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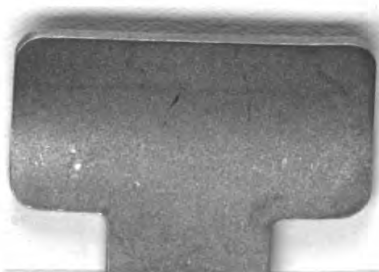
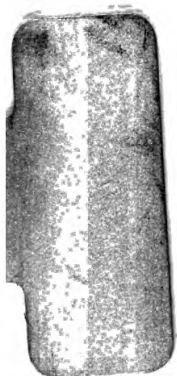
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LOCAL HISTORY

FROM A PRINTER'S FILE

BY

JOHN BALLINGER, C.B.E.

Off-printed from
West Wales Historical Records
Vols. IX-X

CARMARTHEN
W. SPURRELL AND SON
1924-25



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Local History from a Printer's File

By JOHN BALLINGER, C.B.E., M.A.

A few years ago (about 1912) I went with Mr. Herbert M. Vaughan to the office of the *Tivyside Advertiser*, Cardigan, and inquired for the printer's old files. We were received very courteously by Mr. Thomas, the grandson of the founder of the printing business, and eventually found in an attic thickly hung with cobwebs, the files ranging from 1825 to 1865. Mr. Thomas readily agreed to send the files to the National Library, no doubt wondering that such 'lumber' should be accepted.

The work of cleaning and sorting the papers took a considerable time. Many were not only dirty, but had suffered from rats, mice, and insects.

A printing office is required by law to keep for a specified time a copy of everything it prints. This is generally done by 'stabbing' a copy of the printed job (often with the MS. copy) on a wire file 4 to 5 feet in length with a wooden stop at the bottom, and a bent-over top with a sharp point for piercing the paper, exactly the pattern of the wire file often used for accounts and other papers, only much larger. The usual plan is to use a file for each year, starting with the new year.

The Cardigan printer's files yielded a rich harvest of documents illustrating the life of the district during the interesting period following the end of the Napoleonic wars, and the coming of the railways and other conveniences which have changed the conditions of life even in remote places.

In quoting from the documents the punctuation and capitals of the originals have to some extent been pre-

served, inaccurate though they often are, and no correction of faulty grammar has been attempted. The long series of documents dealing with the coasting trade are important as showing the extent of that trade at one time, and the efforts to keep it going when other transport facilities began to improve. In this connection the valuable account of *Dewisland Coasters in 1751*¹ by Mr. Francis Green should be referred to. It supplies details of the nature of the cargoes carried by these coasting traders, not obtainable from the very different series of papers here dealt with.

A glimpse of the interest which is always excited by the abnormal in nature is obtained from a quarto broad-side advertising the Porcupine Lad. 'A wonderful display of nature. One of the greatest human curiosities in the whole world, the Cambrian Porcupine Lad, who is a fine healthy boy, of quick understanding, and amiable temper, nine years of age, three feet two inches high, born of Welsh parents, in the parish of Kilrhedin, Pembroke-shire, whose body (except his Face and the Palms of his Hands) is covered with a Dark Prickly Substance, resembling the Coat of a Hedgehog or Porcupine, which grows to the length of half an inch, then falls off, leaving the root in the flesh, and grows again ; it may be burned or clipped off without injury. He is a wonder to all Physicians and Naturalists ; and all that have seen him testify that they never saw the like. He will be exhibited [a blank space for inserting the name of the place]. Prices :—Ladies and Gentlemen 6d. ; Working People 3d. ; Children 2d. N.B.—Families or Schools may be waited upon at their residence if required.'

The date of this is 1840. Poor little boy !

Portraits in profile. Before photography was discovered, about the middle of the nineteenth century, the profile artist, who cut portraits in outline in black

¹ *West Wales Hist. Records*, Vol. VIII., p. 159—176.

paper, had an important place. Many examples of the art survive in old houses, and they ought to be carefully preserved. In the year 1848 the Artist of the Hubbard Profile Gallery announced a stay of two weeks in Cardigan, at Mr. Davies', Watch Maker, High Street. 'He will make likenesses in every variety of style and price, from the simple Bust at 1s. (Frame and Glass included), to the elaborate whole length, or seated Figures, from 2/6 to £1 11s. 6d. He will make portraits of horses, dogs, etc.' Then follows a long list of local families and celebrities who had given him their patronage during his stay at Haverfordwest.

Gas Lighting. A notice with regard to the introduction of gas-lighting for the town of Cardigan is dated August, 1859, and it would appear from other papers that the gas-lighting proposal went forward, the inhabitants of the town being invited to take up shares in the Gas company.

Education. The papers relating to education are exceptionally interesting, and deal with the Grammar School, the National School 1827, the British School 1858, and private schools. Under the latter is included 'Parnassus School, a classical and commercial seminary, opened at Eglwyserow in the year 1831, under the management of [the Rev.] D. Davies, clk., and assistants'; while Mr. Morris announces to the nobility, gentry, and inhabitants of the ancient borough of Cardigan and its vicinity, that he has just opened 'For short period only' an institution for teaching:—

			s	d
Penmanship in six easy lessons	..	..	10	6
Stenography in four ditto	..	..	10	6
Ready reckoning or tradesmen's arithmetic				
in six ditto	..	..	7	0

The teaching rooms were at Mr. William Edwards's, sail-maker, Pendre. Ladies attended from 9 to 10 in

the morning, and from 3 to 4 in the afternoon. Gentlemen from 7 to 8 in the morning, and from 5 to half past 6 in the evening. The other part of the day is appropriated to attend families. A strenuous day for the teacher. The date is 1831. Some papers relate to the circulating charity schools, and some to the Education Board for the Archdeaconry of Cardigan.

Bookbinders. There is a small label dated as being printed May 3, 1826, which states that 'Thomas John, Book-binder, Cardigan, thanks the inhabitants of the town and its vicinity for the liberal support,' and so on. In October of the same year David Williams, Book-binder, begs most respectfully to acquaint the inhabitants 'that he has just commenced Business in the above line, and hopes by attention to merit their encouragement.' It is difficult to conceive how two book-binders could earn a living in Cardigan in those days. So far as the files disclose they had no competitor until 1841, when B. James and E. Morris commenced business in Bridge Street, while seven years later, 1848, Benjamin Davies, 'commenced business' in the same street, and in 1850 we gather that the encouragement I. Edwards had already received from the Gentry of Cardigan and its neighbourhood, had induced him to commence Business in partnership with Mr. Tiley. Edwards and Tiley not only offered 'neat and elegant binding,' but also described themselves as 'Machine Rulers,' possibly fixing a time for the first setting up in Cardigan of a machine for paper-ruling. Another circular announces that John Jones, bookbinder, 'has resumed business in his native place.' The date is 1858. The word 'resumed' is a trifle ambiguous. The recovery of a list of bookbinders who followed their craft in Cardigan from 1826 to 1858 or later is useful.

Book Society. The file contains a number of documents relating to the Cardigan Book Society, including the

rules and lists of members covering most of the years from 1838—1865. Each year the books were put up to auction at the annual meeting ; printed lists of the books sold are on the file. The Book Society was started long before 1838. Its operations were continued for a full century, and only ceased in quite recent years. The name was changed about 1860 to the Cardigan Reading Society. There was another organisation, the Cardigan new Reading Society in existence in 1851, possibly earlier, it had twelve members, and may only have existed for a few years.

Literary, Scientific, and Mechanics Institute. This institution, founded in 1847 is represented on the file by some papers, including a printed circular, undated, setting out the aims and objects of the institution, and a small broadside calling the annual meeting of members for 27th Dec., 1852. In 1860 Titus Lewis, Esq., F.S.A., is announced to give a popular lecture at the Guildhall, the proceeds to be applied towards fitting up a new room, and in the following year Robert Fowler, Esq., M.D. of London, gave two lectures in aid of the funds, 'On the distinguishing character of organized being.' The kind of lectures inflicted upon the people of Cardigan at an earlier date is shown by broadsides dated 1826, announcing lectures by G. McGregor Campbell, A.M., etc., who offered as his topic, 'Religious, Civil, and Political Economy,' not in one, but a series of lectures, evidently as many as the public could be induced to pay for, front seats 2/-, second seats 1/-, each reduced later to half. Evidently Mr. McGregor did not receive the encouragement he desired, notwithstanding that he relieved what must have been very dull discourses with 'Sacred Music, Anthems, etc., exemplified on the German Flute.'

