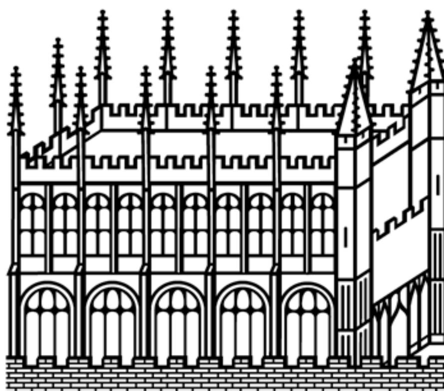

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Reminiscences of my Country and People

David Davies

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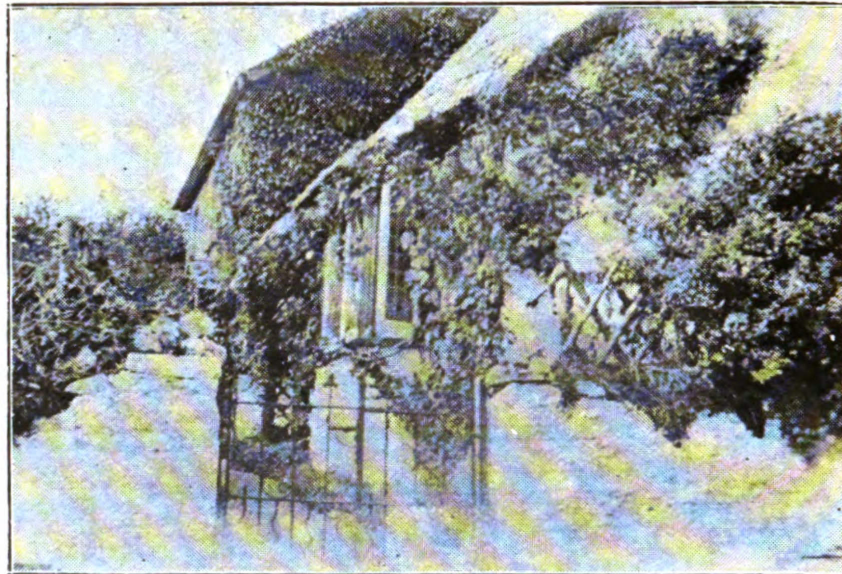
MY NATIVE VILLAGE—RHYDARGAEAU.

The Turnpike Road through the Village—taken from the gate of my Cottage.



The Cottage—My Birth Place

The Maid at the Well.

Photos : Mrs. David Davies.

REMINISCENCES OF MY COUNTRY AND PEOPLE

By the

Rev. DAVID DAVIES,

Penarth.

Author of " Echoes from the Welsh Hills," " John Vaughan, and his Friends, or More Echoes," " Vavasor Powell," " Christ Magnified : The Life of Mrs. N. Thomas," " The Ancient Celtic Church and the See of Rome," " Talks with Men, Women, and Children " (Six Series), *" Sacred Themes and Famous Paintings," " The Book of Job "* (Ch. i—xiv), *" The New Name," etc., etc.*

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TO

MY DEAR WIFE AND CHILDREN

I LOVINGLY DEDICATE THESE

"REMINISCENCES OF MY COUNTRY

AND PEOPLE."

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FOREWORD.

I OFTEN visit memory's lumber room, where there are innumerable relics of past years. They are a heterogeneous collection, consisting of all kinds of oddities —quaint, droll and pathetic. Some have often been taken up, and glanced at, by me, sometimes in a pensive, at other times, in a pleasurable mood. Others have remained almost undisturbed ever since they were deposited there, and, in the course of time, have gathered dust which has greatly obscured them. Besides, many are well-nigh buried beneath the accumulated additions of later days. Some of these seem to be quite reconciled to their fate: others appear to have the knack of keeping in sight, if only edgeways, and occasionally of creaking (especially with every change of the weather), like so many living things, calling loudly for a resurrection.

On the surface there are newer accessions, adding to the volume of the confused mass, and yet helping to impart an aspect of modernity to the whole.

Now that the stated term of my lease of life has run out; and yet, by a gracious concession, I am still permitted to live on extensions—being tenant at will—I do not wish to presume too much upon these extensions long continuing. I, therefore, begin to think it wise to put my whole house in order, not least, the disorderly lumber room of life's memories and reminiscences. I must confess, I have not been able to reconcile myself to the thought of the dust of oblivion, fast accumulating with the passing years, hiding them so entirely, as that ultimately, the old broker, "Forgetfulness," shall consign them *holus-bolus* to the rubbish heap, when I am gone. On the other hand, I too well know that they are not of sufficient worth, rarity, or antiquity, to attract the notice of the connoisseur in the curiosities and antiques of human character, and

social life. I have, therefore, at the kind and repeated suggestion of many of my friends, who have at times accompanied me into my lumber room, resolved to bring out some of its contents, brush off the dust, and place them in something like consecutive order. I say " *some* of its contents " ; for they are by no means all ; but only such as specially pertain to my own " country and people." A large number still lie undisturbed, which belong to the many years which I spent as a student and minister in England. Only the incidents during those periods, which specially pertain to Wales and Welshmen, are now recalled. Of them, there are a goodly number. The rest, however, must remain for the present where they are ; but not without the hope on my part that, if my life is spared, I may yet gather them together, and bring them out under some such title as, " Reminiscences of my thirty-six years of sojourn in England."

In pursuing my present self-imposed task I have, indeed, found here and there, a few lyres and harps, lutes, and violins, which I myself had well-nigh forgotten, lying there in a confused mass, with broken strings and tarnished grace, not having sent out a sound for many years ; although they still have a few strings remaining, which, as I now touch them anew, thrill me, as they did in the days that are gone—some with the joyful and triumphant note of exuberant gladness, and others with the rich, tremulous and pensive tones of the minor key, too deep for tears. They, too, must not be altogether silenced.

Such as these reminiscences are, therefore, I bring them out, and entrust them to the sympathetic care and keeping of congenial friends, who, I hope, will graciously receive, and kindly cherish, them ; and thus help to save them from the ignoble fate of the dustbin and the ash-heap !

DAVID DAVIES.

26, ARCHER ROAD, PENARTH.
June 16, 1925.

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REMINISCENCES.

CHAPTER I.

MY NATIVE VILLAGE.

MY EARLIEST MEMORIES OF IT.

BORN at Rhydargaeau on 16th June, 1849,[1] about four miles inland from Carmarthen, I was environed for the first seven years of my life by primitive customs; and was brought up during that formative period among a rural people, who knew little of, and cared still less about, the stirring life of the great world beyond their own narrow horizon.

And yet among my earliest memories is that of a cutting from a London illustrated paper, about 1855–6, of an incident in connection with the Crimean War. I have also a faint recollection of some of the deprivations of the peasantry in those dark days. Even barley bread was scarce, while wheaten bread was unknown among the poor, except on New Year's Day, when wheaten cakes (*cacennau*) were given to the children, who went in groups from farmhouse to farmhouse singing for *calennig*—of whom, I well remember, I was one, at the age of six.

The Crimean War, with all its horrors—and all the more because of the great sacrifices then offered, pre-eminently by Carmarthenshire, in the loss of the cream of its young men—widened the horizon of the peasant population. The world without had suddenly become very real, and very terrible, to them even if in no other way than by becoming

[1]My father's name was John Davies, and my mother's name was Catherine Davies, before, as well as after, marriage. They were the children of second cousins.

the burial place of some of their dearest and best; and never after that did they quite revert to the narrow outlook of former days.

The period of my infancy and childhood was a transitional period. The old superstitions of corpse candles, etc., had all but passed away. The writings of Joseph Harris ("Gomer") had scattered them, as the rising sun does the mists of night, that lurk in the hollows at the break of day. Temperance Societies were also beginning to tell upon the drinking habits, which so largely prevailed in country districts about the middle of last century, and in a gradually decreasing degree during succeeding decades. Rebecca and her children had done their work in rebelling against the extortionate imposts of Turnpike Gates. The earliest memories I have are of the stories told of the adventurous proceedings of young farmers and farm labourers, in unhinging the gates and casting them into the rivers, or into the ditches by the road side, and of the drastic punishment dealt out to those who were caught doing so. Many humorous stories, too, were told of the way in which punishment was evaded, such as that of "Stammering Jim," who, in order to avoid detection, had driven about at night in a cart that had no name upon it, as many others were in the habit of doing. Jim was brought before the magistrates and asked why, in spite of the explicit order that all carts should bear the names of their owners, he had defied the law. Jim stammered as he explained that he had made up the conveyance of borrowed parts, that the shafts belonged to one neighbour, the wheels to another, the body of the cart to another, and that only the old nag belonged to him, and then closed with the confusing question—"Whose name ought I to put on?"

Gradually, too, housing conditions were improving. Servants, for instance, instead of sleeping as they had previously done, in many instances, in out-houses belonging to the farms in which they were engaged in service, were

increasingly provided with sleeping accommodation in the farmhouses themselves; and, as the result, courting among the young (which, on account of the long hours of service on the land, could only be carried on late at night) became conducted under far better conditions than hitherto. The farm-kitchen, instead of the yard, became the resort of lovers. Yet this was done ostensibly without the knowledge of the farmer, and many amusing incidents were related concerning the experiences of lovers, when the farmer, either seriously or jocularly, unexpectedly appeared upon the scene, and intruded upon their quietude.

Two ballads in Welsh, which I wrote many years ago, may be of some use to the Welsh reader in letting in a side-light upon the adventurous experiences of lovers under those new conditions, say 40 or 50 years ago.[1]

Indeed, the industrial revolution, and the political awakening, of the fifties, had also stirred up the minds of prominent men among the peasantry, and, as just intimated, the Rebecca Rebellion had disclosed a phase of a widespread and deeply-rooted disaffection. The news, too, of the money-earning power of men and women up "the hills," especially in connection with the iron furnaces of Merthyr Tydfil and Dowlais, Blaenavon, etc., had led increasingly to an exodus from my native village, and the whole surrounding country, to the iron works of Glamorgan and Monmouth. Indeed, it was this spread of iron and tin works in Glamorgan, and the phenomenal account of their prosperity, as retailed in the village, that led to the removal of my own parents to Treforest, when I was a child a little over seven years old.

But I had lived long enough at Rhydargaeau, during that impressible and plastic period of my life, to decide once and forever my tastes and preferences, so that to this day that village and its rural associations have a far

[1]See Appendix, pp. 278–83.

firmer grip upon me than all the villages, towns, and cities I have since visited—not excepting Treforest, where, in my boyhood and youth, I laid the earlier layers of character upon the foundations which had already been laid firm and deep, during my infancy and childhood, in that obscure Carmarthen hamlet.

Nor is this only true of the weightier matters of character and of mental attitude. It equally applies to physical tastes, and social instincts. For instance, the joints and entrees, the soups and pastries, of more recent decades, have not supplanted the early taste for the leek broth and " succan llaeth," and for the buttermilk and potatoes, of my childhood : upon which, indeed, was laid the basis of a constitution, that has since stood the racket of more than sixty years of strenuous toil. Moreover, the pride of class, and the exclusiveness of social status, with which I have become too familiar in my pastorates at Cardiff, Weston-super-Mare, London, Brighton, and Penarth, have only increased within me the longing for the simple life, and warmhearted human fellowship, of the countryside two generations ago !

Although fully realising that those primitive conditions and customs had their serious drawbacks and disabilities, and that the advantages, which come in the train of growing education and social advancement, in the main, far outweigh the blessings which they sweep away ; yet one wonders whether some of those primitive conditions which are removed, might not, with some modifications at least, have been, with great advantage, retained. Naturalness has unnecessarily given way, in many directions, to artificiality; and one never visits those quiet and restful scenes of one's childhood without feeling this keenly. In the great centres of our coal and iron industries, artless human character, and the simple open face of social life, seem to suffer almost as much from discord, defilement, and disfigurement, as the enchanting sounds, and charming scenery, of nature suffer,

when broken upon by the raucous noises, black smoke, and the hideous mounds, and excrescences, which trade and commerce bring in their train. Industrial advancement is not all gain to either the beauty of life, or the charm of nature. Is it, indeed, always even a greater gain, than it is of loss? Be that as it may, the recollections of my early days in that village is exceedingly pleasant to-day, as I look at them through the intervening atmosphere of nearly seventy years. It may be that "distance lends enchantment"—it certainly imparts a softening tone—"to the view."

The only traffic that sent even a ripple over the quiet, uneventful life of the village in those days, was that of farmers on their way to and from Carmarthen, on Saturdays, the wagons that came through from the upper part of the county, and even from the adjoining counties of Cardigan and Pembroke, on their way to and from the lime-kilns, and the vehicles that brought people from the surrounding country on red-letter days, especially when special services and meetings were held in one of the chapels of the village.

Those special gatherings were indirectly the means of improving the appearance and sanitation of the village, for in anticipation of them the villagers, irrespective of their denominational preferences, set at work to whitewash the walls of their houses without, and also clean and renovate the interiors, by way of giving welcome to visitors, and of making the village worthy of the occasion.

Indeed, this wholesome custom still remains, and the occasions upon which those festivals are held have become more numerous, as the years have passed by, and the activities of the churches have become greater. The social relationships of the churches in this respect are among the most pleasing aspects of rural Christianity.

Not only are the old gatherings for the repetition of the "Pwnc" (or "Subject" to be discussed), or for the catechising of the different schools of the district in portions of the Scripture, still held, but also new interests have been taken in, especially the training in psalmody, or congregational singing, in what are called "Cymanfa Ganu." These necessitate months of practice in each church. These gatherings, in addition to being great sources of attraction, have vastly advanced congregational singing in the sanctuaries, and have done much to unite the different churches, by their friendly competition, in improving the quality and rendering of the songs of the Lord's House, at their public services.

The habits of the villagers have, in the main, undergone very few radical changes in the long interval, between the time when I was a child in the village and now, when, in my later years, I repeatedly and fondly renew my acquaintance with it. A process of change, nevertheless, has gradually, but certainly, permeated their life during the last two generations. There has been a slow—too slow—improvement in the structure of their dwellings: an improvement, however, which also has happily retained some of the best features of the old homes of the village, namely, their white-washed walls, and their well-kept and fruitful gardens. The diet of the villagers has also undergone a change by the introduction of tea, and the excessive use of it, and by the substitution of white wheaten bread for the barley and oaten cakes of the days of my childhood. Nevertheless, while "succan llaeth" (Welsh porridge) has largely been discontinued, the leek broth, and its boiled chunk of bacon, have held their own in the food of the people, in spite of the fried bacon which has of late years alternated with the latter.

In dress, however, a great change has taken place, especially the last twenty-five years. The tall hat, which my mother and her contemporaries wore; so highly polished

as to reflect surrounding objects like a mirror—a hat of which all modern specimens which I have seen are cruel caricatures—has long since disappeared, and given way to the modern hat which, chameleon-like, changes shape and colour with bewildering frequency; and the frilled cap which, beneath the tall hat, by its virgin whiteness formerly brought into charming relief the rosy cheeks of the peasant maiden and matron, has given way to the waved and padded, and in rare instances, even to the "bobbed" hair of the town devotees of fashion. The "pais-a-gwn-bach" (petticoat and small gown)—that charming garb of the peasant maiden and matron of a generation and more ago—is now substituted by the dress and costume in vogue in towns and cities. Those quaint garments, so attractive and specially adapted to rustic life and its environments, have given way to these, which, however suitable they may be to town surroundings, are out of character with the charming simplicities of rural life. Thus the village dames and damsels have largely lost their distinguishing charm, and are as like their town sisters as so many marbles, with one happy difference, that the rosy cheeks, which the fresh mountain breezes have painted, have not as yet been disfigured by the puff, powder, and paint of town toilet. The younger men, too, have largely discontinued the use of good homespun cloth, in suits that were made to "wear" by the country tailor, for the ready-made suits of cloth, that are made to "wear out," in factories and grimy attics of distant towns.

In spite of these changes, however, the villagers have happily retained, and more than retained, their social and religious customs. On special days, notably on Whit-Sunday and Whit-Monday, they come to their sanctuaries clad in brand-new garments, which have kept the tailors and seamstresses of the neighbourhood busy with needle and thread, and sleeve board and iron, for many

weeks past. Such occasions witness the result in an outburst of bright and graceful costumes, and close-fitting suits that would do credit to any townsfolk. Moreover, as already intimated, in honour of such events, the cottages and garden-walls, from one end to the other, are whitewashed, so that, in the bright sunshine, the hamlet is as white "as snow in Salmon" on those festive days.

The cottages, too, in anticipation, undergo a thorough cleansing within. All the spiders in their dens are mercilessly slaughtered, and their webs as ruthlessly destroyed. The wooden floors are strenuously polished, and the stone and cement floors washed scrupulously clean ; the windows are replenished with spotless curtains ; and the furniture, especially the old polished oak chests, tables, and eight-day clocks, reflect like mirrors the bright sunshine that streams into these humble homes through casement and window.

Even the resting-places of the departed—the graveyards where the ancestors of the village lie—share in the renewing and beautifying touch of devoted descendants. And here it should be noted, that Easter, and its Flowering Sunday, are the most popular of all seasons of the year for visiting graves and adorning them with flowers. But, in addition to this, as already stated, whenever religious festivals are held in churches and chapels there is a response on the part of the inhabitants, without distinction or creed, by way of welcome to the feast, arising from a sense of making the surroundings helpful to a decorous and becoming celebration. Thus, scarcely second to the desire that all dwellings should be bright and pleasant, there is the determination that the resting-places of past generations shall bear all the marks of a reverent and grateful memory. Hence, not a grave is neglected on such occasions, although, throughout the year, except on these special occasions, they are in many instances overlooked. Even the abodes of the obscure pilgrims of far-off days, who were laid to sleep by reverent, but unknown, hands until the trump

shall sound, are not forgotten. They, indeed, were the ancestors of the village, whose lives were inseparably associated with its activities in the years that are long since past, and whose memory is lovingly cherished by their successors to-day. Besides, they, too, were among those for whom Christ died, and who were laid there tenderly and devoutly, with the " sure and certain hope " of a glorious resurrection.

Hence, someone is appointed to see that even unknown graves are rid of every weed and of every token of neglect or oversight. Such occasions as these thus supply the incentive and opportunity for decorousness, and for reverent regard for the amenities of life, and so for the maintenance in the community of those habits and graces which beautify life, and ennoble character.

If only for these reasons, quite apart from the direct benefit conferred, these and other religious celebrations have a refining and uplifting influence over the entire community, and by so much they do their part to " exalt a nation."

Of course, much could be said of the increased knowledge of Scripture, efficiency in psalmody, love for the sanctuary, and increasing social intercourse with those of kindred faith and hope, which directly result from such festivals ; but in addition to these greater blessings there are the smaller, but very real, benefits which indirectly flow from this use of the holiday seasons in those agricultural districts, from which our towns are ever replenished with new energy and life—an important factor in our national growth and development, which it would be folly to under-estimate, still less to ignore.

At the time of my birth there were three inns in the village ; not that it had itself need of them, but because in those days (before the opening of the new turnpike road from Carmarthen through Bronwydd Arms) there were, as already mentioned, frequent trains of waggons and

carts passing through the village for lime and coal, and, in passing through, the horses were refreshed, and the drivers still more so. The villagers, however, at that time, were by no means abstainers. Indeed, some of them were decidedly of the thirsty kind, and would readily join the drivers, and worthily rival them, in a convivial chat and drink.

Forty-two years ago, in my " Echoes from the Welsh Hills," and subsequently in " John Vaughan," I focussed attention upon the chats by villagers and neighbouring farmers at the smithy and the shoemaker's shop, where theological questions were discussed, and the sayings of great preachers were enthusiastically repeated. The villagers, however, were not all of that type, although the majority decidedly were. As a matter of fact, even at the time of my birth, viz., the middle of the last century, the village and neighbourhood had not quite emerged out of the transitional period, through which they had been passing for a century or more, immediately following the powerful ministries of Stephen Hughes, his contemporaries and successors, supplemented by the Calvinistic Methodist Revival, which swept into this district in the early decades of the last century.

It was only gradually that old superstitions, customs, and manners of life passed away, giving room to new beliefs, and a new social order, more in harmony with the teaching of the great religious leaders who, in a glorious and almost unbroken succession, wielded so powerful an influence upon the lives and characters of their countrymen in West Wales. Even those who had come directly under the influence of those great teachers retained for some time traces of old customs, which since then have been almost wholly removed by the growth of Christian sentiment, and the sensitising of the Christian conscience, with regard to the great questions of daily consistency between doctrine and life.

Thus, in that transitional period there were, even among those who took a prominent part in religious discussions, usually in the smithy and the shoemaker's shop, a number who did not think it in the least inconsistent to sit occasionally in the village inn, for a chat on doctrinal subjects, while they drank out of their tankards of beer. There were no temperance societies in those days, and those who thus met had been brought up before tea had come into fashion, and when children were reared on milk and broth, and young men and women on "succan llaeth," butter-milk and potatoes, broth, and, by way of change, bread and cheese and beer. This habit of having beer, where tea is taken to-day, had thus familiarised the villagers with it, and the constant use created a fondness for it, by men whose piety and whose interest in good things none could question.

Modestly nestling in the centre of the village, down in a cross road, was the old smithy, where from time immemorial the farmers of the neighbourhood used to come for all their farming implements, such as their ploughs and harrows, their scythes and sickles, and where they had their wheels banded, their horses shod, and even their own shoes and clogs nailed and tipped. Indeed, wherever iron was needed in the form of handles or hinges, or any purpose whatever in their agricultural or domestic pursuits, the smith was the man who was universally requisitioned.

It followed that the smithy was a very important centre, important not only for business, but (being, therefore, a rendezvous of people from within a radius of many miles) it also became the natural centre for social intercourse, especially for interesting discussion and friendly talk.

The central village inn, which stood upon the corner of the turnpike and the cross road, had also its group of devotees, as well as occasional travellers overtaken with

thirst on their journey; but for number, and continuous converse, it did not compare with the smithy.

At the time I was a child the farmers had very little knowledge of, or interest in, politics. Their chief interest was divided according to the particular circle in which they moved. A certain number were of a rollicking kind, and retained many of the traditions, and detailed many of the reckless and comical escapades, of their ancestors in the preceding generation, before the teaching of the religious leaders of the 18th and the earlier decades of the 19th century had wrought a change in the spirit of the age. Many of those stories appealed forcibly to the sense of humour, and related to mischievous pranks rather than evil deeds, and thus were not only tolerated, but were repeated with a kind of amiable and playful admiration, which prolonged the stories themselves far beyond the age to which they really belonged.[1]

Those men, too, in some cases, emulated their ancestors in their sporting proclivities, and, as such, were specially interested in fox and otter hunts, besides being adepts at poaching for hares and rabbits, pheasants or partridges, and catching salmon or trout, in spite of all land laws and river restrictions—laws and restrictions which they had no compunction in pronouncing iniquitous, and, therefore, as being more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

There were, however, a far more numerous class who did not trouble themselves about these matters, but as shown in my "Echoes" and "John Vaughan," were chiefly interested in the religious activities of the village and neighbourhood—although occasionally one was found who was a curious blend of a sportsman and a theologian!

At this time theological discussions between Calvinists and Arminians, and between Baptists and Paedo-baptists, were in great vogue. Besides this, there was a general

[1]See Appendix, pp. 284–90.

interest felt by the more seriously inclined in preachers and religious services, which often led to long and sustained conversations. The smithy was the chief scene of exchange of thoughts and opinions on all these varied subjects—even more than the shoemaker's workshop—and, as such, supplied a great variety of interest to those who met there.

My tenderest memories, however, are associated with the earliest home of my infancy and childhood, namely " Penstar "—a thatched cottage of the bungalow type, belonging to the Baptist Church at " Horeb," and built in time for my father's and mother's wedding. It still exists, and I have leased it for my life. It is in my esteem a charming cottage—as others, indeed, affirm who have seen it. Along its white walls, as I note elsewhere,[1] the clematis, virginian creeper, crimson rambler, and a variety of rose trees trail their way in all directions. The old highway passes close by the end of the cottage, and dips amid the shades of overhanging trees into the hollow,[2] where the old village has sluggishly nestled for generations, and into which even now few of the world's ambitions ever enter.

It is such another hamlet in its silent isolations, calm restfulness, and placid tranquility as that described by Beattie in his " Hermit " :—

" At the close of the day, when the hamlet is still,
And mortals the sweets of forgetfulness prove,
When nought but the torrent is heard on the hill,
And nought but the nightingale's song in the grove."

[1]" The Book of Job," Vol. 1, p. 6.

[2]Since the above words were written this charming feature has been marred by the arbitrary conduct of the owner of the land on one side of the road, in hewing two stately trees, and thus leaving that side bare and uninteresting.

In the midst of its sluggish and uneventful life, many of the old ancestors of the village peacefully slumber in a graveyard close by the cottage in which I was born—a graveyard which, since my childhood, has taken in a portion of the very large garden where I played as a child, and among those, long since at rest are some of my own ancestors. In the midst of all is " Horeb," where, caressed by the tender love of motherhood, I first heard the love of God publicly proclaimed. This cottage was the scene of my infancy, ere as yet my parents removed to a larger house in the village, which had in former times been the largest inn in the village, before the new turnpike road, constructed through Bronwydd Arms, had taken away so much of the traffic as to necessitate the conversion of the old " Greyhound Inn " into a private house. The latter has long since been replaced by a more modern dwelling, but the smaller cottage where I was born still remains ; and it is there that my roots have struck deepest, as I increasingly realise when, time after time, I visit that spot where I first saw the light, and where my mother taught me to take the first step in the journey of life.

CHAPTER II.

MY NATIVE VILLAGE.

MY EARLIEST MEMORIES OF IT (*continued*).

THERE were many quaint customs in the village in the days of my childhood, which had come down from the past, but have since largely, and in some instances entirely, vanished.

To the latter class belongs "Mari Lwyd," or "Grey Mary." In view, however, of the history of the custom, there can be little doubt that "lwyd" in this case, in early days, meant in old Welsh "blessed" or "holy." Thus, before the Reformation, "Mari Lwyd" meant "Blessed Mary." The custom appears to have been a remnant of an old Catholic play, "The Flight of Joseph, Mary, and the Holy Child to Egypt." Closely associated with this seems to have been the domestic custom on Christmas Day to lay a table, and place chairs around the table, in readiness to welcome the Holy Family, should it appear at the door.

In the days of Elizabeth the play of "The Flight into Egypt" gradually passed through a process of transition from the earliest religious representation of that journey (during which the ass was represented as being led by Joseph, as it bore Mary and her Babe, from stage to stage, as night after night they needed shelter till the following morning) to the later continuance of the custom, with the religious sentiment associated with it increasingly ignored, until at length the whole observance degenerated into a mere noisy and frolicsome escapade. Thus for generations before I witnessed it as a child, "Mari Lwyd" had ceased to be associated in any way with Joseph and Mary; and was the signal for rollicking fun, as an entrance to various

dwellings was demanded, during her evening peregrinations, by attendant vagrants, bent on a jovial carousal at Christmas time.

As time passed, the horse took the place of the ass in supplying the skeleton skull, that had to be covered and dressed up, in the weird representation that passed muster amid the shades of night. The scarcity of asses' skulls accounted for this.

As this custom was observed in West Wales during the first five or six decades of the last century, there were keen anticipations and active preparations, some weeks before Christmas, for the visit of "Mari Lwyd." The skull of an ass, or, failing that, of a horse, was requisitioned and carefully prepared and ornamented. Glass eyes were put into the sockets where the real eyes had formerly been. A false mane, made up of horse hair, was fastened on a neck, which was formed of wood, and was covered over with a large sheet, and the whole was decorated with ribbons of all colours of the rainbow. At the centre, supporting the neck, but hidden beneath the long white sheet, was a pole which held the head about seven or eight feet above the ground; thus imparting to the whole figure abnormal and awe-inspiring proportions, especially to women and children, in the gloom of night, across which gleams of light shot from the open door or lighted windows.

The man who worked the oracle from within was able, by the skilful pulling of ropes, to make the jaws snap together with startling force, which added greatly to the sense of awe and mystery to the timid and young. And yet it was well known that no harm would befall anyone. One or two men were hidden beneath the sheet, and there were about four outside to guide "Mari," and protect her from the intrusion of the inquisitive who gathered round.

Most of these, especially those under tne sheet, had, as a rule, a good supply of stanzas they had memorised, in order to besiege successfully the houses of hosts whose hospitality they were anxious to enjoy; because as long as the verses sung by "Mari Lwyd" were answered from within the house, whose doors had been closed and locked at the news of her approach, entrance was hopeless.

The competition was continued until one party exhausted the fund of stanzas which the other party had; and admission, or otherwise, ostensibly depended upon that issue. Ordinarily the visiting party, who were well primed with a stock of ready-made verses, would succeed in defeating the defending group within, even when they had received sufficient notice of the forthcoming visit of "Mari" and her company. But sometimes a householder would, for the fun of it, secure the presence and services of one or two local bards, who were well stocked with suitable responses, and who could also rhyme extemporaneously. Then the conflict was long and strenuous; but even at such times, those within would at length, by a sort of genuine consent and understanding, voluntarily concede, and admit "Mari" and her friends for refreshments, consisting of bread and cheese and beer, and any delicacies which the housewife had prepared.

I well remember some of the words of the introductory greeting by "Mari" and her friends.

MARI LWYD.

"Wel, dyma ni'n dywad,
Gyfeillion diniwad,
I 'mofyn am gennad i ganu."

REPLY.

"Rhowch glywed, wŷr doethion,
Pa faint 'ych o ddynion,
A pheth yn wych union yw'ch enwau?"

MARI LWYD.

"Chwech o wŷr hawddgar,
Rhai goreu ar y ddaear,
I ganu mewn gwirair—am gwrw."

REPLY.

"*Rhowch glywed, wŷr difrad,*
O ble'r 'ych chwi'n dywad,
A pheth yw'ch gofynniad—gaf enwi?"

MARI LWYD.

"Daw Mari Lwyd lawen,
I lawr o Bendarren,
A hynny'n ddiegwan—i ganu." Etc. etc.

All that has now vanished; and for some reasons one regrets it. There was, occasionally, no doubt some excessive drinking connected with such visits, especially during the later stages of the tour; yet one feels that, in the main, this frolicsome custom was a welcome and harmless break in the monotonously dull peasant life, in those years of continuous hardship and toil. It suited the times, and helped to keep the sense of humour alive in an emotional and imaginative people, under conditions which were eminently calculated to crush it out of them.

When I was a child there was no provision made by any responsible body for the education of the young in the neighbourhood. Whatever Griffith Jones's Circulating Schools may have done, there was no trace of them in my native village at that time, and, indeed, for many years before then. I have, in my "Echoes from the Welsh Hills," described the kind of school that existed in the district when my father was a child—that is, in the third and fourth decade of the nineteenth century.

About half a mile from the village the old school house stood. The pedagogue had in his early days been a soldier, and, above all, had fought in the battle of Waterloo. He and his method of teaching were thus described in after years by "an old boy"[1]:—

"He was a battered fragment of a fine specimen of humanity, a tempest-tossed brother, the greater part of whom consisted of timber, put together and repaired gratuitously by a patriotic carpenter of the neighbourhood. At school the first lesson, as a rule, which he gave to a new boy in mental and moral philosophy was a box in the ears, and if a boy happened to be rather more earthly than the rest, he was made to stand upon as little as possible—one leg—thus affording a better opportunity for the upper region to reflect and consider."

When that description has been received with the proverbial pinch of salt, it supplies a fair picture, in the main, of the kind of school that existed ninety years ago in West Wales. In my "Echoes"[1] I give details of the esteem in which the old master was held by his pupils as the one who, together with the Duke of Wellington, had won the battle of Waterloo; the military discipline in his school; the alphabet being adapted for beginners in the march of the "Men of Harlech"; the misfortune that befell the wooden leg when in giving one of his dramatic recitations:—

> *"Come one, come all; this rock shall fly*
> *From its firm base as soon as I!"*

that leg stuck fast between the roughly-laid slabs of the schoolroom floor, and when he, impatient of such trivial inconveniences, gave a desperate jerk, which broke the leathern strap; and the still greater misfortune that befell the two boys on the way for a new strap to the

[1]See "Echoes from the Welsh Hills," pp. 16 & 17.

village shoemaker, when, trying to stop the mill-wheel with the wooden leg, that leg snapped in two.

All these were features connected with school life in those days which have long since disappeared. Indeed, during the latter part of my father's school days, when the old pensioned soldier entered into his well-earned rest, a man of considerable culture, who had been educated for holy orders, opened a school in the neighbourhood, far in advance of that over which the old soldier had presided. This teacher continued for many years to educate the rising race in that neighbourhood—so long indeed, that one of my earliest memories was that of accompanying my father to see his old master in his last illness.

His successor was my first schoolmaster—a young man of only moderate education, but sufficiently advanced to teach the boys and girls of the district. The school was held in a dilapidated building called "Bwlchcorn"; the site being now occupied by a more modern building owned by the Congregational Church at Peniel and used for a branch cause.

The conduct of the school, however, was still primitive. How well I remember being, at the age of six, one of a small group of children climbing the slope of the hill from the village to that secluded spot! I have naturally but a faint recollection of the lessons learnt in school, but the memory of the "Welsh Note," and of the "breaking up" of the school for holidays, is as vivid as if those things were but of yesterday.[1]

The "Welsh Note" was the terror of the Welsh child. It consisted of a notched stick bearing the "strange device," "W.N." which was handed to any boy or girl caught speaking Welsh during school hours. The one who had it, kept it secret, and did his part to tempt a

[1]See Appendix, pp. 290–1.

comrade to speak Welsh, so that he might hand it over to him before the " Welsh Note " was called for by the schoolmaster: this being done at stated times. That miserable stick was an outward visible sign of the systematic effort made, not only to teach English, but also to suppress Welsh ; and I well remember how, even at that age, I felt the hardship of being punished for speaking my mother-tongue, when my command of English was pitiably limited.

The other event which left an indelible impression upon me was the " breaking up of the school " for holidays. When the proper time arrived, the children met during the dinner hour in solemn conclave, and arranged forthwith to close the door during the master's absence, and barricade it so that it could not be thrust open. Meanwhile, they decorated themselves with strips of different coloured papers, which were curled and fastened to their caps and hats. When the master arrived, and, finding the door shut, requested that it should be opened, the parleying began between the master outside and the children inside ; always resulting (for, after all, it was a recognised custom, at which the master winked) in the triumph of the children. On the master promising to give the stated holidays, the door was opened, and the children marched out, gaily decorated, and, after being addressed by the master, returned home for their well-earned holidays.

Many other memories crowd upon me as I recall the events of those days. One experience during those brief years which I spent in the village—brief, but so important in the make-up of my life—was the time when I was destined to give up the skirt, petticoat, and pinafore, for the coat, waistcoat, and trousers.[1] My father had promised that he would take me to Mr. Henry Evans, the village tailor (the predecessor of J—— D——), who lived in the

[1]See Appendix, pp. 291–2.

centre of the village, to be measured for a suit of clothes, *similar to those which he himself wore.* He was not long in fulfilling his promise, but that interval seemed to my longing and impatient spirit to be like a short eternity. At length, he took me by the hand along the turnpike road, from the house in which we lived, to Mr. Henry Evans's residence, a distance of about 100 yards. It seemed to me that I was growing visibly, in height and importance, every step of the way. At length we arrived: it was an eventful moment in my career! Mr. Evans, who was exceptionally tall, sat tailor-like upon the table, with his legs so inexplicably plaited as to conceal his feet, and, indeed, even his legs below the knees, and only to reveal the portion from the knees upward, which formed a kind of extemporized table, and upon which rested the sleeveboard, while he, with his nose in close proximity to his knees, was ironing the seams of a sleeve with a hot tailor's goose.

Soon after our arrival there, and the due announcement by my father of the purpose of our visit, the tailor leisurely laid aside the iron and sleeveboard; and then (unfolding his legs, and projecting his feet to, what was to me, an amazing distance, he let them drop over the side of the table, until they had reached the ground), he, as he stood, suddenly shot his head upward into close touch with the ceiling. Then—with one hand resting upon the top of the door, and the other placed upon the crown of my head, as he stooped—he turned me round, and, taking a hurried glance at me, before and behind, said, "That will do, David." That was to me an unutterable disappointment. I had previously seen him, on one occasion, at least, measure my father with a tape measure, upon which there were large figures; and I had, in anticipation of this event, pictured him putting the selfsame tape round my waist, etc., in similar fashion, and then record in his book my various dimensions—but lo! now, he had

unceremoniously dispensed with it all! My soul resented such an astounding neglect, and standing at my full stature, I looked up into the tailor's face, and exclaimed, "But you have not measured me, Mr. Evans!" I shall never forget the sardonic smile that played over his countenance, as he once more stooped, and, condescendingly placing his hand upon my head, took another professional glance at me, before and behind, and then dismissed me, with the withering remark:—"That will do, David; *we don't measure men of your size!*" That scathing retort seemed there and then to arrest my growth; and I am not sure that it did not impede it ever after! Who shall tell to what stature I might have attained, had not that rude village tailor, thus early in my life, stuck his sarcastic needle into me![1]

[1]My venerable friend, the Rev. Dr. Harries ("Afanwy"), formerly of Treherbert, had a very different experience from mine with the measuring tape. He relates to me that, when a child at Aberavon, he was a playmate of children who lived in the same terrace. Their mother died, and, while young Harries was in the house with the children, soon after her death, the carpenter came with a tape to measure the dimensions of the body for the coffin. The children watched the process intently, and a day or two later the same man brought the coffin. By a strange coincidence, a week or two later it was decided that young Harries should have his first tailor-made suit, and the tailor arrived, and took out his tape to measure the lad. The appearance of the tape, however, quickened his memory first of the recent measuring, and then of the coffin (made according to measure) which was subsequently brought, and in which the poor woman was laid. At the sight of the tailor's tape on that occasion, the prospect of a similar experience filled young Harries with horror! Failing to escape from the tailor he set up a piteous howl, protesting against being measured, and, throwing himself on his back on the floor, he resisted vigorously every attempt to put the tape measure on his limbs. He was not prepared for the coffin as yet, and from a dread of being measured for one he renounced the tailor and all his works. Happily, during the eighty-five years that have elapsed since that early incident, he has come to an amicable understanding with the genuine tailor and his tape, while the representative of Old Mortality keeps at a respectable distance, until the grand old man gives him permission to draw near.

Coming to later years, I became familiar, during my periodical visits, with striking personalities in the village and immediate vicinity.

D—— L——, or better known as "Dai'r C—— B——" was a noted character—noted in many respects. He belonged to a prominent group, though very few in number, some four or five, known as the "thirsty" men of the village and neighbourhood. They gained notoriety partly because of their exceptional weakness for intoxicants, and partly because of their ready wit when they were elated. They, moreover, were men not given to a reprobate, or even an irreligious life. They were, in their general attitude, intensely sympathetic towards religion, and with the exception of occasional outbreaks, were regular and devoted adherents of different places of worship. But the old habits which they had formed in early days, before there were Temperance organisations, and when beer and bread and cheese formed a staple food in the lives of the young and old, had obtained such a firm hold upon this group that at stated times, such as market and fair days, they were too often unable to resist the power of intoxicants, despite repeated resolutions.

Dai was notoriously one of the number. He was exceptionally small of stature. The cloth required for making a coat for an ordinary man would have well-nigh sufficed to make a whole suit for Dai. He had, however, a huge head. He was a rural postman, as well as a shoemaker. A special suit had to be made for him, nothing in the ordinary stock being small enough. On the other hand, a special cap had to be made for him, as nothing in stock was sufficiently large. His head, moreover, was well supplied with brain. His mind was strong, active, and alert. He kept in touch with the outside world, especially with religious and political movements. He was impatient with the limitations of his own environments. He sought social converse in every direction, especially with those

better informed than himself. This strong social instinct, however, brought with it, to a man of his temperament and life-long tendency, its special temptations. That was to drift gradually into convivial habits, so that he became exposed to the temptation of excessive drinking when he met congenial spirits. This was specially alluring to him, because he shone in any company as a ready wit, and a master of repartee, with the result that his company was generally welcome, and often sought by men of jovial disposition and merry temperament—especially those younger than himself, who were ready to treat him to drinks as a token of appreciation.

There is a story told of some fellows calling upon Dai one autumn day to accompany them on a nutting expedition. Dai readily consented. As evening drew on it became cold, and Dai began to complain to his companions. They had a shrewd guess that a glass of whisky in the circumstances was just the cure that would prove acceptable to him. They, therefore, sent one of their number to a country inn, in the neighbourhood, for a supply. Upon the return of the messenger Dai eloquently enlarged upon the imminent danger of having his marrow frozen—a danger which had been mercifully averted by the timely intervention of his kind friends. To make matters doubly sure, the company encouraged Dai to repeat the dose. The result was that he became flushed and elated, and was exuberantly fluent, when the farmer, upon whose land the company had been nutting, put in an appearance, and, being annoyed at the damage done to the hedges, expressed his displeasure in vigorous terms. Moreover, the farmer and Dai were members of the same church—that is when Dai was not under discipline—and the farmer thought it to be his duty to bring the case before the church meeting. The night came, and the farmer stated the facts unsparingly; if anything, exaggerating the case. Dai was asked to reply. He admitted that he had taken more

than he ought, but affirmed that he was not drunk ; and that, moreover, the circumstances were exceptionally trying. He described how, being older than the rest, he had been tired out by nutting, when the evening came on, chill and cheerless, and with a searching east wind. He added that he, never having had a good circulation, and withal getting on in years, felt the cold going into his very bones, when the young men, seeing the peril, at once sent for some whisky, and pressed him to take of it freely in the emergency.

The result was that he had possibly become somewhat elated, but he affirmed that he had full possession of his faculties. Personally, he felt convinced that the farmer who had brought the charge against him was far more offended by the fact that some gaps had been made in his hedges by nutting, than because there was any gap in Dai's character by drinking to excess. "The fact was," Dai continued, "he was by no means shocked by people taking too much whisky at his sale a month earlier, when other deacons of that church handed it round to likely customers, and pressed them to drink so that they might make high bids for the goods sold." Dai added that he could not understand how he had the face to bring this case forward, and have those deacons to support him, who had been so recently guilty of such a shady transaction. This fired a magazine ! The secretary of the church, who was a strong abstainer, got up and reminded them how he himself had always denounced, as being utterly un-Christian, this custom of handing drinks round at sales, in order to make men more stupid and reckless in bidding. Others took an opposite view, and the whole place was astir with a very excited discussion. By and by, Dai, taking advantage of a brief pause, addressed the pastor in the chair : "Sir, please excuse me. I have at this moment an important engagement to measure a gentleman's feet for a pair of top-boots, and it is important I should not disappoint, but be punctual

to the appointment. Besides," added Dai, naively, " so far as I can see, it is not my case that is at present before the church ! " Dai left, and, with his leaving, the case collapsed !

Dai's contention that he had taken more than he ought, but, nevertheless, was not drunk, was characteristic of him. The power of discrimination, as to the point when immoderate drinking resulted in drunkenness, had become to Dai a fine art, which he professed to have mastered, but upon which he never seemed to have cast a satisfactory light to others. In his occasional lapses, however, it was very difficult to convict him. He was generally very cautious at such times. For instance, he used to take the produce of his small-holding, consisting of butter and eggs, as well as the fruit of his garden, to Carmarthen market in his donkey-cart. On the way down to Carmarthen, Dai, as a rule, either led the donkey, on foot, or sat heedlessly on the side of the cart. Sometimes, however, Dai appropriated more than was wise, of the results of the sale, in refreshers, before he left Carmarthen in the afternoon, and when this was done he took the precaution of sitting or kneeling in the centre of the cart, and nothing would induce him to move from that spot. He thus maintained his equilibrium, and, however, suspicious men may have been, they could supply no proof of drunkenness against Dai. The donkey and he understood each other, and between them made a slow but sure journey homeward.

He, in spite of this unfortunate infirmity, was a rigid Nonconformist, and was particularly outspoken on what he considered to be the proselytizing efforts of the Established Church in seeking to win over Nonconformists into the Episcopal fold. This was well known, and it was, therefore, with a feeling of being engaged on a hopeless mission, but one that would be likely to prove amusing, that, we are told, two collectors—Archdeacon James, of Abergwili, and Captain Phillips, Cwm Gwili—called upon

Dai, as a parishioner, to contribute towards the erection of a boundary wall to a new branch church, in the immediate neighbourhood of Peniel Congregational Church, of which Dai, as already explained, was, with rare lapses, a member, although perhaps not quite an ornament. The archdeacon explained the project, while Dai listened sceptically and unsympathetically. In reply he at once asked pointedly how many churchmen they considered lived in the immediate neighbourhood; and then why the few churchmen who resided in the district did not attend the church at Llanllawddog, or Abergwili. It was explained that the distance of the churches was great for the few who lived in that neighbourhood to attend them. Besides, it was added, that the erection of a new church might induce others to attend who had not hitherto done so.

That was enough for Dai. He replied: "That's exactly it. You want to build a church in order to allure people who belong to other denominations to leave their own places and come to you. Do you know," he added, as he raised his voice, "that it is illegal for anyone to put up an empty beehive, when he has no bees of his own, or the immediate prospect of a swarm from one of his other hives, to fill it? And yet this is precisely what you are doing—putting up an empty hive when you haven't half-a-dozen bees of your own to occupy it; but you do it with the hope that other bees will swarm from some of your neighbours' hives, and fill it for you. No, no," concluded Dai, "not a penny. What you need is to fill the hive you've already got, before you begin to think about putting up another. The only good reason you could have for putting up a new hive is that the old one is too full. But your reason for putting up a new one is that the old one is too empty!"[1] Thus Archdeacon James and his friend had to leave Dai

[1]See Appendix, p. 293.

empty-handed, but they had a memorable interview, to which the Archdeacon, in after days, referred more than once with great glee.

There was another character who belonged to the small thirsty fraternity in the village and neighbourhood, and who, in spite of his occasional lapses, would have been shocked and pained if he had been classed with the irreligious and profane. The fact was that during his whole life he had made various attempts to overcome his inveterate thirst, which came upon him periodically, and he had, during the whole time, tried to maintain a close relationship with church life, but only with very partial success, in the form of a frequently hyphenated adherence.

In his earliest days he was a Nonconformist—I believe a Congregationalist. His fondness for intoxicants, however, brought him more than once under church discipline, and ultimate exclusion. Smarting under the lash of excommunication, he turned over to the Established Church, and, as he had an excellent voice and was a good conductor, he was appointed a precentor in a branch church in the neighbourhood. There was no improvement, however, in his habits, but he found it easier to endure stern personal reproof from his vicar in private than to submit to have his case brought, as it was when he was a Nonconformist, before a church meeting, and receiving not only a reprimand, but also a suspension, and a possible exclusion from membership. Down beneath all his inconsistency there was in him a clinging tenacity to religious privileges and observances, which made him a constant attendant at church services, and an aspirant to be useful in church psalmody, whenever allowed to do so.

He was called "T - m y D - r - n." because of an amusing incident in his early life. I well remember the first time I ever saw him. He was not a native of

the village, but came to live there about the beginning of the present century. He had settled there nearly a year when I paid one of my periodical visits to the village. I recollect sending on the trap in which I had ridden from Carmarthen, in order to speak to a friend, and then following on foot. As I descended the hill into the village, I saw someone " tacking " from side to side, like a ship against the breeze, as he came along the turnpike road towards me, evidently from the village inn. On reaching the level at the foot, I met him in the centre of the road, as he was "tacking" across. He at once stood, and, looking me full in the face, murmured : " Mr. Davies, Brighton ? " I answered " Yes." " I am glad to see you : I heard you were coming," he responded. " I am glad to meet you," I replied. " What is your name ? " The reply was prompt : " T - m y D - r - n." I inquired what his surname was, to which he answered : " Never mind what my surname is. No one knows me by my surname. I am known as ' T - m y D - r - n.' " He then added in half confidential tones, " They tell me you are a great theologian ! " " Do they ? " I responded, as modestly as I could. " Yes," he replied, " and I am a theologian, too." " Oh then, Thomas," I interjected, " we are well met." " Yes," he replied, " and that brings me to the point. There's a difficult question that has pressed upon my chest (" gwasgu ar 'y mrest i ") for years, and I have asked it to Mr. Herbert, the parson, Mr. Jacob, Peniel, Mr. Edward Davies, the Methodist, and your Mr. John at Horeb ; but I cannot get a satisfactory answer."

I inquired what it was. He at once interjected, " Wait a minute," and explained carefully that he found no fault with God and Providence, because, he assured me, he was a religious man, and would not blaspheme ; and yet he confessed the question pressed upon him very much. At length, he looked steadfastly into my face, and slowly, and very emphatically, said, " This is the

question. Listen, please!—*Why has the Lord made me more thirsty than everybody else?*" The question was certainly an arresting one. I paused for a moment, and then replied, "You tell me that you are a theologian?" "Yes," was the reply. "Then, as a theologian, I must ask you another question before I answer yours. Are you sure that it is the Lord that has made you thirstier than any one else?" He stood startled, and then looking slightly askance at me, sadly replied, "That's another poser!" and with the remark, he, with a look of great disappointment, turned on his heels, and left me in the centre of the road, as he took a zigzag course for his own home close by! I frequently met him subsequently, generally sober, but occasionally the worse for drink, yet he never repeated that question, although it was evident that it still "pressed upon his chest."

D—— J——, of P—nc—g, to whom I have already referred, was a very striking character. He was a massive type of a man, a solid block from Nature's quarry upon which the chisel of refinement had left a very little of its mark, but which retained its ruggedness and irregularity in uncouth protrusions. His speech, as to substance and manner, was unlike anybody else's—an accentuated staccato style of delivery, in short brisk sentences, sharply cut off, and all in a stern monotone, without any attempt at any cadence or modulation. The peculiarity of his enunciation and the pointed, and often humorous, nature of his utterances, at once arrested attention. Before he came to P—nc—g, he lived for many years near Panteg. At that time he attended Panteg Chapel. He had been brought up amid primitive conditions in the early decades of the last century, upon a frugal fare of bread and cheese and beer, and upon broth and a chunk of meat—generally bacon, or beef dried and salted. Thus he had throughout life cultivated the use of intoxicants with his daily food, and when thirsty he took freely of them as a beverage

Being, moreover, of a powerful constitution, he could dispose of a quart of home brewed ale, at one attempt, without effort, and without any after effect, except of exhilaration.

He had always a sympathetic leaning toward weaker men than himself, who became victims of drink. Thus, when any case of discipline for indulgence in intoxicants came before the church, he had but little to say, except by way of a plea for gentle treatment. On one occasion, the case of a member of the church who was most useful as a church worker, and was liked by all for his genial disposition, and his readiness to co-operate with others in all kinds of service, was brought before the church, on a charge of having drunk to excess on one fair day.

The charge was brought against him by a rigid disciplinarian of stern puritanic mien, who did little but fault-finding, and who seldom, if ever, managed to work peaceably with any one else—a man who stood aloof from his fellow members, and from whom they in return were glad to stand at a distance. The result was that the sympathy of the community was with the accused member, and in the absence of direct proof of other than a slight excess on his part, there was a strong inclination to deal leniently with him. After many expressions of opinion, the minister, who felt that there was a good deal of personal feeling in the charge, brought forward by the unpopular member, asked other members to speak, and, in so doing, pressed with his foot, under the table in the big pew, the right foot of D—— J——. The latter, however, remained stolid and silent. At length the minister called upon him by name to speak. He instantly got up and said, "I suppose I must say something, as already our minister has trodden upon every corn I have on my right foot, in nudging me under the table to speak. Well, while the case has been discussed," added D—— J——, "I have been thinking of two horses I have. One is a strong robust horse; but he does very little work, and, when harnessed with others,

generally jibs and never pulls his share, especially up a hill. His traces are generally slack, except when he pulls sideways, and makes it most difficult for his partner to do his part, in fact doubles his companion's task by his own perversity and laziness. I have only one remedy for him when he plays his capers, and that is a free exercise of the whip. He understands nothing else! But the other horse is altogether different. He is a charming good-tempered creature, always in good spirits, pulls with all his might, especially up a stiff hill, and is a splendid worker either alone or harnessed with another. He has, it is true, one failing. Once now and then he trips a little, and appears almost to fall. It is evident he can't help it. All I, therefore, do with him is to give him a word of warning and exhortation. And that's what I would do to-night with the brother who may have tripped a bit, but does not appear to have fallen, or at least, has not cut his knees—give him a word of warning, and of exhortation!"

D—— J——'s unconventional mannerisms, and rugged speech, exposed him to many criticisms, with the result that his wife, Mary, who was far more sensitive to such criticisms than he was, used to remind him of certain remarks made by their minister, that seemed to her to touch one or other of his many idiosyncracies. He used to listen to all, and say little. On one occasion the minister remained to tea with Mr. and Mrs. J——. Suddenly, about half way through the meal, D—— J—— said to his minister, "Mr. Jacob, I want you to do me a favour." "What is that?" asked Mr. Jacob. "I want you to preach one sermon for Mary" (his wife). Mr. Jacob replied, "I hope I have preached many to her." "Oh, no," said D——, "she always tells me after a specially searching sermon from you, 'There is another sermon for you, D——'. She has never said, 'There's a sermon for me.' Never. I want you to preach just *one* sermon for Mary, and not all for me!"

