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I have said before what I think of Gwynedd, that it is borrowed of Veneti in Armorica. Concerning Poys, corruptly called Powys, I think it cometh of the name of Poysi, a town in France, where there was, near forty year past, a conference for religion. There was a towne situate six miles west of Salop, destroyed by Owen Glyndwr, where the castell and a village yet remain, called Caors, which name I think to be borrowed of Caors, in France.

I could risk more; but this sufficeth. I ende this letter from home, as you may see by the change of my inke and penne. I pray you write unto me what you think of this my conceit, and also how Armorica came to be called Britannia; and I assure you upon the receipt thereof I will more at large write of this matter, and also what I think of Britayne. In the mean time I commyt you to the care of the Almighty. Anglesey, Idib: Januar.

Totus tuus,

RICHARD GRUFFYDD.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS.

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### OWEN JONES.

THE benefactors of mankind are not always to be sought in the high road of popular glory. The senate and the camp teem, it is true, with renown at once splendid and dazzling. But in the shade of private life, in the sequestered walks of retirement, we shall often find public virtue, less ostentatious indeed in its immediate effects, but more beneficial in its general aim: and for which, perhaps, posterity shall weave a more unsullied wreath than any, that has adorned the brows of a conqueror or a statesman.

Of the various methods, by which a private individual may promote the interests of his country, the encouragement of its literature must not be esteemed the least efficacious. If the bounteous hand of charity may command a sublimer influence, the benefits, that flow from the patronage of learning and science, are of a more extensive and of a more durable character. If the tendency of the former be to alleviate the sufferings, and to supply the necessities, of our nature,—undoubtedly a heavenly occupation,—it is more peculiarly the province of the latter to spread abroad the empire of morality and of knowlege. The protector of literature, therefore, whether by fostering living

talent, or by rescuing from oblivion the genius of past ages, has an indisputable claim to be enrolled amongst the benefactors of his fellow-men.

The position here advanced is one, which will be allowed to apply to all countries and to all times, but with more peculiar force to such times and countries, as may have been remarkable for a dearth of public spirit in this respect. The merit, naturally belonging to this species of patriotism, is thus enhanced by the contrast, and especially, if it be the disinterested spirit of a humble individual contrasted with the supineness of affluence and of rank.

Such is the description of worth, which it is the aim of this brief memoir to record. And the "short and simple annals" of Mr. Owen Jones are easily filled. He was a younger son of a respectable family, which had been long in the enjoyment of a pretty considerable freehold on the spot, where its descendants are still to be found. The parish, of which he was a native, is Llanfihangel Glyn y Myfyr, in the county of Denbigh: in the name of which may be discovered a sort of prophetic allusion to the character, by which his future life was to be marked. And, in the title, which he afterwards assumed, he did not forget, that he had come from the "Valley of Contemplation\*." Of his education nothing certain is known to the writer of this sketch; but it may be presumed, that it was only such as the opportunities of the neighbourhood could supply. And those of the country parishes in Wales are not very enviable. However, even this doubtful advantage he did not continue long to enjoy: for he was sent early in life to London, where he was taken into the employment of Messrs. Kidney and Nutt, furriers, in Thames-street, to whose business he eventually succeeded. And he continued to carry on the trade with credit, and a fair portion of success, until the time of his death.

The diligence, however, with which he pursued his particular calling, did not prevent him from devoting a considerable share of his time to his native country, his attachment to which was at once ardent and inflexible †. The unmerited neglect, so long

\* The literal translation of *Glyn y Myfyr* is the *Valley of the Contemplative Man*. And "Myfyr" was the bardic designation, which, in compliance with the custom of his country, Mr. Jones adopted in his literary undertakings.

† His national zeal was once evinced in a most singular manner, when, upon being present at the performance of Shakespear's *Henry 5th*, and seeing Fluclio compel Pistol to eat his leek, he clapp'd his hands with a rapturous exultation, exclaiming at the same time, "That is right, that is right!"

experienced by our national literature, could not fail to impress itself deeply on a mind so disposed. And he accordingly resolved to appropriate to himself the honourable distinction, which had belonged to the Mæcenases and the Leos of other countries. He became at once the patron of the modern genius of Wales, and the conservator of her past fame. Thus in the obscure retreat of a private individual was nourished a spirit, which, in better times, had been deemed an honour to the mansions of princes.

In the prosecution of this plan he omitted nothing, that might conduce to its proper accomplishment. His time and his purse were alike dedicated to the cause; and the result has been seen in a very extensive collection of MSS., and in the publication of the most antient and valuable remains of Welsh literature. He was likewise the founder of the Gwyneddigion Society, and, during the remainder of his life, did not cease to contribute his pecuniary aid in every way, in which it could be of service, towards advancing the laudable objects of that institution\*.

