyfrwysgar—gwersyll
Rwym pebyll bumddryll bar
Cad aerflawt morgymlawt var
Cadarn ddilesc wrth esgar.

¹ Beli the Great, son of Manogan, the sixty-fourth King of Britain. In the books of pedigrees Beli is the stock from which the descents of the subsequent sovereigns of the Britons are traced out. He is distinguished for having exterminated one of the three molestations of the island, which was a civil war that broke out in his time; and also for being the father of the celebrated Caswallon.—DR. W. OWEN PUGHE'S *Cambrian Biography*, p. 21.

² The royal palace of Aberffraw in Anglesey.

Well known to the enemy is the quick-witted Owen,
 Hero of London,¹ having a lion's war-shout ;
 The hawk, bold from childhood, is greatly popular,
 The supporter of weakness, the hope of Gwyneddians.

The life of this Owain affords striking illustrations of the character of the times, and tempts me to relate a few of its particulars. David, the son of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, having the will of his father, the friendship of his uncle, Henry III., King of England, and the sanction of his nobles, ascended the throne of North Wales and imprisoned his elder brother. The Bishop of Bangor, through whose agency Gruffydd and his son Owain were imprisoned, after the lapse of sometime desired that he should be released; but David refusing to comply, he excommunicated him, and then went to England, where he desired the King to *obtain the release of that prince, lest the fact being mentioned at Rome might bring the King into discredit.* Henry sent to David to demand his brother's liberty; and the Cambrian prince replied that if he were to set Gruffydd at liberty, the country would soon be embroiled in civil war. The prisoner being apprised of this, sent to inform the King that if he would release him, he would consent to hold his land under him, pay him two hundred marks annually, and assist that monarch to subjugate the refractory portions of the country. In the meantime the Bishop of Bangor had gone to Rome, and prevailed on the Pope also to excommunicate the Cambrian prince; and Gruffydd Maelawr, the subject of the ode of Einion Wan, and a man renowned for bravery and wisdom, had also sent to desire the King to release Gruffydd. Seduced by these representations, the King came to Shrewsbury, and was there joined by the lords of the Marches and many Cambrian chieftains; and David standing alone, and doubtful of the fidelity of his vassals, made peace with the King and consented to set free his brother. The King had previously entered into a contract with Gruffydd, in which the latter stipulated through his wife, Senena, that, on the release of himself and his son Owain, he

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 Hyddyse y esgar esudvryd—Ywein  
 Gwawr llundein llew yg gryd  
 Hydoryf walch hydyr or mebyd  
 Hyder gwendud ner gwendyd.

<sup>1</sup> Owen had long been a resident at the English court.

would pay the King six hundred marks for his land, and an annual rent of three hundred more; but David having made his uncle acquainted with his brother's restless disposition, Henry took Gruffydd with him to London, and kept him, his wife, and his son honourable captives in the Tower. Despairing of release, Gruffydd projected an escape. He tore up his bed-clothes, and made them, with what other materials he could obtain, into a rope, with which one dark night he let himself down through a window, but being a stout and heavy man, his weight broke the rope, and he was killed by the fall. His son was in consequence watched more closely; but on the death of David in 1246, Owain, thinking there was a chance to push his fortune, succeeded in making his way to his own country. He had received respectful treatment from the English monarch, and had acquired some knowledge of the art of war. Accordingly on his arrival he found partisans, and the kingdom of North Wales was divided between him and his brother Llewelyn, the latter retaining the cantreys of Rhos, Rhuvonioc, the Vale of Clwyd, and Tegeingl, being all the land between Chester and Conway, and Owain having what forms the present counties of Anglesey and Carnarvon, as appears from the allusions to Aberffraw in the preceding poem. The reason must also be now apparent why Owain is termed the "hero of London." For about eight years the two princes ruled their respective districts in peace; and it was probably during this period (1246-1254) that the above Englynion were composed. The restless spirit of his father survived, it would seem, in the son; for about this latter date he plotted with their younger brother David to rob Llewelyn of his possessions. For this purpose they collected their forces together; and Llewelyn prepared to oppose them. A bloody conflict ensued at a place called Bryn Derwyn; within an hour Owain was taken prisoner; on hearing which the allied forces fled, and were slain in great numbers. Owain was thrown into prison, where he was kept for twenty-three years, while Llewelyn reigned sole King of Gwynedd. It was during this confinement in the Castle of Dolbadarn, near Llanberis, that the bard Hywel Voel ab Griffri wrote the two poems to Owain Goch, which bear his name. Owain was released in 1277, in consequence of a covenant between Llewelyn and Edward I., and received back a portion of his land, the cantrev of Lleyrn. His subsequent fortunes are un-

known, also the date of his death. Bleddyn Vardd has an elegy to his memory, from which it would appear that he lived and died a warrior. He is twice mentioned by Bleddyn as lord of *Mervyniawn*.

The Prydydd Bychan is known to bardic critics for having made frequent use of the metre called *Proest Kynnewidiog*, and on account of his being the only bard of these centuries who has used the *Proest Cadwynawdl*. Meilir and Elidir Sais had used the first of these, and the *Proest Kynnewidiog* (combined vowel alternity) was a favourite; but no one made such frequent use of it as the Little Poet. I am not acquainted with any English verse in this metre, and must therefore use a Kymric example:

Hart llys rys ros geithiwed  
 Rwyf llu tra vu y vywyd  
 Balchgryc barabyl bolchglet drud  
 Bar dwys aghynnwys yg gad.

The peculiarity, it will be observed, is that the vowel in the last syllable of the lines is different in each. It is said that the following verse is the only specimen of the combined alternate rhyme belonging to this era:

Raeadyr gwaed am draed am drwyn  
 Ryw rac vy llyw llew aryein  
 Rwym bryneich branhes terrwyn  
 Rwyf gawr awytvawr Ywein.<sup>1</sup>

The next instance occurs two centuries later, in one of the poems of Gutyn Owain. At first this appears to be the alternate rhyme, so frequently used by English poets; but on examination it will be found to differ in this, that the alternation is not in the rhymes of the final feet, or syllables, for all end with the same letter, but in the vowels composing them.

HYWEL VOEL, the author of the poem which we shall next notice, was a man of Irish extraction. The Kymry were perfectly aristocratic in their laws and usages, particularly with regard to persons of foreign origin, the slightest flaw in whose title to nobility or citizenship was instantly detected; and thus, in speaking of Hywel Voel, they took care to indicate his posi-



<sup>1</sup> Rev. Walter Davies's *Essay on the Twenty-four Metres*, p. 38.

tion in the scale of naturalisation by describing him as "the son of Griffri, the son of Pwyll the Gwyddelian." This scale is an interesting feature in the manners of the people and the time. It was as follows :

The ninth degree in ascent will stand in the same privileged position as the ninth degree in genealogical descent, but upon a principle different from that of lineal pedigree ; its regulating law being as follows :

The first degree of the nine ascents is the son of an alien—that is, the son of a foreigner—but a person of sworn allegiance to the British nation and its lords. A person of this degree is called an alien by descent.

The second degree in ascent is attained by the marriage of an alien's son with a Welsh lady of genuine descent.

The third degree in ascent is a son born from that marriage.

The fourth degree in ascent is a marriage of that son with a Welsh lady of genuine descent.

The fifth degree in ascent is a son born from that marriage.

The sixth is the marriage of that son with a Welsh lady.

The seventh is a son born of that marriage.

The eighth is the marriage of that son to a Welsh lady.

The ninth is a son born of that marriage. He has established his claim to the rights of a Welshman.<sup>1</sup>

But if there was a flaw in Hywel's title to be called a Cambrian bard, he had more talent than many of the fraternity. The following has throughout many indications of ability ; the first part displays the affectation which prevailed at this time among the bards, but the conclusion is both fine and forcible. It is also remarkable as being a bold remonstrance against the imprisonment of Owain ab. Gruffydd by his brother the King Llewelyn ab Gruffydd :<sup>2</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The man in the tower has long been imprisoned,  
 Manly sovereign, princely hawk of royalty,  
 One whose loss from among them the active regret,  
 One who was a bold leader and ruler worthy to be praised,  
 One who was a protector of families,

<sup>1</sup> *Iolo MSS.* p. 462.

<sup>2</sup> There is a metrical translation in Wright's *Scenes in North Wales*, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> Gwr yssyt yn twr yn hir westi  
 Gwreit teyrneit teyrwalch ri  
 Gwr am dotyw gwall oe golli o vyw  
 Gwreitlyw a glyw y glodvori  
 Gwr teleid teiluoedd lochi



One whom families think deserving of eulogy,  
 One who shone in war like Roderick the Great.  
 One who wore golden armour is wanting,  
 One there is bound by the rule of Snowdon,  
 Who if free, like Rhun the son of Beli,<sup>1</sup>  
 Would not let Lloegria burn his borders.  
 A man of the race of Mervyn<sup>2</sup> and the magnanimous Benlli,<sup>3</sup>  
 One who led multitudes, one active in arms,

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Gwr teilu teilwng y voli
 Gwr y gryd yn ryd gwr val rodri mawr
 Gwr eurglawr aessawr ysswyd holi
 Gwr yn rwym gan rwyf Eryri
 Gwr pei ryt val Run vab Beli
 Gwr ny adei loegyr y losgi ei dervyn
 Gwr o hil Mervyn mawrvryd Benlli
 Gwr torvoet gwr gwisgoedd gwisgi

¹ The bard seems to have been mistaken. Beli was the son of Rhun, and Rhun the son of Maelgwn Gwynedd.

² Mervyn was one of the sons of Rhodri the Great.

³ Benlli Gawr, or the Giant, was the lord of an extensive district, forming portions of the present counties of Flint and Denbigh. He lived about the middle of the fifth century. In connexion with him the following circumstance is deserving of record. An ancient lorica, or British corslet of gold, was lately discovered near Mold, in Flintshire, under a mound of stones, called Bryn yr Ellyllon; when the workmen were removing the mound they came upon a skeleton, the skull of which was of gigantic proportion, and the thigh bones those of a man of a great stature. Lying on the chest was found the corslet, studded over with two or three hundred beautiful amber beads, and crossed with a kind of filigree work of fine gold, giving somewhat the appearance of the angels found on the old Saxon arch, the whole based on pure gold. Its extreme length is three feet seven inches, being made apparently to pass under the arms and to meet in the centre of the back; and its width in front, where it is hollowed out to receive the neck, eight inches. The weight of this most interesting relic is seventeen ounces, and its intrinsic value about 60*l.* It is now preserved in the British Museum. Dr. Owen Pughe has made the following ingenious remarks on the subject, and every circumstance seems to corroborate the idea of Benlli Gawr having been interred in that identical spot: "It is probable that this being must have existed since the Romans left our country, otherwise it is likely that the body would have been burnt; and if he had lived about the year 600, or after, he would have been deposited in one of our churches. Under these circumstances we cannot be far away in attributing the period of the existence of this extraordinary being to the year 500: but then, who would he be? Who was the high personage, that at his funeral his retainers should throw such a mass of earth and stones upon his grave, and for whose memory there should be such a remarkable tribute of respect? No other, we believe, than Benlli Gawr himself, who had his friends about him at his *din*, on the summit called after him Moel Benlli, and in sight of his residence called Wyddgrug, now called Mold, as well as in view of Dyffryn Clwyd on the other side. The grave of this powerful man's son, Beli, is about eight miles off, for the Englynion Milwyr (Warriors' Triplets) say that Beli lies in Llanarmon yn Iâl."—WILLIAMS'S *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen*, pp. 38-9.

One who supported the people and was fond of war,
 One who knew well how to regulate battles,
 One who distributed his gold without stint,
 One who was distinguished for generosity,
 One impartial according to the primary precepts of Pryderi,¹
 Owain the generous would not question bails,
 Owain was not less active than Elivri.²
 Thou who bidst the moon give us light,
 Thou who bidst the sun halt not in his course,
 The true God, of Thee I ask—
 Heaven knows the sincerity of my prayer—
 That I may shortly die if he is cut off young,
 By the will of Llewelyn, lord of Kidwelly:³
 Since there has long been an agreement without fault in him,
 Since there is a disposition to treat without deception,
 Since God forgave being placed on the Cross,
 Since Keli went to the grave;
 Since thou believest that the Lord of hosts arose again,
 And fully redeemed the world by His five wounds,
 Why will not a brother forgive another?
 A man of understanding will punish kindly.
 Prudent Llewelyn, a lion raging like the sea,

~~~~~  
 Gwr gwasgawd kiwdawd kan weini  
 Gwr cadarn cadoedd reoli  
 Gwr cadwent kedwis haelyoni  
 Gwr eurfut dilut heb doli  
 Gwr diletyf prifddeddf Pryderi  
 Gwr oet ewein hael ni wnei holi mach  
     Gwr nyd oet lyfrach noc elifri  
 Gwr a beris lloer llwry goleuni  
 Gwr a beris heul nyd treul tregi  
 Y gwir Dduw yt wyf yn erchi  
 Yr gwyr nef om neawl weti  
 Ar oed byrr os tyrr torri glas ewyn  
     Gan vot Llywelyn llyw Kedwli  
 Gan vod hir gymmod heb gam ynni  
 Gan ddiddwyll gymwyll gymodi  
 Gan vadeu o Dduw y dodi yg crocwet  
     Gan vynet yr bet bu bot keli  
 Gan gredu penn llu llwry kyvodi  
 Gan holl ddifyrd byd oe bym weli  
 Pan na vadeu brawd y brovi arall  
 A vyt wrth ddeall guall gospi  
 Ny vet namyn duw digyvoethi dyn

<sup>1</sup> The allusion is not intelligible.

<sup>2</sup> We frequently find Elivri mentioned, but his history is lost.

<sup>3</sup> If I have translated Kedwli rightly, this is Kidwelly in Carmarthenshire.

Valiant dragon, the supporter of chiefs,  
 Armed dragon of the satin tents (do this),  
 None but God can dispossess man.

BLEDDYN VARDD, or Bleddyn the Poet, also flourished about this time. He is the author of thirteen short poems, among which are an elegy on Llewelyn ab Gruffydd, two eulogies of his younger brother, and an elegy on the three brothers Owain, Llewelyn, and David. All possess considerable merit, though it is not wholly of a poetical character. We shall here quote the first of these as a fair specimen of the whole. It is inferior in imagery and passion to the fine composition of Ab yr Ynad Coch, though it may be said to be much more truthful; and as it seems to portray Llewelyn not as an ideal hero, but as he actually was, it is well worthy of attention. This forms its distinctive merit, which is certainly great. The description is very elaborate, careful, and apparently correct; much pains have therefore been taken to render the literal meaning of each epithet: <sup>1</sup>

Great Cambria has lost her manliest hero;  
 His bold and nimble sword was the bravest of the bright raging blades.  
 The manly-complexioned is not living; what shall I do for his loss?  
 The bold and bounteous lion, most ready with rewards.

A hero who slew for us, one who was most daring,  
 One who devoted himself to his country, confidently I name him,  
 The manly Llewelyn, manliest of Kymry,  
 Who loved not to fly by the nearest road.

Ardent hero, leader of a numerous host,  
 Of green-coloured tents and fixed encampments,

~~~~~  
 Digart Llywelyn lew tra gweilgi
 Dewr dragon berywon borthi
 Dreic arveu pebylleu pali.

Myv. Arch. vol. i. p. 393.

¹ Colles Gymru fawr, gwawr gwreiddiaf,
 Gwreiddllafn esgud gloywddrud glewaf,
 Gwreiddlyw nid byw, ba wnaif o'i golled?

Gwreiddllew hyged, roddged rwyddaf;

Gwr a las drosom, gwr oedd drosaf

Gwr oedd dros Gymru, hyf yr henwaf,

Gwrawl Lywelyn, gwraf o Gymro;

Gwr ni charai ffo i'r ffordd nesaf;

Gwr gwrdd yn eyrehu llu lledeithaf;

Gwr gwyrddliw bebyll, gwerysll gorsaf

Gruffydd's manly son ; the most reckless of givers,
After the transcendent maxims of Nudd and Mordav.¹

Hero of a red spear, he was a serious man like Priam,
A good man, king of a joyous army,
Fortunate in obtaining praise, the freest in giving
That the sun sees in his longest course.

Man whose anger was destructive, most courteous prince,
A man sincere in grief, true in loving,
Perfect in knowledge, wise, and the choicest of men,
From Mon to that fairest of places, Caerlleon.

Llewelyn was on the banks of the impetuous Taff²
Celebrated as a hero, freest distributor of garments ;
He was confessedly the first of warriors,
Ardent eagle, as far as Port Wegyr.³

May He who took upon Himself the sins of the world,
And suffered the severest of punishment,
Take my ruler, the most virtuous of princes,
And make him partaker of the great joys of heaven.

This portraiture makes the last Prince of Wales appear to
have been an estimable man, in addition to having the neces-

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Gwreiddfab Gruffydd, digraffaf, am reg,  
Yn neddfau mawr deg Nudd a Mordaf.

Gwr gwayw rudd, gwr prudd megys Priaf,  
Gwr gwiw yn frenin fyddin falchaf  
Gwr hylwydd y glod, gwr haelaf, am draul,  
Hyd y cerdda haul ei hwyl bellaf.

Gwr dig ei ddistryw, llyw llyseiddiaf,  
Gwr dygn ei alar, car cywiraf ;  
Gwr cywirgoeth, doeth, detholedig, o Fon  
Hyd yn Nghaerlleon, y lle teccaf.

Gwr vu Lywelyn ger terfyn taf  
Gwawr kyhoet wisgoet wasgaroccaf  
Gwr oed arbennic bennaf o vilwyr  
Hyd ym porth Wegyr eryr araf.

Y gwr a gymyrth enghyrth ynghaf  
Anghen dros bymhoes drymloes drymaf  
A gymero vy rwyf rywoccaf vonhet  
Yn rann trugaret vawret vwyhaf.

*Myv. Arch.* vol. i. p. 368.

<sup>1</sup> See note to p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> The river Taff is in Glamorganshire.

<sup>3</sup> Gwalchmai alludes to Porth Wegyr in Anglesey. See Pughe, s.v. *Suysawg*.

sary qualifications, in being warlike, valiant, and daring; and the poem very clearly proves one of two things; for we must either believe that Llewelyn actually possessed these fine attributes, or that the bard had refinement enough to perceive that they were qualities which greatly became a prince. In either case it indicates the prevalence of good taste and right feeling; and as such the poem is a valuable remnant. Two other portraits of this prince have been drawn by different authors; and as they reflect some of the spirit of the age, we shall here quote them as in the edition of the *Polychronicon* printed by Caxton in 1460, with the English translation annexed:

Of this Lewelin two men of relygyon wrote verses in metre; of the Walshmen in this maner.

Hic jacet Anglorum tortor, tutor Venedorum;  
 Princeps Wallorum Lewelinus regula morum;  
 Gemma cœvorum, flos regum præteritorum;  
 Forma futurorum; dux, laus, lex, lux populorum.

Here lyeth the tormentour of Englyshemen wardeyn and tutor of Walshmen; Prince of Welshemen. Lewelyn, ruler of good thewes. Cheyf precyous stone of them that were in his tyme. Floure of kynges that were before. Ensamble of them that shall be after this time. Leder praysynge; law and lyght of people.

But the Englisheman said in this manere,

Hic jacet error princeps, prædo virorum;  
 Proditor Anglorum, fax livida, secta reorum;  
 Numen Wallorum, trux dux, homicida piorum;  
 Fax Trojanorum, stirps mendax, causa malorum.

That is; here lyeth the Prynce of errours, Theyf and robber of men. Traytour of Englyshemen. A dymme bronde; and set of euyll doers, God of Walshmen; a cruell duke; a sleer of good men. Drastes of Troyanes; a false rote cause of euyll dedes.

The allusions to Priam, to Ul Kaissar, and other Latin names, show that the taste for classic literature, which so eminently distinguished this and the succeeding centuries, was beginning to make itself apparent in the works of the bards; it becomes more apparent as we advance, and in the fifteenth century we find that the revival of Roman literature by Petrarch and Boccaccio exercised a very powerful influence upon the more learned of the bardic writers.

This bard has three short verses on the death of Davydd Benvras, which form an interesting sketch of that bard: <sup>1</sup>

The good men of Gwynedd—the more is the pity  
For us indigent men—are perishing;  
Two at a time worthy people die;  
Every hour, painful tale, there die three.

Death has been officious with our friends: a new recollection  
Causes me profound and lasting regret;  
There was mourning for the taking of the reproachless David;  
He was a witty man, and in his day wise.

While lived David, his course was blameless;  
He was powerful in the conflict of battle,  
He was liberal, and stout-hearted in distress,  
He was witty without pedantry, wise and humorous.

The bard named SEVNYN also appears to have been living at this time. Two of his poems have no *cynghanedd*; the third has. We might thence infer that he flourished between 1280 and 1370. One of these poems describes the exploits of Prince Llewelyn.

We have now passed in review several poems of various degrees of merit; but the best and greatest which challenges our critical attention during this stage is the Elegy of GRUFFYDD AB YR YNAD COCH upon Prince Llewelyn, which is really a very fine composition. The occasion is one to which no Kyniro can be indifferent; and I trust it has sufficient interest to justify a brief recapitulation of the circumstances attending Llewelyn's death. He had marched to South Wales to meet some Cambrian partisans and English lords, who had entered into a

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¹ Mae gwyrda gwynet gwae ni yr eissywed
Yssywaeth yn trenghi
Pob deu polyl dygyn eu colli
Pob awr poen dramawr pob dri.

Oet tringar an car cof newyt am peir
Perygyl hiraeth peunyt
Oet ewyn dwyn difefyl davyt
Oet coeth gwr a doeth y dyd.

Tra vu ddyt davyt difefyl ddylif ead
Oet cadarn y gynnif
Oet kedawl oet cadyr yg gnif
Oet koeth digrawn doeth digrif.

confederacy against Edward I. The place of meeting was near Builth, in Breconshire. He posted his army on a mountain in the neighbourhood, and went alone and unarmed to the appointed spot; but the design having been betrayed, apparently by the persons implicated in the plot, instead of meeting with his confederates, the outposts were attacked by hostile forces. These made no impression, until a ford was shown where the river might be crossed, when a party of English horse surrounded the place where the Prince stood. He, in endeavouring to get back to his own army, was followed by an English knight named Adam de Francton, who, knowing only that he was a Welshman, ran his spear through his body, which he left where it lay, and then joined the English troops under Sir Edmund Mortimer in the attack on the Cambrian army. The battle, which occurred on the 10th of December, 1282, lasted three hours, and after a severe conflict the Kymry were compelled to give way. All this time Llewelyn had lain upon the ground, faint and expiring. He had just life enough remaining to ask for a priest; and a white friar, who chanced to be present, administered to the dying prince the last sacred duties of his office.¹ After the battle De Francton returned into the valley to strip the person he had wounded. On viewing the body, which was still breathing, it was found, to the great joy of the English army, that the dying person was no other than the Prince of Wales. As soon as Llewelyn was dead De Francton cut off the head, which, as a gift of high value, he presented to the King at Conway. The body lay unburied for some time, though the Prince's friends were solicitous that he might be interred in consecrated ground. The Lady Matilda Longespec also, among others, interested herself for a decent interment; but this indulgence, small as it was, was not allowed. As soon as the head was brought to him, the English King sent it to London; and, in order to feast the eyes of his subjects with a novel and savage spectacle, it was ornamented with a silver circle, and placed in the pillory in Cheapside, in ridicule of the prophecy of Merlin that Llewelyn would one day wear the crown of Brutus. In contempt also of the late prediction of the soothsayer, that this prince would ride through Cheapside crowned with a silver diadem, his head was encircled with

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<sup>1</sup> Warrington, vol. ii. p. 269.

a wreath of ivy, and being fixed on the point of a spear, was carried through the streets by a horseman; it was then placed upon the highest turret in the Tower of London, where it remained for a long time.<sup>1</sup>

These facts will render the allusions in the poem intelligible, and fully justify the observations of Warrington<sup>2</sup> that "to insult the remains of a fallen enemy, and a sovereign prince, by devices which were mean and vindictive, was more suited to the leader of a tribe of Arabs than a great monarch."

<sup>3</sup> Cold is my heart beneath a breast stricken with sorrow  
 For the royal diviner of the court of Aberffraw.  
 Gold that was not smooth was paid from his hand;  
 He was worthy of a golden diadem.  
 Golden horns of a golden monarch, I shall have no joy,  
 Llewelyn is not living, gracefully to enrobe me;  
 Woe is me for a lordly hawk free from reproach!  
 Woe is me of the misfortune which has befallen him!  
 Woe is me of losing him, woe is me of his destiny!  
 Woe is me of hearing that he was wounded!  
 Woe, ye tents of Cadwaladr, that the obstructor of the flood is pierced!  
 Golden-handed prince, hero of the red-stained spear,  
 Every winter he distributed rich apparel,  
 And clothed me with garments from his own person.  
 Lord of plenteous flocks, our right hand has not prospered,  
 But he shall enjoy life eternal.  
 It is my lot to complain of Saxon treachery,

<sup>1</sup> Warrington, vol. ii. p. 277.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. vol. ii. p. 278.

<sup>3</sup> Oer galon dan fron o fraw—allwynin  
 Am frenin dewin dor Aberffraw  
 Aur dilyfn a delid oi law  
 Aur dalaeth oedd deilwng iddaw.  
 Eurgyrn aur deyrn nim daw—llawenydd  
 Llywelyn nid rhydd i'm rhwydd wisgaw  
 Gwae fi am Arglwydd gwalch diwradydd  
 Gwae fi o'r aflwydd ei dramgyddaw.  
 Gwae fi or golled gwae fi or dynged  
 Gwae fi or clywed fod clwyf arnaw  
 Gwersyll Cadwaladr gwae saf llif daradr  
 Gwas rhudd ei baladr balawg eurllaw  
 Gwasgaroedd alaf gwisgoedd bob gauaf  
 Gwisgoedd am danaf oddi am danaw  
 Bucheslawn arglwydd min llwydd yn llaw  
 Buchedd dragywydd a drig iddaw  
 Ys mau bid wrth Sais am fy nhreisiaw



It is mine to complain of the necessity of dying,  
 It is mine to despise myself because God  
 Has left me without him,  
 It is mine to praise him without interruption or silence,  
 It is mine henceforth to meditate on him,  
 It is mine while life lasts for him to mourn,  
 It is mine to grieve, mine to weep.  
 A lord I have lost—well may I mourn—  
 A lord of a royal palace, slain by a human hand,  
 A lord righteous and truthful : listen to me !  
 I soar to complain. Oh that I should have cause !  
 A lord, victorious until the eighteen<sup>1</sup> were slain,  
 A lord who was gentle, whose possession is now the silent earth,  
 A lord who was like a lion, ruling the elements,  
 A lord whose disfigurement makes us most uneasy,  
 A lord who was praised in songs, as Emrys predicted ;  
 No Saxon would dare to touch him.  
 A lord, the admired of the Kymry ; is he not held in sepulchre,  
 Who ought rightly to hold (the sceptre of) Aberffraw ?  
 Lord Christ, how seriously I grieve for him ;  
 Lord of truth, grant him salvation.  
 Oh, the heavy sword-stroke which slew him !

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Ys mau rhag angau angen gwynaw
 Ys mau gan ddefnydd ymddifanw a Duw
 Am edewis hebddaw
 Ys mau eu ganmawl heb dawl heb daw
 Ys mau fyth bellach ei faith bwyllaw
 Ys mau im dyn hoedl am danaw afar
 Canys mau alar ys mau wylaw
 Arglwydd a gollais gallaf hirfraw
 Arglwydd teyrnblas a las o law
 Arglwydd cywir gwir gwarandaw arnaf
 Uched y cwynaf och or cwynaw
 Arglwydd llwydd cyn lladd y deunaw
 Arglwydd llary neud llawr ei ystaw eiddaw
 Arglwydd glew fal llew yn llywiaw elfydd
 Arglwydd aflonydd eu afluniaw
 Arglwydd kannadlwydd cyn adaw Emrais
 Ni lyfasai Sais ei ogleisiau
 Arglwydd neud maendo ymandaw Cymry
 Or llin a ddyly ddal Aberffraw
 Arglwydd Crist mor wyf drist drostaw
 Arglwydd gwir gwared y ganthaw
 O gleddyfawd trwm tramgwydd arnaf

¹ Here apparently we have an historical fact not hitherto noticed ; the number of the persons he took with him appears to have been eighteen.

Oh, the long-swords which caused his ruin !
 Oh, the wound inflicted by the loss of our ruling prince !
 Oh that we should have heard that his army was obstructed !
 The heroic chief was slain by the hand of a stranger,
 And the privilege of his age was not respected.
 Candle of sovereignty, powerful lion of Gwynedd,
 Whom the chair of honour so greatly became !
 Alas his death ! Wide Britain mourns the fall of her supporter.
 Oh that the lion was slain, who was our talisman and armour !
 Many a slippery tear sails down the cheek,
 Many a wounded side is red with gore,
 Many a foot is bathed in blood,
 Many a widow mourns her partner lost,
 Many a mind is heavily troubled,
 Many a son grieves over a father slain,
 Many an old grey town is deserted,
 Many will be ruined by yonder deed.

A portion of this elegy which succeeds these lines has been already rendered into English verse. The translation occurs in Jones's *Relics of the Welsh Bards*; and as they very faithfully represent in a pleasing form the sublimity of the original, the lines are here inserted :¹

Frequent is heard the voice of woe,
 Frequent the tears of sorrow flow ;

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O gleddyfau hir yn ei ddiriaw  
 O glwyf am fy rhwyf y sy'm rhwyfaw  
 O glywed lludded llu bod faeaw  
 Cwbl o was alas o law ysgeraint  
 Cwbl braint ei henaint oedd o honaw  
 Canwyll teyrnedd cadarn llew Gwynedd  
 Cadair anrhydedd rhaid oedd wrthaw  
 O laith Prydain faith cwynllaith canllaw  
 O ladd llew o an coel lluryg na'neaw  
 Llauer deigr hylithr yn hwylaw ar rudd  
 Llauer ystlys rudd a rhwyg arnaw  
 Llauer gwaed am draed wedi ymdreiddiaw  
 Llauer gweddw a gwaedd y amdanaw  
 Llauer meddwl trwm yn tomrwyaw  
 Llauer mab heb dad gwedi ei adaw  
 Llauer hendref fraith gwedi llwybr godaith  
 Llauer diffraith drwy anrhaith draw.

<sup>1</sup> Llauer llef druan ful ban fu'r Gamlan  
 Llauer deigr dros ran wedi'r greiniaw

Such sounds as erst in Camlan heard  
 Rous'd to wrath old Arthur's bard,  
 Cambria's warrior we deplore ;  
 Our Llewelyn is no more.  
 Who like Llewelyn now remains  
 To shield from wrong his native plains ?  
 My soul with piercing grief is fill'd,  
 My vital blood with horror chill'd :  
 Nature herself is changed, and lo !  
 Now all things sympathise below !  
 Hark ! how the howling wind and rain  
 In loudest symphony complain !  
 Hark ! how the consecrated oaks,  
 Unconscious of the woodman's strokes,  
 With thundering crash proclaim he's gone ;  
 Fall in each other's arms and groan !  
 Hark ! how the sullen tempests roar !  
 See ! how the white waves lash the shore !  
 See ! how eclipsed the sun appears !  
 See ! how the stars fall from their spheres !  
 Each awful Heaven-sent prodigy,  
 Ye sons of infidelity,  
 Believe and tremble. Guilty land,  
 Lo ! thy destruction is at hand !  
 Thou great Creator of the world,  
 Why are not Thy red lightnings hurl'd ?  
 Will not the sea at Thy command  
 Swallow up this guilty land ?  
 Why are we left to mourn in vain  
 The guardian of our country slain ?

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O leas gwanas gwanar eurlaw
 O laith Llywelyn cof dyn ni'm daw
 Oerfelawg calon dan fron o fraw
 Rewydd fal crinwydd y sy'n crinaw
 Poni welchwï hynt y gwynt ar glaw
 Poni welchwï'r deri yn ymdaraw
 Poni welchwï'r mor yn merwinaw'r tir
 Poni welchwï'r gwynt yn ymgyweiriaw
 Poni welchwï'r haul yn hwylaw'r awyr
 Poni welchwï'r syr wedi syrthiaw
 Poni chredchwï Dduw dyniadon ynyd
 Poni welchwï'r byd wedi bydiaw
 Oeh hyd attad Dduw na ddaw—mor dros dir
 Pa beth i'n gedir i ohiriaw
 Nid oes le y cyrher rhag caarchar braw

No place, no refuge, for us left,
 Of homes, of liberty, bereft ;
 Where shall we flee ? to whom complain,
 Since our dear Llewelyn's slain ?

The verse translation ending here, it becomes necessary to resume our literal version : ¹

Every member of his worthy family,
 Every tenant who lived under him,
 Every chieftain, every land that was his,
 Every cantrev, and every town—all are pierced with grief.
 Every family, every tribe, are sorrowing ;
 Every weak and every powerful maintained by his hand,
 Every son in the land, groans in anguish.
 It was small gain to deceive me
 By leaving my head and taking his ; ²

A head which, when severed, was not avenged by Kymry,
 A head which, when slain, had better have been preserved ;
 The head of a warrior, a ruler of highest celebrity ;
 The head was that of a dragon, and on his crest a dragon's head.³
 Head of Llewelyn the fair, profoundly feared,
 Oh that there should be an iron spear through it !

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Nid oes le y triger och o'r trigaw  
 Nid oes na chynghor na chlo nac egor  
 Unffordd i esgor brwyngyngor braw.

