BARING-GOULD SABINE

A BOOK OF NORTH WALES

Sabine Baring-Gould

A Book of North Wales

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Содержание

PREFACE 5
CHAPTER I 6
CHAPTER II 10
CHAPTER III 14
CHAPTER IV 22
CHAPTER V 29
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. 36

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PREFACE

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

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

I have to return my warmest thanks to kind friends who have helped me with information, notably the Rev. J. Fisher, B.D., of Cefn, S. Asaph; Mr. J. E. Griffith, of Bryn Dinas, Bangor; the Rev. E. Evans, of Llansadwrn; Mr. C. H. Jones, of the Public Library, Welshpool; Mr. A. Foulkes-Roberts, of Denbigh; Mr. D. R. Daniel, of Four Crosses, Chwilog; and Mr. R. Williams, of Celynog, Newtown. I am also much indebted to Mr. R. J. Lloyd Price, of Rhiwlas, for kindly allowing me to reproduce the portrait of Catherine of Berain in his possession; and to Mr. Prys-Jones, of Bryn-Tegid, Pontypridd, for sending me a photograph of the painting. But, indeed, everywhere in Wales I have met with general kindness and hospitality; and if I have failed to interest readers in the country and people the fault is all mine. It is a glorious country, and its people delightful.

S. BARING-GOULD

Lew Trenchard, N. Devon
May 17th, 1903

CHAPTER I
THE WELSH PEOPLE

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

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

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

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

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

This original people, which for convenience we will call Iberian, migrated at some unknown period from Asia, and swept round Europe, whilst a second branch colonised the Nile basin and Northern Africa, and a third streamed east and occupied China and Japan.

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

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

Then came rushing from the East great hordes of fair-haired, round-headed men, with blue eyes. Their original homes were perhaps the Alps, but more probably Siberia. This new race was

the Celt. It was divided into two branches, the Goidels and the Brythons, and the Goidels came first. Considerable difference as well as affinity exists between the dialects spoken by each. Where a Brython or Britton would speak of his head as "pen," the Goidel or Gael would call it "ceann," pronouncing the *c* hard, as *k*. So "five" in Manx is "queig," but in Welsh "pump." A like difference was found in Italy, where the Roman would name a man Quinctius (Fifth), but a Samnite would call him Pontius.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That they were in the land we know, not only from the testimony of Welsh ancient writers, but from the number of inscribed stones they have left behind them, some with the Ogam script, bearing distinctly Irish names. All these inscribed stones belong to the period after the occupation from Ireland, and none go back to an earlier date, and give any grounds for supposing that the original population of North and South Wales were Gaels. The Scots or Irish held these parts till an event took place which led to their expulsion.

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

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

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

After the whole of Eastern Britain had been taken and occupied, the line of demarcation between Celt and Teuton ran from the Firth of Forth along the backbone of the Pennine Range to the Forest of Arden, and thence to Salisbury and to the sea by Christchurch. But the invaders pressed on. In 577 the Brittons were defeated at Deorham, near Bath, and those of Wales were cut off from their brethren in Devon and Cornwall. In 607 they met with a signal reverse at Chester, and they thenceforth

were separated from the Brittons in Strathclyde. Still the unsatiated Anglo-Saxons pressed on, and the Brittons finally retained only the mountains of Wales as their last refuge. Many, indeed, fled over the sea and occupied and colonised Armorica, to which they gave the name of Lesser Britain or Brittany.

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

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

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

We may halt to inquire how it was that this great and heroic people, to which belong some of the finest qualities that are found in man, a people in some respects more gifted than that which dispossessed it, should have been so completely routed by invaders from across the stormy North Sea. The Gaul had been of precisely the same Brythonic stock, and he had allowed himself to be buffeted by Cæsar and brought to his knees. Cæsar was sharp-witted enough to detect at a glance the defects in character and in political organisation of the Gauls, and to take advantage of them. Cæsar could always reckon on tribal jealousies, and consequently on setting one clan against another; and there was not a tribe in which there were not traitors, who, offended in their self-esteem, were ready to betray those of their own race and household, to wipe off some petty slight, to avenge some personal grudge. Precisely the same cause led to the ruin of the Brittons when opposed to Germanic invaders, and, as we shall see in the sequel, the same cause again acted throughout the long struggle with the English kings.

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

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

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

In feudal France province was opposed to province, in much the same way, till the strong hand of Richelieu consolidated the monarchy.