Another noted character, but of quite a different type, in the village itself, was J—— D——. He was a tailor in his earlier days, but for many years before his death had given up tailoring, and subsisted partly on what he had saved by frugal living, and partly on what he was able to add by hiring a field or two, keeping a pony and some poultry, and selling the produce of the garden and fowls at Carmarthen on market days. He was gifted with a keen discernment in many directions, but was erratic in speech and conduct, and was by no means quick to discern the incongruous in word or deed. He, as a tailor, was frequently engaged to lay out the dead in their coffins!

In the neighbourhood, at that time—and the custom still exists in many districts—the dead were not placed in shrouds, but in their best suit, or dress. A freeholder, owning two farms, and a prominent member of the Calvinistic Church in the village, died. Ordinary people in those days had only two suits, one for work and one for holiday and Sunday. The latter was called "pilyn parch." But this gentleman, being well-to-do, had yet another suit for very special occasions. As a matter of fact, he had some three months or so before his death, so it is said, got a new suit made in time to go to the Sasiwn, or the Association meetings of the Calvinistic Methodists. When he died it was decided that he should be laid out in that particular suit. J—— D——, also a member of the same church, was asked to perform that task. J—— D—— prided himself in being able to "lay-out," as no one in the neighbourhood could, and he looked upon this as a special occasion for the exercise of his very best skill. He, therefore, took great care to do his task skilfully, thus, when he had completed his work, he was exceptionally pleased with it, and with himself. He immediately called into the room the daughter and heiress (who had now lost both her parents), expecting her to share in his high appreciation of the way

in which the task had been done. She came, accompanied by the chief, and confidential, maid. On her arrival, J—— D——, addressing her in his own characteristically quick and earnest manner, asked, as he pointed to the coffin, " Miss —— what do you think of your father now ; how do you think I have done my work ? " She replied in solemn tones that she thought all was well done. But that was not quite as laudatory as he had expected, or thought he deserved. He, therefore, turned to the chief maid and said, " H——, how do you think your master looks now ?" She replied that he looked very well. " Do you think anyone could have done better for him than I have done ? " interjected J—— D——. She admitted that she did not think anyone could have done better. But this again was not so enthusiastically said as he could have wished, so, straightening himself, and looking intently into the coffin, he exclaimed, " Well, if you ask me, *I think he looks fit to go to the Sasiwn any minute !* "

To J—— D——, as a zealous Calvinistic Methodist, being fit to go to a Sasiwn was the acme of fitness this side of heaven ; and the daughter and chief maid, as Methodists, would readily catch the significance of that remark ; but it never occurred to J—— D——, what readily occurred to them, that it was scarcely the congruous thing to say in the circumstances ! Yet, that was his own prosaic way of expressing his satisfaction, that he had succeeded in rendering the highest service in his power to one whom he respected, and for those with whom he desired to sympathise. He was eccentric and somewhat vain, but he was neither irreverent nor hard hearted. Indeed, even when his own widowed mother, with whom he had lived as a bachelor for many years, died, and was laid in her coffin, he was equally quaint and unconventional in his approval of the way in which the task had been done by a neighbour. On being called in to see his mother in

her coffin, he said, " That will do very nicely ! She looks quite comfortable there!" His vocabulary was limited, his choice of adjectives unconventional and even grotesque, and his phrases, all struck off in his own mint, had no duplicates from other mints. He had his own mould—rugged and uncouth, but original—and when that was broken, it could never be reproduced. He was an awkward and rugged specimen of humanity, but beneath all there was a great deal of genuine human feeling, that never, however, found adequate expression in his erratic deeds or eccentric speech.

I, personally, on one occasion, had, unwittingly, the misfortune of offending him, through quite a misunderstanding on his part. For a time, therefore, he had nothing to say in my favour. Just then, I had promised to preach at Horeb, the Baptist Chapel, in the village, with which my earliest years had been so closely associated; and the matter was freely talked about among the villagers and others. A carpenter outside the village, who was a Congregationalist, and a bit of a sermon taster (while J—— D—— counted himself past master in that art), asked J—— D—— whether he intended being present. He replied that he had not quite decided. The carpenter sought to induce him to come, and, in so doing, said a few complimentary and, no doubt, extravagant things about me, as having occupied prominent pulpits in England, not the least Holland Road pulpit, which I then occupied, in Hove, Brighton. " Oh, that's nothing," replied J—— D—— emphatically. " It's like this, John. The English people, especially in swell places like Regent's Park, where Mr. Davies was, and Brighton, where he is now, go to services merely to take stock of one another, and especially the women of each other's hats and dresses, etc., and Mr. Davies is no doubt smart, and gets up, and talks pleasantly to them, while they are looking round, and taking note of things, and then brings the service

very soon to a close. They are very satisfied with that sort of a thing; and, no doubt, he does very well for them, he is cut out for it; but, John," he added, with great emphasis, "for *people enlightened in the Scriptures, like you and me, he would never do! Never, John!*"

There was one other prominent character, who had come into the neighbourhood, as a young man, to fell trees, and, ultimately marrying one of the maidens of the village, had settled down there. He was tall and of a powerful build, and having had considerable experience in early days in going from place to place, where tree fellers, or navvies, were required—an experience which was increased by his later periodical visits to Glamorgan during the hay harvest—he was able from the outset to impress his fellow villagers with the tall stories he related of the events which he had witnessed, and the feats of strength which he had performed. The tale of Samson and the Gates of Gaza did not surpass them. In his later days he settled down to quarrying and breaking stones for the county authorities. Not infrequently by the wayside, as he broke stones, he would dilate upon his wonderful experiences to gaping youths, and others of a credulous turn of mind, who cared to listen to him. He had a fluent tongue, a suave manner, an astounding memory which was supplemented by a vivid imagination. During the long years in which he had repeated his wonderful stories, the tales themselves had gradually expanded and developed, and he had repeated them so often, that he, apparently, had himself become somewhat uncertain as to the exact line of demarcation between fact and fancy in his tales. Meanwhile those who, during the years, had watched their steady expansion and development made very liberal deductions, and only believed a fractional part of what was told them as they winked at each other, while he proceeded, as careless as he was oblivious, of whether those who listened accepted all

as gospel or not. In any case he knew that his tales were popular, and supplied a pleasant entertainment to those who listened, and that sufficed.

It will readily be realized that the foregoing characters were exceptional, even in their day. They by no means, either by reason of their thirst, or quaintness, can be given as samples of the great majority of the contemporary inhabitants of the village and neighbourhood. Indeed, the fact that they were exceptional was what chiefly brought them into prominence, and, even after their day, made them the subjects of many an amusing story, which the villagers have found a delight in repeating. Yet they were typical of groups of men found in most districts in Wales in those days of social transition, forty and fifty years ago; and who, in spite of their limitations and imperfections, are worthy of a place in the memories of men, as possessing qualities which are too rarely found to-day in either hamlet or town. Happily many of these old evils of social life in agricultural Wales, in earlier days, are passing, and, in some cases, have passed away, especially that to which we have specially referred, namely, the drinking habits of fifty years ago. On the other hand, with the advent of greater refinement of manner and outward decorum, which has to a considerable extent taken place, there has gradually entered into the life of our Welsh peasantry more superficiality, and a less robust type of manhood and womanhood, than that which was so characteristic of former generations, and which I desire to keep in remembrance, by these personal reminiscences of the days that are gone.

CHAPTER III.

MY NATIVE VILLAGE.

MY FATHER AND MOTHER, AND OUR REMOVAL FROM THE VILLAGE.

MY father and mother were striking instances of having been drawn together by the force of contrasts. Being, however, the children of second cousins, there were also family characteristics common to both. Both were strong in social qualities, which led to a wide circle of friendships, and also in rich religious instincts, which made them active and enthusiastic as members of Christian churches. My father, however, on his mother's side, belonged to a Llangeitho family, which was inbued with all the inspiring traditions of Daniel Rowland, whose labours were inseparably associated with that Mecca of Calvinistic Methodism. But early in life —when, indeed, he was as yet in his teens—he came under the influence of the noted James ("Shams") Davies, the Baptist minister, who was excluded from his Association for his Arminian views, but who, twenty-one years later, was received back upon precisely the same creed. To the close of life my father cherished toward him the enthusiastic admiration of a hero-worshipper, as he did toward no one else on earth. James Davies' powerful intellect and rare culture—rare especially in that age in obscure country districts, like those of Rhydargaeau—made my father his absolute captive and loyal follower.

This was all the more striking because James Davies was seventy years old when my father was sixteen. The charm of that great man's personality was thrown over my father in those early years. His powerful vindication of human free will, and personal responsibility, of believers'

baptism, and baptism by immersion, appealed to the young man in those formative years. Thus he left the Calvinistic Methodists, and identified himself with the Baptist Church, in the village. In due time he bore the penalty of this in being excluded from being a beneficiary under a will, on account of his "apostacy." But the change was thorough, and destined to be permanent.

The powerful dialectical gifts of James Davies, moreover, in those days of strenuous conflict between Calvinists and Arminians, Baptists and Paedo-baptists, greatly impressed, and gave a permanent bias to the mind of the young man, who was himself blessed naturally with keen reasoning faculties, and an incisive controversial style. Among the earliest memories of my life are those of heated discussions between my father and others—including many ministers—who called upon him with the avowed intention of engaging in a clash of arms, on the great religious questions debated in those days. To the end of life this fondness for discussion never died down—indeed, it became scarcely modified—in my father's case. At the age of eighty-seven when he died, a discussion on "Justification" and "Sanctification," "General and Particular Election," "the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace," "the Ordinances of the Christian Church," "Church Government," etc., never came to him amiss.

His political and social creed, too, was based upon his religious convictions. Human privilege and human responsibility, with him, went hand in hand. Serfdom was inconsistent with the true dignity of man as man, Liberty—personal, social, political and religious—was the birthright of every man. Humanity was to him a brotherhood, God having made of one blood all nations to dwell upon the face of the earth. Society, to him, consisted of a network of mutual dependencies, and, therefore, a network of mutual responsibilities. Religion

was, to him, a spiritual power, dependent upon no temporal patronage or support, but mighty in its own inherent life, which God had implanted in it as a vital unquenchable spark. All it needed was free scope for the development of its own life—a free field, and no favour. These and similar sentiments decided his politics. He was a Liberal—a Liberal of the type of "Gwilym Hiraethog," Mr. Gee of Denbigh, and other Nonconformist Liberal leaders of that day. But he was a theologian first, and a politician second.

It was in this atmosphere that I spent the earliest years of my life, and formed my own convictions, which have, in the main, remained, as the basal principles of my creed, to this day. It was in this atmosphere, moreover, that I also formed a liking, I must confess, for debate, a liking that, no doubt, grew all the more readily on account of natural proclivities which I inherited from my father. For better, for worse, that is undoubtedly true. In any case, the memory of those strenuous discussions has always been inspiring to me. It has always added a piquancy and intensity to the experiences of my youth, under my father's roof, and in my father's workshop, as they are recalled. I have since those early days gone far into the world, come into contact with human knowledge and culture, and have drawn to some extent from far-off fountains; but I often feel that the truths and principles most worth knowing, and which form the basis upon which my life has been built, were those I learnt as a lad beneath my father's roof—first in that obscure village in Carmarthenshire, where I first saw the light; and subsequently in the busier centre of activity in the heart of Glamorgan, whither my parents removed.

There was another fact connected with my father's early life, which, as it became known to me, through casual references, greatly impressed my youthful mind. When a young man, under the powerful ministry of the

Rev. James Davies, my father began to take active part in the life, and the public services, of the Church, and, as the result, was soon encouraged to exercise his gifts in preaching, and that with such acceptance as to lead to his being recommended for college, and his being accepted as a student. But in that juncture his father died, leaving his mother with eight children, of whom my father was the eldest. He, at once, gave up all prospects of the ministry, and worked hard at his trade for many years, thus enabling his mother to rear her children, until all were able successfully to fight their own battles in the struggle of life.

Thus my father remained at his craft, and became the village shoemaker, instead of a Baptist minister. The sacrifice cost him much, but he offered it gladly with the strong conviction that God would yet compensate for all, by giving him a son who should fill his place. That assurance was fulfilled when I, as his eldest son, became a minister, and indeed, when yet another son was set apart for the ministry, but whose early death cut short a promising career. My father never ceased to rejoice in the assurance that I was given him to fill his place ; and the knowledge of that fact has ever been present with me as an incentive and a joy. My father offered the sacrifice and I have entered into the joy ! But so did he in me !

My mother in many respects presented a strong contrast to my father. Physically he was robust and healthy, while she, as far back as I can remember, was weakly and delicate. In keeping with this, he had a powerful, and at times, especially when vindicating a cherished truth or principle, a stern countenance, while her's was exceptionally gentle and refined. Thus in my parents were strikingly symbolized strength and beauty in the home of my childhood. Happily each recognised in the other the qualities which he or she lacked, and thus the home was always exceptionally harmonious and peaceful. My

mother, while she was professedly amused with my father's fondness for controversy, and often twitted him for it, stealthily cherished a quiet appreciation of his controversial alertness; while he looked upon her gentleness and grace—qualities which he consciously lacked—with something like adoring admiration. This harmonious blend between two striking contrasts, was not lost upon us as children; and I well remember how often it impressed me as the eldest child. I have often thought that I have, for better for worse, inherited, if not a love of controversy, at least a keen sense of its need, and appreciation of its value, from my father. I wish I could with equal confidence believe that I had inherited something, even a tithe, of my mother's gentleness! In any case, I thank God, that the memory of her refined gentle spirit abides with me, as a hallowing grace, amid all the strenuous experiences through which I have passed.

By a strange co-incidence my mother in her early days was in the service of the distinguished James Davies, who exerted so mighty an influence upon my father's character and life. Her father, moreover, was a kinsman of the well-known David Evans, co-pastor with the Rev. James Davies at Ffynnon Henry and Rhydargaeau.

Indeed, my mother inherited much of the humour and pleasantry, characteristic of the family to which David Evans belonged, and which he possessed to such an exceptional degree, while my father had a powerful intellect, but only a limited fund of humour, and little aptness for a joke or playful repartee. He was strong and serious, while she was vivacious and playful: one was the complement of the other, and thus they both presented a happy combination of qualities, to us as children, which made the home a happy one.

My grandfather on my mother's side was a weaver, who, for many years, under the *nom de plume* of "Daniel Ddu," wrote much to "*Seren Cymru*," and other

periodicals, and who, as I mention elsewhere, after the age of 55, learnt Greek,[1] so that he could read fluently his Greek Testament, and understand what he read, for many years before his death at seventy-seven. He was a member of Ffynnon Henry, and attended the services there, walking to and fro, a distance of at least four miles from Maesygaer, where he lived. He also attended Rhydargaeau, the branch church, on occasions when he did not go all the way to Ffynnon Henry.

I have a glimmering recollection of the Rev. James Davies, who died in 1860 at the advanced age of ninety-three, but of Rev. David Evans I have a clearer recollection, although that, too, is entirely that of a child. In those two pastors Ffynnon Henry and Rhydargaeau were privileged to a very exceptional degree. The two represented striking contrasts, the Rev. James Davies, being, as already indicated, a man of powerful intellect, a keen dialectician, and one of the greatest theologians of his day, although representing what was, during the greater portion of his life, the smaller section of his denomination, namely the Arminians—the larger being high Calvinists. On the other hand, David Evans troubled himself very little about doctrines, but confined himself to evangelistic preaching, and did so with a wealth of imagery, a quaintness of style, a homeliness of illustration and an exuberance of humour, which made his ministry very acceptable to the great mass of the people. Thus James Davies's preaching was eclectic, drawing men of keen thought and theological taste, while David Evans's preaching was simple, racy and imaginative, and, as such, appealed to a much wider, though less studious circle. Between the two, a ministry of rare power and attraction was enjoyed by those two churches, with which my parents were connected in their early days; whereas it was also evident in later years, that while my father

[1]See Appendix, p. 294.

was an enthusiastic disciple of James Davies, the thoughtful theologian, my mother was charmed by the homely and breezy style of David Evans, the humorous and racy evangelist.

Our removal from the village, when I was a little over seven years old, was a bewildering upheaval to me as a child; and, indeed, never since then have I ceased to look upon it as an event of the first magnitude in my life. Life was never the same again to me, after the first break up of the home of my childhood. Moreover, I have since learnt, that this event was almost as bewildering to my parents as it was to me. But to me! I shall never forget it. Hitherto the amphitheatre of hills, that surrounded my native village, seemed to me in the main to environ creation, and although I had been to Carmarthen, and even Llanstephen, they appeared to me to be just the extreme outskirts of the world, which had its centre in Rhydargaeau. But that day of removal came as a cruel disillusionment. The further we went the wider the horizons became, and the more the walls of my little world were pushed back into the cold, environing, mist. The world was no longer the cosy world of my infancy. It became, indeed, a larger world, but it also became far less sheltered and homely. For better, for worse, the world of my infancy was gone, and something much bigger, but also much colder and desolate, took its place.[1]

Nearly seventy years have passed away since that first upheaval in my life, which opened to my view widening horizons, in all their bewildering mystery. The world was no longer embraced by the caressing hills that surrounded my native village, as it had been until now; and yet, with the larger outlook of life, which came to me during succeeding years, that village never ceased to assert its pre-eminence in my esteem, or lessened its hold upon my heart. Over thirty years of my ministry were spent

[1]See Appendix, p. 294.

in England (twenty-four years in London and Brighton), yet every year that village pulled at my heart, pleading with me to go back periodically; and there, amid the scenes in which I drew the first inspirations of life, replenish the strength, which the exacting demands of populous and exciting centres had insidiously sapped. And so, at intervals, I have, throughout the years, gone to that quiet hamlet, and amid its lonely nooks, and peaceful solitudes, learnt to become young again, for the strenuous duties which have awaited me on my return to life's sterner tasks. During one of those visits, I wrote, many years ago, in homely Welsh rhyme, my impressions of the relative value of country and town life, much to the advantage of the former in all that pertained to naturalness and charm.[1]

During subsequent visits, too, I have re-entered into the life of that village community, and (with the experience gained, from having been brought more and more into contact with human character in other circumstances, as known in our towns and cities) have noted the undoubted differences, for good or evil, which divide the peasant from the townsman. The conditions under which character is formed and developed in these instances are essentially different, and, therefore, the results cannot be similar, or, indeed, be easily compared. A townsman can never understand, or estimate aright, the character of a countryman, nor has the countryman any efficient standard by which he can fairly judge the townsman. They occupy different planes, and breathe different atmospheres: indeed, they live in different worlds. But the study of the one, on that account, should be all the more interesting and instructive to the other. Hence an exchange of visits, as between the village and the town, should be productive of great good to both.

[1]See Appendix, pp. 298–9.

During my frequent visits to my native village, nothing has proved more interesting to me than the disclosure of qualities and characteristics in the peasant, which are either entirely wanting in the townsman, or, if found, are found in a very modified form; and yet, by the entire absence of which from human life, the world would be unspeakably poorer. Those characteristics, like those in towns, are very varied, and have often glaring defects, as well as striking attractions. It is easy enough only to note one phase to the neglect of others, and thus give a very one-sided portraiture. I have had occasion, as already intimated, in my "Echoes from the Welsh Hills," and "John Vaughan and His Friends, or More Echoes," to represent one great type of religious character to be found, especially forty or fifty years ago, in Welsh villages and hamlets. But, in so doing, I was careful to note that I only sought to portray what was characteristic of, indeed almost unique in, Welsh, as distinct from English, religious life among the peasantry.

There were, of course, other sections of the community, which represented other aspects of the peasant life of Wales. Indeed this still remains true to a very large extent. Often one witnesses a blend of qualities, which awakens curiosity and interest, and which require such explanations as only an intimate knowledge of the circumstances connected with such can supply. Idiosyncrasies, incongruities, and inconsistencies, in many instances, call for that careful and discriminating attention, which will infallibly make them more intelligible, and even interesting, to the outsider, although in some cases it may not fully justify them. In the country, as well as in the town, we find men and women of great variety of type, and diversity of gifts, and only the man who recognises this can be fitted to depict our peasant population with faithfulness and fairness.

Now I am keenly conscious of the difficulty of the task I have undertaken in this respect. The difficulty of reproducing with fidelity the moral, social, and mental qualities of an individual is, indeed, great; how much more those of a people? This is further vastly increased when the portraitures, as in this case, have to be reproduced from memory, in the form of reminiscences. I look, of course, at them simply through my own eyes, and, after all, the question of comparative vision is a profound study to which we have not given sufficient attention. The personal taste and bias of the portrayer, moreover, necessarily come in, and largely decide the leading features of the portrait. Some one—I forget who—criticised Lord Bacon's work on the Lord Chancellors of England by saying that what marred otherwise able portraitures was that Lord Bacon insisted upon putting his own characteristic nose upon each Lord Chancellor's face; and all who have seen Lord Bacon's portrait will agree that his nose was far more unique than elegant.

It is precisely here that the personal bias or idiosyncracy of a writer, in his history or description of a people, often comes in, and mars the accuracy, and therefore, the true value, of his work. I have personally, more than once, seen a portraiture of the Welsh people, the most prominent feature of which has appeared to me to be utterly alien to our national character, and I have been perplexed; but only till I have seen a portrait of—or otherwise got to know—the author himself. Then I have instantly seen the explanation of it all. That author has simply put his own proboscis, which is his most prominent, but by no means his most attractive, feature, on the face of the Welsh people! Hence the startlingly repugnant caricature which he has sought to pass as a portrait!

That enormity I am most anxious to avoid; but, lest I forget, I desire at the outset to say that I merely profess to give reproductions of men and customs as they have

appeared to me from my own particular angle of vision, and often in the haste and hurly-burly of life, and, as such, I present them as my personal impressions, to be taken for what they are worth. My descriptions are distinctly local and personal; but, as all these are necessary to the make-up of a nation, I give them as supplying instances of the qualities which, on the lighter and generally more humorous side of life, are striking characteristics of Welsh people. I will only add that the reminiscences given are those which I have promiscuously gathered for more than fifty years, and, as such, they refer to various types, and, I think, disclose different qualities which, if not always exemplary, supply, nevertheless, an interesting study of various aspects of character and life, as they have existed in the heart of Wales; but which are becoming more scarce even there as the years pass by. If not soon recorded, they will utterly be forgotten.

Of the steadier religious type, and of a puritanic mould, there have been, throughout the years, striking specimens in the village and neighbourhood. Mr. E—— D——, a farmer in fair circumstances, but who, in harmony with the general custom, worked on his own farm in a garb which barely distinguished him from one of his own farm labourers, had been brought up in the old school of strenuous toil, and frugal living. He was a member and deacon of Horeb, and, together with his wife, notwithstanding their frugal habits, were generous supporters of the church, and of every good cause toward which that church contributed. He was a grandson of the Rev. James Davies, the old distinguished pastor of that church, and as such inherited traditions of absolute fidelity in all that pertained to the interests of the cause in that place. But while he thus responded readily to all claims upon his support, he never as much as modified his old frugal method of living. This, indeed, seemed, if anything, to become more pronounced as he got older. On one occasion, in his later years, and

only a few years ago, he went to Mr. T—— D——, the village tailor, a member of the church, to be measured for a new suit. He almost apologised for doing so at his time of life, and impressed upon the tailor the importance of not having too good a material, as that would be sure to outlast his life. Something of a very ordinary character, that would not last for more than a few years at most, was what he wanted. When all was arranged, Mr. E—— D——, just as he was leaving, turned suddenly back, as an after-thought, and said, " But be sure to put in *strong pockets!* " The tailor immediately replied : " Why should the *pockets* be specially strong—you do not mean to take them with you, do you ? " The veteran laughed heartily. He had not realised the full meaning of his own request, and accepted the rebuke saying, " You are right ! No I don't expect to take them with me, any more than the trousers ! " This request for strong pockets was the habit of a lifetime, in ordering a new suit, and the old saint was slow in growing out of it.

Apropos of this, there was another old Christian—a Calvinistic Methodist—in Carmarthen, who by a strenuous life had become prosperous as a timber merchant, and who had become increasingly liberal as he succeeded. He was grieved to find that in the same church, others who had succeeded, remained mean and grasping. In a fellowship meeting, after the disclosure of some striking instances of this, the old man stood up, and warned those present of the folly of it all, adding : " Remember, that shrouds have no pockets ! " Who that heard those words could ever forget them !

I am aware that there is an Italian version of this saying ; but I have every reason for believing that the old Welsh veteran had never heard of that. It was one of those reflections which, under certain circumstances, come alike to a devoutly reflective Welshman or Italian !

Again—as a striking instance of simplicity of faith in rural districts—a distant relative of " Myfyr Emlyn," some miles away, was brought in during the " Evan Roberts " Revival, and was very childlike in his faith. On one occasion he took an heifer to the fair to sell, and obtained £5 for it. He was a farmer in a very small way, and did not often handle much gold. He therefore, as he approached the house, took the money out of his pocket, and reckoned the £5 carefully into one of his hands, and then held them firmly as he entered the yard. Suddenly he remembered that he had something to do in the barn. He entered, and very carefully put the money on one side, so that he might have the use of both hands. When the task was done he looked for the money, but could not remember where he had put it ! He was greatly perplexed, but the more he taxed his memory the more bewildered he was. He dared not go to the house. He knew that the first question his wife would ask him would be—" Have you sold the heifer ? " And then, " For how much ? " and then the inevitable question " Where's the money ? " This was an ordeal that he was keenly anxious to avoid. Meanwhile, the day was darkening and the prospect of finding the money was decreasing. In his emergency he fell on his knees, and exclaimed—" O Lord thou knowest I have mislaid the £5, and Thou, too, knowest where they are—tell me." Still all was dark—and then, in his desperation, he added, " Lord tell me, for Thou knowest where they are." Then as a final plea, he added—" If Thou hadst lost them, Lord, and I knew where they were, I would tell Thee ! " It was a child's prayer, and, as such it was heard, for, strange to tell, he no sooner opened his eyes, and got up on his feet, than he placed his hand upon his mislaid treasure !

About the same time, a farmer, who had been recently converted, lost a large number of potatoes, which had been stolen from the mound. He, in the next family worship,

prayed to God about it, and asked him to *convince the thief of sin*, saying " Lord, Thou knowest well who he is ! " and then, after a momentary pause, he added, " I suspect, too ! "

There was a refreshing simplicity about those petitions which could not be mistaken for irreverence, or undue familiarity. Of that type was another prayer, offered by a converted fisherman of the most ignorant type, who lived in Carmarthen, if I remember correctly at Danybank, one of the poorest districts in the town. It was during the Revival. He earnestly prayed for the town, and said, " O Lord have mercy on Carmarthen—wicked Carmarthen !—especially Danybank. *Thou* knowest a good deal, Lord, about Danybank ; but," added the old man fervently, " *if Thou only knewest half of what I know !* "

In connection with the " Evan Roberts " Revival, there was a great deal of misgiving among some religious stalwarts in West Wales. The " Owen " Revival, in 1859, had been inseparably connected with powerful preaching, consisting of sound scriptural teaching, homely and telling illustrations and anecdotes, and thrilling appeals. The " Evan Roberts " Revival, on the other hand, had very little preaching or teaching, and seemed to depend upon singing and intense emotion. Indeed all order in the services was very often deliberately ignored. At such times, as many as half a dozen would speak all over the building where they met, and, by and by, someone would break in with the singing of a hymn. Evan Roberts encouraged this ; while old religious leaders in many instances were shocked by the apparent irreverence of it all. It was said (and I had no reason to doubt the truthfulness of the story, judging from what I knew of the sentiments of that steadier type of Christians) that at one revival meeting, where there was a great noise and commotion, when the leader of the meeting, who was in the pulpit, asked all those to stand who were " on their way to Glory," or wished to go. Up

stood all the congregation, consisting of all types of people, who had been swept in from the public houses and the streets. There was one exception. An old deacon in the corner of the big pew, sat down persistently. He did not relish the appearance of things. At last the leader of the meeting, looking at him, asked, "Don't you want to go to Glory, John Thomas?" The old man looked up and replied, while he remained still seated,—" Oh, yes, I want to go to Glory, but *not with this excursion, thank you!*"

There were, indeed, others of the more rugged stalwarts out of sympathy with much that was done in revival meetings. Among other objections were those to the late hours in which they were held. At Peniel Chapel the meeting on one occasion was running into the late hours of the night, when D—— J——, of P—nc—g, was asked whether he would like to say something. "Yes," was the prompt reply, "it is to suggest that it would be far more Christian for us to go home, see to the cattle, and go to bed, than remain here to sing and shout at these unearthly hours, and call it religion! Good night!"

As a further instance of the quaintness of some rural saints—I am old enough to remember the high esteem in which Bishop Thirlwall was held, partly because, being an Englishman, he determined, on his appointment as Bishop of St. David's, to master the language of the people, and in subsequent years became an accomplished Welsh scholar, and spoke the Welsh language with great accuracy, although, perhaps, not with the perfect fluency and ease. He was also greatly revered because, notwithstanding his stately bearing, and great learning, he was known among the peasants for his unostentatious character, and his freedom from all class prejudice and pride. There was a story in the neighbourhood (the veracity of which I was never able to test) which was accepted as true by the people, of his friendliness with a poor, but able, Baptist minister in the neighbourhood, who was encouraged by

the Bishop to call sometimes at the palace. On one occasion he called, when there were some candidates for holy orders undergoing an examination, and had been invited to lunch by the Bishop. Dr. Thirlwall urged the old minister, clad in homespun, to join them. He, after some hesitation, it was said, consented to do so. When lunch was announced, and, he, with the company, entered the dining room, he was amazed at, and well nigh overawed by, the vessels and ornaments, the varied provisions, and especially the bright silver dish-covers, that adorned the table. He had seen nothing like this before at any dinner, and he had learnt that a " lunch " was less important than a dinner. He naturally recalled his own frugal dinners at home, consisting of broth and a chunk of bacon, and, not infrequently, of butter-milk and potatoes. While he was thus musing, and before he had time to cease wondering, he was called by the Bishop to return thanks. He got up, and in pure terse Welsh, and a rich melodious voice, he exclaimed—" O Lord, we thank Thee for the Bishop's generous hospitality, and for the rich things with which Thou has laden and adorned his table on this occasion—and Lord ! if this is his lunch, what must his dinner be ! ! Amen." How the erudite bishop must have been struck and attracted by the naturalness of that " Grace " !

CHAPTER IV.

THE VILLAGE OF MY BOYHOOD.

MY SCHOOL DAYS, CHURCH LIFE, AND PREPARATION FOR BRISTOL COLLEGE.

OUR early removal to Treforest changed the whole aspect of my life. I well remember that, as a child, I was utterly bewildered by that complete change of surroundings. I missed the whitewashed cottages, the smokeless air, the quiet turnpike road, the rustic smithy with its flying sparks, the quaint but bright sanctuary, the rustic school, and the children of the village ; and got in their stead the grimy terraces, the murky atmosphere, the noisy streets, the huge forges with their belching flames, the dull, uninteresting chapel, and the children of various nationalities who crowded the streets, and who had a sullen and suspicious appearance to me, as they looked askance at the little peasant newcomer, of timid demeanour, and rustic ways. Even the National School, which had just been opened at Glyn-Taff, by its large dimensions and modern appearance, as contrasted with " Bwlchcorn," filled me with awe, and the crowd of children, that appeared to me appallingly great, made me feel keenly my isolation. I had, as far as all the outside world was concerned, lost my bearings ; and even the home lacked the brightness and spotlessness of the cottage at Rhydargaeau.

Even the heavens above were dull with smoke and grimy with dust, the sun had become lurid, and the moon lost her silvery brightness, making perfectly intelligible the remark of the old lady from Carmarthen, who, when she saw the moon through the smoke of Dowlais, exclaimed " Give me the beautiful little moon we have in Carmarthen, instead of the dull brazen thing you call a moon here."

To this day, I remember keenly how shoddy the whole creation had become to me, when I left the serene skies, pure air, and rustic scenery of my native village, for the gloomy skies, stifling atmosphere, and grimy surroundings of that Glamorgan industrial centre. My whole nature recoiled against it! My father and mother, and the familiar oaken furniture, were the only bright and re-assuring associations that linked me to my past.

Indeed, even the atmosphere of the home had to me, as a sensitive child, become different by the change. My parents, were as affectionate as ever toward each other, and toward me as their child. But in greeting each other they had been induced to adopt the fashion of the neighbourhood into which they had removed. Thus instead of the familiar and affectionate "Jaci" and "Kitty" with which they had always greeted each other in their Carmarthenshire home, they called each other "John" and "Catherine," and so the warmth and familiarity of the old greeting was lost in the supposed greater propriety of the new; and I, as a child, felt that the thermometer of the home had gone down several degrees.

I did not enjoy the best of health at that time. Scarlet fever had affected the hearing of one ear for life, and, what was far more serious, had left a physical weakness which clung to me during my boyhood, and almost right through my teens. I was thus at this time unable to combat the depressing influence of those strange surroundings. Hence I was a pensive lad. I can well remember, soon after our arrival at Treforest, being in bed, and lying wakefully, while my father and mother were in the service one Sunday evening. Childhood had lost so much of its sweetness, in the loss of its companionships and associations, by the sudden transition which our removal involved, that, as everything that was tenderest and best seemed to recede,

I began to wonder whether I should keep even my parents much longer, and what would happen if I lost them too—especially my mother; and then, in my childish way, I prayed God that I might *always* keep them!

Soon my parents removed to a brighter and more open spot, in which to live, than the first they were able to secure in the rapidly growing village, that had so suddenly become a centre of great industries in tin and iron. This had a wonderfully exhilarating and brightening effect upon me as a lad. I became gradually reconciled to my surroundings. My subsequent attendance at Glyn-Taff Schools greatly helped me. I found too, very soon, that I could compete with my school fellows in class, and in the playground. I realised that there was a good sporting chance for even the boy that had come from the Carmarthenshire hamlet, among the motley crowd that had come from all the ends of the earth, and met there. I tried, and I succeeded; and that gave a new zest to life. I adapted myself, before I knew it, to my changed surroundings, and my ambition was stirred, as the vision of new possibilities dawned upon me. From that hour forth I never lost heart, and never lacked enthusiasm for my tasks.

It was, nevertheless, a great change from the primitive, rustic school of Bwlchcorn, Rhydargaeau, to the more conventional school in the new buildings erected at Glyn-Taff, and under the wing of the Established Church, and supported by the State. Fees were paid by the children and, these supplemented by subscriptions and by Government grants, provided for the upkeep of the school. The great majority of the children who attended the school belonged to Nonconformist families, yet the Catechism of the Church was taught to all alike. I well remember how, as the child of Baptist parents, who neither practised, nor believed in, infant Christening, or in

" Godfathers and Godmothers in baptism," I was at first utterly bewildered when taught :—

Question: " What is your name ? "

Answer: " M. or N."

Question: " Who gave you this name ? "

Answer: " My godfathers and godmothers in my baptism, etc."

I still more vividly remember what a farce the forced repetition of those words appeared to me, when I knew how utterly inapplicable and, moreover, untrue, they were to me personally. It certainly did not help me to attach any solemnity to, or indeed respect for, those solemn words that were put in my mouth. In contrast to all this, the Scriptures, when taught in the day school, came as a sweet relief. They were the same as I also learnt in my home, and in my own Sunday School.

When I became a pupil teacher the anomaly of Nonconformist children in general, and Baptist children in particular, having to repeat the Catechism became more glaring. Happily the visits of the clergyman, supplemented by the classes of the head master in Catechism, relieved me of all demands to teach the Catechism. The following extracts from the log-book of Glyn-Taff School, during the period when I was a pupil teacher, will explain the circumstances under which the Catechism was taught, with varying persistency, according to whether the protests of parents were frequent and loud, or not :—

" May 27th, 1863—Find that the parents are averse to the Catechism being taught to their children."

" May 25th, 1865—Catechism continues to be taught without interruption."

" November 1st, 1865—The children appear to appreciate their religious teaching. The Catechism is better received."

The first and second entries throw a lurid light upon the plea presented by Church friends to-day, that it is a most sacred duty to teach children in day schools in *the faith of their parents;* whereas the third entry proves that the omission of the Catechism does not necessarily involve the adoption of a "Godless education." The difficulty in my school days at Glyn-Taff School was, as the above third extract shows, not in the direction of religious teaching, which the children "appeared to appreciate"; but with regard to the Church Catechism, which was only "better received," notwithstanding years of persistent insistency upon teaching it, in defiance of the protests of parents. Looking back over it all, I am convinced to-day, that although that policy in some cases resulted in the proselytizing of the children of Nonconformists, it, in the main, created a strong prejudice, and utter dislike, toward that Church, which permitted this pressure—a prejudice and dislike, which struck deep roots into the hearts and consciences of the children of Nonconformist parents. I myself am a typical instance of this. Many of the managers of so called "National" Schools, of those days, sowed to the wind, and their successors have reaped the whirlwind.

We had a kind and genial school master in Mr. David Francis, who was the best penman I have ever known; but was not otherwise specially gifted. Yet he was well up to the standard of the certificated school masters of his day. He married the daughter of the Rev. John Griffiths, the vicar of Glyn-Taff Church. I became pupil teacher some months under thirteen years of age, having passed the necessary examination at St. Mary's Schools, Cardiff. The signing of my indentures, however, was delayed from time to time, because the vicar insisted upon my attending Church, as a condition of being a pupil teacher. Ultimately, when two years and a half had passed, Mr. Francis was instructed to tell me on one

Friday afternoon, that, if I did not come to Church the following Sunday, I was not to go to school on Monday. I did not go to church on Sunday, and did not go to school on Monday. Thus my career as a teacher came to a sudden and unexpected close. The money due to me for the six months, or so, that I had served of my third year, was also withheld. A letter of complaint from me, however, to the Board of Education, Whitehall, resulted in the vicar promptly sending the amount due. So ended my association with Glyn-Taff School. I felt the separation keenly. My memory of that bitter disappointment on that eventful Monday morning, is to-day as vivid as ever. My hopes were broken, and all my plans were shattered ! The iron went into my soul, and it is not surprising if, fifty years later, when engaged in the campaign for the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church, there were clear indications that some of it was still left in my blood ! Such are the bitter heritages which the ecclesiastical tyranny of those days handed down even to succeeding generations. It would be well, however, if henceforth that were a closed chapter. Happily there is another influence at work in the present age in Wales, which helps to soften the acerbities, and bury the intolerances, of those former times. In this I rejoice.

There was an exceptional precocity about my early religious experiences. At the age of nine I came under the influence of the 1858–9 Revival, and was baptized in the River Taff, when in flood, on 17th April of that year. There were eleven baptized at that time, and I, being the youngest, was baptized last, on account of my short stature. The minister (Rev. Josiah Roberts), after baptizing the tenth, came into the shallows, near the brink of the river, to receive and immerse me there. I remember well the great crowd witnessing the ordinance, and, at the close, my walking along the turnpike road about 100 yards, to reach the house where I was to change my clothing.

I had been a candidate for six months, for it was my father's wish that on account of my extreme youth, nothing should be done hurriedly. But, young as I was, my conviction was deep and abiding. As a matter of fact, although I came in during the Revival, that only supplied the occasion. I cannot trace the hour of my conversion. I was brought to the Saviour by the teaching and example of the best of mothers. I remember well her telling me " David, all the love I have for you I have got from the Saviour ! " That saying stuck to me. It was through my mother's love that I learnt to believe in the love of Jesus !

Soon after my baptism my membership was removed from Bethlehem, Rhydfelen, to Libanus, Treforest. At that time, the Rev. Thomas Phillips had settled as the minister of the latter church. Both churches were Welsh. Mr. Phillips was a most sympathetic pastor and friend. He encouraged me to speak publicly, and especially to preach, at the early age of thirteen, and from that time he continued to give me every encouragement and help. My indebtedness to him is more than words can tell. Until his death, when I was in Brighton, he continued to be intensely interested in my progress. Indeed, as years passed by, we became increasingly bosom friends. In 1891, I gratefully dedicated to him the " Third Series " of my " Talks with Men, Women, and Children "—" To my dear friend who, as my beloved pastor, watched tenderly over me in my early days, and encouraged me much and oft, as a lad, to preach the Gospel in my mother-tongue."

I began my public speaking at the Fellowship Meeting (Cyfeillach), where my pastor urged me to give an address. Then I was asked to take the devotional part of the public service on Sunday ; and then was requested to preach before the pastor on the Sunday evening, and ultimately to take a service in its entirety.

The fact of my having been precluded from being a pupil teacher, because I was not prepared to attend Glyn-Taff Church, became known to the Rev. Henry Oliver, B.A., Pontypridd, who had a school for preparing young men for the denominational colleges. He knew my father, he being a native of Llanfynydd, Carmarthenshire, and my father of Rhydargaeau in the same county. He called upon my father, and as I had, for some two-and-a-half years, been preaching, he received me into his school, about September, 1864, and I remained there fifteen months—until December, 1865, when Mr. Oliver accepted an invitation to the pastorate of Victoria Road Congregational Church, Newport, and settled there in February, 1866. For the fifteen months' tuition he resolutely refused to accept one farthing of payment.[1] He thus placed me under a debt of gratitude which I could never repay, unless, indeed, it be, as he was generous enough to say, by a career which would do him credit as my teacher. His interest in me never ceased. No one watched my progress during all the years, until his death, with greater sympathy and satisfaction, than my old teacher and patron, Henry Oliver![1]

[1]It would appear that I was by no means the only one toward whom the Rev. Henry Oliver, B.A., showed such generosity. His brother, the Rev. William Oliver, M.A., writing a very valuable review of Rev. Henry Oliver's life in " Y Geninen " for the year 1916, pp. 106–12, says: " Yn bur gynnar yn ei weinidogaeth cawsai fy mrawd flas a phleser mawr yn y gwaith o roddi *private lessons* i wŷr ieuainc â'u hwyneb ar y weinidogaeth; a gwnai hynny, fel rheol, heb ofyn na disgwyl unrhyw dâl. Ym mysg eraill a dderbyniasant addysg o'r fath hyn ganddo, digon fydd enwi y diweddar Barch. T. Rhondda Davies, yr hwn a lafuriodd am flynyddoedd ymysg y Saeson; y diweddar Barch. Henry Jones, Ffald-y-brenin; a'r Parch. David Davies, Penarth, yr hwn sydd yn parhau i wasanaethu ei oes a'i wlad mor ardderchog. O dipyn i beth tyfodd y gwaith i'r fath faintioli, a chynhyddodd ei ddiddordeb yntau ynddo i'r fath raddau, nes y penderfynodd o'r diwedd gychwyn ysgol ragbarotoawl i ddynion ieuainc yn ymddarpar ar gyfer y weinidogaeth, yn ogystal ag i fechgyn yn paratoi ar gyfer galwedigaethau bydol. Gyda'r amcan hwn adeiladodd ystafell eang a chyfleus at

It was at Mr. Oliver's Preparatory School for Colleges, at Pontypridd, that I first met Mr. Job Miles, who was probably six years my senior. He was afterwards known throughout Wales as the Rev. Job Miles of Aberystwyth, and occupied the front rank among Welsh Congregational preachers. Unfortunately, by a strange conspiracy of unfavourable circumstances, Mr. Miles and myself were never brought into close contact after our school days, at Pontypridd, when he was about twenty-one and I about fifteen. I have, therefore, nothing to record of him by way of personal reminiscence; and I feel keenly how much poorer I am to-day for that lack. Mr. Miles, like myself, was short of stature, but like most short men, he specially cultivated the friendship of tall men. Among his most intimate friends was the Rev. Penry Evans, of Pontardulais, a man of exceptional stature physically, as well as mentally. Mr. Evans was notoriously careless about his appearance, especially in matters of dress. One day they were walking together, when Mr. Miles, noticing an exceptionally shabby hat upon Mr. Evans's head, said "You ought to be ashamed of wearing a hat like that, Penry." Whereupon "Penry", pulling himself up to his full height, looked contemptuously down upon Mr. Miles, who barely reached his elbow, and said, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Job, for presuming to pass judgment on a hat, *at that distance!*"

When at Mr. Oliver's school, I used to go on summer evenings to the wood in the rear of Forest House (now the Mining School) Treforest. A brook ran through that wood, and leapt into a quarry that had been excavated at

y gwaith, yn y Glâsdir, tu cefn i'w dŷ ei hun. Llwyddodd yr ysgol yn fuan i attynnu nifer luosog o efrydwyr o bob cwr o'r wlad, yn amrywio o ran oedran o'r llanc 10 neu 12 oed i fyny at y dyn ieuanc 20 oed a thros hynny. O bryd i bryd bu bron do cyfan o rai o brif bregethwyr Cymru, perthynol i bob enwad, dan addysg fy mrawd. Bu ysgrifennydd y llinellau hyn yn yr ysgol hon am tua phedair blynedd, a theimla ei ddyled iddi hyd y dydd heddyw."

the side of Forest House. Just above that waterfall, and near the part that lead through the wood, "Gurnos," the noted bard, was often to be seen sitting near the brook, like Elijah by the brook Cerith in ancient days. Around " Gurnos " were dozens of birds, not feeding him as the ravens fed Elijah, but being fed by him. He had crusts in his pocket, and he used to break them up, and cast the crumbs all around and even upon his knees, with the result, that the birds would gather round him, and hop upon his shoulders, while he was preparing his ode for the next Eisteddfod. Sometimes, he would give up writing, and placing his manuscript in his pocket, would begin to talk to the birds, as we are told Francis of Assisi did of old. Often I too, would sit down at a little distance off, learning my home lessons, and also watching, with keen admiration, approaching hero-worship, the eccentric old bard enjoying the fellowship and confidence of the feathered tribe, that came to him for food and shelter. "Gurnos" was a big child of Nature as brilliant as he was peculiar and erratic. He little imagined that he was closely watched by a lad, who would tell the tale nearly sixty years later, with a recollection of all that occurred as vivid as if it were but yesterday.

Perhaps the most striking character in the neighbourhood at that time, was Benny Thomas, who eked out a precarious living by hawking apples and nuts, and other goodies, in a familar basket, which he carried on his arm. He visited day schools during playtime, and a special dispensation was granted him, which was extended to no one else, to come into the playground and the porches of our school, at Glyn-Taff. His quaint mannerisms, and his comical remarks, made him quite popular with the boys and girls, and they were glad to spend their coppers in purchasing of him. Thus his basket was often well nigh emptied in the playground, especially after " draw," or " pay " day, at the works.

But he also filled a very different sphere in life. He was a prominent figure at the meetings and services of the Baptist Church at Libanus, Treforest. He specially shone at the Fellowship Meeting (Cyfeillach) and Prayer Meeting. He was very fond of the hymn :—

> " Mae, mae
> Yr amser hyfryd yn neshau," etc.

He would often give out the hymn, according to the custom of those days, before he prayed, or gave his experience, and would pitch the tune himself. His voice was full of quavers, semiquavers, and demisemiquavers, which made it difficult at times for others to join in—the transitions were so sudden and unexpected—so that the singing resolved itself to a solo, with an accompanying note from others, now and then, as they were able to thrust it in sideways. In spite of all Benny would go on unperturbed, until he reached the high note on the word " fry," when not infrequently his voice would suddenly crack. Still undismayed, Benny would calmly give up singing, and exclaim, " Well, there ! my voice isn't as young as it used to be, so I must give up now ; but, when we meet yonder, I'll sing the rest with the best of you."

I also well remember, on one occasion, his giving a unique experience in a Fellowship Meeting (Cyfeillach). It should be here stated that he was vividly picturesque and realistic in his descriptions of his spiritual experience. He talked about everything in pictures. That night he had fought his way through a blinding rainstorm, along a narrow tow-path on the canal bank, from Pentrebach, to within about 300 yards of the chapel. At one slippery spot he had fallen upon his knees in the mud, and he seems to have had a struggle with the hostile elements in getting up again. What else transpired he himself related in his graphic " Experience." He told us how the devil, " The prince of the power of the air," had tried to

dissuade him from coming to the meeting, pushing him back almost every step. At length, in one narrow slippery place, the devil made all his winds blow upon him, in a blinding hurricane, and a deluge of rain. The struggle became desperate—" He brought me," added Benny, " right down upon my knees : the biggest mistake he ever made, for it's there the Christian always triumphs. You see the devil generally over-does it in the long run ; and he did then. We were within a foot of the canal, and, when on my knees, I got my hand under him, and cried ' Lord if Thou didst ever help me, do so now ! ' and then, with one mighty heave, I toppled him head foremost into the canal ; and there he is now, for all I care ! " I well remember, as a boy, wondering, as I heard the old man's vivid description, whether it really was the devil, or some other luckless creature, that Benny had given a dousing to, on that dark, stormy night. But Benny had no doubt whatever as to who it was !

A very notorious, if not famous character, associated with Treforest, when I was a lad there, and for some years later, was Dr. Price. He was well advanced in life when I knew him first ; but he was as agile and erect as he had ever been. He was clad in a most picturesque garb. He wore a red waistcoat, and green coat and trousers ; the last named garment being scalloped just above his shoes ; while his head was adorned with a handsome fox skin, the tail of which hung down over one of his shoulders. He claimed to be a Druid, and to have adopted the ancient Druid's creed and religion. The Rocking Stone, on Pontypridd Common, was the scene of many ceremonies and vagaries by him, Ivan Cornel Du, and others of a similar type. Dr. Price was a man doubtless of great gifts, but was excessively vain, and wilfully eccentric. He was a stormy petrel, and spent most of his life at the storm centre of litigation, accepting alike successes and reverses with perfect coolness and imperturbable

nonchalance. In the main, he suffered heavily by litigation ; but he held up his end to the last, and when his remains were cremated at Llantrisant, one felt that a unique and mysterious personality had passed out of the life of Wales, which might have been of infinitely greater benefit to his race, had it been differently inspired, and more worthily directed.

The circumstances which decided for me the question of whether I should enter the Welsh ministry or the English, were peculiar. My father was a firm believer in law and order in the conduct of all the business of the Church ; and, especially, with regard to financial matters. The custom in connection with the church at Libanus, Treforest, had been to put all collections into a red handkerchief belonging to the Senior Deacon and Treasurer, on the understanding that he would reckon the amount at his leisure at home. My father protested against such irregular and unsatisfactory methods, and ultimately, after many protests, secured a reform by a vote of the church. This resulted in a very strained relationship between him and the Senior Deacon ; and, when I began to preach, I became largely a scapegoat, in being pronounced by the Senior Deacon as lacking in all the essentials of a true preacher. At the same time, Mr. Isaac Jones (a nephew of the distinguished Rev. James Richards, Pontypridd, and a young man who possessed then, and throughout life, a charming voice, and a rich hwyl, or afflatus) began to preach. Confessedly, in these respects I could in no sense compete with him, a fact which the Senior Deacon never forgot to emphasize, although Mr. Isaac Jones, was admittedly greater in delivery than in production.

At this juncture the pastor of the church—the Rev. Thomas Phillips—accepted the invitation of the church at Ferndale. He had well understood the situation, and always showed an exceptional interest in

my future. Before removing, therefore, he advised me to have my membership transferred to the English Church, as he realised that I should stand no chance of a recommendation, from the church at Libanus, to College, while the old Senior Deacon's influence was predominant, as it would probably be in the absence of a pastor. I was therefore transferred to Calvary Baptist Church, Treforest, before Mr. Phillips' departure for Ferndale. This was in 1865, after my rejection as a pupil teacher at Glyn-Taff, and while I was at Mr. Oliver's school, Pontypridd.

When Mr. Oliver left Pontypridd, I went to Cardiff to a school held by the Rev. David Edwards, M.A., in the schoolroom at Zion Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, on the site which the Central Free Library now occupies. Mr. Edwards, like Mr. Oliver, was a native of Carmarthenshire. Mr. Edwards, indeed, had been born and bred at Rhydargaeau, and was the brother of Thomas Edwards, an old apprentice of my father's to whom I elsewhere refer. Thus, I was once more favoured with the sympathetic oversight of one who had personal knowledge of my parents, and a keen interest in myself. I remained for six months at this school : first at Zion Schoolroom, and afterwards at Ivor Villa, near the entrance to Sophia Gardens, Cardiff. In six months I passed the Entrance Examination to Bristol Baptist College in June, 1886. During my stay in Cardiff, in addition to preaching at Calvary Chapel, Treforest, one Sunday a month, I supplied small Welsh churches in the neighbourhood of Cardiff, such as Cadoxton-juxta-Barry, and Peterstone, near Marshfield, and thus earned a little toward my expenses. In obtaining those supplies, in the first place, I was indebted to the friendly aid of Mr. William Morgan, a member of the Tabernacle, Cardiff, and a local preacher. At that time he was in a responsible position in the business of Sessions & Sons; but soon after started a business of his own, which prospered. When I returned to Cardiff six years later,

and settled at the Docks, as pastor, his interest in me continued, and indeed never flagged. I shall always remember him, and his equally kind and gracious wife, with profound gratitude and affection.