<sup>1</sup> Pob teulu teilwng oedd iddaw  
 Pob cedwyr cedwynt y danaw  
 Pob dengyn a dyngynt o'i law  
 Pob gwledig pob gwlad oedd iddaw  
 Pob cantref pob tref ynt yn treiddiaw  
 Pob tylwyth pob llwyth y sy'n llithraw  
 Pob gwan pob cadarn cadwedd o'i law  
 Pob mab yn ei gryd y sy'n udaw  
 Bychan lles oedd ym am fy nhwyllaw  
 Gadael pen arnaf heb ben arnaw

Pen pan las ni bu gas gymraw  
 Pen pan las oedd lesach peidiaw  
 Pen milwr pen moliant rhagllaw  
 Pen dragon pen draig oedd arnaw  
 Pen Llywelyn deg dygn o fraw—i'r byd  
 Bod pawl haiarn drwyddaw

<sup>2</sup> The finest pathos of this poem is taken from the monody on St. David. See his Life in the *Cambro-British Saints*, p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> Pendragon is chief leader.

Head of a lord after whom we severely grieve,  
 Head that was owner of nine hundred lands,  
     Having nine hundred feasts;  
 Head of sovereigns, from whose hand the spear swiftly flew,  
 Head of proud princes, of the blunted sword,  
 Head of wolf-like rulers loving the battle's front,  
 Head of Christian sovereigns—may heaven be his lot!  
 Blessed sovereign, leader of a splendid army,  
 A blessed host conquering as far as Brittany,  
 True and rightful King of Aberffraw,  
 May he inherit the blessed land of heaven!

This bard was the ablest of his day, and this elegy is a fine specimen of his ability. He was strongly inspired with the true spirit of poetry, and seems to have been greatly affected by the fate of his beloved prince. The figures are beautiful and unusually bold; and were they not justified by the bard's Hebrew models, and by the subsequent examples of the greatest names in modern poetry, an ample defence would be furnished in their own intrinsic force and sublimity. I wish such flights of fancy were more frequent among other bards; their poems would then have taken a firmer hold than they have upon the public mind. This poem is worthy the occasion which called it forth, and forms a fitting wail on a hero's fall.

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Pen Arglwydd poen dyngwydd amdaw
 Pen fenaïd heb fanag arnaw
 Pen a fu berchen ar barch naw Canwlad
 A naw canwledd iddo
 Pen teyrn heyrn heid o'i law
 Penteyrnwalch balch bwlch ei ddeifniaw
 Penteyrnaidd flaidd flaengar ganthaw
 Penteyrnef nef ei nawdd arnaw
 Gwyndeyrn ortheyrn wrthaw
 Gwendorf gorf gorfynt hynt hyd Lydaw
 Gwir freiniol frenhin Aberffraw
 Gwenwlad nef boed addef iddaw.

Myv. Arch. vol. i. p. 397.

SECTION III.

THE RELIGIOUS POETRY OF THE BARDS.

IT is a fact now satisfactorily established by the concurrent researches of Blount, Hughes, Rees, and Stebbing, that there was a British Church in these islands prior to the arrival of Augustine. The Church then had, and continued among the Kymry for many centuries to have, a separate and independent existence. Wide differences of opinion on matters pertaining to doctrine and Church government existed between the two Churches, and until members of the Church of Rome, in the course of time, insinuated themselves into the British churches, these differences continued. And even then the fusion was not complete; for the Kymry ever looked with a jealous eye upon foreign ecclesiastics.

This fact will go far to account for the appearance during the middle ages of a mass of religious poetry in the Cambrian language. I was not a little surprised, in perusing these, to find the bards, almost to a man, exercising their talents in the composition of a species of literature which seemed so inconsistent with their practices and professions; but on examination it soon appeared that they had been judged both harshly and unfairly. The Kymry have ever been a religious people; and the profession of Christianity seems now to be a necessary part of their constitution. It will have been observed that scarcely one of their poems begins without an invocation to the Deity, and none end without aspirations for eternal joy hereafter; and it is both interesting and instructive to mark the effect of the principles of Christianity upon men who were by no means favourably disposed towards its teachers. The bards had the discrimination to distinguish between the truth of religion and the mixture of truth and error then usually presented under that name. In the bardic poems we frequently meet with wholesale denunciations of the clergy; but in the whole range of Kymric poetry there is not, I confidently venture to assert, a line of impiety. The professors of a religion, whose precepts they did not practise, were satirised, and justly too; but that

censure was never indiscriminate, and co-existed with sincere and unaffected belief. In the lapse of centuries, the independence of the Kymry became greatly compromised; but the people kept to themselves the right of private judgment, and a disposition to put that right in practice. We have already quoted Meilir's ode upon his death-bed. Kynddelw has a long poem in ten parts, addressed to the Deity, a part of which has been already given; and he has another, supposed to have been his last literary effort, of much greater merit, in which he endeavours, with much success, to show that the bardic profession was not inconsistent with piety. PRYDYDD Y MOCH has an address to the Deity, as has DAVYDD BENVRAS; MEILIR AB GWALCHMAI has eight small poems on devotional subjects, without much merit; and EINION, his brother, is not more fortunate in the three long addresses to God which bear his name. ELIDIR SAIS has several religious poems of much more than ordinary merit. One of them has excellence enough to justify quotation:¹

A DIVINE ODE.

Consider thy errors, for it is written,
 "With God there will be no contention,
 But truth, and mild tranquillity,
 And true mercy," as He has said.
 Examine thy conduct ere thou goest to the grave!
 If thou hast done wrong, be not surprised
 Should there be extreme payment before Jesus.
 Where the three hosts see the evils he has done,
 Woe to the believer who has sinned;
 The deception will not be mercifully passed away,
 And though he thinks not of it, there will be prepared

¹ Ystyr di enuir heruyd a treithir
 Gan dduu ny cheffir dim cynirha
 Eithr gwiryoned a gwar tangeved
 A gwir drugared val y gueda
 Edrych dy vuched kyn myn'd i'th ved
 O gunaethost gamued na ryveda
 Bot yn dir talu ger bron Iesu
 Lle y guelo trillu y trallaut a wna
 Yr tuyll nyt truan a divlannu
 Ac ny meddylio a rwy dirpero
 Y ruyf a gaffo nyt ymgoffha

To meet the sinner the record of his sins.
 Who have done well will be esteemed,
 And honoured at the feast of the blessed.
 I have seen Llewelyn with armies numerous as Mervyn's,
 And the Kymry of the land thronging around him ;
 I have seen the chiefs of North and South Cambria,
 Pillars of battle, sitting on their thrones ;
 I have seen men in battle upon prancing war-steeds ;
 I have seen wine flowing, hosts of men, and play-places ;
 I have seen numbers perpetually drinking,
 And the world increasing in good men :
 All these passed away like contracting shadows,
 And yet men dream of never-ending days !
 The rich shall not have longer life
 Than the disturbed or the contentious.
 Let man consider, ere he is overtaken by death and the grave,
 What he will ask, what he will hate ;
 Let him ask every virtue, and the feast will never end,—
 And the joyfulness and peace of faith will be perpetual ;
 But let him not ask to cheat, and falsely charge
 With injustice Heaven in its beauty.
 When attentively considered, penance becomes a serious duty,
 On account of the triumph over Eve ;



Cyt boed gyvanned bydaul gymmyrred
 Guledd guneir enrhydedd uned a wna
 Gweleis Lywelyn luoced eil Mervyn
 A chymry tervyn yn y tyrva
 Guelais beannaethu guyned a deheu
 Colofynnau cadeu cyd orsedfa
 Guelais uyr yn trin a meirch mysterin
 A guin a guerin a gwaruyva,
 Guelais liosydd a chyved beunydd
 A byd ar gynnydd gynnif gwyrda
 Hynny aeth heibiau mal ymchoel dylau
 Mae pawb yn adaw oed dibarha
 Ni cheiff cyvoethanc vot yn hir hoedlauc
 Vuy no chynwinauc na chynhenna
 Ystyryeit pan vo rac poeneu a gro
 Ba beth a geisso beth a gassa
 Keisset pob detuyd y wled ny derydd
 Lleuenydd llonydd ffydd a ffynna
 Na cheisset hocket truy gam gyhudet
 Nef yn y thecket kan ny thycka
 Pan luyr veddylier penyt pryt pryder
 Pan gam edylllder over Eva
 Nat oe gammoed ef yd aeth Arglwyd nef

It was not for sins of His own that the Lord of heaven,
 Symmetrical sacrifice ! suffered on the tree.
 Woe be to him whose original sin is unforgiven ;
 Sad will it be to see him, when with downcast look,
 Showing the gashes and all His wounds,
 The nail-marks, the blood, and the cross,
 Christ the mysterious, King of kings, shall say,
 " This did I ; what hast thou done ? "
 For the good holiness is prepared in the presence of the Deity.
 For the sinful there will be total destruction.
 Woe to the miserly and the cheat,
 And those who from false notions do not worship ;
 They will be seen atoning for their sins,
 And repenting, in the pains of hell ;
 And there will be seen in the glory of heaven
 Those who walked in the paths of righteousness :
 The excess of joy will not end,
 And the free and open feast will last for ever.

LLYWELYN VARDD has also several poems of considerable merit, addressed to the Cambrian princes, and particularly one to Owain Gwynedd ; but considering that the repetition of the same topics and ideas was likely to weary the reader, I thought it imprudent to give another of the same class as those already quoted, and therefore selected a poem in which the bard has attempted to realise the preparatory stages of the last awful judgment. The merit of the poem is not very great ; but as

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Y pren diodef edyl traha  
 Gwae nyt mat anet bechodaul ueithret  
 Tosted vyd guelet goluc lyvrdra  
 Dangos ffrowyllen ae holl archolleu  
 Ae gethreu ac greu ae groc a una  
 Hynn a wnaethum i beth a wuaethost di  
 Med Crist Celi rhi rheid oed yna  
 Bod gleindydyt puraud yn erbyn Duydaut  
 Rac trallaut pechaut devaut diva  
 Gwae wynt y kebydyon ar hoeket dynion  
 Ac camvedylyon ynt adola  
 Gweled en madeu dros eu camwedeu  
 Yn uffern boeneu benyt gudva  
 A guelet mynet i nef ogonet  
 Y saul a gaffet ar gyffurf da  
 Y gan leuenyd y uled ni deryt  
 Yn dragywd vyd rat gymanva.

the sublimity of the subject would be enough to keep it free from commonplaces, it may be readable :<sup>1</sup>

THE SIGNS BEFORE THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

Friend ! listen thou to the sense  
 Which the books so fully express ;  
 Miracles will be evident to the observer,  
 And the sea will be raised to the sky !  
 The British channel is not measureless,  
 For God has unfolded  
 The magnitude of the signs which will be  
 On the fifteenth day before judgment ;  
 The fourteenth day,  
 The course of the great sea will be stopped,  
 And in the depth of the earth such a spectacle,  
 That the wind cannot reach the billows ;  
 Thirteenth day, men of science  
 Will be greatly astonished to see the ocean,  
 Which, when it comes to be noticed,  
 Will be seen to be not where it was.  
 Twelfth day, God is enough ;  
 The animals of the sea, of great qualities,  
 And every kind of fish, from its incontinence,  
 Will be thrown on the surface of the deep.



<sup>1</sup> Gwyn gwarandaw di ar synhwyr  
 A draetha y llyfrau mor llwyr  
 Gwyrthau golau gwelhator  
 Dyrchavael mor hyd awyr  
 Morudd meidrawl ei ddefawd  
 Oblegid Duw a'i dywawd  
 Maint yr arwyddion a fydd  
 Pumthegfed dydd cyn dydd brawd  
 Y pedwerydd dydd ar ddeg  
 Ydgyrch mor mawr attreg  
 Yn nyfnder daiar dremynt  
 Fal nas cyrraedd gwynt gwaneg  
 Trydydd ar ddeg trwy deithi  
 Mawr uthredd gweled gweilgi  
 Pryd pan eler i'w sylli  
 Nad ym men yd fu yd fi  
 Deuddegfed dydd Duw digawn  
 Anifeiliaid mor mawr ddawn  
 Y daw pob pysg oi odeb  
 Hyd ar wyneb yr eigiawn

Eleventh day, the circle of danger is closing up ;  
 Created beings tremble  
 From fear of an unrestrained flood,—  
 The birds of the earth abstain (from singing ?)  
 Tenth day, in consequence of the elements  
 Men cannot converse ;  
 And the sea will cease its motions  
 From the action of the streams of fire.  
 After the tenth will come the ninth,  
 God Himself planning the events ;  
 Showers of fire will fall from the stars.  
 Eighth day, there will be heard  
 Edicts certain and uncontrollable,  
 Sternly showing what would shortly come,  
 So that man and earth shall tremble.  
 Seventh day, the day of prophecy,  
 The greatest rocks will be split asunder,  
 For they break from the terror of judgment.  
 Sixth day, bitter will be the signs ;  
 Blood will come from straw and wood,  
 And the Lord, our Protector,  
 Will give us belief and baptism.  
 Fifth day, the elements will wage unsuccessful war ;

~~~~~  
 Undegfed dydd cerdd ceugant
 Creaduriau yd grynant
 Rhac ofn diliw diarchar
 Adar daiar dirwestant
 Degfed dydd herwydd anian
 Ni aill dyniadon diddan
 Mor diffaith nis ryddfawdd
 Rhag maint ffrawdd ffrydiau tân
 Nawfed wedi degfed daw
 Duw ei hun yn ei luniaw
 Ufeliar tân drwy ysgyr ergyr
 Or syr yn syrthiaw
 Wythfed dydd dybydd dyar
 Deddfau diau diarchar
 Dygn ddangos aros erfyn
 Fal yd gryn dyn a daear
 Seithfed dydd dydd darogan
 Main mwyaf oll a holddan
 Gwyrthiau Duw a ddangosan
 Rhag arynaig brawd briwan
 Arwyddon chwewr chweched dydd
 Y daw gwaed or gwellt ar gwydd
 An Arglwydd ein Arglledrydd

The Lord will not be hidden
 When there shall be breaking of rushes,
 And when churches shall be falling down.
 Fourth day, it will be serious
 For the animals of the world ;
 They wildly rush about in view,
 Knowing that they will not all go.
 Third and pitiful day ;
 Of the terror of judgment there is fear,
 And men part from all they love on earth.
 Second day, before the day of the deluge,
 The serious people of Christ know Him ;
Palpable ghosts they walk about,
 Knowing that they shall not live.
 One day God will bring all
 The children of Adam from a distance ;
 And the dumb, the insane, and the passionate
 Will be in full possession of their faculties.

The pseudo-Taliesin has a poem on the same subject.

It was at the beginning of the thirteenth century that that quarrel, so important to the interests of the Kymry, took place between the English monarch and Giraldus Cambrensis. The Kings of England had, for a long period, aided and countenanced the attempts of the Archbishop of Canterbury to break down

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An rhoddes ni cered a bedydd  
 Pumhed dydd elfydd aflwydd  
 Rhyfel nid argel Arglwydd  
 Pan fo briwa brwynan  
 Eglwysau diau digwydd  
 Pedwerydd dydd trwy dristyd  
 Arnaid anifeiliaid byd  
 Yngwylloedd cyhoedd i cerddant  
 Can gwyddant nad ant y gyd  
 Trydydd dydd drueni  
 Rhag arynaig brawd braw fi  
 A rygollo pawb o gar  
 Ar wyneb daear Dyfi  
 Eildydd cyn no dydd dilyw  
 Pobloedd drist Crist a'i cennyw  
 Yngwylloedd cyhoedd cerddant  
 Can gwddant na byddant byw  
 Undydd Dofydd dybydd oil  
 Pobloedd plant Addaf o bell  
 A mud a drud a drythyll  
 Yn llwyr yn eu llawn ddeall.

*Myv. Arch.* vol. i. p. 363.

the independence of the Cambrian Church; and for this purpose they assisted him in forcing English bishops into Kymric sees. The position of the Cambrian Church at this time was somewhat anomalous; the bishops appointed by the Kings of England, with the sanction of the archbishops, were received, and allowed to continue unless they made themselves obnoxious by tyrannical conduct; in which case they were unceremoniously expelled, and others elected in their place; and these elected bishops, in many cases, were allowed to remain undisturbed. Giraldus was less fortunate; he had been elected to the see of St. David; but King Henry, and afterwards King John, were determined that the see of St. David should not have a bishop from among the Kymry. The contest was continued with doubtful success for many years; the Archbishop of Canterbury named another person to that see, and the Pope, after much equivocation, when he had extracted from both the Kings of England and the Cambrian princes all the money that he was likely to have, annulled both appointments, and left them to settle their own quarrel. Giraldus was ultimately superseded. We make these remarks in order to introduce a few extracts as specimens of prose composition, from the very powerfully written petition of the Kymric princes in favour of Giraldus. Addressing the Pope they say:

The Archbishops of Canterbury, as if it were a matter of course, send among us English bishops, ignorant alike of both our customs and language, and who can neither preach the word of God to the people nor receive their confessions except through the mediation of interpreters.

These bishops, arriving from England in this manner, love neither ourselves nor our country, but, on the contrary, vex and persecute us with a hatred rooted and national; they seek not the good of our souls, but only aspire to rule over and not to benefit us. For which reason they do not often labour among us in discharge of their ministerial functions, but whatever they can lay hold of, or obtain from us, whether justly or unjustly, they take away to England, and there live luxuriantly and wastefully upon wealth derived from the monasteries and lands given to them by the Kings of England. From thence, like the Parthians, who discharge their arrows while flying and at a distance, they excommunicate us as often as they are desired so to do.

Whenever an expedition is preparing against us in England, the Primate of Canterbury suddenly lays under an interdict that part of the country which it is proposed to invade. Our bishops, who are his

creatures, hurl their anathemas against the people collectively, and by name against the chiefs who take up arms to lead them to combat. So that whenever we take up arms to defend our native land against a foreign enemy, such of us as fall in battle die under the ban of excommunication.

I cite these only as specimens of vigorous composition; and they will be generally admitted to be so, though much of their force is of course due to the cases of glaring injustice they expose.

There are pertaining to this period several series of documents which possess considerable literary merit, and are creditable to their authors. These are the letters from and to the Kymric princes, and the Archbishops of Canterbury as the agents of the English monarchs. I would call attention to the letters which passed between Archbishop Peckham and the Princes Llewelyn and David ab Gruffydd and the men of Snowdon. Had they not been already published in English by Warington, and in Welsh by the Rev. T. Price, they would have been inserted here, as I think highly of their merit; but if the reader will take the trouble to peruse them in either the *History of Wales* or *Hanes Cymru*, he cannot fail to coincide with me in the belief that in manly reasoning, eloquent indignation, and combined wit and logic, the letters of Prince Llewelyn, the men of Snowdon, and Prince David far excel those of the Archbishop. It ought, however, to be conceded that the latter had the worst side; but neither the wit nor the reasoning of the Kymry was of any avail; war was predetermined, and negotiations were but a pretence to veil the preparations which were being made and lull the Cambrian princes into a false sense of security.

We do not find many religious poems in the early part of the reign of Llewelyn ab Gruffydd. LLYGAD GWR'S poems are all heroic, and among those of the PRYDYDD BYCHAN and BLEDDYN VARDD there is not one on a devotional topic. Towards the close of the thirteenth century poems of this class become more numerous, and religious poems assume importance. But while upon this subject I do not think I can do it greater justice than in quoting the Rev. T. Price at some length:

But although their proud and luxurious enemies accuse the Kymry of disrespect to Church matters, I am quite convinced that at this period

they possessed religious feelings fully as warm, and knowledge quite as extensive, as the same class of men in any portion of the world. As an example of their religious character I will take a few extracts from the works of contemporary bards, which methinks show the religious tendencies of Wales better than if we had numerous theological treatises to lay before the reader.

The following is from GRUFFYDD AB YR YNAD COCH, of whom we have already spoken. The bard expresses his regret that sinners will not believe in the sufferings of Christ; and shows an intimate acquaintance with Christian doctrine and Scripture history. He begins one ode thus: <sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "Alas! Thou King who rulest above,  
 The generous Father who lightens eye and hand!  
 That the sinner will not believe he has been saved  
 From going to a pit, to remain afar;  
 Nor that Christ was pained and broken-hearted,  
 Nor that He went to the Cross for him.  
 Alas that he knows not well the slaying of the Lord,  
 And that He was left in mockery!  
 If man would but set his mind to consider  
 The pain HE suffered  
 When His flesh was pierced by nails,  
 He would not commit sin nor desire it,  
 Even if there were not a day when God shall come  
 And pass judgment upon us.  
 And the blood is as fresh  
 As the day He was crucified,

<sup>1</sup> *Hanes Cymru*, p. 758, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Och hyd ar frenin freint ucheldaw  
 Haeldad goleuad llygad a llaw  
 Na chred pechadur ei ddifuriau  
 Yny el i bŵll i bell drigaw  
 Na phoeni gau galon dreuliau  
 Na myned o Grist ir grog erddaw  
 Ac na wyr yn llwyr llabyddiau—'n harglwydd  
 A thrwy waradwydd ei wir adaw  
 Bei meddyliai ddyn ai feddyliau  
 A fu o ddolur ar ei ddwyllaw  
 Gan gethri parawd yn cythruddaw—cawd  
 Ef ni wna! bechawd nai rybuchaw  
 Be na bai undydd dofydd an daw  
 Dyddbrawd yn barawd i'n diburaw  
 Ar gwaed gyn irel  
 Ar dydd y croged

And His hands were spread out  
 When the deed was done.  
 And the blood was in streams  
 About His breast,  
 And His wounds  
 Are unhealed.  
 And the crown of thorns,  
 And His lifeless body,  
 And His head encircled  
 With the thorny ring.  
 And the mark on His side  
 Of the scourges  
 Which took away His life  
 And gave Him pain,  
 And all to purchase the son of man  
 From the everlasting fire,  
 By the enemy  
 In whose hands He was."

We have here an acknowledgment of the doctrine of the salvation of man through the blood of Christ as clearly as it would be laid down by any divine of a more enlightened age. In the following lines from another ode by the same bard the same doctrine is contained; but we have in addition the doctrine of the intercession of the saints.

1 "The protection of Father and Son freely give to my heart,  
 The protection of the Holy Ghost, in memory of the passion,

Ai ddwylaw ar lled  
 Wedi'r Hlidiaw  
 Ar gwaed yn ffrydiau  
 Ynghylch ei fronneu  
 Ai holl weliau  
 Heb eliaw  
 Ai goron yn ddrain  
 Ac yntau'n gelain  
 Ai ben yn anghrain  
 Wedi'r greiniaw  
 Ac ol ffrewyllau  
 Ar ei ystlysau  
 Er gwneuthur angau  
 A phoen iddaw  
 Er prynu mab dyn  
 Or tan ufelyn  
 Y gan ei elyn  
 Oedd yn aelaw.

1 Nawdd y tad ar mab rhad rhof am galon  
 Nawdd y glan yspryd cywyd cofion



The protection of Jesus, loving the crown of mercy,  
 Lover of discipline and disciples.  
 The protection of the Cross, of beneficial attributes,  
 Which Thou, God, tookest for the sake of Thy men,  
 Lest they should fall into the infernal pit  
 And among its infidel inhabitants.  
 The protection of Mercy, between me and my enemies,  
 The protection of Maria and Mary, and her maids,  
 And the protection of the great archangels,  
 Lord of heaven and earth, that we may prosper."

And then he proceeds to claim, after the usual fashion, the protection of numerous other saints.

The next extract of the same writer displays an intimate acquaintance with the theology of that period :

<sup>1</sup> "Seven deadly sins are the sins of the people ;  
 They are enumerated in the Bible.  
 For the seven deadly sins—not fictitious sins—  
 The seven prayers of the Pater are the best remedy.  
 Seven kind endowments, I know their beginning,  
 Seven splendours, let their names be repeated,  
 Seven blessed verses, before the pain of the Cross,  
 Christ sang with His lips.

Let the five ages of the world consider that these verses pardon.  
 When the only Son of God, on the best of days,  
 Went to the portals of hell, and its captive fiends,

Nawdd y Iesu caru coron taangnefedd  
 Caredd disgybledd a'i ddyisgyblon.  
 Nawdd y grog ddehau ddoniau ddanfon  
 A gymmeraist Dduw er dy ddynion  
 Rhag uffern gethern geithaw anffyddlawn  
 A'i chreulawn ddigawn ddigasogion.  
 Nawdd y cariad rhad rhof am galon  
 Nawdd myr a Mair ai morwyaion  
 A nawdd a archaf archengylion—mawr  
 Arglwydd nef a llawr fal y llwyddon, &c.

<sup>1</sup> Saith brifwyd pechawd yw pechodau'r bobl  
 Mae yn y Bibl eu henwau  
 Am saith briwyd nid gwyd gau  
 Saith weddi y pader arfer oreu  
 Seithrad mad medrwyf eu dechreu  
 Saith lleufer enwer eu henwau  
 Saith wers cymman glan cyn gloes angeu crog  
 A gant Crist ai enau  
 Ystyriaint pumoes byd eu bod ym maddeu  
 Pan aeth unmab Duw y dydd goreu  
 I ddrws porth uffern gethern gaethau

To pierce, with His Cross, and His blood,  
 The unhappy serpent in his mouth,  
 There were boiling —horrid the screaming !—  
 Seven hundred thousand cauldrons of souls.

“ And cold rain and snow,  
 And serpents and lions,  
 And all without cessation  
     Enduring punishment.  
 And the branching fiends,  
 And the horned Devil,  
 With sharp hoofs  
     On his heels.  
 And the hard-headed mice  
 With horned beaks,  
 And the blue iron tablets,  
     And the arrows strewed around ;  
 And the long wicked places,  
 And the murky furnaces,  
 And all crawling  
     With their eyes on their paws ;  
 And wicked long spits,  
 And every contrivance,

I wân heb annog ai grog oi grau  
 Y sarph aflawen yn eu enau  
 Ydd oedd yn berwi wb o'r barau  
 Saith canmil peiriad o eneidiau.

A glaweir ac ot  
 A seirph a llewod  
 A phawb heb ammod  
     Yn ei boenau  
 Ar cethri osglawg  
 Ar cythraul corniawg  
 Ar cynn llym sodlawg  
     Ar ei sodlau  
 Ar llygod pengarn  
 Ar gylfinau carn  
 Ar llech las haiarn  
     Ar sarn saethau  
 Ar ffair yn hirddrwg  
 Ar ffwrn dywyllwg  
 A phawb ai olwg  
     Ar ei balfau  
 A phob rhyw hirddrwg  
 A phob cyfriwg

And all sorts of creeping things  
 Upon ancient doors.  
 And every contrivance to wound the flesh,  
 And every flesh-wounder with his flesh-hooks;  
 And all howling,  
 And all wailing,  
 And all crying  
 For death to kill them," &c.

This poem concludes with a prayer, in which the poet asks for

“ Communion and confession,  
 And the pleasure of books,  
 And what is good and necessary,  
 And fitting. Amen.  
 Communion with the Lord  
 As is best.  
 That I be not a lazy glutton,  
 That I be not languid and timid,  
 That I be not a worker  
 Of evil deeds;  
 That I be not vituperative,  
 That I be not pugnacious,  
 That I be not unkind,  
 Harboursing deceit;  
 That my life be not unfortunate  
 Through other's doing;  
 And that when death arrives  
 I be not unwise. Amen.”<sup>1</sup>

A phob eiddiorwg  
 Ar hen doreu  
 A phob rhyw ddefawd  
 Er doluriaw enawd  
 A phob cigweinawd  
 Ar cigweinau  
 A phawb yn ubain  
 A phawb yn germain  
 A phawb yn llefain  
 Nas lladd angeu, &c.

<sup>1</sup> Cymmun a chyffes  
 A lles llyfrau  
 Olew ac angen  
 A chymuyll Amen  
 A chymmod am rhen  
 Yr hyn goreu

MADAWG AB GWALLTER was another religious bard who wrote about 1250. He was the author of the following lines to Christ, which, though they contain some obscure words, are pretty intelligible when we consider that six hundred years have elapsed since they were written. No other nation can produce such another specimen of old literature so intelligible in the present day :<sup>1</sup>

“ A Son has been given us,  
 A kind Son is born  
     With great privileges ;  
 A Son of glory,  
 A Son to save us ;  
     The best of sons ;  
 Son of a virgin mother,—  
 With a merciful religion,  
     Full of good precepts ;  
 Without an incarnate father,  
 This is the free Son,  
     The Gift of gifts ;  
 We will wisely consider,

Ni bwyf lwth diawg  
 Ni bwyf lesg ofnawg  
 Ni bwyf weithredawg  
     Camweithredau  
 Ni bwyf gyhuddgar  
 Ni bwyf ymladdgar  
 Ni bwyf anhygar  
     Yn hogi gau  
 Ni bwyf hoedyl gywall  
 O weithred arall  
 Ni bwyf wr angall  
     Erbyn angeu. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Mab an rhodded  
 Mab mad aned  
     Dan ei freiniau  
 Mab gogoned  
 Mab i'n gwared  
     Y mab goreu  
 Mab mam forwyn  
 Grefydd aeddfwyn  
     Aeddfed eiriau  
 Heb gnawdol Dad  
 Hwn yw'r mab rhad  
     Rhoddiad rhadau  
 Doeth ystyrion

And wonder  
     Wonders ;  
 Nothing more wonderful  
 Will again demand  
     Praise from our lips ;  
 God growing,  
 Man creating,  
     Creatures ;  
 A God, a Man,  
 And the God a Man,  
     With the same faculties ;  
 A great little Giant,  
 A strong puny Potentate,  
     Of pale cheeks.  
 Richly poor,  
 Our Father and Brother,  
     Author of being ;  
 Jesus, He whom  
 We expect,  
     King of kings ;  
 Exalted, lowly,  
 Emmanuel,  
     Honey of minds ;

A rhyfeddwn  
     Rhyfeddodau  
 Dim rhyfeddach  
 Ni bydd bellach  
 Ni byll enau  
 Duw in dyfu  
 Dyn yn creu  
     Creaduriau  
 Yn Dduw yn ddyn  
 Ar Duw yn ddyn  
     Yn un ddoniau  
 Cawr mawr bychan  
 Cryf cadarn gwan  
     Gwynion ruddiau  
 Cyfoethawg tlawd  
 An tad an brawd.  
     Awdur brodiau  
 Iesu yw hwn  
 A erbyniwn  
     Yn ben rhiau  
 Uchel issel  
 Emmanuel  
     Mel meddyliau

With the ox and the ass,  
 The Lord of life  
     Lies in a manger;  
 And a heap of straw,  
 As a chair,  
     Clothed in tatters;  
 Velvet He wants not,  
 Nor white ermine,  
     To cover Him;  
 Around His couch  
 Rags were seen,  
     Instead of fine linen," &c.

He then proceeds to mention other incidents connected with the infancy of our Lord, and concludes by stating that He was born

"Of a lady,  
 Who will do us good  
     Beneath our burdens;  
 And will find us room  
 In the fairest place  
     Among the happy." <sup>1</sup>

We will take one extract more from the brother, Madawg ab Gwallter. The ode to God is written in a flowing style, and shows more splendour of imagery and language: <sup>2</sup>

"Save me, O Lord, and protect me.  
 I am weak, want strength; be Thou my Supporter.

Uch ac Assen  
 Arglwydd presen  
     Preseb piau  
 A soppen wair  
 Yn lle cadair  
     Yn llwycedau  
 Pali ni myn  
 Nid urael gwyn  
     Ei gynhiniau  
 Yn lle syndal  
 Ynghylch ei wal  
     Gwelid carpiâu, &c.

<sup>1</sup> O arglwyddes  
 Awna ynn lles  
     An lludd penau  
 Ac an gwna lle  
 Yn nhecca bre  
     Yngobrwyau. Amen.

<sup>2</sup> I DDUW.

Gwarded arnaf Naf, nawdd a'm rhoddych,  
 Gwan wyf, i'm nerthwyf; fy neirthiad fych,

Thou Deliverer of many, deliver me ;  
Deliverer of the weak, woe to him whom Thou lovest not !

And thou, Soul ! abstain from making me sin ;  
Turn from the ways of error while thou mayest ;  
Guard the mind's feet, while thou possessest prudence,  
From among the webs of deceit and their dark trench.

The Perfect, fairer than the gold of the gold-worker,  
Designed and created thee, as thou mayest easily believe ;  
His own form He impressed upon thee,  
And thou ownest His fair image.

To a hundred covenants He adds one more,  
From His great love, lest thou becomest embarrassed ;  
Watch the hour that thou partest from the flesh,  
That thou be not unready.

The blood of Jesus, the dear blood of the Sufferer,  
His story is truly good, when considered ;  
He groaned, and wept, like an ox bellowing,  
When in pain,—woe is his fellow ox !

Jesus, fair Jesus, show me Thy face,  
Conceal it not from me :

Gwareder llawer, lle gwaredych raid,  
Gwaredwr gweiniaid, gwae ni gerych.

Tithau yr enaid, paid ! na'm pedych :  
Tro o ffyrdd didro, yd tra geffych ;  
Tyn droed dy feddwl, tra feddych dy bwyll,  
O blith maglau twyll, tywyll eu rhych.

Gloyw deccach no'r aur yngwaith eurych,  
A th luniaudd, creawdd, hawdd y crettych,  
Ei eilun ei hun honnych ei arddelw  
Ac oi deg wirddelw yr arddelwych.

Gwedi cant cymmod cymmydych unwaith,  
Herwydd cariad maith hyd na methlych ;  
Disgwyliaw yr awr elych o'r enawd,  
Na fydd ammharawd pan ammherych.

Gwaed Iesu a fu, gwaed eu cwynych  
Gwirda ystoria pan ystyrych ;  
Griddfana, ocha, fal ych yn beichiaw  
Pan fo yn ewynaw gwae eich gydych.

Iesu ! deg Iesu ! im dangosych—  
Dy wyneb, ni heb o ohebych ;

Veil not Thy features ; look down  
Upon Thy servant, and hate him not.

While I live, mysterious Ruler, encourage me.  
To Thee I turn ; turn not from me ;  
Do not let me slip into evil courses,  
Nor end my days in the pursuit of vanity.

Emperor, Creator, strengthen me ;  
My faith, my religion, strengthen !  
Take my hand in Thine, and guide me rightly ;  
Lead me along the paths of rectitude.

I will praise Thee, kind Ruler of the heavens.  
Who will not praise who know Thee ?  
Bells and books shall sound Thy praise,  
And harp melodies from sharp and twanging strings.

When Thou judgest Heaven, Earth, and Hell,  
Give me a mark by which I may be known ;  
Thou wouldst not wish to place me among the damned,  
Therefore let me be by the side of the Lamb.