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

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

Not till 1490 did peace and unity reign in Brittany, just five years after Henry Tudor became King of England, and put a stop to the strife in Wales. The late Mr. Green, in his *The Making of England*, laid stress on the important part that the Latin Church played in promoting the unity of the

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER II
THE ENGLISH CONQUEST

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> "The conquest which now began," says Mr. Freeman, "that which we call either the English or Norman conquest of Britain, differed from the Norman conquest of England. It wrought far less change than the landing at Ebbfleet; it wrought far more change than the landing at Pevensey.
>
> "The Britton of these lands, which in the Red King's day were still British, was gradually conquered; he was brought gradually under English rule and English law, but he was neither exterminated nor enslaved, nor wholly assimilated. He still abides in his ancient land, still speaking his ancient tongue.
>
> "The English or Norman conquest of Wales was not due to a national migration like the English conquest of Britain, nor was it a conquest wrought under the guise of an elaborate legal fiction, like the Norman conquest of England."

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

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

As Freeman further observes: —

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

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

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

There were three Welsh kingdoms, or principalities. Gwynedd, roughly conterminous with the counties of Anglesey, Carnarvon, Merioneth, and parts of Denbigh and Flint. Powys, sadly shrunken, still comprised Montgomeryshire and Radnor and a portion of Denbigh. The third principality, Deheubarth or Dynevor, composed of Pembrokeshire, Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, and Glamorgan. Brecknock was claimed as part of it, but was an enclave in which the Normans had firmly established themselves. Monmouthshire also belonged to Deheubarth.

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

Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, surnamed "the Great," was king of Gwynedd at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and he had sufficient wit to see that the only salvation for Wales was to be found in

its reunion, and he attempted to achieve this. As Powys was obstructive, he had to fight Gwenwynwyn its king, then to subject Lleyn and Merioneth.

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

Llewelyn now turned his attention to the conquest of South Wales. He stormed one castle after another, and obtained recognition as prince of Dynevor. But in 1216 the false and fickle Gwenwynwyn abandoned the Welsh side and went over to that of the English. After some fighting Llewelyn submitted to Henry III. at Worcester in 1218.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

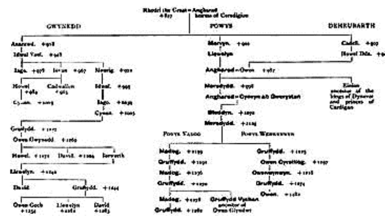
Edward was at Carnarvon when his second son Edward was born, 1301, and soon after he proclaimed him Prince of Wales.

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

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

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

PEDIGREE OF THE PRINCES OF GWYNEDD AND OF POWYS



[1] Rhys and Brynmor Jones, *The Welsh People*, p. 342.

CHAPTER III
ANGLESEY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A massacre ensued; the island was subjugated, and Roman remains found on it in several places testify that the conquerors of the world planted troops there in camp to keep Mona in complete control. They worked the copper mines near Amlwch.

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

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

Edwin, king of Northumbria, conquered both Mona and the Isle of Man in 625. The place of his landing is still pointed out at Lleiniog, near Beaumaris, and a mound of the Anglo-Saxon type remains to show where was his first camp. Here also Hugh the Fat, Earl of Chester, was killed by the arrow of Magnus Barefoot. But of this more presently. Driven from Deganwy, on the Conway, the kings of Gwynedd made their residence at Aberffraw, in Mona. Of that palace there are but scanty traces.

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

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

Mona, as already said, does not present us with very striking scenery, except on the coast, but it teems with interest in other ways. It is dotted with monuments of the primeval inhabitants – cromlechs and meini-hirion (the plural of maen-hir). It possesses very well preserved camps of the Gwyddyl invaders. It was first the sanctuary and school of the Druids, and after that, of their spiritual successors, the Saints. The slope of Mona towards the east is well timbered and studded with mansions, the park of Plas Newydd, the residence of the Marquess of Anglesey, Plas Llanfair, and the palace of the Bishop of Bangor. This prelate had his residence near the Cathedral, but this has been sold, and a lordly mansion has been given to him on the Straits, where he can turn his back on his Anglesey clergy, and say to the rest, “Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed.” The beautiful suspension bridge erected by Telford crosses the Straits at their sweetest spot. Here the channel is broken by a little island occupied by the graveyard and church of Llandyssilio. The church is of no architectural interest. It was founded by Tyssilio, one of the sons of Brochwel Ysgythrog,

prince of Powys, when he ran away from Meifod to escape the blandishment of an over-affectionate sister-in-law.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1831, the *Rothesay Castle* was cast, when a hundred lives were lost. Miss Martineau, in her *History of the Thirty Years' Peace*, tells a striking story of this wreck: —

> "Two men, strangers to each other, found themselves holding on to the same plank, which, it soon appeared, would support only one. Each desired the other to hold on, the one because his companion was old, the other because his companion was young, and they quitted their grasp at the same moment. By extraordinary accidents both were saved, each without the knowledge of the other, and they met on the shore in great surprise. Few greetings in the course of human life can be so sweet and moving as must have been that of these two heroes."