But my greatest friends were the Rev. Nathaniel Thomas, and his noble wife. Mr. Thomas had known my father at Rhydargaeau, when the former was a minister at Penuel Chapel, Priory Street, Carmarthen. I well remember a baptismal service when I was five or six years of age, at Ffynnon Oer, Rhydargaeau, at which Mr. Thomas officiated. I stood near that open-air baptistery, and was not without a childish misgiving that, if I went too near, he might also baptize me. I thus stood at a respectful distance. It is wonderful how a memory of childhood clings to one throughout life, and remains as fresh as if the incident had been but of yesterday.

The Rev. Nathaniel and Mrs. Thomas did their utmost to encourage me by inviting me to their home, and by other deeds of kindness, in those days of lonely struggle, when, as yet, I was only sixteen years of age. In after years, when Mrs. Thomas had passed away, I had the joy of showing my appreciation of their kindness by writing, at the earnest request of Mr. Thomas, a biography of her wonderful life of consecration, *viz.*, "Christ Magnified, or the Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Thomas, of Cardiff"—a work that was greatly blessed, but which has long since been out of print.

The condition of the English church at Calvary, Treforest, at this time was very depressing, partly because of its then solitary position in Wood Road, between Treforest and Pontypridd, and partly because of the great majority of the population all round being Welsh, and attending Welsh places of worship. Calvary Chapel had been built five or six years earlier, chiefly through the instrumentality of members of Bethany Church, Cardiff, prominent among whom were Mr. and Mrs. Barry. It was for years a

source of great anxiety financially to these and others connected with Bethany Church, as the people attending its services were too few and too poor, to meet their obligations. The result was that the members at Calvary were glad to avail themselves of the services of local preachers, and even of a youth like myself. A few others came from Cardiff, prominent among whom was a Mr. F——, a saintly old man, but a dull preacher. I remember attending a few services which he conducted. They were very somniferous, and in that sense soothing. He was not only advanced in years, but was also evidently tired on Sundays, after the toils of the preceding week—so tired as, occasionally, to fall asleep himself—as he certainly appeared to do by an occasional nod, and then a momentary quickening of pace—but whether sleeping or waking he went on. The prayer being practically always the same, it would appear that the dear old man, wearied out, would continue in his dreams, and would automatically wake up before the close. All this seems incredible, but as one who witnessed it all, I personally have no manner of doubt as to its accuracy ; nor did I know anyone else who had a serious doubt about it. In spite of all this the saintly face, the tender voice, and the simple, earnest message of that man of God was always appreciated by those who knew him.

In later days, when I was a student at Bristol College, and visited the chapel during my holidays, a Mr. Henry Davis, a converted Jew, had become pastor of the church. He had the fluency of his race, and filled the position much to the advantage of the church at that time, and with considerable satisfaction to himself. It was about the time that David Thomas published his " Homilist," and homiletics had become immensely popular in Wales. He had caught the prevailing fashion, but had only a very superficial conception of the orderliness which homiletics were intended to further. I remember his preaching a sermon,

which I understood afterwards was a great favourite of his on special occasions. The subject was Zaccheus up the Sycamore Tree, and Mr. Davis's divisions were: (1) Zaccheus before he went up the tree; (2) Zaccheus up the tree; (3) Zaccheus when he came down from the tree. I remember his asking what I thought of the sermon, and pointing to the orderliness of his divisions, which he thought was great, he added, "I have another sermon on 'What is man?'" and asked, "What do you think my divisions are?" It occurred to me, adopting the method of preaching in the three tenses, to suggest: (1) What was man? (2) What is man? (3) What will man be? and ventured to give those divisions. He was delighted; but wondered that two men could have hit upon precisely the same divisions! That method certainly had the advantage of embracing all the tenses—past, present, and future!—and thus there was a comprehensiveness, if nothing else, in his discourses.

When at school in Cardiff, preparing for college, I used to see the Rev. Lewis Powell, of Ebenezer, Cardiff. He was a familiar figure; short of stature, of quick step and agile movement, clad in an Inverness cloak, and keenly observant of all that took place as he walked briskly along. Noted for his ready answers, and incisive repartees, he was often accosted on his journeys by those who vainly attempted to "take a rise" out of him. One day, two young swells, seeing him approach them, agreed to make a joke at the old minister's expense. When they met him they accosted him, and in a solemn tone said: "Mr. Powell, have you heard the latest news?" "What is it?" answered Mr. Powell. "The devil is dead," replied the two. "Dear me," said the old man, as he looked at them intently and tenderly, "I guessed as much when I saw your sad faces. I pity you from the bottom of my heart! Two more helpless orphans in the world! Here is a shilling for you!"

An oft-told tale about him, during my stay in Cardiff, was the following. He appeared on the platform at the annual meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews. When called upon to speak he said: " When your secretary asked me to take part in this meeting, which has for its object the propagation of the Gospel among the Jews, I at once sat down and promised to do all I could for that most deserving object!" This was greeted with loud applause. Mr. Powell continued: " Six months ago my presentation watch stopped, and I took it to a Jewish watchmaker to be cleaned. I received it back in due time, and paid five shillings for what was done to it. It stopped the first day, and I took it back, but, having given it a shake, he gave it me back, and assured me it was all right. Again it stopped, and I took it to the watchmaker of whom it had been purchased. He soon found that all the jewels connected with the different movements had been removed, and I had to get them replaced at very considerable cost. You can understand, therefore, that when I was asked to speak in support of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews, I did not hesitate to respond in the affirmative—there is no doubt about it, the Jews greatly need it! It is a society that has abundant scope for its operations!"

My application for admission to the Baptist College, Stokescroft, Bristol, was signed by the Revs. Nathaniel Thomas, Cardiff; James Richards and Edward Roberts, both of Pontypridd. It would be difficult to find better signatures, and I remember well the ordeal through which I had to pass, in conducting a public service on Sunday evening at the Tabernacle, Cardiff, and at the Tabernacle, Pontypridd—in the former case in the presence of Nathaniel Thomas, and in the latter case before James Richards and Edward Roberts. At the same time, I have wondered often since, how those recommendations given, as the

result of hearing me preach in Welsh, were considered sufficient by the committee of an English college. As a matter of fact my English at that time was very imperfect, as I fully realised, when I entered college, and came into contact with English students. I had, indeed, thoroughly studied the English Grammar, and could write with comparative ease and accuracy in English ; but, in speaking it, I was often perplexed by my failure to command immediately the words I required. This was bewildering, and in the confusion I the more readily fell back on Welsh idioms, which to the English ear sounded quaint, and in some instances amusing. The courtesy of my English fellow-students was, however, with one or two exceptions, unfailing.

I well remember, indeed, one exception. A big, heavy, and lumbering English student, who had little knowledge, and still less refinement, openly and constantly made fun of my English—an act which at the time I sharply resented, but which greatly wounded me, just at the commencement of my college course. By a strange irony of fate, many years later, when I was pastor of Regent's Park Church, London, I called at the offices of a great religious organization, and to my amazement I found this old fellow student a hall porter there ! We instantly recognized each other. His crestfallen and confused look convinced me, too, that he remembered the incident of long ago. My heart bled for him, and the insult was readily forgiven, when I took him by the hand and greeted him as an old fellow student. We had both learnt much since those early days !

When I entered Bristol College in September, 1866, I found that there were many amusing stories told about the doings of the students who had been there during the preceding ten or twelve years. Arthur Mursell figured prominently among these worthies ; but next to him were Welsh students with whose names I was already familiar, *viz.*, Benjamin Thomas (" Myfyr Emlyn "), James Owen,

and R. H. Roberts. The most unconventional and daring of these Welshmen, undoubtedly, was Benjamin Thomas. The Principal, the Rev. Thomas Crisp, who was the embodiment of propriety and of law and order, but who had not a spark of humour in his nature, was greatly perplexed by the freaks of Benjamin Thomas. This culminated on the closing night of a session, when, according to a time-honoured custom, the students had an enjoyable social evening, which generally extended beyond midnight. Some of the students of whom Benjamin Thomas, R. Henry Roberts, and, I believe, James Owen, were the most prominent, met in the classical room above the matron's bedroom, and held a sham class in Greek, and, in order to heighten the absurdity of the whole thing, Benjamin Thomas was voted into the Professorial Chair; and a very enjoyable, hilarious class it proved to be! Thomas solemnly enlarged upon the importance of an intimate acquaintance with Hebrew, Greek, and Latin—the pet theme of Mr. Crisp—as a fitness for the ministry! He kept the company in a high state of merriment by extemporizing couplets of Welsh and Greek; which, as one who was destined to excel in Welsh lyric poetry, he could do *ad lib;* and closed up, what was accepted by the class as a learned disquisition, by repeating yet another couplet:

"Tupto, tupte, tupte;
Mae'r Groeg ar ben bob bys gennyf fi,"

and with that thumped the table with Liddell & Scott's large Greek Lexicon with such force as to frighten the matron (who had for some time, vainly endeavoured to sleep in the room beneath) almost out of her wits. The following morning she complained bitterly to Mr. Crisp; but the students had all left for their homes. To Mr. Crisp this conduct appeared so serious as to border upon a sin against the Holy Ghost. He, therefore, wrote to the culprits in their homes angrily demanding an immediate

apology. This was instantly made by all except Benjamin Thomas. He had just received an invitation to the pastorate of the Church at " Y Graig," Newcastle Emlyn.

He, moreover, had no more sympathy with Mr. Crisp's dry, stern, disciplinary attitude, than Mr. Crisp had with Mr. Thomas's exuberant spirits and frolicsome ways. Mr. Thomas to the last vowed to me personally that old Mr. Crisp strongly held that Hebrew was the foremost qualification not only for the Ministry, but also for heaven, as he firmly believed that Hebrew would be the language up yonder! There can be no doubt that it was Mr. Thomas's rich and lively imagination that put this construction upon Mr. Crisp's constant insistence upon the sacred duty of knowing Hebrew, etc.,—and Mr. Thomas hated Hebrew. When he, therefore, received Mr. Crisp's letter demanding an apology, he made short work of it, and instantly wrote a reply, to the effect, that he regretted he was unable to apologise for an over-fondness for the charming Greek verb " tupto," as he had always been taught by his revered President how important a knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew verbs were to salvation. And, as an apology was now demanded for his over-fondness for the classics, as a condition of returning to college, he much regretted that, in having conscientiously to decline to do so, he, once and for ever, would miss here the illuminating and inspiring lectures, in particular, he had been accustomed to receive on the Hebrew *Dagesh*, both *lene* and *forte*: his only comfort, in view of this irreparable loss, was that when he met Mr. Crisp yonder, as he hoped to do, he would have the privilege of renewing the acquaintance, and of having a chat in Hebrew! This letter shocked Mr. Crisp terribly. He at once had Mr. Benjamin Thomas's name removed from the list of students, and rigidly excluded it, as long as he remained president, from the list of " Ministers Educated " at the College. It was reserved for me in 1867–68 to intercede with

Dr. Gotch to have it re-entered in that list; and Dr. Gotch, in spite of his great knowledge of, and fondness for Hebrew, had a sufficient sense of the humorous to be immensely amused when reminded of the letter (although he very properly shook his head as a tutor at the impropriety of it), and, in due time he inserted Benjamin Thomas's name in the list.

During my college course (1866–72) I came into contact for the first time with a striking personality in the Rev. Thomas Jenkins, then the pastor of the Welsh Baptist Church at Maudlin Street, Bristol. He was not specially gifted, nor was he an orator or great preacher. Yet he was a universal favourite on account of his rich human nature, his broad sympathies, his simple, earnest piety, his quaint humour, his geniality, and his homely, fluent speech. He was a man also of immense physical bulk, so much so as to tax his legs to the utmost for many years, before they gave up the hopeless task of carrying that colossal burden, at least without the constant aid of two stout walking sticks, upon which Mr. Jenkins cast the greater part of his weight. His progress, as he walked, therefore, was very slow, although, when he occasionally put on a spurt in an emergency, it was a sight that could not fail to call into full play the risible faculties of all who were privileged to witness it. Mr. Jenkins was, on account of his massive and almost unwieldly body, subjected to a good deal of good natured, although sometimes ironical, banter by his most intimate friends. Foremost among the skits indulged in at poor Mr. Jenkins' cost, was a striking "englyn" by his old friend, the well-known Baptist minister and bard, the Rev. Robert Ellis (Cynddelw), which is untranslatable, and, therefore, requires a Welshman to appreciate it :—

> " Tŵr o wêr, braster Bristol—hen dabwrdd,
> Neu dwba symudol ;
> Hen bennaeth annibynnol :
> Dyna fe—ei din a'i fol."

In spite of this serious handicap, he did valuable work at Maudlin Street, in keeping alive for many years a genuine religious fervour among the Welsh-speaking Baptists of Bristol. He, moreover, was a most valued friend of the Welsh students at the Baptist College, Stokes Croft, especially when, at the commencement of their college course, some of them felt the depressing influence of living, for the first time, among a people of what was, largely to them, a strange tongue.

Dr. Gotch discouraged Mr. Gethin Davies (afterwards Dr. Gethin Davies, principal of Llangollen College) and myself speaking, or preaching, at Maudlin Street, because he feared it might interfere with our progress in English. We, however, kept in touch with Maudlin Street Church and with Mr. Jenkins, the pastor, toward whom, on account of his sincerity and quaintness, Dr. Gotch had a decided leaning. Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins used to invite us—as they had, indeed, many other Welsh students before us—to spend an evening now and then at their home ; and that was always a most pleasurable event to us. Mr. Jenkins was full of anecdotes, which he gave with humorous asides, that added greatly to the anecdotes themselves. Mrs. Jenkins, however, would now and then intervene, because she was anxious that the students should have a say—the danger being that, as she feared, Mr. Jenkins would monopolise all the talk.

I remember Mr. Jenkins bringing this out one night in a humorous way, in a speech at the Old Pithay Chapel, where his friend, Mr. Probert, was a minister, before the church removed to the new chapel at City Road. It was the annual meeting of the church, Mr. Elisha Robinson was in the chair, and among others on the platform were Dr. Gotch and the Rev. Thomas Jenkins. Mr. Jenkins had hurried home from Wales to be present at the meeting. Presently Mr. Robinson called upon " the Rev. Thomas Jenkins, of Maudlin Street," to speak. This called forth

loud applause, as he was sure on all occasions to amuse the audience with his entertaining stories, and his humorous asides. When called upon on this occasion he rose gradually from the chair, leaning now on one stick and then on another, and thus by a series of gradations, in spite of his weak knees and huge body, succeeded at length in standing erect.

He began with a broad Welsh accent, which cannot be reproduced in print—" Mr. Chairman! It affords me special pleasure to be here to-night at the anniversary meeting of my friend and fellow-countryman, Mr. Probert. Indeed, in order to be here, I've come back in haste from my native Wales to-day, and have hurried to be here in time. When I left the house, Susy, my wife, said to me: 'Now, Thomas, don't make a fool of yourself to-night!' That's how my wife talks to me, Mr. Chairman! Welsh students from Dr. Gotch's college do sometimes come up to our house, and I do my best to entertain them; but soon Susy whispers to me, 'Don't talk,' and I don't talk; and then it's a regular Quakers' meeting! Nobody talks, and by and by Susy sidles quietly up to me and whispers in my ear, 'Talk a bit more, Thomas.' It do remind me of a Quaker on board a ship. It was a stormy night and the wind did blow, and the waves did beat on that ship, and the captain began to swear at the sailors at work. By and by the Quaker went up to the captain and said 'Don't swear, captain,' and the captain answered, 'If I don't swear, the men won't work,' 'Well, don't swear,' said the Quaker; and the captain didn't swear, and the sailors didn't work, and there was every prospect of the ship going down to the bottom of the sea, you see; and then the Quaker sneaked up quietly to the captain and whispered, 'Swear a bit more, captain!' That's how Susy does with me, Mr. Chairman!"

One of the charms of Mr. Jenkins's public utterances in English, in addition to his picturesque and anecdotal

style, was his very broad Welsh pronunciation, and, in early days, even his broken English. An amusing story was told of one of his earliest efforts in addressing an audience in English soon after his settlement in Bristol. Mr. Probert had asked him to take a week-night service for him at a mission hall connected with the Pithay Church. Mr. Jenkins looked upon this as a very important engagement. It was a new and, to him, an important departure in life to take an English service. His preparation was long and intensely earnest. At length the night came, and Mrs. Jenkins, who knew far less English then even her husband, accompanied him on such an important occasion.

The following day Mr. Probert called upon Mr. Jenkins, and, pretending to be greatly concerned, he asked him why he had preached in Welsh, instead of English, to the poor people in his mission hall the preceding night. Mr. Jenkins vowed that he had preached in English; but Mr. Probert positively refused to accept that assurance. At length, in sheer desperation, Mr. Jenkins called his wife Susy, and, in order to convince Mr. Probert, asked her, "Susy, didn't I preach in English last night?" Susy replied, "Indeed, I can't tell you in what language you spoke, Thomas. I only know that you certainly didn't speak in Welsh!" There the matter had to rest.

For some years after my settlement in the ministry at Cardiff, I used to hear of Mr. Jenkins's periodical visits to Wales—visits which were all the more frequent owing to the kindness of Captain Lloyd, who exercised to the full the privilege granted him of giving free passages to Mr. Jenkins and the Welsh students at the college. On one very hot summer day, Mr. Jenkins found the task of walking the whole length of Bute Road, on his way to what was then called "The Bristol Packet," specially arduous. But on the way down he saw an Irishman driving a donkey-cart to the Docks. He, in desperation, called: "Pat,

what will you charge for taking me to the Docks?" "Faith; sixpence!" said Pat. "Very well," gratefully responded Mr. Jenkins, and he made for the centre of the road where the donkey-cart was. But on his arrival, an unexpected problem presented itself—how to get Mr. Jenkins into the cart! It was quite impossible for him to climb into the cart, and quite as impossible for the Irishman to lift him into it! They stood bewildered, but fortune smiled upon them, for at that very moment a powerful navvy chanced to pass by. He was at once requisitioned. The donkey was at a standstill, and the tailboard of the cart was taken off, and then the navvy and Irishman, joining hands beneath Mr. Jenkins—and calling out "one," "two," "three,"—made a supreme, almost a superhuman, effort to lift him up. This they just managed to do, but he was so heavy that they were obliged to drop him with a thud on the bottom part of the cart at the tail-board end, when suddenly the donkey was shot upward into mid-air, kicking and braying hopelessly, until Mr. Jenkins, on account of the sharply-inclined plane that the bottom of the cart had now formed, slid off and dropped into the roadway, when the donkey, too, simultaneously dropped to *terra firma*.

Poor Mr. Jenkins had the fright of his life; but so had the donkey—and so had the Irishman! Mr. Jenkins's exuberant spirits and genial humour, however, could not be suppressed even then, for as he lay helplessly on his back in the centre of Bute Road, he exclaimed in his broadest Welsh accent: "Pat, your donkey tried to take me up yonder too soon!" "Sure," replied Pat, in his most pronounced Irish brogue, "it's the impossible that my poor beauty was trying! It's downward that ye've been after going, in spite of three of us!" Then giving a touch of the stick to the donkey, he exclaimed, "Faith, I wouldn't take ye for a quid!" and proceeding on his

way he left poor Mr. Jenkins prostrate on his back to the mercy of the navvy, who, being more human, lifted him up, and set him on his way anew!

Not long after this an auto-wheeled chair was got for him, and a very substantial one of special build it proved to be, on account of the massive load it had to carry. It looked like a miniature Juggernaut car. Mr. Jenkins, with his powerful arms, used to trundle it along slowly, but majestically. It was an object to behold in the streets of Bristol, as the Welsh prophet proceeded on his way. Mr. Jenkins' car was known far and wide.

It was in this that he took his last pilgrimage to testify for his Lord and Master on earth, until at last his Lord passed by, "riding upon His horses and His chariots of salvation," and snatched him up, leaving his old trundled chair empty on life's highway. The old patriarch's chair was empty, and "he was not found, because God took him!"

CHAPTER V.

MY FIRST PASTORATE: IN CARDIFF.

MY settlement at Bethel, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff, came surprisingly sudden and unexpected. I had frequently visited Cardiff, as a student, and preached at the Scotch Presbyterian Church, Windsor Place, and had preached with some acceptance there. Ultimately the suggestion was made to me, by Dr. S. Wallace and Mr. (subsequently Sir) John Gunn, that it was not impossible, by a little mutual compromise, for me to become pastor of the Church. My views, however, on Baptism ultimately proved to be an insuperable difficulty, and the project had to be dropped, but, with mutual goodwill and esteem, on the part of those two elders and myself. The kind reception which I had as a preacher at Windsor Place, however, became known to some friends who were interested in the Baptist Church at Mount Stuart Square, then without a pastor, with the result that I was asked to preach there, and at length was invited to the pastorate—an invitation which I accepted. At the public meeting, in connection with my ordination, Dr. S. Wallace presided, and let out the secret that, if I had not been a strictly conscientious Baptist, I should in all probability have been the pastor of the Scotch Presbyterian Church at Windsor Place. As there was a very striking contrast between the then vigorous and comparatively wealthy church at Windsor Place, and the shattered and depleted church at Mount Stuart Square, this announcement created some sensation, and materially contributed to my having a very favourable start at the Docks, as a young man who had sacrificed something, in the direction of status and salary, for his convictions.

The church at that time was not only very weak, but also divided. After the Rev. G. Howe's long ministry, a young student full of zeal and eloquent of tongue, but lacking sadly in discretion, and evidently being fully convinced that he was one of those whom the Lord had sent to " turn the world upside down," began his ministry there with great projects of reform, which admitted of scarcely anything remaining there as it had been, or any worker, especially any prominent leader, continuing to carry on his work on the lines hitherto recognised by the Church. The effect of his drastic reforms was cataclysmic! There were loud protests, especially by leaders of long standing; but all only intensified the fervour, and strengthened the determination, of the young reformer. Failing ultimately to secure the support of the majority of the church, he and a company of earnest followers left, and established a rival cause in an adjoining street, leaving the original church greatly crippled.

During the subsequent brief ministry of the Rev. T. E. Williams at Bethel, the rival causes struggled, with lamentable results to both. Just before my settlement as Mr. Williams' successor, the young minister, who had caused all the commotion, removed to London, and the little company who had followed him was ultimately disbanded. Yet bitter feelings had been aroused, and the great bulk never returned to the mother church. Some of the more earnest workers, however, did, and under these conditions, and by strenuous and untiring work, the church prospered; and I enjoyed a very happy, although, in some respects, a difficult pastorate there.

It was a church which demanded exceptional discretion on the part of the pastor in that juncture, and, as I was only twenty-two years old, it made me somewhat doubtful as to whether any discretion which I may have possessed, and the very limited experience I had of life, and none of the ministry, would be adequate for the demands that

would be made upon them. Happily my people did not know my age, and at that time, chiefly because (as the result of a strenuous life in preparing for college, and during nearly six years of college life) I bore traces of the strain, and appeared many years older than I was. I was fully conscious of this, and determined, if possible, to profit by this drawback. I knew full well that there were two or three restless spirits in that church, who, the moment I ran counter to their wishes, would resent being over-ruled by a youth of twenty-two ! I, therefore, held my counsel.

Very soon, however, after my settlement I was invited to tea by my senior deacon, a most earnest and worthy brother—Mr. Samuel Grey, the father of Alderman W. Grey, now of Canton, Cardiff, and brother of Mr. William Grey, our able organist. After tea, during a free and easy conversation, Mr. Grey suddenly asked me—" How old may you be, Mr. Davies ? " I replied, " I will give you an opportunity of guessing." He looked at me scrutinisingly and said, " Well you are nearer forty than thirty." I replied, " No, I am nearer thirty than forty " and there the matter was left. Years after that Mr. Grey told me that from that reply he concluded that I must be about thirty-four, and told others so !

I have often been thankful that I began my ministry among seamen. It enabled me to understand, partly at least, why the Lord Jesus chose his apostles chiefly from among those who had to do with the sea, even among an agricultural people like the Jews. The fishermen of Galilee appealed to him, as no other class of the community did, when he would choose men, who were to endure opposition and hardships as his representatives. He chose men who had been cradled in storms, and who had entered into the fellowship of suffering in sharing each other's hardships.

I was not long in the ministry at the Docks, Cardiff, before I learnt that the hardships of the sea, amid conditions which are only fully known to the sailor, develop some of the strongest traits, and tenderest sympathies, in human nature. One is, of course, well aware of the recklessness, and often foolish abandon, of the impulsive sailor, who has failed to profit as he should by the experiences through which he has passed; but, even in those cases, we find traces of sympathy and unselfishness, which we seldom find in a landman of the same class. Low as the seaman may fall, the perils and hardships through which he has passed (alone, or in fellowship with brave companions) always leave traces, which can never be deleted, of those cordial feelings, and responsive sympathies, which only such endurances can produce. My experiences in those early days convinced me that in the great majority of instances the sailor, even when he has fallen low, retains in his "deepest degradation," "something sacred, something undefiled," to which we can appeal. Moreover, when you find the noblest type of seaman, be he fisherman or sailor, you have a man who cannot be surpassed for courage, transparency and fellow-feeling in any sphere of life.

To hear a devout, brave, hardy sailor praise God after a deliverance at sea, is a privilege worth living for. How well I remember one instance, when a ship came to Cardiff, with all the masts snapped even with the decks, and covered with ice from bow to stern, and from deck to water-mark! I saw it arrive, and saw the hardy crew on board, but to my surprise two hours later they all came into our prayer meeting, uninvited, and only urged to do so by the irresistible promptings of their own heart. They outnumbered all the rest present, and crowded the room in which we were met. Such singing and such praying, as I heard that night, have never been approached for fervour and intensity by anything that I have ever heard

since. It gave me and all present such a conception of devotion as we could never have had otherwise. It was among the sailors of Bute Docks, Cardiff, that I learnt what a deep, throbbing, resistless thing devotion is at its best.

There were, however, other striking aspects of my ministry among these people. It was, as might be imagined, in some respects a "rough and tumble" ministry. Very often little regard was paid in our prayer meetings to conventional phrases. Prayers had about them the breezes of the high seas, and quaint nautical expressions which only a seaman could duly appreciate. There was also often a refreshing blend of the pathetic and the humorous. Sometimes a ripple of smiles would pass over the face of a congregation, but the next moment it would as often be bathed in tears; and my people never imagined that the smile in those cases was less devout than the tear! Oh, the naturalness and the sincerity of it all!!

Not that all mariners are humourists. I have a vivid recollection of the owner of a few smacks coming from Aberdeen to Cardiff, to survey them on their arrival. He then used to attend my ministry. The first time I met him was at my Sunday School, when I had to give my monthly address to the boys and girls. He came into the school, and asked if he might give the address. The superintendent and myself readily consented. He began by telling the boys and girls that he was very fond of children: that he had had children of his own; and now had grandchildren.

He then immediately proceeded to tell them that he was about to speak to them on a very important subject that began with the letter T; and they were asked to guess what the subject was. He gave the first opportunity to the little girls; and one of the smallest instantly held up her hand. This delighted our friend, and he said, "I am very pleased to tell you that a little girl has held up her

hand. Now I want you to be perfectly quiet, and I want the little girl to speak clearly, so that all may hear. Now, my dear, what is the important subject, beginning with the letter T, that I am going to speak about." Instantly a shrill voice was heard throughout the building to say "Tea-things, sir." The children at once caught the comicality of it, and joined in a roar of laughter. But our visitor saw, in that answer, nothing to laugh about, and said, "No, my dear, you are greatly mistaken. I will give another clue. It is a word of five letters beginning with T. Now will the little boys try?" I saw the most mischievous boy in the school instantly put up his hand, as something suggestive of a lightning flash darted from the corner of his eye. My Scotch friend was very interested, and said, "Now we are going to have another guess. A most interesting little boy has put up his hand. Now be perfectly silent, so that all may hear the answer." Whereupon the boy shot out the word as if from a catapult, at the top of his voice: "Tripe, sir."

The effect of that reply was electric. The children seemed to have had the treat of their life, as they burst out in unrestrained laughter. But again my Scotch friend saw nothing to laugh at in it all, and overcome by disappointment, he gave up the attempt, and transferred to me the task of finishing the address! It transpired that the word he had in mind was "Truth," but the answers given by the children were natural. The little girl had had her birthday during the week, and had received a set of *Tea-things*, and they naturally were uppermost in her mind; whereas the boy had only an hour before been indulging in consuming a savoury dish of *tripe* for his Sunday dinner; and what more natural than that this should be uppermost with him! Ah, an unskilled hand like my Scotch friend was playing with double-edged weapons, when he addressed the Bute Docks boys and girls

in that absurd fashion. He gave them just the opportunity which they were eminently fitted effectively to use.

In two or three years after my settlement at Mount Stuart Square, Bute Docks, we renovated the Chapel and Schoolrooms, and were consequently in need of liberal contributions toward the cost. The effort was made in connection with the Anniversary Services of the Church. At the public meeting, following the annual tea, I was asked to take the chair. Mr. Richard Cory, known for his great liberality, was suggested as one of the speakers. But he had one serious failing, namely, that when once he got on his feet there was no certainty when he would get seated again. I had the privilege of knowing him intimately, and promised to give him a pointed hint. The meeting came, and before calling upon Mr. Cory, I said that I had pleasure in calling upon a gentleman who excelled in two directions—he could give to any extent, and he also could speak to any extent. I was determined that he should excel alike that night in both directions. He, therefore, was at liberty to speak as long as he liked, the understanding being that for every minute he spoke he should contribute £1 toward the funds!

Mr. Cory thought it an excellent suggestion, and took to it very kindly. When he had spoken for nine minutes, he looked at his watch and said that he must close, to which remark there was a loud "Go on! Go on!" But he only occupied the meeting one minute longer, sat down, and placed £10 on the table. I often heard Mr. Cory speak elsewhere, but I confess that this was the only time in which he spoke too briefly to please the audience! And I declare that I never heard him speak with such pleasure to himself and *profit* to his audience! Ah, Mr. Richard Cory was a most devout and liberal man, and though indiscreet in methods at times, and never great as a speaker, yet he used his wealth freely for what

he conceived to be for the good of his fellows and the spread of Christ's Kingdom. He was one to whom I never went for help in vain!

The population at the Docks, even at the time of my settlement there, was very mixed: and that in many senses. There was, of course, an endless variety and admixture of population. There was also a strange blend there of good and evil. The commercial life of the place was represented, on the one hand, by men of strong principle and conspicuous integrity, and, on the other hand, by men who readily sacrificed principle on the altar of gain, and ate daily the bread that was leavened with dishonesty. Thus the commercial character of the Docks was of a distinctly mottled character. I soon detected this, and with the exuberant zeal of a young reformer of twenty-two, who felt that he must put the world right without delay, I preached, on a Sunday evening, from the text, "Divers weights are an abomination unto the Lord, and a false balance is not good" (Prov. xx, 23).

I soon found that I had been more zealous than discreet, and that I had stepped in where my predecessors had feared to tread. A merchant, who had been attracted by my teaching, was mortally offended, and the following morning I learnt why, to my intense amazement. It would appear that, some time before I preached that sermon, the tide had burst into the cellars of the leading shops in the district, and that, when the trap-door of that gentleman's cellar was opened, 56 lbs. weights floated on the surface of the water! Thereby hanged a tale, which I need not follow. My text, evidently, exactly fitted, and all unwittingly to myself my sermon had a special appropriateness to that case! I never regained the confidence of that gentleman—and, I may be permitted

to add, that he never regained mine! Moreover, I have lived long enough to commit many similar indiscretions since!

As I have already intimated, the sailor population contained very many magnificent types of character—strong, robust and uncompromising when principle was involved—while on the other hand one found there some of the flotsam and jetsam, and I may say the ligan, of the wrecks of human lives on life's high seas. Many of these were salved. But they required a special ministry, based upon an intimate knowledge of their idiosyncrasies and habits. It was, indeed, very hard to classify some of them. They were marvellous admixtures of the best and the worst—and one extreme seemed to keep the other in check. I remember coming into contact with many of the kind during seven weeks' strike in the coal-fields, which brought great hardship to the population of Cardiff Docks. There was one in particular who remained more or less an enigma to me. He was a conglomerate character. He had undoubtedly good emotions, but he had also bad propensities. His experiences also varied, but they generally touched extremes. He, at times, appeared to have abundance of the necessities of life, at another time he was on the verge of starvation. It was either "feast or famine" with Jimmy Strickland. I met him first at the Soup Kitchen during a great strike. I shall not easily forget his going out with a quart jug full of soup and, looking at me, as he held the jug up, he exclaimed with all the fervour, although not quite in the phraseology of the ancient Psalmist, "Thank the Lord for *another blow out!*"

After that, Jimmy attended my ministry, with an occasional lapse when he gave way to drink, after which he would return, and be as regular as ever for months together. He obtained his living in a precarious, not to say mysterious way, but chiefly by raking up out of the canal an occasional

bar of pig iron, which had in some way dropped into the canal from the barges, and concerning the locality of which, at the bottom of the canal, Jimmy had an uncanny guess. When in comparatively comfortable circumstances, he shared generously what he had with needier ones than himself, with the result that Jimmy himself was never without a friend when himself in need. He got married at the time I got married, and consequently he came to my vestry on my return home to congratulate me—but as he put it (for he did not know the difference) to "sympathise" with me. He told me that he had married the best cook in Cardiff, the one who had for years cooked for the judges in assize! Some three months later I asked after his wife. He replied, "She's no good for a poor man, although she did very well for the judges. She wanted a joint for every meal, sir; but had no idea of making a meal, especially for two, with a bloater. I could not keep her going, sir." He had, therefore, sent her back to the judges! Poor Jimmy—he was a problem that required a lot of solving, and yet an attractive personality. What a blessing that there is a God to judge such people aright!

A very noted character with whom I was brought into contact in the earlier years of my ministry, and with whom I became increasingly intimate as years passed by, until his death, was Mr. Dan Thomas, known for many years as "Dan Pontypridd," the champion light-weight boxer, who, I believe, was never defeated. His name was known among the boxing fraternity of the world and, naturally, at Pontypridd, Treforest, and the neighbourhood, was a household word in the days of my boyhood. The story of his early life was also often repeated. It would seem that as a boy he was known as an incomparable fighter among his fellows. When in his teens, however, he was converted, and joined a Baptist Church. This

became at once a subject of wide comment, and of considerable ridicule among some of his former companions. Many of them also, especially those who held him in greatest dread before, became very aggressive, and used to sneer at him, and push him about. According to a story universally told in those days, a lad one day considerably bigger than himself, became very insolent, and, following him about, suggested a fight, and ultimately gave him a push. Instantly Dan said, " I have given up the trade, but I have not sold the tools," and, with that assurance, he gave him a blow that sent him reeling over the road. The aggressive bully instantly retired. He had had enough. But busy tongues spread abroad the news, and Dan's case was brought before a Church meeting for discipline, by some who were more zealous than wise ; and, strange to tell, Dan was suspended from membership for doing, what I have personally always contended ought to have gone a long way toward securing for him a position on the diaconate! This was a most regrettable decision. Dan's sense of self-respect, and his utter contempt of cowardice, made him resent the decision. He, in a moment of anger, broke off from religious life, and with a youthful abandon devoted himself to prize fighting, and soon became, as already indicated, the light-weight champion of the world. His career in that capacity is well known, and need not be repeated here.

It is a striking fact, however, that, as years passed by, memories of his brief religious life came back to him with increasing force. I remember, when I began my ministry at Bethel, Mount Stuart Square, being amazed when I was told that Mr. Dan Thomas, who then kept the Salutation Arms, Bute Street, had been at the service, and seemed to be very interested in the whole proceedings ; but sat in the last pew under one of the galleries. Many a time after that Mr. Dan Thomas sat in the same seat, behind the curtain that was intended as a protection from

the draught of the door, but in his case was a convenient shield from the observation of the many, who would inevitably know so noted a character. That was the period of transition from the life of a prize fighter to that of a quiet retiring Christian, who, after years of severance from the Church, with which he had been associated in his youth, now reverted to type. After I left Cardiff, I heard of his destroying the trophies of his unique triumphs as a pugilist, and going back to the scenes of his early days at Pontypridd and Treforest. There he became interested in a coal mine, became a member of Libanus Welsh Baptist Church, Treforest, and attended the Men's Bible Class, of which my father was a teacher. The friendship between him and my father became very close, and although, during the years that followed, he lived at Porthcawl and elsewhere, yet the bulk of the years were lived at Treforest, where the two were in constant companionship.

I, as a natural consequence, became also intimately acquainted with him, and was greatly impressed with his persistent silence with regard to his championship of the light belt, and, indeed, with regard to any reference whatever to that chapter in his life. Once only did he deviate from that attitude, and that was when we were discussing the important function of the human eye, he suddenly, and almost unwittingly, said to me, "Yes, in my fighting days I never lost sight of my opponent's eye. I learnt from that what his next move would be. I watched nothing else. I focussed my attention on that. To lose sight of his eye, but for a second, would be to court defeat." I often picture that quiet, unassuming Christian man in the eventide of life—the man who, in its morning hours, was the terror of all who met him in the fighting ring, but who never, as the day drew toward its close, found any pleasure in recalling those hours of triumph. The son of thunder had, indeed, become the Apostle of Love.

During the autumn of my last year (1877) at Bute Docks, Cardiff, I was invited to speak for the first time on the platform at the Baptist Union. The autumnal meetings were held at Newport, Mon., and a great mass meeting on Temperance was held at Victoria Hall, at which Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. McCree, of Bloomsbury (the Apostle of the Seven Dials), and myself were to speak. I remember well my nervous tension at that meeting, as I was naturally to be the first speaker, and the two giants followed, first Mr. McCree, and then Sir Wilfrid Lawson. I was greatly helped by the sympathy of Sir Wilfrid, who evidently detected my nervousness, and when I got up he, with his large heartedness, punctuated, by encouraging responses, some points I made; and still more, when following McCree, who had criticised something I had said, he referred to the criticism, and said he must say that he agreed with the virile young minister who had given such a high tone to the meeting. The inspiration of that gracious encouragement remained with me for years; indeed, I am not sure that it has ever left me. Sir Wilfrid was at that time in the zenith of his power as a temperance advocate. His sparkling asides, his rich humour, and his brilliant repartees, when interrupted, aroused the greatest enthusiasm in that vast audience. As an instance of his unanswerable repartees, I remember that when he spoke of alcohol as the greatest enemy we had to contend with as a nation, a voice broke in from the gallery, "What about opium?" Sir Wilfrid, quick as a lightning flash, replied, "My friend, when we meet at Hong Kong we'll discuss that question. At present we are in Newport, South Wales." There was no answer to that repartee. That was, indeed, a great meeting which, in its influence, has never quite passed out of my life!

CHAPTER VI.

MY FIRST PASTORATE (*continued*).

MY FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE REV. BENJAMIN THOMAS (" MYFYR EMLYN ").

ALTHOUGH I have, in the course of my life, been brought into personal and confidential relationship with many of the leading ministers of all denominations in England and Wales, there is no one who, with the exception of the Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, has struck me more with the charm of his personality, the drollery of his humour, the keenness of his discernment, the geniality of his spirit, and the brilliance of his genius than my old friend Benjamin Thomas (" Myfyr Emlyn "). I became acquainted with him for the first time soon after my settlement in my first pastorate, at Mount Stuart Square, Bute Docks, Cardiff. He came from Newcastle Emlyn to Penarth, as first pastor of the Tabernacle (my present church) in June, 1873, some fifteen months after my settlement in Cardiff.

About two years before that, when a student at the Baptist College, Bristol, I wrote a letter to " *Seren Cymru* " in depreciation of the American degrees, which at that time crossed the Atlantic to Wales like a plague of locusts. The latest instance was that of M.A.which had been conferred upon the Rev. T. E. James ("T. ab Ieuan"), who was, indeed, a most estimable brother of the jovial, happy-go-lucky type, and a popular preacher, whose voice charmed the more impressionable type of Welsh audiences, when he poured out his perorations with the fulness and sweep of a Niagara in its thundering descent. But by no stretch of the imagination could he be considered to be a scholarly man, and it was this that struck me at that time as being most incongruous. A letter appeared in the " *Seren* " in reply to mine, to which the *nom de plume* " Twm o'r

Nant " was appended, and which defended " T. ab Ieuan," not on the ground of scholarship, but on the ground that he was *one of the kindest men in the country*, and subjecting me to merciless irony, for my presumption in calling into question the qualifications of such a man. I did not know at the time who had written that letter, nor, indeed, did I until, some years later, "Myfyr Emlyn" and myself became bosom friends, when he confessed that he was the author. He further confessed that he had written it at the earnest request of his old warmhearted, innocent friend, " T. ab Ieuan " himself, who had felt my criticism far more keenly than I had ever imagined. "Myfyr Emlyn," in response to his friend's earnest wish, defended him with great zest and pungency ; but he freely admitted that subsequently he had repented handling me so harshly, when he learnt that I was a promising lad (" hen grwt bach gobeithiol "), and that I was a distant relative of David Evans, Ffynnon Henry—" Myfyr Emlyn " 's great hero, in his immortal biography of him—and was, moreover, the son of the very man who had given him his best stories about David Evans.

When, therefore, he came to Penarth, he determined to call at once upon the lad, as some atonement for his unnecessarily harsh treatment of him a few years earlier. I remember his first visit to my house, as if it were yesterday. He was shown into my study. He entered slowly and politely, gave me his name, and took me by the hand. I at once felt the warm grip of that large powerful hand. I looked up into that strong, yet genial, countenance, that had upon it a smile as tender as love, and had in it the clear transparency of the dawn. I looked into those dreamy eyes, that at once allured me, and saw a sudden flash, that shot out of them, denoting the momentary awakening of the great soul which dreamt its dreams, and saw its visions, in the depths beyond. I felt instinctively that I had come into contact with one of God's seers, and that I should be richer to all eternity for that touch.

Only on one other occasion, in my whole life, did I feel as I then did, and that was when I met Charles Haddon Spurgeon for the first time, looked into his genial face, felt the warm pressure of his tender hand, and came under the irresistible spell of that great personality! I fear I shall never again have a similar experience—the thrilling discoveries of my eager, inquisitive youth are long since past; and yet the inspiring recollections of them come increasingly back to me with maturing years.

I was but twenty-three years old when "Myfyr Emlyn" then called upon me; and he was only thirty-six, in the full vigour of life. He very often called after that. He frequently went on a preaching and lecturing tour from Monday to Saturday, and, on returning on Saturday, would visit me. When he came into my study, it was always with the most pious resolve to leave for home, after a smoke and a brief chat; but although he made that resolve dozens of times, I am a living witness to the fact that he never succeeded in carrying it out. The chat would proceed pleasantly till tea time. After tea the resolve was renewed, but with the same result until supper. Then, by a desperate effort, he would leave somewhere within an hour of supper, when he would start on his lonely journey for Penarth Ferry, and thence for Penarth. That was before Penarth railway was opened.

During those visits "Myfyr" would sometimes give a graphic and humorous description of the characters he had met on his journey; and his unsurpassed gift of mimicry made such descriptions living pictures. One felt that, at any time, one would recognize them readily if one ever met them. At other times he would inquire about my texts for the following day. Sometimes he would put the pipe on one side while he outlined a homiletical sketch. Occasionally, too, he would repeat some poetical descriptions that he had composed on his journey. In any case, before leaving about ten o'clock he would generally have

the sketch of a sermon for the following morning; and on the way between Bute Docks and Penarth Ferry, he would go through the sketch, filling in the hiati beneath the stars, or as he pressed homeward through the storm, in preparation for the morning service. He would have a far less definite conception of his treatment of the evening text.

Thus, on Saturday night, his Sunday evening sermon would be much like creation before the coming of light—"without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep"—but, almost without exception, by Sunday evening the spirit "had moved upon the face of the waters—and there was light." His method of preparation would have been ruinous to most preachers; but to him it came with the ease and naturalness of breathing. Knowing all this about "Myfyr Emlyn"'s brief, direct, preparation for his pulpit, it is easy to imagine my admiring wonder of his great gifts when, on Monday, some of the most intelligent and devout men who visited Penarth for a week-end, came back to Cardiff, and gave glowing reports of the sermons they had heard him preach on the Sunday, as being marvellous deliverances, and which, as they averred, must have cost him the bulk of the week to prepare!

Thus, "Myfyr Emlyn" was not a hard or painstaking student, although he rendered great and untiring services publicly. He took the duties of life calmly; he never was in a hurry, and seldom, indeed, quickened his deliberate pace; but he, nevertheless, took those duties resolutely and philosophically. He knew that he could efficiently perform them in his own time, and his own way, and he did so without fuss or sweat. As a matter of fact his mind as a student was not of that ordinary type, that gathered and accumulated from without, and then gave the result; but one that produced from within. His reading was but an incentive to the exercise of his own great intuitional gifts, and not the gathering together of material which could be

retailed, in due course, to others. He was a prophet, and not a reciter; a voice and not an echo. He did not view literary studies as the equipment for life, but as an exercise by which his own faculties were developed and stimulated for the task that lay before him. Study, to him, was a tonic—and that not to be taken ever and anon, but only as occasion required that his natural intuitions and faculties should be braced up to the full exercise of their functions. The thought of making life superficial and mechanical was to him a horror, and the training that would make men as much like one another as so many marbles was viewed by him as an enormity. He believed that everyone's faculties should be used along the particular lines that God had appointed for that individual, and not according to the fashion of any age, or the custom of any community, or district.

He was, although a thoroughly cultured man, in some respects like the Welsh mountain pony: he believed only to a limited extent in any clipping, bridling, or saddling. He himself was as free as the breeze, and as playful as the sunbeam. In this respect he, indeed, had some of the failings of his great quality. For instance, as a bard he had never studied, or had much regard for, the involved technicalities of the close metres; nor, indeed, was he very deferential toward the recognized rules of even the free metres. He sang without rule, but sang as sweetly as the nightingale, some of the tenderest lyrics in our language. So, too, he spoke and preached. He dreamt his dreams, and revelled in his imaginative flights, as he advanced. He uttered some of the most striking things with the greatest naturalness and ease, and almost without knowing it, when he was in a homely mood.

Occasionally, however, he was like a giant in chains, or as helpless as Samson when shorn of his locks. Happily, that was very seldom. In his best form, he thrilled the audience with his brilliant thoughts, his glowing imagery,

his exquisite poetic diction, and the rich cadences of his tender voice. The Rev. E. Herber Evans had a greater rush of fervid eloquence, which by sheer force and irresistible pathos, carried everything before it, and the Rev. Kilsby Jones had a greater gift of racy conversational powers, which never flagged ; but Benjamin Thomas was far more richly imaginative, more original in conception, more pictorial in style, and poetic in diction, than both. Besides, he repeated himself more rarely than either of them. There was a perennial freshness about many of his utterances, too, even when he repeated favourite sermons. He was inexhaustible, and, in his happy mood, bubbled up like a spring from unfathomable depths.

There was also a rich vein of humour in "Myfyr Emlyn." He could equal the best I have ever known in telling a story. He had, moreover, a most exceptional power of imitation. His lecture on "The Celebrities of the Welsh Pulpit" ("Hynodion y Pwlpud Cymreig") supplied him with rare opportunities of exercising that gift. Those whom he imitated or mimicked seemed almost to be present—so realistic was his description. He could so easily change the shape or expression of his countenance, and adapt his voice so completely, as to astound people, by his striking similarity to those he imitated.

For instance, he delivered that lecture on one occasion at The Tabernacle, Carmarthen, where the noted Hugh Jones had ministered for so many years. All who heard the Rev. Hugh Jones (and I am one of the few now living who did so) know that he suffered for a long period, near the close of life, from asthma. Thus, in his later years, his silvery voice was often broken by a stifling cough ; but Hugh Jones succeeded very cleverly in making the cough a means by which his delightfully triumphant shout was made more irresistibly effective than ever—such a consummate artist was he. "Myfyr Emlyn" had taken note of this many a time ; he, therefore, when he came to lecture

at Hugh Jones's chapel, made a point of imitating the alternating melodious shout, and the short sudden muffled cough, with such striking similarity to Hugh Jones, that two old ladies in the vestibule, ere they entered, as they heard this, were astounded—one assuring the other that Hugh Jones must have come back again: an assurance which was doomed to disappointment, as soon as they entered, and saw the lecturer!

In his playful hours his wit was rollicking and alluring, and his jokes unending. At such times his eye had all the merry playfulness of a trout's eye; but this was more evident in private than in public. Yet he, at times, gave the reins to his merriment publicly, and did this occasionally to excess. This, indeed, was a besetment, which he could not always resist; and once he began, and was encouraged to continue by some of the merriest members of a congregation, there was no certainty when he would finish his by-play, and proceed with his theme.

His repartees were unanswerable. One striking instance at once occurs to me. At the commencement of my ministry at Cardiff, and for years later, during "Myfyr Emlyn"'s all too brief ministry at Penarth, there was a super-holy man in Cardiff, who was far too unctuous to be sincere, and who conducted a Mission Hall in Bute Road. That holy man had been keen enough on the one hand to marry a lady of fortune, but, on the other hand, was sufficiently pious and circumspect not to "waste his substance in riotous living," or in any indulgence in food or drink, or dress, *to gratify the flesh!* That would be worldly! He, therefore, made no "fair show in the flesh," but economised, and that very rigidly. He was a vegetarian, and lived on 2¾d. a day, and considered this to be one of the essentials for admission into the Kingdom of Heaven. The eating of a mutton chop, or a beef steak, was to him almost synonymous with the sin against the Holy Ghost. As might be expected, he was exceptionally lean, and looked, as Sidney

Smith would put it, "as if a curate had been taken out of him"; indeed, he might have passed for an Egyptian mummy, if only placed in a sarcophagus in one of the ancient pyramids. He also had a pre-eminently holy look—that is if holiness may be estimated by the length of the face, and the sourness and stolidity of its expression.

That holy man chanced to meet "Myfyr" and myself in Bute Road one day. "Myfyr" was nearly six feet in height, and of proportionate breadth. According to the thin brother, holiness was consistent with physical length, but not with breadth or thickness. At that time I was not excessively blessed with flesh. I did not, therefore, offend the pious brother. But as we approached him "Myfyr" whispered to me, "See this pious old bone coming." That set us smiling. But as we approached I managed to suppress the smile, whereas "Myfyr"'s playful and pliable face was still aglow with merriment, and the smile seemed to flit hither and thither all over it, like a glimmering light. This was instantly noted by the emaciated brother, who addressed "Myfyr" in one of his most sanctimonious tones—"Ah, brother, I am afraid the work of preaching the Gospel does not weigh very much upon you!" "Myfyr," in response, looked at his cadaverous-looking rebuker, and scanning him from head to foot, replied in precisely the same tones—"Ah, brother, I am afraid the work of preaching the Gospel doesn't *agree* with you!" The effect was electrical. The thin brother rushed speedily on his way without uttering a word, as if he had been shot; and so he undoubtedly had been.

There was, indeed, a small measure of truth in the assertion of the holy brother, but not in the direction he supposed. The immediate preparation of sermons, as already indicated, did not "weigh heavily" upon "Myfyr Emlyn." That was no task, or hardship, to him, but an easy and pleasurable exercise. He, as a rule, lived in

the atmosphere of the pulpit; thus, when he composed a sermon, he had not to search for material. That was ready at hand. Thoughts only needed to be selected out of his "treasury of things new and old." Like Mary, the cook, he had the "stockpot" always ready on the hob, and whenever any "stock" was required it was there at call. Thus his direct preparation was amazingly brief, and all the more so because of the readiness of his genius to adapt itself to every demand made upon its resources.

"Myfyr Emlyn," although a man of a most genial disposition, had a pet aversion toward super-pious men of the above description, and occasionally was scathing in his ironical references to them. On one occasion he composed a song, called "Wil Fain" ("Slim Will"), which far outrivals Dryden's satires, in its withering sallies, against the sanctimonious man who was its theme. That song was composed for private consumption among a select circle, into which I was graciously received. The man, to whom "Myfyr" gave the fictitious name of "Wil Fain," was not only thin and sinewy, like the holy man of Bute Road, but was also abnormally tall—some six feet two inches. Like all men of his school, too, he had an inbred dislike of "Myfyr Emlyn," who never lost an opportunity of ridiculing them; and, in return, he did his utmost to traduce "Myfyr," and undermine his influence. Consequently "Myfyr" composed the song. I personally, as a youth, knew the original "Wil" of that song. In addition to his being a tall, lanky man, he indulged in a specially sanctimonious smile on opportune occasions. His face was naturally long and pliable, and when it relaxed into that favourite smile, it became specially inane, and displayed unctuous lines strikingly suggestive of the melting of a bladder of lard. It certainly was the most oily and repulsive that I have ever seen. "Myfyr" referred to that smile, but specially dwelt upon the mischief "Wil" had wrought, by pushing

himself into the confidence of churches, and then abusing his position by creating suspicion and dissension. He at length described him as presenting himself at the door of heaven, and trying to smuggle himself into the confidence of Peter and the angels. But Peter gave strict orders to keep him out. The angels, with the door ajar, announced the decision and refused admission; but he instantly put his foot in between the door and the jamb. Then came the tug of war: "Wil" rivalling the angels in the strenuous struggle. "Myfyr" even suggests a doubt as to the issue; but proceeds:

" Ac os trwy ddrws y nefoedd
Y cwymp e' yn ei hyd,
Fe gymer dragwyddoldeb maith
I'w gael e' 'maes i gyd,"

which, being translated, may be rendered:

And if through heaven's portal
He falls full length amain,
Eternity will be too short
To get him out again.