In spite of the lure of the German Flute the people of Cardigan were shy, as may be gathered from another broadside by which Mr. Campbell has the honour of informing the respectable Gentlemen who did him the

kindness of attending at the Hall, last evening, that he intends (for the last time) to make his last efforts, by endeavouring to collect a reasonable number of Auditors together, assuring them that, 'if there be but thirty persons present, he will positively deliver his discourse; His object being a desire of courting Public enquiry; he trusts and hopes that the respectable inhabitants of Cardigan, will afford him the opportunity of being heard.' (The capitals and punctuation are as in the original.)

Road Transport. A study of transport for people and goods before the railways is of importance in relation to economic history. In order to obtain a reliable basis for the study of economic development or lack of development of any district, it is essential to have details of transport facilities, whether by road, rail, or sea. Records of road transport, prior to the coming of railways, are already scarce. Any documents, therefore, which throw light on early transport, ought to be carefully preserved.

The earliest document under this head is dated 1829, but it was not printed at Cardigan, and it deals with Abergavenny. Benjamin Anthony informs the public that he has taken his son-in-law, Thomas Bevan, into partnership, and bespeaks a continuance of public patronage for the firm. A most commodious 'Tram-way conveyance' has just been commenced between Hereford and Abergavenny, which will ensure safe and speedy delivery of goods to and from London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and Sheffield, at prices considerably below the usual stage charges.

A circular letter, bearing date July 9th, 1831, particularly requests attendance at a meeting to be held at the Town Hall, Cardigan, for the purpose of examining the accounts of the Regulator Coach, and to determine whether the coach shall continue to run. Whether the Regulator coach was continued, and to what place it went does not appear, but a little later in the same year a notice respectfully informs the public that a neat and

convenient stage coach to and from Cardigan and Carmarthen will commence running on the 3rd of October, and will continue to run once a week during the winter. Monday was its day from Cardigan, starting at 8 a.m. from the Albion Hotel, returning from the Ivy Bush at Carmarthen the following day at 10 a.m. Between Cardigan and Haverfordwest John Furlong of the Nant-y-ddwylan Arms drove his 'covered cart' every other day, starting from Haverfordwest after the arrival of the Bristol Packet every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and from Cardigan on the alternate days. This was in 1840.

The making of the South Wales railway sometime in the Fifties altered the line of approach to Cardigan. Narberth Road, the nearest railway station, became the objective. Benjamin Davies, proprietor, announces that the Narberth Road and Cardigan Royal Mail Coach will leave Narberth Road station after the arrival of the down mail train from Paddington at 7.55 a.m., and the up train from Milford Haven at 8.5. Cardigan is to be reached at 10.48 a.m., and the coach will leave again at 2, arriving at Narberth Road station in time for the up mail from Milford Haven to Paddington, and 'for the Express and Third Class down trains to Milford Haven.' Third class passengers were not carried in express trains until many years later. The notice bears no date, though it was before 1859. Its interest is that it appears to be the first daily connection between Cardigan and the outside world. In 1860 a well-horsed omnibus is advertised to run daily from Cardigan at 9 a.m. to Narberth Road, returning from the latter place at 1.21 p.m. Competition as regards coaching between Narberth Road and Cardigan began with the running of the service last referred to. A poster dated a year later gives (for the first time) the fares charged—outside, 4/-; inside, 6/-, with proportionate fares between intermediate places. Competition had obviously led to a 'cut' in the fares as the wording of the notice shows.

Another poster relates to an omnibus from Newport, Pem., on and after the 19th June, 1860, starting daily at 7 a.m., running to Crymmych Arms, where passengers would transfer to the coach from Cardigan for Narberth Road.

In another notice of about the same date, one John Thomas complains that, having commenced business as a General Carrier between Cardigan and Narberth Road Station, the railway company refuse to deliver to him any goods 'unless *specially addressed* by my waggon.' He goes on, 'I hope you will therefore sympathise with me under such cruel and unjust treatment; and be careful to address all your goods—Per *John Thomas*, the company and other persons having combined to monopolize the road.'

In June, 1852, coach communication was established between 'Cardigan, Aberayron, and Aberystwyth, by Cummins, Weston, and Parker, from Cardigan every monday, wednesday, and friday, returning on the alternate days.' The same firm ran a coach from Cardigan via Fishguard to Haverfordwest and Milford Haven, three days weekly each way.

Railway projects. A notice dated Oct. 27th, 1858, signed by the Mayor of Cardigan, convenes a public meeting in compliance with a requisition made by numerous shareholders in the Carmarthen and Cardigan railway, for the purpose of conferring on the subject of the circular lately issued by the directors, giving notice of an extraordinary meeting at Carmarthen on the 3rd of November. What the trouble was is not stated, but a Carmarthen and Cardigan direct railway has not yet been constructed. Two posters relate to another ill-starred railway project, described as the 'Milford, Fishguard, and Cardigan Junction railway, to complete the through route from Manchester to Milford with an unbroken narrow gauge.' In October, 1860, the Mayor of Cardigan announces a public meeting 'to promote the

above railway project, which will be so conducive to the interests of this district.' The second poster, dated November, announces the holding of meetings for the same purpose, 'and for the purpose of getting persons to take shares therein.' Meetings were held at Kilgerran, Moilgrove, Eglwysrwrw, Boncath, Pontreselly, Llechryd, Penllwyndu, St. Dogmael's, and Aberporth. At that time the dream of Milford as a great port for the shipment of Manchester goods was very much in evidence.

Sea Transport. Neither road nor rail reflected the true out-look of the people of Cardigan of fifty and a hundred years ago. They were more familiar with the sea and sailing ships, small but well-built craft, which the seamen of the Cardigan coast knew how to handle in fair weather and in rough. This printer's file contains a wealth of documents which show the former importance of Cardigan as a sea-port, and the great part which the sea played in the lives of the people there. Vessels changed owners as freely in those old days as motor-cars and motor-cycles in ours. Over one hundred and thirty broadsides in this collection deal with the sale of ships, mainly at Cardigan, but including sales at Fishguard, New Quay, St. Dogmell's, Aberaeron, Newport Pem., Popit, and other places in the locality. The vessels were of various sizes, the majority under fifty tons. A classification of size for 93 vessels sold gives the following result :—

25 tons and under	..	..	..	13
between 25 and 50 tons			..	35
„ 50 and 75 tons	..	..	..	15
„ 75 and 100 tons	..	..	..	13
„ 100 and 150 tons	..	..	..	13
„ 150 and 200 tons	..	..	..	3
over 200 tons	..	..	..	1

The vessel classed as over 200 tons is given in the sale bill as 299 tons.

What was the nature of the carrying trade performed by these sea-going craft? Some documents enable at least a partial answer to be made.

May, 1827. 'For Bristol, direct, now loading at Cardigan Quay, and will sail immediately; a constant trader, the new fast-sailing smack, *Mary*, A.I. John Griffiths, commander (late of the trader *Expedition*). N.B.—The above named commander hereby engages to keep his said smack, *Mary*, as a regular trader between Bristol and Cardigan henceforth, and not to remain a longer period than 18 days loading at Bristol, at any one time (that is to say), to clear out on the 18th day after his entry outwards at the Customhouse there, with or without a full and complete cargo (reserving to himself the power of clearing out on any day, previous to the 18th day, if a full and complete cargo be on board the said vessel), or forfeit the sum of Twenty Pounds to any shipper or shippers on the said vessel from time to time. Due notice will be given by the Cardigan crier of the day of the said Trader's entry outwards at the Customhouse Bristol, to enable parties to know the certain day of departure from there.'

A poster dated 1830 records that a meeting of merchants and shopkeepers was held to consider the best mode to be adopted for regulating the time for loading and sailing of the smacks *Mary* and *Hero*, trading between Cardigan and Bristol. Agreement was reached, the respective managing owners of the two smacks concurring. Each vessel was to have eighteen days after berthing at Bristol in which to load, after which loading was to cease, and the vessel proceed to Cardigan. Both vessels agreed that should either arrive in Bristol during the time the other is discharging or loading, she is not to take any goods on board until the time limit of the other has expired. The Bellman is to make known in Cardigan twice on two successive days the time when

each vessel is berthed at Bristol. Each vessel was to unload at Cardigan with all despatch, and sail again for Bristol within eight days. Three merchants and three shop-keepers were appointed a committee to see that the resolutions were carried into effect. Thirty-eight names are appended, together with the names of the managing owners of the two vessels accepting the resolutions.

July, 1838. 'Bristol, Loading for Cardigan, Newcastle Emlyn, Kenarth, Newport, Boncath, Pontreselly, Eglwys-wwr, and places adjacent, the new smack, Packet of Cardigan (a constant trader), Thomas Evans, Master (G. Young, Agent, King Street), now loading at the Cardigan Tier, Welch Back, and will sail in 14 days.' A similar notice, dated 1843, refers to the new smack *Sarah of Cardigan*, David Timothy, Master.