~~~~~  
Na chudd dy ddeurudd, diddorych o'th was,
Gwae neb a gas a gasych.

Tro fi Rhwyf Celi ! a'm calonych ;
Attad y troaf, attaf troych !
Nad fi i wrthyd i wrthrych maswedd,
Gwagedd breuoledd a ddiweddych.

Amerhawdr ! Creawdr ! cryf i'm gwnelych,
Y'm ffydd, y'm crefydd, i'm cryfheych,
Daly fy llaw i'th law a lywych yn iawn,
Ar hyd ffyrdd uniawn i'm harweddych,

A'th folaf Duw, Naf nefoedd lewych :
Pwy nith fawl or sawl a ry seilych,
I'th foliant soniant son clych a llyfrau
Cerddau telynau, cras dannau crych.

Nef, Daeear, Uffern, pany bernych,
Dod nod i'm hwyneb a'm hadneppych,
Parth clet i minnau ni mynnych fy mod,
Parth yr Oen gorfod i'm gosodych.

When the three hosts come, and the time of tribulation
 To whole hosts of sinners, who will be sorely punished,
 Among the happy, faultless choir, clothed in finest white,
 Place me on Thy right hand."

On contemplating this and similar remains, I think we can fairly conclude that our ancestors at this period were not behind their contemporaries in religious knowledge; and even at the present day we cannot look back upon them without their producing a feeling of respect. Much as there might have been of chaff, there was some wheat.¹

To these extracts I will only add that these poems give us an exalted opinion of "Brother Madawg ab Gwallter," and strengthen the favourable estimate already expressed of Gruffydd ab yr Ynad Coch. He was the best poet of his day, and deserves to be ranked with Gwalchmai and Hywel ab Owain as the best poets of this era. These were not, perhaps, as deeply versed in bardic lore as others, but they possessed infinitely more of the true spirit of poetry; they felt a passion, and clothed it in words; they were something much nobler than skilful versifiers.

CASNODYN, GRUFFYDD GRYG, and DAVYDD DDU also wrote poems on religious topics.

SECTION IV.

THE MABINOGION.

WE should, however, form but an imperfect estimate of the literature of Wales if we confined our notice to the bards alone. The Kymry had in the middle ages two literatures, essentially distinct from each other, which, though springing from the soil, had different features. The bardic literature, taken singly, forms but a faint reflection of the national character, as it is described by contemporaneous writers and observers of Cambrian

Pan ddel y trillu trallawd berych
 I leaws yn draws a drais boenych,
 I'th lu di difri, difrych, gwynoleu
 Ar y llaw ddeheu i'm lleheych.

¹ *Hanes Cymru*, p. 761.

manners. The bards, properly so called, were a despotic and exclusive order, and had created an artificial taste, from which standard no one was allowed to depart. This had, therefore, the defect of narrowness; the poetry was the literature of the few, and found no great favour among the body of the people. Giraldus tells us the Kymry were a free, merry, and witty people, and passionately fond of music; but the latter characteristic only is found in their poetry. It was, therefore, in the nature of events that the bulk of the people should have found some intellectual recreation more consonant with their character. There had been for hundreds of years traditions floating among them; and therefore, when the general awakening, of which we have already spoken, took place, it was a natural desire that these should be connected, arranged, and written. This was the origin of the *Mabinogion*—tales written to while away the time of young chieftains, to be repeated at the fire-side, and ultimately to react very powerfully upon the national literature and character.

It is utterly inconsistent with our knowledge of human history to suppose that the national mind of Wales could have been for any lengthened period inactive; we may therefore conclude that the long and barren period which intervenes between the death of Cadwaladr and the arrival of Gruffydd ab Kynan could not have been wholly unproductive. The bards were engaged in recording the actions of their countrymen, which, becoming more and more known, became more and more glorious. Plain facts were embellished into glorious fictions; brave warriors became great heroes; and Arthur, an insignificant chieftain in the sixth century, grew into a valorous warrior in the eighth, and by the twelfth had become emperor of the whole civilised world. This growth of traditions is plainly evident in the works of Nennius, Geoffrey, and Alanus de Insulis; and, as has been well remarked, there is as much difference between Gildas and Nennius as there is between Nennius and Geoffrey. Fable had grown in the intervals. There is an evident growth of fable among the Kymry themselves between the ages of Gildas and Nennius; and this becomes more apparent if we admit Mr. Price's happy conjecture that Nennius translated his work, or at least a part of it, from Cambrian originals. We have in his work many of the elements of the greater romance. His work mentions Arthur as a "magnanimous hero;" and,

unless the passage be interpolated, he alludes to a visit paid by that "emperor" to Jerusalem. In the Mabinogi of Killwch and Olwen the combing of another's hair implies relationship. Arthur combed the hair of Killwch with "a golden comb," and a scissors the loops whereof were of silver;" and the boar Trwyth is hunted for nothing else than the comb, scissors, and razor which were between its ears. Now we find this statement in the history of Nennius, where St. Germanus being charged with the paternity of a boy, takes the child and says, "I will be a father to you, my son; nor will I dismiss you till a razor, scissors, and comb are given to me, and it is allowed you to give them to your carnal father." A very large portion of the romantic incidents in Geoffrey were most probably found in the home traditions; and the Dream of Rhonabwy, the Mabinogi of Killwch and Olwen, and the tale of Gwgan the poet show that the Kymry were in the habit of writing tales, and that they knew well how to do so; for the second of these is very ingeniously constructed. We may therefore safely conclude that the Mabinogion could have been produced here; and there is sufficient evidence to show that the Kymry did so produce them. Lady Charlotte Guest, in her preface, speaking of the Red Book of Hergest, says:

It comprises, among other things, a collection of Mabinogion; some, like the present story (the Lady of the Fountain), having the character of chivalric romances, and others bearing the impress of far higher antiquity, both as regards the manners they depict, and the style of language in which they are composed. So greatly do these Mabinogion differ in character, that they may be considered as forming two distinct classes, one of which generally celebrates heroes of the Arthurian cyclus, while the other refers to personages and events of an earlier period.

Those of the second class appear to be the earliest in point of time; they make no mention of Arthur at all, and treat of personages who lived much earlier; these are the Mabinogion of Pwyll Prince of Dyved, Branwen the daughter of Llyr, Manawyddan the son of Llyr, Math the son of Mathonwy, the Dream of Maxen Wledig, the Tale of Lludd and Llevelis, and the Mabinogi of Taliesin. The second class, Killwch and Olwen, the Dream of Rhonabwy, Owain and the Lion, Geraint ab Erbin, Peredur ab Efrawc, and the Story of St. Greal, are Arthurian romances of a later date.

In the Arthurian group there are, however, marked distinc-

tions. The Hengwrt romance of St. Greal fixes the palace of that hero at Camelot, Cornwall. The Dream of Rhonabwy, with Kilhwch and Olwen, agree in placing it at Gelliwig in Cornwall; and the stories of Owain, Geraint, and Peredur mention Caerlleon. The second two also differ from the latter three in several other respects. Arthur in the former is surrounded by an immense number of knights, while in the latter the number of his attendants is not so great, the prominence being given to individual and not collective achievements; and the confusion of the first gives place to order and regularity in the latter. In Kilhwch and Rhonabwy Arthur hunts the Twrch Trwyth with his knights, and is preparing to fight personally against Ossa Gyllellvawr; but in Owain and the others he is the emperor reposing on his laurels. In the former the knights act collectively, but in the latter the knight-errantry of the ripêr romance is fully developed. These facts warrant us in concluding that Kilhwch and Rhonabwy are the earliest of the Arthurian group. They seem to have emanated from sources purely Kymric, and bear out Geoffrey's assertion that, prior to the appearance of his history, the exploits of Arthur *were very commonly related in a pleasing manner*; the others appear to be later. This conclusion is also supported by the bardic writings; the earlier bards attach no importance to Caerlleon, but the latter do; and Bleddyn Vardd, towards the close of the thirteenth century, calls it "that best of places Caerlleon."

It is not easy to fix a date for these tales; perhaps they are not in their present form older than the twelfth century; but they were evidently in circulation years, if not centuries, before. In the Ystori of Peredur it is said, "And Peredur was entertained by the empress fourteen years, *as the story relates.*" And again, "The story relates nothing further of Gwalchmai respecting this adventure." At the end of the Dream of Rhonabwy it is said, "And this is the reason that no one knows the dream without a book, neither bard nor gifted seer, because of the various colours that were upon the horses, and the many wondrous colours of the arms, and of the panoply, and of the precious scarfs, and of the virtue-bearing stones." In that remark we have a sufficient proof that these stories were being frequently related without reference to written memorials; and Lewis Glyn Cothi's designation of a class of bards as story-tellers (*ystoriawyr*) makes the probability certain.

While so related, they, in accordance with the known laws of the development of fable, ascended from a brief to an expanded, from a simple to a complex and artistic form. A case of this nature occurs in connexion with Owain ab Urien. At the end of the thirteenth century it existed, as it appears in Rhonabwy, for Bleddyn Vardd alludes to nothing more romantic than "Owen and his ravens;" but at the commencement of the fifteenth century, in Gruffydd Llwyd's ode to Owain Glyndwr, we find Owain described as the knight errant of the "Lady of the Fountain." But though these stories grew with time, there were limits to their development imposed by the character of the national mind, and though the operation may be delicate, it is still possible to define what is of foreign and what of native addition. In the earlier tales of Kymric origin, the machinery is invariably supernatural. The Mabinogion of Pwyll, Branwen, Math, and Manawyddan are evidences of this; the marvellous and moving power is seldom—indeed, we may say never—personal courage, but invariably magic; and the same fact appears in the verse as well as prose legends. Nothing could be more remote from the Kymric conception than knight-errantry; the spirit of adventure has no place even in our national character, and wherever that appears in our literature we shall not greatly err in assigning to it a foreign origin. It only occurs in the stories of Owain, Geraint, and Peredur, and is, I think, clearly post-Norman. The existence of an earlier class of tales of a purely Cambrian origin demonstrates satisfactorily that tale-telling was a natural attribute of the Kymry, and is a sufficient proof, were there not an abundance of others, to show that our Mabinogion are of Kymric origin; yet the source of some of the elements of the Arthurian group is more doubtful: the knight-errantry is clearly Norman; but whence came Arthur?

Arthur is confessedly a Kymric hero; but a question having been raised as to whether he receives his romantic character from the Kymry of Wales, or those of Brittany, it is our duty to throw upon the point all the light we possess. His name is mentioned by Nennius, but as the passage occurs at various places in the different manuscript copies of that historian, there is reason, if not to doubt its genuineness, to consider it an addition by his editor, Mark the Hermit. I have thought that the discrepancy between the dates assigned to this history

might be explained in a similar way; but of that let riper scholars judge. Yet, though the name assumes a heroic garb in this historian, it did not take hold of the popular mind: there is no trace of the hero in the early poetry of Wales. It has been so frequently shown that the earlier bards make no distinction between Arthur and the other warriors of his day, that it is not necessary for me to travel over ground already trod by Turner and Schulz; but the same fact is observable in the writings of other bards. Arthur is very reluctantly admitted, and even as late as the twelfth century the bards showed much greater partiality to Cadwaladr. Indeed, strange as the assertion may appear, there is reason to believe that they discountenanced the Arthurian stories. Kynddelw mentions the battle of Badon twice, but we seldom find the name of Arthur introduced in his poems with any great degree of prominence; and, until the force of public opinion forced them to give way, the bards continued to set their faces against him. They persisted in confining him to Cornwall long after the rest of the world had turned their eyes to Caerlleon; and Kynddelw, twenty-nine years at least after Geoffrey's history had become well known, hints at the former glories of Gelliwig. Llywarch ab Llywelyn *when from home* compares Rhys Gryg to Arthur; but when at home he does not compare a much greater man, his patron Llewelyn ab Iorwërth, to that hero: and although the bards were well acquainted with the story, the name of Arthur is not freely used for at least half a century after that time, and even then he is simply the most renowned of warriors. There is therefore a strong presumption that the heroic character did not originate where, being planted, it found such difficulty to grow. This anomalous position of the Kymry of the Principality leads infallibly to one of two conclusions. Either they did really consider the Arthurian stories to be fabulous, or deeming them true, they were too apathetic to embrace them. The latter inference is utterly inadmissible; we have therefore no alternative but to fall back upon the other, and to conclude that at that time Wales was so raised above the civilisation of the rest of Britain and the Continent, that it presented the Mabinogion and romances as tales for children and fabulous stories. Professor Schulz asserts that this was not the case; but when we consider that he terms the age of Meilir, Gwalchmai, Kynddelw, Hywel ab Owain, Llywarch ab Llywelyn, and Davydd

Benfras, as “a period of decay in Welsh poetry,” we need not wonder that his speculations on the Mabinogion are not quite correct. These tales were certainly so considered by the bards; but there is a slight modification required in the Cambrian account. The term Mabinogion is applied indifferently to all the tales; but that is not strictly proper. Originally they appear to have been thus classified:

MABINOGION, OR JUVENILE TALES.

Mabinogi Pwyll Pendevig Dyved	Pwyll Prince of Dyved
Mabinogi Branwen Verch Llyr	Branwen the Daughter of Llyr
Mabinogi Math ab Mathonwy	Math the Son of Mathonwy
Mabinogi Manawyddan ab Llyr	Manawyddan the Son of Llyr
Mabinogi Taliesin	The Mabinogi of Taleisin

BREUDDWYDION, OR DREAMS.

Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig	The Dream of the Emperor Maximus
Breuddwyd Rhonabwy	The Dream of Rhonabwy
Kyvranc Lludd a Llevelis	The Quarrel of Lludd and Llevelis

YSTORIAU, OR STORIES.

Ystori Bown o Hamtwn	The Story of Bevis of Hampton
Ystori Dared	The Story of Dared
Ystori Saint Greal	The Story of St. Greal
Ystori Gwlad Ievan Vendigaid	The Story of the Land of John the Blessed
Ystori Idrian Amherawdyr	The Story of the Emperor Hadrian
Ystori Kilhwch ac Olwen	The Story of Kilhwch and Olwen
Ystori Owen ab Urien, neu Chwedyl Iarlles y Ffynnon	The Story of Owen the Son of Urien, or the Tale of the Lady of the Fountain
Ystori Peredur vab Evrog	The Story of Peredur the Son of Evrawc
Ystori i draethu mal yd aeth Mair i'r nev	A Story relating how Mary went to Heaven
Ystori Geraint vab Erbin.	The Story of Geraint the Son of Erbin.

This classification is taken from Llwyd's *Archæologia Britannica* (pp. 255–256). He there professes to give the titles of the various MSS.; and as we know that the relaters of the

larger tales were called story-tellers, the names are probably strictly accurate. It hence results that Schulz is partially correct in his conjecture as to the actual facts; but the conclusion deduced therefrom is as unwarranted as before, for *Ystorïau* and *Ystorïawr*, indicate with quite as much clearness as *Mabinogion* the limited extent of the bardic credulity. Nothing can be more apparent to the student of Cambrian literature than that the bards were among the last persons in Europe to admit the credibility of the Arthurian tales. We must therefore seek the first traces of the Arthur of romance among the Kymry of Armorica.

The people of Armorica, and of ancient Gaul generally, are supposed to have been the same people as the colonists of Britain; and this would seem to be the reason why during times of distress the Britons fled there for refuge. Besides this connexion there were others of which history takes note. In the Triads we are told of "three combined expeditions that went from the Isle of Britain:"

The first went with Ur the son of Erin, and became Greeks.

The second combined expedition was conducted by Caswallon, the son of Beli, the son of Manogan, and Gwenwynwyn and Gwanar, the sons of Lliaws, the son of Nwyvre, with Arianrod the daughter of Beli, their mother. Their origin was from the border declivity of Galedin and Essyllwg (Siluria), and of the combined tribes of the Bylwennwys; and their number was three score and one thousand. They went after the Kaisarians over the sea to the land of the Geli Lydaw (Gauls of Letavia), that were descended from the original stock of the Kymry. And none of them, or of their progeny, returned to this island, but remained among the Romans in the country of the Gwasgwynion (Gascony), where they are at this time. And it was in revenge for this expedition that the Romans first came to this island.

The third combined expedition was conducted out of the island by Elen the Armipotent, and Kynan her brother, lord of Meiriadog, into Armorica, where they obtained land, and dominion, and royalty from Maccen Wledig (the Emperor Maximus), for supporting him against the Romans. These people were originally from the land of Meiriadog, and from the land of Seisyllwg (in Carmarthenshire) and from the land of Gwyr (Gower) and Gorwennydd (in Glamorganshire), and none of them returned, but they settled in Armorica and Ystre Gyvaelawg (Neustria and Valais),¹ by forming a commonwealth there. By reason of this combined expedition the nation of the Kymry was so weakened and

¹ According to the happy conjecture of the Rev. T. Price.

deficient in armed men that they fell under the oppression of the Irish Picts; and therefore Gwrtheyrn Gwrthenau (Vortigern) was compelled to procure the Saxons to expel that oppression. And the Saxons, observing the weakness of the Kymry, formed an oppression of treachery, by combining with the Irish Picts and with traitors, and then took from the Kymry their land, and also their privileges and their crown.¹

The truth of the third part of the Triad is proved by the occurrence of the same story in Gildas, Nennius, and Geoffrey; and these facts afford a strong presumptive proof of the correctness of the others. The oppressions of the Picts led many more to leave this island; and after the Anglo-Saxons had entered, A.D. 513, fresh bodies fled to Armorica, and settled in the country of Vannes and Quimper, then called Lectavia, Littau, or Llydaw. If Geoffrey may be trusted, there was a close connexion between the Britons and Armoricans in the time of Arthur; and from the *Liber Landavensis*, we learn that the bishops Samson and Teilo went to and fro between the two countries. Again, there must be some authority for Geoffrey's assertion that at the close of the reign of Careticus a great fleet of Britons went over to Brittany; and there is most probably some truth in the statement that there was a considerable emigration at the death of Cadwaladr.

The Kymry who left their native land on these occasions carried with them the histories of their ancestors; and as many, perhaps, intended to return at more favourable junctures—for the Kymro never forgets his native land—they would naturally magnify their own actions and those of their forefathers, and foster grand hopes of national restoration. Many of these were the Kymry of Cornwall, which, next to Wales, formed their last resting-point; and these would very naturally exalt the actions of their countryman Arthur. It is also to be observed that the dialect of the Bretons bears a closer resemblance to that of Cornwall than to the language of the Principality. These seem to be the only conditions under which Arthur could have been singled out for distinction from men whom the Cambrian bards praise quite as highly. How the conception was generated will best be explained by a partisan of the Breton hypothesis,

¹ *Myv. Arch.* vol. ii. p. 60; and Mr. J. H. Parry in the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i. p. 87.

² Continental authorities quoted in Schulz's valuable *Essay on Welsh Tradition*, p. 23.

the writer of a very able critique on the essays of the learned Abbé de la Rue who expresses himself thus :¹

If it be allowed that a mass of floating tradition was carried by the South British exiles, when in the sixth century they passed over to Armorica, that these traditions were fondly cherished among them, because they told of the former glory of that land to which they could never return, that the imagination of their descendants invested them with a halo of poetic beauty, because these fond recollections were their only heritage, we shall discover not merely the reason why every British tradition up to the sixth century was preserved among them, but a reason, too, why Arthur, merely one of the many brave warriors in the enumeration of the Welsh bards, is the all-powerful monarch and hero of the Breton lay. Arthur, although known in Wales as the monarch of the Silures and the valiant opponent of Cerdic, was but one of the many kings and warriors who fought, though in vain, against the Saxon ; but to the Breton exiles he was their *own* king, who had led them to battle, and whose death was the cause of their flight. Thus the tales of Caerlleon and Camelot gathered splendour from each Breton bard, for they were visionary recollections of another land ; but the Welsh bard saw Caerlleon in ruins and Camelot in the power of the Saxons, and he left them unsung. The "woody Isle of Avalon" too, that brightest spot in the realms of romance, was to the Welsh bard but "one of the perpetual choirs of Britain," and he well knew that tonsured priests alone wonned there ; but the Breton, separated for centuries from his fatherland, showered upon this island, to which his forefathers saw their monarch borne, every imagined beauty, and peopled it with Morgan le Fay and her attendant damsels, watching in hushed silence the tranced slumber of Arthur.

These remarks appear to be, in the main, just ; but there is no sufficient warrant for making Arthur the King of the Silures ; and the location of that hero at Caerlleon appears to be due to Geoffrey of Monmouth. The chief argument is not, however, greatly affected thereby ; and there are other reasons in favour of that conclusion. Alanus de Insulis relates, towards the end of the twelfth century, that the Breton people would have stoned anyone who dared to deny the fact that Arthur lived.² His words are most significant :

What place is there within the bounds of the empire of Christianity to which he has not extended the winged praise of the Arthur of the Britons ? Who is there, I ask, who does not speak of the Britannic Arthur, who is but little less known to the people of Asia than to the Britons, as we are in-

¹ *Athenæum* for 1835, p. 842.

² Schulz's *Essay*, p. 32.

formed by our pilgrims who return from the countries of the East? The Easterns speak of him, as also do the Westerns, though the breadth of the whole earth lies between them. Egypt speaks of his name, and the Bosphorus is not silent; Rome, the queen of cities, sings his deeds, and his wars are not unknown to her former competitor, Carthage. His exploits are praised in Antioch, Armenia, and Palestine. He will be celebrated in the mouths of the people, and his acts shall be food to those who relate them.¹

These remarks cannot be applied to the state of opinion in Wales; and therefore may we derive from this extract a cogent argument in favour of the Breton theory. Honourable mention of the chivalry of Llydaw is made in the poem attributed to Golyddan, Geoffrey refers the origin of portions of his history to that country, and the romancists unanimously point out Brittany as the source of their legends; and therefore was there much point in the question of M. de la Rue, How could there be this uniformity of testimony if there were no truth in the allegations? The most striking argument in favour of the same conclusion has, however, yet to be adduced. We have said that Rhys ab Tewdwr (A.D. 1077) is reported to have brought from Brittany the bardic system of the Round Table to Wales, "where," it is naïvely admitted, "it had become forgotten."² A bard named Iorwerth Vynglwyd, living about 1450, alludes to the bardic Roll of Rhys ab Tewdwr in these words:³

The regulations are faultless
Of Rhys the son of Tewdwr, a good man who lived formerly,
And the much respected Roll of Arthur,
Which is also good and spirited.

¹ "Quo enim Arturi Britonis nomen fama volans non pertulit et vulgavit: quousque Christianum pertingit imperium? Quis, inquam, Arturum Britonem non loquatur, cum penè notior habeatur Asiaticis gentibus, quàm Britannis; sicut nobis referunt Palmigeri nostri de orientis partibus redeuntes? Loquuntur illum orientales, loquuntur occidui, toto terrarum orbe divisi. Loquitur illum Ægyptus; Bosforus exclusa non tacet. Cantat gesta ejus domina civitatum Roma, nec emulam quondam ejus Carthaginem, Arturi prælia latent. Celebrat actus ejus Antiochia, Armenia, Palæstina. [*In ore populorum celebrabitur, et actus ejus cibus erit narrantibus.*]" Quoted in *Hanes Cymru*, p. 258.

² *Iolo MSS.* p. 630.

³ Defodau difai ydynt
Rhys vab Tewdwr, da'r gwr gynt,
A Rhol Arthur o bur barch,
Da hefyd a dihafarch.

Iolo MSS. p. 391.

Caradoc, in speaking of Rhys, says: "Great was the fame he had obtained for wisdom and knowledge of the principles of government,"¹ though he makes no allusion to the Roll of Arthur; but as we find him, in giving an account of a bardic festival held by Cadwgan ab Bleddyn, Rhys's successor, stating that it was conducted according to the rules observed at the feasts of King Arthur,² we may conclude that the above statement is historically true. From these numerous and various facts, the conclusion is both legitimate and irresistible that the romantic Arthur is a creation of the Armorican Kymry.

There were several ways in which such a creation may have been, and probably was, brought to this country, in which it only at first found favour among the clergy. Alain II. of Brittany reigned about 690; his sons Ivor and Ynyr became Princes of Wales in 683.³ Ivor reigned twenty-eight years with much glory;⁴ in commemoration of successes over the Saxons he, in 712,⁵ built the Abbey of Glastonbury (Ynys Afallen), and soon after went to Rome. These princes brought with them two powerful fleets, and recovered Cornwall, Devon, and Somersetshire. Mathuidoc, Count of Poher, with many nobles and Breton families, are said to have in their turn sought refuge in Britain, at the beginning of the tenth century, from the devastation of Rollo and the Normans.⁶ There was probably an intercourse kept up between the two countries, such as we see in the case of Rhys ab Tewdwr, who resided in Brittany for eighty-four years; and therefore we need experience no difficulty in accounting for the transmission of their traditions to this country. Yet it is strange that the Bretons should have no romantic remains; the tales published in French by the Comte de Villemarqué are translations from Lady Charlotte Guest's English version of the romances of the Kymry of the Principality.

Several of the Kymric romances seem to have been lost; that of Creirwy and Garwy is frequently mentioned by the bards, yet we have it not; Cambrian ladies are frequently compared to Eliwri, but we know no more of her than that she was the

¹ *Myv. Arch.* ii. p. 538.

³ Caradoc, *Myv. Arch.* ii. p. 470.

⁵ Brut Ieuan Brechva, *Myv. Arch.* ii. p. 471.

⁶ Schulz's *Essay*, p. 25.

² *Myv. Arch.* ii. p. 521.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 471.

daughter of Urien Rheged;¹ and Kymric warriors are repeatedly compared to a now unknown Elivri. The bards were also acquainted with the most celebrated romances of other nations; and frequently allude to Tristan, Roland, Charlemagne, Sir Fulke, and Alexander.²

Of the authors of the Kymric Mabinogion and other stories but little is known. Indeed, it may reasonably be doubted whether the earlier portion ever had recognised authors; most probably the tales were orally transmitted for centuries before they were reduced to writing; and as they increased by being repeated, it would be difficult to discover their paternity. No date can be well assigned to the tale of Kilhwch and Olwen; it was well known in 1169, as appears from Kynddelw's elegy to Owain Gwynedd. An allusion is made to the hunting of the boar Trwyth in the Incantation of Kynvelyn, attributed to Aneurin; Lady Charlotte Guest, in her most interesting note,³ shows that this event is mentioned in a MS. which Mr. Stevenson, the editor of Nennius, pronounces to be as old as the tenth century; and whatever may be the age of the tale of Kilhwch and Olwen, one of its chief incidents is impressed upon the coins of Cunobelinus. The Dream of Rhonabwy is of necessity posterior to the time of Madawc ab Meredydd, Prince of Powys, whose name is mentioned at the commencement, and who died in 1159. The tale was probably written in Powys, as Owain, Geraint, and Peredur were the products of Glamorgan, and the remainder of Dyfed. Gruffydd ab Adda ab Davydd, a poet who flourished about A.D. 1340 to A.D. 1370, was the author of a chivalric tale of much interest. Several of his pieces are preserved. He was killed at Dolgellau, and buried at the same place. Ievan Vawr ab y Diwlith was another writer of tales in his day. The following notice of him occurs in the *Iolo Manuscripts*:

The bards of Tir Iarll having gone to the Dewless Hillock, on one of St. John's Midsummer festivals, to hold there a chair of vocal song, found a new-born child, half alive, on it. Rhys the son of Rhiccert ab Einion ab

¹ *Iolo MSS.* p. 458.

² The romance of Alexander, composed in France in 1210, was known in Wales soon after (Sismondi, i. 191), as it appears to be referred to in a poem attributed to both Kynddelw and Prydydd y Moch (*Myv. Arch.* i. 247, 306, circa 1220). Tristan is mentioned in the *Myv. Arch.* i. 364, 424.

³ *Mabinogion*, vol. ii. p. 359.

Collwyn took it home with him, and placed it under the care of a foster-mother. The child lived, was put to school, and brought up to a learned profession. He imbibed knowledge with all the avidity that a child would suck its mother's milk; and early in life he took the lead of all preceptors in Wales. He wrote several books, one of which was called the "Preservation of the Welsh Language, the Art of Vocal Song, and all that appertained to them, according to the Rights and Usages of the Welsh Nation, and Judicial Decisions of Wise Men;" others were called the "Greals," the "Mabinogion," the "Nine Tropes and Twenty-four Embellishments of Diction," the "Book of Fables," and many more. He also composed a work for the preservation of the moral maxims and laws of the Welsh nation. He received the name of John the Son of the Dewless, because he was found, as already mentioned, on the Dewless Hillock on St. John's Midsummer festival; and because he was a large man he was called Big John the Son of the Dewless. He lived and died at Llangynwyd, where he was buried with the family of Llwydarth. It was currently reported that, in all probability, he was the son of Rhys ab Rhiccert by a lady of high rank; and when it was so asserted in his presence, he merely held his tongue, allowing that belief to continue.¹

Mr. Edward Williams states that Ievan lived between 1160 and 1180; ² this date was a necessary consequence of his being the son of Rhys ab Rhiccert, whom the same antiquarian had previously placed about 1140; but as we shall presently show that Rhys lived two hundred years later, we must, assuming the paternity to be correct, conclude that Ievan lived nearer 1380.³ The authorship of the Mabinogi of Taliesin is attributed to two persons. In the *Iolo Manuscripts*, at the close of an epitome of the history of Taliesin and Elphin from the book of Anthony Powel, occur these words:

It was from this account that Thomas the son of Einion Offeiriad, descended from Gruffydd Gwyr, formed his romance of Taliesin the son Ceridwen; Elphin the son of Gwyddno; Rhun the son of Maelgwn Gwynedd; and the operations of the Cauldron of Ceridwen.⁴

This Thomas ab Einion must have lived about 1260, as a

¹ *Iolo MSS.* p. 479, on the authority of the memoranda of Mr. John Bradford extracted from Anthony Powel's MS., then (circ. A.D. 1760) at Goettref Hen, near Bridgend.

² *Iolo MSS.* p. 88.

³ The minute fidelity of local colouring in the description of Cardiff renders it not improbable that the author of the Mabinogi of Geraint ab Erbin was our friend Ievan.

⁴ *Iolo MSS.* p. 459.

work on grammar, written by his father, was copied between 1254 and 1280 by Edeyrn Davod Aur; and as, in addition to that fact, Gwilym Ddu, about 1320, terms Taliesin "Gwion Bach," as if that romantic name was well known, we may safely conclude that this Mabinogi probably belongs to the beginning of the reign of Llewelyn ab Gruffydd. The second person who is the supposed composer is Hopkin Thomas Phylip, also of Glamorgan. Dr. Pughe supposes that he wrote the connecting prose passages, but that the poetical passages were what he professes his book to be, collected from other works. In one place¹ Dr. Pughe says this person lived about 1370; but if we take another and more probable date given by the same author, and place him from 1590 to 1630,² the two accounts may be reconciled, Thomas ab Einion being the author and Hopkin Thomas Phylip the copyist.³ These are all the facts that I have been able to glean concerning the authors, or rather compilers, of the Mabinogion; and it now only remains to speak of the noble lady who has translated and edited the English version of these antique tales.

The Mabinogion combine dignity of expression with a fine, easy flow of language, and are remarkable for their quaintness and simplicity. They contain many passages of exquisite beauty, and a poetical colouring, enriching the whole, prevails throughout: such being their character, they demanded in a translator qualities which are not of frequent occurrence. A knowledge of two languages is far from being the only quality required; for the spirit of the original should be as fully as possible transferred, in addition to the literal meaning. I have in many parts compared the translation of the Mabinogion with the original, and have uniformly found reason to think that our ancient tales have been exceedingly fortunate in being translated by Lady Charlotte Guest. Her version correctly mirrors forth the spirit of these antique stories, and is as much distinguished for elegance as fidelity. Her Ladyship's good taste led her fully to appreciate the charm contained in the

¹ *Cambrian and Caledonian Quarterly*, vol. v. p. 381.

² *Cambrian Biography*, p. 178.

³ They were two distinct persons: 1. Hopkin ab Thomas ab Einion, of Ynys Dawy, or Gower, lived circa 1350 (cf. *Myv. Arch.* i. 514, &c.) 2. Hopkin ab Thomas ab Phylip, of Gelli Fid, Glynogwr, circa 1590-1630 (*Myv. Arch.* iii.) Poems to the former appear in the *Myv. Arch.* (1870).

simplicity of the original, and she has been eminently successful in producing a version at once simple, animated and accurate. It is not necessary to enter into an analysis of compositions which, thanks to the munificence of that noble lady, must now be well known ; and therefore it will suffice to cite one or two extracts, in illustration of both the ability of the translator and the character of the Mabinogion. The following describes the heroine, Olwen :

So a message was sent, and she came.