I remember asking "Myfyr" why he had left "Wil" in such an equivocal position. He instantly replied: "Well, you know, I couldn't conscientiously put 'Wil' in heaven, and out of sheer pity I did not care to shut him outside; so I left the responsibility with Peter, and the angels at the door."

"Myfyr Emlyn" did not often compete in Eisteddfodau, but when he did he was generally successful. On one occasion he won a prize for a poem—ten guineas, if I remember correctly—in a provincial Eisteddfod. A few intimate friends gathered round him and congratulated him. The Eisteddfod was in a village where there were but few rooms, at most, in which he could invite them for a chat. Besides, in the generosity of his heart, and with that unconventional freedom which existed at that time in country districts, he invited a few congenial souls

into the parlour of the village inn, and, as it was the height of summer, he ordered some aerated water for himself and his friends.

In that parlour a newly-married couple chanced to be seated near the window, as the group of friends entered. Their presence was not very welcome to the young couple, who would have much preferred being alone; and they rather resented the intrusion, in so far, at least, as they could by unpleasant looks. Meanwhile, as "Myfyr" was opening one of the bottles, the cork suddenly shot across the room, and a few drops squirted on the lavender trousers of the bridegroom. The young man became at once very angry; but "Myfyr" immediately apologised for the misadventure, took out a silk pocket-handkerchief from his pocket, and gently tapped the spots, adding that they would soon dry out. But the young man, evidently anxious to show off before his bride, would not be appeased, and insisted on being paid for the trousers. "Myfyr" suggested that they should wait to see whether the spots would dry out or not; but the youthful bridegroom was wroth, adding that "Myfyr" would not leave the room before he had compensated for the loss. Having asked the price, and been told that it was 30s., "Myfyr" promptly paid the amount, and then promptly added, "Now you will please hand the trousers to me." The bridegroom demurred, and said he must, of course, first leave the room; but "Myfyr" having reminded him that he himself had insisted upon "Myfyr" paying before he left the room, added that, now he had purchased the trousers, he also naturally insisted upon the young man delivering the goods before he left the room. The situation was humiliating to the bridegroom. Being on the horns of a dilemma, he chose the less humiliating of the two, and soon offered

to cancel the purchase, and to return the money, and thus save the ignominy of having there and then to deliver the trousers!

One of the latest occasions, if not, indeed, the very last time, I was brought into close and memorable relationship with him was peculiar and pathetic. I used to go annually to Llechryd, near Cardigan, for fishing, and made arrangements to meet " Myfyr Emlyn " on such occasions, either at Narberth, or in Cardigan. One year we had arranged to meet at Cardigan. I went according to arrangement, but found that " Myfyr " and my two other friends, Mr. Phillips and Mr. Hughes (Cardigan ministers) were at the Pembrokeshire Association meetings at St. Dogmells, just over the river. I went in search of them, and found that a conference was just then sitting, into which I received a hearty welcome.

To my intense amazement an old friend of " Myfyr Emlyn," who had become a foe, had brought a charge against him, before the conference, of having drunk to excess on a certain occasion. There were no witnesses, and the conference had to choose between the accusation of the one, and the denial of the other. The chairman suggested to the conference that I, as " Myfyr Emlyn" 's most intimate friend, should be asked to speak a few words. This was endorsed by the assembly. I got up and told the brethren the circumstances in which I had come, and the great surprise with which I found that the case of my friend had been brought before the conference! I added, " I can only say that I have known 'Myfyr Emlyn' most intimately for many years, and have seen him in almost every possible circumstance; but I have never seen him the worse for drink. The nearest point was some years ago, in the house of the gentleman who has now, and here, brought this charge forward against my friend. 'Myfyr' and I had gone into that gentleman's house; he was soon supplied with a

'Churchwarden pipe,' and began to tell his tales in his own inimitable way. The gentleman urged my friend to take a drop of whisky. That offer was twice declined, but at the third time of asking my friend consented. The table was at 'Myfyr''s' elbow, and, as he went on, he sipped the whisky from a glass; but I observed that the gentleman from behind, *and without my friend's knowledge*, replenished the glass repeatedly. As an abstainer, I was exceptionally annoyed at such a mean procedure, and got up to go, and my friend instantly rose, leaving the glass half full, and came with me. That," I added, in closing, "is all that I can say; except that now I am shocked beyond words, to find that the subtle *tempter* of that night is the bold *accuser* of to-day!"[1]

The charge was discredited; and it is not a little joy to me to know that on that occasion I was brought by a way I knew not, to that conference, in the psychological moment, to do my part to discredit an utterly uncorroborated charge, by a man who had played such a contemptibly double part. Indeed, I seem to feel at this very moment the warm grip of my friend's hand when, at the close of the conference, he came up to me and said, "You have been the same faithful friend to-day, as you have always been," and when, looking up, I saw a big glistening tear upon his honest, manly countenance!

Before closing, I must refer to one other memorable incident. It occurred when I paid my friend a brief visit about 1876, at Rushacre, Narberth. I went on the distinct understanding that he would not ask me to preach, as I was at the time somewhat indisposed, and had been ordered rest. "Myfyr" began to look for texts on Saturday in a leisurely way. He soon succeeded to fix upon a text for the morning service, and was not long in preparing a neat and comprehensive outline.

[1]It will be noted that "tempter" and "accuser" are two epithets applied to Satan.

He was not equally successful for Sunday night. He, however, found a text early Saturday evening, and had a misty conception of the mode in which he would treat his subject. On Sunday morning we had a delightful service. In the afternoon, before going to the Sunday School, we both went to the study and, after my friend had lit his pipe, we both went over the subject in earnest: but he was slower and less happy than usual; yet he had made out what I thought was a charming little sketch before going to school. On his return from school, he put on the finishing touches before tea.

Meanwhile dark and threatening clouds had gathered on the horizon, and the sound of thunder was heard in the distance. But speedily the clouds drew near. By the time we were at tea, the flashes had become very vivid and frequent, and the thunder roared almost without cessation. As we finished tea, "Myfyr" said to me, "Come to the study. It's no use trying to preach from the text we have chosen, amid such an awful demonstration as this. It would be like Nero fiddling when Rome was in flames. No, there is no use trying, really. I have a text, my boy, without its like—'Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth forth out of his mouth. He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth. After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard. God thundereth marvellously with his voice.'—Did you ever see a text fit like that?"

My friend was intensely serious and very much in earnest. We went to the study upstairs. "Myfyr" took two steps at a time, and I followed as best I could, according to the length of my legs. Soon a few points were jotted down, and after reviewing them hastily (as it was time to start for the service) "Myfyr," as a kind of excuse for the thinness of the sketch, said, "You see,

I can venture to-night with this, the storm will fill up the sketch. There is no possibility of failure. The air is full of natural and supernatural electricity." We went to the chapel through the storm ; and to our surprise it was filled almost to excess. The storm had, in some unaccountable way, driven all to the sanctuary. They seemed to have felt that they would be happier in God's house than they could be anywhere else. By this time the lightning had become forked and vivid, and the thunder more furious. In the midst of all " Myfyr Emlyn " rose up in his pulpit. His tall and stately figure, his broad shoulders and expanded chest, his majestic head, his solemn countenance, his patriarchal beard, and his large luminous and searching eyes, all imparted a wonderful effect to his full sonorous voice when he gave out Isaac Watts's hymn :

" How shall I praise the eternal God—
The Infinite Unknown ?
Who can ascend His high abode,
Or venture near His throne ?

The great Invisible. He dwells
Concealed in dazzling light ;
But His all-searching eye reveals
The secrets of the night."

He then read the latter part of the nineteenth chapter of Exodus. The reading was made all the more impressive, by the alternating emphasis of the lightning and thunder, as the reader proceeded. Right through it seemed as if the reader were with God on Sinai, while we were at the foot. After the reading came the prayer. I had never before heard a prayer offered amid such circumstances, and with such effect. Every sentence quivered, as if charged with an electric current that shot from earth to heaven. I do not think that there is a single phrase used in Scripture, descriptive of Sinai when shaken to its foundations in the distant past, that was not used with thrilling effect in that prayer. After the prayer, another hymn

was sung, " Lord Thou hast searched and seen me through," etc. Then the text was read : " Hear attentively the noise of His voice, and the sound that goeth forth out of His mouth. He directeth it under the whole heaven and His lightning unto the ends of the earth," etc. (Job xxxvii, 2-5).

The preacher, in reading his text, looked as I should have liked, if I could, to represent Moses reading the Law. The heavens above flashed and roared, the earth trembled under our feet, yet the preacher stood calmly solemn in the midst of the wild play of the elements. He spoke like a prophet about the different voices of God—the voice of the seasons, of the mountain and of the valley, of the sea and of the land, etc. ; but, ultimately, he came to the voice of God *in thunder*. He proceeded for about twenty minutes in a most impressive manner to speak of God's thunders. The poet preacher, in rich poetic diction, indulged in such daring descriptive flights, as to make one ask apprehensively how he could come down from that altitude, and close his discourse upon his feet, and all without a bewildering anticlimax. Just as that thought came to me, the whole congregation was well-nigh blinded for a moment by a lightning flash, that seemed to set the whole heavens ablaze ; and, in another second, a thunderclap shook the chapel to its foundations, and something fell with a thud through the severity of the shaking, so that a cold shiver was sent through each heart. There was a dead silence for a moment—then the preacher broke the awful stillness with the thrilling words, " Hark, when the Master speaks, it behoves His servant to be silent ! ! " and then sat down ! The next minute appeared to us like half an eternity—no one moved ! no one whispered ! A moment before we had felt in the thunder the powers of this vast creation ; but in the last words of the preacher we felt the " powers of the world to come." After that awful pause, the preacher got up, and gave out James Montgomery's hymn :

Not to the mount that burned with fire, etc.

Forty-eight years have gone by since that wonderful service; and my old friend has, many years since, passed within the veil, and beyond all the thunders and lightning, into God's clear light, where the sky is cloudless and the air serene. I have lost him in the mist of the valley, but the memory of the part he took in that incomparable service, long ago, remains with me still, undimmed, and undiminished in its thrilling effect; and will so remain as long as I have memory and feeling.

CHAPTER VII.

MY SECOND PASTORATE: AT WESTON-SUPER-MARE.

"ECHOES FROM THE WELSH HILLS"; KILSBY JONES.

IN the autumn of 1877 I received an invitation to the pastorate of Wadham Street, Weston-super-Mare, and began my ministry there in January, 1878. This was the revival of an old love. When a student I used to preach often at Wadham Street, during the repeated indisposition of Mr. Rodway, the pastor. In the latter part of 1871, he appeared, at length, utterly to break down in health, and he urged the church to look out for a successor. The result was that at a church meeting, over which he presided, it was unanimously decided to invite me to be his successor; but, the exact date when the invitation was to be sent was left for him to decide, according to the state of his own health. As my college course would not close before the following June, the matter was allowed to glide for some weeks. Meanwhile I had accepted the invitation to Bute Docks, Cardiff, before I ever knew that an invitation from Wadham Street was pending.

Mr. Rodway was very disappointed, and decided to continue for a while as best he could. Meanwhile his health improved, and, with occasional lapses, continued to be tolerable for some years; and it was not until the autumn of 1877, that it was decided at his request, by a second vote of the church, to invite me to the pastorate. This invitation I accepted, and in December of that year I settled among a people whom I had well known during my college course; and became the successor of a veteran, who had done a great initial work in that place, and whose loving sympathy with, and parental interest in, me, never faltered to his dying day.

During my pastorate at Weston-super-Mare, in the spring of 1882, I was brought into contact with the Rev. Walter Jones, who was then the pastor of the Congregational Church at Devizes, but who was invalided, and sent to Weston-super-Mare to recruit his health, after a very severe snow storm that had overtaken him, and had brought on Bright's disease. He, as a rule, attended the Congregational Church, The Boulevard, in the morning, where the Rev. Frederic Hastings then ministered, and attended Wadham Street Church, of which I was pastor, at night. His friend, the Rev. Wm. Clarkson, B.A., used to visit him during the week, and I used to accompany them on my tricycle on runs to the country around. Mr. Jones recovered slowly, but was advised not to minister in this country, but to seek a milder climate. He accepted an invitation to a church in Australia, where he rendered faithful and efficient service for many years, to the close of life.

During his stay at Weston, I remember walking with him one afternoon on the sands, and looking at the sun setting over the western hills and mountains of South Wales, bringing into clear relief their bold outline. I had, indeed, often seen this before, with a strong longing to be back again among those hills. On this occasion I expressed that longing to my companion, and began to relate some of the incidents of my early life, and to describe quaint religious characters I had known, and especially great preachers I had heard. Suddenly he stood still, and brought me to a halt, and placing his hand upon my shoulder said, " I never imagined that the religious life, and the pulpit utterances, of Wales were so quaint and so entrancing ; *you must tell the English people what you have just told me. They know nothing about it.*" I was stirred and arrested by that startling statement and irresistible demand ; and there and then, without a pause, I said, " I will."

My work, " Echoes from the Welsh Hills," was the direct and speedy result of this interview. " The fire burned within me," and, the following week, I visited Wales, and began, amid congenial surroundings, to catch the "Echoes" of spoken words, which had well nigh, as far as I was concerned, died into silence; and I continued, without a pause, to the extent that my ministry at Weston-super-Mare would permit, to pursue my task, so that on 10th May, 1883, and within one year of that walk upon Weston sands, I wrote my "Preface," which completed my task, and consisted of the last printed sheet of the book.

I had, some two months earlier, placed my manuscript of the first few chapters in the hands of the printer —indeed, before I had commenced to write the following chapters. I wrote the bulk of those chapters in the composing room, amid the din of that small " Gazette " workshop, at Weston-super-Mare, and with the compositors, at times, within a few lines of overtaking me. When I review it all, I wonder at my reckless venture, but at that time I was driven on by an eager impulse, which I could neither explain nor resist. Every sentence was written under high pressure, and without an opportunity of careful revision. The phrases, however, flowed out like molten metal, and, in some way, they were, by no art of mine, fused together, so as to arrest the interest and awaken the sympathy of my readers, as probably nothing else that I have ever written has done.

I dare not begin to record the many interesting incidents connected with the subsequent history of my " Echoes from the Welsh Hills," but there is one striking succession of events connected with one copy, which I feel bound to relate—Mr. Krauss, of Bristol, a well-known contractor, secured the contract for building the sea wall, Weston-super-Mare, about 1881–2, and then removed from Bristol to Weston. Mrs. Krauss was an invalid, confined

to her bed, with a disease of the spine. In other respects she was of an active temperament, and wonderfully bright in spirits. I used to visit her, as pastor, and, on the appearance of my "Echoes" in May, 1883, she purchased a copy. The Bible and the "Echoes" were the two books which she always had on her bed during her long illness. The year following the publication of my book, I removed to Regent's Park, London; but Mr. Krauss continued to live at Weston until Mrs. Krauss died, when he returned to Bristol. After her death he naturally attached great value to the copy of the Bible, and of the "Echoes," which had been so continuously perused by her during the long affliction, that she had borne with most exemplary patience. But to his intense sorrow he lost sight of the copy of the "Echoes," and, notwithstanding repeated efforts, could find no trace of it.

Some time later, he called at the office of his solicitor (Mr. Inskip, I think, was the name) and, while he was waiting in the ante-room, he looked into the bookcase there, and took out the very copy of the "Echoes" which he had lost, and which bore the name of "Krauss." On seeing Mr. Inskip, he at once asked him how he had got possession of that book. He, in reply, explained that the preceding summer he had gone to Dartmoor for his holiday, and that on being shown into the sitting-room, in the house where he had obtained lodgings, he saw the book on the table in the centre of the room. Upon opening it he saw Mr. Krauss's name written in it, and he at once asked the lady of the house how she had obtained it. She stated that she had no explanation to give, except that, when she removed, from Birmingham to Dartmoor, she found the book among the furniture brought there. Upon Mr. Inskip stating that Mr. Krauss was a friend of his, he was allowed to bring it to Bristol, so that he

might hand it to Mr. Krauss. He had put it, with that intention, into his book-case in the waiting room ; but had hitherto forgotten to tell Mr. Krauss of the incident.

Further inquiries were made. It was found that the same firm had removed Mr. Krauss from Weston-super-Mare to Bristol, as that which, on the day following, had sent the same vans to Birmingham, to remove the lady's furniture to Dartmoor. It appeared evident that, in removing Mr. Krauss's furniture to Bristol, the volume had been left behind in the van, amid the straw, in Birmingham, and was ultimately taken out with the lady's furniture at Dartmoor! Mr. Krauss himself related to me this extraordinary story, and added, "Thus I found my tenderly-cherished treasure, and, if you offered me £500 for it, I would not accept the offer. Its associations with the long and patient suffering of my dear wife, and the pleasure it gave her to the last, have made it priceless to me!"

There is another interesting incident which I recall in connection with my "Echoes from the Welsh Hills." Soon after the death of Peter MacKenzie, I received a letter from a journalist at Neath, in which the writer told me, as an interesting fact, that a fortnight, or so, before Peter MacKenzie's last illness, he was staying at the house of the journalist's aunt, when at the evangelist's request the journalist read to him, until late at night, my "Echoes from the Welsh Hills." Peter MacKenzie was specially delighted with the tenth chapter, in which the Parable of the Prodigal Son is discussed by "John Vaughan and his Bible Class." At the close Peter exclaimed, "Thank God! these are some more luscious plums for Peter's cake!" and then retired for the night. I was never permitted to meet him, but it has given me much joy to know that, so near to the end of life, that remarkably quaint and humorous evangelist derived pleasure, and some profit, from anything that I ever wrote.

Among the places I visited in the preparation of my "Echoes from the Welsh Hills" was "Glenview," the home of the Rev. J. R. Kilsby Jones, situated in a romantic glen, beyond Llanwrtyd Wells, right in among the mountains. The house was built largely by "Kilsby" himself, on the slope of the rugged and bare mountain, which he had bought for a possession.[1] I knocked nervously at his door, for I had never previously met that distinguished stalwart, and I had heard a great many disconcerting things about his brusqueness. Soon the door was opened by "Kilsby" himself. I see him now, as he then appeared, in the open doorway—a tall athletic figure, erect, agile, and alert, in spite of his advancing years, and with eyes which, in one darting glance, pierced me through like an X-ray. Having been challenged as to what my business was, I was taken aback. But remembering, in a flash, what my friend, Benjamin Thomas ("Myfyr Emlyn"), had said, when asked by Henry Ward Beecher what had induced him to visit America—namely, that he "had come all the way from Wales to see *Henry Ward Beecher* and *Niagara*"—I, too, risked "neck, or nothing," and said, "I have come all the way from Weston-super-Mare, sir, to see Mr. Kilsby Jones and his mountain." I struck oil.

[1] In a sermon on Caleb's choice of a mountain, bristling with Anakim ("Talks with Men, Women, and Children," Vol. 1, pp. 124-5), I refer to the Rev. J. R. Kilsby Jones as a man of similar robust make.—"There is nothing finikin about the man who chooses a mountain as his ideal possession—I knew a veteran who, late in life, bought a rugged mountain, built his house in one of its hollows, cultivated a portion of its slope, and let his sheep wander for a living over the remaining portion. He was as happy in breathing the clear mountain air as Adam was in Paradise. There was wonderful congeniality between him and his surroundings. There was a great deal of rugged grandeur about him. He was a veritable *Petros*, with any amount of rock in his constitution, that showed on the surface here and there in huge projections. In his character, too, there was many a fertile nook, where the tender blade and the wild flower grew in rich and charming profusion. To come into contact with that man was as bracing as to climb his mountain, and to breathe the pure inspiring air upon its summit."

He immediately smiled, asked me in, and said, " Come, my son, and see Kilsby first, it will take you a much longer time to see the mountain." I was ushered into a room, where there was a large glowing fire, and, having given me a seat on one side, he, himself, sat on the opposite side of the fireplace.

I at once explained to him that I was anxious to give the English people a glimpse into the religious life of Wales, and especially its pulpit, and I wanted to consult him. He replied, " But that is already largely done, in the ' Lives ' of, and the more casual references to, Christmas Evans, Williams of Wern, and John Elias." I answered that I had no desire to deal with the past, but with the " living present " ; and at once he exclaimed, " Virgin soil, *my son*." From that moment, to the close of life, he always accosted me in conversation, and by letter, as " My son ! " His kind, fatherly interest in me never flagged, and my filial loyalty to him never faltered !

We talked much that afternoon and evening,—for he would not hear of my leaving until the following day. Before retiring for the night, at nine o'clock, he said, after consulting his wife, who was very interested in the conversation, " Sleep well, and to-morrow morning, at 5.30, I shall knock at your door ; we shall have breakfast at 6, and then proceed to climb the mountain." Precisely at 5.30 he thundered at my door: we breakfasted at 6; and then having supplied me, as well as himself, with an Alpine stick, he led the way, and we began the climb. The bracing mountain air, and " Kilsby " 's exuberant spirits and exhilarating talk, made the climb brief and easy. Having arrived at the summit, " Kilsby " began, " You will readily see, my son, that this view is practically panoramic ; all the land you see around, also, is classic ground." Then pointing to a little church on the left, and down deep at the end of the narrow valley which his house overlooked, he exclaimed, " You see that little

church—there the Rev. William Williams of Pantycelyn, the 'Isaac Watts of Wales,' was once a curate." Then, suddenly turning further to the left, so as to see the expansive landscape on the other side of the mountain, upon which we stood, he continued, as he pointed to a large distant dwelling, "There Charles Wesley, wise man, found a wife." Then, pointing to another whitewashed farm house at a distance, he added, "And there John Penry, the great Apostle of Wales, was born—classic ground!"

By and by we began to descend and, once more facing the valley which "Kilsby"'s house overlooked, he pointed to a very small glen on the right, and said in soft but emphatic tones, "There, my son, beneath that tree, when my journey is over, I mean to rest, without a stone, or anything else, to mark my exact resting place—Ideal, ideal!" I tried to dissuade him gently, but all in vain. At length, gaining confidence, I ventured to ask him why he persisted in such a resolve. He replied in tones, which revealed a wonderful blend of dignity and tenderness, and withal, a rugged reality, "Because I will never have Jack the Tripper shout over my grave to his comrade, 'Will, by gum, look here! Here's the place where old Kilsby lies!' and then proceed to squirt his tobacco juice over my green counterpane! No! let the blackbird, the thrush, and the linnet sing their song, and the breeze waft its lullaby over my grave, until the trump shall sound!"[1]

[1]This resolve, and expressed wish, on the part of "Kilsby" to be buried "over against Bethpeor" was never carried out. In the graveyard of that little church, to which he on that occasion had pointed out to me, as the scene of the first and only curacy of "Williams Pantycelyn," his mortal remains were laid to rest, within sight of his old home, "Glenview," and amid the shadows of the hills he loved in life; but not amid the shades of that lonely

That brief visit revealed to me a great and unique personality. " Kilsby " was the greatest conversationalist I have ever known. Once he was set going, the sparkling flow of vigorous thought (lit up with wit and humour, and made all the more striking by his unconventional methods, and rhetorical adroitness) was steady, and unbroken by any pause, or hesitation. He would repeat himself on different occasions, as "Myfyr Emlyn" very seldom did; yet " Kilsby " 's repetitions never had a blunted edge, but came with amazing freshness, and thus were enjoyed even at the second and third time of hearing. He also threw his own commanding personality into every phrase, so that his words in print cannot convey the faintest impression of the force and charm of his spoken utterances. His preaching, too, was conversational from beginning to close; but was of the vigorous and arresting kind, which was characteristic of his public and private utterances alike.

He was quick to avail himself of a passing incident in his discourses; so that they were as memorable for the circumstances in which they were uttered, as they were for the truths they conveyed. I well remember a striking instance of this. In order to understand the circumstances it should be stated that Dr. William Rees ("Gwilym Hiraethog") had, during his last illness, spent much time at Llandrindod Wells, and had attended " Kilsby" 's ministry with great regularity. He provided himself with an armchair, as it was necessary that he should have plenty of room, and as much ease as possible, during a long sitting. With " Kilsby" 's full approval the chair

glen, that he himself had chosen for his last long sleep! Upon the tombstone erected over his grave are graven the words:—

" Rev. J. R. Kilsby Jones,
Born April 4th, 1813.
Died April 10th, 1899.
'He being dead, yet speaketh.' "

was placed at the end of the side aisle, to the right of the preacher. His presence was to "Kilsby" a source of great satisfaction.

When "Hiraethog" died the chair was retained in the same spot. "Kilsby" would not for a moment tolerate the thought of having it removed; but, on the contrary, he reserved it for any friend, or distinguished visitor, to whom he would do special honour. Mr. Powell, of Tower House, the sidesman, was, therefore, told to permit no one to occupy that chair, unless he was instructed to do so. I remember attending service one Sunday evening in the summer. The place was well filled, there being only a few vacant sittings, except that chair at the extreme end of the side aisle. Suddenly a self-assertive individual with a small head, but (in more senses than one) with a huge stomach, and withal wearing a conspicuously white waistcoat, walked up the aisle, and, seeing the empty chair at the pulpit end of the building, made for it. Mr. Powell, the sidesman, instantly reading his intent, tried to divert his attention to another sitting; but it was all in vain: brushing aside Mr. Powell, who was a little and somewhat timid man, the imposing visitor proceeded in his course, and seated himself in the chair. By and by "Kilsby" emerged from the vestry, with a well-known ministerial friend, who was directed toward the chair, but who had, instead, to occupy another seat. "Kilsby," having ascended the pulpit, noted this, and evidently took in the situation instantly.

He began the service, and periodically cast a searching glance toward the chair, and its pompous occupant. It was evident that he was ill at ease. By and by he took for his reading, and "running comment," Luke's account of Jesus and the two disciples from Emmaus, and, reaching that point where Jesus, having revealed himself to them in the breaking of bread, vanished out of their sight, and contrasting the light with which Christ's presence

had lit up the chamber, with the dying down of that light when He disappeared, " Kilsby " continued—in general terms—" Some men bring light with them everywhere. I well remember the visits of my old friend, the Rev. J. P. Mursell, of Leicester, when I was at Kilsby, a few miles out of that town. Whenever he came, he, with his radiant face, his snow-white hair, and his brilliant talk, filled every nook and cranny with light. I recall one occasion specially, when, after giving an hour's feast of brilliancy, he left, and, as the light died down, I tried to gather all the gleams that remained into the chair which he had occupied, and to imagine that he was still there; when suddenly a brother bulky in body, but small in soul, came in, and was about to sit in that chair. I exclaimed, 'Pray don't sit in that chair!' 'Why,' he impatiently asked; 'It is empty.' I replied, 'No, it isn't empty; *it will be if you sit in it!*' " "There are men," " Kilsby " added, as he cast a lightning glance at " Hiraethog " 's chair and its occupant—" *There are men, who empty chairs by sitting in them!* " He then proceeded with his exposition undiverted from his main theme by that momentary home-thrust; but the eyes of all who were " in the know " were focussed on that white waistcoat!

What would appear utterly incongruous in other people came with perfect naturalness in " Kilsby." Immediately after this withering aside at the usurper of " Hiraethog " 's chair, " Kilsby " with a shrug of the shoulders, and a momentary look of slight bewilderment, proceeded, in the tenderest tones, to say, " Ah, me! that was a dark room when Jesus vanished out of it! No room is so light as that in which He is; and no room is so dark as that which He has left! "

Altogether he was startlingly unconventional; but his powerful personality commanded respect in spite of all,

I have elsewhere stated that[1] "nothing could be less ministerial" than his appearance. He wore a wide-brimmed slouching hat, oftenest of straw, "and a large loose collar, revealing" (after he, in later years, had cropped his long beard) "the foundations of the neck and its sinewy strength. His countenance was stern and tender," serious and comic, "in its rapid alterations. His eye darted light with every piercing look ; yet it was tremulous with merry glances that played "hide and seek" in every corner. The central ornament—the nose—which gave character and individuality to the whole, was long, straight, and firmly fixed ; and by an occasional dilation of the nostrils asserted supremacy in royal fashion, and shot upward a three-fold furrow, dividing into two counterparts the towering forehead above, that had braved many a storm, and thought many a noble thought. A fine mouth, powerfully set, but indulging occasionally in a playful pout, completed the picture of forehead and face. It presented an index of the man, who was as stern as a judge, yet frolicsome as a schoolboy. The transitional expressions of righteous indignation, withering contempt, and melting tenderness, and especially the relaxation of that face in the presence of woman, child, or congenial spirit were a study. The head and neck were upheld by a large expanded chest, and a pair of shoulders, which in the days of physical prowess would have alone asserted his pre-eminence among his fellows. Had he not feared God he would have been terrible, for he never feared man in his life.

As an illustration of his bold defiance of the conventional and customary, and of his striking independence of judgment and utterance, I give an instance told me many years ago by Sir William Davies, solicitor, Haverfordwest, of what occurred when "Kilsby" was walking arm in arm with Mr. Rees, Sir William's predecessor—a local magnate

[1] "John Vaughan and His Friends, or More Echoes from the Welsh Hills," pp. 66-7.

to whom the residents, as a rule, entrusted their souls, and the farmers of the district *even their money!* As the two friends proceeded along the leading street, a poor man, recognising Mr. Rees, took off his hat repeatedly and bowed and cringed slavishly as he passed by. To " Kilsby " the sight was abhorrent. At last, straightening himself to his full height, he turned to the man and said to him, " Put on your hat, my man, and stand on your feet; worship God—and not Mr. Rees, the lawyer! "

He not only had little or no regard for the conventional, but also had even an obsession for the unconventional. He shocked people in those days (when so much attention was paid to a suitable, and, at least, a decorous garb for the pulpit) by appearing there in a velvet coat, or shooting jacket, with bulging knicker-bockers and striped Welsh stockings. Indeed, at Tonbridge Chapel, London, his persistence in shocking people's sensibilities with regard to the conventionalities of pulpit dress, seriously damaged his usefulness; but he gave up the church, rather than submit to be dictated to as to the cut of his coat, or the style of his trousers, in the pulpit or out of it.

He could not be any other than unconventional. I remember his being called upon in 1884, to say grace before dinner at the Rock Hotel, Llandrindod, at the height of the season, and his getting up and repeating, as he frequently did on such occasions, the words of Robert Burns:

" Some hae meat, and canna eat,
And some wad eat that want it;
But we hae meat, and we can eat,
And sae the Lord be thankit! "

I remember the amazement on the faces of some English visitors, who had never before heard such a daring departure from, " What we are going to receive, etc." And yet, when

dinner was over, they admitted the wonderful appropriateness of that "grace" to the occasion. "Kilsby" was vindicated; and the Scotchmen present were not a little elated.

Often, too, in the pulpit, he was not only utterly unconventional in his "running comments," and in his prayers, and general treatment of his theme; but also in announcing the subject of his discourse. I remember, for instance, his giving as his text at a Welsh service, one Sunday afternoon, "Take no thought what ye shall eat . . . but seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you," and announcing as his subject, "*Religion and bread and cheese*" ("Crefydd a bara chaws"). It would be difficult to express the theme more tersely; unless, indeed, it be in the words in which I once heard John McNiel define it, "*The perquisites* of a goodly life."

"Kilsby" was essentially a "Master of Assemblies." He knew it, and he never failed to make his congregation realise it. I personally owe him, more than I can tell, for the keynote he gave me in a great crisis in my life. When, at the early age of thirty-four, I settled as the pastor of Regent's Park—a church then and subsequently associated with such names as Dr. Angus, Lord Justice Lush, and equally well-known specialists from Harley and Wimpole Streets, musicians, painters, and princely merchants in the city—he asked me how I was getting on. I replied that I felt hampered, if not somewhat awed, by the presence of so many great men in my congregation. I shall never forget his reply: "My son, what have you to be awed about? If you talk to those men about law, medicine, music, painting or trade, you may well be careful. They know more about those things than you will ever learn. But you are there to tell them what you know of your great Text-Book, and, as a rule, about a verse only at a time. That is the Book to which you have devoted

the study of your life, and every week you focus your whole mind upon two special passages, and, having done all that, and sought the guidance promised you, you go and stand in that pulpit as its exponent. Who, of all that imposing crowd, know a fourth as much about your message as you? If they do, you ought to be ashamed of it. Then speak to them with the consciousness of having a message which they all need, and of which, I assure you, they know less than anyone could credit. Speak with authority, my son, and your Master will not fail you!" I have never lost the inspiration of that advice; but have recalled the words a thousand times—so full were they of common sense, and so clearly the outcome of a long and mature experience!

CHAPTER VIII.

MY SECOND PASTORATE: AT WESTON-SUPER-MARE (*continued*).

"ECHOES FROM THE WELSH HILLS"; REVS. EVAN PHILLIPS; DR. REES ("GWILYM HIRAETHOG"); AND RICHARD HUGHES.

I TOOK many journeys to Wales during the spring, summer, and autumn of 1882, when writing my "Echoes from the Welsh Hills," to refresh my memory of men and incidents, as well as to hear some of the leading Welsh preachers, whom I had not previously heard; but with whose reputation, and many of their striking utterances, I was already familiar. I remember being told by my brother Dan (who died at the early age of twenty-eight) that I ought not to finish my book without hearing the Rev. Evan Phillips, Newcastle Emlyn. My brother had a wonderfully retentive memory, and he repeated to me a sermon which he had heard Mr. Phillips preach, and which quite captivated me. I at once arranged for a supply for my pulpit for the following Sunday, and started on Saturday morning from Weston-super-Mare for Newcastle Emlyn, in order to hear Mr. Phillips in his own pulpit. It was a risky thing to do, as Calvinistic Methodist ministers were, forty and fifty years ago, and, indeed, still are, far oftener absent from their pulpits than not. But Mr. Phillips was an exception, and seldom vacated his pulpit. It was early in autumn, and when I arrived at Llandyssul it was quite dark, and the evening was close and humid. The small coach was excessively filled, the atmosphere within was almost stifling, and the jolting of the old, ramshackle vehicle, as it proceeded on a road, although a turnpike, none too even, creaked and expanded in such an

erratic fashion, as to suggest the possibility of a total collapse at any moment. But, mercifully, this was averted in a providential, although utterly unaccountable, way.

At length we arrived at Newcastle Emlyn, and I got out opposite the Plough Inn, a hostel kept by Mr. Elias, the principal of a local school, in which many young men were prepared for the ministerial colleges. Mr. Elias was also an elder in Mr. Phillips's church.[1] I asked for a bed for two nights and board till Monday. This was rather an exceptional request, as most travellers who stayed there, as well as those who put up in the larger Emlyn Arms, departed for the week-end, and left the inns empty for Sunday. Mr. Elias scanned me from head to foot. I was then thirty-three years old, and looked like a commercial traveller—and I may say in passing that, as I have not donned the ministerial garb, I have generally been mistaken for a commercial traveller or a captain: my volubility suggesting the former, and my rotundity suggesting the latter. Mr. Elias could not decide exactly what I was, but he was intent upon knowing. I could plainly see that, and, therefore, kept up the mystery. I was subjected to a raking fire of questions, very politely, but very directly, asked. I, as persistently, and, I trust, as politely, evaded them with replies that had in them no glimmer of illumination. At length Mr. Elias gave up in despair.

Lest, after a little rest, he should subject me to a second cross-examination, I then began to give him clues, which he was not slow in taking up. I asked whether the Rev. Evan Phillips was preaching at home the following day. He at once replied in the affirmative, and asked whether I knew him, or had heard him, and whether I

[1]In later years the well-known evangelist, Evan Roberts, was a pupil at this school, and was during his stay there lovingly befriended, and carefully nurtured, by the Rev. Evan Phillips. Indeed, subsequently, during his enforced withdrawal from active work, he was often cared for beneath Mr. Phillips's hospitable roof.

intended to hear him on the morrow, and so on, until at length I told him that I had come some distance in the hope of hearing him preach. As to how far distant I had come I politely abstained from satisfying him. Most of this had occurred during a meal, which I ravenously consumed. The meal was no sooner over than the Rev. Evan Phillips came into the room. Mr. Elias had sent over—a very short distance—to tell Mr. Phillips all he knew, asking him to come over and see whether he recognized the mysterious stranger.

By this time, Mr. Elias had, in spite of my comparative youth, concluded that I must be an elder of a meddling, precocious type from another Calvinistic Methodist church, who had come with some sinister motive ; and the thought of Mr. Phillips ever being tempted to leave Newcastle Emlyn, for another pastorate, was intolerable to him. The tension was great, and I must confess that I had, by admissions, alternated by silence, done my best to increase that tension.

It was in that juncture that Mr. Phillips entered. There he paused for a moment in the middle of the room. He was short of stature, erect, square-shouldered and broad-chested, with a restful, but stately head, a calm, open countenance, crowned with a massive forehead, at the base of which two thick-set, bushy eyebrows overshadowed two keen, observant, but withal merry eyes, and between them a nasal ridge, broad and firm, which led to a firm mouth with mobile lips ; and all ending in a flowing beard. As he stood before me, with his feet planted firmly on the floor, I was introduced to him as a man who had come in quest of him. We had never met before. I at once disclosed to him my identity, and (without telling him that I had come specially all the way from Weston-super-Mare to hear him) I told him that my own pulpit being supplied, I had come to hear him, as my brother had spoken to me about a sermon which he had heard him preach, and which he was

anxious I should hear. I mentioned the text, and asked him if he could preach it on the morrow. After some hesitation he consented to do so in the evening.

Excellent as that sermon was, the sermon he preached in the morning was, if anything, still more so. That, indeed, was a happy day that I spent listening to one of the greatest preachers of the age, and a friendship was formed on that day, that became more and more cordial until the close of his life. The Rev. Evan Phillips never wrote a word, or memorised a sentence, of his sermons. He was absolutely extemporaneous in all his public utterances, yet his sentences were brief, clean cut, and as clear as crystal. He spoke simply, but with a poetical touch that made every phrase as beautiful and as chaste as the lily. His sentences were evolved, and not constructed—a growth, and not an accretion. They bore no trace of "toiling or spinning," yet they were clad with an elegance and charm which was lacking in the elaborate periods and perorations of the conventional preachers of his day. Every phrase was luminous, and every word in it contributed its own quota to the general brilliance of the whole. Such preaching was necessarily brief. There was no superfluity in the quantity, because of the rarity of the quality. Hence, Evan Phillips seldom, if ever, preached for more than twenty or twenty-two minutes. He wasted no time, but instantly awakened interest, and, as he proceeded, quickened expectation, stimulated thought, kindled devotion, and sensitized the hearts and consciences of his audiences. Then, when the interest of the hearers was keenest, and their enjoyment most intense, he suddenly pronounced his "Amen," to the surprise and regret of all who listened. He had reached his climax, and finished his message. Another great opportunity, surprisingly brief, but intensely real, had come and gone for ever! All in twenty minutes!

He was a meditative rather than a studious man. He had his books, but he was generally found away from his

library, in the front room, on the right as one entered the house, in winter months with a glowing fire, and, summer and winter, with an old friend in the form of a churchwarden pipe. There he sat, either looking into the fire, or leaning backward watching the smoke as it ascended in ringlets from his pipe. He consulted his books for exegetical purposes, so as to be sure that he understood his text ; but then dismissed all books, and dreamily followed his thoughts as they wandered at will in an all-absorbing reverie. He always thought in pictures, and those were gradually grouped together mentally in his meditations, like so many lovely cameos from different standpoints of the main theme of his discourse ; and then, in the pulpit, he reproduced those cameos, in charming word-pictures. Thus the sermon was a miniature art gallery, in which the various phases of his great subject were presented to his hearers with a quiet grace, and irresistible effect. Thus, too, in the days when sweeping oratory was a leading characteristic of the Welsh pulpit, Evan Phillips did not often as much as lift his voice ; but, in the quiet assurance of the fitness and adequacy of his message, he gave it with a gentleness and charm which made it great.

As a specimen of Mr. Phillips's homely pictorial style the following may be given :—In preaching from the words, " Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins," he dwelt upon the Divine hindrances to sin—namely, in those that are natural, social, and providential barriers, as well as those of a spiritual kind. He then came to Divine restraints in the life of even the godly man. It was, he asserted, the Lord that preserved the greatest saint from sinning, even presumptuously, and added : " He checks him in many instances as He does the river. It has been said that if the river Thames were to flow, without restraint, in a straight line, from its source among the Cotswold Hills to the sea, it would rush through London at such a rate as to make it, not only unnavigable, but also dangerous, and

a curse rather than a blessing; but the Great Ruler says to the Thames: 'I will put a few curves in thy course. In thine onward flow thou shalt visit the foot of the hill on yonder side, and then recross the valley and touch the dark rock on this side. Thus shalt thou moderate thy course at length, and pass through the metropolis of the land with becoming stateliness and grace.' God does the same with His child. If he were allowed to rush on according to his own impulses, he would soon proceed on his way at a dangerous speed; but his Father in heaven says: 'I will put a few curves and windings into thy course. Thou shalt pay a brief visit to the graveyard on yonder side of the valley and leave thy wife or child there; and then recross the valley and come into contact with the dark, frowning rock of tribulation on this side. Thus shall thy course be winding, so that thine impetuous rush may be taken out of thee, and thy flow at last, as thou enterest the heavenly city, shall be calm and stately, like the river of God.'"

The preacher proceeded: "It is supreme folly, therefore, to complain of these windings as most of us do. They, indeed, are the very things which will impart a special charm to the review of life, at last, from the Hills of Immortality. There is but little beauty in any river that has no winding in its course. A straight canal has no charm for the human eye, but it never tires in looking at the winding course of a meandering river. So shall it be at last. How beautiful, when the end is reached, will even that bend in life's course be, when, perforce, we touched the graveyard, and left our dearest to rest there, or that winding when, without knowing why, we were made to pass beneath the dark and chilling shadow of the frowning rock of tribulation. We shall see the full meaning of all from the vantage ground of the celestial hills:

"O fryniau Caersalem ceir gweled
Holl daith yr anialwch i gyd,
Pryd hynny daw troeon yr yrfa
Yn felys i lanw fy mryd."

(From Salem's high hills I shall witness
My progress the wilderness through;
'Tis then that the curves of my journey
Will add to the charm of my view.)

Again, preaching from the words (John vi, 67-68)—"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, 'Will ye also go away?' Then Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life"—he proceeded, "Jesus said practically to them, 'Now is your opportunity. You have never had such an one before, and probably never will again, to go with the crowd, and leave me, while it is popular to do so.' But Peter replied, 'Where can we find a better, or as good, as Thyself? Show us one first, and then we may begin to talk about leaving Thee, but not before.' "To whom?"—it is a living person that the human heart needs. God has made a large place in that heart for Himself. He, indeed, as we read, has put eternity in the heart of man; so that it is too large to be satisfied with less than Himself, 'Who inhabiteth eternity.' The restless wanderings of the godless show this. They make but a mad search for someone who can satisfy them outside God Himself. God has been the home of the godly in all generations. The godless is homeless, and, therefore, ever restless. Hell at last will be the last resort of the homeless—the godless still seeking a home where he can rest, but finding a devil already ensconced in every nook and corner.

"Hearer! Wilt thou be like the wandering Jew of the legend? Thy wants expand beyond this world. The grave is that which thou wilt need longest in this world. I remember an old brother going to the squire (a Mr. Bowen) to ask for a parcel of land for a burial place for the saints about Beulah. The squire asked: 'What length of lease do you want?' The old saint replied, 'Till the morning of the Resurrection, sir.' The squire replied, 'Then you had better have it to the *afternoon* of the Resurrection.' The squire meant well, but he did not understand the nature

of that day aright. There will be no afternoon to the Day of Resurrection. It will always be morning. 'Good morning' will be the eternal greeting on yonder shore. 'Eternal Life'—that is what you and I need, and what we must have, before we can be satisfied."

The Rev. Rees Evans, of Llanwrtyd Wells, has told me of an instance when Mr. Phillips, having preached the preceding evening, and again at the morning service at some Monthly Meetings, was induced to preach once more at the afternoon service. He preached from the shortest Psalm (cxvii), and began his sermon in a few striking sentences: "This is the shortest psalm, and consists of only two verses. If it were one verse shorter, it would be a *verse*, and not a *psalm*. And yet it is a great psalm. There is an occasional bird that appears very small when it is on the ground, but when it stretches its wings, and takes its flight, it appears majestic. This psalm, too, appears small and insignificant at first. But let it stretch its wings, and take its flight in its native air, and it becomes great and majestic in its movements: and see! the tips of both wings are painted exactly alike—" Praise ye the Lord"—" Praise ye the Lord."

These are but a few small cameos with which his sermons abounded, and which unavoidably lose much of their delicacy and charm in the process of translation. That poet-preacher, in this respect, stood alone among his fellows. Such preachers as Evan Phillips are rarely, if ever, reproduced. There is a Divine reserve in sending such a man to the human race. God never sends one exactly like him again; and the tragedy of it all is, that such an one comes and goes, before we fully realise that a great " prophet has risen up among us." But when he is gone we begin to sigh " for the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still"—a hand and a voice, alas! which we heeded too little while they were yet with us.

Another distinguished Welshman whom I visited when preparing my "Echoes," was Dr. William Rees (" Gwilym Hiraethog "). " Hiraethog," was at that time living on " The Walls," Chester. As a lad I had heard him preach at Pontypridd. His robust physique, his strong face, pitted and roughened by deep small-pox marks, his *one* commanding and all-searching eye ; (for he had lost the other), his majestic head, erect and stately, as it rested on its firm foundations, towering above his massive shoulders, and broad chest ; his nose, as assertive " as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus " ; and, withal, his deep, sonorous voice, mellowed by more than fifty years of strenuous use, had unitedly left an indelible impression upon my youthful mind and heart. He had for many years stood high among the foremost of my great heroes, whom I well-nigh deified.

The privilege, therefore, of meeting " Hiraethog " now face to face, and conversing with him in his own study, about my project of publishing " Echoes from the Welsh Hills," was one which I then greatly prized, and which I still gratefully remember. We talked much about preachers and preaching, and, at last, after repeated efforts on my part, we came back to himself. Among other things which I asked him, was whether one story I had heard of him, and which had appealed greatly to my youthful imagination, was true. It was to the effect that, in addition to the performance of the onerous duties of an important pastorate, he was frequently from home during the greater part of the week, returning home on Saturday afternoon : with the result that his people, who desired to consult him, knowing this habit, postponed their visits till Saturday evening, when they came, sometimes in an unbroken succession for some hours, to see him.

This naturally became increasingly bewildering to him often, as the evening wore on, for after absorbing engagements extending over some days from home, a man of his emotional temperament became increasingly anxious to concentrate his thoughts upon his messages for the following day, in proportion as the hours of Saturday evening sped by. On a particular Saturday night, so it was said, he was exceptionally unprepared, not having been able even to fix upon a text for the following morning, and, to aggravate the situation, callers were more numerous, and more persistent, than usual. "Hiraethog" became increasingly apprehensive. At last about nine o'clock the calls ceased, and he, finding it more difficult than ever to decide upon a text, even now that an opportunity was given him, gradually slid down from his low easy chair, first upon his knees, and then lengthwise on the hearthrug, and remained prostrate there, vowing to God that, if He would help him on that occasion, he would go less from home, and prepare in better time, in the future!

His vows had become more fervent, and more intense, as his prospects of obtaining relief became more distant; when suddenly there was another knock at the door. "Hiraethog," it was added, then rose hurriedly to his feet, as a woman was ushered in, who, in her great grief, began at once to say: "Oh, Dr. Rees, I am very sorry to trouble you; but my boy has joined the soldiers, and you are the only one who can get him free!" "Hiraethog" was hopelessly bewildered, and asked confusedly but eagerly, "What has he done?" "Joined the soldiers," repeated the anxious mother. "Joined who?" instantly inquired "Hiraethog" once more in complete embarrassment. "The soldiers," replied the mother. "Hiraethog," it was said, paused for a moment, and then, as the gleam of a new hope lit up his distracted countenance, he exclaimed in tones of intense relief: "*As I live, I'll join the soldiers too!*"

"Hiraethog"'s countenance presented a strange blend of restrained amusement and curiosity, as I related the story; and I became growingly apprehensive of what might happen, when all was told. At length, however, I ventured to ask whether the story was true. Immediately his face relaxed, and there was a playful twinkle in his one large luminous eye, as he replied: "It may be poetically true, but, as such, it has taken a good deal of poetic licence. I am afraid that I was not quite as devotional, although I might have been as despairing, as all that!" After receiving that enigmatical reply, I did not include the story in my "Echoes," as I failed to decide how much of it was poetry, and how much was fact; and yet I feel to-day that it is too good a story to be totally ignored. It, moreover, is certainly good enough to be true, and, knowing what a highly emotional, and sometimes exceedingly moody disposition, "Hiraethog" had, it appears to be eminently characteristic of him.

"Hiraethog"'s brilliant intellect had many facets. He had, for instance, a keen laconic irony. Just a short, terse sentence conveyed what others would have taken many phrases to express. He never elaborated. There was a poetic suggestiveness, which conveyed more than it stated, even in his irony. For instance, when he had listened to the loud display of oratory, which conveyed little or no thought, on the part of a young minister (who afterwards became noted, but who, at that time, had little to say, but said it with great gusto), "Hiraethog" was asked what he thought of it, and he instantly replied: "A train of empty trucks passing through Menai Tubular Bridge!" On another occasion, when asked what he thought of a man of great assumption, but whose countenance, with its sloping forehead, and weak receding

chin, denoted a low type of intelligence, "Hiraethog" replied:

> " Pe gwelsai Darwin hwnna,
> Fe waeddai 'Pen and ink!'" etc.
>
> (If Darwin did but see him,
> He'd cry out, "Pen and ink!
> I wish to place on record—
> I've found the missing link.")

"Hiraethog" was equally laconic and prompt in his humour, adapting himself readily to circumstances, and often releasing himself from an awkward situation. For instance, when Temperance was making rapid strides, especially among ministers, and it became additionally difficult for a minister to drink intoxicants, and retain public favour, "Hiraethog" and a younger man, were preaching anniversary sermons at a certain place. At the close of the day they returned to the house where both were entertained. Pending supper being served, the lady of the house chanced to ask the younger minister first, what he would have to drink. He replied hastily "A glass of water"; but, suddenly pausing, he added *sotto voce* "with a drop of whisky in its throat" (a Welsh idiom: "A dyferyn o *whisky* yn ei gêg o"). She then turned to "Hiraethog" and asked the same question, to which he promptly replied, "A glass of whisky," then paused, and added in a mock whisper, "and a drop of water in its throat."

But "Hiraethog" was as great in pathos as he was in irony. His song, in which he tells his early experience as a shepherd lad, on the "Hills of Hiraethog," when he, and his faithful dog, Tango, were worried beyond endurance, by a perverse one-horned sheep, is charmingly tender. In the song he records a visit to his native hills, which recalled all those experiences of long ago, and reminded him of the fact that, apart from that one-horned sheep, Tango and himself would have been the happiest two in all the world. He then mused over his transference in later years, like David

of old, from watching his father's sheep on his native hills, to watch the Lord's sheep on Mount Zion, and learnt, what he had little imagined amid his youthful worries, that Providence had sent that one-horned sheep into his first flock, in order that he might be better able to deal with similar one-horned sheep, in the Lord's flock, in after years!

How tender, too, were the words he uttered over the open grave of his brother, the Rev. Henry Rees, of Liverpool! He compared his brother's placid death to a patient undergoing an operation. In a few graphic touches, he described the surgeon administering the anaesthetic to the patient, so that he might pass through the operation without knowing it. At length, when all was over, the patient would open his eyes, and ask in astonishment, "Is that all? Can this be amputation?" "So," added "Hiraethog," "when my brother Henry was about to pass through the last article of death,—the great transition from earth to heaven,—some kind ministering angel brushed his pallid face with its wing, so that he might fall asleep, and pass through all without knowing it. I can see him awake on the other side, and exclaiming in infinite surprise, 'Is that all? Can this be death?'"

But what always struck me most about "Hiraethog," as a speaker, was his sublimity of style, his firmness of mental grasp, and his majesty of delivery. It impressed me as a boy when I first heard him at Pontypridd, and that impression, so far from diminishing, like so many youthful impressions, became more and more pronounced, as years passed by. I have heard some other distinguished Welsh bards preach the most prosaic, and most hopelessly commonplace sermons, that I have ever listened to. They seemed to have left all their poetry behind them, presumably in their poems, so that there was not the semblance

of a poetic thought, or phrase, in their discourses. How far removed from that was "Hiraethog," as preacher and lecturer!

As my recollections of "Hiraethog" only extend over the last two decades of his life, it follows that his great work in earlier years as a journalist and publicist, in connection with Roger Edwards, the Roberts Brothers, and others, is beyond my purview. But who, that has but an elementary knowledge of "Hiraethog" in those years of activity can cease to wonder at his great versatility, his rich resources of thought, emotion, and language, and his incalculable influence, on his age and generation in one of the greatest crises, and historic transitions, through which Wales has passed, during the last three centuries!