In December, 1836, was issued a poster giving the trade list of freights from Bristol to Cardigan by the Cardigan traders. The schedule is too long to reproduce, it contains over 300 items, but it is an invaluable record for anyone engaged in research into economic conditions in the first half of the nineteenth century; it not only gives the cost of transport, but also indicates the nature of the goods which had to be brought from other places to meet the district's needs, and throws some light on the position of Bristol as a great distributing centre for South Wales at that time, which may have given rise to the name 'Welch Back' for one of the wharves there. Even greater interest attaches to the list of freights from Cardigan to Bristol, as showing what the Cardigan merchants were able to export. The list is so short that it can be reproduced in full—

				s	d
Butter, per cask	..	..	..	0	10
Barley, per quarter	..	..	..	1	6
Wheat, per ditto	..	..	..	1	8
Oats, per ditto	..	..	..	1	1

	s	d
Rolls of leather with 5 bull or cow hides. . .	2	3
Bazil, per doz.	0	6
Kips, per ditto	2	0
Calf skins, per ditto	0	10
Eggs in boxes, per hundred	0	3
Paper, per ream	0	4

Bazil or Basil is sheepskin tanned, used for book-binding and other purposes. Kips or kip-leather, thin calf or other thin skins tanned, mainly used for the uppers of boots.

It would appear that only three industries are represented in the list—farming, tanning, and paper-making. The inclusion of the last named suggests that Cardigan, like Haverfordwest, had a paper-making mill in those days.

A similar freight list from Bristol to Cardigan was issued in December, 1852. The freights charged are fractionally less for some goods, but the articles included in the export schedule are the same, with the addition to the list of 'Leather per bundle of 4 hides 1s. 3d.' Rolls of leather being reduced from 2s. 3d. for 5 bull or cow hides to 4d. per hide.

August, 1828. 'Now loading, at Pickle-herring Wharf, Southwark, London, for Cardigan, the fast-sailing smack *Eaton*, Evan Rees, Master. Persons desirous of availing themselves of this opportunity will apply to the Captain on board, or to Mr. D. Davies, Merchant, Cardigan.'

There is another notice dated 1838 of a 'London and Cardigan trader, the schooner *Friends*, of Cardigan, John Thomas, Master, which is taking in goods at Pickle-herring wharf (London), where it will remain until the 1st September,' after which it is to be presumed it would sail for Cardigan.

August, 1841. 'At Pickle Herring Wharf, Southwark. Now loading for Cardigan and all places adjacent, the smack *Maria* (John Edwards, Master), having nearly

half of her cargo already on board, and will be dispatched in a few days. For further particulars apply to the Master on board, or to Mr. Betts, Wharfinger; or on the Irish Walk in 'change hours.'

An announcement dated August, 1838, headed 'Direct communication between Ireland and Cardigan Bay,' states that the Dublin and Glasgow Steam Company intend plying one of their beautiful and powerful new steamers from Dublin to Cardigan, on Friday the 24th inst.; and from Cardigan for Cork on the following day. Particulars as to freight of goods and passage on board to be had from Mr. David James, Lion Hotel, Cardigan, who is authorised to treat for the same. The printed notice is dated eight days before the steamer is due to arrive, not, one would think, sufficient time for securing passengers and cargo. Incidentally, it is the first indication that steam vessels might some day displace the local sailing ships. The announcement received a cold welcome. No further reference to steam propelled vessels for the port of Cardigan is found until twenty-one years later, 1859, when the Mayor in compliance with a requisition from certain ratepayers convened a public meeting to consider the propriety of establishing a communication between Cardigan and Bristol by means of a steamer.

Steam Packet communication between Bristol and Carmarthen, and between Bristol and Haverfordwest (and places adjacent), was established much earlier, as is shown by a small poster on the file. This was not printed at Cardigan, the imprint being 'Rose, printer.' The date is December, 1830. It seems from its terms to imply not a new, but an established service. The Steam Packet *Frolic*, Edward Jenkins, R.N., commander, is announced to sail between Bristol and Carmarthen, calling off Tenby, when practicable, to land and receive passengers, and between Bristol and Haverfordwest, taking goods for Milford and Pembroke Dock, at shippers risk, and calling off Tenby when practicable.

The times of sailing are given as follows :—

FROM BRISTOL TO CARMARTHEN.		FROM BRISTOL TO HAVERFORDWEST.	
Friday, December 31, 7 Morning			
„ January 14, 6 Morning		Saturday, Jan. 8, 1 Afternoon	
„ January 28, 6 Morning		Thursday, January 20, 10 Morning	
FROM CARMARTHEN TO BRISTOL.		FROM HAVERFORDWEST TO BRISTOL.	
Tuesday, January 4, 9 Morning			
„ „ 18, 7 Morning		Tuesday, January 11, 3 Afternoon	
Monday, January 31, 7 Morning.		Monday, January 24, 12 Noon	

Cabin 21/-; Steward's fee 2/-; Steerage 18/6; Horse 25/-; 4-wheel carriage £2; 2-wheel carriage 25/-; Dog 3/-.

The *Frolic* was described as a new vessel of 'nearly 100 Horses Power.' It belonged to the General Steam Packet Co., 1 Quay, Bristol, the agents being Mr. Gibbon, Haverfordwest, and Mr. Walter Harris, Milford. No office or agent at Carmarthen is given.

The file being that of a Cardigan printing office, the port of Cardigan naturally forms the subject of most of the broadsides, but a few deal with other places. One, dated 1826, states that the very fast sailing new smack *Mary* of Cardigan, John Griffiths, commander, is loading in London, lying at cotton's wharf, and will be dispatched immediately direct for Milford, Haverfordwest, and Carmarthen. For freight or passage apply to the commander on board, or at the Rose and Crown Tavern, Horsleydown. A note at the foot of the bill supplies some details with regard to local transport. 'N.B.—Should the gentlemen in and near Cardigan, be pleased to order their goods by the *Mary*, every attention will be paid by the commander in having them safely forwarded by carrier from Haverfordwest or Carmarthen, or by water from Milford, as vessels are daily loading there for Cardigan direct.'

In the same year 'the smack *Phœnix*, constant trader from Bristol to Fishguard and Cardigan [is] now taking in goods at the Welch Back, Bristol, Cardigan Slip, and will sail in a few days, if wind and weather permit. John

James, Master. 'That was in the month of May. In June another notice of the same vessel and master, again lying at the Welch Back, ready to take in goods for 22 places of which a list is given, including nearly all the places within a radius of twenty miles of Cardigan, 'with many others too numerous to insert.'

Another route from London to Carmarthen is disclosed by a slip, undated, announcing a reduced price for the carriage of Teas from London to Carmarthen by way of Bristol and Steam Packets to Swansea twice a week :—

If by waggon to Bristol and Steam to Swansea (in 7 days), 9/- per cwt.

If by Canal to Bristol and Steam to Swansea, 6/6 per cwt.

'Performed by D. Rees & Co., Carmarthen.'

The slip was printed by Brigstocke, Carmarthen.

Such notices bring before the mind a vivid picture of the methods by which goods were transported in those times. Vessels loading at London or Bristol conveyed their very miscellaneous cargoes to Cardigan or Carmarthen, whence the various consignments were conveyed by carriers' carts to their destination.

Fishguard as an import centre appears in a notice, 1826, announcing for sale a cargo consisting of 'the best Pine Timber in Balk, a few pieces of Oak, and a quantity of Lathwood from Quebec, in North America, by the brig *Eclair*. Thomas Griffiths, Commander. The cargo, unless disposed of at Fishguard wholesale, will be retailed in any quantity at prime cost; particulars from Mr. Thomas Davies, Fishguard bottom, or Mr. Morse, Cardigan.' A week later the brig had arrived, and a further notice was issued offering for sale 'Pine in Balk, Deals, Oak pieces, Mast pieces (Red Pine), Spars, and Lathwood. A very superior sorted cargo in quality, length, and size, and well deserving the notice of the public, as it will be disposed of at reduced prices.'

An invitation to the owners of Cardigan vessels to take

part in carrying cargoes outside the regular course of their business is contained in a notice issued in March, 1838 (printed at Cardigan) :—' To owners and masters of vessels. Many thousand tons of Iron Ore, ready at the Port of Whitehaven, to be shipped for Cardiff. Vessels of 200 tons burthen and under, dispatched in one tide. For freight particulars apply to Mr. William Steward, Iron Ore Office, Whitehaven.'