The maiden was clothed in a robe of flame-coloured silk, and about her neck was a collar of ruddy gold, on which were precious emeralds and rubies. More yellow was her head than the flower of the broom, and her skin was whiter than the foam of the wave, and fairer were her hands and her fingers than the blossoms of the wood anemone amidst the spray of the meadow fountain. The eye of the trained hawk, the glance of the three-mewed falcon, was not brighter than hers. Her bosom was more snowy than the breast of the white swan, her cheek was redder than the reddest roses. Whoso beheld her was filled with her love. Four white trefoils sprang up wherever she trod.¹

We will add to this beautiful portrait the description of her lover, Prince Kilhwch, setting forth on his journey towards the court of Arthur :

And the youth pricked forth upon a steed with head dappled grey, of four winters old, firm of limb, with shell-formed hoofs, having a bridle of linked gold on his head, and upon him a saddle of costly gold. And in the youth's hand were two spears of silver, sharp, well tempered, headed with steel, three ells in length, of an edge to wound the wind and cause blood to flow, and swifter than the fall of the dewdrop from the blade of reed grass upon the earth when the dew of June is at the heaviest. A gold-hilted sword was upon his thigh, the blade of which was of gold, bearing a cross of inlaid gold of the hue of the lightning of heaven ; his war-horn was of ivory. Before him were two brindled, white-breasted greyhounds, having strong collars of rubies about their necks, reaching from the shoulder to the ear. And the one that was on the left side bounded across to the right side, and the one on the right to the left, and like two sea swallows sported around him. And his courser cast up four sods with his four hoofs, like four swallows in the air, about his head, now above, now below. About him was a four-cornered cloth of purple, and an apple of gold was at each corner, and every one of the apples was of the value of a hundred kine. And there was precious gold of the value

¹ *Mabinogion*, vol. ii. p. 276.

of three hundred kine upon his shoes and upon his stirrups, from the knee to the tip of his toe. And the blade of grass bent not beneath him, so light was his courser's tread as he journeyed towards the gate of Arthur's palace.¹

The notes contain a mass of very interesting information, and I have derived from them much valuable assistance. They bring the past vividly to mind, very clearly elucidate the text, and are only defective in being too brief.

It is now generally admitted that romance originated from these traditions of the Armorican Kymry, which had a most important influence upon the literature of other European nations, by the publication of the *Historia Britonum*. All the names of the heroes in the Arthurian cycle of romances are of Kymric origin, so that no doubt can be entertained of their paternity. But in Wales the romance was never developed to the extent it assumed among other nations. Among them romances presented features which were not in the Mabinogion; and this arose from the following circumstances: The Normans infused into them an adventurous spirit, and the monks, or Catholic clergy, chastened and refined their tone. We will offer a few remarks in elucidation of both these positions.

M. Sismondi is of opinion that the Normans were the inventors of the romance literature, though he admits that the names of the Arthurian cycle belonging to a different race present a difficulty not easily overcome, and he bases his opinion upon the fact that "of all the people of ancient Europe the Normans showed themselves during the period which preceded the rise of the romance literature to be the most adventurous and intrepid."² But the learned historian has overlooked an important fact. It is with nations as with men; there are some who can invent, but cannot improve; and there are some who can improve what they could not invent. To the first class belong the Kymry; to the second the Normans. The path had been already discovered, the framework had been already formed, and it only remained to carry out what had been previously designed. The Kymry failed to do this, but it was done; the *Mabinogi* was pushed into a romance, and a brief review of their character will show that the Norman Trouveres were the per-

¹ *Mabinogion*, vol. ii. p. 253.

² Sismondi's *Hist. of Literature*, vol. i. p. 198.

sons who carried this into effect. They were on the spot, and happened to possess the very qualities necessary to bring about the changes we witness. Their faculties were illustrative, not creative. Behold their character, drawn by an able hand :

Above all men the Norman was an imitator, and therefore an improver ; and it was precisely because he was the least rigid, most supple, plastic, and accommodating of mortals that he became the civiliser and ruler wherever he was thrown. In France he became French, in England English, in Italy Italian, in Novgorod Russian ; in Norway only, where he remained Norwegian, he failed to accomplish his elevated mission. Wherever his neighbours invented or possessed anything worthy of admiration, the sharp, inquisitive Norman poked his aquiline nose. Did Sicily invent a better kind of helmet, instantly the Norman clapped it on his head. Did the Moor *or the Breton breathe sentiment into a ballad, the Norman lay forthwith adopted the humanising music.* From a Frank castle or a Lombard church to a law by Canute or a witan under Athelstan, the Norman was always a practical plagiarist. Wherever what we now call the march of intellect advanced, there was the sharp, eager face of the Norman in the van. All that he retained, in his more genial settlement, of his ancestral attributes were the characters of a seaman. He was essentially commercial ; he liked adventure and he liked gain ; he was also a creature social and gregarious. He always intermarried with the people among whom he settled, borrowed its language, adopted its customs, reconciled himself to its laws ; and confirmed the aristocracy of conquest by representing, while elevating, the character of the people with whom he closely identified himself. This remarkable race exercised an astonishing influence for good, especially in their noblest settlement, England. No one who has not paid some attention to our Saxon poetry, with its most artificial structure, its meretricious alliterations, its tedious, unanimated tone, relieved, it is true, by some descriptions and an ethical allegorical spirit (as in the songs of the Phœnix), can be aware how thoroughly it differs from the genius of our existing muse ; and how much immediately from the Anglo-Norman, and his kinsman the Anglo-Dane (and the Welsh and Bretons), though perhaps remotely from the Saracen, we derive of sentiment, vivacity, character, passion, simple construction, easy humour, and true pathos—all, in short, that now especially distinguish the poetic and popular literature of England. But for the Norman and the Dane we think it probable that we might have writers like Thomson, Young, and Wordsworth, but we feel a strong conviction that we should have wanted a Chaucer, a Spenser, and a Shakespeare. No one who has not made himself familiar with the wretched decrepitude of the Saxon Church, its prostrate superstition and gross ignorance, at the age preceding the Conquest, can appreciate the impetus given to learning by the Norman ecclesiastics ; and no one who has not studied the hialf dis-

organised empire of disconnected provinces and rebellious earldoms under the Confessor, with laws of succession both to throne and to lordship most regular, can comprehend all the advantages derived from the introduction of a hereditary aristocracy, singularly independent and high-spirited, quickly infusing its blood and its character into the native population, leaguings its own interests with those of the whole subject community, and headed by a line of monarchs who, whatever their vices and crimes, had at least the power to defend the land from all other invaders, and the wisdom to encourage the trade and the commerce which have ultimately secured to England at once its fame and its freedom.¹

Cambrian history furnishes numerous proofs of this strongly assimilative character of the Normans. Between them and the Kymry there were frequent intermarriages. On the one hand we find Nest the daughter of Rhys ab Tewdwr married to Gerald de Windsor, Nest the daughter of Trahaearn ab Caradoc to Bernard de Newmarch, Nest the daughter of Iestyn ab Gwrgant to Robert Fitzhamon, Marred or Margaret, daughter of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, to John de Breos, and another of that prince's daughters to Reynold de Bruce. While, on the other hand, David ab Owain Gwynedd married a sister to Henry II.; Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, Joan the daughter of King John; and Llewelyn ab Gruffydd, Eleanor de Montford. Gruffydd, the eldest son of the Lord Rhys, took to wife Maltt, or Matilda, a daughter of Willian de Breos; his brother Rhys Gryg married a daughter of the Earl of Clare, and Cadwaladr ab Gruffydd ab Kynan a daughter of Gilbert, Earl of Clare. We therefore, from a knowledge of these facts, soon perceive that the Normans must have exercised an extensive and very important influence upon our literature, as well as been influenced by it in return.²

The above finely drawn sketch of the Norman character shows us both what they were and what they were not; and we thence learn that M. de Sismondi's conjecture contains a truth, though it is not *the* truth. The Normans did not invent the romance literature, but they greatly improved and extended what they found already invented in Brittany and Wales. At first the Norman Trouveres confined themselves to embellishing the Keltic traditions, but they soon dragged in the Kings

¹ The *Examiner*, April 1, 1848.

² The influence of the Normans in the erection of abbeys, cathedrals, and castles is well delineated in Berington, pp. 166, 216, &c.

of France with Charlemagne at their head, and ultimately enlisted in their services the classic names of ancient Greece.

The influence of the religious element is next to be developed. At and preceding the period of which this section treats the Church had become powerful in Wales, as well as over the rest of the civilised world. It exercised a very considerable influence over the moral and intellectual order in modern Europe, and upon public ideas, sentiments, and manners, as is shown by the essentially theological character of the works developed at this time. Papal theology possessed and directed the human understanding, and gave its impress to all opinions; philosophical, political, and historical questions were all considered under a theological point of view.¹ In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the order had increased; monks and friars were abundant, and there was no department of intellectual activity in which they did not bear part. We have in the case of Geoffrey a monk embellishing old traditions, and adding fabulous genealogies and imaginary agents, the products of his own brain. And coupling this with the fact that Layamon, the author of the Brut known by his name, was a priest, we easily arrive at the conclusion that the monks had not left romances to be exclusively produced by laymen. We have one striking proof of this in the *Awdl Vraith*, which is evidently an ecclesiastical production of the romance era. This might have been inferred from the tone of the composition, its allusion to the consecrated wafer, its Latinised diction, and the fable of Trojan descent. This last fable is evidently of monkish origin. There is also a very striking difference between the same facts when treated of by the bards and the priests; the poets speak of Arthur as a warrior only, while the monks, from Nennius downwards, continually endeavour to clothe him in an air of sanctity. Nennius, who states him to have borne the image of the Virgin on his shield, appears to have drawn upon an ecclesiast's imagination rather than upon authentic history; and knowing this, with many similar facts, can we doubt that Arthur, the religious hero, the greater part of whose memorials were found in convents, is partly at least a being of monastic creation? If, after the consideration of all these facts, there should remain any doubt upon the subject, it would be dispelled by the fact that

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<sup>1</sup> Guizot's *Lectures on Civilisation*—the Church.

Edward I. prohibited the monks from being rhymers and raconteurs—a sufficient proof that they frequently appeared as such. This fact would go far to explain the enmity which subsisted between the priests and the bards. Lewis Glyn Cothi openly assails them; but when the writer of the *Avallenau* spoke of them as “*Myneich geuawg, gwydawg, gwydus,*” he thought it prudent to place the words in the mouth of *Merddin*. This enmity appears to have sprung from their being rival candidates for popular suffrages; it was, in fact, jealousy, and is therefore of itself a proof of the position here laid down. It being now manifest that the monks cultivated romantic literature, we shall proceed to estimate the influence they exercised upon it.

There is an erroneous opinion prevalent that religious ascendancy is inimical to, and incompatible with, mental development:

Opinions formed less from a knowledge of actual facts, and ascertained influences of religion upon civilised society, than from an infidel antipathy to religion itself, would deserve but little attention, were they not widely spread and their upholders numerous. Religion, of all principles the most fruitful, multiform, and unconfined, does not express itself in a few unchanging modes of writing; it not only becomes the vehicle for knowledge, but it clothes it in the most attractive, noble, and dignified forms; it has the variety and bold contrasts of nature which at the feet of rugged mountains scoops out the freshest, sweetest valleys, and embosoms in the wild, troubled ocean islands whose vernal airs, loveliness, and teeming fruitfulness almost breathe the joys of Paradise.<sup>1</sup>

We have now to develop the influence of this principle upon our romantic literature. The Catholic Church was now in its glory and at the height of its power; and now, as at all times, was most studious to conform itself to the improvements of society;<sup>2</sup> it mingled with all things without excluding any;<sup>3</sup> and in Wales, as in other European countries at the period we now treat of, theological modes of thought, feeling, and expression were everywhere displayed. The *Mabinogi* of *Taliesin* is replete with theological expressions; and its conception proves that the tendency of theology was to mental expansion. Indeed,

<sup>1</sup> Channing's *Works*, vol. i. p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> Robertson's *Scotland*, book ii.

<sup>3</sup> Guizot: “Dans le monde moderne l'esprit religieux s'est mêlé à tout, mais sans rien exclure.”

the very word shows that romance must have found more favour with the priests than among the poets. The bardic maxim *Y Gwir yn erbyn y byd* (Truth against the world) was essentially unfavourable to fictitious literature. The bards were authors already, and possessed of much repute; they might therefore be naturally expected to look with contempt and distrust upon any literature less authentic, studied, and laboured than their own. The very names Mabinogion (Juvenile Tales) and Ystorïau (Stories) are indicative of their contemptuous feelings; bardism, they insinuated, was the occupation of superior minds. The bards were the salt of the earth, the talented men of the country. They were men themselves, and provided mental food for the adult intellect; but the romances were Mabinogion and Ystorïau, *tales for young men and stories*. Even the writers of them were spoken of in the same derisive language, as the reader might have seen in Lewis Glyn Cothi's classification of the bards, as *Bardd*, *Teulüwr*, and *Ystorïawr* (story-teller). But I am not disposed to form so low an estimate of these stories; for if I were compelled to decide between the bards and the Ystorïwyr, the choice would most unhesitatingly be in favour of the Mabinogion. The bardic poems are more valuable as contemporary records, they are more strictly accurate, and, in one word, are more "useful;" but the tales show most of the thought and feeling of the times, and are at this day more readable and interesting. Artificial systems which impose upon the mind, the decrees of individuals and associations which prescribe rules for taste and criticism, and which claim for themselves every imaginable perfection, cannot reflect the spirit of the times, must be at variance with the dictates of nature, and tend to sink man below, rather than to elevate him above, mediocrity. Such was bardism, which, dissociated from and in opposition to natural promptings, degenerated for the most part into a tame representation of the more tangible and transient thoughts of the day, and measured intellectual capacities by rule and compass: it wanted life, elasticity, and truthfulness. From all our bardic remains we learn but three facts—that the Kymry loved war, mead, and music; but we learn from the Mabinogi that they had great regard for chastity, that women were held in high estimation among them, that their chieftains were fond of literary associates, and devoted their time and talents to improve, instruct, and civilise their

subjects. The Laws of Howel show how the court was conducted; Giraldus describes the more obvious popular habits; and the Mabinogion supply many traits of natural manners not noticed in either. The latter are more really poetic, the life is more life-like, and the warriors more heroic, than the portraiture of the bards; the bardic heroes are at the best but exaggerations of warriors, while those of romance are really sublime creations. Of the fine and high-toned sentiments which breathe through the Mabinogion we have no traces in the works of the bards, and no counterparts in the civilisation of the period; they must therefore have emanated from the clergy. Abstracting a warrior from the province of history, making him feel the impulses and speak the language of a more civilised age, revealed in studies of the classics, and enriching him with all that cultivated minds deemed to be good, great, and gorgeous, was an idea which could only have found favour among ecclesiastics. It never appears to have entered the minds of the bards; the tumult of conflict, the excitement of warlike life, and the contemplation of actual everyday scenes, were all that could interest those matter of fact personages; and they never attempted to analyse their own minds and feelings, to endow a sublime creation with the ardent promptings of their own nature, and to represent as actual existences beings which the ambitious minds of able men had alone considered possible to exist, and hoped themselves to be. Pictures of immutable truth, and of the deep workings of the soul, were things too pure and sublime ever to have subsisted in a literary atmosphere contaminated by the arbitrary rules and conventional regulations of the bards, and could only have been developed where the vivacity of the people had been heightened by the contemplation of Divine attributes, and their feelings chastened by God's goodness and loving mercy. Here all the pent-up and cherished feelings of the nation found vent; and the fact that Arthur was reported to have worn the image of the Virgin Mary upon his shield affords us proof that religion possessed great influence over men's minds, that the monks gave a religious colouring to popular traditions, and that, setting aside the question of the accuracy of the statement, it is obvious that the assertion was consonant with the spirit of the time.

The influence of the Church was twofold—immediate and mediate. Its immediate influence is shown in its positive

teachings, its mediate in the movements it originated. The Church was the great civilising element of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; it ameliorated the social condition of the people, and was greatly instrumental in bringing about the abolition of slavery in Europe; it laboured for the suppression of many barbarous practices, and framed a penal code upon principles elevated, and enlightened, and strikingly coincident with those enunciated by Jeremy Bentham, and his followers Mill, Molesworth, Bowering, Grote, and others who are accounted the profoundest thinkers of the present day. It looked upon continual wars as being inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity, and in all these various ways it rendered productive the intellectual movement which at this time prevailed among most European nations. The system of doctrine and precepts under which it imparted the movement was very superior to anything that the ancient world had known, and contained within itself tendencies to both exertion and advancement.<sup>1</sup> As regards the romance, the clerical influence is very apparent in the tales of the Greal, which, according to Schulz, date their origin from Provence.<sup>2</sup> The romance of St. Greal, which was written in verse by Chrestien de Troyes in the twelfth century, is a mixture of Breton chivalry and sacred history. The cup out of which the Messiah is said to have drunk during His crucifixion, or which contained His blood, was known to the romance-writers under the name of St. Greal,<sup>3</sup> and this fact, indicating a Christian tendency in the romancists, shows the statement made by Tegid<sup>4</sup> of the Greal being connected with Druidic and anti-Christian tenets to be altogether erroneous. The "Greal" of Chrestien de Troyes may be found, according to the translator of Sismondi, in the Royal Library, Paris, No. 7523. His account of it is as follows:

It is a very large manuscript volume, in 4to, written in double columns, and containing nearly the whole history of the Knights of the Round Table.

Now it is very evident from the description given by Llwyd of "Ystori Saint Greal," and by Guto'r Glyn in these lines:



<sup>1</sup> Guizot's *Lectures on Civilisation*—the Church.

<sup>2</sup> Schulz on *Welsh Tradition*, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Sismondi's *History of South European Literature*, vol. i. p. 197 (Bohn's Edition).

<sup>4</sup> Lewis Glyn Cothi, p. 259, note.



Am un llyvr y mae'n llevain,  
 A gâr mwy nag aur a main ;  
 Y Greal teg i'r wlad hon—  
 Llyvr o enwog varchogion ;  
 Llyvr o grefft yr holl Vord Gron,

that the Greal, so much desired, was substantially the same as this very MS., which, as its contents show, was a Christian document—being, in fact, nothing more than the adventures of the Knights of the Round Table in search of the Greal or Blessed Cup, which, it was stated, was carried to England, and ultimately possessed by Launcelot, Peredur, and the other knights. There is a further account of this cup given in the notes to *Colyn Dolphyn*, by the late lamented Ab Iolo. In 1450 this Cambrian MS. was in the possession of a Glamorgan chieftain.<sup>1</sup> About 1500 we find the loan of a Greal asked of Lewis ab Davydd, the Abbot of Neath,<sup>2</sup> and in 1707 Llwyd states that there were copies in both the Mostyn and the Hengwrt libraries. His description of one MS. is as follows :

Ystoriâ Saint Greal: Historiâ Gregorianâ. M. & Vaugh. *Membr. nitid. Charact. Varias fabulas exhibit de Arthuro Rege, & militibus suis, &c. Init.* Megis ydoedh Arthur yn y Lhys a eluid kamalot, nos Sadurn, Sylguyn, oed yr Arglwydh Iesu Grist, pedair blynedh ar dheg a deugaint, a phedwar kant. *Fin.* Ag velli y tervyna Hystoria St. Greal. *Const. p. 560 in 4to. Consule Lexicon Davisianum sub voce Greal.*<sup>3</sup>

The Stories of Saint Greal : Gregorian Histories. M(ostyn) & Vaugh(an of Hengwrt). Vellum, neat character. Various fabulous tales of King Arthur and his knights, &c., beginning : "As Arthur was in his court called Camelot, on the night of Whit Saturday, in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ four hundred and fifty-four." Ending : "So ends the History of Saint Greal." It contains 560 pages 4to. Consult Davies's Lexicon under the word *Greal*.

The editors of Lewis Glyn Cothi's works state that the MS. copies of the Greal are lost ; but it is gratifying to find that such is not the case. In the catalogue of the MSS. in the Gloddaith collection, published by Mr. Aneurin Owen, occurs the following notice :

5. Sang Royal ae cavas, ac ae duc y nev ; nyt amgen Galaath vab Lawnselot de Lac, Peredur vab Eвраuc, Iarll Bwrt vab Brenin Bwrt. Y

<sup>1</sup> *Iolo MSS.* p. 704.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 706.

<sup>3</sup> Llwyd's *Arch. Brit.* p. 265.

copi cyntav a ysgrivenodd Mastir Philyp Davydd o unig lyvyr y urddedig ewythyr, Trahaearn ab Ieuan ap Meuric, ae ysgrivenodd Siancyn vab John, vab Siencyn, vab Ieuan Vychan, vab Ieuan, vab Einion, vab Rhys, vab Madoc, vab Llewelyn, vab Cadwgan, vab Elystan Glodrydd. Vellum, folio.<sup>1</sup>

Sang Royal, who had it, and who took it to heaven; being none other than Galaad the son of Launcelot du Lac, Peredur the son of Evrawc, Earl Bort, the son of King Bort. The first copy written by Master Philyp David from the sole book of his knighted uncle, Trahaearn ab Ieuan ab Meuric, which was written by Siancyn the son of John, the son of Siencyn, the son of Ieuan Vychan, the son of Ieuan, the son of Einion, the son of Rhys, the son of Madoc, the son of Llewelyn, the son of Cadwgan, the son of Athelstan Glodrydd. Vellum, folio.

The Gloddaith MS. is probably the Mostyn MS. mentioned by E. Llwyd.

The next notice is in the catalogue of the Hengwrt library, given in the same work :

49. Y Greal ; the Exploits of Arthur and his Warriors ; written in the sixth year of Henry I. in a beautiful hand. Vellum, quarto, five inches thick.<sup>2</sup>

The latter is evidently the MS. noticed by Llwyd ; and possibly may be the identical MS. of Trahaearn ab Ieuan ab Meuric. It is a most interesting document ; and if the date A.D. 1106 be correct, it must be the first of the Arthurian cyclus ; and it is hoped that Lady Charlotte Guest will not allow her work to remain incomplete while this important MS. remains unpublished.<sup>3</sup> We shall then know more of the work ; have additional light thrown upon the question of the origin of the romances ; and probably be able to place Siancyn ab John, the descendant of Athelstan Glodrydd, at the head of our list of the authors of Cambrian stories.

The mediate influence of the Church was manifested through such movements as the Crusades. These form a historical problem of much interest, and Gibbon alone of all our histo-

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of the Cymmrodorion*, iv. p. 402.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* iv. p. 407.

<sup>3</sup> See an interesting account of the early history of the Saint Greal in the *Athenæum*, April 9, 1870, p. 481 ; consult also Tennyson's poem "Holy Grail." [The *Greal* is now (1875) passing through the press under the editorship of the Rev. Canon Williams, author of *Enwogion Cymru*, *Lexicon Cornu-Britannicum*, &c. The MS. is of the early part of the fifteenth century, but the work was originally written about the year 1200. For "Henry I." of the Catalogue we should read "Henry VI."—Ed.]

rians doubts their having had a most important influence upon European civilisation. Since he wrote, the historians of the Continent have studied the subject; and we now learn from the elaborate treatises of Heeren, and Villiers, Michaud, and Guizot, that they created quite a revolution in the thoughts and feelings of the time. It is impossible to believe that Europe should have been convulsed to its centre, that millions of its best, bravest, and most intelligent inhabitants should have poured themselves out upon the deserts of Arabia, and that the minds of whole nations could have been put upon the stretch, without the acquisition of much additional knowledge, the generation of novel sentiments, and the elaboration of grander and juster ideas of manners, history, politics, literature, and geography. Their effect is very concisely stated by M. Guizot in the following words:

Here was the first and main result of the Crusades, a great step towards the enfranchisement of the mind, and a considerable advance towards more extended and unprejudiced ideas. Commenced in the name and under the influence of religious principles, the Crusades took from the religious ideas, I will not say their legitimate share of influence, but the exclusive and despotic possession of the human mind. The same fact happened to those travelling populations who have been called Crusaders as usually happens to travellers; their minds were opened and elevated by a mere circumstance of witnessing a multitude of different things, and by becoming acquainted with manners distinct from their own. Besides, they came into relations with two civilisations, not only different, but more advanced—namely, the Greek society on the one hand, and Mussulman on the other. There can be no doubt but that the Greek society, although its civilisation was emasculated, corrupted, and expiring, had on the Crusaders the operation of a society in a more advanced state, more polished and enlightened than theirs. The Mussulman society offered to them a spectacle of the same nature.

Now we cannot believe that these new feelings should have left no traces in literature; in fact, we see the effect of the Crusades in both the chronicles and romances. In their journeys towards the Holy Land the Cambrian knights mixed on terms of intimacy and equality with those of other countries, and effected of course an interchange of literatures, as plainly appears from the frequent mention in Kymric literature of Orlando, Charlemagne, Sir Fulke, and Guy of Warwick. Petrarch and Boccaccio had meanwhile revived a taste for classic literature; and we see the influence of the Church in

disseminating a knowledge of the "great of old" in the mention by the bards of Hector, Achilles, Priam, Alexander, and Cæsar.

Having thus analysed the agents at work in the production of the romance literature, the reader will be the better able to appreciate the following remarks on the scope and tendency of the Mabinogion. Here we see depth of passion breathing in rapid transitions and fiery tones; imagery, brilliant, glaring, and redundant to a fault; a sublime spirit of pure and uncreeded devotion—enlivening not darkening, elevating not depressing, and serving to show life, not as shaded by secluded ascetics, but irradiated by celestial light, with happy and perhaps unconscious allusions to contemporary transactions, national customs, and everyday habits. These show that a daring and frank, a refined and generous, and a religious though lively people had freely, almost recklessly, poured out their souls into their romantic literature, and had their peculiar habits of thought, passion, and sentiment faithfully portrayed by their *Ystorïwyr*. Pictures of external life, of the hidden workings of the passions, and of scenery, are drawn with a glow, animation, and truth equal to the best efforts of Crabbe, "Nature's sternest painter, but her best." The same force of expression and unaffected yet refined morality, the same generosity towards friends and haughty defiance of Saxon foes, are visible in both its poetry and history; but this sublimity of conception is shown to the greatest advantage in the Mabinogion. From its early chivalry, which furnished the first example for similar institutions, and awoke in other nations a similar feeling; from the restless aspiration after ideal greatness which became afterwards infused into the chivalry of Europe; from these, and the *Kymry*, its founders, romance derives its origin. No modern people seem previously to have been able to surmount the cold reality of fact; nowhere does mind appear to have so readily renounced control and ascended on daring pinions to such lofty heights. In no other country, among no other people, does mind appear to have been so early employed in contemplating as actual realities things which found no parallels in actual instances, no companions in ordinary life, and which possess no tangibility save as the embodiment of man's most cherished hopes and highest wishes. Here man is raised far above himself, clothed with every attribute of power

which men wish to possess, performing feats requiring super-human strength, and slaying Saxon enemies in such numbers as harassed Kymry alone could desire. Life is decked out in the grandest colours ; the most extraordinary acts are performed ; the most simple yet dignified sentiments are uttered ; the most exquisite sensibilities are shown by the genius of romance and its sublime creations. Its Arthurs, Tristrams, and Peredurs revel in the most gorgeous scenes ; they live in an atmosphere of their own ; and though these beautiful pictures of imaginary perfection are sometimes obscured by mystic allusions, the desire for happiness, the craving after ideal perfection, the irrepressible instinct to paint the future in the most illusory colours, soar transcendently over all.

This undoubtedly had its origin in the sanguine temperament of the Kymry ; and other nations have derived their plots, actors, and acts from Kymric models. The Round Table is a fiction, though, as we have seen, as old as A.D. 1170, the age of Cadwgan ab Bleddyn ab Kynvyn ; but Wales had always possessed a chivalric order, who have been praised by contemporary bards, and have been themselves rhymers. The cavalry of Bretagne introduced the romances of the Kymry into France and Germany ; thence they spread among the civilised nations of Europe. Great principles, wherever they flash, have in an eminent degree this universality and diffusiveness. They find a response in every bosom, they touch the finest chords of the soul, and at whatever door they knock are readily admitted. Mahometanism spread over the Eastern world with a rapidity not astonishing only when compared with the wonderful dissemination of Christianity over the Western ; second only to these was the progress of the Kymric romance. Like an electric current it made its presence known by a series of brilliant flashes ; with every clime it claimed affinity, and from every nation the brotherhood was acknowledged. Hence our English neighbours have derived the most brilliant gems in their early literature. Had the Kymric romance not made itself known to them, would Spenser have given birth to the *Faery Queen* ? That fine piece of imagery was produced at a time when chivalry, as an institution, had become extinct—when the feelings in which it had originated had, in a measure, subsided—when they glowed with less intensity, and had been chastened by improved taste—when, in fact, it could not have been pro-

duced without the previous preparation of public opinion, by the vivid and energetic description of feats which Kymric tradition had linked with the names of Arthur and his companions. English history furnished no such brilliant achievements, no such ardent feelings ; and one of England's sweetest poets was necessitated to borrow from a people whom his countrymen now affect to despise the conception of his characters and the description of the scenes amid which they existed, with the influence which such a being as Arthur was thought to have exercised upon surrounding people in raising up a race of warriors only less noble than himself. The Kymry have therefore much reason to be proud of their Mabinogion.

Romances were, during these and succeeding centuries, objects of lively curiosity ; and in an age when large libraries abound the astonishing exertions made to obtain copies through loan or purchase will scarcely be credible. Of the stories of the Greal it appears as if there was at that time but one copy known to exist throughout Wales ; for the bard Guto'r Glyn was sent all the way from Denbighshire, in North Wales, to the extreme bounds of Glamorgan to borrow it. It was then in the possession of Tryhaearn ab Ievan ab Meuric ab Howel Gam, of Gwaenllwg, Glamorganshire ; and the bard addresses a poem to the chieftain, in which he describes the book he wished to borrow for David, Abbot of Valle Crucis Abbey. At that time it was customary to send the bards on important messages ; and whenever an important favour was asked, the request was uniformly couched in verse. In the fifteenth century this fashion became very common, and we owe to the custom some scores of very admirable compositions. The poem composed on this occasion is very interesting, as, in addition to indicating the prevalent practice, it describes the book, throws light on the nature of the Greal, and shows the intense interest which the stories had at last excited in even very intelligent minds, since a dignitary of the Church was so exceedingly curious, as he is here described, to peruse the adventures of the Arthurian knights. It is a picture of the time, and runs thus :

The ages of three men be to thee, Tryhaearn,  
 Patron of the bards in giving judgment,  
 Son of Ievan, the chief of Penrhos,  
 The son of Meuric, the object of my address.  
 The second from Howel Gam,

And the third of the race of Adam.<sup>1</sup>  
 A royal race of the kingly stock,  
 Of Kynvyn and Bleddyn and Blaidd,  
 Is thy lineage, from the Usk to the vale of Neath ;  
 The kindred is of South and North Wales.  
 Noble is thy blood, Tryhaearn ;  
 May thy end in this world be the Day of Judgment.  
 Strong as the yoked ox, thy fame has  
 Traversed the Gwents and southern lands.  
 The eye of Gwaenllwg art thou entirely,  
 The hand and the book of others also ;  
 The offerings of science hast thou  
 Truly distributed, as Arthur did.  
 The hand of Nudd to Caerlleon wast thou,  
 And its people assemble where thou art.  
 The mouth of the learning of the bards of Glamorgan ;  
 The mouth of the literature of the land of Gwaenllwg.  
 The mouth of all the excellencies of Gwynedd,  
 From Edeyrnion to the land of Neath.  
 And the skilful tongue of our language ;  
 The father who cherishes it art thou that knowest it.  
 Let us go to the court ; there shall we find thee,  
 At Haverford, like in a high fair.  
 Eight hundred thousand extol thee,  
 From Aberffraw to the Vale of Pembroke.  
 Well art thou styled the wise countenance  
 Of all the sciences of Dyved,  
 From the fair harbour where boils the wave  
 Of Daugleddau<sup>2</sup> to Caledonia ;  
 One of the heroes of Earl Herbert of Narberth  
 Art thou, and his lance and his might,  
 Possessing a name above that  
 In the dwelling of thy own eight territories ;<sup>3</sup>  
 The name of teacher and director of every learning,  
 In a measure like unto the name of Moses.  
 The Abbot of Valle Crucis will make our land  
 Altogether one entire feast ;  
 At his own charge shall wine and meat be free  
 For the entertainment of you and Davydd,<sup>4</sup>  
 In the same manner as thou in the Dwyallt,  
 Excepting his vestments and his tonsure.

<sup>1</sup> Howel's father.<sup>2</sup> Milford Haven.<sup>3</sup> Gwent<sup>4</sup> The Abbot of Valle Crucis.

Like as all Cambrians assemble in thy house,  
 From all the Gwents, so shall it be with him.  
 He by his order is distinguished,  
 You by the sciences of the world.  
 All Gwynedd shall assemble here,  
 Like as the eight districts of Gwent at thy fair mansion.