Indeed his influence extended throughout Europe. Perhaps one of the most important of all the great services he rendered was that which he did to Hungary as editor of *Yr Amserau* ("*The Times*"), resulting in petitions being sent to the British Parliament, asking the Government to exert its great influence in favour of the release of the oppressed Hungarians from the tyranny of Austria. In acknowledgment of that, Kossuth's secretary and another Hungarian of prominence, were sent to this country to thank "Hiraethog" for his inestimable service to an oppressed people. This was to "Hiraethog" one of the proudest moments of his life, of which he thus spoke in after years: "I had never received a penny for my labour for years as editor of *Yr Amserau*, and I never expected any pecuniary remuneration for the toil and anxiety; but, if no money came to my pocket, I received that day what I valued more than a thousand pounds, were they put in my hands: namely, the blessing of an entire nation saved from perishing, partly through the influence of my "writings."

Another most important service was that which he rendered, in sympathy with Mazzini, Garibaldi, and other prominent Italian patriots, when he championed fearlessly

and eloquently, as editor of *Yr Amserau*, the great cause of Italian Independence—a service which resulted in a friendly correspondence with Mazzini, in which the latter expressed to "Hiraethog" his intense thanks for his inestimable help.

These are but a few glimpses into the unique life, gifts, and character of one of the greatest sons of Wales.

Another great preacher, for whom I had profound regard, whom I visited when preparing my "Echoes," was the Rev. Richard Hughes, Maesteg. I had heard him preach the sermon on "The two blind men," which is given in the "Echoes," and it was chiefly to refresh my memory of that striking discourse that I called upon him at his home in Maesteg; but nothing in his MS., or in his recollections of the sermon in the quietude of his study, compared with the thoughts and sentiments, which were struck off at white-heat, in the service where I heard it. His best things were never written, and never pre-meditated. The sayings that will live longest are those that gleamed, or scintillated, for a passing moment in the glow of holy passion and fervent thought, when he spoke face to face with his fellows, as a man who had been face to face with God.

He was a man of a very nervous temperament. I had also come into close contact with Mr. Hughes some years before, during one of his visits to Siloam Welsh Baptist Chapel, Mount Stuart Square, Bute Docks, Cardiff, when I was minister of Bethel English Baptist Church, in the same Square. He and Mr. Lewis, of Troedyrhiw, were the two appointed preachers for anniversary services at Siloam. On the Monday they came to my house to tea. Soon after tea Mr. Hughes complained, and, as he appeared to be very distressed, I induced him to lie down on a sofa in an adjoining room. Having done so, I returned to the dining room where I found Mr. Lewis, to my intense surprise, highly amused. He said, "You don't know

Mr. Hughes. He is always like that before he preaches an immortal sermon. He is genuinely distressed, and thinks he is terribly ill, but those pains are only birth-pains : he is in travail, and will produce a sermon to-night that you will never forget." This greatly surprised me, as Mr. Hughes had only just been earnestly pleading with me to take his place ! I could scarcely credit all that Mr. Lewis had to say. But just as the time approached to start for the service, Mr. Hughes entered the room, still troubled, but considerably less bewildered, and Mr. Lewis began to ridicule the whole thing, and told me in Mr. Hughes' presence, that this was his little way of carrying on, before he excelled himself, and added : " He knows it as well as I do. I haven't an atom of pity for him, I can only envy him."

Mr. Hughes pensively shook his head, and tremblingly took me by the arm as we left the house. Having arrived at the chapel, a neighbouring minister took the devotional part of the service, and, after that, Mr. Lewis, being the younger preacher, ascended the pulpit, and preached the first sermon. Mr. Lewis was an excellent preacher ; but it was soon evident that evening, that he was not in his usual mood. The sermon, though good, was delivered without the freedom and power which generally characterised his preaching. Then came a hymn, and, after that, Mr. Hughes, quivering from head to foot, walked falteringly up the pulpit steps, and then, in tremulous tones, but with that sweet cadence which so distinguished his voice, read for his text " The Dream of Pilate's wife."

Now there had scarcely been heard a single " Amen," or response of any kind, during Mr. Lewis's sermon—a rarity in a Welsh service—but the unique reading of the text by Mr. Hughes, instantly arrested attention, and produced a murmur of approval. Then he began : " My text this evening is the Dream of Pilate's

wife. Some of you, no doubt, are disposed to ask me, 'Why do you take a dream for your text?' I will tell you— Because God has given some of his best things to the world in dreams." "Ah!" burst from two or three in the audience: "Yes, yes," responded the preacher in encouraging tones, while a look of satisfaction was traceable on every face. "But you also ask me," added the preacher "Why do you take a *woman's* dream for a text? I will tell you— Because some women dream more sensibly than their husbands think. It was so here." This drew responses from all parts of the chapel. The whole congregation was instantly stirred, as an approving smile rippled over the faces of that crowded audience, and every neck was craned to hear more of what that still, small voice, had to say in tremulous tones. Mr. Hughes had already mastered his audience. Those two touches, within the short space of one minute, had given him complete control over the congregation, and we were all helplessly in his power, so that from beginning to end he, like a master minstrel, played upon our hearts as a man who "plays skilfully with an instrument." Mr. Lewis after the second remark, leaned toward me, and said: "I told you so." Mr. Lewis was right. It was a memorable service, but at the cost of a great travail! Mr. Hughes had paid the price in my house, in pain and prostration, and great was his reward in the sanctuary!

These are a few out of the many Welsh preachers with whom I came into contact, during those repeated journeys, which I took in Wales, when the passion to give a portraiture of Welsh religious life, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, was powerfully upon me. But I also came into contact with obscure men and women in lowly cots and obscure spheres, who exhibited all that was strongest and tenderest in Welsh piety. It was a piety, moreover, that was not morbid. In every circle there were to be

found men and women, whose piety was as quaint and humorous as it was strong and fervent ; and it was the blend of these qualities in the peasant Christians of Wales that imparted to them a naturalness and charm which attracted English readers.

Many of the quaint sayings of those obscure Christians are recorded in my "Echoes," and in the continuation volume "John Vaughan and his Friends," but many more that I heard are still untold.

CHAPTER IX.

MY PASTORATE AT REGENT'S PARK, LONDON:

BEREAVEMENTS: THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON'S SYMPATHY

IN 1883 two elders from Dublin Street Baptist Church, Edinburgh—at that time one of the foremost, if not the foremost, Baptist church in Scotland—paid a visit to Weston-super-Mare, with a view to reporting, on their return, as to my fitness for the pastorate of that church, which was then vacant. This resulted in my being unanimously invited to the pastorate in October of that year. I was, however, rigidly forbidden to entertain the thought of it by the medical men whom I consulted, on account of the delicate health of my dear wife, who, could, as they averred, never bear the severity of the Edinburgh climate.

After my declining the invitation of Dublin Street Baptist Church, Edinburgh, to the pastorate, Dr. Landels, of Regent's Park, London, was invited, and accepted the pastorate. The church at Regent's Park hearing that I had declined the invitation to Edinburgh, on account of the severity of the climate, which the doctors pronounced to be more than my wife, in her feeble health, could bear, approached the secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, and, without my knowledge, asked to arrange for my preaching both morning and evening at Regent's Park Chapel, on Missionary Sunday, in connection with the May Meetings. This I did, and an invitation was given me to the pastorate, it being specially urged that, if I lived in the neighbourhood of Primrose Hill, it would be conducive to my wife's health. I accepted the invitation, and began my ministry there on the first Sunday in July, 1884.

At this time Regent's Park Church had begun to suffer severely by the removal of families from the district, further afield—to Upper Holloway, Highgate, Seven Sisters' Road, etc. Dr. Landels had for some time felt this keenly, after the many years, during which the doors of Regent's Park had only to be opened in order to secure a full congregation. There was need now of new methods, and a more strenuous effort at organisation, especially among the young. It was only gradually that the church, and especially the officers, at Regent's Park, realised this. There was a magnificent body of elders in the church, representing men of varied gifts, and almost all occupying prominent positions as professional and business men in the city. Among them were Mr. Frederick Benham, Mr. Henry Sturt, Col. Griffin, Sir Alfred Pearce Gould, Dr. Angus, of Regent's Park College, etc., and among the younger men of the church were Mr. (now Mr. Justice) Lush, Dr. Percy Lush—their father, Lord Justice Lush, and Lady Lush having until their death occupied most honourable places among the workers. The amount of money raised toward all objects still reached the sum of £7,000, and even £8,000, annually. It was difficult for a church with such a history, and with such a splendid band of leaders, to admit the necessity of more aggressive methods in the conduct of its affairs. The tendency, naturally, was to lean on past reputation, and to conclude that methods, which in earlier years had been attended by such prosperity, could not be advantageously superseded by new and untried methods.

Even a board at the front of the chapel announcing the services, when suggested, was considered to be a superfluity, and, if I remember correctly, even the name "Regent's Park Chapel" over the entrance had only recently been placed there. Until then it was felt that "all people that on earth did dwell," and possibly many on the planet Mars, knew where Regent's Park Chapel was! This attitude,

while it was perfectly natural in the circumstances, nevertheless impeded the success of the church in its many and great enterprises; and this was the difficulty that I, as Dr. Landels' immediate successor, had to contend with to a very considerable extent. A kinder people could never be found, as far as considerate treatment, generous presents, and kind invitations to parties in their homes, were concerned, but, at the same time, it was very difficult to enthuse that fine body of leaders with any new proposal, or enterprise, in the conduct of the church, or of public services. They did not, and would not for all the world, oppose; they simply remained placid, and could see no reason for excitement; and yet they had a strong and genuine desire to see Regent's Park prosper, and prove itself worthy of its illustrious name, and would make great sacrifices to attain that object. My own attitude as pastor was, on the contrary, that of a young emotional Welshman, who would have become somewhat restive amid such a complacent and amiable quiescence—except, indeed, the Sunday School, and Drummond Street Mission, where certainly most valuable work was being done. But even the Sunday School—divided into senior and junior schools—was conducted under some special conditions. For instance, the Sunday School Anniversary was regularly held at Regent's Park Chapel, but there were no special anniversary hymns and tunes sung, nor were even the children present at the service! This was so contrary to all that I had ever witnessed, that when I was asked to preach on that Anniversary Sunday, and learnt that the children would not be present, and that no special hymns would be sung, I demurred; and, although this was within a few months of my settlement, I asked that someone else should be asked to take the services. This request took the elders by surprise; yet they were very patient, and even kind, as they pressed for my reason. I heartily appreciated and reciprocated their kind attitude, but, nevertheless,

said, I am afraid, somewhat bluntly, that I could never preach the anniversary sermons of my Sunday School, and appeal for a collection without a single child present from the school, just as if they had all been living in Timbuctoo. Even this did not ruffle their composure. In the kindest manner possible they explained to me that there would be a very tangible difficulty connected with requesting the pewholders on the huge gallery to vacate their seats, so that the children, some 800 in number, might occupy their places; but they themselves cordially withdrew all objection to the change, if I personally undertook to make it right with the occupants of the gallery.

That I readily undertook to do, and thanked them for their courtesy. Special hymns and tunes were prepared, the anniversary services were announced, I appealed to the friends on the gallery, in the interests of the children, to vacate their seats, and assured them of welcome downstairs, to the utmost, on the part of the pewholders, and added that the broad aisles could also be requisitioned. The day came. No one raised an objection. The chapel was crowded, the children sang as they had never done before at Regent's Park, and almost lifted the roof off with their choruses. Everybody was delighted; and at the close of the evening service there was a queue leading to my vestry door consisting of friends who asked whether such services could not be held once a quarter; and to the credit of those splendid men who constituted the eldership, there was no one who was more delighted than they were!

The fact was that Regent's Park Church consisted of two distinct classes: (*a*) the upper, and (*b*) the middle and lower. Yet there was never a cleavage, or a serious difference, between them. They were engaged in parallel, but not homogeneous, services. They recognised each other's sincerity, and the value of their services; but they did not quite blend. The chief difficulty was to enthuse the leaders; and yet the wisdom, earnestness, and ability

of those leaders were far beyond all doubt, and the homage of all the church to their leadership was unreserved. Moreover, the fact remains that the church suffered spiritually from the exceptional social respectability of its leading families. They were too dignified to be seriously moved by enthusiasm, and they recoiled from any suspicion of excitement. Hence it had the name of being cold among aggressive churches and ardent Christian workers.

To a man of Charles Haddon Spurgeon's temperament, it was more or less an enigma, as will appear from his first remark to me regarding it on my arrival in London : " You must not remain too long at Regent's Park : you cannot very well light a fire on an ice-berg ! " Of course, that was an extreme remark, and he would readily acknowledge this ; and yet, in a terse and sweeping phrase, he gave extravagant expression to what he considered to be the great defect of Regent's Park : namely, extreme propriety and decorum.

And when one has made every reasonable deduction from Mr. Spurgeon's description, there remains, after all, a very substantial residuum of truth in it, as I felt more than once. I remember giving expression to that sentiment playfully on one occasion to Mr. Frederick Benham, one of my elders, and one of the most genial of men. He had very kindly taken me to see a very wonderful ice-factory. Among the most striking things there was a long solid block of ice which had exquisite festoons of flowers embedded in it, for a very important function in the height of summer. It was a marvel of beauty. The ice glistened from end to end, and right through the whole length of it were the lovely festoons of flowers, which had been arranged with perfect grace and symmetry. Mr. Benham pointed to it and said, " Is not that exquisite ? " I replied, " It is, indeed " ; and after a moment's pause I playfully added, " and I have seen some

Christian churches uncommonly like it." Without the slightest sign of annoyance, he replied with a smile, "All too true, Mr. Davies."

Beneath all the cordiality, however, and goodwill, there was a difference of outlook in this respect between the majority of the elders of the church and myself. To me, in spite of so much that was excellent in the church at Regent's Park, it appeared to be too much of a religious club, and too little of a Christian family. The transparency and sincerity of the leaders, and, indeed, of the church as a whole, were most apparent; yet the glow of Christian fellowship, to a young emotional Welshman like myself, appeared lacking. But every temptation to be impatient with the respectable pace at which the church, under their leadership, moved, in spite of the changed conditions which seemed to call for speeding up, was largely removed out of my life, just then, by great domestic anxieties, which were gnawing at my heart, and which culminated in two bereavements within a short space of time in my home.

Already I had suffered severe bereavements, and had experienced great anxiety concerning my dear wife, before my removal to Regent's Park. And now, the hope that the removal would have resulted in her recovery was gradually, but steadily, being extinguished. My dear wife fought a brave battle, in which she was magnificently aided by the unrivalled skill, and untiring attention, of Dr. Fred Roberts, the distinguished chest specialist, a native of Carmarthen, and brother of the Rev. R. H. Roberts, B.A. Indeed, at length, the victory seemed to be within reach: there was evident improvement and an increase in weight, especially after a visit to Weston-super-Mare in the summer; but the progress seemed to have been too rapid. It was said that she had made blood too fast. In any case, at midnight, with the bursting of a bloodvessel, the end came with tragic suddenness.

Six months earlier we had lost our youngest child. Thus within six months two funerals went out of my home, at 14, Regent's Park Terrace, leaving me and one child—the two others being at school—in that desolate dwelling. The nightly vigil, in all extending over three years, during a great part of which the charge of that great church was upon me, had largely affected my physical strength, and toned down my buoyant spirit, so that, even while my dear one was with me, and much more after she vanished out of sight, I had little heart to urge upon the church more vigorous enterprise than it was readily disposed to undertake. After my bereavement the former vigil, with even its intervals of rest, was changed to almost unbroken sleeplessness.

In all this experience of sickness and bereavement, my people were most sympathetic; but the conditions of life in London, notwithstanding all the kindness of my people, made me realise how lonely in sorrow one could be in the midst of that great city, with its teeming millions!

There was one incident connected with my wife's funeral, which will ever live in my memory. Mr. Chown, of Bloomsbury, conducted the funeral at North Finchley Cemetery, and there, when my three children and I gathered round the open grave, he stooped and kissed each child, and lifting up the youngest in his arms, caressed her, before he proceeded, with broken voice and tearful eyes, to read the words of committal. A few Sundays later, Mr. Chown attended the morning service at Regent's Park, and sat in my pew with my children; and my youngest child—about five years old—greeted me exultingly the moment I saw her after the service: "Father, *the gentleman who kissed us at mamma's grave* was in our pew this morning!" Ever since then I have loved to think of Mr. Chown as the gentleman who kissed my orphaned children by their mother's grave! It is so much like what Jesus Himself would have done in the circumstances.

In this juncture Mr. Spurgeon's solicitude for my health was unceasing, and the reports I gave him during my visits on Saturday were anything but reassuring. There was imminent danger of my becoming a shattered man, notwithstanding my naturally strong constitution. The one thing in my favour was that my heart was strong. All depended upon my being able to recover my sleep, which had continuously been broken for four years in nightly vigil.

Just then, Mr. G. T. Congreve, the consumption specialist, who lived at Hove, Brighton, was greatly impressed with the weakness of the Baptist Denomination at such an important centre as Brighton, and resolved to build church premises that would cost in all nearly £20,000, and place them in trust for the Baptist denomination for ever. Indeed, already the buildings were all but completed. But the difficulty was to obtain a suitable pastor for such a venture, as there were at Hove not more than a score of Baptists, who could be formed into a church, and in all Brighton there were but two Baptist churches, other than Hyper Calvinistic—one church being up in a corner, which could be reached only by passing an imposing Congregational church in Queen's Square, and the other in a narrow by-street, called Sussex Street. He went to see Mr. Spurgeon, and laid the matter before him. He was prepared, not only to hand over the buildings as a freehold, but also to guarantee for three years, out of his own pocket, a liberal salary for the minister. He asked Mr. Spurgeon to recommend him a suitable minister. Mr. Spurgeon mentioned my name, and, having explained the sad circumstances through which I had passed, suggested that a change to Brighton would, in all probability, restore me to health, and kindly added that I was, in his opinion, the man for the great task which had been outlined

to him. He also expressed the belief that the proposal would secure my most favourable consideration. In any case he promised to urge me to consider it.

Mr. Congreve, moreover, was urged to go the very next Sunday to Regent's Park to hear me. This was done, with the result that he wrote me from his hotel on that Sunday evening, asking me to give him a short interview the following morning at my house. Strangely enough, I had been unable to go as usual to Mr. Spurgeon's on Saturday, so that I knew nothing of Mr. Congreve's presence at my services on Sunday—even if Mr. Spurgeon had been disposed to tell me, had I gone. When Mr. Congreve arrived at my residence on Monday, I recognised him at once as a gentleman whom I had seen at Regent's Park the previous day. We had a long conversation, with the result that Mr. Congreve suggested a further interview in Mr. Spurgeon's study on the following Thursday—an arrangement which Mr. Spurgeon himself had suggested to Mr. Congreve, if he was favourably impressed by his visit to Regent's Park.

This was agreed to, and on Thursday we met in Mr. Spurgeon's presence. I was invited to be perfectly free in asking questions; an invitation which I gladly accepted. I asked where the buildings were to be erected? Would they be placed in trust for the Baptist denomination? Also, as Mr. Congreve's gift was so princely, and his assurance to me with regard to my personal income was so generous, I expressed the hope that he would pardon me if I wanted to know whether he "proposed to have a private chaplain, or the pastor of a self-governed church?" Without the slightest offence, he instantly replied, "The pastor of a self-governed church." Many more questions were asked, and satisfactorily answered; and, at the close of the interview, I left Mr. Spurgeon and Mr. Congreve together, as I bade

them good-bye, and promised to give the matter my most serious consideration. It was, therefore, agreed that the formal invitation should be sent me that evening.

On the following Saturday afternoon, when I paid Mr. Spurgeon the usual weekly visit, I found that he had been very pleased with the interview. He, moreover, told me that Mr. Congreve was delighted, especially with my outspokenness in asking him whether he " proposed to have a private chaplain, or the pastor of a self-governed church." Strangely enough, instead of being offended, he greatly admired the candour. That fact, indeed, also attracted me toward Mr. Congreve. He evidently was a man who did not expect humble obeisance, but open, candid dealing—and that, in those exceptional circumstances, was to me an all-important consideration.

Yet the problem before me was a very complicated and difficult one. The hope that removal to Brighton would restore to me, in part at least, my sleep, and re-establish my health, inclined me strongly to accept. Besides, the proposal of starting a new cause, in such an important centre, and under such unique conditions, appealed to me powerfully, all the more because it had an element of daring about it. Yet there were other important considerations which considerably modified my enthusiasm. I should be leaving a great historic church of over 700 members, whose receipts for all purposes were about £7,000 per annum, for a church that was to be formed, but which so far as could be foreseen, might not consist of a score of members; and although Mr. Congreve generously guaranteed for three years, from his own pocket, the same salary as I received at Regent's Park; yet I felt that such a guarantee had an unsatisfactory savour about it, which I did not personally relish. Moreover, I had no clear inner guidance as to God's will in the matter. I was, therefore, greatly perplexed.

It was in that juncture that a guiding voice came from a most unexpected quarter. On the following Sunday morning, after my return from the service to my house at 14, Regent's Park Terrace, and just as I was sitting down before dinner, considering the perplexing question whether I should accept or decline the invitation given me, my little five-year-old daughter, who seemed to be withering away in the uncongenial fogs of London, but who had greatly benefitted by our recent visit to Weston-super-Mare, came, and having climbed up on my knee, placed her little wan cheek against mine, and whispered, "Dada, I wish you would go back to Weston." I replied, "I cannot, my dear." She eagerly inquired, "Why ?" I answered that I had no church there. She instantly interjected, "Wadham Street." I explained that there was another minister now there. She looked troubled for a moment, and then, suddenly a gleam of light passed over her face as she exclaimed, "Well, go where there is a sea, and they'll build another chapel for you, Dada !"

There and then, in the voice of the child I heard the voice of God. Out of the mouth of a babe—and *my* babe—He had perfected strength. From that moment I had no further hesitation. I confidently accepted the invitation to "go to a place where there was a sea, and where they would build another chapel for me."[1]

[1]Brighton not only restored sleep very largely, and brought back health and robustness, to me, but also gave a new lease of life to my little daughter. She grew up to be strong and athletic. She was the brightest of all my children. She passed her M.A., in Branch 1, in London University, in eight months after taking her B.A., became ultimately the head classical mistress at the school where she was first trained (Brighton Girls' High School), and after many years' service died five years ago at Davos Platz, having condensed into her short day a full day's work, and leaving behind her a memory too sacred for words !

CHAPTER X.

MY PASTORATE IN BRIGHTON:

THE REVS. C. H. SPURGEON AND JOHN McNIEL.

I BEGAN my ministry at Hove in July, 1887. The circumstances being so exceptional, one hardly knew what kind of congregation to expect on the first Sunday. To my surprise, the beautiful building was filled morning and evening; but filled chiefly by visitors, especially from London: it being pretty well known that I had left Regent's Park for this new venture. As it was the height of the summer season, therefore, visitors formed the overwhelming part of the congregation. Gradually, as the summer visitors left, residents attended in increasing numbers, so that from the outset the building was well filled at our services. Nor was there any difficulty with regard to the finances. In no instance was Mr. Congreve called upon to pay a penny of his guarantee, beyond, indeed, the liberal contribution which he gave as a member of the church.

Indeed, right through my ministry at Holland Road, a very large proportion, and sometimes a majority, of my congregation were visitors, and, as there were three seasons in Brighton, practically covering ten months out of the twelve, and a large number of week-enders came right through the year, this may be accepted as generally true of my congregation. Among the visitors were, as may be gathered, many prominent men, occupying different spheres, and among others a large number of ministers, Members of Parliament, and literary men. This involved a strain upon the nerve and the resources of a preacher; but, happily, I had been gradually trained at all my pastorates for that ordeal. In Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff, I always had mariners coming and going; at

Weston-super-Mare, for many months in the year, I had a large number of visitors; and at Regent's Park, throughout the year, there were numerous strangers, even from other countries, at all our services.

During those preparatory years I had also learnt by experience that gifted men, especially leading ministers, were the kindest of all listeners; so that the terror, with which their presence struck me at first, died down as the years advanced; and the presence of such men as Dr. Landels, Dr. Clifford, Mr. Simon of Westminster, and others like them, in my congregation, became a stimulus rather than a restraint, to do my best, knowing that, even when I failed, they remembered similar experiences in their life, and sympathised, whereas, if I chanced to say anything worth saying, they were the first to appreciate it. It is, indeed, many years since the presence at a service of my brethren in the ministry, even the most richly endowed, has had any disquieting effect upon me: on the contrary, it has always inspired and cheered me.

In going to Brighton, I keenly realised that I was to labour in a town, which had long since become historic as the scene of great and memorable ministries. I remembered the names of Sortaine, F. W. Robertson, Wade Robinson, James Vaughan, Paxton Hood, and many others; and that remembrance was inspiring to a young minister, of barely 38, who was entering upon a work which was so exceptional in its character, and circumstances, as to admit of endless possibilities of success, or of failure. I can claim, therefore, that my life of twenty years there was earnest and strenuous, and I am grateful to add, happy and successful.

During my ministry there, in addition to my ministerial labours, I edited the "*Christian Pictorial*"—the first illustrated religious weekly in Great Britain—for seven years, and published my "Talks with Men, Women,

and Children" weekly for six years; and at the close of each year, got the surplus weekly numbers bound into volumes. During the same ministry I wrote my work on "Vavasor Powell," at the request of the Baptist Union, and published "John Vaughan and His Friends, or More Echoes," and "The Pilgrim's Progress Retold for the Young," besides editing "*The Church and Household*," a magazine localized by the churches.

In Brighton, too, I continued to maintain my close relationship with Mr. Spurgeon, visiting him almost every Saturday, preaching for him often at the Tabernacle, during his absence at Mentone, and when he was incapacitated by sickness at home. And when the great battle of the Down Grade came I fought earnestly at his side on the main issue, although, as explained briefly elsewhere, I differed slightly from him as to methods of procedure, and wished that he had fought the battle on the platform of the Baptist Union, rather than withdraw from it, and fight from without.

The movement which Mr. Congreve initiated by his princely gift was abundantly justified in the success that attended it. Not only was a strong church built up at Holland Road, but a new church was also formed at Florence Road, Preston Park, of which those who attended the services at Holland Road, from that district, formed the nucleus, that speedily grew and maintained a vigorous life under the able ministry of the Rev. D. J. Llewellyn. A mission church was also formed, and an imposing building was erected at Stoneham Road, which accommodated 400 people, and proved to be most aggressive and prosperous from the commencement. Moreover, instead of weakening, it gave an additional incentive, to the older church at Queen's Square to extend its operations, by building, under the leadership of the Rev. J. Felmingham, a new chapel at Gloucester Place, and thus accepting a responsibility, which, at the time,

indeed, appeared to be excessive, but which since, especially under the ministry of the Rev. A. D. Garrow, has been bravely faced and ultimately fully met, so that no debt now remains on the building.

My acquaintance with the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon had come about in a peculiar way. When at Weston-super-Mare I published (April 1881) my first volume of sermons, entitled, "The New Name, and other Sermons." Mr. Spurgeon was very favourably impressed by these discourses, and in reviewing the volume in the "Sword and Trowel," he said: "They are short and sweet, and have both thought and truth in them. We feel ready to say, 'Many Davieses have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.' Such a preacher is an honour to the Baptist denomination. Weston-super-Mare may count itself favoured in having the author of these discourses among its public teachers."

This—more than any other review—undoubtedly ensured the sale of the book, and the entire edition was soon exhausted. In the spring of 1884 I was invited to Regent's Park, London. Soon after my settlement there I attended a service at Exeter Hall, where Mr. Spurgeon preached. At the close of the service I was introduced to him by the Rev. W. J. Mayers. I shall never forget the cordial greeting I received. He exclaimed: "And is this the author of 'The New Name'?"; and on receiving a reply in the affirmative, he said, "Can you come and see me next Saturday afternoon? That is the afternoon when I meet with my friends." I gladly accepted the invitation, and went. I met a few others there; but, at the close, as I was leaving, he drew me aside and said: "I am delighted you have come to London, although I think that Regent's Park is a very difficult sphere for aggressive evangelical work. You know it is difficult to light a fire on an ice-berg! They are excellent people, but very dignified and select. However, I here and now

give you a hearty invitation to come, if possible, every Saturday afternoon, and spend it with me and my friends." I, naturally, much appreciated that open invitation, emphasized as it was by the warm grip of that strong and friendly hand; and, ever afterwards, when Mr. Spurgeon was at home, and when I was not prevented (which was very rarely) I was to be found every Saturday afternoon in that choice and inspiring circle at Westwood. As time passed, I realized that the company changed every Saturday, and that my presence there was the only fixture. I came into contact with great men of all persuasions, under that hospitable roof, and I can never tell, or indeed realize, my indebtedness to Mr. Spurgeon, for the unique privilege of being counted worthy of being in their company, and of benefitting by converse with them.

Yet the conversation was utterly unconventional and homely in theme and character. I remember, on one occasion, being introduced to a well-known head master of one of our great public schools, who, since then, has become one of the high dignitaries of the Church of England. Having referred to me as a young Baptist minister, who had just become pastor of the most aristocratic, although not the most aggressive, Baptist church in London, he turned to me and said, "Now this gentleman is Dr. ——. His mother was a grand old Baptist; but he is a Churchman —a case of abnormal development!" This was done with such geniality and good humour, and accompanied by such a merry twinkle of the eye, that Dr. ——, who was on terms of close friendship with Mr. Spurgeon himself, greatly enjoyed the home-thrust.

On another occasion I chanced to meet Mr. and Mrs. Allison. Mr. Allison was an elder of the Tabernacle. He was also the proprietor of one of the leading shops in Regent Street. It should be added that he was, of all men I have ever seen, most like King Edward VII, when both were young, only that his beard was rather ruddier

than that of the King. Sitting at the tea-table, just before leaving, Mr. Allison sat on the opposite side of the table to Mr. Spurgeon, whereas I sat next to Mr. Allison. Suddenly I saw the familiar twinkle in Mr. Spurgeon's eye, and then, looking at Mr. Allison, he said, "My wife was in Regent Street yesterday, and came home full of your praises. She was completely charmed with the perfect blend of tints in your windows." Then he appealed to Mrs. Spurgeon, who instantly endorsed all he had said, and enlarged upon the delightful harmony of colours in the window dressing. Mr. Allison expressed great pleasure at hearing that testimony. "Yes," interjected Mr. Spurgeon, "I, too, was delighted; but since I have been sitting here, and looking at you, I have been greatly puzzled. Do you know, I cannot for the life of me understand how a man of your exquisite taste for colours could have ever chosen *red* whiskers!" "Red whiskers!" replied Mr. Allison, in an assumed tone of surprise, "you surely do not call them red!" "Yes I do," interjected Mr. Spurgeon, "what do you call them?" "Oh! golden of course," answered Mr. Allison. "Golden!" replied Mr. Spurgeon, "then if they are 'golden' I vow that they are 22 'carrot' (carat)." I told that story to a friend of mine, and he, wise man! sent it on to "Tit-bits," and got the guinea prize for the best repartee of the week!

Another instance of his ready wit. He used to spend the majority of his Sundays (in order to avoid returning during the day to Upper Norwood) at the house of my father-in-law (Mr. W. Higgs, Gwydyr House), and after Mr. Higgs's death, for many years, at his widow's. My wife, prior to her marriage, was then at home, and one Sunday with the family, sat as usual, at dinner with Mr. Spurgeon. She was not well at the time, and the doctor had ordered her to take stout. Mr. Spurgeon noticed the glass of stout before her, and asked what it meant. The mother intervening, explained that of late she had become

very thin and weak, and that consequently the doctor had ordered her some stout, with the hope that she might put on flesh, and gather strength. Mr. Spurgeon replied, " Ah, Nellie, that's a big mistake. Don't you know that stout makes people lean ? " When great surprise was expressed at this, he added, " Oh yes, stout makes people *lean—but, mind, it is generally against a lamp-post.*"

I have referred to Mr. Spurgeon's humour and wit, because the more serious side of his character is well-known, and because many, being impressed with the intensely earnest side of his life, in the unique work which he accomplished, would be apt to overlook the lighter vein, which imparted such a buoyancy and charm to his character. He was the most striking instance I have ever known of the possession of a keen sense of the pathetic, involving the possession of an equally keen sense of the comic. They were not only allied to an exceptional degree in him, but were so blended as that he could never see any incongruity between them in any circumstance. Humour to him was as sacred as pathos, and laughter as pure as weeping, and a great deal more agreeable. He was thus less restrained in saying what would inevitably create a smile in the sanctuary than most, and, in many cases, the smile he created brought tears in its train, by the masterly way in which he played with the extremes of emotion, and made the reactions, which their alternation produced, conducive to the ultimate purpose of his great message.

I have also spoken of his irresistible repartees. How many a time have I been their victim ! On one occasion, and one only, and that by sheer accident, can I record an exception during all the years I knew him. Mr. Spurgeon for many years invited Dr. Munro Gibson and myself to speak at the annual meeting of his Sunday Schools, at the Tabernacle. On one of those occasions I urged upon the teachers not to encourage too readily a preference for easy Scripture lessons, to the neglect of the more difficult

subjects that presented themselves in the course of lessons for their classes. The Scripture passages that readily disclosed their message, so that it became comparatively easy to prepare our lesson on them in a short time, were, I affirmed, seldom the most productive, or the most remunerative. My experience, I stated, as a preacher, was that the texts which held their secret jealously for a time, and into the confidence of which I could only get after a great deal of patient knocking at their door, were those which, with scarcely an exception, rewarded me far and away the most liberally, when once they opened their door, and let me in.

I added that often I went to Wales; and sometimes on entering the compartment at Paddington I found opposite me a chatty, unreserved Welshman, who wore his heart on his sleeve, and told me all he had to say before we reached Swindon. At another time I found a reserved, undemonstrative Englishman opposite me. Then I had to do all the preliminary work, by remarking that it was a fine day, to which he would drily reply, "Yes." By and by, I would venture the remark that the country looked exceedingly beautiful, and that there seemed to be bright prospects of a good spring, fine summer, and a harvest, to which he would reply, "It is so," with less reluctance. But the progress we made seemed to be painfully slow, until we arrived at Swindon—at that time the stopping place for every train. Then I would make a move and say "I think I will go for a little refreshment," to which he replied, "I think I will accompany you"; and there he seemed to drop his chilly manner as his reserve melted over a bowl of soup; and then, after returning to the train, he would tell me more between Swindon and Bath than the Welshman could in a day. I then urged them as teachers not to be discouraged, if they were not all well equipped educationally for their work, that very often those of very limited education had rendered

inestimable service as teachers. I gave as an instance an old teacher I had, when a boy at a Welsh Sunday School. He was very particular about having the Scriptures properly and accurately read. Often, when I had failed to read a verse to his satisfaction, he would call upon another boy to read it, and would add, " There, David, that is the way to read that verse." I added that they would be surprised to learn, that while that old teacher knew the Scriptures by rote, I did not know, for years after I left his class, that he himself could not read a word !

Instantly Mr. Spurgeon, who was in the chair, exclaimed, so that all in that vast building could hear:—" And he was the unreserved Welshman, who wore his heart on his sleeve, was he ? " The effect was thrilling. The question brought the house down, in a deafening applause. My position was bewildering. I waited until that thundering applause had died down, and then said, " Mr. Spurgeon asked whether that teacher was the unreserved Welshman who wore his heart on his sleeve ? " Another round of applause greeted the question, while I, happily, gained breath, and said, " I omitted to say that my teacher's name was Arnold Butler; from which you will gather that he was of English descent. He came to Wales when young, but, while he managed to master the Welshman's language, he never succeeded in dropping the Englishman's reserve ! " The fates had saved me ; and Mr. Spurgeon, great sportsman-like soul as he was, instantly jumped on his feet, and, frantically clapping his hands with delight, led another deafening applause, this time against himself.

Never did he forget that incident, and often he referred to it, while he never reminded me of the numberless times in which he had turned the tables upon me. Nor was that incident, and its rollicking merriment, in his opinion out of

harmony with the spirit and aims of that great meeting which was held in the highest spiritual interests of the children of his Sunday Schools.

This sportsman-like spirit revealed itself ever and anon. I remember well the Down Grade controversy, and some day I may have more to say about it. It fell to my lot, after the withdrawal of Dr. James Spurgeon from a heated discussion in the Council Chamber, with regard to his great brother's indictment against some prominent ministers of the Baptist denomination, to lead a small minority against an overwhelming majority on the Council of the Baptist Union. I had then left Regent's Park for Brighton. Mr. Spurgeon, following upon the vote of censure passed upon him by the majority of the Council, withdrew from the Union. The same week it was announced in the Press that I had also resigned, as a follower of Mr. Spurgeon. I wrote denying that report. On the following Saturday afternoon, he referred, apparently with some regret, to my denial of the report. I replied that I was, of course, at one with him on the main issue, but strongly differed from him as to method of procedure, adding that, in my opinion, he himself ought never to have withdrawn; but should have come to the Assembly of the Baptist Union where, if he but personally pleaded his cause, he would "sweep the decks." "Ah, brother," he replied, "that would be impossible in my present state of health. My doctor has told me that the excitement, that such a course would entail, would be at the imminent peril of my life. I, therefore, had no course but to withdraw." I replied, "But the doctor has never said that to me"; to which he replied, "That's a right answer, you do your part inside, and I will without."

This disproves what was so often said, by those who never knew Mr. Spurgeon, namely, that he was autocratic, and had little tolerance for those who did not entirely conform with his views and methods. I personally,

although in perfect agreement with him in his chief contention, differed from him and unreservedly told him so, as to method of procedure, yet he never showed the least intolerance toward me. I specially recall one letter he wrote me during a long private correspondence, when we chanced to agree on some detail: "Dear Brother, when I differ from you I love you: when I agree with you I do not love you more, but *I am much happier*." This is not the utterance of an autocrat.

He related to me once a wonderful story, which, I regret to say, I only remember in outline at this distance of time. On one Saturday night he had to retire before he could fix on a suitable text for the morning sermon. His night was restless, and waking early on Sunday morning, he told Mrs. Spurgeon that he must rise, as he could not rest because he had no text for his morning sermon. She said, "Don't get up. Perhaps I can suggest a text." He invited her to do so. She did. I, unfortunately, forget what text she suggested, but it immediately gripped Mr. Spurgeon, who replied, "Capital; but how would you treat it, Susy?" She suggested gradually an outline of a sermon, point by point. In each case Mr. Spurgeon was immensely struck by each point suggested, and by the sketch as a whole. It was, he said, exactly in accord with his own mind. "But," he added, "is that your own sketch, Susy, or have you read it somewhere." She assured him that she had never read it. "Then," he said, "it is yours." She replied that it was not hers. He pressed for an explanation, and then she told him that she had heard him preach it that night in his sleep, and that now she had merely repeated, in a more condensed form, the sketch which he had given in his slumbers.

It was in Mr. Spurgeon's vestry at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, during my ministry in Brighton, that I first met with the Rev. John McNiel, who was, as might be expected, a great favourite of Mr. Spurgeon's. His striking

naturalness and unpretentiousness, as well as his rich wit and refreshing raciness, were very delightful to the great preacher, and I confess that I was not long in his company before he threw the charm of his personality over me. I had already heard him preach once or twice, and while he did not impress me as a student, or an exegete, yet there was a vigorous commonsense, an earnest practical tone, and a rich imagery about his whole discourse that arrested my attention. My personal touch with him on this occasion greatly added to all this.

I remember the first time I heard him. He was charmingly unconventional. Addressing an aristocratic London audience, he at one point introduced an illustration by blurting out, "A few years ago, when I was a *porter* on the railway," etc. And then, later on, when speaking of Christ, in the morning by the Sea of Galilee, asking His disciples, "Children, have ye any meat ?" (in other words "Have ye caught any fish ?") and of their honest reply, "No," John McNiel said, "Ah, it takes some of us spiritual fishermen a long time to confess a failure. We are so apt to fence about the question, so that when the Master asks us, after a fruitless night, 'Have ye caught any fish ?' we reply, 'Well, not exactly, but we are kippering those we caught last week ! '"

Like Mr. Spurgeon himself, he was absolutely fearless of his audience. I believe it was Mr. Spurgeon himself who told me a story about Mr. McNiel going to preach at Glasgow, on a very special occasion, to a congregation that consisted chiefly of university men. There was one university don present who was the terror of most preachers. He was accustomed to put on such airs, and to make such grimaces as he listened, as to unnerve many who noticed him as they preached. Someone in the vestry told Mr. McNiel of his presence, and Mr. McNiel questioned him closely as to where that great man sat. He was told that he sat in the front seat. "Very well," said Mr. McNiel,

" leave him to me ! " As he proceeded with his discourse, the old dominie had recourse to his old antics, and Mr. McNiel occasionally cast a glance at him. At length, having worked up his subject to a convenient point, he paused, and then, in illustration of a spirit of conceit and display, which he had already ridiculed, he proceeded, in a piercing voice, and with a strong Scotch accent, to exclaim slowly and measuredly : " There's—a man—here—who—*tries*—to look—more clever—than *any man* CAN *be* ! " The dominie collapsed, and John McNiel proceeded. He had killed the don !

I have, in these full references to Mr. Spurgeon and Mr. McNiel, consciously deviated from my plan of referring in this work to my pastorates in England, only so far as they cast a light upon my present theme ; but I have done so because John McNiel was a Celt, and even Mr. Spurgeon himself, as he used to tell me, had Welsh blood in his veins from his mother's side ; and I am sure that my Welsh temperament, and an occasional Welsh story, made my companionship congenial to the great man, whom I personally revered more than I did any other living man. A story from Wales was welcome, and easily told, whenever I entered into the atmosphere which the presence of Mr. C. H. Spurgeon and Mr. John McNiel produced.

During my ministry in Brighton I used to be favoured, as already stated, with the presence of many M.P.'s and other prominent Londoners at my services. Some came for one of the three seasons which Brighton was privileged in having, especially the autumn and early winter season. Others came for week-ends. Among the M.P.'s were Lord Pontypridd (then Mr. Alfred Thomas) and Mr. D. Lloyd George. I remember both coming to my vestry at the close of a service one Sunday, in which I had been expatiating with some fervour upon the bravery of Shamgar, who, with a stout and powerful ox goad, kept the Philistines at bay, and thus, single-handed, slew 600 of

their number. Mr. Lloyd George was in a very earnest and excited mood and said, " That's a message for me. I will break off with the Government, and go to Carnarvon this week to tell my constituents so." I replied, " The sermon is mine, but the application is yours, Mr. Lloyd George." He stuck to his resolve, and did as he declared he would. That was the nearest approach, that I can remember, of any sermon of mine helping to lead to a political crisis !

On another occasion I remember Mr. Lloyd George having a cup of tea at my house during the Boer War. As is well known, Mr. George at that time was a very pronounced " Peace man." I, on the contrary, while admitting that Mr. Chamberlain was responsible for an irritating policy that urged poor old Kruger on, yet, contended that, when once Kruger was unwise enough to issue an ultimatum, war was unavoidable, and, therefore, we were bound to proceed. We had a very heated argument, and Mr. Lloyd George was well equipped for the argument from a whole armoury of facts, and (as I held) fancies. It was just at the time when Lord Roberts had captured Cronje, with whom Mr. Lloyd George expressed great sympathy, and for whose character he cherished high admiration. This appeared to me, with my estimate of that man, to go beyond all bounds. Poor old Kruger :—well, I admitted, he might have been a saint, as saints went, but Cronje, I maintained, could by no stretch of the imagination be classed with him, " and yet," I added, " you would canonize even old Cronje ! Good heavens, what next ? " This, I fear, permanently shook Mr. Lloyd George's faith in my judgment. Only a few years ago I was told by a mutual friend, that he had never forgotten, if indeed he had forgiven, that outburst of mine ! I have a strong presentiment that that friend is right.

CHAPTER XI.

DURING MY LONDON AND BRIGHTON MINISTRIES:

MY ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE REVS JOSEPH THOMAS, EVAN JONES, ROBERT JONES, AND OWEN DAVIES.

DURING my London and Brighton ministries, I often visited Wales, and formed a friendship with many prominent Welshmen. Among others was the Rev. Joseph Thomas, of Carno, who was a great preacher and platform speaker. I met him for the first time under exceptional circumstances. It was at the funeral of Dr. Lewis Edwards, of Bala. A friend came to me in the midst of the crowd that had assembled, and said that the Rev. Joseph Thomas, of Carno, was desirous of speaking to me. This for the moment considerably disconcerted me, as I had made frequent references to, and repeated many of, the striking utterances of Mr. Thomas in my "Echoes from the Welsh Hills." I had done so without consulting him as to the accuracy of my quotations, as I had been warned by those who knew him best that, if I did so, he would, as likely as not, prohibit my making any reference to him in print. This message brought back to me forcibly the recollection of this omission, and I concluded that I was in for a severe reprimand from the veteran. However, I put on a bold face, and said I should be very pleased to have the honour of being introduced to him. We soon met. His tall and powerfully built figure stood before me, and, to my amazement and immense relief, he shook me cordially by the hand, and thanked me for the good things I had been "generous enough," as he expressed it, to write about him.

Then followed a brief conversation which was to me full of interest and charm. The blend of massive strength with calm dignity and grace, together with his quaint wit, his vivid picturesqueness of diction, and homeliness of illustration, were very impressive. I had previously heard him preach, but in private conversation these characteristics were more striking than even in his public utterances. From that hour until the close of his life, our relationship was most cordial, although we lived far apart —he at Carno, and I in Brighton.

He was the most homely and naturally racy speaker that I have ever heard. He had a lisp which seemed to add to the charming simplicity and homeliness of his style. He was, moreover, endowed with a rich humour, tender pathos, and playful, but incisive, irony. His illustrations, when they were not taken from Scripture history, were drawn from every-day experience, and from the sphere of life in which he himself, and the great bulk of his hearers moved. Hence, they at once arrested attention, and the applications from them struck like burrs in men's memories. His sermons, like those of Mark Guy Pearse and men of similar style, were exceptionally long —all the more because as a Calvinistic Methodist preacher (like Mark Guy Pearse as a Wesleyan Methodist) he preached the same sermon repeatedly, only with endless variations, additions, and, as circumstances demanded, omissions. But people were never wearied, however lengthily he spoke.

In this respect he was the envy of those who found that when they preached twenty minutes, they exhausted alike their resources as preachers, and the patience of their congregations as hearers. The question of long and short sermons came up for discussion on one occasion at a conference. One or two preachers, who were reputed to have never composed a sermon of their own, but to have traded exclusively on borrowed discourses, and who, as

such, found it more convenient to memorise short sermons than long ones, denounced long sermons vigorously, and said that many of them ought to be cut in half. Every eye was fixed on Joseph Thomas, who sat, though apparently asleep, listening to all.

By and by his name was called to speak, but he shook his head. However, after persistent calls, he got up and said: "While the brethren have been speaking about cutting long sermons in half, I have been thinking of the two women who came one morning to Solomon to settle their dispute over their babes. One woman's child had died in the night, and, finding this out early, she went and robbed another woman of her child, before she was awake, and placed her dead child in the place of the living one. In the morning there was a hullabaloo, and the matter was submitted to Solomon. Both mothers claimed the living child. Solomon, finding the difficulty of getting at the truth, sent one of his attendants for a sword, and holding the child up, proposed to divide it between them. The mother who had stolen the child welcomed the proposal, but the real mother of the child protested with tears. It is something like that with sermons," added Mr. Thomas significantly as he glanced sideways at the ministers who had advocated cutting long sermons in half: "Those who, under pressure of circumstances, have to appropriate other people's sermons are, as a rule, quite ready to have them cut in half, but those who have travailed over them, and given them birth, are loth to consent to the mutilation. That is all I have to say." With that he sat down; and the discussion was over!

Another instance of his quiet, but scathing, irony:—It was the centenary of Calvinistic Methodism in Liverpool, which was celebrated at a great public meeting. It was a time for rejoicing and congratulation. Almost every speaker—and they were mostly local—claimed some ancestor who had had something to do with the founding

of Methodism in that city. The repetition of this at last seemed to have become somewhat nauseous to Mr. Thomas, who, when called upon to speak, began by saying: "It is easy to see that Methodism has been a success in Liverpool, because we are all anxious, through some grandfather or great-grandfather, to have a share in the concern. If it had been a failure, none of us would be anxious to claim a share in the affair. I once heard of a farmer near Cerrig-y-Druidion who, together with his men, had one summer day made a fine haystack. At the close of the day he stood, with arms akimbo, on the hedge enclosing the yard, when a neighbouring farmer passed by, paused, and said, 'What a beautiful haystack! Who made it, Mr. Jones?' Mr. Jones straightened himself to his full height, and replied, 'I did.' That night a terrible wind-storm blew the stack down, and the following morning Mr. Jones once more stood on that hedge, but no longer with arms akimbo. Another farmer chanced to pass by, and, looking upon the scene of desolation, exclaimed: 'Dear me, was that ever a hayrick? I never in my life saw anything like it. Who on earth tried to make that?' Mr. Jones scratched his head bewilderingly, and said, 'Oh, there were several of them about it!'" The application did not need further enforcement; and Mr. Thomas proceeded with his speech.

I remember him on one occasion dwelling on the blessing, which a generous and large-hearted life is to the community to which it belongs, and, as usual, using a very homely, but striking illustration. He told us of a farmer in the neighbourhood of Machynlleth, who, whenever he had the harvest brought in, and the first sacks of flour sent back to him from the mill, used to send an invitation to the poor within a radius of two miles to bring their empty bags on a certain day, and at a specified hour, so that he might fill them out of his bin. But one year his harvest had been more plentiful than ever before. He therefore extended

the radius to four miles, and sent an invitation to all the poor within that distance. On the appointed morning and hour they came to the farmer, and he, with his own hands, filled their bags out of his rich supply. On the way home, some of those who were struggling on under the burden of the Lord, suggested that it was not enough to thank the farmer as they had done, but that they also ought to thank the One Who had put the generous thought into the farmer's heart.

The suggestion found favour, and a thanksgiving meeting was arranged in one of the largest chapels in the neighbourhood. The meeting came, and the building was crowded. There was no time for an address. All was taken up with prayer and praise. They sang stirring Welsh tunes with such vigour as almost to lift the roof off. Then the prayers came. One thanked the Lord that Farmer So-and-So had ever been born, to which there was a loud response of "Amen." Another thanked the Lord because he had ever been made rich, and this called forth another "Amen." Another thanked God because he had ever been brought to their neighbourhood, and a loud "Bendigedig" filled the place; and then, when all the items of thanksgiving seemed to have been exhausted, one brother, more original than all the rest, thanked the Lord for giving such big hands to Farmer So-and-So, so that he could deal out such glorious handfuls of flour! The preacher then proceeded to add that when we pass away men will thank God, not so much for the bigness of our bins, as the bigness of the hands with which we have dealt out of them great handfuls of blessings to meet the needs of men.

Another striking personality I greatly admired was the Rev. Evan Jones, of Carnarvon. I first met him in the summer of 1891. I had been asked to preach at the Welsh Baptist Union meetings there one afternoon. I shall never forget it. I had travelled all the way from

Brighton, and had arrived, although my journey had been broken, wearied out. It was, moreover, a thundery afternoon, one of the most oppressive that I can remember.

The service was one of the most hopelessly heavy and lifeless services that I have ever had. My words cleaved to the roof of my mouth ; my memory was paralysed, and my spirit was in the grip of Giant Despair. The Rev. Evan Jones, Dr. Hughes, and a host of ministers of all denominations were there ! I remember also seeing prominent laymen present—among them Mr. David Lloyd George, the rising young lawyer, of Criccieth. At the close of the service, when my devout wish was that I might have a trapdoor through which I might drop out of sight, the Rev. Evan Jones came to me, and thanked me most earnestly, as he gripped my hand warmly, for my sermon ! He spoke as if he really meant it ; and I, not daring to suspect any insincerity, at once concluded that he was one of the most large-hearted and charitable Christians I had ever been privileged to meet. I really had even the courage to scrutinise whether his fervent thanks were the outcome of a large Christian charity or a momentary mental aberration. I concluded hastily that it must have been the former ; hence, ever after, I looked upon him as one to whom I was indebted, for one of the most gracious ministries that I had ever received, in an hour of great depression and almost despair.

Some fifteen or sixteen years after that, when I came back to Wales, we came into frequent contact in the Council meetings and committees of the Evangelical Free Churches, and especially in connection with the Disestablishment Campaign. In that relationship we frequently met. He was a charming companion, utterly unpretentious, and never presuming upon his mature experience, and unique personality. He was a fascinating conversationalist and a delightful story teller. I readily recall one story which he related with a keen relish. He explained that there was

a good deal of wholesome rivalry between his church and the sister church under the pastorate of Dr. Hughes, at Carnarvon. Whenever any one of the two did a good thing, the other tried to do one better. On one occasion Dr. Hughes's people had installed a beautiful organ in their chapel. At that time, Evan Jones met one of Dr. Hughes's members—a keen, bright lady. He said to her, " You have excelled us now at your chapel. You have built a very fine organ." " Yes, we have, Mr. Jones," she replied. " Well," he added, in a playful, mischievous mood, " now that you have the organ, you only need a monkey." " Yes, that is so, Mr. Jones," she replied, " but you can take comfort, you only need an organ." Mr. Jones told me that he had received many repartees in his life, but not one to compare with that, " and," he added with an appreciative smile, that lit up his whole countenance, " I richly deserved it."