Emigration to America is the subject of four broadsides in the collection covering the years 1839—1841. In the first of these Messrs. Fitzhugh and Grimsham of Liverpool, proprietors of a line of packet ships trading from Liverpool to New York, set forth the attractions of their vessels, and the paternal care with which they provide for the comfort and convenience of their passengers. Those who desire to secure a passage are to communicate with Mr. T. Davies, druggist, Cardigan, who is duly authorised to treat. The proprietors propose as soon as a sufficient number is obtained to have a steamer down at New Quay to take them to Liverpool, ' thereby saving them a great deal of expence and trouble.'¹

Two other emigration posters run on similar lines, but have the distinction of being in Welsh and English. The date is 1841, and the agent for the shipping of passengers, was Mr. Benjamin Evans, Pendre, Cardigan. A definite date is given in the second of these posters for departure. The steamer for Liverpool will be at Cardigan on July 2nd, and will call at New Quay on the following day. After arriving at Liverpool it is guaranteed that passengers will not be detained above three days before sailing, wind and weather permitting, or each passenger will be allowed one shilling per day according to Act

¹ Mr. Howell Jones of Topeka, U.S.A., whose parents emigrated from the neighbourhood of Llanon, Cardiganshire, when he was a child, told me that he remembers the journey to Aberayron, and from there in a small ship to Liverpool, to join the vessel for New York.

of Parliament. The names and tonnage of seven vessels sailing from Liverpool to New York are given ; they range in size from 641 to 1140 tons.

The details just quoted, and the wording of the posters suggest that emigrants found the voyage to the States a trying business, and that promises of improved conditions and better despatch were necessary in order to induce people to emigrate.

The other emigration broadside deals with a voyage from Cardigan direct to New York. The date is 1840, and the notice is in Welsh and English. 'To emigrants to America' is rendered in Welsh, 'Ymfudwyr i America.' The vessel is the fast-sailing first class ship *Triton*, 400 tons, David Rees, Master, the owner being Mr. D. Davies, Merchant, Bridgend, Cardigan. This vessel, when the notice appeared, 'was being fitted out for emigrants,' and was to sail on or about the latter end of February. If she sailed with a full complement of passengers, the emigrants who went in this 'converted' first class fast sailing ship probably experienced a rough time.

Many notices dealing with the control and administration of the town and port are on the file. The Mayor convenes (1841) a meeting in response to a request from certain ratepayers for considering the best mode of improving the harbour. Any persons digging for or Shipping Ballast from the beach adjoining the lands of Thomas Lewes Lloyd, Esq., at or near Cîbwr, will be prosecuted (1858). All limestone, gravel, stone, slate, or rubbish, now lying on the banks of the river Tivy, must be removed within fourteen days, and all or any such matter hereafter discharged from any vessel or vessels, trading to or from the port of Cardigan, must be removed . . . within three days after being discharged, for the better navigation of the said river Tivy. Any parties offending will be prosecuted (1858). The Mayor convenes a public meeting for April 1st, 1861, for considering the pro-

priety of erecting a Pier or Breakwater, near Penrhyn Castle, in the parish of St. Dogmells. There are various notices dealing with the preservation and improving of the salmon fishery in the river Tivy, and also relating to the Cardigan Bay Fishing company.

Notice is given (1850) that in pursuance of the instructions of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, Captain John Washington, R.N., Inspector of Harbours, will attend at the Town Hall, Cardigan, to inquire into certain complaints against the owners of slate quarries and others, on the banks of the Tivy, of causing damage to the navigation of that river, and the harbour of Cardigan, by allowing the refuse of the quarries to fall into the stream all persons interested are invited to attend.

April, 1827. 'A Caution. Whereas the sloop *Friendship* of Cardigan, Richard Finch, Master, is lost between New Quay and Lansantfraed ; as part of the wreck has not come ashore yet, the mast, rigging, and other materials that belong to the said sloop is expected ; Therefore, this is to give notice that whosoever will pick them up will be rewarded for their trouble ; but whosoever will conceal the said property will be prosecuted according to law. Signed, W. Finch, Wm. James, Wm. Davies, Thos. Thomas.'

A notice issued in 1826 by the Customs officer deals with licenses for navigation. 'Notice to Mariners. Acts 6th Geo. IV. Cap. 108 and 110. That from and after the 5th January, 1826, all vessels, not square-rigged, and all boats whatever (except such as are used solely in owners and in land navigations), be subject to seizure and forfeiture, unless the owners thereof shall have obtained a licence for navigating the same from the commissioners of His Majesty's Customs ; and the owners of such vessels and boats are also required to have the name painted in white or yellow letters, upon a black

ground on some conspicuous part of the stern, and the port to which she belongs, in a distinct and legible manner, or the owner or master shall forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds.'

A notice dated Dec. 11, 1826, deals with a co-operative fund for the benefit of seamen and their dependents. It runs—'Port of Cardigan. To ship-owners and Masters. In pursuance of the Act of Parliament passed in the 20th year of the reign of King George the 2nd. Intituled 'an Act for the relief and support of maimed and disabled seamen, and the widows and children of such as shall be killed, slain, or drowned in the Merchant Service. Notice is hereby given that a general meeting will be held at the Town Hall, in the town of Cardigan, on Thursday, the 4th day of January next, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, for the purpose of appointing Fifteen Persons to be local Trustees for the collection and application of the sixpence per month, payable by all seamen, employed in merchant ships and vessels belonging to the Port of Cardigan.'

The contributions of the seamen were paid through the Master or Owner of a vessel, who it may be presumed deducted the amounts from the men's wages, an early example of the 'levy' in general use to-day in the South Wales coal-field. That the contributions were not always paid promptly appears from a printed notice of which 200 copies were printed in 1827.

Sir,

I beg to inform you, the Master of the
has not paid the money due to the merchant seaman's
fund since and as the Master or Owner are
subject to the forfeiture of twenty pounds for such
neglect, you will therefore be proceeded against, unless
immediately discharged. I am, Sir, your humble servant,
Richard Dickens, Collector of the said fund, at the Port
of Cardigan.

The fund appeared to be localised at the several ports. A later Act (iv.—v. William IV.) established the Corporation for the relief of seamen, and fixed the contributions at 2/- per month for masters, and 1/- per month for each other person employed on the ship.

(To be continued in Vol. X.)

Local History from a Printer's File

By JOHN BALLINGER, C.B.E., M.A.

(Continued from Vol. IX, p. 216.)

Drama and Music. Reference has already been made to lectures and other forms of recreation put before the people of Cardigan.¹ Entertainers of a lighter cast made occasional visits. In 1830, for instance, Mr. Collier, manager of the Aberystwyth Theatre, informs the public that he intends to open a theatre for a very short season, 'at Mr. W. Phillips's, near the Market Place.' Three play-bills relating to Mr. Collier's venture survive, all for October 1830. On Monday the 18th, the programme was 'The illustrious stranger, or married and buried,' concluding with a farce, 'the Irish Tutor, or New Lights,' with variety singing and dancing between the play and the farce, and Mr. Collier posing as Hercules, Ajax, the Fighting Gladiator, and other pieces of ancient sculpture, describing himself as 'The Venetian statue, or living model of antiquity,' surely an anticipation of the *tableaux* produced in London Music Halls before the war. Other plays produced were, 'Love in humble life, or the generous soldier,' and 'A Race for a dinner,' with three farces, 'The Two Gregories, or which is which?' 'The Weather Cock,' and 'William Thompson, or which is the man.'

Ten years later, 1840, the new play, 'Twm Shon Catti and the widow of Ystrad' was advertised, followed by a succession of plays, extending over the last three

¹ Vol IX., pp. 201-2.

months of the year. For the first month the performances were at the 'Theatre, Town Hall, Cardigan,' under the management of Mr. Bass. Then something happened, and Mr. Bass informs his patrons that he has been placed in a most painful situation in consequence of the sudden closing of the theatre at the Town Hall, and announces the performance at the 'Theatre, Angel Inn,' on Nov. 10, of the favourite Scotch drama, 'Warlock of the Glen,' and a series of other attractions, concluding with a farce 'The Lottery Ticket.' A few days later Mr. Bass informs the public that 'having been favoured with premises adjoining Mr. Oliver Lloyd's, which have been fitted up as a neat and commodious theatre, the musical comedy "Sweethearts and Wives," will be performed, with the laughable interlude "Sylvester Dangerwood," to conclude with a new and interesting Vaudeville "The Welsh Girl."

Mr. Bass and his small company of players continued to produce plays until the end of December, and then disappeared. The plays performed were mostly melodramas, comedies, and farces. To provoke laughter was the main object of the pieces selected. Only three well-known dramas were included among the thirty-five produced, Shakespeare's 'Richard III.,' Sheridan's 'Rivals,' and Goldsmith's 'She stoops to conquer.'

Newcastle Emlyn was visited on December 14th, 1840, by the Aberystwyth Company of Comedians, who gave, at 'Theatre, Salutation Hotel,' 'The Two Gregories' (a comedy), 'The Village Lawyer' (an interlude), and 'The Spectre Bridegroom' (a farce).