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

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

He had gone to Brittany, and had found a deserted habitation at Plestin, of which he took possession. The hut had been constructed by an Irish settler named Efflam, who had departed on a pilgrimage. On his return Efflam found his cell in the occupation of a stranger. The question arose as to which should have it. This they decided to determine in the following manner. Both seated themselves in the cabin. The day was overcast, but the clouds were breaking, and the sun was nearing its setting. He on whom it first shone should retain the hovel. Presently the clouds parted, and a golden ray shot in through the little window and blazed on Efflam's upturned face. Then Iestyn rose, bowed, and withdrew, and ended his days in Mona. It is by an artist's licence that on the monument Iestyn is represented wearing a crown. He was, indeed, a king's son, but he never bore the royal circlet.

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

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

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

His happiness was of short duration, for he was summoned by Owen Gwynedd to assist in driving the Flemings out of South Wales, who had been settled there by Henry I. This was in 1137. Einion was away for a good many years, constantly engaged in fighting, and when he did return to Trefeilir he found that on that day his wife had given her hand to another suitor, supposing that Einion

was dead. Einion remained without and sent a servant within to summon her to come forth, and then, striking his harp, he sang a lay of reproach that has been preserved. Then he entered the house and ejected the gentleman who had presumed to invade his premises.

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

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

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

This chapel has a well-preserved and good carved oak roof, which the present rector has saved from destruction by damp. Here is the base of the shrine of S. Elian. It is of wood, and the panels were formerly carved, but the tracery is gone. Into this people crawled, and if they succeeded in turning themselves about within, believed that they would get cured of any disease they might have, or, according to another version, would have their lives extended by five years.

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

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

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

To the west of Amlwch, in a bold situation, is Llanbadrig. The church was founded, not by the Apostle of the Irish, but by a namesake who lived later and was a member of S. Cybi's monastery at Holyhead. According to legend, when he was on his way back from Iona, where he had visited S. Columba, his frail boat was wrecked on Ynys Badrig, or the Middle Mouse, an islet off the coast. Patrick succeeded in making his way to the land, drank of a fountain near the shore, and scrambled up the rock, in which the marks of his feet are still to be seen, to where is the church which he planted on the edge of the precipice in commemoration of his providential escape.

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

The parish of Llanddona is in evil repute, as a nest of witches. The story goes that a boat came ashore in Red Wharf Bay without rudder or oars, containing women and men in a condition of great destitution. They were Irish. Now it was a common custom in Ireland to punish malefactors by putting them in a wicker-work coracle, covered by a single hide, without allowing them oars or rudder. So when S. Patrick converted Maughold, the robber, he bade him drift oarless on the sea, his feet chained together. He was swept by the winds and waves to the Isle of Man, and eventually became bishop

there. Now when the good people of Llanddona saw this boat come ashore thus unprovided with the necessary apparatus for its guidance, they concluded that those on board were criminals, and would have nothing to do with them. They would have sent them adrift again had not a spring of clear water burst forth on the sands where the coracle had come ashore. The spring still flows. This was decisive as a token that Heaven accepted the punishment of the crew, and desired them to rest where they had landed.

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

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

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

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

This Llanfair Mathafarn was the birthplace of Goronwy Owen, the poet. He was born in 1722 of extremely poor parents, went to Oxford through help of Edward Wynne, of Bodewryd. Subsequently Mr. Wynne despatched him to Jesus College, Oxford, and maintained him there. From an early age he gave indications of poetic genius, and he proved himself to be a ripe scholar in the classic tongues.

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

At Donnington poor Goronwy Owen not only acted as curate to the great absentee rector, but also as master of the grammar school, and received twenty-six pounds as his stipend. Thence he shifted, first into Cheshire and then to Northolt, near London. In 1756 he was living in a garret in

town vainly soliciting employment in his sacred calling, and undergoing with his family the utmost privations. His Welsh accent in English stood in his way, and his brilliant Welsh qualifications were not wanted in Wales. But, indeed, poor Goronwy, with all his gifts, was not the man to do much spiritual work.