All who knew him must have been greatly impressed by his noble and handsome physique, his beautifully chiselled features, and his genial disposition. Had he been an Episcopalian he would in these respects, as well as by virtue of his high mental and spiritual qualities, have made an ideal archbishop, and as such, would have conspicuously adorned the premier seat on the Episcopal bench. But, so far from being an Episcopalian, he had for many years done yeoman service as a disestablisher, and I looked upon him as a mature and most efficient controversialist; indeed, as the great Welsh protagonist of his day, on the burning question of absolute religious equality. He, on the other hand, in chatting with me, emphasised the fact that I, in dealing with the question from a historical standpoint, had adopted a new and a more effective method of attack; and I remember well his speaking to me very earnestly, as a veteran to a younger man, on the platform of Wrexham railway station when he intimated that he was feeling the encroachment of advancing years,

and ended up graphically as he put his hands on both my shoulders, exclaiming, "Whatever fragment of a mantle I have, I now place it on your shoulders." Those words so dramatically uttered, at first staggered me. But they also stuck to me; I never could forget them. It seemed all to be impossible, and yet he meant it all! And that left a profound and lasting impression upon me. It was a challenge that I dared not ignore; and it had come with such startling suddenness and with such irresistible force. This was the last time we met face to face, and in mutual converse, and I shall never forget it! I could not if I would; and I would not if I could!

The Rev. Robert Jones, Llanllyfni, was another noted character with whom I was brought into intimate contact, on my visits to Wales, during my London and Brighton ministries (1884–1907). As years passed by the acquaintance deepened into friendship, all the more because of my intimate relationship with the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, for whom Robert Jones had the highest possible admiration, and concerning whose life and work he was never tired of inquiring. Robert Jones specially admired Mr. Spurgeon's stand in the "Down Grade" controversy, all the more because Robert Jones felt that, what Mr. Spurgeon did for England, he himself was called upon to do for Wales, namely, uphold the orthodoxy of the Baptist pulpit.

Robert Jones was no respecter of persons, and withal, was fearless in spirit, and incisive in speech. Like most men who feel strongly, and speak with burning zeal, his utterances were at times unduly severe, and often extreme, but his well-known sincerity and courage secured even for such utterances wide notice, and very general respect. When troubled by the indifference and inactivity of some of his own members, he would deal with such unsparingly. He more than once told some of his members that, as they were of no service, or ornament, in the Church, they were

only fit for the Church's lumber room, and that the Church that would tolerate them long even in the lumber room, sadly neglected to keep its house in order.

Being shocked and pained beyond endurance on one occasion, by the profanity of slate quarrymen, in a railway carriage, who wildly indulged in blasphemy and ribaldry in order to annoy the old patriarch, he stood up in their midst, and exclaimed, "Listen, men. I have learnt the last few minutes, as I have never learnt before, the necessity of having a hell for men like you, so that they might be shut in to their own blasphemy and curses, and never be allowed to break upon the peace of the redeemed, and the blessedness of heaven, with their loathsome profanity, and execrable curses. Thank God that there is a hell, so that heaven may be undisturbed by such a crowd as you!" Those words struck into every heart, and the ribaldry instantly died down into a terrible silence, which no one dared break. The old man was victor: the stern prophet was supreme.

He was a very pronounced Nonconformist, and was never happier than when having a fling at curates, canons, etc. This was done with such good nature, albeit with withering irony, that no one was offended. He was particularly hard upon the clergymen claiming tithes. "Just imagine," he exclaimed in a large public meeting at Carnarvon, "one man in a parish claiming one-tenth of its produce! If there were nine other men of his greed there wouldn't be a blade of grass left for anyone else!" His speeches were punctuated with such telling home-thrusts. The effect was irresistible, and friend and opponent alike enjoyed the brilliant display of such earnest, although rollicking, advocacy.

Robert Jones, too, had some plain things to say about the Romish Church. For instance, in speaking about purgatory, he said, "According to the teaching of the Church of Rome it is not ungodly men, as much as imperfect

saints, that are sent to purgatory. Very few Papists seem to escape purgatory. The priests are very fond of putting them there. Even cardinals and high dignitaries of the Church—and I suppose even the Popes, for some of them, judging from what we know of them here, evidently need it—have to go there; and if they have to go, it is a poor look-out for smaller saints. Now Paul evidently knew nothing about purgatory. All the saints he spoke of were in God's family on earth, or in Heaven. If there had been a purgatory Paul would be sure to have heard of it, especially when he was caught up into the third heaven; but as he knew nothing about it, we may rest assured that no such thing exists."

When Robert Jones died, I, as editor of the "*Christian Pictorial*," telegraphed to my old friend, Dr. Owen Davies, of Carnarvon, the intimate companion, and subsequently the able biographer, of Robert Jones, for his portrait. He was away from home, and thus I was unable to obtain a photograph in time for that week's publication of the "*Christian Pictorial*." I was very disappointed. I had never in my life attempted to draw a sketch of anything, although I was considered to be a keen critic of drawings by other artists—on the same principle, I suppose, as that upon which those who have never preached themselves pose as expert sermon-tasters. In a moment, however, of desperation, I, with a free, unhesitating swing of the hand, drew an outline of Robert Jones's broad-brimmed slouch hat, and, before I knew it, drew an outline of the profile of his powerful face, in which his prominent nose and projecting chin were striking characteristics. Then, having hurriedly dashed in his beard, and bushy arching eyebrows, with a rough suggestion of a keen furtive eye, all from memory, I stood amazed at having done almost unconsciously what I had never done before, and never should again, and called to my aid an artist who sketched for the "*Pictorial*." I asked him to fill in that

outline, while I described to him verbally some of the striking features of that countenance. A portrait was finished comparatively in a few minutes, and a block of Robert Jones appeared in that week's issue. The following week I received a letter from an old friend of Robert Jones, expressing high appreciation of the life-like portrait given. That attempt at sketching a familiar face, in a moment of sheer desperation, when driven by an irresistible determination to publish a portrait in the obituary notice, stands alone in the experiences of my life. If a thousand pounds were offered me for doing it again, I could not do so. The inspiration which came upon me was resistless and unerring. It served me once in that emergency, never to return again. It was that very likeness that was published subsequently in my "John Vaughan and His Friends," and was pronounced by many who knew him most intimately to be one of the best ever published.

The mention of Dr. Owen Davies as the biographer of the Rev. Robert Jones, of whom he was a great admirer, reminds me of his waggishness. In the earlier years of the ministry of a popular minister at Bangor—about forty years ago—there was a frequent clash of arms between the astute minister from Carnarvon and the younger, more fluent, but less sagacious, minister from Bangor. On one occasion there had been some cross-firing between the two at a conference, and the young minister got impatient, and introduced a few depreciatory references to Dr. (then Mr.) Owen Davies with the words, "I begin to think that Mr. Owen Davies, etc." The latter listened quietly to the diatribe, and simply got up, and said with a smile, "I am delighted to hear that Mr. —— —— has at last *begun to think*," and then sat down. The discussion closed there; there was no more to be said!

On another occasion, a professor from South Wales, learned in Hebrew, and in cuneiform inscriptions, but

somewhat crude in speaking his mother tongue, gave a lecture in Welsh at Dr. Owen Davies's Chapel. The professor's broken Welsh created considerable surprise and amusement even when understood, and there were some passages which were, especially to the North Welshmen, past finding out ! Dr. Owen Davies, at the close, in proposing a vote of thanks to the lecturer, sought to make the best of matters, and at the same time indulged in a quiet satire at the cost of the professor, when he explained that there was a considerable difference between South Wales Welsh and North Wales Welsh, and that this, no doubt, had occasioned some confusion. But he proceeded to suggest that, when their friend came to them next time, he should address them in ***English so that they might understand him better !***

CHAPTER XII.

DURING MY LONDON AND BRIGHTON MINISTRIES:

MY IMPRESSIONS OF SIR OWEN M. EDWARDS AND MR. DAVID DAVIES, M.P., LLANDINAM. MY VISIT TO THE "FIELD OF BLESSING."

TWO North Wales laymen who came into prominence, one during my London ministry, and the other a dozen years later, were David Davies (the founder of the Llandinam family) and Owen M. Edwards, respectively. They produced a lasting impression upon me personally, the former on account of his powerful personality and great financial enterprises, and the latter on account of his rare literary gifts and genial disposition. They were both eminently patriotic in spirit, and honest in purpose, and both prominent Calvinistic Methodists. But their similarity largely ended there; whereas each exhibited qualities peculiar to himself, which, although they widely differed from those of the other, in both cases contributed in no small measure to the growth and advancement of their country and nation. One was an outstanding industrial magnate, redolent of Cymric soil, a rugged Welshman, of robust character, upon whom the chisel of the social customs and class distinctions, characteristic of the Victorian age, had not made a vestige of an impression. The other was a literary prince who, in addition to having been richly endowed and delicately modelled by nature, was highly refined and liberally equipped, by patient and assiduous training, to play a leading part as guide in *belles-lettres* to the rising race of Welshmen; but whose comparatively early death deprived Wales of the full fruition of his great ministry, as one of

the greatest exponents of our purest national aspirations, and finest literary and educational ambitions, whom the last generation produced.

It was my privilege to enjoy the friendship of Sir Owen M. Edwards for half the number of his days. We touched each other in life's press when we were both comparatively young, although I was about eight years his senior. He had read my book, "Echoes from the Welsh Hills," in 1884, and had expressed the wish to know me—a wish conveyed to me by a mutual friend. It was five years later, however, that we met for the first time. I had then left Regent's Park for Brighton, stricken by a series of crushing domestic bereavements, which had left me broken and sleepless; hence the necessity for a change of air and surroundings. He, I believe, was at that time a lecturer at Oxford, and "at home" at Llanuwchllyn. I shall never forget the first meeting we had at that home, Llanuwchllyn (where my wife and I, at the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, spent the day with them), nor will the picture of that placid, tender, thoughtful, and classic countenance, or of those restful, meditative eyes, through which that youthful but great soul looked out at me, be ever deleted from my memory. From that hour until his death I never lost touch of him, and even now that he has for years vanished from our sight, I still feel the grip of that slender but strong hand and see the tender glance of that luminous eye.

During my ministry in Brighton, I used to read his productions in "*Cymru,*" etc., with avidity, and as editor of "*The Christian Pictorial,*" I was privileged in being permitted to superintend the production of some illustrations for him. His articles in "*Cymru*" were specially helpful to me. They enabled me to retain my mother tongue, and even to improve my knowledge of it, in a "strange land." Without laying any claim to an intimate knowledge of Welsh style and diction, I felt the

powerful charm of his exquisite phrasing. It allured and helped me, and often made me long to write Welsh with a tithe of the winsomeness and subtle beauty with which he wrote it—but, alas! I sojourned among a people of strange language! Yet to this day no Welsh stylist has captivated me like him.

I have also been greatly indebted to him for valuable hints, especially in one masterly adjudication of an essay of mine in a National Eisteddfod competition on an abstruse, and largely unexplored, subject, as well as for luminous and appreciative reviews of my published works. He, moreover, by his generous estimate of my offorts, encouraged me to write Welsh ballads in the Carmarthenshire dialect for his Magazine, "*Cymru*"—a modest form of Welsh versification to which I dared to aspire, and for which he himself showed a special fondness. But, above all, I felt the irresistible attraction of that gentle spirit and unique personality. How well, and how pleasantly, I remember my wife and myself spending a day, over thirty years ago, at what was then his new home at Llanuwchllyn!

How genially and generously both he and his dear wife entertained us! How well, too, I remember that young, graceful, and manly figure clad in flannels leading the way with elastic step into the garden; and then the fair form of a true gentlewoman, with her first-born child—of tender memory—following. The three are now no longer with us. They have vanished all too soon out of our national life!

Owen M. Edwards, in a moment of unaccountable aberration, comparatively early in life, tried to be a politician. The spell of that other pure spirit, Mr. Tom Ellis, was upon him, and he was returned to Parliament as his friend's successor. But he was too modest and refined for the rough and tumble, and the growing persistent axe-grinding, of a Parliamentary career. He had to give

up politics, or give up his literary pursuits, his homely hearth and simple tastes ; and we know the choice he made. He got out of politics—as, indeed, Mr. Tom Ellis had done in another way—saved his soul, and retained a pure and unspotted character for all time. Indeed, in my opinion, Owen M. Edwards was the most refined, accomplished, and modest Welsh nationalist and litterateur of the past generation. He was, moreover, I think, one of the most vivid writers modern Wales has ever produced. As a historian he clothed the dry skeleton records of departed generations with flesh, so that an army of moving, living personalities sprang up out of every ancient " valley of dry bones " that he ever visited, and upon which he had breathed the breath of life—an army having fresh human colouring upon their cheeks, alertness in their glance, and a natural swing in their movements. These possessed all the vividness of present day life, with all the characteristics of the bygone age to which they belonged.

What Peter was as a word painter among apostolic writers, Owen M. Edwards was among the Welsh historians of the present generation, only Sir Owen, in addition to the vividness of the impetuous Peter, had the gentle grace, restraint, and delicate touch of the " beloved disciple." He is sometimes charged with being indifferent to minute details, and with speaking too broadly, dealing with the trend of events, rather than their detailed order, and their precise characteristics as separate incidents. There is a semblance of truth in this. He certainly did not present history in the finikin details of " vulgar fractions," but in rich combinations and permutations. He wrote pictorially. He could do no other. He saw clearly everything he described, and thus he presented everything with its appropriate foreground and background. His rich imagination was a vision, and not a dream ; hence it was never allowed to run into any excess or incongruity ; it was curbed well within the limits of historical accuracy by

his love for truth and reality, which is traceable in every line that he ever wrote. His pictures, on the one hand, were never mere cold, bare outlines—drawn, indeed, with anatomical precision, but lacking " the spirit of the living thing"—nor yet were they, like so many others, glaring daubs, in which gamboge vulgarly predominated, but which lacked alike all the precision of outline and the softness of half tone. His portraitures always seemed to me to throb with life, and stood out of the canvas in such a way as to make the spectator forget that he was looking at a picture, and thus to allure him into close converse and fellowship with the living characters that peopled the scene.

In a very able article in "*Cymru*" (January, 1921), Mr. Ifano Jones traces the " apostolic succession " in the leadership of the Welsh democracy from "Gwilym Hiraethog" to Owen M. Edwards. He states that in the death of "Hiraethog" in November, 1883, the Welsh people only began to realise that they had lost the most versatile leader since the days of Gruffydd Jones, of Llanddowror, and the greatest master of assemblies since the brilliant period from Daniel Rowland to Christmas Evans. "Ifano" adds that a few weeks before the death of "Hiraethog," Dan Isaac Davies settled in Cardiff, and became, before the Welsh nation realised it, the worthy successor of "Hiraethog" as a leader of his race—a leader, although not as versatile as his predecessor, yet every whit as honest in purpose, as powerful in personality, and as fiery in zeal for the welfare of his countrymen. In less than four years, namely, in May, 1887, Dan Isaac Davies was in his grave. "Hiraethog" had led his countrymen for forty years, while Dan Isaac Davies only led for less than four, yet at the close of that brief period the democracy of Wales stood stunned and tearful beneath the banner which he had unfurled, but was no longer living to uphold. Indeed, priceless as the service was which "Hiraethog" rendered, it

was not greater than that rendered by Dan Isaac Davies, in compelling Owen Morgan Edwards to grasp the standard, as he himself fell in the heat of the conflict. An interesting light is thrown on this vital connection in a letter sent by O. M. Edwards to "Ifano" (which he reproduces), dated 3rd May, 1907, in which he states, "I was a great deal in Cardiff during my holidays when a student at Oxford. In those years, 1884–86, Dan Isaac Davies took me under his care, and revived within me feelings which had been stirred by Michael D. Jones at Bala. He came to me, although I knew but little of him; he came across me on all occasions, followed me to my lodgings, and exclaimed to me constantly, 'It is you that is to carry on my work.' I barely understood what he meant, but I was completely charmed by his self-sacrificing spirit, his high and pure aims, and his all consuming zeal. Little by little I opened my eyes!"

Those open eyes were used for more than thirty years to discover means by which he could raise up a new generation of Welsh readers, and ardent students of the literature and history of Wales, to wit, in his "*Cymru*," "*Y Llenor*," "*Cyfres y Fil*," etc. He attached infinite importance as a national leader to the democracy thinking and speaking in their own native tongue. And yet he was not narrow in his outlook, and did not wear even national blinkers, which should shut out from his view all that pertained to the interests of humanity outside his own nationality. He, moreover, taught the people to widen their horizon, as he, by the charm of his style and winsomeness of his spirit, induced them to read as far back as 1889 "O'r Bala i Geneva" ("From Bala to Geneva") and "Tro yn yr Eidal" ("A Tour in Italy"), and the following year "Tro yn Llydaw" ("A Tour in Brittany").

Thus he was a worthy successor of "Hiraethog," to whom Wales, sacred as it was, was not a little garden walled around, beyond which there was nothing of vital importance

to the Welsh patriot. "Hiraethog" and "O.M." looked over the national hedge, not loving their own nation less than some modern patriotic Welshmen, but the race more. They began in Jerusalem and their chief sanctuary was there, but they did not end there. Their sympathies were as broad as the world, and as deep as human misery.

In the death of O. M. Edwards we lost the magic historian of Wales in the present age, and one's heart grows sick with a depressing sense that overpowers us of the hollow emptiness which, in that respect, he has left behind! His seat is empty. Dry academic accuracy we may have; but the luminous and inspiring presence of the seer is, for the present, at least, gone!

Sir Owen, indeed, lost his first-born "Ab Owen," and that charming child well-nigh drew his father with him. What "Ieuan Ddu" was to "Gomer," "Ab Owen" was to "O.M." Indeed, "O.M." would never quite admit that the child had gone; for to the end the name of the child "Ab Owen" was printed as the name of the "Publisher" on the title-page of every volume of "*Cyfres y Fil*" that appeared—a tender touch, which disclosed the clinging tenacity of a father's love, that "would not let him go!"

Happily another son has outlived the father, who is intensely loyal to his memory, and appears to be obsessed with his great ideals. May his father's mantle rest upon his youthful shoulders! May his father's spirit make him great!

Indirectly associated with the name of Sir Owen M. Edwards there is another incident which I readily recall.

In 1894 I was asked by the Council of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland to write a biography of Vavasor Powell, the great Welsh Evangelist of the seventeenth century. In connection with that task I had one very memorable experience.

I had heard a good deal of the " Field of Blessing " on the Ysgafell Farm, belonging to Mr. Henry Williams, a remarkable man closely associated with Vavasor Powell from 1650 to 1660, but seven years his junior. He was converted under Powell's ministry, became a member of his church, and ultimately his successor as pastor at Newtown, Montgomeryshire. But, being naturally of a retiring disposition, he, unlike Powell, took no prominent part in the political, social, and religious questions of the day, but (in addition to performing his duties on his own farm) simply devoted himself to quiet evangelistic work. " The only known exception " as I state elsewhere,[1] to this was in 1654, when he, with others, signed a bold remonstrance against the Protector, which Vavasor Powell had prepared. Yet "few suffered as much as Henry Williams and his family from the hands of cruel persecutors."

I had read of his farm being devastated by his persecutors. The description given by Dr. William Richards of Lynn, had especially left a very deep impression upon my mind.[2] :—

" They seized the stock upon the land, and seemed resolved to leave nothing behind them for the future subsistence of the family. There was, however, a field of wheat then just sown, which the unfeeling wretches could not carry off, and probably did not think worth while to destroy. The field thrived amazingly . . . Nothing like it had ever been known in those parts . . . It was said, indeed, that it amounted to more than double the value of what the persecuting plunderers had carried off . . . The field, I believe, is known there and shown to strangers to this day."

[1] " Vavasor Powell," p. 114.

[2] " Cambro-British Biography." By Rev. Wm. Richards, Ll.D. Edited by John Evans, Ll.D. Lon. 1820 ; pp. 21-2.

During the summer of 1895, therefore, I visited the neighbourhood. On approaching Ysgafell and asking for "Cae'r Fendith" ("The Field of Blessing")[1] I found that everyone in the vicinity, then, as in the days of Dr. Richards, knew it, and was intimately acquainted with the marvellous story associated with it." On my way to the neighbourhood I called on my friend Mr. Richard Williams, solicitor, of Newtown and author of "Montgomeryshire Worthies," who told me that there were two stalks of that miraculous harvest in the possession of Mr. J. Thomas, of Craigfryn Farm, Carno, about twelve miles distant from Newtown. I gathered, however, Mr. Williams himself had never seen them. I at once went to Carno, and on my arrival at Craigfryn, I found that the two stalks were in a dresser drawer. They were loose, and not even wrapped in paper, and they bore traces of wear and tear, probably to some extent by the repeated opening of the drawers. I was permitted readily to photograph the stalks. I took them and pinned them to a black cloth, which I had suspended just outside, in the farmyard. This was the first time they had ever been photographed.

I state in my "Life of Vavasor Powell" (p. 122) that "for three centuries the Thomas family had lived at Craigfryn; and for six generations the history of these stalks could be traced back. They were sent to the Thomases as a keepsake in commemoration of the miraculous crop reaped at Ysgafell. At different times during the long period that had elapsed since that event some of the wheat had fallen out of the husks. With the true instinct of farmers . . . . the different generations at Craigfryn had carefully sown the few grains thus detached, with the hope that they might produce a similar crop; but in every case each seed had produced only one stalk."

[1] "Vavasor Powell," pp. 120-1.

It was only comparatively a few years before my visit that the last few grains were sown with the same result. Thus the secret of the exceptional growth was not to be found in the nature of the seed sown.

On my return to Newtown, I showed Mr. Williams my photograph of the stalks. He was very surprised and delighted. The interest created by my having taken that photograph and published it was surprising. I first published it in my " Life of Vavasor Powell," and subsequently in the " *Christian Pictorial* " of which I was editor ; and various editors, including Sir (then Mr.) Owen M. Edwards, sent to me for blocks. Sir Owen was intensely interested in the incident, and in correspondence with me entered very fully into its significance. Mr. Parry (Professor of Agriculture at Aberystwyth at the time, I believe) and other experts in cereal growths wrote me asking for particulars. I, however, met with no one who had ever seen other stalks similar to these. This is an incident in my life for which I have often been grateful, and of which I am, I confess, proud.

Mr. David Davies, M.P., presented a striking contrast to Sir Owen M. Edwards, but each in his own sphere, and with his own distinctive characteristics, rendered priceless services to their country. My personal recollections, moreover, are more remote and less intimate of Mr. David Davies than of Sir Owen. Indeed, I do not suppose that he had any knowledge of my existence, and thus I never had the privilege of personal converse with him. He was, nevertheless, to me, as a young hero-worshipper, a great personality who had not only arrested my attention, but also kindled my wonder, and won my admiration. Gradually I learned the leading facts of his early life, and the story of his astounding success. Born in a farmhouse in the Parish of Llandinam, suggestively called " Drain Tewion " (" Thick Thorns ") and brought up to be a

sawyer, he worked his way out of the thicket of humble surroundings, and tangle of obstructing hindrances, and comparatively early in life became an industrial prince, and even king, in his own native land. From being a sawyer, he developed into a contractor, and pre-eminently a railway contractor, beginning with a mile of the Llanidloes and Newtown Railway, and then, in succession, constructing the Cambrian, Van, Pembroke and Tenby, and Manchester and Milford Railways.

Unrestrained by the strenuous toil, and anxiety incident to such important railway contracts, he moreover became greatly interested in coal mines in the Rhondda and Ogwy Valleys, and was the chief shareholder in the Ocean Steam Coal Company.

In addition to these commitments he became a Member of Parliament ; and that was a great distinction in those days for a man, who had risen from the democracy, to become their trusted representative as a formulator of our National laws, and as a vindicator of our National honour and integrity in our intercourse with the other great nations of the world. Four hundred a year, and first class railway fares, with the hope of being able to vote themselves more, as opportunity offered, had not then become incentives to quicken the ambition of scores of mediocrities, who could barely earn half that amount in any other sphere of honest toil ; nor had party funds been sufficiently amassed to enable wire-pullers in high places to hoist into Parliamentary seats a goodly number of Pliables, who could be squeezed, when occasion demanded, to any shape, or any attitude, desired. David Davies was a man of another mould. He stood as a Liberal on his own feet, and acted according to the dictates of his own convictions.

In the midst of all he retained his early simplicity of life, spotlessness of character, and plainness of speech. He retained, moreover, his loyal adherence to the Church

and traditions of his youth. He was a Calvinistic Methodist to the last, and freely fraternised with his humbler brethren —as freely and unostentatiously as if he had remained a sawyer all his days. Moreover, as he increased in wealth he increased in liberality, especially, though not exclusively, to his own denomination, as his generous contributions to Bala and Trevecca Colleges, the Memorial Church of Howel Harris, the University College, Aberystwyth, and the Fund for Ministers of North and South Wales abundantly testify.

Thus, first as a youth, and then as a young man, I was greatly charmed by his robust personality. I can easily picture him now as I first saw him. There he stood four-square against all the winds of heaven, with his wide forehead betokening a broad basal brain, his eyes calm but penetrative, his face powerful and restful, and his chin prominent and assertive; but unquestionably his nose appeared to me to be the most characteristic feature of all. It was an aggressive organ, as defiant as it was inquisitive, and, withal, it had a slight concave curve as it approached a somewhat sharp point, which suggested a capacity for negotiating any difficulty in an abstruse problem, and finding out speedily the trail of a satisfactory solution, and successful issue. To me it was that nose, more than any other feature, that appeared to supply the chief visible clue to his phenomenal success.

Indeed, in those days, he was the most pronounced individuality Wales had in the House of Commons. He was a typical Welshman of the sturdier type, who never tried to Anglicise his speech, or, or the matter of that, his garb. He held also pride of class and of high birth, in supreme contempt; so much so, as to assert more than once, that he himself was proud of being a "self-made man:"—a statement which gave to Disraeli the chance of indulging in one of his sinister ironical asides, in referring to him as "the honourable member whom the

Lord Almighty had never made!" This, of course, was exceedingly smart, but coming as it did from Disraeli (whose gloomy, subtle—almost suggestive of a Mephistophelian—face contrasted badly with David Davies's open, transparent countenance), it left the irresistible impression that, judging from appearances at least, the Almighty would have had far less to do with the make-up of Disraeli, than of David Davies!

But such home-thrusts were quite innocuous in their effect on Mr. David Davies, and, when opportunity offered, he was not slow to return the compliment with interest, to those who tried to disparage and ridicule him. For instance, when the Barry Dock Bill was in Committee, it is stated that the Counsel in opposition, in order to depreciate Mr. Davies' financial soundness as the promoter of so great a scheme, repeated to him, for the second and third time, the question, "Let me see, Mr. Davies, am I to understand that you yourself were at one time a working sawyer?" On the third occasion when he was asked the question, which had been satisfactorily answered twice before, Mr. Davies lifted up his voice and exclaimed: "Yes, I reply for the third time, you are to understand that, *quite*; I was a *working* sawyer; but don't misunderstand me either—I was always a *top-sawyer*; and I had always dashed better fellows than you working under me!"

I well remember, when through the folly of some local extremists, in endeavouring to associate him, during the election, exclusively with the "Old Corff," the jealousy of other denominations was aroused, and, as a consequence, he lost his seat for Cardigan. This was, probably, one of the greatest disappointments of his life. He suffered a humiliating defeat through the folly of others; yet I recollect seeing him on Carmarthen railway platform just after, without any shadow of gloom, or of disappointment, upon his face. He was the same resolute, self-reliant

David Davies, ready and able to plough, if need be, his own lonely furrow in the future, as he had many times in the past!

As a party politician he was not great; but as a man who had his hand on powerful industrial levers, and moreover, as a representative Welshman, loving his country, and his countrymen, and their most sacred traditions, and prepared at any cost, and at any time, to defend them, he was unquestionably a great figure. I know of half-a-dozen Welsh M.P's at the present time, who, for untiring energy, and for strong sheer force of character, and transparency of spirit, would not unitedly make up one David Davies! Yet, these qualities, happily, did not die with him, for, in the alternate generation, we see them growingly reproduced in the present David Davies, of Llandinam, the M.P. for Montgomeryshire, who never is in doubt as to what he believes, and never is in a quandary as to whether he will carry those beliefs into practice.

CHAPTER XIII.

DURING MY LONDON AND BRIGHTON MINISTRIES:

MY GROWING INTIMACY WITH THE REVS. E. HERBER EVANS, J. GOMER LEWIS, AND R. D. ROBERTS.

I HAD the privilege of knowing the Revs. E. Herber Evans and J. Gomer Lewis intimately. They had many excellences and failings in common; yet in other respects they differed widely. Both had rare popular gifts, and both were spurred on by an inordinate ambition in that direction, and were exceptionally sensitive to popular praise and blame. Yet their ideals and their methods were entirely different. "Herber" looked upon every great occasion when he had to address an audience as a crisis in his life. With all his experience and success, he never lost that intense feeling of anxiety. Thus, in preparation for such an occasion, he would toil incessantly for weeks in preparing, and polishing in every detail, his discourse. Meanwhile, that was his all-absorbing thought, wherever he went, and was the chief theme of his converse with his intimate ministerial friends, whenever he met them. He also consulted every authority within his reach by way of books of reference, and, being, moreover, always an omnivorous reader, especially of sermonic, biographical, and fictional literature, he laid everything, especially by way of illustration, under tribute, and as such commandeered whatever could be profitably utilised, to enhance the quality and effect of his discourse.

Also, by way of private rehearsal in his study and his private walks, he would master every period, repeat practically every important sentence, and practise every

cadence and inflection, so that, when the occasion came for the delivery of his discourse, nothing could come to him in the form of a surprise, or even of an unfamiliarity. He, moreover, would throw without stint his intensely emotional nature, his fervid oratory, indeed all his unique personality, into the delivery of his discourse, and generally with irresistible effect. He left nothing undone to complete his ideal.

" Gomer " was equally conscious of the importance of such an occasion, and was equally bent upon making the best possible use of it ; but, unlike " Herber," he did not worry about it. He welcomed the opportunity enthusiastically, but with a light heart. He did not spend much time in consulting books of any kind. As a matter of fact, he read but few standard works, and was inclined to give but a brief time even to the exegetical study of his text. This neglect of systematic reading and study was generally acknowledged by himself and his friends. He made no secret of it ; with the result, for instance, that when in delivering his brilliant presidential address at Aberdare many years ago he said, playfully, " Bachgen y *study* wyf fi " (" I am the boy of the study "), all appreciated the joke, and roars of laughter greeted the remark. Yet he read more than most imagined of current literature, and especially of periodicals. He thus kept himself abreast of the trend of the age, and the events that helped to mould and fashion public opinion. Moreover, he studied men more than books, with the result that he was always in touch with the thoughts and feelings of his fellows. Indeed, he studied human nature closely, and had a quick eye to see what appealed to men and women around him, and with knowledge he played skilfully upon the hearts of men, and " was unto them as a very lovely song of one that had a pleasant voice, and could play well on an instrument."

In all this he seldom failed in his object, and he did all with one-tenth the wear and tear of " Herber " in preparing his discourses. Again, while " Herber " was unsurpassed, and rarely equalled, in dealing with the tender and pathetic aspects of his subject, " Gomer " was great on the humorous side of his theme, and was not averse to having recourse to this when, at times, the more serious treatment was apt to become uninteresting. The failing of " Herber " 's great quality was in the direction of excessive sentimentalism, and occasional tearfulness, whereas " Gomer " 's failing was in the direction of playful merriment, bordering sometimes on mild buffoonery. Those occasional lapses into excess, on the part of both, were, however, only defects which brought into relief the rare gifts which were, as a rule, used by them with telling effect in their public ministries for the highest ends.

As a further illustration alike of the similarity and dissimilarity between the two—they both had conferred upon them the degree of D.D., and both were somewhat proud of the fact. At that time, however, there had been a danger of an epidemic of such degrees, and " Myfyr Emlyn " 's " Song of the D.D." (" Cân y D.D.") had brought a great deal of ridicule on degrees of uncertain merit. " Herber " was keenly conscious of this, as the following incident will show. Some time after he had received the doctorate I had occasion to refer to him in " *Cymru Fydd*," when I playfully referred to his physical bulk, adding, " This was before 'Herber' had been condensed within the narrow limitations of a D.D." Many months later I chanced to go to Holborn Restaurant, and, turning to the right, where the recesses surround the central well, a voice came from the first recess, " Davies, how are you ? " I turned round, and saw " Herber " waiting for lunch. I asked him what brought him there. He explained that he had been preaching at Westminster Chapel the preceding day. I then asked him how he was, to which he replied,

"None the better for the nasty thing you said about me in '*Cymru Fydd*.'" I asked him to explain, whereupon he said, "You spoke about me having been compressed within the narrow limitations of a D.D."

I expressed great surprise at his objection to what I considered was a very high compliment to him, adding, "You know, 'Herber,' that most fellows who receive those degrees just now, have to be blown out and puffed up endlessly before they can fill a D.D., whereas I stated you had to be compressed in order to be brought within it." "Oh, that's all right, Davies, come and have a bit of lunch with me," was the instant response. The trouble was over; all misgiving had vanished; that great hearted, highly gifted, but amazingly innocent man was quite satisfied, and we enjoyed a lunch together in as happy a mood as ever!

"Gomer," on the other hand, though he well knew the little value that some attached to his degree, and remembered how he himself had often repeated "Myfyr Emlyn"'s "Song of the D.D." with great glee, was not in the least disconcerted, even by chaff and banter. Although, in reality, he was as much pleased with his degree as "Herber" was with his, "Gomer" on occasions made light of it all. Having referred to a long list of presents he had received during his visit to America, such as a travelling bag, walking stick, etc., for which he stated he had in reply said, "Thank you kindly," he last mentioned the D.D. as having been also offered him by the Yankees, when he thanked them in precisely the same terms—"Thank you, kindly," and put it into his baggage with other trophies. So much alike, and yet so different, were those two men in this case.

Now, the great qualities, and the amusing weaknesses, of these two were known to all; and even the blend of strength and weakness in the two seemed to add to the affectionate interest which all felt in them as the idols of

the public. Men marvelled at their gifts, while they were amused at their idiosyncrasies. There were waggish companions of theirs, however, who were not slow in getting at their vulnerable points and humorously trading upon them. In the case of Dr. E. Herber Evans perhaps the greatest culprit was the Rev. Penry Evans, of Pontardulais, whereas, with regard to Dr. J. Gomer Lewis, the Rev. D. S. Davies, of Login, was probably the most inveterate sinner, with the possible exception of the Rev. David Richards, of Cwmduad, to whose ironical by-play with "Gomer" I shall refer elsewhere.

Penry Evans was a wag, as well as a wit, and in that capacity would "pull the leg" of a super-sensitive, guileless, man like Dr. Herber Evans. Being a master of assemblies "Herber" was, as already intimated, supremely solicitous of winning their opinion and esteem. He was not proud: he had not enough self-reliance in that respect for that; but he was conceited—in the sense of yearning for and enjoying keenly the praise of his fellows. This yearning for praise was, moreover, fed by a great ambition to excel. It was, however, the super-sensitive yearning of a child for praise, who, although gladdened beyond bounds by approval, never allowed that approval to make him supercilious. It was a kind of conceit, therefore, that was harmless and amusing and that never awakened resentment or disgust on the part of his brethren, as they all knew so well that it was the innocent weakness of a great man, who, in that respect, was simply an overgrown child.

Men of "Penry"'s waggishness were given to play with "Herber"'s weakness in that direction. This was the one joint in "Herber"'s armour through which he could be teased and even tormented. There was one story illustrative of this which has a tender and pathetic association in my mind, because it was one which, out of sheer rollicking mischief, I was induced, by a group of "Herber"'s closest friends, to relate in his hearing, in a

happy gathering at Llandrindod Wells, the last time I ever enjoyed his company, and only a few weeks before Wales was bereft of the ministry of this great son, who was one of the foremost of its preachers.

I can see the group now to whom I told that story. I had the preceding day been persuaded, out of sheer mischief, to tell it before " Herber " himself when we next met. There was no fear of misunderstanding, for although it awakened merriment at " Herber " 's cost, yet the fact that it was mainly true, and the satisfaction that, after all, he was the " hero " of the tale, amply compensated for that, and all he told me at the close, as he lifted up his walking stick, and as he smiled and blushed, while the feelings of approval and disapproval fought for the mastery on his countenance, was, " I'll kill you some day, Davies ! "

The story ran that the Rev. Penry Evans, having to preach at, or near, Carnarvon, called on the Rev. Herber Evans on a Saturday afternoon. Soon the conversation turned to preachers and preaching in the Welsh Congregational body. Suddenly " Herber " asked, " Who are the geniuses of the Welsh pulpit in our denomination now ? " " Well," replied Mr. Evans, " that is a very difficult question. Geniuses are few and far between." " Yes, yes," interjected " Herber," "but mention some, Penry." " Well, let me think," replied Mr. Evans, " there's 'Ap Fychan,' " " Yes, yes," said " Herber." " Go on, Penry." "It's hard to go on, there are so few," responded Penry Evans, as he looked askance at " Herber." " Mention the few, then," said " Herber " ; " go on, man ! " " There's 'Gwilym Hiraethog,' " added " Penry." " Yes, yes," responded " Herber," " who else ? " " Oh, there's Dr. John Thomas, of Liverpool," interjected Penry Evans, who knew that " Herber " had just then some grievance against Dr. Thomas. " What ! Go to Liverpool for a Welsh genius, and John Thomas a genius ! Think, Penry ! " " Penry " was unmoved, and watching the effect of all

this upon "Herber," he added, "I don't think there is another genius!" The effect of this last utterance was instant. "Herber" exclaimed, "Never heard such a thing—go to Liverpool for a genius of the Welsh pulpit—John Thomas a genius—and no other genius! Think, Penry!" "No," replied "Penry," "there isn't another!" "Oh, well," said "Herber," in tones of despair. "'Ap Vychan' a genius, 'Gwilym Hiraethog' a genius, and even John Thomas a genius; and no other genius in the Welsh Congregational pulpit! Things have come to a fine pass! Well, very sorry, Penry; am very busy this afternoon; good-bye!" With these words "Penry" was politely dismissed, to his own intense amusement.

Nearly a year passed before these two friends met again. But one day, while Penry Evans was waiting for a train on Whitland platform, he saw Herber Evans bundling out of the Cardigan train with his fishing tackle. He had been fishing in the River Cuch, and was now bent on trying the Tâf close by. Penry Evans began to wonder whether "Herber" had quite forgiven him, for failing to find a fourth genius at Carnarvon, nearly twelve months before. But all doubts were at once set at rest, for "Herber" no sooner saw him than he greeted him; and then, inviting him to a spot on the platform where no one else stood, he said, "Come here, Penry," and, taking from his pocket a letter, said, "Listen, Penry: 'The editor of the "*Quiver*" has pleasure in enclosing a cheque to the Rev. E. Herber Evans for five guineas for an article supplied to the "*Quiver*."'"

"Five guineas for an article, Penry," exclaimed "Heber"—"*and no genius either!*"

As may be surmised from the above, Penry Evans could "buy and sell" "Herber" at any time in that direction. Indeed, as a keen thinker, too, and a preacher of incisive and humorous speech, gripping an audience by his fresh and vigorous presentment of truth, "Penry"

was the superior of "Herber." But for fervid speech and sweeping oratory, "Herber" easily had the pre-eminence. From an intimate knowledge of him as a friend I wrote a brief appreciation of him more than twenty-six years ago. That expresses the impression still left upon me, as I recall his great personality, and his irresistible eloquence when he was thoroughly prepared —and he seldom preached except when, as I have stated, he had mastered, in anticipation, every phrase and every pause in his sermon! I then wrote ("John Vaughan and his friends, or more Echoes from the Welsh Hills," page 14), "Endowed as he was with a very exceptional gift of speech, and a voice as resonant as a bell, he was, moreover, a perfect artist in the presentation of his theme."

He was an omnivorous reader of Welsh and English books, even during his holidays, emptying railway and other bookstalls of every work of value. He, moreover, was a close student of human life, and a keen observer of every passing incident, especially those which disclosed that which was tenderest in human relationship. Thus he was ever apt in his illustration, and, in particular, had a wonderful delicacy of touch, and showed great fervour of feeling, in dwelling upon what was tenderest and most pathetic in the lives of men and women. With one touch he could unseal the fountain of tears, as his expansive and grandly human countenance beamed with an overpowering emotion; he could, with a simple wave of the hand, or a slight change of cadence in his fully harmonious voice, bring his whole audience into captivity to the thought and sentiment which had already conquered him. In that respect he was the most effective Welsh orator I have ever had the privilege of hearing.

Dr. Gomer Lewis and the Rev. D. S. Davies, too, had a strong affinity for each other, although in many respects they had very different characteristics. Both had a rich vein of humour, and, on that account, were centres of

great attraction, publicly and privately. When they were brought together, their united frolicsomeness, as a rule, exceeded all bounds. Their humour varied in kind. "Gomer" 's was generally of the bonhomie type, and, not infrequently, in the form of an assumed buffoonery; whereas Davies's generally leaned towards the satirical, which was often in the form of an incisive repartee, or adroit evasion. Thus, when both were together, and each in his happiest mood, an hour in their company supplied material for merriment which could not easily be equalled. "Gomer" was by far the more popular preacher. The pulpit seemed to handicap Mr. Davies, as his best sallies were not exactly suitable for the pulpit. He was keen enough to realise that, and thus would put on a restraint that deprived the sermon of the raciness of his freer utterances. "Gomer," moreover, was most sensitive to praise or blame, and was easily elated or depressed by praise and criticism; whereas Mr. Davies attached little importance to either, and relied rather upon his estimate, whether good or bad, of his own actions, than upon anyone else's.

I recall one instance in which these different characteristics of the two friends were strikingly disclosed. On one Tuesday morning I met Mr. Davies at Merthyr Tydfil railway station, and gathered from him that he and "Gomer" had been preaching together at the anniversary services of one of the churches in that town the preceding Sunday and Monday. I asked him whether they had had successful services, and in reply he said, among other things, that he had never before heard "Gomer" preach with such marvellous power and effect. At that moment "Gomer," who had been to the cloak-room, put in an appearance, and as we all were returning by the same train as far as Landore, we entered the same compartment. Knowing how "Gomer" was encouraged by any success, and also how a reference to such would gratify him, I asked him how he enjoyed the services. Instantly, before "Gomer" could

put in a word, Mr. Davies, with a wink, said, "Don't ask, Mr. Davies, I cannot imagine what has happened to "Gomer," he has evidently seen his day. We'll talk about something else." I noticed that "Gomer" became pale, and very depressed, and that he had very little to say all the way to Landore, where he and I left the train for Swansea, while Mr. Davies proceeded to West Wales. Still "Gomer" was silent and depressed. By and by I asked him if he was well. He replied, as his eyes filled with tears, "I am well, so far as I know; but I am not the best judge. I had thought I had got on well yesterday and Sunday, and felt very happy about it. But you heard what Davies said. It is clearly a case of unconscious decadence. My work is evidently done, and life has no longer any charm for me."

It took me quite half an hour to convince him that Mr. Davies had done all from sheer mischief, and that, a few minutes before, he had spoken in most enthusiastic terms of "Gomer"'s sermons. Instantly he exclaimed, "I am much better now; come and have a bit of dinner with me!"

Like all men of the Elijah type, "Gomer" was easily exalted, and as easily cast down. I remember many years ago, when spending my summer holidays in my native village, meeting Mr. Lewis, Meiros Hall, Drefach, at Carmarthen. I had heard that "Gomer" was at his sister's house at Drefach. I, therefore, asked Mr. Lewis how "Gomer" (his cousin) was. He told me that he was suffering from great depression, and keeping his bed, and that no one could induce him to get up. He urged me to go up and see him, as he believed that I was as likely to get him up as any one. I went to the house, and my name was announced to "Gomer." He was unwilling that I should see him in bed, and yet he persisted in remaining there. At last I insisted (of course with the full approval of his friends) upon seeing him. I went

into the bedroom. He instantly wept, and enlarged upon the fact that a man, as he stated it, of my importance should come all the distance to see a poor, helpless man like himself. I replied, "Don't you make a mistake. It is only a very important man that would bring me all the way to Drefach."

"Is that it?" asked "Gomer," in a tone of a newly awakened interest.

"Yes, it is so," I replied.

"Do you hear that?" he exclaimed, as he looked at his sister, and a gleam of satisfaction passed over his depressed countenance. I proceeded to say that, now I had come, I expected a courteous response to my request. I, therefore, asked him to get up without delay, as my time was short, and I wanted to have a walk and chat with him, before I returned. He immediately bestirred himself, got up, dressed, took a walk with me, and did not return to his bed until the evening, at the usual time of retiring. The depression was over, and "Gomer" was his own bright self once more.

On another occasion "Gomer," quite unwittingly, got his friend, Rev. D. S. Davies, of Login, into a fix. He was lecturing at Login on "The World's Fair." Mr. Davies, being an old bachelor like "Gomer," had taken personal trouble to get two pheasants for "Gomer" and himself, one for their tea on "Gomer's" arrival, and another for their supper; and had got them from the squire's gamekeeper, although it was strictly just before the end of the close season. The time came for the lecture. The squire was in the chair, and, after a few introductory words, called upon "Gomer." He, as accustomed to do on such occasions, expressed pleasure at seeing the squire in the chair. He said that he always liked to see men of position as well as of intelligence occupy that position. It was not always that they had that blend. Very often the chair was taken by a minister who, although

his intelligence might not be questioned, had no means. Half-a-crown for the object in view would swamp him, whereas he averred that in a case like the present five or ten guineas would only be a question of detail that would not cost a moment's anxiety. Not that all ministers, he added, were poor; for instance, there was the pastor of the church. He (the lecturer) had sat at his table that afternoon, where, among other dainties, there were two pheasants—one for tea and the other for supper. The squire looked astounded, as it was still the close season, and his estate was the only one for many miles where pheasants were reared, while the face of the gamekeeper, who was present, became purple. "Gomer," quite unconscious of the mischief he had done, then proceeded with the lecture.

At the close, Mr. Davies, in proposing a vote of thanks to the lecturer, spoke of him as occupying the foremost rank, but added that even he had his limitations. For instance, like many other people in our towns, he evidently did not know the difference between a fowl and a pheasant. He, as they had seen, had derived a great deal of pleasure from the thought that he had eaten pheasant for tea, and that he was to have a similar treat for supper, and all, note, in the close season. He evidently knew no better. "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." So cleverly did Mr. Davies dispel every fear and doubt, that the squire and his gamekeeper were once more perfectly happy and contented.

FRIEND OF THE POOR.

Popular as "Gomer" was as a preacher and lecturer, he shone most as the friend of the poor. I never visited his house and remained with him for an hour or so without seeing some poor one, sometimes many, in search of sympathy and help, who unerringly came to his door, and was never turned away unheeded. But it was not

even by personal help that he himself gave to the poor as much as the service he rendered by the wonderful influence he exerted over men and women of larger means to give of their wealth to the needy that he will be remembered. His appeals to such were, as a rule, irresistible. He would walk, for instance, to the shop of Mr. Ben Evans and tell him what he wanted; and he would get it. In all such cases he gave ungrudgingly of his time and energy, even when the monetary gift was exclusively another's.

The Rev. Morgan Jones, of Whitland, gave one typical instance at "Gomer's" funeral when he stated that on one wintry Saturday evening, with the snow lying thickly on the ground, he had entered a tramcar at Swansea for Morriston, where he had to preach the following day. To his surprise "Gomer" came in with a large parcel under his arm. Being asked where he was to minister on the morrow, he replied, "My own pulpit." On Mr. Jones expressing surprise that he was going in the direction of Morriston so late on Saturday, "Gomer" said, "I suddenly thought of one of my poor old members this cold afternoon, and felt sure that she had not enough clothing for such an inclement night as this, so I went to Mr. Ben Evans and got a blanket for her; and I am now taking it to the poor old soul." Scores of such instances could be given. He "delivered the poor that cried and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him, and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy."

He will be remembered by many for his powerful sermons, and his thrilling appeals and perorations; by some for his irrepressible wit and humour; by others for his unbroken flow of racy and exhilarating talk, and sudden outbursts of natural oratory; and by others again for his irresponsible,

but clever drollery, and playful buffoonery. These characteristics will long be spoken of with different estimates, varying from enthusiastic appreciation to emphatic disapproval, according to the tastes and moods of those who recall them. But his sympathy with the poor and his untiring efforts to lighten the loads of the heavy-laden on life's highway, where the weakest are ruthlessly ridden over or driven mercilessly to the ditch, will be remembered by all who knew him as the crowning virtue of his life, and will draw from his Lord and Master the final commendation: "Inasmuch as thou hast done it for the least of these my little ones, thou hast done it unto Me."

Another great preacher, in many respects similar to Gomer and Herber, but with a voice far surpassing theirs in tone and compass, was the Rev. R. D. Roberts, Llwynhendy, Carmarthenshire. Elsewhere I speak of him as unquestionably the most popular preacher of the day with the masses.[1]

"He was a perfect master of assemblies. The moment he stood up every eye was fixed on him, and from that moment until the close of the service he appeared to mesmerise his audience. We have never witnessed such splendid natural oratory, blended with burning zeal, as he exhibited. His eye and mouth betokened a mighty orator; and he unstintingly expended all his fine powers of voice and utterance in the preaching of the Gospel. He always began his sermon with vigour and precision of speech. Every word had its place, and every tone and movement their significance. As he proceeded his words glowed more and more with intensity of feeling, and his fine voice assumed a greater compass; until finally, during the last five or ten minutes of his discourse, he would chant his sentences in the strongest and most

[1] "John Vaughan and His Friends or More Echoes," pp. xii and xiii.

triumphant tones in music, viz., those of the major common chord in its normal position. Having given the leading tone, he would lightly touch the intervening ones, but only to give greater effect and prominence to the Tonic, Mediant, and Dominant. Beginning on the Tonic with a few words, he would smoothly ascend to the Dominant which was emphasised, then slowly glide to the Mediant, or he would leap to the Super-tonic and pause on the following Mediant softly. This he would do repeatedly, but on coming to *the end of his paragraphs* he invariably burst into a loud victorious shout on the note marked *forte* below. The effect as a rule, was electrifying. Having a strong bass voice, and an excellent resonator (mouth), and being full of Welsh fire, he could keep the congregation spell-bound for any length of time. His themes also were without exception grand, joyful, and triumphant ; hence the triumphant tones suited them perfectly.

"He was himself quite ignorant of the theory of music ; yet he instinctively gave expression to what musicians affirm were the most appropriate notes possible for making his words overwhelmingly effective.

"The following are two different strains which Mr. Roberts often adopted in the delivery of his discourses.

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The former was when he spoke in a condensed style toward the middle of his discourse ; the latter, when he gave fullest scope to his oratory, in extended periods and fervid perorations, especially as he drew near the close."[1]

The Rev. R. D. Roberts, in respect of fervour, voice, and oratory, would have compared favourably even with Francis Hiley, who, in an earlier age, when open-air services were a necessity, because of the crowds that gathered together to hear him, is said to have defied the storm, and made himself heard amid the tumult of the elements. It would appear that, in those days, when sanctuaries were too small to contain large assemblies, God raised up an order of men with broad chests and powerful vocal organs, that clearly rang out the message of salvation, among the hills and valleys of Wales. R. D. Roberts appears to have been one of the last of that race.

[1]These notes, together with a description of Mr. Roberts's *hwyl*, have been kindly supplied by Rev. W. Evans, of Blaen-y-Cwm, whose retentive memory and intimate knowledge of music have enabled him to reproduce these tones perfectly.

CHAPTER XIV.

MY VISITS TO WEST WALES: "THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH."

THREE JOURNEYS TO CARDIGAN.—I. A JOURNEY BY COACH FROM CRYMMYCH ARMS.

IN this chapter I propose giving an account of three journeys, taken within a period of twenty-five years,—that is, from 1885 to 1910—to Cardigan, because it casts a side-light not only upon the social progress of the district, in the direction of transit, but also upon the growing impatience of the Welsh people with an ancient system of established religion, and with the demands made by it upon the resources of those who had become alienated in their affections from it. The improvement in transit by road still continues to go forward by leaps and bounds, and one rejoices to record that the bitter conflicts over tithes, and other resisted claims of a privileged Church, have now vanished, and a spirit of concord and goodwill between all the churches of the land is increasingly taking their place every day.

About forty years ago I visited Cardigan, via Whitland and Crymmych Arms. I believe that the railway from Whitland to Crymmych Arms in those days was a private railway, owned by a Mr. Owen, Glogue, and was intended more to convey slates from his quarries to the Great Western Railway than for passenger traffic. In any case, it had all the characteristics of slowness, jerkiness, and general ramshackleness of private, or small, railways in those days. Having, after many persistent efforts, with a maximum of jerks, and a minimum of speed, arrived at Crymmych Arms, there remained eight miles, or so, to be covered by coach, before Cardigan was reached.