After the departure of Mr. Bass and his company of players the printer's file discloses no record of a dramatic company visiting Cardigan for a couple of years.

In November, 1843, H. Fenton announces that he has 'fitted up a neat little theatre on the premises of Mr. Phillips near Town Hall,' and with the assistance of a talented company, and so on. Mr. Fenton's play-bills range from November 1st to December 27th. They are

the last records on the file relating to the theatre in Cardigan and the district. The drama does not appear to have been popular.

Music, it may safely be presumed, commanded more favour, and it will be interesting to see what the printer's file will reveal about the kind of music offered for public patronage.

It was in November, 1837, that the earliest concerts, of which a record remains, were given. Two broadsides survive, by which Master Hughes announces his second concert for Nov. 6th, and his farewell concert for the 13th, with Monsr. De Pothonier, pianist, from the Conservatoire, Paris 'who will, if required, perform extempore variations on any subject which may be given by the company during the evening.' Neither the Christian name nor initial of Master Hughes is given, but it is to be gathered that he was known as the Infant Harpist. A short sketch of the commencement of his career is quoted on each concert bill from the *Hampshire Advertiser*. 'We learn from the friends of this extraordinary youth that from an accident a harp was introduced into the family, when the child was two years old. The father, though fond of music, was quite unacquainted with the instrument as a performer, and the child, by the merest accident, in [a] moment of play with the strings, struck the notes A. B. C., and recognised the commencement of the air 'The Swiss Boy,' which he had heard his father playing on the violin. The instrument, from that moment, became his passion. In a week, without any instruction, he played several airs. Friends came to admire and advise, and at five years of age the youthful harpist—,' the reader can fill in the rest—how he played before many critical audiences in the great musical world, and the Princess Augusta, who introduced him to the Queen (not Queen Victoria for this puff is printed in 1837). Master Hughes appears to have been about ten or twelve years of age when he gave the concerts at Cardigan in 1837. One wonders what his further story was.

In the following year, 29th August, 1838, Mr. Parry (Bardd Alaw, editor of the *Welsh Melodies*) gave a concert of vocal and instrumental music at the Town Hall, Cardigan, accompanied by Miss Woodham, and Mr. Parry, junior. This concert poster is of considerable interest, for it brings before us two musicians of note in their day—John Parry (1776—1851), famous for his musical sketches; and his son, John Orlando Parry (1810—1879), who, following at first in his father's footsteps, ultimately developed a vein of his own, and for many years had a successful career as an entertainer. The Cardigan concert included one of Bardd Alaw's characteristic musical sketches, 'A trip to Wales,' which included specimens of pennillion singing by Mr. Parry to the tunes *Serch Hudol* and *Merch Megan*. The concert bill contains, in small type, an interesting note on pennillion singing.

In November of the same year, Mr. Williams, Organist of St. Michael's, Aberystwyth, announces 'a concert of vocal and instrumental music, in which he will be assisted by the Misses Williams, and also by Mr. E. W. Thomas of the Italian Opera, and Philharmonic and Nobility's concerts, London; and Mr. Sapio, late of the King's Theatre, and now of the Dublin Concerts.' There is only one price—five shillings.

Except two or three concerts by musicians with foreign names the file preserves nothing until the year 1851, when on May 12, 'positively for one night only,' the Welsh Nightingale, Miss E. L. Williams, from Exeter Hall, London, announces a concert. Miss Williams does everything herself, sings the songs and ballads, plays her own accompaniments, twenty-seven items in all, three in Welsh, to be sung in Welsh costume. Positively for one night only. Not many artists could endure even one night of so much exertion, and it must have been a little monotonous for the audience who paid 2/6, 1/6 or 1/- for admission.

There are a few references to local choral societies—

the St. Dogmell's Hullah Singing Class, the Cardigan Choir, the Caersalem Choir, the Llechryd Choir, the Rhymney Choir, the Penybryn Choir, and the St. Dogmell's Glee Party. The last named, at a concert on June 28, 1861, sang *Hen Wlad fy Nhadau*, a fairly early instance of its being sung, as the now famous song was only written and composed five years before, and was not published until 1858, or a little later.

The Cardigan Choir and the Llechryd Choir each gave a concert in 1858 and 1859, at Llechryd, to provide funds for books for the Llechryd British School.

Owain Alaw (John Owen), of Chester, gave 'his entertainment on the melodies of England, Ireland, and Wales' on July 6th, 1858, and in June of the following year he visited Cardigan again, accompanied by Talhaiarn (John Jones), for a poetical and musical entertainment, entitled 'A night with Tal and Owain.' An opening address was given by Talhaiarn, who also recited some of his own translations into Welsh, and 'Englynion Talcen slip and pennillion.' Owain Alaw sang, among other things, 'two new songs,' *Noswaith o garu*, and *Y Fran*, by Ceiriog, the music being Alaw's own.

Brinley Richards visited Cardigan and gave two concerts, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., on September 7th, 1865. The visit was notable. In addition to Mr. Brinley Richards, Mr. John Thomas, the famous harpist, and Miss Edith Wynne took part. At that time Edith Wynne was 25 years of age, and had already achieved distinction as a singer. She sang three songs at each of the Cardigan concerts.

'*Alun's' Library.* A broadside of literary interest announces the sale by auction, on the 5th and 6th August, 1840, of upwards of 4000 volumes of rare and valuable books in different languages, the property of the late Rev. J. Blackwell, B.A., Rector of Manordeivy. This is the well-known Welsh poet 'Alun.'

NeVERN Church Restoration. An appeal for funds for the restoration of the parish church of NeVERN was printed in October, 1861. The appeal is signed by John Jones, Vicar, not John Jones 'Tegid' but a successor in the vicariate of NeVERN, and J. B. Bowen, Llwyngwair. Appended to the letter of appeal is a list of water-colour drawings, which may be obtained from Mrs. Bowen, of Llwyngwair (presumably her own work), the subjects being views of places and objects of interest in the county, and some places adjacent. The prices range from 10/6 to 15/6, two etchings of the cross in NeVERN church-yard, both sides, being priced 5/6. The list is interesting in many ways, and is reproduced here in the hope that some of the drawings may be identified:

Llechryd Bridge; Cilgerran Castle; Pontrhywfellin; Cenarth Bridge; Falls of the Teify, Cenarth; Pilgrim's Cross, NeVERN; Etchings of the Cross in NeVERN Churchyard, both sides; Falls of the Teify, above Newcastle; Tresaith, Bullslaughter Bay; Pembroke Castle, Ditto from entrance to town; Stack Rock, Milford Haven; Tenby; Carew Castle; Interior of ditto; Lawhadden Castle; Manorbier Castle; Benton Castle and the Haven; Cardigan Head, from Dinas; Morfa Head; Castle Gorfod; Entrance to ditto; Newport Cromlech; Pentre Efan, ditto; Llechrydribedd, ditto; Laugharne Castle; Carn Ingli, from Berry Hill; Ditto from Llwyngwair; NeVERN Church; Dinas Head; Newport from the sea; Newport Castle, 1859; Ditto, 1860; Newport Bay, from Cotham, Dinas and Garth Rock; Carn Coon; Dinas from Parrog; Distant view of Newport Bay.

Agriculture. A series of notices relating to sire horses, over 130 in number, ranging from 1826 to 1865, may be of value to students of stock-raising. There are papers dealing with ploughing matches, the Cardigan Agricultural Society, the sale of seed potatoes, imported turkeys and other poultry, but agriculture did not run to much printing.

Rebecca Riots. The series of lawless disturbances which broke out in West Wales in 1843, caused by resentment at the unreasonable number of tolls exacted

for vehicles using the roads, are in evidence to a limited extent. The story of these disturbances has been written¹ and it is, therefore, not necessary to repeat it.

The earliest document (English and Welsh on one broadside), dated 24th July, 1843, is as follows :

NOTICE.

Being informed that the people, styling themselves Rebeccaites, were assembled on Llechryd Bridge, on Tuesday night, the 18th instant, with the declared intention of destroying the SALMON WEAR, now in my occupation ; and having been informed, that altho' their nefarious and unlawful designs were, upon that occasion, frustrated by the arrival of a military force, yet, that they have intimated their determination to repeat the attempt.

I HEREBY GIVE NOTICE.

That upon the commission of any such aggression upon that, or any other part of my Property whatsoever, or upon the Property of any of my Neighbours in this District, I will immediately discharge every Day Labourer at present in my employment ; and not restore one of them, until the Aggressors shall have been apprehended and convicted.

*Castle-Malgwyn,
24th July, 1843.*

ABEL LEWIS GOWER.