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER IV
HOLYHEAD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Meanwhile Cadwallon had arrived, and through Brian entered into a league with Penda, king of the Mercians, against Edwin. Both forces marched into Northumbria, and a battle was fought at a place called Heathfield, and Edwin was slain and his Northern Angles routed.

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

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

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

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

Ruskin says: —

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cyngar was so decrepit with age that he could eat no solid food, and Cybi bought a cow with its calf to supply the old uncle with milk. This led to ructions. The calf strayed into the meadow of a monk of the name of Fintan, who impounded it. The consequence was angry altercation and so much unpleasantness that Cybi had to leave. He crossed to Ireland, took boat in Dublin Bay, and

landed in Lleyn, the rocky promontory of Carnarvon, where his wicker-work coracle got on a reef that tore the leather covering. However, all reached the shore in safety, and Cybi founded a church where is now Llangybi, near Pwllheli.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> "A singular fissure, cleaved in a direct line from the summit to the base, forms, or rather did form, a passage of communication of no small celebrity in ancient days, and retaining its odour of sanctity till very recent date. It is known by the name of Ogof Lochwyd, *ogof* signifying a cave. A spring of crystal water filtering through the deep strata formed a deep well at the bottom of this chasm. Situated just at the higher opening of the gorge was a chapel for the accommodation of pilgrims called Capel y Llochwyd, of which a considerable remnant in ruins at the head of this gorge still remains. Till within sixty years the lonely chapel with its

> well were from time unknown the resort of lads and lassies of the island, who, at a certain annual festival called Suliau y Creiriau, the Sundays of the Relics, and held during three successive Sundays in July, assembled in troops to ascertain the contingencies awaiting them. Each diviner into futurity descended the chasm to the well, and there, if after having taken a mouthful of holy water and grasped two handfuls of sand from the charmed font, he or she could accomplish the re-ascent with them safely, each would obtain the wish of their heart before the close of the year. About sixty years ago (1770) the chapel was reduced to ruins, and the well was concealed by filling it with rubbish; but till twenty years ago the walls, to the height of seven or eight feet, remained sufficiently entire to convey a tolerable idea of the perfect building, which is represented to have been a substantial though rude and primitive edifice, composed of unhewn stones cemented with mortar, the windows and doorways excepted, which were well wrought by the chisel with considerable labour from some obdurated material, the whole apparently consisting of one oblong chamber not exceeding a few yards in length.
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> "Of the well, however, not a trace was left, though its existence was proved beyond a shadow of doubt a few years ago by a party who landed and at length succeeded in detecting the spot, from whence, after removing a quantity of sand and loose stone, again gushed the fountain of water in its pristine vigour and doubtless inherent virtues."

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

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

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

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

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

The coast is alive with sea-birds, kittiwakes, razorbills, guillemots, solan geese, puffin, shag, cormorant, and tern; and collections of these birds' eggs can be obtained at a very small cost in the town. An ingenious provision of Nature saves the eggs from being carried by the raging winds from the ledges of rock on which they are laid, when the mother-bird is not sitting. If, for instance, a guillemot's egg be looked at, it will be seen that it is so balanced that the wind, catching it, spins it

round on its centre of gravity, and does not obtain sufficient resistance to carry it away bodily, and precipitate it into the sea.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A traveller in Gilead and Moab will find precisely similar collections of hovels, similarly surrounded with walls of unhewn blocks, and associated, as in Ireland, with cromlechs and cairns and menhirs, the relics of the same prehistoric race which through long centuries, and after long journeys to new lands, continued to build houses, erect camps, and set up monuments to their dead in Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Cornwall, and Northern Africa precisely as they did in Central Asia and in Palestine. A mysterious people that never advanced in the art of building, but clung tenaciously, as the bee, the bird, the spider, and the ant, to traditional usage in the structure of their dwellings, and which clung with like tenacity to the cult of ancestors. It came out of Asia with polished stone weapons, and only slowly accepted, as foreign importations, axes and swords and personal ornaments, made of bronze.

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

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

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

It may be, it probably is the case, that there is much of this immobility in the English race. It is because of this that the American and German are beating us in manufacture and commerce, and

if we are ever routed in the field, it will be due to the clot of it that has settled in our War Office not having been expelled.