The science and endowments of knowledge  
 Assuredly does Davydd love,  
 For one book he does call out,  
 That he loves more than gold and gems,  
 And implores you to send  
 The goodly Greal to this land.  
 The book of the blood ; the book of the heroes,  
 Where they fell in the court of Arthur ;  
 The book of the renowned knights,  
 The book of the fair order of the Round Table ;  
 A book still in the Briton's hand,  
 Which the race of Horsa cannot read.  
 The loan of this does Davydd, Principal of the Choir,  
 Request from the bountiful Ivor,  
 The kingly book, which should the venerable chief obtain,  
 He would be content to live without other food.  
 The holy monks also do desire to have  
 The sacred Greal in yonder land of Yale.  
 Nevertheless it will not tarry there ;  
 From the land of Yale it will return again :  
 Your old blind Guto, he and his chattels,  
 Will be your surety for its return,  
 And gracious Providence, as from the dwelling of St. David,  
 Will doubtless grant thee thy reward.<sup>1</sup>

In the Kymric lines quoted, p. 419, the book is differently described ; for instead of " a book of the fair order of the Round Table," it is more pointedly termed—

Llyvr o grefft yr holl vort gron,  
 A book of the doings of the whole Round Table.

The curiosity of the abbot is well described by the blind old bard ; and it would appear to have been real, for Black Ievan of the Billhook, another bard, describes the anticipated gratitude of a different aspirant for the perusal of " the truthful grey

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¹ *Iolo Manuscripts*, p. 706.

book" in terms quite as forcible. Addressing Lewis ab Davydd Ddu, the Abbot of Glyn Neath, he says :

Let this book therefore be courteously sent
 To us from the court of Neath by the worthy Lewis,
 Who is exemplary in rebuking the ungodly,
 And of true propriety in prayer to God.
 And if I shall obtain from Davydd's son
 The book of the Greal without delay,
 And readily against Lent,
 Its proud leaves will be worth its weight (in gold).
 We will observe the supreme law of St. Gregory,
 We shall have matins in the choir,
 And after vesper manifold will be
 The uttering of praise to Mary.¹

Proceed we now to notice another curious species of literature pertaining to and truly characteristic of the ancient Kymry.

SECTION V.

THE TRIADS.

THESE form an exceedingly interesting collection of documents, and have been found eminently useful in illustrating national history, manners, and language. They bespeak a singular state of society, and such as could have no existence in modern times. I have been much interested in considering the allusions to the social state found in the works of the early bards; the poems of Llywarch Hen and Aneurin seem to show a higher state of civilisation than prevailed many centuries later, and clearly show the condition of Britain at the close of the Roman domination, when the civilised practices of their conquerors had won their admiration and elicited their sympathy. In such circumstances, when the alarms and excitements of war had ceased, and when the British youth, whose mental capacities have been favourably noticed by several Latin historians, strove to excel in a knowledge of Roman literature, there must of necessity have

¹ *Ibid.* p. 708. [The work mentioned in this poem was, apparently, not the Greal, but a *Gradual*, or antiphonary.—Ed.]

been much intellectual activity. Then must have arisen the necessity for some medium of communication, and for the transmission of thought; and if we bear in mind the assertion of Cæsar that the Druids cultivated the art of memory, we arrive easily at the origin of the Triads. By these remarks I do not mean to assert that the Triad is as old as the time of the Druids, but intend more particularly to show that at this period it was in existence, or, had it not been previously in use, must now have been developed. The Kymry were a communicative and intellectual people, and wanting writing materials, must of necessity have had recourse to a system of artificial memory. Some of the Triads may be as old as the time of the Druids; there must have been a collection of them in the time of Hywel Dda, before he could have consulted those attributed to Dyvnwal Moelmud, but the collections we have are as late as the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries.¹

They may be divided into Triads of history, bardism, theology, ethics, and jurisprudence. We have advanced one reason why they seem, some of them, to have been collected as far back as the tenth century. The Triadic form is frequently seen in the poems of Aneurin and Llywarch Hen; and Mr. Vaughan of Hengwrt was of opinion that some of them had been collected as far back as the seventh century. In the time of Hywel they were very common, as "the collective wisdom" of his day have either framed or copied a great number of legislative Triads; and we have unquestionable proof in the following Englyn by Kynddelw that one at least of the historical class is as old as the twelfth century:

Godwryf a glywaf am glawr fagu glyw
 Glew Fadawc bieuflu
 Trinfa cryf a cynyddu
 Trydydd *Tri Diweir Deulu.*

¹ If Price (*Hanes Cymru*, pp. 134-6) be right in his ingenious attempt to identify *Tawch* with *Dacia*—and there is not much doubt that he is—the Triad which relates to the earliest account of the Cambro-Britons must have been composed in or about the twelfth century. There are some Triads in the *Llyvr Du*. See *Archæologia Cambrensis*, 1864, pp. 265, 269. The Triads of the sixteenth century were made by the Glamorgan bards (*Myv. Arch.* iii.); the Triads that name Hu Gadarn are not later than the fifteenth century.

This alludes to a well-known Triad of the three blessed families of Bran Vendigaid, Cunedda Wledig, and Brychan Brycheiniog.

I had, in sketching out the plan of this essay, intended to introduce a dissertation upon the value of the Triads as historical documents, but the shortness of the time at my disposal, and the quantity of matter yet to be introduced, compel me to leave it out and content myself with briefly stating the probable conclusions. Many of the Triads refer to events of which there remains no other record, and many are evidently fabulous and mythological. Again many of them relate in different words, and from evidently distinct sources, to events commemorated by Roman and Saxon historians and the monkish chroniclers. The accounts are very similar, and so nearly coincident that in other cases, where there is no corroborative evidence, and where there is no admixture of fabulous matter apparent, the Triads may, with a little caution, be without risk of impropriety used as authentic historical documents. They are only traditions, it is true, for the habit of writing, once introduced, would render these brief memorials unnecessary and less satisfactory than full and circumstantial reports; but they are traditions of a peculiar and trustworthy character. The bards are said to have recited these Triads at their congresses, and if such was really the case, the difficulty of introducing fictitious matter under such circumstances would be very great; we are therefore justified in forming a favourable estimate of their historical trustworthiness.¹

¹ [See Appendix.—ED.]

CHAPTER IV.

SECTION I.

THE WELSH LANGUAGE.

It is my business to write the history of the language as well as of the literature of the Kymry; and however imperfect the following pages may be, they will throw a little light upon the subject, and materially assist such of my readers as wish to study the original poems. The Kymraeg is a language which lays claim to very remote antiquity, but at a time when almost every scientific discovery tends to unsettle our notions of the primary state of society, it would scarcely savour of wisdom to speak of a primitive language. Suffice it that the language is old; perhaps the Keltic is the oldest class of European languages.

It is of more importance to know upon the present occasion that the Kymraeg is an original language, corresponding to the wants of the people, indicative of their deficiencies, and elaborated with much care from original roots, upon principles really philosophical. The language of a people must always correspond to the requirements of the nation, and from its copiousness in some respects, and scantiness in others, will always furnish a tolerably correct notion of the place of that people in the scale of civilisation. Languages at all times answer the demand made upon them, either from their own resources or by the admixture of words from other tongues; and therefore it is an index of both the purity and richness of the Kymraeg, that from its own elements it has been found capable of meeting all the requirements hitherto made of it, without being in the

slightest degree indebted for foreign aid; and the fact that in the march of intellect many branches of knowledge have been formed, for which the Kymry have as yet no adequate expressions, is no proof whatever that its capacities have been exhausted. Science has not hitherto domesticated itself at the Cambrian hearth; but when it does visit our mountaineers—and the time for that is, I trust, approaching¹—there is not much room for doubt that this time-honoured language will, like the Greek, be as well adapted for the most abstruse sciences as for common conversation.

The originality of the language is a fact which has not been fully recognised by most of our grammarians; but it is less my intention to give an outline of the principles of the language than to trace the progress of its growth or development during the two hundred and forty years embraced by this essay. My observations will principally be directed to the mutation of consonants; but I would make a passing remark upon the conjugation of verbs. The past, present, and future terminations of verbs are a little confused in our earlier poets. This topic cannot be satisfactorily treated unless we had the actual words of the sixth century poets before us in their original orthography; but we cannot, I fear, with any degree of certainty refer their present orthography to as early an age as the sixth century, though our present version is evidently early. Taliesin says, in giving Owain ab Urien's reply to Fflamddwyn's demand for hostages:

Ni ddodynt, nid ydynt, nid ynt parawd,

They have not been, they are not, they will not be ready.

Here we have all the three tenses with the same termination. Again, in that very beautiful description of a flight of arrows—

Gwelais wyr gorravwr,
A dygyrchynt awr;

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<sup>1</sup> It is a source of sincere gratification to reflect that an attempt is being made to render Chambers's *Information for the People* known to the Kymry in their own language. The translator, Mr. Ebenezer Thomas, is fully competent to his task; the work is of all others the best adapted, from its excellence and cheapness, for the purpose of bringing scientific knowledge within the reach of my countrymen, and I trust that Mr. Edwards, the publisher, will not have to regret that his spirited undertaking meets with a cold reception.

Gwelais waed ar lawr  
 Rac ruthyr cletyvawr  
 Glesynt esgyll gwawr  
 Esgorynt yn waewawr—

we notice the same want of a discriminative mark between the tenses ; but it is singular that this defect only pervades the writings of Taliesin and Llywarch. Instances in abundance may be produced from the Elegies of the latter bard. The termination “ynt” is used in the *past tense* in the following lines :

Yn Llongborth llâs i Arthur  
 Gwyr dewr, cymmynynt a dur  
 Ammherawdwy, llywiawdwyr llafur ;

while it is here used in the *present* (the proper) tense :

Eglwysau Bassa ynt dirion heno,  
 Ys gwaedlyd eu meillion  
 Rhudd ynt hwy, rhwy fy nghalon.

Aneurin, who exhibits traces of Latin influence in other respects also, uses this termination as do modern writers ; and in the following passage the past, the present, and future terminations are such as are now commonly used :

O vreithell Gattraeth pan adrotir,  
 Maon dychurant eu hoed bu hîr,  
 Edyrn diedyrn, a mygyn dîr,  
 A meibion Godebawc, gwerin enwir  
 Dyphorthynt gowysawr gelorawr hîr !  
 Bu truan dyngedven, angen gywir  
 A dyngud i Dudwylch a Chywylch hîr  
 Aed yvent vet gloew wrth liw babir  
 Cyd vel da ei vlâs, ei gâs bu hir.

At Cattræth's deed of blood, when told by fame,  
 Humanity will long deplore the loss ;  
 A throne with nought to sway, a murky soil ;  
 Godeboc's progeny, a faithful band,  
 On biers are borne to glut the yawning grave.  
 Their fate was wretched, yet true the destiny  
 Sworn to Tudvolch, and to Cyvolch proud—  
 That though by blaze of torch they quaffed clear mead,  
 Though good its taste, its curse would long be felt.

Here we have “ent” for the past tense, “ynt” in the present, and “ant” in the future. Whether this arose from the greater skill of Aneurin, or from the alterations of the copyist, I know not; but that alterations have been made is evident, from the fact that in other places Taliesin is made to use the future termination *ant* in both the past and present tenses. Perhaps the only safe conclusion would be that the usage at that period was confused and unsettled, and that the use of the terminations “ant” and “ent” has been introduced since that of “ynt.” “Ynt” is sometimes improperly used in the past tense by the bards of the twelfth and subsequent centuries; and even at the present day “ant” is as frequently used in the past as in the future tense by writers careless of elegant diction.

Mr. Humphreys Parry, preceded by Dr. Pughe, has, in a series of able articles upon the Welsh language, given expression to some sentiments respecting the mutation of consonants, which require examination. He seems to consider that the consonants are not changed for the sake of euphony, but only in accordance with grammatical rules. Such an assertion is utterly at variance with the state of the language as we find it in the twelfth century, as is also the assumption that the mutation of the initial consonants dates back from a very remote antiquity. It is easy to trace the steps of its growth; and the poems of the twelfth century show that many mutations now used were not then known. The mutation of initial consonants is as old as our oldest poems, but all the mutations now known were not then used. They were gradually introduced. Meilir, in one of his poems, says:

Amdlawd vyn tavawd ar vyn tewi.

Had the whole of the mutations been then known, he would have written thus:

Amdlawd vy *nhavawd*, &c,

At that time, if the language was pronounced as it is written, it must have sounded harsh indeed, as will be seen from the following instances:

Digonais *geryt*  
Yg gwyt Duw *Dovyt*  
Vy iawn *grevyt*  
Heb y weini.—*Meilir*.

Un o Iwerton.—*Gwalchmai*.  
 Pencor, pencert wyti itaw.—*Kynddelw*.  
 Un ar dir, ar dorvoet rydres.—*Prydydd Moch*.  
 Ban dywaid o vrait wetait wovec.—*Hywel ab Owain*.  
 Diwallaw di venestr na vyn angau,  
 Korn can anrydet anghyvetau.—*Owain Kyveiliog*.  
 Maredu, llofrut lloegrwys.—*Prydydd Moch*.

Now in each of these and hundreds of similar cases the *t* would be now written *dd* or *dh*; but this mutation was not at that time in existence.

The *dh* was introduced to express this sound about the year 1400, and in the time of Henry VIII. the *h* was omitted, and the *d* written with a point at the top or underneath, and Irish antiquarians still retain the *ḏ*. This was the form used by H. Llwyd and W. Salesbury at home, and by Dr. Gruffydd Roberts and Roger Smyth in the Welsh books they printed beyond the sea. Dr. J. D. Rhys, Dr. D. Powell, Thomas Jones of Tregaron, and others who wrote during the reign of Queen Elizabeth revived the old form *dh*; but Dr. Davies afterwards rejected both the preceding, and introduced the *dd*, which prevails at this day.<sup>1</sup> This alteration is far from being judicious; it wants the sanction of analogy, and has no valid support. In the case of *tt*, *rr*, *mm*, *nn*, &c., the single letters are doubled in order to harden the sound, but the doubled *d* is intended to be softer than the single; it is therefore against analogy. Dr. Owen Pughe wished to revive the *d* with the dot at the top, and Lynch in his Irish Grammar (pub. 1821) recommended the Kymry to adopt the Irish notation; but the *dh*, as used by Edward Llwyd, J. D. Rhys, Powell, and Thomas Jones, appears to be the best exponent of the aspirated sound of *d*.

The letter *f* very anciently had two pronunciations. Llwyd gives an interesting illustration of the most unusual of them:

On a mountain, called Gelli Gaer, in Glamorganshire, we find the British name Divrod inscribed on a stone TEFRAVTI. In the notes on Glamorganshire in Cambden I have read this inscription, supposing it might have been Welsh, DEFFRO IT TI, i.e. mayest thou awake; but having found afterwards that the names anciently inscribed on monu-

<sup>1</sup> Llwyd's *Arch. Brit.* p. 226.



ments in our country are very often in the genitive case, as CONBELINI, SEVERINI, AMILINI, &c., and most if not all in Latin, I now conclude it a proper name, and the very same that is otherwise called *Dubritius*.<sup>1</sup>

Here it is sounded as *v*; but the same writer remarks that generally, and in the oldest MSS., it has the sound given to it in the English alphabet. Perhaps it would have been more strictly accurate to have stated that in early ages the usage was not fixed, as no rule appears to be observed by the poets, who sometimes use the one and sometimes the other character to express the same sound. A line from *Kynddelw* will show the fact clearly:

*Sevis ef seint duw genhyn.*

Here we have the same sound represented by both *v* and *f*. In the twelfth century, or perhaps sooner, another rule was adopted by which the *v* was superseded by *f*, and the doubled *f* used to represent the English sound of that letter, thus:

*Uffern carn ffurf y henneint;*

but still considerable laxity prevailed; for in reading in the *Meddygon Myddvai*, “*Ef a geif*,” the first *f* would be pronounced soft and the second hard.

In old MSS. we find the letter *c* where we now use *g*; and in reading most of the specimens given in this work the *c* at the end of the word should be sounded as *g*. Thus *Aneurin* has *caeawc cynhorawc*, for *caeawg cynhorawg*;

*Guledic gwlad orvod.—Meilir.*

*Teithiawc Prydein.—Gwalchmai.*

*Twrwrff ton torchawc.—Kynddelw.*

*Hartliw guanec.—Hywel ab Owain.*

It should also be observed that the modern compound *ng* is generally represented by a single letter, which in printing has been displaced by the simple *g*; thus:

*Gwaethyluann yg kyman yg kymelri.—Llywarch ab Llywelyn.*

would now be written, *Gwaethylvann, ynghyman ynghymelri.*

<sup>1</sup> *Llwyd's Arch. Brit.* p. 226.

Formerly the words *eog*, *baedd*, &c., were written *chauc*, *bahed*, the *h* being used to prolong the sounds of the vowels.

In the oldest MSS. the letter *i* supplied not only its English pronunciation in the words *him*, *thin*, &c., and the double *ee*, but also both *y* and *ÿ*; and Llwyd remarks that in an ancient Welsh manuscript, written five hundred years before his time, this letter was constantly omitted, and its place supplied by *ÿ*.

Llwyd remarks that the letter *k* never occurs in our oldest British manuscripts, but was afterwards introduced by the Normans, who made frequent use of it in their old French. About the year 1200 it is constantly used in the initial syllables, and the *c* in the terminations; thus:

A deckant kyman ae kilyei.—*Hywel ab Owain*.

Y korn yn llaw Rys, &c.—*Owain Kyveiliog*.

Am fedd Krist, &c.—*Elidir Sais*.

Y neb a holo penkynyd keisyed, &c.—*Cyfreithiau Hywel* (a MS. of the twelfth century.)

It continued to be used until about 1500, since which time most Welsh writers have omitted it and used the *c* instead. As at present used among the Kymry the *c* is always hard.

The letter *l* has two pronunciations; but in the oldest British MSS. Llwyd says that there is no distinction to denote when it has its simple sound, and when it is to be sounded as *ll* or *lh*. The double *l* "was introduced in the twelfth century; which Dr. Gruffydd Roberts, author of the first printed Welsh grammar, in the reign of King Henry VIII., not approving of, altered for an *l* with a point underneath, and William Salesbury for one marked at the top. Afterwards Dr. Davies, the physician, observing that *h* had been the auxiliary in the ancient Roman orthography as *ch*, *ph*, and *th*, introduced *lh*; and this practice obtained till Dr. Davies rejected it and used *ll* in his grammar, printed A.D. 1621, and in his dictionary."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to its usual sound, the *m* sometimes in the most ancient manuscripts had that of *v*; thus in the *Liber Landavensis* the word *Cyvraith* is written *Cymreith*.

There are two pronunciations to the *r* in the oldest manuscripts. When used in its primary form, as in the beginning

<sup>1</sup> Llwyd's *Arch. Brit.* p. 228.

of words in dictionaries, it is always pronounced as in the Greek, aspirated. Thus, in the words "Kyn rudaw," &c., it would be pronounced as if written *rh*; but in the poems of this era, there is no mark to denote when the aspirate should be used or omitted. About 1500 in North Wales the initial *r* was doubled as in "rriallon," for Rhiwallon; the *rh* was introduced afterwards. Old bards of this era began to double the *s*, just as Glamorgan writers doubled the *n*; but the wisdom of, or the necessity for, either is alike problematical. *U* was variously used for *u*, *v*, and *w*. The *w* does not appear in very old manuscripts; it was used as *v* and *y*; but its usage is now fixed.

The letter *x* is not known among the Kymry, though Cæsar states that one of the chief of the Edui was called Dumnorix. Llwyd argues with much ingenuity that the name was ended with the Greek *X*, the *ch* of the Keltic dialects.

Many of the bards, who lived during the twelfth and succeeding centuries, took much pride in the art of literary composition, and many therein display considerable skill. The language of the Kymry is rich in native roots, and several of these men have done much to develop its capabilities; they wisely determined to cultivate their own tongue rather than borrow words from others; and, as they had clear perceptions of the philosophy of language, the service rendered to their parent speech by the writers of these centuries will ever give them a strong claim upon the respect and admiration of their countrymen. They formed their compound words upon principles really philosophical; and, when the number of Kymric roots was so great, it will scarcely excite surprise that men proud of their language, and with intelligence enough to develop its capacities, should have produced lasting monuments of their own skill, and of the inherent wealth of the Cambrian tongue. In their position, and surrounded by the social atmosphere of the age, we naturally conclude that they must have excelled in those things by which they were most strongly affected. War was the ruling passion of the era, and battles, warriors, and princes were the objects which most frequently tasked their descriptive powers. It is here, therefore, that we shall find the best specimens of composition. For battle they had no less than nine words:

|        |   |            |
|--------|---|------------|
| Battle | } | Brwydr,    |
|        |   | Ymladdfa,  |
|        |   | Aer,       |
|        |   | Cad,       |
|        |   | Trin,      |
|        |   | Breithell, |
|        |   | Camawn,    |
|        |   | Gwaith,    |
|        |   | Rhyfel;    |

and from one of these words we meet with the following compounds :

Aer, *pl.* Aerau, Battle.

Aeraesawr, Battle-shielded (*D. ab Gwilym.*)

Aerawd, *pl.* Aerodydd, A slaughtering (*Prydydd y Moch.*)

Aerawg, Slaughtering (*D. ab Emwnt.*)

Aerawl, Warring.

Aer-bair, Causing slaughter (*Llygad Gwr.*)

Aer-baith, Wasted by slaughter (*Llygad Gwr.*)

Aer-baladr, The spear of battle (*G. ab Meredydd.*)

Aer-bar, *pl.* Aerbarau, The spear of war (*Kynddelw.*)

Aer-bar, Preparing for slaughter (*Kynddelw.*)

Aer-bost, *pl.* Aerbyst, Pillar of battle (*Prydydd y Moch.*)

Aer-darf, Battle-frightening (*Kynddelw.*)

Aer-dawelwch, Battle-silence (*Prydydd y Moch.*)

Aer-dew, The thick of battle (*Kynddelw.*)

Aer-dorf, *pl.* Aerdorfoedd, Battle-troop (*Kynddelw.*)

Aer-dranc, *pl.* Aer-drancau, Battle-extermination (*Prydydd Bychan.*)

Aer-drawd, *pl.* Aer-drodion, Battle-tread.

Aer-drin, Managing of battle (*Davydd Benfras.*)

Aer-drodi, To march to battle.

Aer-dwr, The tower of battle (*Prydydd y Moch.*)

Aer-dwrch, The boar of battle (*G. ab Meredydd.*)

Aer-dwrf, *pl.* Aer-dyrfoedd, The sound of battle (*Kynddelw.*)

Aer-draig, The din of battle (*Gwilym Ddu.*)

Aer-ddraig, The dragon of battle (*Prydydd Bychan.*)

Aer-ddor, The guardian of battle (*Einion Wan.*)

Aer-ddryd, Skilful in war (*Davydd Benfras.*)

Aer-dduriawg, Battle-steeled (*Prydydd Bychan.*)

Aerfa, *pl.* Aerfaod, Place of battle (*G. ab Arthur.*)

Aer-fab, *pl.* Aerfeib, Son of slaughter (*Bleddyn Vard.*)

Aer-faidd, *pl.* Aer-feiddiau, Battle-daring (*Aneurin.*)

Aer-fan, Aer-fannau, Field of battle (*Kynddelw.*)

Aer-fulch, Proud of battle (*Llygad Gwr.*)

- Aer-far, *pl.* Aer-faroedd, Battle rage (*Einion ab Gwgan.*)  
 Aer-fathru, To trample in battle (*Rhisierdyn.*)  
 Aer-fawr, Greatly slaughtering (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aer-feddawg, Entombed in slaughter (*Prydydd y Moch.*)  
 Aer-fen, Place of battle (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aer-flaidd, *pl.* Aerfleiddiau, War-wolf (*Prydydd Bychan.*)  
 Aer-flawdd, Nimble slaughterer (*Prydydd Bychan.*)  
 Aer-fle, A field of slaughter.  
 Aer-frad, Battle-treachery (*G. ab Meredydd ab Davydd.*)  
 Aer-frau, Breaking in battle (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aer-fraw, The terror of battle (*Prydydd Bychan.*)  
 Aer-fryd, Battle-loving.  
 Aer-fur, The fortress of battle (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aer-frwyd, The sting of battle (*G. ab Meredydd.*)  
 Aer-frys, The haste of battle.  
 Aer-fwrw, Dealing slaughter (*Prydydd y Moch.*)  
 Aer-ffysg, *pl.* Aer-ffysgau, Battle-hastening.  
 Aer-gad, *pl.* Aer-gadoedd, A skirmish (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aergawdd, *pl.* Aer-goddau, The rage of slaughter (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aer-gi, *pl.* Aer-gwn, Dog or Dogs of war (*Aneurin.*)  
 Aer-glais, *pl.* Aer-gleisiau, Battle-marked (*Prydydd Bychan.*)  
 Aer-glau, Active in battle (*Prydydd y Moch.*)  
 Aer-gledd, The sword of battle (*Casnodyn.*)  
 Aer-glwyf, *pl.* Aerglwyfau, Battle-wound (*Phylip Brydydd.*)  
 Aer-göl, Battle-sting (*Taliesin.*)  
 Aer-gorf, *pl.* Aer-gyrf, The strength of battle (*Gwalchmai.*)  
 Aer-grain, *pl.* Aergreiniau, The wallowing of slaughter (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aer-grau, The gore of battle (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aer-gre, *pl.* Aergreon, The impulse of slaughter (*Llywarch Hen.*)  
 Aer-grwydr, *pl.* Aegrwydrau, Battle-scattering (*Seisyll Bryffwrch.*)  
 Aer-gryd, *pl.* Aergrydau, Battle-tremor (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aer-gun, The chief of the battle (*Prydydd Bychan.*)  
 Aer-gur, Battle-paining (*G. ab M. ab Davydd.*)  
 Aer-gwl, *pl.* Aergylion, Battle-mischief (*Davydd Benfras.*)  
 Aer-gwyn, *pl.* Aergwynion, Battle-complaint (*Einion Offeiriad.*)  
 Aer-gwys, *pl.* Aergwysi, Battle-furrows (*Llygad Gwr.*)  
 Aer-gyfrain, *pl.* Aergyfreinion, Meeting of battle-spears (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aer-laith, *pl.* Aerleithiau, The havoc of battle (*Elidir Sais.*)  
 Aer-llary, Generous in fight (*Prydydd y Moch.*)  
 Aer-lew, *pl.* Aerlewod, The lion of battle (*Llygad Gwr.*)  
 Aer-lew, Brave in battle (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aer-lid, The anger of battle (Author of *Hoianau.*)  
 Aer-ludd, *pl.* Aerluddiau, The hindrance of battle (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aer-lyw, *pl.* Aerlywion, The ruler of battle (*Seisyll Bryffwrch.*)  
 Aer-llafn, The blade of battle (*G. ab Meredydd.*)

- Aer-llin, A warlike race (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aer-llu, The army of battle (*Casnodyn.*)  
 Aer-ner, The lord of battle (*Prydydd y Moch.*) .  
 Aer-nerth, Strength of battle (*Prydydd y Moch.*)  
 Aer-walch, *pl.* Aerweilch, The hawk of battle (*Bleddyn Vardd.*)  
 Aer-wan, Opening the battle (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aer-was, *pl.* Aerweision, A young warrior (*Elidir Sais.*)  
 Aer-wib, *pl.* Aerwibiau, The course of slaughter.  
 Aerwawr, The hero of battle (*G. ab Meredydd.*)  
 Aer-wosgryn, *pl.* Aerwosgryniion, The shaker of battle (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aer-wr, *pl.* Aerwyr, A warrior (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aer-wy, *pl.* Aerwyon, Battle-torques (*G. ab Ieuan Hen.*)  
 Aer-wyad, Battle-torque-wearing.  
 Aer-wyaw, To put on a battle-torque.  
 Aer-wyawg, Having battle-torques.  
 Aer-wyawl, Like battle-torques.  
 Aer-wyll, The fiend of war (*Kynddelw.*)  
 Aer-wymp, Smart in battle (*G. ab Meredydd.*)  
 Aer-wywr, A maker of battle-torques.

The same fecundity may be observed in other roots, though not perhaps to so great an extent.

In the arrangement of words the bards also showed a degree of skill, but little, if any, inferior to that exhibited in the formation of new ones; but generally, in this respect, they proposed for themselves too low a standard of excellence. *Kynddelw* frequently contents himself with such displays as :

Ae balchlann rwng y balchneint  
 Ae balchvur ae balchwyr testeint  
 Ae balchlwys eglwys eglurveint  
 Ae balch rad ae balchrot trameint  
 Ae balchwawr yn awr yn deweint  
 Ae balchgor heb achor echvreint  
 Ae balch offeiryat ae hoffeirieint ;

but he has many passages indicative of greater ability ; among these may be cited :

Dysgogan derwyton dewrwlad—y esgar  
 Y wysgwyd weinivyad  
 Dysgweinid kyrt kydneid kydnad  
 Kyd volyant gwr gormant gormeissyad  
 Dysgweyd keinyeid kyva enad eu rwyf  
 Eu rwytvod yn amhad

Dy brydeich brwydyr daer aer aerurad  
Dybrw dreic dragon beleidryad;

and in the same poem, addressed to Owain Kyveiliog :

Mwyn ouyt y veirt y ueith goelvein—rann  
Meirch mygyruann kynkan kein  
Yn rith rynn ysgywd  
Rac ysgwgn blymnhwyd  
Ar ysgwyt yn arwein  
Yn rith llew rac llyw goradein  
Yn rith llauyn anwar llachar llein  
Yn rith cletyf claer clod ysgein—yn aer  
Yn aroloet kyngrein  
Yn rith dreic rac dragon prydein  
Yn rith bleit blaengar vu Ywein.

Llywarch ab Llywelyn prided himself upon the polish of his verses, and would probably not have objected to the citation of his address to Davydd ab Owain as a fair specimen of his best style :

Hanbych well dauyt handid o deuawd  
Gogyuarch teyrn gogwyr teyrnuart  
Gogyfurt torment gogyfyaw toruoet  
Gogawn teyrnueirt gogawn teyrnuro  
Termud torment terrwyn deyrn  
Eryres ormes eryron dyrrva  
Eryr teyrnon yr yn deyrngein  
Eryr dreic ormant arduyant prif veirt  
Eurdwrn prydytyon arwynawl pryduar  
Ar wyneb prydein  
Hud wytt yth edryt hud wyf yth eduryd  
Hydrueirt oth edrych hud ynt yth adrawt  
Eiryod dy ang car aerawd dyt angkeu  
Eurawc dy aghad eiryt ym anghen  
Teyrnllu teyrnet teyrnllaw teyrnllin  
Teyrnllwy teyrnas teruyse torment  
Teruyn tir gadw terrwyn  
Teyrn ar gedyrn eur gedawl dauyt  
O devawd angertawl  
Rwyn kynnygyn kynnogyn ditawl  
Rwyf prydein prydyt ath vawl.

It would be impossible to convey a clear notion of the skill here displayed by translation, and therefore I have not made

the attempt. But neither of these bards possessed such mastery over the language as Gwalchmai. In his celebrated ode he displays a remarkable degree of skill in developing its capacities, as will appear from the various combinations of the word "dygyfod" in the following lines :

A *dygyfor* Lloegr, a *dygyfrang* â hi ;  
 Ac ei *dygyfwrw* yn astrussi,  
 A *dygyfod* clod cleddyf difri ;  
 Yn saith ugein iaith wy faith foli !

The richness of the Cambrian tongue is also shown in the second line of the Avallenau, where a number of words are ably developed from the root "gy—"—

Saith afallen beren a saith ugaint  
 Yn *gyfoed*, *gyfuwch*, *gyhyd*, *gymmaint*.

I have already quoted, in treating of this poem, some lines from Davydd Benvras, which exhibit the same mastery over words and the exhaustless wealth of a language whose roots were numerous enough to enter into every requisite combination. Instances of this fecundity might be cited from all the bards, from Aneurin down to Davydd ab Gwilym ; but those already quoted show the truth of the assertion in the most clear and satisfactory manner. The improvement which took place during this period is also shown by the discarding of such Latin phrases as "rex regum," "rex rexedd," and "rex awyr," which prevailed in the time of Meilir.

The Welsh language has evidently grown in the hands of its literati ; new wants have revealed new capabilities to supply them. Evans, in the *Dissertatio de Bardis*, complains that the language of the early bards is unintelligible ; but it is much more intelligible than he seems to have considered it to be ; and in the bards of the twelfth century, making allowance for words which designate manners not now prevalent, is not difficult to be understood.



## SECTION II.

POETRY FROM A.D. 1280 TO A.D. 1322.

It is now time that we should cast a cursory glance over the literature of Wales from the death of Llewelyn ab Gruffydd to that of Sir Gruffydd Llwyd. The fall of Llewelyn, and the capture of David his brother, seem, as it is natural to expect, to have paralysed the mind of the nation and rendered it incapable of great exertion. Besides, the period between 1280 and 1322, when Sir Gruffydd Llwyd was taken prisoner, was one of petty insurrections and local wars; these irritate but do not stimulate the intellect, and probably gave rise to many paltry poems, which have left no traces in the literature of the country. Such a state of political servitude and grumbling obedience is essentially unfavourable to intellectual labour; the Kymry could not make up their minds cheerfully to submit to the English usurper, and yet they appear to have wanted both ability in their leaders and zeal on their behalf; for the insurrections were very petty, had no lofty aims, and springing from local grievances, found no response in national sympathy. The state of feeling and opinion at this time may be inferred from the poems of the bards; and one of the best bards in the whole course of Cambrian literature gives the feeling very clear expression:

Mynych iawn y dynunais,  
 Cael Arglwydd llawn arwydd llain  
 O honou ninnau'n hunain.—*Iolo Goch.*

Oftentimes have I wished  
 To have a lord of ability—glorious portent—  
 From among us ourselves.

Carefully considered, these facts will leave no room for wonder that the literature of these forty years is not more plentiful and valuable. The age, however, was not altogether barren; it was a period of gestation, as appeared in the general revival of the age of Owain Glyndwr and the wars of the Roses; and there are strong reasons for referring some of the Mabinogion to this date.