Two months later, September, 1843, the Rebeccaites carried out their designs on the Llechryd weir, and there is a broadside offering a reward of £100 for such information as shall lead to the apprehension and conviction of the offenders who, on the 14th Sept., at 3 o'clock in the morning, attacked and destroyed the Llechryd Fishing Weir on the river Tivy.

The disturbed state of the district culminating in the destruction of the Llechryd Weir led to the publication of a Royal Proclamation, dated October 2, in Welsh and English, each a folio broadside, and Rewards were offered. A copy of the proclamation is printed in *Rebecca and her Daughters*, pp. 184-5. A copy in each language is preserved on the file.

¹ Henry Tobit Evans, *Rebecca and her Daughters*, Cardiff, 1910.

Following directly after the publication of the Royal Proclamation a notice was issued (English and Welsh) convening a public meeting, to be held at Llechryd at eleven o'clock in the fore-noon, probably an open-air meeting as no building is named, to vote a dutiful and loyal address to the Queen, expressing the devoted attachment of the meeting to Her Majesty's person and government, and pledging itself to the utmost of its power and influence to preserve the peace of this part of Her Majesty's dominions. At the meeting all local grievances are to be considered, and it is hoped, amicably and satisfactorily adjusted. The attendance of all the magistrates of the district, and also of the public at large, is requested. The notice is signed by Thomas Jenkins, H.E.I.C.S., a retired officer of the East India Company, who lived at Cilbronnau.

It was probably at this time that an undated broadside in Welsh, of which there is a copy on the file, appeared; a translation by 'Tegid' of the Charge to the Grand Jury at the Cardigan Assizes in the previous July. The charge was delivered by Sir Robert Monsey Rolfe (afterwards Baron Cranworth) baron of exchequer. He said he did not think there was anything in the Calendar of sufficient importance to call for special notice, but he wished to call public attention to the trouble in connection with the toll-gates. He advises the people not to be afraid of any threats they may receive, but to carry out their duties honestly and without fear, and gave directions with regard to the reading of the Riot Act should a crowd assemble with the intention of causing trouble; but the Act should be read only as a last resource for keeping the peace. He also requests the Grand Jury to explain to the people what will be the result if they do not obey the law, and at the same time to offer to look into any complaints of overcharges for passing through the Toll Gates. He mentions that the same trouble happened in England last year, and refers to the punishment inflicted on those who broke the law,

such as transportation for life, causing men to be taken from their homes and families never to return. Though he addressed these remarks to the Jury at Cardigan he intended them for the whole country of Wales.

A pathetic item is a letter, issued as a broadside in Welsh and in English, which is printed in *Rebecca and Her Daughters*, but it may well be reproduced here. Both the Welsh and English broadsides are on the file. The English form runs :

TO THE PUBLIC GENERALLY, AND TO OUR
NEIGHBOURS IN PARTICULAR.

We, John Hughes, David Jones, and John Hugh, now lying in Cardiff gaol, convicted of the attack on Pontardulais turnpike gate, and the police stationed there to protect it—being now sentenced to transportation, beg, and earnestly call on others to take warning by our fate, and to stop in their mad course, before they fall into our condemnation.

We are guilty, and doomed to suffer, while hundreds have escaped. Let them, and every one, take care not to be deluded again to attack public or private property, and resist the power of the law, for it will overtake them with vengeance, and bring them down to destruction.

We are only in prison now, but in a week or two shall be banished as rogues—to be slaves to strangers, in a strange land. We must go, in the prime of life, from our dear homes, to live and labour with the worst of villains—looked upon as thieves.

Friends—neighbours—all—especially young men—keep from night meetings ! Fear to do wrong, and dread the terrors of the judge.

Think of what we must and you may suffer, before you dare to do as we have done.

If you will be peaceable, and live again like honest men, by the blessing of God, you may expect to prosper ; and we, poor outcast wretches, may have to thank you for the mercy of the Crown—for on no other terms than your good conduct will any pity be shown to us, or others, who may fall into our almost hopeless situation.

Cardiff Gaol,

Nov. 1st., 1843.

(Signed)

JOHN HUGHES.

DAVID JONES.

The mark of

JOHN HUGH.

Witness—JOHN B. WOODS, The Governor.

A ballad in Welsh, by Levi Gibbon, Cwmfelin, seems to have been very popular. It was printed on a folio

sheet, headed by two large, rather crude, wood-cuts. The ballad calls attention to the destruction caused by Rebecca and her followers, and their cunning in appearing in unexpected places to carry out their work. The ballad shows that the writer was in deadly fear of Rebecca, though he recognised that there was a good side to the movement.

Rwy'n crynu, ar droion, rhag ofan ei chwrdd,
Beth ydyw hi'n hidio fy nghornio fel hwrdd;
Ond, etto, 'rwy'n deall fod Becca mor gall
Na chymmer hi gant-punt am flino dyn dall.

Although this ballad in broadside form was extensively circulated at the time it does not appear to be known at the present day, for no mention of it is made in any account of the Rebeccaites.

Bidding Notices. The custom known as the Bidding, formerly in general practice in parts of South Wales, is represented on the Cardigan file by over sixty examples. These, added to others in the National Library, make a collection of exceptional interest and value. The Bidding has been described as a Welsh marriage custom, but at present the evidence indicates that the custom was limited to the valleys of the Towy and the Teify, and parts adjacent.

The purpose of the Bidding was to assist a young couple with contributions in money or in kind, to enable them to make a good start in married life. The modern system of wedding presents is closely akin to the Bidding, though of independent origin. It is not desirable to discuss the source of the Bidding until fuller information is available, especially with regard to the area over which it extended. I have recently been told that it was formerly used in Anglesey, but have not been able to verify the statement. It appears to be unknown, except by hearsay, outside the counties of Cardigan, Carmarthen, North Pembroke, West Brecknock, and West Glamorgan.

A short time before the date fixed for the wedding a printed announcement was sent out, the main form of which is substantially the same in all cases. Eight variant forms of a Bidding letter are given in Part II. of a little book, *Collectanea*, by Morgan Williams, printed at Carmarthen in 1823. The earliest Bidding notice in a printed form in the National Library collection is dated 1812 (Carmarthen), but in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. LXIX., Part I., 1789, is a copy of a notice in almost identical terms, printed at Carmarthen in 1787.

The announcement of a forthcoming marriage, and an invitation to the Bidding by the picturesque personage known as the *Gwahoddwr* (Inviter), is much earlier than the printed form. There is a coloured picture of 'The Bidder' in *The Cambrian Popular Antiquities*, by Peter Roberts, London, 1815. An account of the Bidder and the custom itself was contributed by Lewis Morris to the *Gentleman's Magazine* for the years 1791 and 1792, and there is a chapter on wedding customs in *Welsh Folklore*, by J. Ceredig Davies, Aberystwyth, 1911. The address made by a *Gwahoddwr*, at Llanbadarn Fawr in the year 1762, is given in Meyrick's *History of Cardiganshire*. The speech of course was in Welsh. Translated it runs :

The intention of the Bidder is this : with kindness and amity, with decency and liberality for Einion Owain and Llio Ellis, he invites you to come with your good will on the plate ; bring current money ; a shilling, or two, or three, or four, or five ; with cheese and butter. We invite the husband and wife, and children, and manservants, and maidservants, from the greatest to the least. Come there early, you shall have victuals freely, and drink cheap, stools to sit on, and fish if we can catch them ; but if not, hold us excusable ; and they will attend on you when you call upon them in return. They set out from such a place to such a place.

That the custom prevailed in the XVIth century is shown by such records as survive of the actions in the Court of the Marches. Rowland Lee, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, President of that Court from 1534 to 1543, was an ardent reformer of abuses of the law prac-

tised in Wales. The commorthas, or levies, many of them oppressive, had been prohibited by Acts of Parliament from the beginning of the XVth century and later. The Act passed in 1534 expressly includes "bydales" among other prohibitions.

The following examples¹ of proceedings in the Court of the Marches against persons accused of holding bydales are extracted from Harleian MS., 4220 (British Museum) :—

- Co. Carmarthen. Thomas ap John ap Owen of Midrim in the county of Carmarthen for exaccion and comortha of diverse somes of mony of iverse persons at the maredge of R's Thomas his sonne committed at the suite of Thomas Lloyd rel'.—fine iii^{li}. [fol. 6^b]
- Co. Cardigan. Owen Yerworth—unlawful ' Byddall ' & Comortha at the marriage of his stepdaughter.—fine 50/- [fol. 19^a]
- Co. Carmarthen. Rhydderch Gwillim of Moythva in the Com' of Carmarthen comitted for unlawful inviting of diverse persons to his wedding and for taking and receaving of diverse somes of money by way of Comortha at the suyte of Thomas Lloyd Relator. fine £3-6-8. [fol. 35^a]
- Co. Carmarthen. Unlawful comortha at a wedding—without commitment in regard to defendant's poverty—fine 10/-.
A similar case—commitment spared upon inspection, fine 6/8. [fol. 40^a].
- Co. Glamorgan. Unlawful " Byddall " & Comortha. fine £3-6-8. [fol. 46^a]
- Co. Carmarthen. daughter's wedding—fine 40/- [fol. 49^a]
- Co. Brecon. Rees Morgan of llanganton for a Comorthae or Biddall by invitacon in the Church upon a saboth day in tyme of divine service. fine £6. [fol. 113^b]
- Co. Pembroke. Thomas David of Radbaxton for Comortha at his sones wedding. . . . fine 6/8. [fol. 138^b]

¹ These extracts have kindly been supplied by Dr. Caroline A. J. Skeel, author of *The Council in the Marches of Wales*, 1904.