The principal works, which he published at his own expence, were the Poems of Dafydd ab Gwilym, with a Preface from the pen of Mr. William Owen Pughe; and, for the use of his countrymen in humble life, "Dyhewyd y Cristion," or, "the Christian's Resolution," a translation from the English by the celebrated Dr. John Davies. He likewise established a periodical work in Welsh under the title of "Greal." But what will constitute the proudest monument to his fame, as long as the Welsh language shall be known amongst men, is the "Archaology of Wales," embracing, in three large octavo volumes †, all the most distinguished productions of the country from the fifth to the close of the thirteenth century. These he is represented to have given to the world with a conscientious fidelity, and at an expence, in their collection and publication, somewhat exceeding a thousand pounds. When it is considered, that by far the greatest portion of these literary treasures had not before appeared in print, that many of them were thus, in all probability, saved from impending destruction,—and when with this is remembered the reproachful indifference, that generally prevailed with respect to Welsh learning, making remuneration hopeless,—this act of disinterested patriotism can not be estimated too highly.

\* See p. 34, *post*.

† These were published in the respective years of 1801, and 1807. Mr. Jones was assisted in the literary superintendance of the work by Mr. W. O. Pughe and Mr. Edward Williams, the venerable bard of Glamorgan.

To these public exertions the subject of this memoir added others, which, although of a private nature, had the same patriotic object in view, and must not, therefore, be passed without notice. He was at the additional pains and expence of collecting manuscript copies of the Poetry of Wales from the year 1300, when the Archaeology concludes, to the time of Elizabeth, comprised in about fifty quarto volumes, each containing nearly five hundred pages. This valuable collection is at present, it is believed, in the possession of his son.

Nor must it be forgotten, in this inadequate tribute to the memory of Mr. Owen Jones, to record, that he united with his merit as a patriot many amiable private qualities, extending often to individuals that benevolence, of which his country had so largely partaken. A single anecdote, for the authenticity of which the writer of this memoir can vouch, will at once illustrate the justice of the preceding remark. A few years after the establishment of the Gwyneddigion Society, the author of a celebrated Welsh Essay, to which one of its prizes was awarded, attracted, in consequence, the notice of its generous founder. A correspondence between them was the necessary result, and in the course of it our Welsh Mæcenas urged his new friend to give his talents the benefit of an academical education, using, in his letter on the occasion, these characteristic words:—"I will bear your expences:—draw upon me for any sums of money you may be in need of whilst in college. And the condition of the obligation is this, that, if, by any reverse of fortune, I should become poor, and you in a state of affluence, then you must maintain me." No stronger proof of his liberal spirit can be required. It is proper to add, however, that the gentleman, here alluded to, was only once under the necessity of trespassing on his patron's munificence; and he then found him true to his benevolent promise. Yet it takes nothing from the merit of his intention, that it was not more fully executed. It should also be remembered, that by his judicious discernment in this instance, and by his encouraging instigation, he was the means of bringing into public notice an individual, who has since proved himself a distinguished proficient in our national literature. He was the Ulysses,

— per quem magnus Danais successit Achilles.

After a life, thus signalized by private excellence and by public zeal, Mr. Owen Jones left the world lamented by many, respected by all. He died at his house in Thames-street, on the

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26th of September, 1814, at the age of 73, leaving a widow and three children to unite their sorrow with that of his country, and to derive from its sympathy the truest consolation, that can be experienced for the loss of departed worth\*.

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## CRITICISM.

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COLL GWYNFA: *or* PARADISE LOST translated into WELSH by  
W. O. PUGHE. 8vo. pp. 371. 8s. E. Williams, 1819.

THE fame of Milton has long ceased to be at the mercy of time. It has, for ages, become one of the brightest possessions of eternity, as far, at least, as that term may be applied to the renown of this world. In no language does there exist a nobler specimen of the union of learning and genius,—of the pomp and dignity of the former and the luxuriance and sublimity of the latter,—than is afforded by PARADISE LOST. Its very blemishes result from the exuberance of its author's knowledge; and its beauties are such as his towering fancy could alone have created. It was Milton too, be it remembered, that made the first successful effort to liberate the English Muse from the bondage of rhyme. He first taught her to exchange her monkish frippery for a more sober and a more classical attire †. He also taught his native language itself to soar to a higher point in the scale of poetical excellence; he intermixed with her homely phraseology the polished idioms of more cultivated tongues, and engrafted upon her comparatively naked stock a variety of choice exotics from the genial climes of Rome and of Athens. To the valuable stores,

\* A very appropriate tribute was paid, on this melancholy event, by the Gwyneddigion Society to the memory of one, whom they had so many reasons for styling their "Father." All the members appeared in deep mourning,—their silent harp was covered with black crape, and an affecting dirge, composed on the occasion by Mr. John Jones, then bard to the Society, prepared all present to participate with still deeper emotion in the mournful solemnity.

† It is not intended by this assertion to insinuate, that Milton was the first English poet who wrote in blank verse, but only, that he was the first to make a successful use of it. The earliest English composition of this nature was a Translation of the second and fourth books of the Æneis by Lord Surry, in 1557. See Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 21.