About this time there flourished Gwilym Ddu, Llywelyn Brydydd Hodnant, Hillyn or Heilyn, Iorwerth Vychan, Llywelyn Ddu, Rhys Goch, Casnodyn, Rhiserdyn, Gruffydd ab Davydd ab Tudur, and Madawg Dwygraig. Llywarch Llaety is also referred to this date by the editors of the *Myvyrian Archaeology*, but, for reasons already stated, without propriety. Several of these bards have been incidentally noticed already, and some passing remarks may again be made upon others; but we shall only notice at any length a few of the more distinguished.

GWILYM DDU has two odes addressed to Sir Gruffydd Llwyd, the causes of which were the following circumstances: "Sir Gruffydd Llwyd, knight, the son of Rhys ab Gruffydd ab Ednyved Vychan, was a valiant gentleman, but unfortunate—'magnæ quidem, sed calamitosæ virtutis,' as Lucius Florus saith of Sertorius. He was knighted by King Edward when he brought him the first news of his queen's safe delivery of a son at Carnarvon Castle; the King was then at Rhuddlan, at his Parliament held there. This Sir Gruffydd afterwards taking notice of the extreme oppression exercised by the English officers, especially Sir Roger Mortimer, lord of Chirk and justice of North Wales, towards his countrymen the Welsh, became so far discontented that he broke into open rebellion, verifying that saying of Solomon, 'Oppression maketh a wise man mad. He treated with Sir Edward Bruce, brother to Robert, then King of Scotland, who had conquered Ireland, to bring or send over men to assist him in his design against the English; but Bruce's terms being conceived too unreasonable, the treaty came to nought. However, being desperate, he gathered all the forces he could, and in an instant, like a candle that gives a sudden blaze before it goes out, overran all North Wales and the Marches, taking all the castles and holds; but to little purpose, for soon after he was met with, his party discomfited, and himself taken prisoner."<sup>1</sup> What became of him ultimately is not known; but our bard has paid two tributes to his gallantry, one of which, composed while he was imprisoned, we here extract. He has given it the singular title of "Odes of the Months;" "why," says the Rev. E. Evans, "I cannot guess, but by what he intimates in the poem, which is, that when all nature revives, and

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Vaughan of Hengwrt's notes on Dr. Powell's *History of Wales*, printed at Oxford, 1663, and quoted in the *Dissertatio de Bardis*, p. 46.

the whole animal and vegetable creation are in their full bloom and vigour (in the months of May and June), he mourned and pined for the decayed state of his country.”<sup>1</sup>

THE ODES OF THE MONTHS.<sup>2</sup>

Is it not true that at the beginning of May I was honoured ?  
 Is it not true that I had protection, meat, and mead ?  
 Is it not true that a time so disastrous has not occurred  
 Since Christ was taken and betrayed—disconsolate condition ?  
 Is it not care that makes me weep ?  
 Is it not the Lord's punishment that the red sword is sheathed ?  
 Is it not in my memory how large it was,  
 And how frequently it made dreadful havoc ?  
 Are there not many captives uttering indignant groans ?  
 Are not the one-tongued bards straitened on account of their  
 feasts ?  
 Is not generosity imprisoned with one munificent as Nudd ?  
 Gruffydd, the valorous hawk, renowned for destroying his enemies,  
 Is he not mourned by the bards who have proved his hospitality ?  
 Is it not a vexation to me that the hosts of a hundred feasts  
 Is cruelly imprisoned by the false men of England,  
 The war-dragon of Llan Rhystud—the picture of nobility ?  
 Am I not unappeased by benefits ? I have been eloquent.

<sup>1</sup> Gwilym Ddu has another poem addressed to this chieftain. It appears from the *Cambro-Briton*, i. pp. 138, 190, that Mr. Richard Llwyd, author of *Beaumaris Bay*, has translated a poem by Gwilym Ddu ; but which of these two is it ?

<sup>2</sup> ODLAU'R MISOEDD.

Neud cynnechrau Mai mau anrhydedd,  
 Neud aeth ysgwaeth a maeth a medd,  
 Neud cynhebig, ddig, ddygn adrossedd drist,  
 Er pan ddolid Crist, weddw athrist wedd !  
 Neud cur a lafur im wylofedd,  
 Neud cerydd Dofydd, nad rhydd rhuddgledd.  
 Neud cof sy ynof, ys anwedd ei faint,  
 Neud cywala haint, hynt diryfedd.  
 Neud caeth im dilyd llied llaweredd,  
 Neud caith Beirdd cyfaith am eu cyfedd.  
 Neud caethiwed ced, nad rhydd cydwedd Nudd  
 Cadrwalch Ruffudd, brudd, breiddin tachwedd,  
 Neud cwyn Beirdd trylwyn, meddir anwyn medd,  
 Neud cawdd im anawdd, menestr canwledd.  
 Neud carchar anwar enwiredd Eingl dud,  
 Aerddraig Llan Rhystud funud fonedd.  
 Neud nim dyhudd budd, bum arygledd,

Shall I not be afflicted with wrath for a number of years ?  
 Am I not concerned, great God, Ruler of the hosts of heaven,  
 That my chief is not free, the lion of Trevgarnedd ?  
 Are not two unfeasted, pensive that he is wanting ?  
 Do not the bards of a hundred countries want his protection ?  
 Is this not a certain but sad truth, though the vulgar reflected  
     not,  
 When they saw my eagle shine in his majesty ?  
 Am I not pierced by the lance of despair ?  
 Is the fate of my protector not hard ?  
 Is Gwynedd not in a heavy, melancholy mood ?  
 Are its people not punished for their transgressions ?  
 Is it not long since the bright, torchlike sword was laid aside,  
 And the brave courage of Achilles obstructed ?  
 Is it not spent in sorrow, the whole pleasant season of May ?  
 Is not June comfortless and cheerless ?  
 Am I not sorrowful the whole month of June  
 That he is not free, Gruffydd with the red lance ?  
 Am I not covered with chilly damps ?  
 Does not my whole fabric shake for the loss of my chief ?  
 May I not sink, O Christ, into a quiet grave, for  
 Is not the office of the bard a vain and empty name ?  
 I am surprised that my despair has not burst my heart,

~~~~~  
 Neud nam dilyd llid, lliaws blynedd.
 Neud nam dawr, Duw Mawr, maranedd, Nef glyw,
 Neud nad rhydd fy llyw, llew Trefgarnedd,
 Neud trwm oi eisiau dan digyfedd.
 Neu'r wyr Beirdd canŵlad, nad rhad rheufedd,
 Neud ef arwydd gwir, neud oferedd gwyr,
 Wrth weled fyeryr yn ei fawredd ;
 Neud truan im gwân gwayw lledfrydedd,
 Neud trwydded galed im amgeledd.
 Neud trymfryd Gwynedd, gwander dyedd braw :
 Neud hwy eu treisiaw am eu trosedd.
 Neud trahir gohir gloyw babir gledd,
 Oedd trablwng echwng Achel ddewredd.
 Neud trai cwbl or Mai, mawredd allwynyn,
 Neud mis Mehefin weddw orllin wedd
 Neud mis Mehefin, mau hefyd gystudd.
 Neud nam rhydd Gruffydd wayw rhudd yn rhyd.
 Neum rhywan im gwân gwayw cryd engiriawl,
 Neud am Ddraig urddawl didawl im dyd.
 Neum erwyr om gwyr im gweryd Crist Ner.
 Neud arfer ofer, Beirdd nifer byd.
 Neud arwydd nam llwydd lledfryd im calon,

And that it is not rent through the midst in twain ;
 The heavy stroke of care assails my memory when I think
 Of one valorous as Urien¹ being confined ;
 My meditation on past misfortunes
 Is like that of Cywryd,² the skilful bard of Dunawd.³
 My praise to the worthy hero is without vicious flattery,
 My panegyric is like the fruitful genius of Avan Verddig.⁴
 In celebrating Cadwallon,⁵ of royal enterprises,
 I can no more sing of the lance in well-laboured verse,
 For, since thou comest not, what avails it to exist ?
 Every region proclaims thy generosity,
 And the world droops since thou art lost.
 There are no entertainments, or mirth, nor honoured bards ;
 The palaces are no longer open, strangers are neglected ;
 There are no caparisoned steeds, no endearing friendships ;
 Our country mourns and wears the aspect of Lent ;

~~~~~

Neud eres nad tonn honn ar ei hyd.  
 Mau ynnof mawrgof am ergyd gofal.  
 Am attal arial Urien yngryd.  
 Mal cofain cywrain Cywryd, fardd Dunawd.  
 Meu im Dreig priawd gwawd ni bo gwyd.  
 Mau gwawdgan Afan, ufuddfryd ffirwythlawn,  
 O gof Cadwallawn, brenhinddawn bryd.  
 Ni wn waith gwayw dwn, gwawd ddihewyd clod,  
 A thi heb ddyfod pa dda bod byd ?  
 Neud wyr pawb yn llwyr, lleyrfryd gynnal,  
 Na hylithr aur mál mal oddiwrthyd.  
 Nid oes nerth madferth ym myd, oth eisiau,  
 Gwleddau na byrddau na Beirdd ynghlyd.  
 Nid oes lys yspys, esbyd neud dibeirch  
 Nid oes meirch na seirch na serch hyfryd.  
 Nid oes wledd na moes, massw ynyd yw'n gwlad,

<sup>1</sup> Urien Rheged, a Cumbrian chief frequently mentioned by Aneurin, Taliesin, and Llywarch as an undaunted warrior.

<sup>2</sup> Cywryd is not mentioned by either Dr. Davies or Mr. Edward Llwyd in their lists of British writers ; but, from his being named as the bard of Dunawd, it would seem that he lived in the sixth century.

<sup>3</sup> Dunawd was the son of Pabo Post Prydain, one of the heroes of the sixth century, who fought valiantly against the Saxons. See p. 245.

<sup>4</sup> Avan Verddig was the bard of Cadwallon ab Cadran, King of Britain. The Rev. Evan Evans states that he had in his possession a poem of Avan Verddig's on the death of Cadwallon, which, as far as he understood it, possessed much merit.

<sup>5</sup> The Cadwallon above mentioned fought many battles against the Saxons, in one of which, by the assistance of the men of Powys, he slew Edward, King of Mercia. For this he conferred on these certain privileges, which have ever since gone by the name of Breiniau Gwŷr Powys.

There is no virtue, goodness, or anything commendable,  
 But vice, cowardice, and dissoluteness bear the sway.  
 The great strength of Mon<sup>1</sup> is become an empty shadow,  
 And the inhabitants of Arvon are become insignificant beneath the  
 ford of Rheon.<sup>2</sup>

Is not the lofty Gwynedd become weak?  
 Is she not struck down by the heavy blow of care?  
 Is it not a sad year for the vigorous patriot?  
 Is it not presumptuous to imprison him who loved the shout of war  
 and the piercing spear?

In the original of the above there are sixty-three lines, forty-three of which have the peculiarity of commencing with the word "Neud," in English "it is not." This feature has been rendered in the translation as often as the idioms of the English language permitted, so that the reader might have as nearly perfect an idea of the poem as could be conveyed in a translation. Mr. Evan Evans, in whose translation there are several whole lines omitted, thinks the poem "has such touches as none but a person in the bard's condition could have expressed so naturally," and in another place styles it "a monument of the bard's genius." It is very valuable as a picture of the state of the country at that time, and also as a proof of the view already advanced respecting the reported massacre of the bards. There is not the slightest countenance given to any such opinions here; but, on the contrary, the language of the poem comes in as a corroboration of the historical account of prohibition. The bards were prohibited by Edward from wandering about the country, and this poem states substantially the same thing:

The one-languaged bards, are they not straitened on account of their entertainments or feasts?

~~~~~  
 Nid oes mad eithr gwad agwyd.
 Neud gwagedd trossedd, traws gadarnyd Mon,
 Neud gweigion Arfon is Reon ryd.
 Neud gwann Wynedd fann, fenn ydd ergyd cur,
 Neud gwael am fodur eglur oglyd.
 Neud blwyddyn i ddyd ddiodyd a gar,
 Neud blaengar carchar, grym aerbar gryd.

Gwilym Ddu o Arfon ai cant yn y flwyddyn 1322.

¹ An allusion to the fall of Llewelyn, the last Prince of Wales, and the royal palace of Aberffraw, in Anglesey.

² Rheon, a brook in Carnarvonshire; precise locality not known. [It is in the parish of Clynnog.—Ed.]

but there is here nothing more than prohibition. The poetical merits of the poem are not great, though its closing portion forms a vivid and powerfully drawn picture of the distresses of the country—both real and sentimental. This poem has one peculiarity in the affected beginnings with “Neud;” and it has also another in the adoption of the semilineal rhyme, which is found so frequently to grace our lyric poetry. I can never sufficiently admire this feature in Kymric poems; the dropping of the voice before the close of the line has a fine and very musical effect, and therefore I was pleased to find that the whole of the second verse in this poem beginning:

Neud mis Mehefin, mau hefyd *gystudd*
Neud nam rhydd *Gruffydd* wayw rhudd yn rhyd,

is in this metre, and not in the regular and monotonous rhyme of many of the bardic compositions. This rhyme is also used eight times in the first of the two verses; and though not invented by Gwilym Ddu, seems to have been more liberally used by him than by any preceding bard.

Gwilym Ddu addressed another poem to Sir Gruffydd Llwyd; but as its tone resembles that of the preceding, we shall quote his only other production, an elegy on a brother bard. The *Marwnad* to the poet Trahaiarn is very interesting, as it is well written, is skilfully constructed, and embodies a contemporaneous criticism on several of the bards whose works we have already reviewed.

AN ELEGY ON TRAHAIARN THE POET, THE SON OF GRONWY.¹

Fruitful, righteous, and the treasure of song
Is the stout-hearted and witty-worded Trahaiarn.²
He was the fortune of men and protector of the needy;
He was free-spoken, but in eulogy wise and discriminative.

~~~~~  
<sup>1</sup> Ffwrwythlawn a chyfiawn a chyfoeth y gerdd  
Gwrdd Drahaiarn eirgoeth  
Ffawd gwyr oed nawd gwared noeth  
Ffraeth dafawd detholwawd doeth

<sup>2</sup> Trahaiarn was an eminent poet who flourished from about A.D. 1290 to 1350. He presided in the Gorsedd Morganwg in 1300. He is supposed to have been the same person as the one who distinguished himself under the assumed name of Casnodyn. —OWEN'S *Cambrian Biography*, p. 330.

Wise he was ; we mourn his taking away while his talents were increasing ;  
 Freely discriminating poet, and sincere brother in faith,  
 Was the sapient son of Gronwy, of the just and courteous word,  
 Who is famed as far as Merioneth for wise and genial conversation.  
 The sun of song introduced no worthless arrangements ;  
 But as death is inevitable, tears should not accumulate.  
 The Muse's favour was good to Gwion <sup>1</sup> the magician ;  
 Good was Merddin, <sup>2</sup> and his line of the tribe of Meirchion ;  
 Good was Llevoed, <sup>3</sup> ever of courteous avouchment ;  
 Good was the pattern avoucher, brightly endowed Kynddelw ;  
 Good Elidir (Sais), of true statement and right canon,  
 One of the wise men of sea-bosomed Mona ;  
 Good the greeting of Llywarch (ab Llywelyn), a cognomen of the right order ;  
 Good Davydd Benfras, famed for kindness of disposition ;  
 Good in Dyved the name of Cadwgan Gruffydd ; <sup>4</sup>  
 Good in unambiguous language the speech of Gwgan ;  
 Good among the castles of Cardigan  
 The strength of Phylip, and William <sup>5</sup> of pungent anger ;

~~~~~

Doeth ynn gwynn o'i ddwyn o'i ddawn gynnydd
 Detholydd brydydd brawd ffydd fyddlawn
 Doethfab rwy Gorohwy gair uniawn syberw
 Doeth dichwerw ei ferw hyd wlad Feiriawn
 Dyhir na welir waladr nawn cerddau
 Dihau i'w anghau dagrau digrawn
 Da fu ffawd y wawd i Wiawn ddewin
 Da Fyrddin a'i lin o lwyth Meirchiawn
 Da Lefoed erioed da radlawn arddelw
 Da arddelw cynnelw Kynddelw ceinddawn
 Da Elidir gwir gwarant iawn ganon
 Gwr o ddoethion Mon mynwes eigiawn
 Da Lywarch cyfarch cyfenw iawn urddas
 Da Dafydd Benfras digas digawn
 Da o Ddyfed ced Cadwgan Ruffydd
 Da o'r iaith ddigudd araith Wgawn.
 Da oedd rhwng caeroedd Ceredigiawn rym
 Phylip a Gwilym aethlym wythlawn

¹ Gwion is a name given to Taliesin in one of the *Mabinogion*.

² Here Merddin has not only a father but a tribe.

³ Llevoed Wynebliglawr, or Flat-faced Llevoed, was a bard who lived between A.D. 900 and 940.—*Cambrian Biography*, p. 214.

⁴ There were three Cadwgans living about this time. Cadwgan ab Cynvrig, a bard who lived about 1280 ; Cadwgan ab Ednyved, another bard, who lived about 1280 ; and Cadwgan Henvoel, also a bard, who lived about 1380 ; but the latter, most probably, is the one here indicated.

⁵ I know not who this person is, unless Mr. Owen, who places him between 1460

Well entwined was Einion ab Gwalchmai's single song,
 Which sparkled as a bubbling spring;
 Good the shame-opposing Kneppyn,¹ from the district of Gwerthryniawn,
 Who sings fluently and accurately in compact Latin.
 Llygad Gwr was the tower of Edeyrnion land;²
 We shall scarce find his equal in energy and correctness
 On the face of the wide land, from the full sea of the Wye
 To where the Gawrnwy flows over the grave of Rhuvawn;³
 And Trahaiarn in my judgment was indispensable to song;
 He was the friend of chief bards when they travelled on the road.
 May the Trinity approve of the song we devote to thy praise!
 Through the intercession of the saints, who love carols,
 May his soul be put into the straight path,
 And he become a free-spoken and fruitful occupant of Paradise.

LLYWELYN BRYDYDD HODNANT has contributed two sets of Englynion, as also has a bard named HILLYN; LLYWELYN DDU has one set of verses; and there are in pp. 418, 419, and 420 of the *Myvyrian Archaeology*, several small poems pertaining to

Da gyfnun un Einion ab Gwalchmai
 A ganau ffynnai fal berw ffynnawn
 Da Gneppyn warthryn o Werthryniawn dud
 Oedd gerdd esgud lud Ladin gyfiawn
 Llygad Gwr oedd dwr Edeyrniawn artal
 Odid ei gystal yniaw uniawn
 O dudwedd fawr lled hyd for llawn yngwy
 Hyd Gawrnwy fudd rhwy ar fedd Rhuvawn
 Trahaiarn o'm barn em berniawn cerddraid
 Oedd blaid pencerddiaid ceiniaid cammawn
 Trindawd tros folawd fal y gwnawn ith fraint
 Trwy eiriold saint ceraint carawn
 Tro raid i'w enaid i uniawn gymwys
 Trefred Baradwys ffraethlwys ffrwythlawn

and 1490, has post-dated William Egwad, who was a celebrated poet in the locality here mentioned.

¹ Kneppyn Gwerthryniawn was one of the fictitious names assumed by Davydd Bach ab Madog Wladaidd, who also called himself Y Crach, and Syppyn Kyveiliog. Mr. Owen states that he flourished between 1400 and 1450; but as we find him described (*Iolo MSS.* p. 681) as being famous for poetry in 1390, we must place him further back.

² Edeyrnion land is in Merionethshire.

³ The grave of Rhuvawn is unknown; but if Gawrnwy be that which survives in Llanvair yng Nghornwy, it is at the extreme end of Anglesey. There is a place called "Rhyd y Beddau" in this neighbourhood, according to Owen Williams of Waen Vawr; and also "Carnet's Point," i.e. Carnedd's Point.

this period, by unknown authors. IOBWERTH VYCHAN has also two poems treating of love, the first of a class which afterwards became numerous. They are superior compositions, and would have been inserted here, did we not meditate copious quotations from the abler works of another bard.

The poetry we have hitherto perused has been of a character uniform almost to monotony; but we are about to enter upon a period when the subjects become more numerous and varied, when poetry assumes more of the aspect of spontaneity, and when strenuous exertions were made to reconcile sound to sense, and combine in versification poetical ideas with intricate musical cadence. A wide interval divides the stiff amble of Meilir's first effort from the stately strides and full, resounding march of *Ab yr Ynad Coch*; it was an interval of desperate struggles, when many men of brilliant capacities produced much intellectual wealth, but still one which leaves us much to desire. War was the ruling passion of the men, and the prevailing feature in the literature of that era; the best poems of the ablest bards are addressed to the potentates of the hour, and were hastily composed for set occasions; and as warlike princes and daring chieftains are the only figures which appear upon the scene, the want of more humble and homely accessories gives the pageantry an unreal character, and makes us pant for less exceptional society and more genial companionship. We cannot refuse to those brave and patriotic men our respect and esteem; and did our strong national prejudices, and profound sympathy with the glorious cause in which they were engaged, permit us to be indifferent spectators of their arduous struggles for liberty and independence, it were impossible to withhold our tribute of admiration for the heroic constancy with which they fought and bled for their rights and privileges, their mountain homes and native land; but when the excitement had subsided during the calm of centuries of peace, the mere records of war and bloodshed leave in the mind "an aching void" unsatisfied, and we gladly hail the appearance of more quiet scenes and a stiller atmosphere. In the period embraced by the first chapters we find one devotional poem by Meilir;¹ *Gwalchmai* has

¹ In treating of Meilir I neglected to state that there is reason to believe that he had composed more poems than have come down to us. In an ode to *Owain Gwynedd*, *Gwalchmai*, Meilir's son, says:

one poem dedicated to the love of nature, and one to his wife; Hywel ab Owain divided his favour between love, war, and external nature; but all the rest are occupied with the sword and spear. During the period contained in the second we find a few devotional poems; but Cupid has not a single votary, though all the bards have offered sacrifices at the blood-stained fane of the god of war. Towards the close of the third era we meet several religious poems of considerable merit; but with these exceptions Mars reigns supreme, and the little god of love has fled the field.

The fall of Llewelyn paralysed for a time the intellect of the Kymry; but the people soon regained their buoyancy; and when war had given way to peace, and turbulence been kept in abeyance by the firm hands of the English monarchs, the bards again resumed their calling, and sang in strains which, if less bold and animated, were superior in sweetness and polish to any that their predecessors had produced. The latter had—what the others had not—leisure; and accordingly we find it bearing rich fruit. We now find that the Kymry resembled other portions of the human family; they had pruning-hooks as well as swords, and we occasionally find that they had plough-shares as well as spears. The clang of arms in the royal halls gave place to the dulcet tone of woman's lips; skipping lambs made populous the solitudes which war had created; and when the pawing war-steed neighed no more, the groves were vocal with the cuckoo's cry, and with the evening notes of the white-faced nightingale. We were out of our element while dwelling among the eagles of war and the hawks of battle, for we are no admirers of the hunters of men, and therefore are glad to find that the land had more pleasing objects of contemplation than mail-clad warriors, dexterous spearmen, and keen-sighted benders of the twanging bow; for it is pleasing to find ourselves still among the comforts of ordinary life, and to enjoy the sweet companionship of human hearts.

~~~~~  
 " Ardwyrews fy nhad  
 Ei fraisg frenhindad."

My father extolled  
 His stout kingly father.

An "Arddwyread" appears to imply a heroic address to a living person; and as none of Meilir's poems are of that character, we may conclude, as is from other reasons extremely probable, that some of his poems are lost.

The distinctive character of the poetry of the last seventy years of the fourteenth century is love. Other subjects also occupied the attention of the bards ; and the era is remarkable for the variety of the topics embraced as well as for the sweetness of the poems and the elegance of the versification ; for the country being at peace, they were no longer compelled to dedicate their talents to the service of war, and were consequently allowed greater latitude in the selection of their subjects. But the fair sex quite monopolised the favour of the poets, and there is scarcely one of them who has not written amatory verses. We have already stated that Iorwerth Vychan has two love poems ; Casnodyn has one ; Gruffydd ab Meredydd, six ; Gronwy ab Davydd, three ; Gronwy Gyriog, one ; Iorwerth Gyriog, one ; Sevnyn, one ; Gronwy Ddu, one ; Mab y Cloch-yddyn, one ; and the celebrated Ode to Myvanwy Vechan, of Hywel ab Einion Lygliw. Davydd ab Gwilym, the Cambrian Petrarch, who addressed seven score and seven poems to his lady-love, also lived during this period ; but we shall on this occasion confine our attention to the less known labours of Rhys Goch.

RHYS GOCH AB RHICCERT lived at Tir Iarll, in Glamorgan-shire. Rhiccirt, his father, is said by Mr. Taliesin Williams, upon the authority apparently of John Bradford, to have been the son of Einion ab Collwyn, a man who figures in the history of the Norman conquest of Glamorgan, about A.D. 1090 ;<sup>1</sup> and it was probably this consideration that led to the dating of Rhys Goch's poems at "about 1140."<sup>2</sup> Whether this reasoning be that of John Bradford, Mr. Edward Williams, or of Mr. Taliesin Williams, I am unable to determine ; but, as it will devolve upon me to show that the period assigned for the life of our poet is at least two hundred years too early, the presumed genealogy must be called in question. Rhys Goch may have been descended from Einion ab Collwyn, but he certainly was not the second in descent. The data from which we arrive at that conclusion are the following :

Rhys Brydydd, the son of Rhys Goch, was famed as a poet in A.D. 1390.

In a poem written during the reign of King Richard II.,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Hanes Cymru*, p. 483.

<sup>2</sup> *Iolo MSS.* p. 229.

<sup>3</sup> *Iolo MSS.* p. 680.

who ascended the throne in 1377, and was deposed in 1399, we find Rhys Brydydd recommended as a fit and proper person to sit upon a jury :

Let *Rhys Brydydd* be counted ; well known his claims  
To the composition of legitimate verse.

We are informed that Ievan ab Rhys was his son.<sup>1</sup> Rhys Brydydd is also called Rhys Llwyd ; and if Ievan Llwyd Brydydd<sup>2</sup> be his son, he lived about 1480. Ievan ab Rhys had two sons, named Thomas and Gruffydd. Of the last but little is known ; Dr. Owen Pughe says that he flourished between 1560 and 1590 ;<sup>3</sup> and the Rev. Roger Williams,<sup>4</sup> writing between 1600 and 1620, states that he was living at that time. The other son was the personage so well known as Twm Ivan Prys, a bard and reputed conjuror ; the learned Edward Llwyd, writing in 1707, terms him *poeta recens* ;<sup>5</sup> and Dr. Pughe says he died in 1510, two hundred years old.<sup>6</sup> It is impossible to reconcile the last statement with any of the other facts, or with other assertions of the same author's ; but fortunately it is not difficult to show that his account is either an error of the press or a mistake ; for if Thomas ab Ievan was two hundred years old in 1510, his brother, who was living about 1620, must have been three hundred and ten. In Thomas ab Ievan's works we meet with some lines which set forth his age with considerable accuracy :

In one thousand six hundred exactly,  
And four years complete,  
The beginning of January (fair computation),  
I am one hundred and thirty.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, if in 1604 he was 130 years old, he must have been born in 1474 ; and as Malkin asserts that " it can be satisfactorily proved that he was living in 1615,"<sup>8</sup> he must have been at least 131 years old at his death. In consonance with these facts we find that Ievan ab Rhys was driven from Kynffig by Sir Matthew Cradock of Swansea, and that Thomas ab Ievan was imprisoned in Kynffig Castle for his attachment to

<sup>1</sup> *Iolo MSS.* p. 615.

<sup>3</sup> *Cambrian Biography*, p. 146.

<sup>5</sup> *Arch. Brit.* p. 264.

<sup>7</sup> *Iolo MSS.* p. 615.

<sup>2</sup> Llwyd's *Arch. Brit.* p. 257.

<sup>4</sup> *Iolo MSS.* p. 613.

<sup>6</sup> *Cambrian Biography*, p. 327.

<sup>8</sup> Malkin's *South Wales*, vol. ii. p. 549.

Lollard opinions. Sir Matthew was born somewhere about 1460, was made Steward of Gower in 1491, and died between June 6 and Aug. 16, 1531.<sup>1</sup> These dates harmonise with the preceding facts; Ievan ab Rhys, flourishing as a poet about 1480, might have been driven from his home on account of the Lollard taint by Sir Matthew in or after 1491; Thomas his son, who, in 1531, would have been in his 57th year, might also have suffered from his enmity; and therefore we have here a mass of consistent facts large enough to convince us that we are on safe ground. Let us now retrace our steps. Thomas ab Ievan ab Rhys<sup>2</sup> was born in 1474; his father was the son of Rhys Brydydd, who lived in or about 1390; and therefore as Llwyd has shown that Rhys Brydydd was the same person as Rhys Llwyd,<sup>3</sup> and that Rhys Llwyd was the son of Rhys (Goch) ab Rhiccert, the latter should not be placed further back than the year 1350. The internal evidence of the poems also countenances this conclusion; the absence of Cynghanedd, which soon became the *sine qua non* of Cambrian poetry, proves that they could not have been later than 1350; and the structure, language, and allusions show that they were not much earlier.

The poems, twenty in number, have lately been given to the world from the MSS. of his father by the late Mr. Taliesin Williams; they treat principally of love, and breathe the same spirit of profound peace as most of the bardic effusions of the fourteenth century. After the submission of the Principality to the first Edward, an entire change came over the poetry of the bards; in consequence of the prohibitions they no longer breathe defiance against the English monarch, seldom speak of national feelings, and never hazard political allusions. But the national spirit was not broken; for the poets, whose attention had hitherto been divided between love and war, now gave themselves wholly up to the former passion, and in the service of "the rosy god" Rhys Goch and Davydd ab Gwilym display such exuberance of fancy, elegance of taste, and fertility of invention as a perusal of the works of their predecessors would not have led us to anticipate. These qualities, characteristic

<sup>1</sup> Rev. J. M. Traherne's *Life of Sir Matthew Cradock*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> See *Camb. Quart. Magazine*, v. 94.

<sup>3</sup> *Arch. Brit.* p. 231, col. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Arch. Brit.* p. 231, col. 3.

alike of both these bards, connect Rhys Goch with the age of the Cambrian Petrarch, "the Nightingale of Dyved;" but the absence of Cynghanedd from the poems of the former, while it pervades those of the latter, compels us to place Rhys ab Rhiccert in the first half of the fourteenth century. We will select his—

SONG TO A MAIDEN'S HAIR.<sup>1</sup>

On the head of Gwen there's a growth of loveliest hue,  
 Loose, flowing, and worthy of a countess;  
 It hangs down to her heels,  
 As a flaxen bush, wine-coloured and willow-like;  
 (Hôw) beautiful are the long golden ringlets,  
 Drooping from the temples of a lovely woman!  
 Her forehead is smooth, clear, and as purely white  
 As the spray of waters dashing over rugged rocks;  
 And it is encircled by a broad band of precious gold.  
 Beneath the tall and glistening white veil  
 (Peep out) two tender eyes, joyous and cheerful,  
 Two stars of love gladdening to the sight,  
 In the head of the elegantly-formed second Lunette;<sup>2</sup>  
 Her cheeks were redder than the red wine of raspberries;  
 As the colour of wild roses in leafy woods  
 Is the coral hue of her buoyant health.

~~~~~  
¹ CAN I WALLT MERCH.

Mae twf ar benn Gwenn gain eiliw
 Modd llaes hirllaes Iarles odliw,
 Llwyn llin lliw gwin gwiall dyfiad
 Hyd ei sawdl dyw ei osodiad,
 Gwiall aur arian glan glwys waneg,
 Uwch dwyael feinion gloywon glandeg,
 Taleen gwastodloyw hoyw hardd hyfryd
 Lliw ffrwd geirw garw garregryd,
 Tan y tal grisial gryswyn lewych
 Tirion olygon llon llawenwych,
 Dwy seren serch seirian ei gweled
 Ymhen Gwenn feingan lan ail Luned.
 Gorlliw ei grudd gwin rudd rhaspi
 Lledawd aur addawd wedi'i rodidi
 Cyfliw rhos gwylltion gelltydd deiliog
 Cwrel iachusder sywber serchog,

² Lunette, or Luned, is a character well known to readers of romances. She is thus described in the *Lady of the Fountain*: "He beheld a maiden with yellow curling hair, and a frontlet of gold on her head; and she was clad in a dress of yellow satin, and on her feet were shoes of variegated leather."—*Mabinogion*, vol. i. p. 55.

Between two cheeks
 Of splendid tint
 (Rises) a neat sharp nose
 Of small proportions;
 A mouth distilling honey
 Belonged to the silent fair,
 And an elegant lip of the lovely hue of coral;
 Small teeth, and an expression of shrewd vivacity,
 Were evident in the mouth of the witty Gwen;
 And her small round chin appeared as wonderful
 As mountain-peaks seen by day, when wrapt in gowns of snow.
 Her neck as whitely shone
 As the spray of the ocean wave;
 And two budding heights,
 Revealed through whitest linen,
 Form the beautiful bust
 Of my gentle fair;
 Whose charms, second only to Enid,¹

~~~~~  
 A rhwng deurudd  
 Gwawr ysblennydd  
 Trwyn main moddus  
 Bychan gweddus.  
 A min fel mel  
 I'm dyn dawl  
 Gwefus mirain liw cain cwrel.  
 A mân ddannedd a gwedd hoywgoeth  
 Amlwg ymhean gwenn gymhenddoeth,  
 Gê'n bychan crwn a hwn mor hynod,  
 Ag yn nydd mynydd mewn gwn manod.  
 Mwnwgl clærwyn  
 Deuliw'r ewyn,  
 Hardd ei dwyfron  
 Fy mun dirion,  
 O fewn meingrys  
 Dau berl ysbys.  
 Hardd ail Enid

<sup>1</sup> Enid was one of the three fair and illustrious ladies of the court of Arthur; she became the wife of Geraint ab Erbin, and was mentioned with respect by Davydd ab Gwilym and other bards. She has drawn from the noble translator of her story an elegant tribute of admiration: "Throughout the broad and varied region of romance it would be difficult to find a character of greater simplicity and truth than that of Enid the daughter of Earl Ynywl. Conspicuous for her beauty and noble bearing, we are at a loss whether most to admire the untiring patience with which she bore all the hardships she was destined to undergo, or the unshaken constancy and devoted affection which finally achieved the triumph she so richly deserved. The character of Enid (in the romance of Geraint ab Erbin) is admirably sustained throughout the whole tale; and as it is more natural, because less overstrained, so, perhaps, it is even



Will, if compared,  
 Appear in propriety, purity, and comeliness.  
 The maid is fair, reserved, and so light and nimble  
 That the smallest trefoils bend not beneath her.  
 Swan ! sea mew ! lovely is her pure aspect,  
 Slight, straight, sprightly, and handsome.  
   Her hands are white,  
   And her slender fingers  
   Swiftly move  
   While weaving silk ;  
   And her nails  
   Are ruddy-tinted.  
 Skilful and alert she waits at the wine feast.  
 My becoming charmer is slender and tall,  
 Having a pretty small waist, and an erect form,  
   Short round shanks,  
   And a round white leg,  
 With (chaste maid !) a foot of faultless outline.  
 If there were given to me the power to dispose  
 Of the world's wealth, the white maid should have it all



Pei mesurid  
 Gan gymwysder glwysder glendid,  
 Bun deg dawel-ddawn ysgawn wisgi,  
 Ni phlyg manfeillion ar donn dani,  
 Alarch, Wylan, glan ei glwysbryd,  
 Meindwf, iawndwf hoywdwf hyfryd.  
   Dwylaw gwynion  
   Bysedd meinion  
   Ymmod buan  
   Ar we sidan,  
   Ag ewinedd  
   Gwridog ei gwedd.  
 Medrus hwylus heiliaw gwinwledd  
 Hir ei hystlys weddus wiwddyn  
 A chanol main gain gymhwysddyn.  
   Bergron esgair  
   Wengron iawngrair  
 A throed da i lun i'm bun ddiwair  
 Pe cawn i'm byd ennyd annerch  
 Dda'r byd o'i benn fe'i cae'r wenferch,

more touching than that of Griselda, over which, however, Chaucer has thrown a charm that leads us to forget the improbability of her story."—*Mabinogion*, vol. ii. p. 165.