- Co. Cardigan. Morgan Thomas ap Rudd' of llandeveiog at the suite of Moris Reignold, gent. for assaulting the pl'. & breaking two of his foreteeth & unlawful inviting of divers persons to a bidall. fine £6-13-4. [fol. 225^b]
- Co. Salop. Edward Evans of Blodwell at the suite of Edward Allen for severall exaceons Biddalls Comorthas & oppression fine £6-13-4. [fol. 268^a]
- Co. Montgomery. Comortha & " Byddall "—fine £6-13-4. [fol. 287^b]

With two exceptions all the cases quoted are from the West Wales area. The list includes all cases where Bydal or a marriage is mentioned. Many other entries in the MS. relate to 'Commortha,' coupled with exaction or oppression under colour of office, but these lie outside the Bidding custom.

The proceedings in the Court of the Marches did not go unchallenged. A protest from Wales is copied in Cardiff MS. 3.25, which sets out 'The greevances of the afores'd subjects by resone of the oppression and iniustice done by the s'd Councell by coloure of the s'd Instructions.' Then follow 15 heads of grievances, No. 14 being 'Or a poor man byd his frends to a weddinge dyner . . . but he shal be subiecte to be questio'ed wrongfully before the Councell and fined to as much as hee is worth and more. . . . ' Examples¹ of these injustices include :—

Thomas David accordinge to the Costome of his Countre (hee goinge to be married) sent 4 or 5 payre of gloves and sprigs of Rosemary to his and wife's best beloved frends and well willers who accordinge to the Costome of the Countrey likewise dyd envite some of there well willers and frends to come wyth them to come to the marraige of the poore yonge couple to bestowe there benevolence uppon them which amounted in the whole to about 40 or 50^s—ffor which doinge one of the relators of the Councell enformed against the s'd Thomas Davyd as of an offence comytted by him therein for unlawful Kymorthas for which he was censured & fined by the said Councell in 5^{li} and 5 nobles costes given the relator 11^s & 8^d fee to the porter & 4^d garnish

¹ Again I am indebted to Miss Skeel for the extract.

all which came in the whole to 7^l 5^s & 4^d besyde his owne expenses which came to aboute 3^l the poore man having gotten but 40 or 50^s in all. [p. 49, p^t I., fol. 42].

Rhydderch Wm. Griffith envited certayne persones to his weddinge who prepared a dyner for them in a vitlinge house wheare the company did pay for there dyner & the gayne that was gotten by the dyner came to the s^d Rhydderch Wm as the maner of the Countrey is when poore people are married & dyne in a vitlinge house & for soe doinge the s^d Rhydderch was sued before the Councell of the Marches by a relator & there fined in about 5 markes & about 5 nobles costes given [to] the relator & 11^s & 8^d fee to the porter the s^d poore man haveinge not gotten 5^s by the dyner; and this poore man was fayne to sell all that hee & his wife had to mayntayne them for to pay the fines to the kinge, the costes to the relator & the fees to the porter & spent the rest of his meanes in answeringe the matter. [p. 50, p^t I., f. 13].

Rhydderch Wm Davyd envited aboute 10 or 12 persons to his weddinge & dined them & they gave hym 10^s amongst them for there dyner because they would not be chargeable to the poore man & for recevinge the s^d money the s^d R. W. was sued before the Councell of the Marches as a malefactor for unlawful Kymorthas & there fined in 5 markes & 5 nobles costes given [to] the relator & the fees of the porter came to 11^s & 8^d & the s^d Rhydderch had but 8^d a peece for his frends dyner or thereabouts & the poore man spent all that hee & his poore wife had to mayntayne them in this matter. [p. 51, p^t I., fol. 13.]

No dates are given to any of the cases quoted, but they are all fairly early, between 1534 and 1620, and prove that the Bidding custom at weddings was recognised and well established in West Wales from early times. It is not extinct. The National Library has two printed Bidding notices, issued during the last ten years, and at least two Bidding books, that is, records of the contributions made at a Bidding. In one of these the gifts in money amounted to about £30, besides numerous gifts in kind.

Two examples of Bidding notices are reproduced on the next two pages, one in Welsh, dated 1851; the other in English, dated 1849. These are good illustrations of the form usually adopted. The borders are made of ornaments from the printer's stock. The reproductions are facsimiles of the originals, but reduced in size.

Swydd Gaerfyrddin,
Mawrth 1, 1851.

Gan ein bod yn bwriadu cymmeryd aniom yr Ystad Briodasol ar ddydd Mawrth, yr 1leg o'r mis presennol, fe'n cefnogir gan ein cyfeillion i wneuthur **NEITHIOR** a **GWLEDD DE** ar yr achlysur, yr un diwrnod, yn Nhŷ y Ferch Ieuanc, a elwir **PENRHIW-OLEU**, yn Mhlwyf Cenarth; y pryd a'r lle y deisyfir yn ostyngedig eich llon gyfeillach, a pha anrheg bynag a weloch fod yn dda ein cynnysgaeddu â hi, a dderbynir yn ddiolchgar, ac a ad-delir yn siriol, pa bryd bynag y gelwir am dani ar yr unrhyw achlysur,

Gan eich gostyngedig Weision,

JOHN OWENS,
RACHEL JONES.

✂ Y mae y Mab Ieuanc, yn nghyd a'i Frawd (David Owens) yn dymuno i bob Rhodd o'r cyfryw natur ag sydd ddyledus iddynt hwy, i gael ei dychwelyd i'r Mab Ieuanc, ar y diwrnod rhagddywededig, a hwy a fyddant yn dra diolchgar am bob Rhoddion ychwanegol.—Hefyd, y mae y Ferch Ieuanc yn dymuno i bob Rhoddion ag sydd ddyledus iddi hi, a'i Chwaer ymadawedig, i gael eu dychwelyd ar y diwrnod hwnw, a hi rodde ei diolchgarwch gwresocaf i bob un a ddangoso unrhyw garedigrwydd ychwanegol iddi.

Isaac Thomas, Argraffydd, Heol-Fair, Aberteifi.

October 15th, 1849.

As we intend to enter the Matrimonial State, on Thursday, the 25th Day of October, inst., we purpose to make a BIDDING on the occasion, the same day, at our Dwelling-House, called Porth, Abercych, when and where the favor of your good company is most humbly solicited, and whatever donation you will be pleased to confer on us that day, will be thankfully received. and cheerfully repaid whenever called for on a similar occasion,

By your obedient humble Servants,

**THOMAS JONES,
ELIZABETH EVANS.**

☞ The Young Man's Father and Mother, desire that all Gifts of the above nature due to them, be returned to the Young Man, on the above day, and will be thankful for all favors granted.—Also, the Young Woman's Father and Mother, her Grand-father (John Davies, Shambles,) desire, that all Gifts of the above nature due to them, be returned to the Young Woman, on the said day, and will be thankful for all favors granted.

The Young Man's Company will meet that Morning at his Father's House, called Penrhiwleu, Kenarth; and the Young Woman's Company at Porth aforesaid.

Isaac Thomas, Printer, Cardigan.

Briefs. The documents from the Cardigan file include eleven examples of petitions for help from persons overtaken by some loss or calamity. These are survivals of a form prevalent from early times of procuring assistance in emergencies, known as 'Briefs,' common in England and Wales, but abolished by statute in 1828 (IX. Geo. IV.). Records of briefs are preserved in some parish registers in England. Collections were, in many cases, made in the parish church.

The Cardigan examples differ from the usual form of 'Brief,' in being local rather than general appeals, and for the relief of individual cases of necessity, the older form being for calamities to a community, as at Teignmouth, where the French landed in 1690, 'fireing and plundering ye said town ye losse £11,000.' The Cardigan petitions range in date from 1826 to 1859. One relates to a resident in the parish of Cilrhedin, Carmarthenshire; two are from St. Dogmaels, and one from Dinas, Co. Pembroke; and seven from Co. Cardigan, viz.—Cardigan Town, Llanarth, Llangranog, Penybont, Verwick, and Penbryn (two).