CHAPTER V
BANGOR AND CARNARVON

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

BANGOR, pleasantly situated in a green valley, near the sea, sheltered from every rough blast, communicating with Beaumaris by a steamer, or with a ferry across the Menai Straits at Garth, backed by the glorious heathery mountains of Carnedd Dafydd, Elidyr Fawr, and Carnedd Llewelyn, with easy access by the London and North Western line on the one side with the thronged watering-places on the north coast, and with the Snowdon district on the other, serves as a convenient and cheerful centre for excursions, and is preferable on the whole to Carnarvon. Bangor was founded by S. Deiniol in the sixth century. Deiniol was grandson of Pabo Post Prydain, whose monument is at Llanbabo, in Anglesey. His father was Dunawd, prince in North Britain, who, to his lasting disgrace, instead of uniting with his fellow-Britons against the Picts, attacked the sons of Urien, king of Rheged or Moray, and met with his deserts, for the Picts drove him from his principality, and he and his sons fled helter-skelter to Wales, where he entered the ecclesiastical estate, as the secular life was closed to him, and became Abbot of Bangor on the Dee, in Flintshire.

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

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

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

Norman cathedral is a stone with plait-work, now lying on the floor at the west end of the north aisle, which has been used as a sharpener for weapons, and most of the sculptured work has been by this means worn away.

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

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

The structure underwent extensive alterations in the latter half of the thirteenth century under Bishop Anian, who christened the infant son of Edward I. When Sir Gilbert Scott undertook the restoration of the cathedral, he preserved and used up in the work much of the earlier sculptured stone that he found. He says: “This exhuming and restoring to their places the fragments of the beautiful work of the thirteenth century, reduced to ruin by Owen Glyndwr, used as mere rough material by Henry VII., and rediscovered by us four and a half centuries after their reduction to ruins, is one of the most interesting facts I have met with in the course of my experience.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

widow's weeds. "Make the most of the pedigree," she said, "but cook the rest of the report; write down the goats as serving-men and the pigeons as ladies-in-waiting."

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

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

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

As soon as the queen was dead bad times ensued for Owen. The marriage had been winked at, but not relished, and he was seized and committed to Newgate, and the three sons were given into the custody of the Abbess of Barking.

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

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

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

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

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

The duet begins: —

"*Owen.*I salute thee, sweet Princess, with title of grace,
For Cupid commands me in heart to embrace
Thy honours, thy virtues, thy favour, thy beauty,
With all my true service, my love, and my duty.

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

And it all winds up with their saying together: —

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Carnarvon lies at a little distance from the old Roman town of Segontium, or Caersaint, as the British called it. The river that flows into the sea beneath the castle walls is the Seiont, or Saint. It was here that resided Elen the Road-maker, daughter of Eudaf, chieftain of Erging and Ewyas, who married the usurper Maximus, called by the Welsh Maxen Wledig. This Roman general was raised to the purple by the legions in Britain in 383. He was by birth a Spaniard, and had acquired a reputation under the elder Theodosius in a campaign against the Picts and Scots in 368.

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

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

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

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

Visitors are shown a room in the Eagle Tower as that in which Edward first saw the light; but this tower was not erected till later, though the castle itself was begun in 1284. It was not completed till 1322. There had, however, been a fortress here before, erected by Hugh the Wolf, or the Fat, Earl of Chester. This Hugh and his namesake, the Earl of Shrewsbury, were unsparing in their cruelties to the Welsh. If Hugh of Chester was a wolf in his ferocity, he was a fox in guile. He inveigled the king of Gwynedd into a conference, then treacherously imprisoned him, and the king languished in a dungeon for twelve years, to 1098. Hugh was sister's son to William the Conqueror, who delivered over Wales to him to rifle at an annual rental of £40.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hugh who fell was Hugh of Shrewsbury.

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

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

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

In the grounds of Plas Newydd are two cromlechs, or rather what the French would call *allées couvertes*. They are prehistoric tribal mausoleums, and are perhaps the finest in the Principality. The

cap stone of one is 14 feet long by 13 feet broad, and from 3 to 4 feet thick. There are vast numbers of cromlechs in Anglesey, but year by year sees the number decrease. By the Highway Act of William IV. (1835) the road surveyor may enter on any waste or common and dig and search for stone and remove the same. He may also take stones from any river. He may go into another parish and do as above, provided he leaves sufficient stone for the said parish. He may enter enclosed land, with the consent of the owner, and remove stone, paying nothing for the same, but paying for any damage caused by transportation of the stone. If the owner refuses consent, the surveyor may apply to the nearest justice, who may authorise him to enter the enclosed land and remove any stone he requires. Farmers are only too delighted to have cromlechs and other prehistoric stone monuments blown up with dynamite and cleared off. Then visitors will not trespass to see them, and all obstruction to cultivation will be removed. Recently a number have been destroyed in Anglesey and elsewhere. They are being used up for roads. The cromlech, kistvaen, and *allée couverte*

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