For one hour, fair one of passing beauty,  
On a green sward, in the arms of Gwenonwy.<sup>1</sup>

Our bard has drawn another portrait of a beautiful woman, in which he repeats several of the images which occurs in this; but by introducing new attributes, he brings the other to a better close. After expatiating on her beauty, and minutely detailing her many perfections, he continues :

The kindness of Gwen, and her shrewd remark,  
Her wise conversation (wit-inspired Moon!),  
The mildness of her notes when she sings,  
And her melodious tones of nine score nightingales,  
Have completely deprived me of all my senses,  
Robbed me as if deceitfully of all my prudence,  
And put strong madness into me.  
I shall be laid in the grave—that will be my end—  
If I obtain not the idol of my heart,  
To become a sister to me  
Before the end of the summer.  
Let her hasten my heart to cure,  
Or if she does not, I very well know  
That love of her will be my death.<sup>1</sup>

~~~~~  
Er cael un awr lliw gwawr lywy,
Ym mreichiau honn tonn Gwenhonwy.

Iolo MSS. p. 230.

¹ Gwenonwy was the daughter of Meurig ab Tewdrig of Morganwg, married to Gwyndav Hen ab Emyr Llydaw, and mother of Meugam the bard.—REES, *Welsh Saints*, pp. 164–5, Pedigree. Davydd ab Gwilym uses the term in describing the daughter of Ivor Hael (*Works*, p. 14); but whether this was a proper or applied name is not clear, though the same authority (*Works of Davydd ab Gwilym*, p. 538) asserts that it was the proper name of Ivor's daughter.

¹ Ei mwynder Gwenn a'i gair cymmen,
Ai llafar doeth Lloer awengoeth
Ai goslef gwar lle can meinwar,
Ai goslef maws naw can eaws,
Am dettry'n llwyr o'm holl synwyr,
Am dwg mal twyll o'm holl ymbwyll
A ddod wallcof cadarn ynof
Am rhy mewn bedd llyna'r diwedd,
Onis caf hon claf fy nghalon,
Onis caf hi yn chwaer immi,
Cyn diwedd haf marw a fyddaf,
Meddylid honn iachau nghalon
Ag onis gwna ys gwn yn dda,
Ei serch a fydd fy nihenydd.

Iolo MSS. p. 245.

Some of the images in these sketches are very fine. The lines—

Cerddai dyn war wyneb daiar
Yn hardd baunes drvy'r melyndes,
Ag ni phlygai man y cerddai,
Dan wyn draed hon un o'r meillion,

remind one of Scott's description of Ellen Douglas :

A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dashed the dew ;
E'en the slight hare-bell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread ;

and the Cambrian bard loses nothing by the comparison. Indeed, Rhys Goch's image is the finest ; Sir Walter's heroine does bend the harebell ; but the footstep of the Cambrian beauty is more airy still :

As peahens stride in sun-ray heat,
See her the earth elastic tread,
And where she walks, 'neath snow-white feet,
Not e'en a trefoil bends its head.

Our next extract shall be a picture of the bard and his lady-love just at the moment when a jealous lover interrupted their joys :

About us streamed the rays of the summer sun,
And long green grass covered the fields ;
Treffoils in great numbers and leafy trees adorned the scene.
There lay I and Gwen in perfect bliss,
Reclining both among the flowers,
Surrounded by troops of trefoils ;
Lip to lip we spent the time ;
From the lips of the maid I obtained a feast
Like that of saintly David in the choir of Hodnant,

~~~~~

<sup>1</sup> O'n amgylch haf haul gorphenaf  
Ac ar glawr maes glas dwf hirllaes.  
Meillion yn frith manddail cymmhlith,  
Minnau a gwen yno'n llawen.  
Gorwedd ein dau ym mysg blodau,  
Gorwedd ar donn ymhlith meillion,  
Finfin a gwen om holl awen,  
Gwledd a gefais ar fin meinais,  
Gwledd Dewi Sant Ynghor Hodnant,

Or Taliesin at the court of Elphin,  
 Or the Round Table feasts at Caerlleon,  
 Or angel joys in Paradise ;  
 And we both feasted thus,  
 Without a care for what had been,  
 Without a thought of what would be.  
 This height of bliss was never ending,  
 For we were both of one intent,  
 And all that day we only sang,  
 That we would live and love together,  
 Living sweetly upon kisses,  
 And both dying on the same.<sup>1</sup>

A few of the Cambrian poets were enthusiastic lovers of nature, of fields, and flowers, and of the songs of birds. Burns, Chaucer, and Wordsworth soared to eulogise the daisy ; but the favourite of the bards was the trefoil. This finds a place in all their descriptions of flowers ; princes eulogise it ; light-footed women are careful of its fragile form ; and when the bard wishes to recline on summer noon, he surely selects a bed of tender trefoils. This feeling appears in the following, among many other verses :<sup>1</sup>

- 1 I am weary, heavy, and sad ;  
 I'll court no more of the girls, for 'tis winter,  
 Till May with verdure covers the hedges  
 And crowns the woods with foliage green ;

~~~~~

Gwledd Taliesin yn Llys Elphin,
 Gwledd y fort gronn yng Nghaerlleion,
 Gwledd angel glwys ym Mharadwys.
 Ninnau ddeuddyn ar wledd fal hynn
 Heb ofalu am ddim a fu
 Heb fyfyriaw am ddim a ddaw,
 Gwynfyd y sydd byth ni dderfydd.
 Yn cyfymnawdd yn un ansawdd.
 Hyn ar ein can oedd y cyfan
 Felly mynni cydfoddloni
 I fyw yn lan ar wledd cusan
 I farw ein dau o gusanau.

Iolo MSS. p. 247-8.

- ¹1 Gorthrwm a thrwm a thrist fyddaf,
 Ni charaf un tro tra fo gauaf,
 Oni ddel mai glas ai glosydd.
 A gwyrddlen penn pob glwys irwydd

For there is a propriety in growing trees,
Which gives the heart a joyful feeling.

- 2 In a bush among the paths of the green wood
I have a beautiful circular retreat ;
Men and their hateful habitations come not near,
And it is only accessible to the adventurous fair ;
It is pleasant to see, when covered with foliage,
My sky-capped palace in the woodland green.
- 3 The charming residence among the small wood
Is floor'd with trefoils of the loveliest verdure ;
A cheerful, attractive, and eloquent cuckoo
Is singing delightfully in a loving voice ;
And the chick-thrush (beautiful bard of summer !)
Sings most sweetly in clear and pure language.
- 4 The nightingale from its bush kindly joins
The harmonious concert 'mid the greenwood leaves ;
And the clear-voiced lark delightfully sings
Most charming verses at the break of day ;
And we only want thy presence, Gwen,
To complete the joys of my woodland house.



Mai immi glas urddas gwyrddail,
Calon hoywfron hyfryd adail.

- 2 Mewn llwyn ffyrdd duwyrdd dyfiad,
Harddgrwn yw hwn hynaws gaead,
Ni ddaw ai annedd y cas ddynion,
Na neb ond medrus moddus mwynfron,
Hyfryd ei bryd clyd pan ddeillio.
Ty glas parlas purlen arno.
- 3 Cyntedd tirion mwynion manwydd,
Ar lawr meillion gleision glosydd
A chog serchog ddoniog ddenus
Yn canu'n lwys lais cariadus,
A chiw bronfraith buriaith beraidd
Yn canu'n hardd loyw hoywfardd hafaidd.
- 4 Eos o'r llwyn yn fwyn gyfannedd.
Arail mewn gwyrddail gerddi maswedd.
A chyda'r dydd ehedydd hoywdon
A gan yn drylwyn fwyn bennillion,
A phob llawenydd hirddydd hyfryd
O'th gaf weno yno ennyd.

The song to the Leaf House, "Cân y Deildy," is a poem of the same class, and contains many very felicitous passages.

The bards were also powerfully attached to all the song-birds; and the cuckoo, nightingale, lark, and thrush were held in especial regard. No happiness could be complete without them; if the poet walked forth with his lady-love, the birds must supply the musical accompaniment to his tale of enduring love; and when on the Lord's Day, he wandered to the woods alone—

The thrush in brilliant language
 Prophesied without ceasing,
 And read to the parish
 The gospel without stammering;

and the nightingale—

Priest of the dingle!
 Sang stanzas to our Lord and Creator,
 With sylvan ecstasy and love.

Of all the poetry that of Rhys Goch and Davydd ab Gwilym is the most purely pastoral I know; it contains the real sentiments of intelligent countrymen, and is free from the impertinent commonplaces of town-made eclogues. The partiality for birds, which we have here noted, is seen in the "Song to send the Birds with Messages to a Maid." He commences by stating:¹

I placed my affection
 Upon a slender-waisted maid,
 One who is a second *Essyllt*,²
 Of the hue of the waves of the raging sea;
 The beauty which adorned her

¹ Serch y rhoddais,
 Ar ddyn feinais,
 Hoen geirw mor gwyllt
 Bun ail *Essyllt*
 Ei thegwch hi

² There were three ladies of this name. Of the one here alluded to, "*Yseult le Blonde*," it is said that "her complexion was fairer than the purest snow, the plumage of the swan, or the bone of the sea-horse."—WILLIAMS'S *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen*, p. 146.

Became to me an arrow,
 For she shot me
 With her glances.

Failing to obtain an interview, he desires the birds to acquaint her with his love: ¹

Go, thou Blackbird,
 To the proud and slender maid,
 And unto her show
 How much for her I grieve;
 And thou, Thrush,
 Singing on beautiful branches,
 Take all my plaint
 To the brilliant fair;
 And thou, Lark,
 Bard of morning dawn,
 Show to this maid
 My broken heart;
 And place thou, Cuckoo,
 With thy affectionate tones,
 The burden of my love
 In the maiden's ears.
 A nightly companion

~~~~~

Bu'n saeth i mi,  
 E'm saethes honn  
 O'i golygon.

<sup>1</sup> Dos dir fwyaleh.  
 At ddyn feinfaleh,  
 Dangos iddi,  
 'Mhoen am dani.  
 Bronfraith a gan  
 Ar wydd eirian,  
 Dwg oll om cwyn  
 At loyw forwyn,  
 Tithau'r hedydd,  
 Bardd boreuddydd  
 Dangos i honn  
 Fy nhorr calon.  
 Dod tithau'r gog  
 A'th don serehog  
 Yng nghlust y ferch  
 Fy nghwyn traserch.  
 Cyfalll cyfnos

H H

Am I to the Nightingale ;  
 Let her quickly go  
 With my vocal song  
 To the lime-white blessed one  
 At the side of Dyffryn,  
 And there say  
 To my dearest maid,  
 That if she comes not  
 To comfort me  
 To the greenwood bushes,  
 Of the love, ere summer's o'er,  
 Of the charming fair  
 I'll surely die.

The pretty Spanish song beginning with "Rio verde, rio verde," has been much admired, and an English song commencing, "Gentle river, gentle river," deserves to be so ; but such apostrophes to natural objects are singularly frequent in the poems of this bard and Davydd ab Gwilym. Dr. Pughe claims the merit of the introduction of this very beautiful species of poetry for the Cambrian Petrarch ; but there is reason to suspend that opinion ; for Rhys Goch appears to have used it before him. However that may be, the idea is very beautiful ; and though Davydd has shown much greater mastery in its application, it elicited several admirable poems from the subject of our present remarks. The plan of these poems is very simple ; the bard fixes upon the object to which he intends entrusting the message ; describes its attributes, and therefrom deduces the qualities which fit it to become a messenger ; and

~~~~~

Wyf ir Eos.
 Aed hon yn ffest
 Am cerdd arwest.
 At liw calch gwynn
 Yn ael y Dyffryn.
 Yna d'wedyd
 Wrth f'anwlyd
 Os hi ni ddaw
 I'm cysuraw
 I goedlwyn ir
 F'anwyl feinir,
 O'i serch lliw'r haf
 Marw a fyddaf.

Iolo MSS. p. 233.

then entrusts it with the important charge. To this class belongs the following: ¹

SONG TO THE SEA GULL.

Fair Gull, on the surface of the billows
 Amid the foam of the rippling wave ;
 White queen of the waves of the Severn sea,
 With thy kingdom on the ninth wave of the ocean,
 And living upon the bodies of fish !
 Thou art a delicately fair one, swift of wing,
 And it is for this I want thee ;
 Take from me a song of cold complaint
 To a maid of slender growth in fair greeting ;
 I am sick for one of the whiteness of driven snow,
 Who has placed an arrow in my bosom,
 Which as I bear it about me gives me great pain.
 Say, Gull, to the hue of snow-flakes,
 That, amiable Gwen, I love her ;
 Go to the castle of the bright-eyed maid,
 And sing from my mouth the fair one's praise ;
 If I made a song of the five metrical excellencies,
 I should not fittingly sing her praise,
 Or the hundredth part of the beauty's merit.
 If I have not this one, my heart will break ;

~~~~~  
<sup>1</sup> CAN I YRRŪ'R WYLAN YN LLATTAI.

Yr wylan deg ar fol gwaneg,  
 Ymhlith dystrych yr heli crych,  
 Brenhines wenn geirw mor Hafren  
 A'th deyrnas di nawton gweilgi.  
 Ymborth ydd wyd ar bysgodfwyd,  
 Gwisgi meinwen wyd ar aden,  
 Ag er mwyn hynn wyf yn d'ofyn.  
 Dwg erof gan o'm oer gwynfan  
 At feindwf ferch yn deg amnerch.  
 Claf wyf am wenn hoen ôd gaenen  
 Fe ddodes hon saeth i'm dwyfron,  
 A'u dwyn ydd wyf gloesion irnwyf,  
 Dywed wylan wrth liw'r od man,  
 Fy mod wen gu yn ei charu,  
 Cyrch hyd ei chaer Bun oleuglaer,  
 A chan om pen ei mawl, meinwen,  
 Pei gwnawn arwest o'r pum gorchest  
 Ni thraethwn fawl a fai moddawl,  
 Na chanfed rhan clod bun eirian,  
 Oni chaf honn tyrr fy nghalon,

Into some brake I'll go to grieve ;  
 And hid in the woods, far from sight,  
 I'll die because of this gentle maid.

The next, a better specimen of the same class, will form the last of our quotations from this poet. It is called