A short summary of each is worth recording.

1826. Cilrhedin.—That your petitioner met with one of the heaviest misfortunes that reigns amongst the human race. On a Sunday he went to visit a sick neighbour, and on his return found his house burnt down to ashes. He was a weaver by trade. The fire consumed his loom, and everything belonging to it; his bedstead, feather bed, beddings, etc. The estimated value of the damage is £77, which brought the petitioner to very low circumstances, therefore he begs leave to throw himself very humbly at the feet of the public. The truth of the statement is certified by twelve persons, whose names are attached.

1826. Cardigan.—The petitioner's husband and her two sons sailed in August, 1825, in the sloop *Mary*, of Cardigan, from Cardigan to Holyhead, intending from

thence to the Isle of Man. Her husband was the master and sole owner of the sloop, the vessel and cargo being of the value of £110. No tidings of them could be had. 'My faithful husband and my tender little children met with their premature death, they are sunk, undoubtedly, into the great deep, to rise no more, they are overwhelmed beneath the mighty waves of the terrific ocean.' The petitioner is reduced to 'exigency and penury,' and solicits help for the support of herself and her five young children. Two churchwardens, two overseers, and eight others attest the truth of the story.

1828. Llangranog.—The petitioner's house was reduced to cinder, due to the little children applying some straw unwarily when the petitioner was absent. The loss is £13. 'Will any of our boasted philanthropists display their benevolence on the present merited occasion to a helpless individual, having two small children to provide for. These comforts and consolations, which are imparted by a partner in life, are denied her: no one knows whether her husband is living or dead as nothing has been heard of him for two years.' The petition is certified by the Vicar, and seven others, and appended is 'We recommend the bearer to ask relief through the neighbourhood.' Signed for the Quarterly Meeting, August 5th, 1828, Thomas Phillips, Chairman. Endorsed in writing by the printer '20 copies for David Jenkins, Singing Master.'

1831. Verwick.—A fire destroyed the house and all the furniture when petitioner was at Ebbw Vale, working in the Iron Works, and his wife absent from the house. Valued moderately the loss amounted to £9 15s. od. and upwards. Certified and recommended by the Minister, Churchwarden, and ten others, and 'For the Calvinistic Monthly Meeting in Cardiganshire, July 14, 1831, E. Richards.'

1832. Llanarth, Co. Cardigan.—Fire about 11 o'clock at night when all the family, seven in number,

were asleep, which consumed the dwelling house, out houses, furniture, wearing apparel, corn intended for seed, and the only mare petitioner had was suffocated by the smoke. Loss estimated at £20 and upward. A daughter and two of his sons were taken ill of a fever, out of which his daughter died, and the petitioner was taken ill of the same complaint. Certified by the Vicar of Llanarth (David Evans), John Jordan Jones, J.P., Fronwen, and Thomas Phillips, Neuaddlwyd. For the Calvinistic Monthly Meeting in Cardiganshire, Ebenezer Richards.

1832. (In Welsh). Penbryn.—Fire destroyed the house and all its contents. A wife and five children. The wife and three children ill with Typhus fever. Damage £50 at a moderate estimate. Certified by twelve names, and by Ebenezer Richards for the Monthly Meeting.

1838. Dinas.—The Minister of the Gospel at Tabor, Pembrokeshire. 'From variety of unforeseen events, especially on sea, by country banks, and bad debts, has been greatly reduced in circumstances since commencement in business, up to the amount of £2000, and is consequently compelled to throw himself upon the benevolence, and under the humane consideration of his friends and the public.' The petition is not attested, but a list of sums received is appended, including £20 15s. od., contributions made in the Church of Tabor, and through the vicinity of Dinas.

1840. St. Dogmells.—Petitioner was sole owner of the sloop *Jenny* of Cardigan, value about £150, wrecked on a voyage from Milford to Cardigan, laden with culm. Certified by seven ministers and others.

1841. (In Welsh). Penbryn.—Fire, loss £9 18s. 6d. Certified by sixteen persons.

1849. St. Dogmaels.—Petitioner was Master and principal owner of the smack *Ann*, of Cardigan, wrecked

on the rocks called the Sledges while going through Jack Sound, near Milford Haven. No amount mentioned. Certified by ten persons.

1859. (In Welsh). Pen-y-bont, Cardigan.—Widow of Captain and owner of the *Good Hope* of Cardigan, lost on a voyage from Cardigan to Haverfordwest. Appeal for assistance to support herself and her three little children. Loss £100 to £120. Certified by five persons, and by the Monthly Meeting.

There is a striking similarity between most of the petitions, which points to a common source of inspiration, the minister, the schoolmaster, or some other recognised practitioner, who knew how to state the facts and present them to the benevolent in moving language. Recognition by the Monthly Meeting of the Calvinistic Methodists was accorded to several of the petitioners. Incidentally this introduces the names of two distinguished men, the Rev. Ebenezer Richards, of Tregaron; and Thomas Phillips, of Neuaddlwyd. The co-operation of neighbours of all conditions and creeds in the work of assisting distress is worth notice. The certificates given by vicars and churchwardens were indorsed by the Monthly Meetings of the Methodists.

Official Documents. Local government and administration in the town of Cardigan and the surrounding district is indicated by numerous public notices. It is significant of the times to find a request from the inhabitants of Cardigan, addressed to the Mayor, dated 9 Nov., 1850, asking him 'to call a general meeting, for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of an address to the Throne protesting against the late aggression made by the Pope of Rome upon The Constitution of this Country, and the Supremacy of the Queen in these realms.' The Mayor convenes a meeting, to be held at the Town Hall, on Nov. 15, at 12 o'clock noon. The aggression was the appointment of Cardinal

Wiseman to the oversight of Roman Catholics in England, with the title of Archbishop of Westminster. Meetings of protest were held throughout the kingdom, and great excitement and indignation prevailed.

A meeting, sounding a quite different note of alarm, was held in 1831, for the purpose of preventing the introduction of the 'Cholera Morbus, and to arrest its progress should it unfortunately make its appearance.' The precautions recommended to the public were:— 'To pay attention to cleanliness, and keeping themselves warmly clad in flannel and woollen apparel; to maintain regular habits, avoiding excesses of all kinds, to keep their minds easy and cheerful on the subject, relying on the effort now making by Government, through the assistance of Divine Providence, to keep off and check the disease should it appear among us.' Arrangements were made for visits of inspection and instruction of the 'Houses of the Poor,' and the Constable of each parish was instructed to order the removal of manure from the vicinity of the habitations of the poor.

An official caution in Welsh and English was published, signed by the Mayor, calling attention to the measures best calculated to prevent the introduction, and to mitigate the effects of contagious disease, and requesting the inhabitants so far as in them lay to comply with the recommendations of the Board of Health, and officially communicated by the Home Secretary. The recommendations are on the same lines as those quoted above.

On the 28th Nov., in the same year, an enterprising tradesman, David Rees, on a broadside headed 'Pure Water' begs to inform the public that he has just received from Lipscombe & Co., London, a supply of superior Water Filters, for 'Purifying and clarifying river, rain, pond, or spring water; warranted superior to all others known at the present day, at the following prices:—16s., 25s., £2 2s. od.'

A couple of years before the cholera scare a public meeting was held (18 May, 1829), convened by the Mayor in response to a petition, to consider the best means to be adopted for bringing a supply of water to the town. The result of the meeting is not recorded on the file.

The Mayor gives notice that the ancient boundaries of the Common belonging to the Borough of Cardigan will be perambulated on May 3, 1841, and requests the burgesses to assemble in the Town Hall at ten in the morning for that purpose. Another notice (1849) forbids the removal of soil and earth from the Common.

The notices and other official papers on the file cover a wide range, and are very numerous. They deal with almost every phase of local administration, including jury lists, lists of voters, and many other subjects. The ancient charter of the borough of Newport, Pem., was printed as a poster in 1853. The original, dated 1215, is still preserved in the possession of Sir Martine Lloyd.

The amount of literary material on the file is considerable, and of great interest. It cannot be dealt with briefly, and is therefore reserved until it can be fully treated.

What has been written will bear witness to the value, from the point of view of local history, of the products of the local printing offices. The neglected bantling of to-day may be of great worth at some future time. Unhappily much material of this kind was sent to be pulped during the strenuous years of paper shortage 1914—1918. By the good-will of the master printers in Wales the National Library has been able to gather much of what has been printed from 1909, the year the library was started. There are gaps, however, mainly due to the lack of appreciation of the value to the future historian of these local products. Individually, they appear to be of small importance. Brought into a classified group in the National Library they have a real value.