The two bus termini were the Crymmych Arms and the Black Lion, Cardigan. The landlord of the Black Lion was the proprietor of the coach, and there the vehicle and the horses were put up each night. The turn-out had a quaint and ancient appearance, which imparted a striking appropriateness and congruity to the whole concern. Indeed, the horses seemed to have been specially constructed for that coach, and the coach for the horses. One cannot imagine any other combination. They were as essential to each other as were the Siamese twins. Nor did the driver and conductor break upon the alluring congruity. There was an antique quaintness, and a primitive freakishness, about them which imparted a picturesqueness to the whole turn-out. This, however, was less observable in the morning, when they left the Black Lion, than in the afternoon, when they left Crymmych Arms. At Cardigan there was a wholesome restraint; but at Crymmych Arms horses, driver, and conductor alike seemed to find a superabundance of motive force for the return journey—the horses in the stables in the yard, and the driver and conductor at the tables in the parlour.

The driver was known as Little Dan, and the conductor as Joss. They both, like barristers, had a decided bent for retainers and "refreshers." This was generally known; and the two worthies did not attempt to keep it as a secret. That day upon which I first met them was cold and drizzly. Dan assured us in confidential tones, and as a piece of important general information, that wet weather at best was very cold-catching, especially when a man was forced to face the elements. It was bad enough for Joss, but still worse for him as he sat on the box. In that exposed position nothing short of something hot, especially before starting, could keep out the cold. The driver of a coach on the box, and the captain of a ship on the bridge, he held, could never be

teetotallers, and live long. It was more than human nature could stand. He had known several teetotallers who had died. Dan evidently felt keenly the dangers of too abstemious a diet, and scrupulously acted up to his convictions. There were various confidences exchanged between him and three or four of the passengers.

Unfortunately, no one wanted the box seat on that wet day, hence Dan was deprived of that "tip" for companionship, which was generally anticipated as a certainty; yet even this afforded an opportunity for enlarging upon the hardships of the driver, especially when he had a tendency to bronchitis, as Dan said he had. Joss meanwhile assured the passengers that their luggage had been packed on the coach with very special care, and was "as safe as a nail"—a favourite phrase of Joss's. I suggested at the time that he was fond of this simile because of its close connexion with a "tip." That was a far-fetched explanation, but be that as it may, Joss, as conductor, had his full share of "tips," which were generally taken in a state of solution.

Thus both driver and conductor were, if not "in full sail," at least "three sheets in the wind," by the time we started. Dan, after a preliminary dreamy inspection of the harness and reins, ascended the box, and Joss the footboard as he gave the word of command. Joss, however, soon stepped inside the coach and settled down in the vacant corner. There was a pungent fragrance in the air whenever Joss was near, and we soon found this out on that occasion. The fragrance had, no doubt, an infinite suggestiveness about it to a connoisseur; but to an abstainer it was an unusually subtle blend of numerous alcoholic fumes which defied diagnosis. It was evident, however, that it had a somniferous effect upon Joss, for he soon succumbed and slept the sleep—not "of the righteous"—but "of the riotous." It had also a subduing effect even upon the other passengers, myself included.

I soon began to realise the possible veracity of the publican who, when charged with being drunk, assured the magistrates that he never drank intoxicants; but, when questioned as to how he had got drunk, replied that he got somewhat elevated on the smell of it. The effect upon the passengers on this occasion, however, was decidedly depressing and soporific. This, no doubt, was furthered by the oppressiveness of the atmosphere without.

Meanwhile, Dan was proceeding on his journey as sole occupant of the box seat; and, we who had, for the reasons already given, been subdued almost into a state of coma, were blissfully ignorant of the dangers of the way, until we reached the first steep, within a mile or so of Crymmych Station, when suddenly we felt a pronounced jerk, culminating in a grating movement of increasing intensity and speed, as the coach visited in turn the hedges on both sides of the road. At last, when Dan had to negotiate an elliptic curve to the left at the bottom of the hill, we had mercifully just touched the hedge on the right, and thus he was able to convert it into something like a hyperbolic curve as we swung round, at the rate of fifteen miles an hour, just in time to escape a cottage which, with its fore court, was sunk below the roadway at the foot. Happily there was a hill in front, and the horses at length stopped. Soon the occupants of the coach—including Joss—were on foot, and naturally looked to Dan for an explanation. We hadn't to wait long, for Dan, with a look of pride and satisfaction, which was most refreshing, if not re-assuring, in the circumstances, explained, "There's no one else in the United Kingdom who could have done that!" We all agreed, but did not wish to have a repetition of the experiment.

The vital question then presented itself as to what was to be done for the rest of the journey. I, for some inexplicable reason, unless it was the sturdiness of my frame, was deputed to hold Dan up on the box, which

he had resolutely declined to vacate—Dan exclaiming, "You hold me up, I'm the joker for driving." My position was by no means a sinecure, especially as Dan became more limp and, by way of paradox, more obstreperous, as we proceeded. The position, moreover, was not a dignified one, especially when just at the time we met the Rev. J. Williams, of Cardigan, in his trap, it would have puzzled most to decide whether Dan or myself was drunk. I could only fall back upon my past reputation and Dan's, and hope for the best, as my brother divine drove by, as to the impression made upon him.

In spite of all, we proceeded with tolerable success—at least without charging a hedge, or leaping over a precipice—until we arrived at the top of the hill before entering Cardigan. The sight of his native town and fellow townsmen, suddenly made Dan self-assertive. The ember of self-respect, which had been smouldering in his breast on the journey, now suddenly burst into a flame, and he repudiated my assistance and interference. After some deliberation, and with considerable misgiving as to what might happen, all the passengers decided to vacate the coach, and I the box seat, leaving Dan and Joss in possession of the vehicle and the luggage—Joss, however, assuring us that everything was "as safe as a nail." On they went with accelerating speed down the hill, and disappeared among the houses ; but on arriving at the Black Lion we learnt that when the horses suddenly stopped in front of the Inn, Dan, who had not made a mental provision for the stoppage, turned a somersault, and landed, as only Dan could, on his knees on the backs of the horses—a climax which the onlookers greatly appreciated, and which appropriately ended a historic drive to Cardigan.

It was asserted that this was the only time that Dan had ever been seen publicly on his knees. Indeed, his family does not appear to have excelled in this direction,

His brother John—called " John Cwrt Bach " because he enjoyed a " plurality of livings " as " bailiff " and " interpreter " at the County Court—was an instance of this. He, comparatively late in life, turned over a new leaf, and became a member of the Church at Bethania. He was evidently sincere, and did his utmost to adapt himself to the new surroundings; but old associations, and their familiar phraseology, clung to him as tenaciously as the old man of the sea did to Sinbad the Sailor. When asked by an inquisitive friend whether, having joined the Church, he had begun to preach, John replied, " Not *yet.*" Being further pressed as to whether he had given an address, he again answered, " Not *yet.*" But his friend was relentless, and asked whether he had even pitched the tunes. John somewhat impatiently replied, " Not *yet,* I tell you." But his friend (not to be denied in his determination to humble John's conceit) asked again, in assumed surprise, whether he had not so much as taken part in the prayer meeting, John, with a keen consciousness of his short-coming, and at the same time with a remnant still left of the self-esteem which had been somewhat liberally bestowed upon Dan and himself by nature, replied in a whisper, and in confidential tones, " No, I never could do very much on my knees! But," he added, in a self-assertive and confident tone, as he straightened himself to his full height, " *I'm a d——l of a man for a committee!* " This was an involuntary reversion to type by John, in regard to language; but it supplied the compensating fact which, he sincerely felt, atoned materially for his weakness devotionally, which he had reluctantly to admit! Dan had the same infirmity.

When, a few years after that journey, the railway was opened from Crymmych Arms to Cardigan, the coach was discontinued, and the services of Dan and Joss were dispensed with. They immediately formed a partnership,

and obtained a vehicle (which would not admit of classification under the recognized types of modern vehicles), to run from the station to different parts of the town. The history of this conveyance before Dan and Joss obtained it, was lost in antiquity; but the tradition was that it had once, before the memory of man, been a hearse. In appearance it was a compromise between a bus, a "black Maria," and a "hearse," with a decided bias in favour of the hearse. Hence their unappreciative fellow-townsmen called it by that uninspiring name, and thus helped to doom the spirited enterprise to failure. Thus Dan and Joss had to seek fresh fields, and pastures new. With the change of calling, and exemption from the temptations of his former life, Joss became a changed man, and lived an industrious and sober life to the close, and when he passed away, his loss was mourned by all who knew him, as the loss of a genial, unselfish, and obliging fellow. Dan, for some years before his death, became a billposter, and thus passed away from the scenes of his exploits in his earlier days, and another generation arose that only knew Dan as a man who at one time could handle the ribbons as few could, and who, though fond of his bottle and his diversions, wronged no man wilfully, and left in no mind the recollection of a selfish or mean act.

II. A JOURNEY DURING THE TITHE WAR: FROM LLANDYSSUL TO CARDIGAN, BY COACH.

When the railway from Crymmych (the terminus of the line from Whitland, to which I have already referred) to Cardigan was opened, and thus when the coach which had run between these two places was given up, I lost all interest in that route. I had, moreover, meanwhile taken my family during two or three summers to Llechryd for the sake of the fishing I got there in the Teify, and because it was a convenient centre for meeting

my friends; the Revs. Thomas Phillips, Verwig, Benjamin Thomas ("Myfyr Emlyn"), Narberth, E. T. Jones, St. Dogmaels, and G. Hughes, Cardigan. I, therefore, when I had occasion to visit Cardigan next, went to Llandyssul by train, and thence by coach *via* Newcastle Emlyn and Llechryd. I then had, and, indeed, still have, a great liking for the old-fashioned coach, in spite of all its inconveniences and discomforts. There is a wonderful charm in the fact, that it was thus that our fathers for many generations travelled, which appeals to one—for whatever our politics may be, there is a strong conservative strain in most of us by nature. I confess that it depresses me—progressive as I am—to see old customs and usages passing away, and thus leave us steadily with fewer ties of affinity to unite us with our forefathers. There is something uncongenial, after all, in the fact that, in this respect, we have to "forget the things which are behind," in "reaching forth to the things that are before."

But there is a sense in which we never can "forget the things that are behind." This applies even to coaches. We have, indeed, once for ever, left the old coaches behind, but for the life of me I can never forget Dan and Joss and the old Crymmych coach, and others like them; nor yet the exhilarating and adventurous journeys I enjoyed in former days, although we were at times so shaken and bumped against each other, as that, at the end of the journey, we had to take a few minutes to enable us to be quite sure which was which, and to feel that we had our feet under us, on *terra firma*, once more. I could not forget those escapades if I would; and I would not if I could.

They, moreover, sometimes connect us with historic movements in the life of our nation which have left indelible marks upon our own. This was the case with one of my coach journeys from Llandyssul to Cardigan, when the Crymmych coach had ceased to run. At the

time of the " Tithe War " this part of the country—from Llandyssul to Cardigan—containing Penbryn, Aberporth, Traethsaith, and especially the neighbourhood of Esgair Eithin, was full of stir and conflict. On this occasion I chanced to sit on the box of the coach from Llandyssul to Cardigan with the Tithe Bailiff—a quiet and meek-looking man of gentle speech, but having thin, firmly pressed, resolute lips, denoting exceptional fitness for the unpleasant task he had undertaken. On that journey we were both the objects of keen interest, and close scrutiny, to the inhabitants along the way. Everyone knew the bailiff, whereas very few knew me. I, therefore, was thought to be the solicitor, who instructed the bailiff how to perform his task at times of exceptional difficulty and trouble, which recurred with disconcerting frequency.

The few who knew me were surprised that I appeared to be on such friendly terms with the bailiff, who sat at my side. During the first half of the journey, the surprise was all the greater because the Vicar of Penbryn sat on the box seat on the other side of the driver, which enabled us to speak freely together behind the driver's back: for although he sat between us, he did not seriously interrupt our conversation. What made this all the more surprising was that, a few days before, the bailiff had, on behalf of the Penbryn incumbent, distrained one noted black sow (and, if I remember correctly, a litter of exceptionally promising pigs). The sow had been profusely decorated before the distraint, and in anticipation of it, with ribbons and variegated chaplets, and had been taken about by the owner and a host of admirers, who formed an imposing procession, and sang, in mimicry of over-powering grief, the well-known song, " Y Mochyn Du," ("The Black Pig"), and other droll and humorous songs, supposed to have some bearing upon the event. That distraint was the subject of conversation between the clergyman and myself, and we had much innocent

amusement mutually in banter and repartees. I, for instance, congratulated him on the fact that he did not live under the Old Dispensation; for in that case, the sow and litter would have been unclean, and could not have been distrained for tithe. He immediately reminded me that the great sheet that was shown Peter, and which contained " all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth," etc., had put an end to the ancient prohibition. I, in return, thanked him for that illuminating exposition, for it gave a satisfactory exposition of what had puzzled me, *viz.*—according to a rumour, which I found subsequently was apocryphal—why the bailiff had also chosen to distrain the ass of " Dai 'r Crydd " (Dai, the shoemaker) for tithe.

Thus the talk proceeded merrily, while many who knew us wondered how the Vicar of Penbryn and myself could be on such friendly terms, and more than all how the bailiff could on the other side press toward me so cordially in endeavouring to catch the conversation —and all in the midst of " The Tithe War ! " After the Vicar of Penbryn had left us at a cross-road, the bailiff and myself engaged freely in conversation. He, before his appointment to the position he then held, had been a tailor, and all the anti-tithers who accosted him seem to have been thoroughly conversant with that fact. They, indeed, often seem to have given rein to their imagination when they referred to the persons who had been wrongly measured by him, and, as a result, were tormented with misfits. They related, with evident relish, how " Long Jimmy " had to sell his trousers to " Wil y Gwaddotwr " (" Will the molecatcher "), because the tailor had made them too short to cover Jimmy's knees ; and how " Slim Tom " had to make breeches of a pair which the tailor had made for trousers. Then they asked him with mock seriousness what had happened to the sleeve-board and goose, needle and thimble—and whether there would be

a chance of buying them as extras at the next tithe sale. The bailiff received all this with exemplary patience, and amazing good temper.

But, at last, we reached Cenarth Bridge, where we waited outside an inn for a few minutes. In an instant a shoemaker came out wearing his leather apron, and all the village gathered together as he viciously stung the tailor-bailiff with his sharp, darting tongue. His first greeting fairly took one's breath away as he shouted " Dyma fe, wirione, fechgyn—gwas y d——l a *jackal* y *ffeiradon*" (" Here he is, boys, really—the devil's servant, and the jackal of the parsons "). This unexpected cataclysm of uncomplimentary and somewhat unrefined and blasphemous epithets, hurled mercilessly at the bailiff, took him momentarily off his guard. He lost the equanimity which he generally managed to maintain, and was visibly upheaving with anger, which he vainly tried to suppress; and it looked as if a pitched battle between needle and bradawl was imminent. The instant and timely crack of the whip by the driver, however, saved the situation. The battle was averted, and once more we proceeded at a gallop on our journey.

A significant silence was maintained for some time. All felt a large measure of sympathy with the bailiff, who was evidently perturbed, and looked very pale. At length, conversation was gradually resumed by way of comment about the beautiful scenery, and the majestic Teify, meandering through the valley on its way to the sea. By and by, as we were approaching Llechryd the bailiff alighted, and we proceeded through Llechryd and ascended the hill without any incident of note.

As we approached Cardigan, we passed Llangoedmor Church, and residence of Archdeacon North, a veritable John at Ephesus, who recoiled, with the sensitiveness of a gentle and highly-refined nature, from all the turmoil and bitterness of the Tithe War that raged all around

him. He strove to live peaceably with all men, and succeeded even in those turbulent times to a very exceptional degree. From a keen sense of duty he, throughout his long term of ministry in that purely Welsh parish, struggled hard to master the Welsh language, but with only moderate success, and, in spite—or rather as the result—of his great culture, was able to make but little headway in the little isolated church where he officiated.

There is a tradition that, at the close of forty years of conscientious service, the genial Archdeacon preached a sermon on a text in Peter's discourse on the Day of Pentecost, and began his sermon in words which, when repeated, have frequently since called forth a smile; but which, judging from my knowledge of the fine sensitive nature of that perfect Christian gentleman, must have been very pathetic, when first uttered in imperfect Welsh to his sparse congregation:—"Pedr dydd Pentecost pregethu un pregeth a tair mil wedi eu converto: fi wedi pregethu yma mwy na tair mil pregeth, a dim un wedi ei gonverto." ("Peter preached one sermon on the day of Pentecost and 3,000 were converted. I have preached here more than 3,000 sermons and not one converted.") Whatever may be said of the literal accuracy of this tradition, there is no doubt that it was substantially true. The appointment of that refined and scholarly Christian gentleman in this obscure spot was a case of sheer misplacement. Archdeacon North, with his fine gifts, his rare culture, and choice spirit, should have been a dean; but he lived and died in a sphere where a far smaller man would have done much better. As I, on this occasion, passed the old spot where I had more than once visited him, I perforce took off my hat as a reverent tribute to that Christian gentleman, whose gentleness had made him great, even among a simple folk, who had

but a very inadequate estimate of his culture, or appreciation of his quiet, unobtrusive, and, it must be added, his misplaced ministry, but who, in a higher sphere of service, would have been one of the choicest princes of the Church.

Nearly thirty years have passed since I took that journey, and, happily, the turbulent condition of the whole district, through which that journey was taken, has died down and passed away, as a transient phase of a great struggle that is now over, leaving only a softened, and even amiable memory, of what, at this distance, appears as a humorous aspect of a stern and strenuous conflict. We have begun to " Know each other better " as " The clouds have rolled away."

III. A JOURNEY BY MOTOR FROM NEWCASTLE EMLYN.

Some years later the railway was extended from Llandyssul to Newcastle Emlyn. Thus the distance to Cardigan to be covered by road was halved, and this was done by a road-motor instead of the old coach. When I next visited Cardigan, some twenty-five years after my first visit, I, therefore, booked for Newcastle Emlyn. One of my sons, then a lad, accompanied me on this occasion. There were two motors in waiting at the station, and one had been filled before I left the platform. In the other there were two vacant seats near the driver which were promptly taken by my young son and myself. There appeared to be very few things in common between the motor and the old coach that used to ply on that road, or, indeed, the one running from Crymmych, to which I have already referred. Each vehicle had its own distinctive characteristics. For instance, the absence of the pungent fragrance, which enveloped Joss on the Crymmych road, was amply compensated for by the smell of petrol which now filled the air; and the periodical grunt of the motor horn came, to an

imaginative mind, like a distant echo of the recurrent snores, with which Joss used to entertain the company in olden days, when he settled in his corner, and fairly subsided into a deep sleep.

The passengers, on this occasion, were no sooner fairly seated than, with a snort of the motor-horn, a sudden pull at the levers, a thumping, quivering vibration suggestive of a volcanic rumble, a little extra exhalation of oil and petrol, and finally an onward plunge, we rushed along through the little town of Newcastle Emlyn, scattering dogs, cats, and chickens in all directions, and leaving in those days when the roads were not tarred, a cloud of dust behind, to smother the long-suffering inhabitants, and gasping pedestrians, a species of nuisance which even we in the motor car, mindful of past experiences on foot, felt ought to be made punishable by law in every civilized country. In turn, in meeting other motors, we received the retribution of our own misdeeds, as we were well-nigh blinded and stifled by the clouds of dust which they left behind.

On reaching Newcastle Emlyn, however, I had hastened to see my old friend the Rev. Evan Phillips, having first secured my seat in the motor, and arranged with the driver to stop at Mr. Phillips's door, as the motor passed. My visit to him was, therefore, very hurried—far too hurried—especially when I reflect that this was the last time but one that I called upon him before he was called hence.

I thought much at the time, and have done so often since, how greatly Newcastle Emlyn had been privileged by having three of the greatest Welsh preachers of the last generation among its ministers. Evan Phillips was the last of the three to remain. His ministry was as beautiful, as fruitful, and as fascinating as the Vale of Teivy, where he spent his life. I never had the privilege of knowing the Rev. John Williams, Ebenezer; but it is acknowledged by all who knew him, that he was a man

of rare gifts and one of the greatest pulpit orators of Wales. The Rev. Benjamin Thomas ("Myfyr Emlyn") I knew as a bosom friend for more than twenty years. He was, as I have already shown, one of the most richly gifted as an original thinker, and as a fresh, unconventional speaker and writer, that I have ever known. In his early days as a lad he fell in love with Nature in its most majestic and romantic form, as he played at the feet of Y Frenni Fawr and Moel Drigarn; but it was in the Vale of Teivy that he fell in love with it in its exceptional tenderness and beauty. He loved the mountain and the mountain brook in his boyhood at Eglwyswrw, in Pembrokeshire, but it was at Newcastle Emlyn that in the early years of his ministry he learnt to love the charming vale, and the wide meandering river of Teivy. Here he opened his heart to the gentlest confidences of Nature. The sound of that grand old river was in all his preaching and poetry, and the dark-eyed maiden ("Merch Lygatddu") on its banks was portrayed on his heart ever since the eventful moment, when (as he describes it) a lightning flash from the corner of her dark eye pierced his heart, and made it her own for ever.

These three giants, representing the three greatest denominations in Wales, flowered in this little town at the same time. I thought much of them as I sped, on this occasion, through the streets which their feet had so often trodden. Nor did I forget "Eilir," who was brought up here as a rustic youth, under the sheltering oversight of the Rev. John Williams and Benjamin Thomas ("Myfyr Emlyn"), and with whom I had many a sweet converse, many years later, when he was on his death-bed in his peaceful home in Cardiff, especially in recalling incidents connected with Mr. Williams, his early patron, and "Myfyr Emlyn," his master's brilliant companion and friend. I can see "Eilir"'s eyes flash with amusement and delight, even amid the thickening mist of the Valley, as he recalled the journeys

which, as a youth, he had with those two seers in the years that had gone. There never was a warmer-hearted Welshman, nor a more ardent admirer of talent or humour, than the talented and affectionate Eilir, who had his soul's awakening in this quaint town of Newcastle Emlyn, and under the tutelage of Williams and Thomas, as a son of the prophets !

This journey was, as we have intimated, in the early days of motors, when there was more smoke, and more noise and stench, connected with them than anything else. Yet there was plenty of speed while everything proceeded smoothly, that is, while the driver was on the motor, and not under it examining the mystery of the machinery, like an occasional student of prophecy amid the wheels of Ezekiel.

When the driver was not on his back under the motor to see, as "*Punch*" once said, not how it worked, but how it *didn't* work, we rushed along with a speed and noise that disconcerted the villagers and other peasants, who, until now, had been accustomed to the leisurely speed of the rumbling coach. The smiths, the shoemakers, and the tailors, hastened out of their workshops (their wives and children with them) to see that great sight. Down hill especially the motor rushed by like a hurricane. The dogs barked, the cats ran up to the topmost branches of the trees, pedestrians jumped hastily into the ditches by the roadside, and the fowls were scattered in all directions—except one here and there which got under the wheels, only to leave a feathery mark behind, to indicate the spot where the poor thing breathed its last. In the meadows the cattle lifted up their heads leisurely, the calves and the colts rushed to their dams, and the rabbits darted across the road in wild alarm. To crown all, a lonely ass, at last, looked vacantly over the hedge,

with its ears shot up straight, and his dreamy eyes revolving in their cavities, and, just as we passed him, sent forth a desperate hee-haw that sounded like the knell of doom!

Soon we plunged into one of the most romantic and enchanting sceneries in Wales. I was accompanied, as it chanced, by two ministers who also had secured seats in the open, in the front of the motor—one, Mr. Saunders, Baptist Minister, Pontycymmer, and the other, Mr. Oliver, Calvinistic Methodist Minister, Cwmaman. They were to preach respectively at Cilgerran and Llechryd, while I was to take anniversary services at Mount Zion Baptist Chapel, Cardigan. Thus there was quite an epidemic of strange ministers in those pulpits on the following day. Learning that I had just come from the neighbourhood of Ffynnon Henry, where there is a very old Baptist Church dating back to the days of persecution, Mr. Saunders told me a story connected with the recognition of the former pastor, Mr. Lewis. Mr. Saunders, then a very young minister and fellow student of the Pastor's, had been asked to preach. He had become hoarse from a cold on the journey, and as he had then, and still has, an exceptionally fine voice, he as a young minister became nervous, and, explaining that he was suffering from a cold, asked for the forbearance of the congregation. When he had finished, Mr. Humphreys, Felinfoel—one of the ablest ministers in Wales, but suffering from a natural huskiness of voice—got up, and said, "My young brother has explained to you that he became hoarse on the way here, and he asked your forbearance, which you have readily granted; I think I deserve still greater consideration, for I was born hoarse, and I have not yet got out of it."

We thus whiled away the time in a lively and congenial conversation as we advanced, sometimes rushing down declivities with a swerving movement which almost compared with little Dan's performance on the Crymmych

Road, at other times struggling with a steep ascent, the motor meanwhile throbbing and heaving like a monster of the paleozoic period.

We came to Cenarth, about half the distance, to that historic spot which, during the former journey to which I have referred, threatened to be the scene of gory combat between a knight of the awl and a knight of the needle. There now all was peace. One wondered whether the shoemaker still lived, and whether the tailor had resumed his peaceful calling. We had no time to inquire, but passing over the bridge we could see on each side of the river the wooded slopes, and the rugged rocks with their steep and abrupt escarpments, and, in between, rested the huge boulders, over which the grand old river Teivy in winter leaps and prances as it roars in cataracts and thunders in waterfalls, ere it plunges into the deep dark channel which it has hewn for itself by its persistent flow for millenniums. Now it had subsided into a tranquil stream in the depths of its ancient bed. On we sped, delighted with the scenery, especially along that part of the road where it describes a huge horseshoe, while the hills rise in majestic grandeur on the right, and the Teivy meanders along the plain, and plays hide and seek among the foliage on the left. Having passed through a majestic avenue of trees (which blended their branches as they arched over us like a ribbed and groined roof, crowning the nave of a huge natural cathedral, which in turn is flanked by aisles, in the form of cross roads deeply shaded) we arrived at peaceful Llechryd, nestling in the hollow, near its quaint old-world bridge, which here, spans the broad smooth-flowing river, the familiar home of the merry trout and the stately salmon.

We ascended the hill steadily out of Llechryd, until we reached the summit, from which we could see Cardigan lie sluggishly about two miles distant. As we began to take the descent we saw a man on foot leading a pony

and trap, and mercilessly belabouring the pony, apparently to force it to meet our motor car without shying. In doing so, however, he almost succeeded in upsetting the trap, which had been pushed by the pony to the hedge. Suddenly there was an outburst of Welsh indignation on the part of our motor boy, who exclaimed, " Beth mae e'n crasu y poni bach fel yna ? " (" Why does he baste the little pony like that ? ") Then, turning to an English lady in the motor car, he translated his protest in vigorous tones, " What crasu pony bach like that ?" This youthful Welsh outburst, which defied all the resources of the English language, as a vehicle of thought and feeling, was very typical, and I must add gratifying to me. It maintained the national character of the drive. In spite of motor, and all the modern improvements it represented, we were in the heart of Welsh Wales, where the Celtic tongue flourishes vigorously, and where the English language finds little root.

Soon we arrived at Cardigan, and on my arrival I asked the chauffeur where Mr. Hughes, the Baptist minister, lived. He did not know ; but called the hotel boy—the junior boots. At first, when questioned, he was somewhat puzzled, but when I said the " Rev. George Hughes," he suddenly recovered himself, and exclaimed, "I know, Sir! you mean the gentleman that keeps Mount Zion." I was startled ; but I soon realized that in hotel phraseology it was a graphic and accurate description of the pastor of the church that met at " Mount Zion " Chapel. Since then, indeed, quite recently, he has passed to his reward after " keeping Mount Zion " with tender solicitude and ceaseless care for over forty-five years. His gentleness made him great during his life, and still makes his memory a hallowing grace, now that he is no longer with us.

I had scarcely arrived at Cardigan when I was reminded by a friend of an incident which had occurred twenty

years before, when the Welsh Baptist Union visited the town. I had quite forgotten it, and I felt like blushing when I was reminded of it. On one afternoon during the week of the meetings, a steamer was chartered to take the delegates down the river to Gwbert. I was among them. When we had proceeded a short way it was announced that the clergyman of the parish and his school children were coming up the river in another steamer, and were about to meet us. It was at a time when political feeling ran very high, Gladstone being the great personality around whom the conflict gathered, and there was an idle whisper that this was a counter demonstration to the Baptist Union by the clergyman in question. Out of sheer mischief—I was young then!—I instantly got up on the paddle box, and, waving my handkerchief vigorously as they passed us, I shouted, "Three cheers for Gladstone." The children, *ready for any shout*, took up the cheer, round after round, with thundering effect. What the clergyman who was on board said to those children afterwards, it is not in my province to report, but he subsequently, I understand, often laughed good-naturedly at the incident, and threatened he would pay me out if he had a chance. Alas! amid the numerous removals one had to mourn over, after many years absence, was his! He is "called up higher"; and who shall say that Gladstone and he have not ere now met, amid "the solemn troops and sweet societies, in the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love," where all the party strifes are for ever silenced, amid the peaceful serenities of that Heavenly State!

CHAPTER XV.

MY RETURN TO WALES.

THE BATTLE OF DISESTABLISHMENT; MY GROWING ACQUAINTANCE WITH, AND REVIVED MEMORIES OF, RELIGIOUS LEADERS.

AT the close of twenty years I closed, in Brighton, perhaps the happiest ministry of my life. I had purposed returning to Wales at the close of twenty-one years; but at the completion of the twentieth year, heavy losses, and consequent great mental stress and strain, led me to place my resignation in the hands of my people, whose sympathy, and large-hearted generosity, while they reluctantly accepted it, are among the most grateful memories of my life.

On my return to Wales, I found that the question of Disestablishment had reached an acute stage. In my early days I had been brought up in the atmosphere of that great contention; and, indeed, during the greater portion of my ministry, I regret to say that, owing to the strained relationship between the Established Church and Nonconformists, in the days when the question of Disestablishment was to the front (which practically covered the whole period of my ministry from 1872 to 1914, when the Episcopal Church in Wales was disestablished), and owing to my sojourn in England for thirty years (1877 to 1907) I could not claim personal and intimate acquaintance with any Welsh clergyman, except Dean Howell, of St. David's. My frequent visits to Wales, during my pastorates in England, enabled me to keep in touch with the leaders of Welsh Nonconformity, and, in a lesser degree, with Dean Howell. We frequently occupied the same platform as temperance advocates, and

formed a friendship that remained firm to the end of Dean Howell's life. He was an eloquent evangelical preacher, and a very effective platform speaker. His voice, fine personality, and evident sincerity, added great force to his arguments and appeals; and the broad view he took of the various Churches, and the great cordiality with which he greeted all evangelical teachers—even a young man like myself—endeared him to all. Personally I never felt inclined to discuss disestablishment with him. The atmosphere around him admitted of no contention. He admitted the faults of his Church, but with all its faults he loved it still, and one had no heart to disturb that love.

My return to Wales in 1907, as already stated, coincided with the time when the battle for the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church had reached its climax. Before I realized it, I was, by the force of circumstances, thrust into the whirl of it. I journeyed throughout South Wales, at the request of Free Churches, to lecture upon the subject, and to invite discussion at the close. The challenge was generally accepted by Church adherents, and many a strenuous conflict was witnessed at the close between local Church defenders and myself.

At length a challenge to a debate with a representative of the Church was issued, and I readily accepted it, and details were speedily arranged.

The debate on "The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church in Wales," held in Carmarthen between the Rev. Griffith Thomas and myself demands, perhaps, a brief notice, as it was an event of importance in our lives, and indeed of some importance in the story of the campaign which, three years later, ended in the passing of the Disestablishment Bill, and the placing of the Act upon the Statute Book of this country; although the outbreak of the Great War prevented the Act coming into operation for years.

The Rev. Griffith Thomas was at that time the " Lecturer to the Central Church Committee for Defence and Instruction in the Dioceses of Llandaff and St. Davids." In the heated discussions which then took place in the daily papers, Mr. Thomas and I clashed. Ultimately he challenged me to a debate, and I accepted the challenge. The arrangements for the debate necessarily took some time. Two committees, each consisting of an equal number of representatives of both sides, were appointed. The Penarth Committee consisted of the Revs. E. T. Davies, M.A., Jonathan Evans, Albert Law, A.T.S., and Mr. J. B. Maddocks. It devolved upon that committee to make all general arrangements. The Carmarthen Committee consisted of the Ven. Archdeacon Evans, M.A., the Revs. Canon G. Brown, B.A., Principal A. W. Parry, B.Sc., E. Ungoed Thomas, W. D. Rowlands, and Alderman H. E. Blagdon Richards, J.P., John Lewis, J.P., and Walter Lloyd (ex-Mayor of Carmarthen). It devolved upon this committee to make all local arrangements. The Secretaries of the Penarth Committee were the Revs. E. T. Davies, M.A., and Jonathan Evans; while the Secretaries of the Carmarthen Committee were Mr. David King and Mr. F. G. Humphreys.

As the result of the joint work of these Committees the following arrangements were made :—

1. Place of Meeting—The Assembly Rooms, Carmarthen.
2. Admission by ticket, price 6d. each. 650 to be printed for each night; each side to have 325.
3. Each side to have its shorthand writer.
4. The surplus money, above expenses, to be given to the Carmarthenshire Infirmary.
5. Date—the evenings of 28th and 29th March, 1911, commencing at 7 o'clock.

6. Each side to choose a chairman for one night. The chairmen chosen were R. Watkins, Esq., J.P., of Swansea, for the first night, and Frank Morgan, Esq., Keble College, Oxford, for the second night.
7. Lots were drawn to decide which of the two debaters was to open the debate the first night ; it being understood that the other would begin the second night. The lot fell upon myself. The debaters each night were allowed alternately, twenty-five minutes to begin with, then twenty, fifteen, ten, and five minutes.
8. There was to be no show of hands ; but the debate was to be published verbatim, as agreed upon by the two reporters, and accepted by the two debaters.

Never was a debate more carefully and satisfactorily arranged by committees, or presided over with greater efficiency and fairness by chairmen, than this debate. The united committees, representing both sides, worked with the greatest amity, even in the discussion of crucial points, and the chairmen were the embodiment of honour and fairness in the conduct of the debate both nights.

The report of the debate, as approved by the two reporters and the two debaters, was duly published, and it speaks for itself, so that no comment is called for here. Five thousand copies were published at 4d. each, consisting of seventy-four pages, bound in cardinal red, stiff paper covers, containing a preface jointly signed by the Rev. Griffith Thomas and myself, which read as follows :—

PREFACE.

In issuing the following Report of our Debate, which has been carefully revised, and approved of, by us, we desire jointly to express our gratitude to

the gentlemen who represented us on committees at Penarth and Carmarthen, and made such excellent arrangements as to secure a successful issue, free from all misunderstanding and unpleasantness.

We are also profoundly grateful to the two gentlemen who, as chairmen, presided with such wisdom and impartiality, and who, by their introductory speeches, infused such a friendly and generous feeling into the audiences, as to make it comparatively easy for the debaters to conduct the argument with calmness and deliberation.

Altogether, we review the Debate with pleasant memories of excellent behaviour, in the main, on the part of crowded audiences, amid much physical discomfort, which might, under less happy conditions, have produced considerable irritation and impatience.

We now solicit the same fair and respectful attention to our printed argument, as was ungrudgingly given by the audiences to the Debate itself, and trust that all will result in a maximum of light and a minimum of heat, an increase of goodwill and a decrease of suspicion. Thus we may hope that out of the present discord there shall come forth future harmony, and out of momentary strife a lasting peace.

DAVID DAVIES.

GRIFFITH THOMAS.

8th May, 1911.

The debate, naturally, aroused intense popular excitement, although, in no instance that I know of, was there an unpleasant incident. The tickets, although providing for every inch of space in the Assembly Rooms, which were in reality densely packed, nevertheless were utterly inadequate for the demand made for admission, and many of those especially who had come from distant parts of

Wales paid high premiums, in having to purchase tickets, of those who formed the queue, at very excessive prices in order to secure admission. There were occasional interruptions, certainly, but none that delayed matters, or created bitterness or resentment.

The relationship between the Rev. Griffith Thomas and myself from that hour became very cordial. I believe we can both claim to have exhibited a generous, sportsmanlike spirit ; and that cordial relationship has existed to this day. As an instance of this cordiality I only need mention that when, a few months later, I was the recipient of the large gold medal of the National Eisteddfod Association, and the accompanying money prize (which I shared with my old friend, "Cadrawd"), at the Carmarthen National Eisteddfod, among the first to come to me on the platform, take me warmly by the hand and congratulate me in the presence of the assembled thousands, was the very man with whom I had been strenuously contending so recently in the Assembly Rooms of that very town! It was an object lesson, which could not fail to appeal to all who knew the circumstances. And, to-day, I am happy in knowing that the debate left no root of bitterness behind in the town, or indeed, anywhere, to my knowledge, in the country.

My return to Wales, also, brought me into closer and more intimate acquaintance with men whom I had only partly known, and inadequately estimated, in my periodical visits, during my absence in England. Among those was a striking character of whom I had often heard as a local celebrity, when I visited my native village. I refer to the Rev. David Richards, formerly the pastor of the Baptist Church, Cwmduad (one of the many daughter churches of Ffynnon Henry), who is still living, He is one of many able men in Wales who, during the last generation, had a keen love for, and appreciation of, the

peacefulness and quietude of rural life, and who were satisfied with working steadily in obscure spheres, with only such a variation as a periodical visit to larger centres, for anniversary services and big meetings, would supply. Mr. Richards has always been noted for his vigorous common sense, his manly bearing, and his terse and arresting speech. Always interesting and stimulating as a preacher, he has been still more so as a platform speaker. He also still retains his old skill, and shows no sign of mental decadence. Slower, no doubt, in movement, he is, nevertheless, as alert and observant as ever. In one respect, however, he has of late years been seriously handicapped. He hears but a little, being exceedingly deaf, but this has not silenced or depressed him. Still he talks much, and his talk is very racy and witty. He was a fellow student of the late Rev. J. Gomer Lewis, of Swansea, and there was no one who could subject " Gomer " to such a raking fire of good-humoured banter, and all without offence, as Mr. Richards.

When " Gomer " was in the height of his popularity as preacher and lecturer, he visited Cwmduad, preached in the afternoon, and lectured at night on " The World's Fair "—the great American Fair, which bore that name, and which " Gomer " had visited. Mr. Richards was in the chair, and in his introductory remarks made frequent references to his old friend. It should be noted, in passing, that " Gomer," like most old bachelors, was exceedingly sensitive about his personal appearance, and was also very reticent about his age, and it was an open secret that he had recourse to a well-known hair-restorer to retain the colour of his hair, moustache, and whiskers, and long flowing beard. Sometime before visiting Cwmduad, despairing of keeping his beard in colour, he had got it shaved off, and had only retained his moustache—a familiar resort, as we know, in such an emergency. It should also be stated that some years before this, when

he settled at Swansea, he had adopted the *nom-de-plume* of the great Joseph Harris " Gomer," who had, long before, with such distinction ministered in that town.

Mr. Gomer Lewis and Mr. Richards had been life-long friends, hence Mr. Richards began his address by saying : " We were born almost in the same neighbourhood, only he was the older of the two ! We were also in the college together. We then knew him as ' John Lewis,' and so he remained known for years. When he settled at Swansea he added the name of ' Gomer.' He has grown prodigiously (" yn aruthrol ") since he has become J. Gomer Lewis. He is, undoubtedly, in the front rank of preachers and lecturers. In one respect, however, I can claim to have surpassed him. I have succeeded in finding a wife. He has utterly failed, although he has been in the World's Fair ! That is very strange. Even the boys from this neighbourhood go to Carmarthen to Brown's Fair, and each of them brings back a colossal specimen (' clatshen fawr ') of a sweetheart ; but my friend, unlike them, has been all the way to the World's Fair, and has had to come back alone, and has been all alone ever since. He is not so plain looking, either ! Indeed, he wore very imposing looking whiskers and beard for many years ; and even now he maintains a handsome moustache ; and it is very wonderful how it keeps its colour so well, for a man of his age ! "

Those who knew " Gomer " could not fail to appreciate these playful and apt, but scathing, references. And to " Gomer's " infinite credit—sensitive as he was about his good looks and his age—be it said, no one laughed more heartily than he in the midst of this merciless hurricane of banter.

Mr. Richards is excessively nervous of high-spirited horses. On one occasion he was driven in a trap behind a high-stepping, prancing horse, which, moreover, had been liberally fed on oats, and had done but little work for some time. It was very restive and mischievous, and

gave indications of a lawless defiance of bit and bridle, and threatened even to rear at times. It was then that Mr. Richards began to show great uneasiness ; but he was at once assured that the driver was exceptionally experienced. This quieted Mr. Richards until the next sudden stop, and threat to rear. Again the same assurance was given, which was rather sceptically received by Mr. Richards. In a few minutes more, the horse once more began to rear and snort. Then Mr. Richards became very excited, when for the third time he was assured that they had the best driver in the country, and, as a further assurance, it was added that they had a prophet in the trap. Mr. Richards, who had, as he thought, heard more than enough of the first assurance, and feeling ruffled by the second assurance as being inconclusive, exclaimed impatiently, " What's the use of having a good driver, and even a prophet in the trap, if the devil is in the shafts ?"

Now that Mr. Richards has become very deaf, he asserts that his ears have changed their calling—that is, instead of receiving sounds they have of late years produced them. His deafness is naturally a serious drawback at public meetings, yet he maintains his popularity at such gatherings by his ready wit and humour. To call upon Mr. Richards, of Cwmduad, to speak is to awaken keen expectation in the audience. He does not hear anything said by the other speakers ; and yet there is never any danger of his repeating what has already been said. He always ploughs a furrow for himself, quite apart from anything done by the others.

At the ordination of the Rev. D. Pryse Williams at Ffynnon Henry, in 1897, as successor to the Rev. W. Lewis, there was a very large attendance. It should be stated that Mr. Williams is considerably more than six feet in height, whereas Mr. Lewis is nearly as tall. The speakers had uttered much of a complimentary character that is usual on such occasions, when Mr. Richards, Cwmduad,

was called. He at once said that he had no doubt many excellent things had been said about the former pastor, and that great hopes had been expressed for the new, and he would cordially endorse anything that may have been said in that direction. But, although he could not hear, he, too, had been thinking. He had recently been to Pontardulais, where he had seen some of the bulkiest and weightiest ministers he had ever set eyes on. And that night he had been looking at the former, and present, pastors of that church enviously. They were, like Saul, head and shoulders above their fellows. Now these two experiences had set him thinking. He had asked himself the question, " On what principle do churches choose ministers ? " and he had come to the conclusion that at Pontardulais they were chosen *by the ton*, and at Ffynnon Henry *by the yard!*

On one occasion, before he had become deaf, he was present at a competitive meeting, when the late Mr. W. T. Samuel was adjudicating at a singing association. Many choirs had done excellently, but Mr. Samuel, with his usual keen discernment as a musical critic, had gone into great detail in his approval and disapproval of each performance ; but at length he bestowed the highest approval on the choir that in his judgment had given the most satisfactory rendering. Mr. Richards, in proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Samuel, dwelt upon his keen discernment of the good and bad in music. " As for me," he added, " I was delighted with everything, just as I was when, as a boy, plums were given me—I ate them wholesale, stones and all ! "

He had a good deal of banter that he levelled against the sparsely inhabited district of Ffynnonhenry, with its large graveyard, as contrasted with the little lively village of Cwmduad, where he lived. He used to say : " Ffynnon Henry is a very dead district ; it suits dead

people excellently, and," he added, "dead people are far more numerous here than living people. Yes! it's a very dead place!"

On his retiring from the ministry, chiefly on account of his great deafness, he received a testimonial from his church in recognition of his great services as pastor. They had throughout the years paid him but a small salary, although in gifts of butter, cheese, milk, etc., they had been exceedingly kind and generous towards him. In responding, Mr. Richards expressed his sincere thanks to them for their liberal testimonial, adding that they had always shown him, as their pastor, great kindness in many ways, and on many occasions, although they had never given him a large salary; "but there," he added, evidently referring to his great deafness, and possibly to some other defects of which he was conscious, "I am like a maimed horse at the fair, you never can get a 'top price' for him, but are willing to receive as much as you do."

He has always been a quick and very accurate reader of character, and, when he has formed his opinion of anyone, has had a very effective way of expressing his opinion. Not many miles away a wealthy layman lived, who, in spite of many excellent qualities, had, according to Mr. Richards's estimate of him, a great failing in an overwhelming conceit and self-assertion. Mr. Richards one day had a chat with his pastor, and asked, "How is Mr. ——?" "Very well." "Is he helpful in the church?" "Very." "Does he attend the week-night services?" "Yes." "Does he attend the prayer meetings?" "Yes, he does." "Does he himself go on his knees?" "Yes." "That is well," concluded Mr. Richards with a sigh of relief.—"Then there is One whom even he acknowledges to be greater than himself!"

When Mr. Richards was a minister at St. Clears there were two or three boys, who used to repeat psalms and other portions of the Scriptures at the evening services,

instead of the usual reading before the sermon. Among them was one lad who subsequently succeeded in life, and, as he became more successful, became more pompous, and less devotional. By and by he bought a motor-car and, like many others, on acquiring it, began to drive about on Sunday. One Sunday afternoon he called upon Mr. Richards at Cwmduad. When he appeared at the door bedecked and bejewelled, Mr. Richards did not know him. The visitor reminded him of the boy who, many years before, used to repeat psalms during the devotional part of the service, preceding the sermon, and then announced with a measure of pride, as he displayed his jewellery, that he was that lad. Mr. Richards noted his get-up, and, seeing the car in front of the gate, asked him whether that was his. He proudly replied that it was. On being asked where he was going, he answered, " Taking a run through the country." Mr. Richards, not hearing clearly, repeated the question, and the visitor replied that he was " Going for a pleasure drive." " Oh," said Mr. Richards, " you had better go back again to the psalms, my boy," and bade him adieu; and the man with the swelled head left disappointed and chagrined, but with a memory of a wholesome rebuke that would never be quite forgotten.

Mr. Richards is an exception among those of whom I have written these reminiscences, as he is still living; but he is far advanced in life, being considerably more than eighty years old, and he represents, as already intimated, a class of men who, with great gifts and striking characteristics, have, during the last fifty years, been satisfied with labouring in obscure spheres, far from the clamour and ambition of the world. In those lowly spheres, however, they have touched men and women in the formative period of life, and thus have, in many instances, largely unknown to themselves, prepared them for efficient service in our larger centres of industry, into

which they have removed in after years. It is to such men that, under God, the large churches in our towns and cities owe a debt, of which they are scarcely conscious, and which they certainly can never repay. These are the men whom we cannot ignore, or even under-estimate, socially, politically, or religiously, except at the cost of overlooking some of the most vital energies, which are at work at the very roots of our national tree.

The memory of another striking personality came back to me as I visited his former home, *viz.*, the Rev. Thomas Edwards, Cwmavon, who was one of the most striking preachers of the Calvinistic Methodist denomination in the later decades of the nineteenth century. I knew him first when he was an apprentice in my father's workshop, and when I was quite a child, at Rhydargaeau. He was the brother of the Rev. David Edwards, M.A., in whose school, at Cardiff, in later years, I was prepared for college, and both were the sons of Mr. Edward Edwards, landlord of the Blue Bell Inn, in my native village, who was also a bookbinder. Thomas, as an apprentice, was a clever and mischievous lad. The story of his mischievous adventures is a long and varied one. Yet, he never got into difficulties through his delinquencies. He cleverly evaded detection. The only instance, which at one time threated to be an exception, was when a daughter of a gentleman in the neighbourhood had got married, and the open carriage containing the bride and bridegroom was being driven through the village. Thomas was in the garden outside my father's workshop, in a position that was concealed from the turnpike road close by. He wore a pair of unlaced shoes as slippers at the time, and, as the passing of the carriage was a temptation which could not be resisted by him, he instantly, with a sudden kick, sent the shoe that was on his right foot hurtling through the air after the carriage. It chanced to fall on the bridegroom's top hat, making a concertina

of the beaver. The hat, however, mercifully saved the bridegroom's head (which was confessedly on the soft side) from serious injury. Thomas saw the mischief done, and instantly ran, *minus* one shoe, into the workshop. The carriage stopped, and a hue and cry was set up. Many of the villagers had seen something drop into the carriage; but no one knew whence it had come. But there was the tell-tale shoe. Who had the partner shoe? No one could tell, although one or two had a shrewd suspicion; and as the couple had to hurry on their journey, the inquiry had to be dropped. Thus, after some gratuitous threats and oaths on the part of the disconcerted bridegroom, he had to proceed, still wearing his battered head-gear, without solving the perplexing question; and Thomas once more breathed freely. A few years later he entered the Calvinistic Methodist ministry, and proved to be one of its most popular preachers. His style was terse, graphic, and homely; for instance, when preaching from the text, "The law of the Lord is perfect," he began his sermon by saying, "Every other law is imperfect. You can drive a carriage and pair through every Act of Parliament. The laws of Great Britain are full of gaps—*and in the gaps the lawyers live!*" That introductory sentence arrested every ear, and fixed every eye, in that congregation. It was, moreover, a sentence which could never be forgotten. Such were the terse utterances, here and there, throughout his sermons, which stuck like burrs to human memories.

Among those early memories of Christian ministers, revived by my return to Wales, too, was that of a visit by the Rev. Daniel Jones, of Tongwynlais (and in earlier years of Cwmsarnddu, and of Liverpool), to Libanus, Treforest. It left a lasting impression upon me. I can see him now as vividly as I did over sixty years ago, as he spoke. I had never seen, nor, indeed, have I since, such an ideal picture of John at Ephesus in his mature years. His countenance exhibited a wonderful blend of gentleness and refinement.

His figure, even at his advanced age, was erect and elegant, and withal most graceful in its movements. His voice in its pure silvery tones, and rich cadences, was irresistible in its charm. His message, although not strikingly thoughtful, was, in spirit and tone, in perfect harmony with that wonderful vehicle that conveyed it—full of sweetness and tranquility. It was small wonder that he was known even in his old age as " the silver trumpet," and in his earlier and more vigorous years as the " golden trumpet." Crowning all was the snow-white hair that fell gracefully back upon his neck. His dress was in perfect harmony with his person—spotlessly clean and without a wrinkle or fold. He was a perfect Christian gentleman, whose gentleness had made him uniquely great. From the first hour I saw him until now I have never been able to think of John, the beloved disciple, without picturing Daniel Jones, of Tongwynlais, as I saw him long ago.

My friend, the Rev. Benjamin Thomas (" Myfyr Emlyn "), used to repeat a characteristic story of him. In one of his pastorates he met with a most disagreeable man, whom even Daniel Jones could not please. By degrees he became a bitter enemy of that gentle minister. This continued long. At length the man became very ill, and got worse and worse, until, at last, he could not take any nourishment, except the juice of an orange, of which he was very fond. Daniel Jones heard of this, and one day called at the house, and asked if he might see him. He was gladly admitted. After speaking a few words gently to the sick man, he took an orange out of his pocket, and said to him that he had heard that an orange refreshed him : then, peeling one, he divided it into sections, and gently offered them one by one, to the sufferer. When he left, the sick man testified that no one had done him as much good as Daniel Jones, and that in future he hoped he would often call. The man was at length restored to health,

and, until the close of Daniel Jones's pastorate, there was no one who dared utter a disparaging word about the minister in the hearing of that man. When questioned years after about this, Daniel Jones admitted the truth of the story, and when further asked why he had taken an orange to his enemy, he replied, " Ah well, there is nothing better to soften enmity, or sweeten bitterness, than an orange."

Among my memories as a lad also was one of the noted Baptist minister, *viz.*, blind Dr. Daniel Davies, of Swansea. It was at Salem, Llantwit Fardre, that I saw him first, as he stood in the pulpit—a stalwart and commanding figure,—reading (or really repeating) the 49th chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah. He read with magnificent emphasis, and rich, varying cadence, and never hesitated for a moment. That chapter, so rich in its variety and wide in its sweep, was indelibly inscribed upon the blind preacher's heart and mind. He opened to me as a lad its great wealth of thought, emotion, and diction—so much so that it has never ceased to be to me one of my most deeply cherished of all the Scriptures. The sermon left upon me but a moderate impression, as compared with that chapter which the blind man made to scintillate with light, and throb with earnest appeal and glowing prediction. Five years later, when a young student in my first year at Bristol Baptist College, I was startled to see the same man cross North Street, in one of its busiest parts, from one side to the other, without any guide save his walking-stick, which he tapped against the ground as he shot across, evidently aware that no vehicle was near. They were the only two occasions upon which I ever saw that great man ; in each of which, however, he disclosed varied qualities, which were called into play according to the circumstances in which he was placed, but all revealing a unique personality, to whom natural defects, and difficult circumstances, were but an opportunity

for the disclosure of a strength and versatility for which he was distinguished.