THE SONG OF THE THRUSH.<sup>1</sup>

I was on the margin of a plain,  
 Under a green-branch'd tree,  
 Hearing the tunes  
 Of the wild birds ;  
 Listening to the language  
 Of the thrush cock,  
 Who from the wood of the valley  
 Poured forth an englyn,<sup>2</sup>  
 And from the wood of the steep  
 Exquisitely sang.  
 Speckled was his breast  
 Among the green leaves,  
 (Appearing) on the branches  
 As a thousand flowers.  
 On the edge of a brook,

~~~~~

Af i boeni dan wyddeli,
 Yno'n draphell yng nghudd coedgell
 Meinwar a fydd fy nihenydd.

Iolo MSS. p. 239.

¹ CÁN Y FWYALCH.

Bum yn ael maes
 Dan bren briglaes
 Yn clywed ton
 Adar gwylltion.
 Yn gwrandaw iaith,
 Ceiliog bronfraith,
 O goed y glynn
 Prydai englyn,
 O goed y rhiw
 Canai'n gywiw,
 Brith oedd ei fronn
 Mewn dail gleision
 Mal ar gangau
 Mil o flodau,

² An englyn is a species of Welsh verse, requiring considerable skill in its construction. See next Section.

All hear him,
 Singing with the dawn
 As a silver bell; ¹
 Performing a sacrifice
 Until the hour of forenoon;
 Upon a green altar
 Ministering Bardism.
 From the branches of the hazel
 Of broad green leaves
 He sings an ode
 To God the Creator;
 With a carol of love
 From the green glade,
 To all in the hollow
 Of the glen, who love him;
 Balm of the heart
 To those who love.
 I had from his beak

Yn ymyl nant
 Pawb ai clywant :
 Gan wawr y cân
 Mal cloch arian,
 Cynnal aberth
 Hyd awr anterth
 Ar allawr las
 Heiliaw Barddas
 O gangau cyll
 Gwyrddion defyll
 Y cân gywydd
 I Dduw Ddofydd
 A charol serch
 O las lannerch,
 I bawb ar bant
 Glyn ai carant,
 Eli calon
 Fr serchogion,
 Cefais o'i ben

¹ When falconry was held in estimation, as we learn from the poems of Davydd ab Gwilym, it was at this time, in Glamorganshire, a portion of silver was introduced into the hawk-bells to improve their tone.—*STRUTT'S Sports and Pastimes*, p. 33. The reader of poetical taste will be reminded of a line in Dryden's paraphrase of Chaucer's Palamon and Arcite, and of the passage in Shakespeare where Juliet says :

"How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
 Like softest music to attending ears."

The words in the text, highly descriptive, and conveying a very pretty compliment, also allude to the sweet tones of those Milan bells.

The voice of inspiration,
 A song of metres
 That gratified me;
 Glad was I made
 By his minstrelsy.
 Then respectfully
 Uttered I an address
 From the stream of the valley
 To the bird.
 I requested urgently
 His undertaking a message
 To the fair one
 Where dwells my affection.
 Gone is the bard of the leaves
 From the small twigs
 To the second Lunet,
 The sun of the maidens!
 To the side of the vale
 St. Mary prosper him,
 To bring to me,
 Under the green woods,
 The hue of one night's snow,
 Without delay.¹

Cyflais awen,
 Cerdd o fitres
 Am boddlonos.
 Llawen am gwnaeth
 Ei ganiadaeth.

Yna drwy barch
 Dodais gyfarch
 O glais y glynn
 I'r aderyn,
 Erchais yn ffraeth
 Ei Latteiaeth
 At y wenferch
 Lle mae'm traserch
 Aeth bardd y dail
 O'r man wiail
 At ail Luned
 Haul y merched.
 I glais y fro
 Mair ai llwyddo
 Er dwyn immi
 Dan ir lwyni
 Hoen ôd unnos
 Yn ddiaros.

Iolo MSS. p. 237.

¹ This translation, for the most part, is that of the last editors of the *Iolo MSS.*

Thus closes our survey of the second important era of Cambrian literature.

We have already stated that the latter part of the fourteenth century was a period of considerable activity among the bards, and productive of a very large number of valuable poems; but in the present volume we can only advert to the existence, without entering into an examination of these. The rhythmical consonancy, termed *Cynghanedd*, was introduced at that time, and has ever since formed an essential feature in Kymric poetry. Opinions are divided as to its merit, and therefore it would not be fair to pass any judgment without a complete discussion of the subject. Of the poems, however, it may truly be said that several hundreds of them are of a superior character, and that few would sink below the level of mediocrity; there are, it is true, but few, except those addressed to Owain Glyndwr, by Iolo Goch and Gruffydd Llwyd, that can be compared with the greatest efforts of Meilir, Kynddelw, and Llywarch ab Llywelyn; but there is a greater number of small poems, having respectable merit, and making up an era of considerable literary interest. The bards who flourished during this period were numerous and active. Casnodyn, whose poems, five in number, are, with respect to versification, what would now be deemed regular, is the first of this era; Gruffydd ab Meredydd has twenty-eight long poems; Gruffydd ab Davydd ab Tudur, five short ones; Prydydd Breuan, one; Y Proth, one; Davydd y Coed, six; Trahaiarn Brydydd Mawr, two; Goronwy Gyriog, one; Iorwerth Gyriog, one; Sevnyn, three; Llywarch y Nam, one; Iorwerth Lwyd, one; Meurig ab Iorwerth, one; Goronwy Ddu, two; Mab y Clochyddyn, one; Llywelyn Goch, six; Iorwerth Beli, one; Madawg Dwygraig, ten; Hywel Ystoryn, one; Madawg ab Iorwerth, one; three satires by the Mab Cryg; two by the Iustus Llwyd; and some predictions attributed to Y Bergam o Vaelor and Ieuan Trwch y Daran. Davydd Ddu o Hiraddug, an honoured poet, also lived about this time, as well as Gruffydd Gryg. All these lived between 1350 and 1400, and have been already enumerated; and at, or subsequent to, the year 1400, during the revolt of Owain Glyndwr and the Wars of the Roses, in which events several of the bards took an active part, there lived some hundreds of these gentlemen.¹

¹ Sir John Wynn refers to songs written to or upon Ieuan ab Robert; by whom were they composed?

The order flourished with such extraordinary luxuriance that stringent laws were enacted to curb their extravagance.

The period between 1350 and 1600 is considered to form the third important era of Kymric literature; and the fourth, beginning with Huw Morus, the author of three hundred poems, and a strong royal partisan during the civil war, extends to the present time. During the third era lived several bards of note and ability. Davydd ab Gwilym alone has contributed to our literature two hundred and sixty-two poems, and Lewis Glyn Cothi one hundred and fifty-seven poems; and these, with the poems of Iolo Goch, Gruffydd Llwyd, Gutyn Owain, Davydd ab Emwnt, Tudur Aled, William Lleyrn, and others, make up nearly six hundred compositions. These for the most part are published; many more are known to exist in MSS., and probably some may be lost. It would therefore have been exceedingly imprudent of me to have introduced notices of these at the close of this work; they demand a volume for themselves; and should this attempt be favourably received, I may possibly bring down the history to the present time, as well as give a full account of the poems of the sixth century—the literature of the Kymry of the Strath Clyde. At present I can only give place to a single specimen. It shall be Davydd ab Gwilym's address to the summer, requesting it to visit Glamorganshire with its choicest blessings:

Thou Summer! father of delight,
 With thy dense spray and thickets deep;
 Gemmed monarch, with thy rapt'rous light,
 Rousing thy subject glens from sleep!
 Proud has thy march of triumph been,
 Thou prophet, prince of forest green!
 Artificer of wood and tree,
 Thou painter of unrivalled skill,
 Who ever scattered gems like thee,
 And gorgeous webs on park and hill?
 Till vale and hall with radiant dyes
 Became another Paradise!
 And thou hast sprinkled leaves and flowers,
 And goodly chains of leafy bowers,
 And bid thy youthful warblers sing
 On oak and knoll the song of spring,
 And blackbird's note of ecstasy
 Burst loudly from the woodbine tree,

Till all the world is thronged with gladness,
Her multitudes have done with sadness !
O Summer, do I ask in vain ?
Thus in thy glory wilt thou deign
My messenger to be ?
Hence from the bowels of the land
Of wild, wild Gwyneth to the strand
Of fair Glamorgan—ocean's band—
Sweet margin of the sea !
To dear Glamorgan, when we part,
Oh, bear a thousand times my heart !
My blessing give a thousand times,
And crown with joy her glowing climes !
Take on her lovely vales thy stand,
And tread and trample round the land,
The beauteous shore whose harvest lies
All sheltered from inclement skies !
Radiant with corn and vineyards sweet,
And lakes of fish and mansions neat,
With halls of stone where kindness dwells
And where each hospitable lord
Heaps for the stranger guest his board !
And where the gen'rous winecup swells ;
With trees that bear the luscious pear,
So thickly clustering everywhere,
That the fair country of my love
Looks dense as one continuous grove !
Her lofty woods with warblers teem,
Her fields with flow'rs that love the stream ;
Her valleys varied crops display,
Eight kinds of corn, and three of hay ;
Bright parlour, with her trefoiled floor !
Sweet garden, spread on ocean's shore !
Glamorgan's bounteous knights award
Bright mead and burnished gold to me ;
Glamorgan boasts of many a bard,
Well skilled in harp and vocal glee ;
The districts round her border spread
From her have drawn their daily bread ;
Her milk, her wheat, her varied stores,
Have been the life of distant shores !
And court and hamlet food have found
From the rich soil of Britain's southern bound.
And wilt thou, then, obey my power,
Thou Summer, in thy brightest hour ?

To her thy glorious hues unfold
 In one rich embassy of gold !
 Her morns with bliss and splendour light,
 And fondly kiss her mansions white ;
 Fling wealth and verdure o'er her bowers !
 And for her gather all thy flowers !
 Glance o'er her castles, white with lime,
 With genial glimmering sublime ;
 Plant on the verdant coast thy feet,
 Her lofty hills, her woodlands sweet ;
 Oh ! lavish blossoms with thy hand
 O'er all the forests of the land ;
 And let thy gifts, like floods descending,
 O'er every hill and glen be blending ;
 Let orchard, garden, vine, express
 Thy fulness and thy fruitfulness :
 O'er all the land of beauty fling
 The costly traces of thy wing !

And thus 'mid all thy radiant flowers,
 Thy thick'ning leaves and glossy bowers,
 The poet's task shall be to glean
 Roses and flowers that softly bloom
 (The jewels of the forest's gloom !)
 And trefoils wove in pavement green,
 With sad humility to grace
 His golden Ivor's resting-place.¹

This will afford the reader some conception of what these poems are, though the notion derived therefrom can neither be accurate nor complete ; for being only of one class, it can give no very definite idea of others belonging to different classes. It is a poem of very considerable merit ; there are, perhaps, none that excel it ; but many may be found among the bardic compositions that will bear comparison without discredit. We have now gone through the special examination of the mediæval literature of the Kymry ; and the next section will terminate the volume.

¹ The translation is taken from a most interesting volume of very admirable translations from the Kymric of Davydd ab Gwilym by A. J. Johnes, Esq. Davydd ab Gwilym has much that is akin to Indian poetry. Like him Kalidasa makes a cloud his messenger, and bids flowers tell persons of their love, &c.

SECTION III.

GENERAL CRITICISM.

OUR special survey of the poetic literature of Wales, from the time of Meilir in the eleventh century to that of Gwilym Ddu in the fourteenth, is now brought to a close. Every poem could not of course be noticed; but in the selection I have been guided by a wish to give such as were possessed of intrinsic merit and poetic beauty, and such as revealed, either plainly or incidentally, any pointed illustration of national character. I might have quoted a much greater number of poems; but as it did not appear that I should thereby do anything else than tire my reader, it seemed best to adopt the course which has been here followed. I have given special criticisms on each poem, and now offer a few remarks as a general criticism on the whole.

There was much truth in the statement of Mr. Sharon Turner that the bardic poems did not possess the merit which was sometimes claimed for them. He who approaches the bards in the hope of finding companion spirits to the great poets of other countries will surely be disappointed; for, as we have already remarked, the merits of their poems are rather historical than poetical. The poems of the bards here passed in review are of a peculiar character; their lyrics, except Gwalchmai's ode, want fire and animation, and their elegies too frequently substitute petty conceits for genuine tenderness. The bulk of the poems of this era treat of war; and there are a few dedicated to the service of love. The exhortations to warlike exploits are very frequent, and give us a more favourable opinion of their writers than any other portion of their labours, though many of them are as far below the war-songs of most other nations in poetic fire as they are above in versification. With this deficiency of really poetical thought, fire, and sentiment, the conventionality of bardism has much to do; and by fixing an artificial standard of versified perfection, they concentrated attention upon the words, and neglected the spirit of their poems. This is an inherent vice of system-making.

Systems are only admeasurements of the mental capacities of their founders, and ought not to be made binding upon men of greater abilities. Criticism may point out the perfections of genius, but it cannot create them. There were good reasoners before Aristotle wrote his Logic; and had Homer not lived, Longinus would have wanted a subject. Colleges and universities are subject to the same defect; Alfred and Cromwell might have made and patronised universities, but all the colleges in the universe could not have made either of them. Had no collegiate institutions been in existence, we should still have had Shakespeare, Milton, Newton, and all our great men; such conventional institutions are, however, not only depositories of great knowledge, but are themselves evidences of intelligence. There was intelligence shown in their establishment, and there must be knowledge used to keep them up and discharge the duties attached to the various offices; but, after all, the standard of talent must of necessity be the standard of mediocrity, for Nature's noble minds require no cabalistic letters at their hands; the truly great man has already received his degrees from the hand of Omnipotence. This thought is finely expressed in the following stanza, addressed to Tasso:

Peace to Torquato's injured shade! 'twas his
 In life and death to be the mark where Wrong
 Aim'd with her poison'd arrows; but to miss.
 O victor, unsurpassed in modern song!
 Each year brings forth its millions; but how long
 The tide of generations shall roll on,
 And not the whole combined and countless throng
 Compose a mind like thine? *Though all in one*
*Condensed their scattered rays, they would not form a sun.*¹

In like manner bardism might have been itself an evidence of intelligence, and numbered in its ranks many able men; yet upon the whole it was unfavourable to extraordinary merit and true poetic excellence.

The historical value of their poems is, however, very great, for the bards seem generally to have adhered very closely to their professed maxim "Y gwir yn erbyn y Byd;" and if their poems contain but few beautiful thoughts, they are full of cor-

¹ Byron, *Childe Harold*, canto iv.

rect statements of facts, descriptions of manners, and natural allusions to the habits of the people and their traditions. Even the minutiae of military decorations are mentioned, as appears from many passages in the works of the bards, and as is shown in a very interesting note to *Hanes Cymru* :

The King of France aided Owain Glyndwr with an army of men, and presented him with handsome arms. Among other things there was a beautiful helmet, "un beau bassinet," as it is described, says Sir Samuel Meyrick, in an old French author; and I have no doubt that it is this Gruffydd Llwyd alludes to when, speaking of Owain, he says :

"Ffyr digrif afrifed
Owain *helm gain*, hael am ged."

This confirms me in a belief, which I have long held, that the bards did not crowd their lines with unmeaning phrases, and that those passages which are now obscure and are read without producing any benefit, are really apposite and instructive allusions to things of which we have no cognisance; for the merit of the bards consisted in skilfully weaving such minutiae into their poetry.¹

And therefore, viewed in this light, the bardic remains deserve to be diligently studied.

As might naturally have been expected, the regulations of the bards have acted as dead weights upon imagination, and the metaphors and images of many of the Kymric poets display either a want of taste or of originality. There is a sameness about the whole of them; and they not unfrequently borrow each other's images. Several instances of this occur in the poems already noticed. Gwalchmai had described the loss of blood at the Battle of Tal y Moelvre, that streaming seaward, it checked the progress of the incoming tide; and we find Kyn-ddelw soon after making use of the very same idea in the following forcible passage: ²

The green flood of Teivi was thickened;
The water and the blood of men filled it;
The blood-stained *grebe* ³ called aloud for a glut of gore,
And swam with toil on waves of blood.

¹ *Hanes Cymru*, p. 771.

² Gwyrdd heli Teifi tewychai
Gwaedlan gwyr a llyr ai llanwai
Gwyach rud gorfud goralwai
Ar doniar gwyar gonofiai.

³ The grebe is a waterfowl (gwyach).

And a similar idea is used by Llywarch ab Llywelyn.

The standing images for warriors are lions, hawks, and eagles, which we meet with everywhere in these poems; occasionally we find these conceits varied with comparisons to historical names. In the love songs of the earlier bards, where one would have thought originality both easy and abundant, we find nothing but repetitions of each other; and a happy idea, when once penned, is appropriated by every writer and worn to tatters. Kynddelw, in a poem addressed to Eva, the daughter of Madawg ab Meredydd, Prince of Powys, describes her thus: ¹

Thou art as white as the spray of water scattered by the wind,
 Thou white Cambrian of the court of Dyffrynt;
 Thou shinest as brightly as the rising sun,
 And art as purely white as the mountain snow.

And these very images have been reproduced by Hywel ab Einion. The "cherry bloom" and "hawthorn flowers" may be accounted his own, as also "the waves of Caswennan;" but "the whiteness of the curling wave," "the flakes of driven snow," and "the meridian sun" seem to be reproductions of the images of Kynddelw. This image of the water spray is also used by Hywel ab Owain, who is usually very original:

Gorewynawg ton tynhegyl ebrwydd;

and by many others.

One of two things is very apparent from these facts; either these images had been authorised as appropriate to such and such subjects, just as Bossu and his school gave recipes for epic poems, or the minds of the bards were incapable of framing original comparisons. The last conclusion becomes quite inadmissible when we reflect upon the appropriateness of the images used; and therefore, as will appear from the following list of the figures which were considered to be legitimate by the bardic critics, we must adopt the former alternative:

1. The three embellishing names of poetic genius: light of the understanding, amusement of reason, and preceptor of knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> Cymrawd ewyn dwfr, ai difriw gwynt,  
 Cymraeg laesdeg o lys dyffrynt,  
 Cyfleuer gwawr dydd, pan dwyre hynt  
 Cyfliw eira gorwyn gorwydd epynt.

2. The three embellishing names of reason : candle of the soul, might of wisdom, and transparency of knowledge.

3. The three embellishing names of wisdom : beauty of the heavens, strength of amusement, and the word of God.

4. The three embellishing names of the understanding : eye of genius, ear of reason, and right hand of meditation.

5. The three embellishing names of knowledge : might of the world, joy of the wise, and grace of God.

6. The three embellishing names of God : King of the Heavens (Soul of Worlds), Father of Animation, and Immensity of Love.

7. The three embellishing names of heaven : life, blessedness, and heavenly tranquillity.

8. The three embellishing names of the sun : torch of the worlds, eye of day, and sprightliness of the heavens.

9. The three embellishing names of the moon : sun of night, the beautiful, and sun of the fairies.

10. The three embellishing names of the stars : eyes of serenity, candles of heaven (God), and gems of the sky.

11. The three embellishing names of the sea : field of Gwenhidwy, court of Neivion, and fountain of Venus (and glutton of the world).

12. The three embellishing names of the waves : sheep of Gwenhidwy, dragons of the salt deep, and blossoms of ocean.

13. The three embellishing names of summer : chevalier of love, father of vigour, and keeper of ardour.

14. The three embellishing names of the wind : hero of the world, architect of bad weather, and assaulter of the hills.

15. The three embellishing names of flowers : gems of shrubs, beauties of summer, and eyes of zephyrs.

16. The three embellishing names of herbs : mantle of summer, aspect of beauty, and hall-floor of love.

17. The three embellishing names of zephyrs : countenance (smile) of joy, salve of heaven, and smile (face) of love.

18. The three embellishing names of genius : life of knowledge, soul of reason, and gift of God.

19. The three embellishing names of conscience : light of heaven, eye of truth, and voice of God.

20. The three embellishing names of knowledge : paths of truth, hand of reason, and strength of genius.<sup>1</sup>

Rhys Goch, Davydd ab Gwilym, and subsequent writers, it should be admitted, are favourable exceptions.

We have stated the facts as they exist ; but there are several considerations which ought in fairness to be urged in defence of the Cambrian bards. Their works should not be

<sup>1</sup> *Tolo Manuscripts*, p. 480.

judged by the critical principles which now prevail; for though it be admissible to apply that rule in order to estimate their value as specimens of the art of composition, to criticise the productions of dark ages by the light of the present is to apply a test as much too severe as it is imperfect and unfair. This, I am aware, is the rule most frequently employed; for men generally believe nothing good, except that with which they happen to be acquainted; and the first impulses of all men verify the correctness of that faithful representation of the narrowness of human judgments—the allegorical bed of Procrustes. In reviewing the bardic poems, the time at which they were sung, and the circumstances under which they were produced, should be taken into account. The subjects were not the suggestions of happy moments, nor were the poems the fruits of untrammelled meditation; but, on the contrary, the themes were prescribed, and the treatment of the subjects not what welled up spontaneously in the poet's mind, but what custom had ordained to be appropriate. Of the bardic canon of criticism we must say that it has much to recommend it; the images sanctioned are frequently very beautiful; and being drawn less from books than from external objects, have a freshness which none others can supply. We do not quarrel with it on this account; perhaps it was well to fix a standard of excellence, to which the inferior class of bards should aspire, but it erred in cramping the talents of those who were really able men. The mind has laws and moods of its own; it may drink inspiration from the pealing thunder, suck honeyed thoughts from opening flowers, or see profoundest meanings in pearly drops of dew; but it is reluctant to obey another's command, and bows submissively to no secondary laws. "Poets," it has been well said, "seldom succeed on given themes." The times were not favourable to originality; the minds of the able men were not allowed sufficient room to be developed still further; so that when bardism had prescribed the metaphors and images appropriate to each occasion, we should rather wonder at finding so many good passages in the poems of the greater bards than at seeing the minor poets ringing the changes on a few ideas and set phrases.

We are also liable to do the bards less than justice, from viewing their poems in a collective form. A sense of weariness and monotony is thus produced, which could not have been felt

when the poems were first composed. No severer test can be applied to a writer addicted to mannerism than a comparison of his collected works; and as a peculiarity of mental constitution, though not inconsistent with greatness of certain kinds, is an indication of narrowness, none but the choicest spirits can pass unscathed through such an ordeal. Some of the ablest of living writers have been weighed in this balance, and found wanting; when we have seen their writings on one class of subjects, we may predict with considerable certainty what their treatment of others is likely to be; and therefore we should not pronounce too hasty a judgment upon the Cambrian bards. Their poems are not members of a series. Each composition was intended to be complete in itself, and should be viewed accordingly. If the poems be taken singly, and at intervals of time, as they were produced, they will be found readable enough; the thoughts are appropriate to the subject; the imagery, which is sometimes rich, can seldom be said to want beauty; and the metaphors, frequently forcible, are never far-fetched or out of place: they only become wearisome when read in quick succession. Much of the monotony is also to be attributed to the paucity of subjects. The age had but one idea—war; and most of the bardic poems being addressed to the warlike princes of the Kymry, were composed for set occasions. Princes, wars, and raids were the great features of the time; and as one prince or one war was as like as possible to another, the writers of successive addresses to different or the same persons must have repeated themselves very frequently. The inferior bards could not break through this narrow circle. The poems of Einion Wan, Prydydd Bychan, and Bleddyn are neither good nor bad; tried by the Horatian rule, they must be condemned; but viewed in connexion with the bardic school, they will appear less liable to censure. Gwalchmai, Kynddelw, Llywarch, Davydd Benvras, and Ab yr Ynad were, however, men of a different stamp; they had capacity enough to soar above that which was immediately present—to leave the beaten path of custom, and to adorn their works with graces peculiarly their own.

The bardic poetry is frequently sententious, and interwoven with moral reflections. Sometimes this has a pleasing effect; but it is most commonly otherwise. In the poems of Gwalchmai we have several specimens of very pure lyric forms, free

from any admixture of irrelevant matter. All the poetry of the Kymry of these centuries would come under the designation lyric; for though they sometimes assume an epic character, the whole treatment is that of the lyricist. The pure forms of Gwalchmai were, however, thought not to display a sufficient degree of mastery; and instead of confining themselves to the proper limits of lyric poetry, the bards frequently interrupt the full flow of passion to introduce commonplace and unnecessary reflections. Parenthetical sentences impertinently intrude themselves into some of the finest poems of Kynddelw; some of the others are in this respect less faulty, but in most of the bardic poems the anxiety of the authors to remind the hearer or reader of their personal presence is frequently a source of annoyance. There are, however, numerous instances where these reflections are both strictly appropriate and productive of very pleasing effects; the invocations at the commencement of some of the greatest poems of Meilir, Kynddelw, Llywarch, and Davydd Benvras are really sublime, and the religious tone of the closing lines of many give their chief compositions a highly poetic character.

Another feature in their poems is strongly indicative of the circumstances under which they were produced. We frequently find the subjects of their odes spoken of in different degrees of relationship; the persons to whom the poems are composed are generally addressed in the second person singular, but frequently in the third; and the explanation appears to be that the poems were composed for, and recited in, public assemblies. The early poetry of all nations appears to be connected with feasts and populous gatherings; the lyrics of the Hebrews, as appears from the admirable lectures of Lowth, have the peculiarity here noticed; and the same observation holds good of the epic and lyric poetry of Greece. Most of the poems of the mediæval bards were undoubtedly composed for such occasions; this appears from Lewis Glyn Cothi's account of the wedding in Flint, and from the words of Kynddelw:

Canaf wawd yr priawd ae pryn.

I will sing an eulogy to the prince who will buy it;

and the poet recited his composition after dinner in the presence of the assembled guests. When the bard speaks of the host in



the second person, he probably addressed that personage directly; and when the hero of the piece is spoken of in the third person, the remarks are parenthetical, and were probably addressed to the bystanders. On such occasions the introduction of matter not strictly relevant was excusable; and it should be observed that the poems of the bards were intended to be listened to rather than read.

We have already shown the skill of the bards in forming compound words; their works exhibit a similar feature in the compound epithets with which they abound. This has been well described by the Rev. Thomas Price:

I have passed some time in studying the writings of the bards, and can say of them that they are in the highest degree original in their character. One mark of their excellence was that they could not be accurately translated into any other tongue; the diction was highly wrought, and the imagery striking, and altogether the poetry of the bards is so superior to the general run of colloquial writing that it is impossible to give it adequate expression in any other language. If I was asked what is the style in which the bards wrote, I would say that it was lyric; if I were to name any classic poet of antiquity that resembled them, I would name Pindar: there was the same originality, the same richness of expression, and the same transient kind of imagery, so suddenly produced and so rapidly withdrawn. I know of no other poet of antiquity to compare to them. If I were called upon to explain by any English work the nature of this combined expression, I should certainly fix upon the poems of Gray, in which we find such lines as:

“The breezy call of incense-breathing morn.”

Gwalchmai invokes

“The early-rising summer-sun.”

And such passages are frequent in the poems of the bards.

On becoming more intimate with the bards, the principles of the order become more and more manifest; and we find that, in order to give more *éclat* to themselves, and make poetry a difficult art, they raised an artificial standard of a somewhat vicious character, and required all reputable poems to be of a given affected form. This consisted of like commencements to their lines, such as we saw in the Avallenau and in Davydd Benvras. It was the prevalent taste during the last period treated of here, and had been introduced as early as the time of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth. This appears from Giraldus; but as

the reader might not have particularly noticed the allusion, we here quote it a second time :

Beyond all rhetorical ornaments they preferred the use of alliteration, and that kind more especially which repeats the first letters or syllables of words. They made so much use of this ornament in every finished discourse that they thought nothing elegantly spoken without it.

We have given some specimens of this already, such as—

and—  
*Gogyfurdd torment gogoflaw torfoedd,*  
*Teyrnllu, teyrnedd, teyrnllaw, teyrnlliw ;*

and these lines in the Avallenau furnish a specimen both of the beauties and the faults of the practice. They have been already twice quoted, and will bear quotation again :

*Saith Afallen beren a saith ugaint,*  
*Yn gyfoed, gyfuwch, gyhyd, gymmaint.*

This, when sparingly introduced, has a pleasing effect ; but we here observe a drawback : “ gyfuwch ” and “ gyhyd ” mean precisely the same thing, for there can be no difference between “ as high ” and “ as long ” when applied to trees. Davydd Benvras was proud of this affected ornament, and has a long passage full of repeated phrases :

*Oedd breisg freisg ei fyddin,*  
*Oedd brwysg rwysg rhag y godorin,*  
*Oedd balch gwalch golchiad ei lain,*  
*Oedd gweilch beilch gweled ei werin,*  
*Oedd clywed cleddyfau finfin ;*  
*Oedd clybod clwyf ym mhob elin ;*  
*Oedd briw rhiw yn nhrabludd odrin ;*  
*Oedd braw saw Saeson Clawdd y Cnwccin ;*  
*Oedd bulch llafn yn llaw gynnefin,*  
*Oedd gwaedlyd pennau gwedy gwaedlin.*

Now, this has no great merit as poetry ; yet if that has but the single merit of being alliterative, the following has the double merit of being alliterative and good poetry as well :

*Llawer deigr hylithr yn hwylaw ar rudd ;*  
*Llawer ystlys rhudd a rhwyg arnaw ;*  
*Llawer gwaed am draed wedi ymdreiddiau ;*  
*Llawer gweddw a gwaedd am danaw ;*

*Llawer* meddwl trwm yn tramwyaw ;  
*Llawer* mab heb dad wedi ei adaw ;  
*Llawer* hendref fraith, gwedi llwybr godaith ;  
*Llawer* diffaith trwy anrhaith draw ;  
*Llawer* llef druan  
 Fal ban fu'r Gamlan ;  
 Llawer deigr dros ran,  
     Wedir greiniaw,  
 O las gwanas gwanar eurllaw  
 O laith Llywelyn, cof ni'm daw.<sup>1</sup>

Here the repetition is appropriate, and rises naturally from the subject ; but we can only say this of a very few. Gwilym Ddu has forty-three lines, out of the sixty-three forming his *Odlau'r Misoedd*, beginning in "Neud," much of which is pure affectation and bad taste. Casnodyn, who lived a little later, inclined to the same practice, as may be here seen :

Pan wnel Duw ddangos ei faran,  
*Dyddwyre* dy daerad arnan ;  
*Dychryn* twryf torfoedd yn eban,  
*Dygyrch* hynt, dychre gwynt gwaeddfan ;  
*Dychymmriw* ton amliw amlan,  
*Dychymmen* ufeliar bâr ban,  
*Dychrys* gwrys gwres tandde allan.

The same taste, or rather want of taste, is shown in the poems of Gruffydd Gryg, Iolo Goch, and Madog Benfras ; and Davydd ab Gwilym very frequently has whole poems commencing with the same letter. It should, however, be admitted that the poets of other countries have put forth similar conceits. Arnaud de Marveil, a well-known Provençal poet, or Troubadour, in a poem addressed to his mistress, has the following lines :

Vos saluda ; e vostra lauazor,  
 Vostra beautat, vostra valor,  
 Vostre solatz, vostre parlar,  
 Vostr' aculhir e vostr' onvar,  
 Vostre pretz, vostr' essenhawen,  
 Vostre saber, e vostre sen,  
 Vostre gen cors, vostre dos riz,  
 Vostra terra, vostre pays ;

<sup>1</sup> For translation of these extracts see pp. 148 and 372, 373.

and, what is still more surprising, this affectation prevailed over the mind of Dante. We find it in the inscription over the gate of hell :

Per me si va nella citta dolente,  
Per me si va nell' eterno dolore ;  
Per me si va tra la perdita gente.

Through me you pass unto the city of woe,  
Through me you pass into eternal pain ;  
Through me among the people lost for aye.

This was the root from which Cynghanedd subsequently sprang.

Again, I have another quarrel with the bards ; for not only do they display affectations in the "beginnings" of their lines, but they also display it in their "endings," the effect of both practices being the depreciation of the poetry and filling up of the lines with unmeaning words. It dates from an early period :

|                                 |                                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Aneurin has . . . .             | 11 lines ending in <i>awr</i> , and |
| " . . . .                       | 18     " <i>en</i> .                |
| Taliesin has . . . .            | 31     " <i>ant</i> .               |
| Meilir has . . . .              | 38     " <i>awd</i> ,               |
| " . . . .                       | 52     " <i>awc</i> ,               |
| " . . . .                       | 64     " <i>yt</i> , and            |
| " . . . .                       | 16     " <i>ed</i> .                |
| Gwalchmai has . . . .           | 21     " <i>i</i> .                 |
| Einion, his son, has . . . .    | 56     " <i>i</i> .                 |
| Kynddelw has . . . .            | 60     " <i>eith</i> .              |
| Prydydd Moch . . . .            | 66     " <i>ar</i> ,                |
| " . . . .                       | 36     " <i>an</i> ,                |
| " . . . .                       | 42     " <i>o</i> , and             |
| " . . . .                       | 64     " <i>int</i> .               |
| Davydd Benvras has . . . .      | 41     " <i>n</i> .                 |
| Einiawn ab Gwgawn has . . . .   | 28     " <i>awl</i> ,               |
| " . . . .                       | 44     " <i>ein</i> ,               |
| " . . . .                       | 36     " <i>ad</i> , and            |
| " . . . .                       | 30     " <i>er</i> .                |
| Llygad Gwr has . . . .          | 36     " <i>ed</i> ,                |
| " . . . .                       | 32     " <i>i</i> ,                 |
| " . . . .                       | 36     " <i>dd</i> ,                |
| " . . . .                       | 16     " <i>dith</i> , and          |
| " . . . .                       | 45     " <i>an</i> .                |
| Owain Kyveiliog has . . . .     | 24 lines rhyming in <i>en</i> ,     |
| (in the <i>Hirlas</i> ) . . . . | 24     " <i>ed</i> ,                |
| . . . .                         | 20     " <i>eid</i> ,               |

|                           |                                 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Owain Kyveiliog has . . . | 18 lines rhyming in <i>an</i> , |
| (in the Hirlas) . . .     | 16     " <i>ir</i> ,            |
| " . . .                   | 16     " <i>yr</i> ,            |
| " . . .                   | 16     " <i>ant</i> , and       |
| " . . .                   | 14     " <i>yn</i> .            |
| Gwilym Ddu has . . .      | 32     " <i>edd</i> , and       |
| " . . .                   | 30     " <i>yd</i> .            |

And Ab yr Ynad, in Marwnad Llywelyn, ends 104 lines in *aw*. This species of affectation seems to have belonged peculiarly to this period; for, to their credit be it said, it was not adopted by the bards of the succeeding centuries.

Much, however, of this monotony arose from the simplicity of their metres. From time to time these were greatly improved; and even during the period under consideration many new metres were invented. Those in use prior to the time of Meilir were the following:

1. *Gorchan y Gyhydedd Fer*. This requires the line to consist of no more than four syllables, and the lines to be no more than eight in each verse. Each of the lines must have the same rhyme; and the poet has the privilege of choosing the number of lines from four to eight.

2. *Y Gyhydedd Gaeth*. This is the same as the short metricity in all respects, except in the length of the lines, which should consist of five syllables.

3. *Y Gyhydedd Drosogl* (rugged). The same as the two preceding, except in the length of the lines being six syllables.

4. *Y Gyhydedd Lefn* (smooth) has seven syllables in each line, and is privileged to range from four to twelve lines in each verse.

5. *Y Gyhydedd Wastad* (regular) has octosyllabic lines, and verses ranging from four to sixteen lines each.

6. *Y Gyhydedd Draws* (cross) is the same as the last, only that there are nine syllables in each line.

7. *Y Gyhydedd Wen* (flowing). Ten syllables; in other respects the same.

8. *Y Gyhydedd Laes* (heavy). Eleven syllables, &c.

9. *Y Gyhydedd Hir* (long) is privileged to have as many as twenty lines, the length of each line being twelve syllables.

These are what are termed the nine canons of metricity; the other metres are combinations of these:

10. *Clogyrnach* (rugosity) resembles the Pindaric odes.

11. *Ban Cyrch* (recurrent verse). Very pleasing rhymes.

12. *Fforchawdi* (furcated transition). Gwalchmai's ode is in this

metre, and the Rev. Walter Davies (to whose essay I am indebted for much information) gives the following as a specimen of one of its many varieties :

Fountains of wine shall pour along ;  
And, melting from the hollow tree,  
The golden treasures of the bee,  
And streams of milk shall fill my song.—*Francis' Horace.*

13. *Warrior's Triplet.* A very old metre—old, perhaps, as the time of the Druids—consisting of three lines, and having the privilege of ranging from seven to ten syllables in the line.

14. *Huppynt* (vaulting strain). An example :

Cysgid Lloegr  
Llydan nifer  
A lleufer  
Yn eu llygaid.

Wordsworth's verses to the daisy are written in this metre. They are not so simple as the preceding example, but belong to the variety known as *y ffordd hwyaf*, the huppynt, the longest way :

When smitten by the morning's ray,  
I see thee rise alert and gay,  
Then, cheerful Flower, my spirits play  
With kindred motion.

At dusk I've seldom mark'd thee press  
The ground, as if in thankfulness,  
Without some feeling more or less  
Of true devotion.

15. *Cynghawg* (complexity). - There are many varieties.

16. *Toddaid* (confluency). Example :

Gorvoledd gwinwledd gwenwlad—tragywydd  
Lle bydd hael Llywydd haul a lleuad.—*Casnodyn.*

To these were added during this era :

17. *Proest Cyfnewidiawg* (combined vowel alternity) :

Gwyr riv y syr yssut yn y gad  
Gwrthrudd Veredydd vur gryd,  
Twn y bar dreig anwar drud,  
Di dwn y eir vel creir cred.—*Prydydd Bychan.*

18. *Ynglyn.* The verses of Kynddelw to Owain Kyveiliog and the Lord Rhys are specimens of this.

The Englyn is much simpler in its form in the poems of these centuries than it afterwards became on the introduction of Cynghanedd, or consonancy. The old form of this metre was :

Nid oes ym Davyt dawn orvod—ar bawb  
 Arbennigyawl hebod  
 Cadyr rwyf cadarn glwyf glybod  
 Can llonyt byw yn dyt bod.—*Gwilym Ryfel.*

Here the only peculiarities are that the four lines have the same final rhyme, and that the consonants *r*, *b* in “ar bawb” are repeated in “arbennigyawl.” But in the more modern Englyn this correspondence of consonants is required in every line. For example, we will take the prize Englyn to the Goat, at the Liverpool Eisteddvod of 1840 :

*Bervain yw'r avr a barvog,—arwaw lais,*  
 Un hirvlew a chorniog ;  
 Naid hyd llethrau creigiau crog  
 A'i nawdd yw'r graig ddanneddog.—*Rob. Thomas.*

The peculiarity here is indicated by the italics ; and there are numerous other nice distinctions which we cannot stay to notice.

19. *Triban Cyrch* (recurring triplet), better known as *Triban Morganwg*. Example :

Anhyfryd beth i'w methu,  
 A ffywyl ar ddyn yw ffaelu,  
 Ni wel fwynder glwysber glân,  
 Nag un awr gân a gwenu.

20. *Cywydd* (recitative). The merit of inventing this is claimed for Iolo Goch, Trahaiarn, and Davydd ab Gwilym. It is considered the finest and sweetest of all the metres. Most of D. ab Gwilym's poems are written in it.

21. *Proest Cadwynodl* (combined alternate rhyme). We have an early example in Gutyn Owain :

Y vendith drwy gyviawnder  
 A gavas Nudd ac Ivor  
 Ar Ddavydd riv sydd o ser  
 Ac a roi'r mwy nâ gro'r môr.

22. *Cadwyn Gyrc* (recurrent catenation), says one critic, “crowds the ear too much with its cuckoo-like repetitions.”

23. *Traethawdl* (narrative). “Its mark of inherence is, that the

rhythm be changed every couplet like a Cywydd, and its privilege is choice of metricity from seven to twelve syllables."

24. *Dyri* (vocal song), a free flowing metre, and of endless varieties, adapted to lyric songs.

These four last were invented subsequent to the time embraced by this essay, and some changes were made at the Carmarthen Eisteddvod in 1451; but these alterations were afterwards done away with at another Carmarthen Eisteddvod in 1819. The miserable affectations of writing verses on all the metres has now been abandoned, and the poet is very properly allowed to use such of the metres as suits his taste.

The influence of such an order of men as the bards in stirring up the patriotism of the Kymry, and in stimulating the latent intellect, courage, and daring which slumber in all bosoms until called forth by strong excitement, is very clearly shown by the proclamations and hostile edicts of the English monarchs, and can scarcely be overrated. Much that was good and great would not, but for their exhortations, have seen the light; and many a brilliant conception that the world now glories in the possession of would have been evaporated in apathy, or perished in indifference, but for the stimulus given to the patriotic cause by these wandering minstrels.

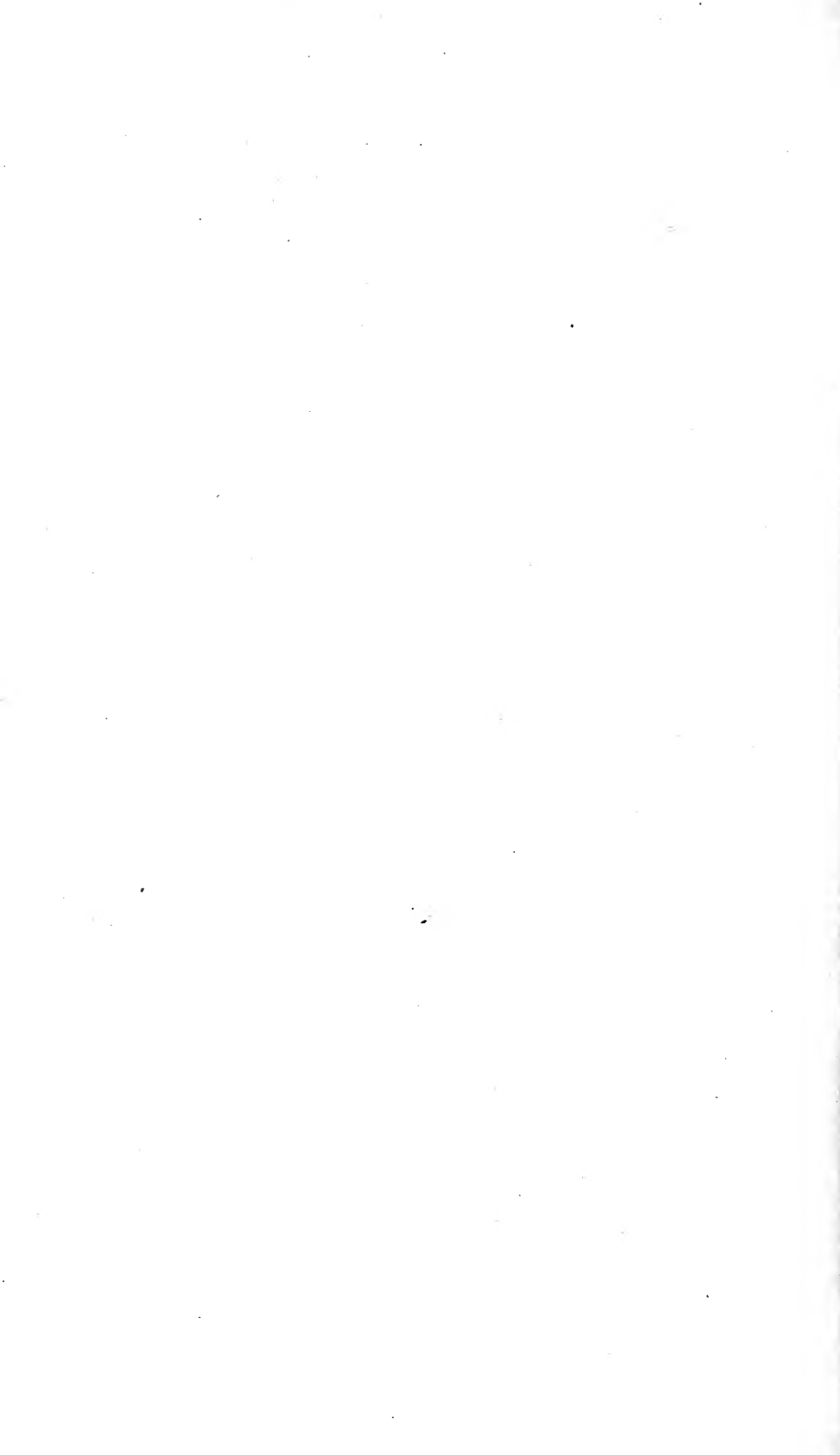
We have already adverted to the historical value of the bardic remains; but there is one aspect under which their historical worth deserves a more special notice. They throw light not only on Kymric literature, but also on English history; and it cannot but be interesting for candid Saxons to learn how their countrymen were regarded at this period by their more civilised opponents. The wars of the English kings against the Kymry form a most important portion of English history, though it is admitted to be imperfect; and it must ever remain imperfect, as it now is, until English scholars cultivate a knowledge of our literature, or some Cambrian supplies the deficiency from the rich stores of Kymric poetry; for the bardic writings throw a flood of light upon contemporary history of a most faithful and trustworthy character. Mr. Turner was not slow to appreciate the value of the early poems of Taliesin, Aneurin, and Llywarch in illustrating and completing the history of the Anglo-Saxons. These bards introduce the reader into a new country, new thoughts, new habits, and to a new people. They



mention battles of which there are no other records, and describe with graphic fidelity engagements of which the Saxon reader has never heard; and how could it be otherwise than interesting and instructive to peruse the records of the only literary people then existing? The same facts are apparent as we descend from the sixth century; descriptions of battles, pictures of manners and dresses, and eulogies of brave warriors are of frequent occurrence; and, even where we have authentic history on the English side, it must be interesting to peruse the counter accounts current among their opponents. How faint the traces which Owain Glyndwr has left on the English page; and how unimportant compared with the vast influence he is known to have possessed! And yet how full the details in Iolo Goch and Gruffydd Llwyd. During the Wars of the Roses Wales was the scene of incessant conflicts, plots, and intrigues, and yet of this period, so obscurely described by English historians, the Kymry have a fund of lively and authentic contemporary history in the poems of Lewis Glyn Cothi, Tudur Aled, Gutyn Owain, and the galaxy of bards who flourished during that period. To come down still lower, who, after reading Huw Morus's spirited pictures of the movements, passions, and persons of the day, would think the present history of the civil war anything like complete?

These characteristics of Cambrian literature give us no small claim upon the attention of the English public, who, if they wish thoroughly to learn the history of their own country, must see their character reflected in Kymric mirrors and diligently study the literature of the Principality. It will repay the labour.

I believe I have now gone over as much ground as the reader can reasonably be expected to travel; and, at parting, take leave to ask if, at the period under consideration, the Kymry were not among the most intelligent and intellectual of the inhabitants of Europe? We wait the answer in perfect confidence.



## APPENDIX.

### THE TRIADS.

[The following letter on the *Triads* (see p. 429) was addressed to the Editor of the *Archæologia Cambrensis* in 1862.—Ed.]

“SIR,—My answer to Mr. Freeman, on the visit to Arthur’s Stone,<sup>1</sup> respecting the date of the *Triads*, seems to occasion some surprise; and, as I have been spoken to on the subject since, it may be well to give my reasons. In the *Literature of the Kymry*, published in 1849, when I was less thoroughly acquainted with the *Triads* than I have since become, several propositions were made that have since been found to be untenable; but even then they were only put forward as conclusions that would ‘probably’ be adopted when time might have enabled to discuss the question of their age and value more exhaustively.

“The practice of arranging facts in threes is not peculiar to the Kymry. Several triads occur in the Old Testament,<sup>2</sup> and one or two in Tacitus. This practice prevailed, it is probable, among the Druids; but we have no historical triad now existing that can be referred to so early a date. The date of a triad is not determined by its historical contents. Murchison’s *Geology* is not quite so old as the Silurian rocks. A few legal triads occur in the oldest copies of the *Laws of Howel*; but the arrangement of law points in groups of threes did not manifest itself as a decided literary habit for several centuries afterwards, and it is only in the sixteenth and subsequent centuries that we find whole codes thus arranged. The so-called laws of Dyrnwal Moelmud were certainly composed at no earlier date than the sixteenth century. So we find a few of the historical triads in the poems of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries; but no collection of them now known to us can claim a higher antiquity than the latter date.

“Our collections are three in number:

“1. The first and oldest series is that in the *Red Book of Hergest*,

<sup>1</sup> [During the meeting of the Cambrian Archæological Association at Swansea in August, 1861. See *Archæologia Cambrensis*, 3rd series, vol. vii., pp. 364–65.—Ed.]

<sup>2</sup> See 2 Sam. xxiii. 8–23; and 1 Chron. xi. 10–35.

now at Jesus College, Oxford. The last person named in this series is Owen Gwynedd, who died in 1169: the collection must, therefore, be subsequent to that date. At p. 516 of the *Llyfr Coch* (Red Book) there is a chronicle brought down to the year 1318: the manuscript could not, therefore, have been written before that. The latest date in the book is 1454. The *Triads* come in at p. 588 and extend to p. 600: they cannot, therefore, claim a higher date than the middle of the fourteenth century.

"2. The second series in point of date, but the first in order in the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, refers to *Ystoria y Greal*, the Romance of the *Saint Greal*. This was translated into Welsh in the time of Henry VI., between 1422 and 1471: hence this series cannot be older than the fifteenth century.

"3. The third series also refers to the *Greal*, and is in the orthography of the sixteenth century. It is published in the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, from a copy made in 1601. It is this series that refers to Maen Ketti or Arthur's Stone. This copy was made from the *Book of Ieuan Brechva*, who is supposed to have died about A.D. 1500; and from another MS., improperly called the *Book of Caradoc of Llancarvan*, which, judging from the orthography, must have been still later. This series, therefore, must be referred to the sixteenth century or the beginning of the seventeenth.

"These facts will enable your readers to form their own judgments as to the antiquity of the historical *Triads*.

"Yours, &c.,

"THOS. STEPHENS."











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