Another memory revived was that of the Rev. Cornelius Griffiths, who had passed away just before my return to Wales, and whose life was then reviewed in the denominational press. Although I had followed with interest, while in England, the story of his eminently successful ministry at Cinderford, and subsequently in Bristol, it was not until I visited Pontypridd, after my return, that an incident flashed upon my memory in all its vividness, which I had allowed to remain in oblivion for over forty years. It was in 1864–5, when at the Rev. Henry Oliver's preparatory school for college, that I heard Mr. Griffiths (then the pastor of Zion Baptist Church, Merthyr) preach in Welsh for the only time in my life. As a youth of fifteen or sixteen years, I had a passion for preaching, and an eager desire to excel in that divine art. Mr. Griffiths' unique appearance at once struck me—tall, erect, of dignified bearing, and possessing a voice of great wealth and compass. His reading of the Bible lesson was in itself an inspiration. As he read, the sacred Scriptures became illumined by his accurate emphasis, his clear enunciation, and his varied cadences of voice, according to the nature of the passage read. He, moreover, had a charming, picturesque style, which found wonderful scope in retailing Scripture narrative, and in unfolding the poetic utterances of inspired seers and prophets. There were two others, of dignified bearing, fine physique, and possessing a voice that was rich in its cadences and inflexions, which made their message a charm, namely the Revs. J. P. Williams, of Blaenywaun, and later, Robert Lloyd, of Castletown. But space forbids my enlarging in this direction. They were not quaint, humorous, or brilliant, like some of those to whom I have referred. They were, however, princely preachers, who maintained as a priceless trust the sacredness of their calling, and the divine authority of their message;

and thus helped to hold an even balance between brilliance and dash and solidity and sincerity, in the Baptist pulpit of their day. It goes without saying that there were others of the same type in other denominations, whose ministry had a wholesome effect in the same direction.

On my return, too, and my consequent visits to the scenes of my boyhood at Treforest, I was reminded by my friend, the Rev. C. Tawelfryn Thomas, the present minister of Groeswen, of some interesting stories of his predecessors. One story about Mr. Hughes, the predecessor of "Caledfryn" there, illustrates the homely customs of three generations ago, and, indeed, still later, in country districts, with regard to the free use of beer as a beverage, and the visits to country inns, by ministers and others, in quest of a drink, as being universally considered to be perfectly permissible, and, indeed, in complete accordance with public custom. Mr. Hughes, one very hot summer's day, when astride his little mare, after preaching at the Ton, stopped opposite the Black Cock, near Caerphilly Mountain, and called the landlady, one of his members, saying, "Mary, bring me a glass of *Home Brewed*." "Indeed, Mr. Hughes," replied Mary, "I am very sorry to say that it is quite exhausted!" "No wonder, Mary," responded Mr. Hughes, "because it was grievously weak the last time I called here."

Quite of another kind is one he related of a member of Groeswen, in the time of the Rev. William Edwards, the builder of the noted one-span bridge at Pontypridd. It was a wintry Sunday morning, and the spotless snow lay thickly upon the ground. In every direction the world was brilliantly white. When Mr. Edwards arrived in the lobby of the chapel, he found one of his old members in a reverie, as he looked out on the charming scenery, remarking—"Ah, Mr. Edwards, God must have a wonderfully clean place up yonder, to keep such things as this there."

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Among the changes which had taken place during my absence in England, nothing was more striking than the cordial relationship which had grown up among the different denominations of Free Churches. The differences of belief and policy still existed, but the old acerbities had largely died away, and the references made to the differences were playful—almost too playful—and good-natured. Indeed, before my return to Wales, I recollect meeting the Rev. D. Lloyd Jones, of Llandinam, on Moat Lane Platform. He had, a day or two before, been at the recognition services of a Baptist minister in the neighbourhood (was it Caersws ?), and he at once began to tell me the story with great zest. He said that there were at the meeting ministers, representing different denominations, to welcome the new minister. The Congregational minister, in a happy speech, said that he was very pleased to be present, as the Baptist minister and himself served the same Master, and were making for the same country, with the only difference that the Baptists insisted upon going through the river, while the Congregationalists went over the bridge. Mr. Jones told me that he followed, and referred to the figure used by the previous speaker as being a happy one—the only difference being, that in going to the same country the Baptists went right through the river, while the other denominations were satisfied with going over the bridge. Then the Baptist minister responded, and thanked his brethren heartily for their welcome. He agreed with them that they were engaged in the same service, and were making for the same country, the only difference being that the Baptists went through the river and others over the bridge : the only thing he would like to remind them of was, that *God made the river, but man made the bridge!* Mr. Jones added that he enjoyed repeating the story to

me infinitely more than he did sitting on the platform just then, when he would have welcomed a trap door through which to drop.

I replied that no doubt the Baptist in that case had the best of it, reminding him of another happy repartee by the Rev. Dr. Cernyw Williams. He was present at a meeting where the chairman, in calling him, said that he had great pleasure in asking Dr. Cernyw Williams to speak. It was a great pity that they were not quite united: it was only the river that divided them. Dr. Cernyw Williams, in thanking the chairman for his kind reference to him, said, "It certainly is a pity that we are not united, as it is only the river that divides us. The fault, however, is not mine," added Dr. Williams, "for I am quite ready at any moment to meet you half way!"

CHAPTER XVI.

MY PASTORATE AT PENARTH.

TABERNACLE CHURCH: SOME QUAINT CHARACTERS: TYPICAL WELSHMAN IN A BROTHER MINISTER, THE REV. JONATHAN EVANS.

I CANNOT close my reminiscences without a special reference to my settlement, as the pastor of the church at the Tabernacle, Penarth, where at the time of writing (1925), I have been minister for more than sixteen years.

The Church at the Tabernacle has had a chequered, but, on the whole, a successful history. Its origin was closely associated with the abnormal growth of Penarth when the Docks were constructed. During the dock excavations a great change came over that small village, which hitherto had no other name than the discreditable one, which it had in the reigns of the Tudors, in connection with piracy in the Bristol Channel, and in association with Cardiff. At length there came a genuine industrial movement that was soon destined to convert the village into a town of considerable importance. A sudden influx of navvies, with their foremen and gangers, necessitated the erection of dwellings along the slope and summit of the ridge, which gives Penarth its name.[1] This growth continued with accelerating speed as the dock was approaching completion, and especially when the dock was completed, for although the navvies, for the greater part, left, their places, and many more, were taken up by coal tippers, trimmers, and jobbers of all grades, and thus the demand for dwellings became increasingly urgent. In an incredibly short time, streets of artisan houses, and small shops,

[1]Penarth is a contraction of " pen " (*head*) and " garth " (*ridge*), meaning the " head of the ridge."

sprang out of the earth, through the ceaseless activities of enterprising builders. It was under these conditions that the Baptist, and other denominations, sought to provide for the religious needs of the heterogeneous population, that had settled there in new and, in some cases, densely packed houses. The little company of Baptists met in succession at a carpenter's shop, and various dwellings. When at length the first Tabernacle was built, and soon after my settlement at Mount Stuart Square, Bute Docks, Cardiff, the Rev. Benjamin Thomas ("Myfyr Emlyn") settled as the first pastor of the Tabernacle Church.

I elsewhere make full and appreciative references to that unique personality. His stay at Penarth was brief. His own unconventional defiance of a demand for a pastorate of the limpet kind, where the minister would be always found at his post, and consequently his flying visits to all parts of the principality, where his services were in great demand, soon wore out the patience of a small section of that little conglomerate congregation, headed by one or two of small gifts, but of considerable self-importance. Thus, in a little over two years, he removed to Narberth, where he remained pastor until the close of life. After him followed the Rev. William Parry, who remained at Penarth a little more than one year. Then came the Rev. W. G. Davies, who exercised a gracious and faithful ministry at the Tabernacle for more than twenty-six years.

When I left Brighton I decided to devote myself to literary work, and preach on Sundays in various pulpits, without again accepting the responsibilities of a pastorate. Very soon, however, I found how impossible that was. Itinerant preaching did not by any means take the place of a pastorate in my life. Besides, churches began to approach me, and foremost among them Crane Street, Pontypool. For many reasons I regretted having to

decline an invitation to that pastorate for an indefinite time, but agreed to accept it for six months, for a special purpose, as it was necessary for me in the interests of my family to reside near a great industrial, or commercial, centre. With this in view, my dear wife and I had already fixed upon Penarth, as having that advantage, and, moreover, as being one of the few places at which one could settle, after twenty years at Hove, Brighton, without a depressing sense of contrast. Soon after our settlement at Penarth, the Rev. W. G. Davies, the pastor of the Tabernacle, whom I had known and respected for many years, died suddenly, and thus brought to a close a long ministry, memorable for its great usefulness, and its gentle and unobtrusive qualities.

I had no sooner accepted the pastorate of Crane Street, Pontypool—about three months after Mr. Davies's death—than I was invited by the Church at the Tabernacle to accept its pastorate at the close of that period, until which time they were willing to wait for a reply.

I confess that, in addition to the fact that I had already settled at Penarth, and had been acquainted with all the preceding pastors of the Tabernacle, my intimate knowledge of it in the earliest days, when my friend "Myfyr Emlyn" was its pastor, made the thought of accepting the pastorate of the Tabernacle very agreeable to me. Even while I was in England I had kept up my knowledge of the Church, so far at least as to be familiar with some of its quaint characters: and it had many such, during its earliest years. Moreover, the memory of my frequent chats with my friend, "Myfyr Emlyn," during his brief stay at Penarth, made the thought of being a successor to him a pleasant one. But I also knew one great defect in the church. It had always lacked organization; but its enthusiasm in everything it undertook, and the great cordiality which characterised its fellowship, very largely made up for this defect. Besides,

although at that time it had existed as a Church only forty-five years, it had many traditions which made its history pleasant and interesting.

There were, for instance, the rough and tumble experiences of earlier days, when through force of circumstances, owing to the sudden and abnormal development of Penarth, men of small gifts, limited resources, and untrained minds were, in the absence of better equipped men, placed in positions of responsibility, as deacons of the Church and teachers in the Sunday School. I remember one, to whom "Myfyr Emlyn," in his conversations with me, used to refer often with a strange blend of annoyance, pity, and amusement. He was one of the original navvies who had remained at Penarth after the opening of the Docks, and who, by dint of industry and persistency, had worked himself into a position of foreman over a shift of workmen, but who had never been affected by any refining or uplifting thought; except, indeed, that from being a rough worldling he had become a Christian man of a rugged and rude type. He was undoubtedly vigorous and zealous, but utterly oblivious of his limitations, except that in his prayers he was never weary of confessing his sinfulness and ignorance, especially the latter. "Myfyr Emlyn" wished that he confessed the latter less frequent, but felt it more. The form of the confession in a public meeting was slightly disconcerting to "Myfyr" as pastor, who used to say to me, "He almost always begins his prayer with the words—'O Lord we be very ign'ant." "Of course," "Myfyr" added, "the Lord is well aware of that, and indeed, no one who hears the good brother make the confession would for a moment care to question it, but, in the circumstances, I feel strongly that the form and frequency of the confession could occasionally be spared with advantage." No doubt this confession was less convincing to "Myfyr," because it did not harmonize with the general attitude of that old deacon. Yet it is

with such rough stuff as that old man that the Lord often lays the lowest layers of many a church that in time becomes a steadfast and mighty witness for God!

It was gradually that this element was eliminated out of the Church as it grew in numbers and in efficiency. Yet for many years amusing bulls and blunders were perpetrated in many of the public utterances of those who, by long and faithful service, had won the esteem and confidence of their fellow members, but who had never quite outgrown their early crudenesses. For instance, in those early days public announcements were generally made at the services, by the secretary of the church, or one of the prominent deacons. On one Sunday the deacon, whose duty it was to make the announcements, was absent, so were two or three of those who, in order of precedence, were to take his place. The task, therefore, fell to the lot of one who was not qualified for the task, but who himself was quite oblivious of that fact. He. therefore, made a big effort to make his "calling and election sure."

It appears that, the preceding week, the heating apparatus in a chamber under the chapel had got out of order, and, in order to repair it, the path leading from the front of the chapel, to the room where the week-night services were held, had been blocked up. It was, therefore, decided that the prayer meeting the following week should be held in the Chapel. This was the announcement upon which the brother had concentrated his thought, and prepared a phrase, or two, which would express, as he thought, with becoming dignity and elegance, so commonplace a fact. Thus having given a few preliminary announcements, he paused, gave a nervous cough, and then, when the attention of the congregation had been duly arrested, he proceeded gravely, "The prayer meeting this week will not be held in the prayer meeting room, but in the chapel, as something has gone wrong with the fires in the lower regions." It was a cryptic announcement, which amused not a few, and set others thinking.

On another occasion an Englishman, a more prominent deacon, and more accustomed to announce than the former, came unexpectedly to grief. He had to read a poster announcing a lecture to be given in the town on Savonarola, the great reformer, of Florence. He had never heard the name before, and, coming suddenly upon it, read, " A lecture on Sav—Sav—Sav—its no use ! I never can master these Welsh words ! " The remark produced a staggering effect upon the congregation, especially the Welshmen present.

The sisterhood, too, in those early days, contained odd and quaint specimens. An English sister, who had come to Penarth with the great influx at the construction and opening of the Docks, became noted for many years for her fidelity as a member of the Church, especially in visiting the sick, and in her unfailing attendance, not only at the Sunday services, but also, the prayer and Church meetings during the week. She also filled a useful place in representing, as she felt she ought, the Church and congregation at the funerals of those who, from time to time, passed away. Whoever was absent Mrs. G— was sure to be present. This was also a congenial task for this old sister. The sombre procession all in black, and solemnly wending its way through the busy street, had a strange charm for her. But she was poor, and it became increasingly difficult, as years passed by, to appear on such occasions in a garb that would, even with the addition of an occasional black ribbon, and an odd bit of crape, pass for mourning. She attached great importance to the bonnet ! The dress might be dark brown, or navy blue, and the gloves might have a colour, provided it were dingy ; but the bonnet must be black, and, as she was a widow herself, a bit of crape came in very appropriately to add to the effect. The bonnet, which she had bought, poor soul, when she lost her husband, had done service on Sundays and at funerals for over seven years, had got dilapidated and

rusty-looking, and for the last four years she had spared it all she could by using it for funerals only; while a friend had given her a bonnet that served for Sunday, but could by no available means be made suitable for funerals. It was russet brown, and more than all, had a rose in it! This was fatal! And as the lady who gave her the bonnet worshipped in the same chapel, even the rose could not be removed without instant detection! She became very concerned. But suddenly deliverance came from an unexpected quarter. A "Jumble Sale" was held in the Schoolroom, and, to her intense delight, one of the first objects which arrested her attention was a lovely black bonnet, having on it a profusion of black crape, and such delightful black strings—and all, *to her*, at the reduced price of one penny! She instantly bought it, and returned home rejoicing, "as one that findeth great spoil." To think of the funerals she could attend now—even those with carriages—for that bonnet would adorn any procession! The prospect was alluring; and her expectations were fully realised. During the years that followed fashions changed, especially in bonnets, but, by the aid of a little periodical titivating, that bonnet retained its pre-eminence. Hats might come and bonnets go, but that "went on for ever." No, not for ever. She, dear old sister, had at last to lay it aside, never to put it on again, when, to the regret of all those who knew her, she quitted this scene for the land where there is no need for crape or mourning, where there is "no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; for the former things are passed away!"

But closely allied with these peculiarities in the general conduct of the meetings and services of the church, there was a robustness and a strong individuality in spiritual matters, which could ill be spared. Refinement and culture are blessings in any community, but often they are obtained by the sacrifice of strength and integrity.

A rugged, but genuine, brother was George Telford, a son of toil who secured in later years a position of trust and oversight, as the reward of his transparent honesty of purpose, and by his courageous outspokenness. He was a man of little education, but had a keen natural insight, and in spiritual things he was a " seer," full of discernment and wisdom. At one time, during his active connection with the church, there was considerable disagreement among some of the members. At a social meeting of the church, more than one, in prayer and in speech, expressed a desire that the Spirit might descend " as the dew," and thus bring peace to the troubled community. Telford, standing up in the midst of his fellow members said, " Brethren, the Spirit will descend as the dew fast enough, when the conditions among us are what they should be," and then, holding up his hand by way of emphasis, he added, " You have never seen the dew descend of a stormy night : nor will the Spirit ever descend amid such disturbances as we are having. He must have a peaceful calm into which to come." This was a saying worthy of any pulpit in Europe, and reminiscent of another remark, repeated to me by my friend Mr. Ifano Jones, and originally made many years ago by another obscure puritan " seer," at Aberdare. When speaking of the Lord, being " as the dew unto Israel," that worthy said to his brethren, in a time of spiritual deadness and indifference, " Remember, the dew never descends on dead vegetation : you must have a living blade or leaf, or flower, upon which it can descend, and rest as a pearl of heaven."

The Church at the Tabernacle has undergone many changes since it was formed. The old angularities and roughnesses have disappeared ; but it still has some of the leading characteristics of early days to an exceptional degree. There is a heartiness, and often a quaintness, about the prayers and general utterances of some of its

members, that are very attractive. During my pastorate of sixteen years I have come into contact with a few striking characters in this respect. Most of them, indeed, have now passed away, and have left us the poorer for their leaving. They evidently belonged to a type that is becoming gradually extinct. Still we have one or two left.

At this moment, I think of one in particular. He is a native of Devonshire, as his speech still clearly indicates. But he has been a member of the Tabernacle for over forty years, and is one of the most devoted of all our members. He is our *factotum*. When anything has to be done to the buildings, or to any furniture, or books, connected with the church, we may rely upon his doing it, or having it done. At the weeknight services, as well as those of Sunday, his presence, apart from some supreme necessity for absence, may be depended upon. He is especially faithful to the prayer meetings, and is at a loss to understand the absence of many who could attend if they wished. At one Church meeting a member, who seldom, if ever, came to the prayer meeting, pleaded for a full programme for every night of the week, and, pointing out the great success of all meetings when introduced by a tea, or closed with a supper, contended that these should be more frequently adopted, as they always secured a good attendance. Our friend had his opportunity, and, quietly complimented the member on the sagacity of the suggestion he had made, and added, " I wonder whether a tea before our prayer meetings would secure a better attendance at them ? I suggest a *tea before* the prayer meeting, as that would secure punctual attendance ; whereas a *supper at the close* would only secure an attendance for the benediction." The suggestion was apparently so harmless, and yet the comment so scathing, that the humour and irony of it all appealed to those present ; and the vindicator of teas and suppers collapsed. No more was said !

This friend had a shop, and, during a slump in trade, I ventured to ask him whether he had a fair flow of customers, as other tradesmen had told me their shops were empty half their time. He replied that their shop was seldom empty, but, he added that, in order to keep " a flow of customers," it required a little skilful handling. The fact was, that, when a customer came, business was attended to, and then, if no one else had arrived, his wife would enter into general conversation with the customer; and, as their customers were almost all women, there was no difficulty in that direction; they would go on making the best of their chance, till the next customer came. In that case, again, the same course would be repeated, and so on. So that one could truthfully say that they had " a flow of customers " in their shop pretty well all day; but one could scarcely say there was a " rush "! There was more " gush "!

When asked by me one day whether they were going for a holiday soon, " Well," he replied, " there's a great deal of talk about it, and a good deal of planning. It's the subject at every meal, and the first thing talked about in the morning, and the last thing at night "—then came a short pause—" and, when that is the case in our house, I generally find that it ends there! "

Calling upon him one day a few minutes before five, I found he had just come in. He bade me sit down, and explained that for a moment he had to go to the kitchen, and put the kettle on the gas stove. When he returned, there was a twinkle in his eye, as he said, " Now, Mr. Davies, you may not understand our way of doing things in this house. Of course, when we finished dinner to-day, we all knew that tea time would come: so we kept a good fire in the range. Three o'clock came, and then four struck, and we knew all the while tea time was coming. There was the kettle on one side, and there it remained; but, I no sooner came in just now, than I heard an eager voice

say, 'John, it is five minutes to five, and we must have tea; put the kettle on the gas stove; there's no time to put it on the fire now.' And that is what I have just done. That, you must understand, is our way of doing things here."

It will be noted that in my references to the above striking characters which have, at different times, been associated with my church at the Tabernacle, Penarth, I have departed from the course generally adopted in this work. None of them are Welsh. They are in every instance English. As a matter of fact, the inrush from all quarters during the construction of the Docks, and during the subsequent developments of the town, largely swamped the original Welsh population. Hence we find an Englishman seek to cover his ignorance of Savonarola with the self-complacent boast that he could never pronounce those Welsh words! In Mrs. G——, too, we have a typical English old lady, who, although reduced in circumstances, maintained her lifelong observance of propriety and style, and in so doing retained her respectability to the last. The others reveal an aptness and quaintness confined to no special nationality, but which, strangely enough, derive a certain tinge or colouring from having been brought into such close contact with Welsh sentiment and feeling. Thus, for instance, the Devonian's quaintness has a touch of Welsh flavour about it, which it would not have had, apart from the influence which a Welsh wife and fifty years life in contact with the Welsh people, produced.

But, when I would supply distinctly Welsh characteristics at Penarth, I have to look in a different direction. These, I find, for instance, to an eminent degree, in a brother Welshman, settled as a neighbouring minister. I refer to the Rev. Jonathan Evans, then of Christ Church (Congregational), Penarth, and now of Llandrindod Wells, a much younger man than myself. Strange as it may seem, a singularly joyous and intimate friendship was

made possible by a striking co-incidence of pathetic and even tragic experiences which both had been called to pass through. I purposely, at the time of my friend's sorrow, avoided the sad note, and dwelt almost exclusively upon the brighter side of life, of which, indeed, there appeared to be very little within sight at first, but which expanded as time passed, and our friendship, by a kind of recoil, became increasingly buoyant and, at times, even frolicsome. This, indeed, is a fact in life which calls for a psychologist to explain. But whether the psychologist can explain it or not, I care not ; for I know it to be a gracious " compensation balance," which God infallibly sets amid the workings of the most chequered experiences of our present life.

The Rev. Jonathan Evans and myself settled at Penarth about the same time (1908-9), and we soon became intimate friends. It appears that he was already predisposed in my favour, for, many years ago, when he was an assistant at a business at Cross Inn (now Ammanford), but preparing for Rev. Watcyn Wyn's Grammar School, and ultimately for college, he had bought a copy of my first published book of sermons, namely, " The New Name and Other Sermons," and subsequently, during his college course and ministerial life, had kept in touch with my other works as they appeared. He showed me that first volume in which a specially printed and tasty label had been neatly stuck, bearing the words, " Jonathan Evans, Post & Telegraph Office, Cross Inn." The business with which the Post and Telegraph Office was connected, appears to have comprised of drapery, grocery, and other departments—a kind of Whiteley's, on a *slightly* smaller scale !—but the one fact that obsessed that promising youth was that he held a vital connection with the " Post and Telegraphic " Government Department, and thus was in the service of the King ! This keen sense of neatness on the one hand, and the consciousness of a high calling on the other, have

clung to my friend Jonathan ever since. If order is the first law of heaven, he stands very high among the celestials; whereas I have never known a man who has, under the constant stress of an acute nervous tension, more scrupulously "magnified his calling" by doing everything in his power to make his pulpit utterances comprehensive and effective, than he. Occasionally Saturday night arrived before he had *quite* completed his preparation. It was then, when he thought that the end of all things had come, that I, more than once, told him the story of "Hiraethog," who resolved to "join the soldiers" in similar circumstances (as already given in my "Reminiscences" of "Hiraethog"); and that story never failed to awaken his sense of humour, and thus restore him to a sense of proportion, and consequent tranquility.

During the war he was eager to go forth as a chaplain to the soldiers—not at the base, but *in the trenches*. Nothing less than that would satisfy him. In an emergency he has no sense of danger; and yet—as striking instances of how extremes often meet in one personality—all the while he, each night, has a policeman's staff and whistle in his bedroom in case a burglar appeared; and, when he was down with me at my cottage in Carmarthenshire, and slept in the end room, he carefully locked and barricaded the door, in anticipation of a possible assault, and, as soon as possible, provided himself with night lights, so that he might not have to fight in the dark when the burglar arrived! All this was a case of abnormal precaution, rather than any timid fear, arising from a keen sense of possibilities, for which he prepared his strategic counter!

I, sometimes, used to repeat for his delectation a story he had told me of himself in his bachelor days when a young minister at Albion Park, Chester. I did this when he

complained most bitterly of being denied the privilege of joining the Army. It was about an experience he had when his landlord and landlady went to the National Eisteddfod, and left him and the servant in charge of the house. He, however, had invited two young friends to spend a few days with him. It was arranged that one should sleep in Mr. Evans's own room, and the other in the adjoining chamber, as a precaution against any possible emergency. And, sure enough, the very first night, about twelve o'clock, he was wakened out of his first sleep by strange noises in the house! He instantly woke up his friend, who slept in the same room as himself, and both stealthily entered the next apartment and woke the second friend. Thereupon the three armed themselves—one with a trouser-stretcher, another with a razor, and the third with an equally appropriate weapon, which I cannot recall. Then the three valiants stood in the dark, in solemn silence, on the top of the staircase, and listened! There was no doubt about it! They could hear taps, then footsteps, then the opening of drawers! The position became desperate. Each urged the other two to go downstairs; and in each case the compliment was returned to the other two. All alike abstained from such a harsh act in the dark! At length Jonathan, in sheer desperation, shouted in stentorian tones, "Who is there?" Instantly the door of the kitchen was opened, a flood of light shot along the passage: the three simultaneously "shouldered arms"; and then—then—a thin voice exclaimed, "I am here, ironing the clothes, sir." It was the servant who was busily ironing the washing of the day! Thus ended the careful arming, the pent-up courage, and the strategical precautions on the staircase, of the three valiant men, two of whom, in after years, became magistrates in the county of Carmarthen.

I am quite sure that no one in the excitement of real danger on the battlefield would be more fearless than my friend. He would be among the first "to go over the top," perfectly heedless of danger; but that story in all its refreshing realism, and its ultimate surprisal, suited my purposes excellently, when I sought to dissuade my friend, if possible, from his persistent determination, to "join the soldiers"!

But, putting aside, however, all playful banter, there was, as already intimated, a tender and sacred experience, which, although divided in point of time, brought Jonathan and myself into close touch. A bewildering succession of pathetic bereavements had stripped me, many years before, in an incredibly short time, of my dearest and best. A similar experience, only still more tragic, was repeated in the life of my friend, and left him a solitary and sad figure upon the hearth, around which one of the happiest of human families had been wont to gather. It was then that I was drawn into close contact with him. As one who had "sat where he now sat," I sought to console him. He readily recognised in me a "companion in tribulation," and, in after days, said that I comforted him! I only know that he had touched my heart with the touch of a kindred sorrow, and, by so doing, enlarged its sympathies, so that I have never been quite so self-centred since, as I may have been before. It was then that I saw the true hero in my friend. He ultimately emerged out of the blinding hurricane, with weather-beaten countenance, it is true, but still unbroken and undaunted! Meanwhile, our roots, like those of the cedars of Lebanon, had become interlaced in the storm, —under the surface and out of sight—and, from that hour until now, those roots have never relaxed their grip!

CONCLUSION

The preceding reminiscences chiefly pertain to my private life, and social intercourse with friends. There are other events recorded which cannot be included in this category. They are public, and are not dependent upon my recalling them for being known. There are, for instance, three or four conflicts in which I have been engaged, which found publicity through the Press at the time, and of which, after all, I may not be the best qualified for giving an impartial record. I refer (1) to the controversy on the Down Grade, in which I earnestly sought to defend the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon in his main contention; (2) the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales, in which I took a vigorous part; (3) the Reform of the relationship existing between the Eisteddfod and Eisteddfod Association, for which I fought strenuously, and (4) the Split in the Liberal Camp, in which, to a much smaller extent, I took sides. The first named controversy was fully dealt with at the time in the religious press. And the last three, "are they not written" in the files of the "*South Wales News*" and the "*Western Mail*" and other journals? It is, therefore, neither appropriate, nor desirable, that I should now discuss them in this record of lighter, and more pleasant, experiences of intimate friendships, and genial social relationships.

I rejoice, however, in being able to say that all these conflicts have left very little, if any, bitterness behind them; certainly not on my part. I undertook in each case the unpleasant task conscientiously, and I readily believe that my opponents were moved by equally conscientious motives, in the struggles which, for the greater part, are, happily, things of the past. The anomaly

of it all is that the difficulty now in the way of cordial goodwill, and ready forgetfulness of past disputes, is not to be found among those who pummelled each other vigorously, up hill and down dale, but among those who, either are too young to remember the struggles, or those who, while the fights lasted, lay low, prompted to do so from a supreme regard for their own skins. For my part I desire to place it on record, as a tribute to human nature at its best, that, almost all my formidable opponents have proved themselves to be fine sportsmen. Now that the battles are over, all the differences are forgotten in the one absorbing desire for co-operation and mutual goodwill, in the great causes which we have learnt now to hold in common.

I have also only casually referred to my literary efforts in the Press, by the publication of sermons, Biblical expositions, historical, biographical, and fictional works, etc., and still less referred to my National Eisteddfod competitions, which have resulted in my receiving the award repeatedly for essays on the most important themes, *all of which remain unpublished ; the manuscripts, however, are now, happily, in my possession.* These are subjects which do not come appropriately within the scope of a work of this kind, which simply deals with the lighter social aspects of my life, in friendships and acquaintanceships, which have surrounded a strenuous and troubled career with a genial atmosphere, and a sunny environment, which have done much to make toil easy, and life bright.

It follows that I have not, in these reminiscences, sought to appraise the relative value of my pastorates, or, indeed, to give a detailed narrative of my ministry of more than fifty-three years, by recording any successes, and tabulating any figures of aggressive work. Others are best fitted for that task. I am content to leave that with them. But above all, I leave my ministry, such as it is, at the feet

of my Lord and Master, from Whom I received it, and Who has already borne much with me in all my blunders and shortcomings, right through the years!

Besides, while this book is, to a large extent, an autobiography, it is so only in a subordinate sense. I have sought to use the autobiographical form, as a setting for exhibiting what is of much greater import, and of far wider interest, namely, the leading characteristics of my country and people. I have sought to be candid and unbiassed, and have not hesitated to show our shortcomings and failings, as well as our attainments and good qualities. Such as this work is, I now humbly place it at my nation's feet, a tribute to the debt I owe to, and the affection I cherish for, the land that gave me birth, and the people to whom I am proud to belong. "That which is writ, is writ: would it were worthier."

APPENDIX.

NOS GARU JACI'R CRYDD A DAN Y GOF.

(*See page* 11.)

Aeth Dan bach y gôf gyda Jaci y crydd
Un noswaith i garu at ferched Penhydd :
'Roedd Dan ar ol Pal, ac 'roedd Jaci am Bet,
Y naill wisge gapan, a'r llall wisge het.

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan,
'Doedd dim mwy i'w ddewis rhwng Jaci a Dan.

Dechreusant eu siwrne cyn codiad y lloer :
'Roedd y nos yn serennog a hynod o oer ;
Edrychodd y lleuad dros aeliau y bryn
Yn syn fod dou grotyn mor debig â hyn !

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

Tebygrwydd oedd hefyd rhwng merched Penhydd :
'Doedd fawr o wahaniaeth i'w weled liw dydd ;
A phan oedd yn nosi, 'doedd unmath o ddal
Pa un o'r ddwy groten oedd Beti neu Pal.

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

Yr oedd y ddwy lodes ar drothwy y tŷ
Pan ddaeth y ddou garwr i fyny yn hŷ :
'Roedd cwmwl ar wyneb y lleuad, on'te
Hi welse yn gymw's jist beth gymrodd le !

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

Ond clywyd dou gusan fel ergyd dou wn :
Y naill yn dra nerthol a'r llall yn lled grwn ;
A'r drws a agorwyd yn ddistaw bach, bach,
'Nol arfer addolwyr duw Ciwpid a'i âch.

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

Ond cyn mynd i'r gegin fe glywyd rhyw sŵn,
A theimlodd Bet rywbeth yn tynnu ei gŵn ;
A chwyrnodd y ci yn lled gâs ; ond, os do,
Ffodd un pâr i'r llaethdy, a'r llall i'r cwtsh glo.

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

Mawr ofne y merched y rhoise'r ci nâd
Yng nghanol y t'wyllwch nes deffro eu tad ;
A'r gwaethaf o'r cyfan—mor chwithig eu rhan !—
'Roedd Pal gyda Jaci, a Bet gyda Dan !

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

Tu allan fe chwyrne y ci yn ddi-daw :
Tu fewn braidd anadle'r cariadon gan fraw :
O'r diwedd distawodd y ci am y pryd,
Ond gwyddent ei fod e' yn agos o hyd !

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

'Doedd fawr flâs ar garu mewn cyfwng fel hwn :
Ac eto 'roedd peidio yn ormod o bwn :
Cusanwyd, ac yna sibrydwyd—os do !
Aeth arswyd drwy'r llaethdy a thrwy y cwtsh glo !

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

Ar unwaith fe deimlwyd fod popeth ar wall—
Fod cariad pob cariad gan gariad y llall :
'Roedd pleser i raddau i'r ddou'n y fath bleth,
Ond ow ! 'roedd dou arall yn gymw's 'run peth !

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

O'r diwedd fe fentrodd Pal, druan, i mâs ;
Ymdrechodd dawelu y chwyrnllyd gi câs :
Aeth Bet hefyd allan i'w ddal tra f'ai Dan
A Jaci, ei gyfaill, yn dianc o'r fan.

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

Ond, och ! pan ymdrechodd y cryts fyn'd i ffwrdd,
Fe chwyrnodd y ci, ac fe dwpodd fel hwrdd ;
Ac yn eu gwylltineb, er mwyn Pal a Bet,
Aeth Dan heb ei gapan, a Jaci heb i het !

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

Ar ol i'r cryts redeg, yr henwr ddaeth 'lawr,
I weled paham 'roedd fath stŵr y fath awr :
Ond ffodd y ddwy lodes i'r llaethdy mewn braw
At fuddai hen ffasiwn a safai gerllaw.

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

Bryd hynny fe drwynodd y ci yma 'thraw,
A chafodd ysglyfaeth, yn wir, maes o law ;
Ca'dd gapan Dan bach, a cha'dd het Jaci'r crydd,
A thaflai hwynt fyny yn hynod o rydd.

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

'R hen ŵr, ar ol *stando*, a aeth ar ei hynt,
A d'wedodd, " Wirione, mae fel y bu gynt :
Rhyw garu sydd yma, ond mae yr hen gi
Yn mynnu ymhyrryd a spwylo y 'sbri.

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

Fe ffeindodd y merched, yn wir, yn y fan,
Er nad oedd un hanes am Jaci a Dan ;
Ond d'wedodd yn wawdus, " Mae'n amlwg i chi,
'Does dim all eu corddi yn debig i'r ci."

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

'Roedd Jaci a Dan yn helbulus tu fâs,
'Roent am fynd i'r tŷ, ond yn ofni'r ci câs ;
O'r diwedd cytunsant fyn'd adref yn frisg
Yn hytrach nâ cholli dim chwaneg o'u gwisg.

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

Dwys gofient, pan gerddent yn bennoeth is nen,
Am golli eu penwisg drwy golli eu pen ;
A thyngent nad elent heb golli pob bri
I garu byth eto cyn crogi y ci !

Cytgan.—Os ych chi'n y fan, etc.

CARWRIAETH DAFI BWLCHGWYNT.

(*See page* 11.)

Un noswaith ym Mai, ar ol gorffen y corddi,
  Aeth Dafi Bwlchgwynt i wel'd Bet Belan Fach ;
Mae'n hysbys ei fod wedi cael ei hyfforddi
  Ar y neges oedd ganddo gan Dan Llwyn-y-wrach.

Hen lanc ydoedd Dafi, wedi byw gyda'i lysfam
  Am hanner can' mlynedd a mwy, 'rwyf yn siwr ;
Bu farw ei lysfam : ca'dd yntau ryw flys am
  Gael gwraig—petai Bet yn awyddus am ŵr.

Hwn oedd y tro cyntaf i Dafi i garu,
  A d'wedai, " Wirione, gwaith rhyfedd yw hwn ;
'Rwy'n cofio i Ianto o'r Cefen 'ddifaru,
  A chyn cael ei ryddid aeth sofren yn grwn.

" 'Rwy'n mentro, er hynny : mae Bet yn nodedig ;
  Gall odro a gwnio, gwneud 'menyn a chaws ;
Gall gwiro y sane, gwneud cawl bendigedig,
  A phancws bach tyner, yn rhyfedd eu naws.

" Mae hefyd yn fenyw sy'n deall barddoniaeth :
  Rhaid bod yn farddonol, medd Dan Llwyn-y-wrach,
Os odw i lwyddo : mae gennyf brydyddiaeth
  Wnaeth Dan imi'n barod am swm hynod fach."

* * *

'Roedd cof da rhyfeddol gan Dafi i ddysgu,
  A dysgodd bob gair cyn rhoi tro ar ei hynt ;
Ei bryder mawr ydoedd y byddai'n cymysgu
  Prydyddiaeth Llwyn-wrach gyda rhyddiaith Bwlchgwynt.

Can' gwaith yr adroddodd y geiriau prydyddol
  Wrth gerdded y 'sgubor heb wasgod na het,
A'i galon yn curo fel ffustiau'r hen bobol
  Wrth feddwl fath effaith a gaffent ar Bet.

O'r diwedd gwnaeth Dafi ei feddwl i fyny
  I fyned at Bet yn ei hoff bilyn parch,
Gan feddwl, os methai, 'doedd dim ar ol hynny
  Ond myn'd at y saer er mwyn erchi ei arch.

Ond unwaith yn rhagor aeth dros y brydyddiaeth,
  Ac yna yn syth aeth i gartref y ferch ;
'Roedd Bet ar y trothwy, ac yntau ar unwaith
  Ddechreuodd fel hyn dywallt cenllif ei serch :—

" Bet fach, y mae'r ddaear yn gwisgo ei gore,
  A'r heulwen yn gwenu ar fynydd a dôl ;
Mae'r haul yn cyfodi bob dydd yn fwy bore,
  A phob nos yn mynd yn fwy diweddar yn ol.

" Mae'r awyr yn llwythog gan arogl blode
  A pheraidd gan nodau y ddeiliog wig dlos ;
Y fronfraith a'r fwyalch a gathlant y bore,
  A'r eos â'i chaniad fendithia y nos.

" Fe ddychwel y wennol o'i thaith yn y deheu,
  Mae'r dryw wedi gwneuthur ei Shini yn wraig,
Mae pob un yn llon, ac i gyd ar eu goreu
  Yn caru'n ddichlynaidd yn ol y Gymraeg.

" Mae Mat Llwyn-y-pïod, a Ben Llwyncrychyddod,
  Wil Shams Rhydwyalchen, a Mari Cwmbrân,
A Phal Ffos-y-broga, a Dai Pentrehyrddod
  Yn berffaith gytun 'beidio byw ar wahân.

" Mae Pegi Cwmrheiddel, a Jaci Cwmrhapant,
  A Ben Godrerhiw, lo's, a Marged Penlan,
A Shôn Llwyn-yr-eos, a Shân Nant-y-llyffant,
  I gyd i briodi, os wyt ti'n y man !

" Mae Twm Troed-yr-orfa, a Sal Rhyd-y-ceisiaid,
  A Wil Rhos-y-ceiliog, a Nel Nantywrach,
Yn wastad ynghyd fel deubar o efeilliaid—
  'Rwyf innau'n dihoeni am Bet Belan Fach.

" I gasglu ffrwyth daear 'does dim fel yr Hydref,
  A'r Haf yw y goreu at wyliau a bri ;
Y Gaeaf yw'r goreu ar aelwyd y cartref ;
  At garu, wirione', y Gwanwyn i mi ! "

" O Dafi ! " medd Bet, " 'rwy yn synnu'n fawr atat,
Yn adrodd mor dwt beth oedd Dan Llwyn-y-wrach
Yn sisial i 'nghlustiau mewn modd hollol breifat
Wrth 'y ngharu i yma yng nghlôs Belan Fach.

" Cer' adre rhag cwilydd : rho fyny dy garu ;
Nid Gwanwyn ond Hydref yw hi 'nawr gyda thi ;
Mae Dan Llwyn-y-wrach tuhwnt i'w gymharu
Â dyn dros driugain i ferch fel y fi.

" Fe ddwedodd Dan wrthyf ei fod wedi colli
Un copi o'r geiriau a sgrifennodd mewn serch,
Fod rhyw dalcen slip, heb ronyn o allu,
Yn sicr o'u hadrodd i ennill ei ferch.

" Cer' adre' 'nawr, Dafi ; paid cynnyg at garu :
'Does dim yn dy natur yn addas i'r gwaith :
Byddai dyn fel 'rwyt ti yn siwr o 'ddifaru,
Sydd heb ddechreu caru cyn trigain a saith ! "

* * *

Aeth Dafi yn ol i hen aelwyd ei febyd,
A thaflodd o'r neilltu ei glogyn a'i het ;
A thyngodd fod merched i gyd yn rhai enbyd
A Bet Belan Fach fel rhyw hen *suffragette*.

Yn lle erchi arch, fel yr ynfyd fwriadodd,
Rhodd goron yn chwaneg i Dan Llwyn-y-wrach,
Gan ddweyd, " Dy brydyddiaeth yn unig a'm cadwodd
Rhag syrthio'n ysglyfaeth i Bet Belan Fach."

I reproduce a ballad which I wrote in 1912, and which appeared in " The Cardiff Times " in the " Welsh Column," edited by " Ifano " (January 4, 1913), as illustrative of the practical jokes and the unconventional Bohemianism which, without descending to dissipation, characterised country life in days that had passed away

when I was a child. Among the amazing tales I heard in my youth was the one reproduced in the following ballad:—

TOMOS Y GWADDWR.

(*See page* 20.)

'Roedd Tomos y Gwaddwr yn stoncyn cryf iawn,
  Ond mewn syched angherddol o hyd ;
Nid oedd yn y pentre' un arall o'i ddawn,
Na neb at waddota, nag un dorre fawn
Fel Tomos, pan nad oedd o'r dablen yn llawn ;
  Ond ar dablen yr oedd ei holl fryd.

Un rhyfedd oedd Tomos i wlitho'n yr hwyr,
  Yn enwedig 'rol cywen y gwair ;
'Roedd e', chware teg, gyda'r blaena o'r gwŷr,
Yn pitsho'n yr ydlan, a thoddi fel cŵyr ;
Ond faint 'roedd e'n chwysu 'does neb 'nawr a ŵyr—
  D'wede fe, " Rhyw bump cwart, ar fy ngair ! "

Yn awr mae pob ffermwr sy'n byw yn ein ho's
  Yn lled sicr o ddweyd yn go hyf
Mai sychter y tir a bâr wlithder y nos,
Ac 'roedd Tomos yn dadle mewn modd hynod glôs
Fod sychter heb wlithder yn beth hollol gro's
  I'r hen ddeddf, " 'R hwn a weithio, a yf."

Hen broblem fawr bywyd i Tomos bryd hyn
  Oedd, paham 'roedd y byd mor ddihap,—
Fod rhai'n medru pitsho heb gwrw na gin,
Na seider, na whisci, na dim yn yr *Inn*,
Ac ynte'n sychedig pan nad oedd mor dynn
  Â'r farel, cyn agor y tap ?

" Pam," medde, " 'rwy' i wedi ca'l y fath geg
  Fwy sychedig nâ neb sy mor llwm ?
Gofynnes y cwestiwn i un-dyn-ar-ddeg,—
I Pywel y ffeirad, a Dafis Panteg,
A naw o wŷr dewr : atebodd un, gyda rheg,
  " Mae dy geg fel y gwnaethost hi, Twm."

'Roedd Scweier Glangwili—yr hena' o'i ach—
Am roi perchyll i'w ŵyr yn y dre' :
Danfonodd ei was â dau barchell mewn sach ;
Aeth hwnnw i'r " Greyhound " ; 'roedd Dan y Crydd bach,
A Wil y Pysgotwr, a'i blufyn a'i fach,
Yn y *bar* ; ac 'roedd Twm yn 'run lle.

Gadawodd y gwas y sach berchyll tu fa's,
Ac fe dd'wedodd ei neges tu fewn ;
Aeth Tomos a Wil at sach berchyll y gwas ;
Ond Dan a arhosodd i siarad am flas
Y bacco oedd ganddo, oedd hytrach yn gas,
Er mwyn gwneuthur y gwas yn fwy ewn.

'Roedd gast gan y Gwaddwr a chanddi gŵn bach,—
Rhyw gymysg'eth lledrywaidd di-hap :
Awd am y ddau salwa' i'w dodi'n y sach
Yn lle y ddau barchell oedd dew ac yn iach :
A chadwyd y gwas 'nol gan Dan y Crydd bach :
Ac ail-ddodwyd y sach yn y *trap*.

O'r diwedd, fe aeth y gwas bant ar ei hynt
I Gaerfyrddin yn weddol o hwyr ;
Danfonodd ei esgus am nad oedd yn gynt
Gan aros tu allan, bron torri ei wynt,
Wrth feddwl faint gawse am ddod â gwerth punt
Oddiwrth Scweier Glangwili i'w ŵyr.

Ond buan y siomwyd y gwas, druan bach :
Daeth yr ŵyr, a'i ddau lygad fel sêr,
Gan daflu i waelod y *trap* yr hen sach ;
Gofynnodd a oedd ei dadcu'n eitha iach,
A d'wedodd, gan regi, 'doedd neb yn ei âch
Am hen *fongrels* yn lle perchyll pêr.

O'r diwedd, deallodd y gwas mai dau gi
Ac nad perchyll, oedd ganddo'n y *trap* :
Dychwelodd i'r " Greyhound," lle'r oedd yr un tri
Yn aros i glywed y *news* ; ac fel 'sbri
Wrth glywed y gwas yn dweyd shwd y bu,
I dosturio ag ê am 'r an-hap.

Aeth Tomos yn ddistaw o'r parlwr i'r clos
I ail-newid y perchyll a'r cŵn,
Tra oedd y ddau arall yn tynnu yn glos
At y gwas a ddatblyge ei syndod a'i lo's
A'r siom fwya' gafodd erio'd yn ei o's :
A'i gwmpeini'n gwynfannus eu sŵn.

Cyn hir aeth y gwas ar ei gyfer i dre ' :
Pan gyrhaeddodd, 'roedd hen Scweier Prys
Yn aros i'w weled : gofynnodd ymh'le
Y buase gyhyd. " 'Nawr, yn wir," medde fe,
" Meddylies y buaset yn colli dy le
Am fath oedi, yn lle bod ar frys."

" Wel, wir," medde'r gwas, " mae rhyw gythrwm yn bod :
'Rwyf yn siwr imi ddodi'n y sach
Ddau barchell bach hyfryd, neilltuol eu nôd ;
A phan es i'r dre' fe ddatgenes eu clod,
A d'wedes nad oedd perchyll gwell is y rhod
Wrth y *porter* aeth fewn â'r rhai bach.

" Ond, Syr, daeth eich ŵyr mewn brys allan o'r tŷ,
Ac mewn iaith nad adrodda' i 'nawr,
Dywedodd mai *mongrels* o gŵn oedd gen i ;
Gofynnodd yn wawdus ymha gyflwr oe'ch chi :
Os ychi'n y man, nid oedd dim ond dau gi
Yn y sach—y salwa' fu 'rio'd ar y llawr."

Mawr synnodd y Scweier wrth glywed fath blê :
Ond meddyliodd yn fuan shwd bu
I'r fath gyfnewidiad erio'd gymryd lle ;
Gofynnodd, " B'le galwest ti wrth fynd i'r dre ' ? "
Fe ddwedodd, " Yn y ' Greyhound,' " medde fe,
" Dyna'r fan 'r aeth pob parchell yn gi."

Ac yna agorwyd y sach mewn brys mawr,
I gael gweld fath gŵn bach oedd i mewn,
Os ychi'n y man, 'roedd y perchyll ar glawr ;
Rhedasant hwy allan i'r lan ac i lawr,
Ac nid oedd un corgi i'w ganfod yn awr—
'Roedd y perchyll yn hynod o ewn.

" Wel, wir," medde'r Scweier, " rhyw dro od yw hwn ;
Ymha le, wrth ddod 'nol ar dy daith,
Y galwest ti, John ? Galwest rywle, fi wn."
" Yn y ' Greyhound,' " medd John ; " 'roedd fy ngofid fel pwn,
Fe saethwn fy hunan pe cawn i ryw wn :
Ond ces lased, rhag gwneud y fath waith."

Fe chwarddodd y Scweier : hen ŵr hoff oedd e'
O ryw lased pan oedd e' ar lawr :
Fe deimlodd 'doedd John ddim ymhell iawn o'i le,
Ar ol galw unwaith wrth fynd lawr i'r dre' ;
I alw'r ffordd adre : 'roedd *sense* yn ei blê—
Dyna'r ffordd daeth y perchyll i glawr.

" Wel, gwed 'nawr yn hy," medd y meistir yn llon,
" Shwd digwyddodd pob peth ar dy hynt ?
Pwy oedd yn y ' Greyhound ' ? Rho'u henwau o'r bron."
Adroddodd yr enwau heb gur yn ei fron.
" 'Rwy'n deall y pwnc," medd y Scweier ; " 'nawr, John,
Mae y *joke*, ar fy ngair, werth pum punt.

" Paid colli dy dymer : *joke* dda oedd hi'n wir ;
Bydd yn *sportsman*, a chymer hi'n grwn :
Fe haedda y bechgyn gael swper cyn hir,
A chystal a geir yn un man yn y sir ;
Ac ar ol y swper cânt farel o fir—
Y bir gore'n y wlad, mi a wn.

" Rho iddynt wahoddiad i ddod yma'n hy,
Dywed wrthynt gwn i am yr oll ;
Gwahodda nhw i gyd, a'u perth'nase yn llu—
Rhyw ugen ne' fwy—a dy holl ffrindie di ;
Fe gewch yn y gegin, cewch, *right royal* sbri
Dros y perchyll fu unwaith ar goll."

Fel yna, aeth popeth yn dda yn y plas,
Ond 'roedd Tomos, a Wil, a Dan bach
I gyd yn y " Greyhound " yn teimlo rhyw iâs
Pan geisient ddyfalu beth ddaethe o'r gwas,—
A gawse ei feistir yn llawen neu gas,
A mawr ofnent y cawse fe'r sach.

Ond buan y gwelsant fod John wrth ei fodd :
Daeth i'w gweld yng ngoleuni y sêr ;
A hynny cyn iddynt gael shawns i'w wahodd :
'Roedd y pedwar ynghyd, a'r oll wrth eu bodd,
Yn chwerthin wrth feddwl mor ddoniol, fel rhodd,
Oedd y corgwn yn lle perchyll pêr !

O'r diwedd, gwnaeth John dynnu fyny yn glos,
A gwahoddodd bob un yn y lle
Yn enw ei feistr, i swper ryw nos,—
Pob un oedd â rhan yn y tric ar y clôs,
I newid y perchyll, a rhoddi hen bôs
Idd ei ŵyr oedd yn byw yn y dre'.

Pythewnos aeth heibio : daeth John ar ei daith :
Rhoed gwahoddiad i'r tri a'i holl âch
I fynd i Glangwili yn *sharp* erbyn saith,
I swper a rali, 'roedd hynny yn ffaith,—
Dydd Mawrth nesaf oll, ar ol gorffen â'u gwaith,
I atgoffa y perchyll a'r sach.

Mawr oedd y disgwyliad cyn dyfod yr awr ;
A dydd Mawrth aethant fyny yn llu,—
Rhyw ugen o fechgyn, yn fychan a mawr,
Cyrhaeddent Glangwili ; eisteddent i lawr
Wrth ford fawr y gegin, a phob *dish* dan glawr
Hyd y fendith, dechreuwyd mewn bri.

'Roedd *dish* ar bob pen i'r ford fawr o fla'n tân ;
" Dyna sgwarnog werth wel'd," medde Wil,
Gan edrych ar *ddish* oedd bron bod o'i fla'n :
" Gwir, Wil," medde Dan, " dyna sgwarnog â grân " ;
" A dyna un arall," medd Twm, " ar wahân " ;
Ond 'roedd John braidd yn edrych yn swil.

Cawd amser godidog ; bwytawyd yn hy ;
Ac yfwyd y farel yn glau ;
Ar ddiwedd y swper daeth y Scweier o'i dŷ ;
Rhoes roeso i'r cwmpni fu'n *bwyta'r ddau gi*,
Yn enwedig i Tomos, y pennaf mewn bri,
Gan mai fe fuasai perchen y ddau !

'Roedd effeth yr areth yn rhyfedd o fawr
Ar y cwmpni swperodd nos hon :
'Madawsant yn fuan ; ac wrth fynd i lawr
I'r pentre', fe deimlent bob cam fod rhyw sawr
Oedd hynod o debig i genel Blaengwawr,
A rhyw gynnwrf di ball dan y fron.

'Roedd Tomos a Wil, gyda Dan y Crydd bach,
Yn eithriadol o dawel bryd hyn :
'Roedd rhai o'r cwmpeini yn perthyn i'w hach
Yn cyfarth yn 'strywgar, a Dan Llwyn-y-wrach
Yn dweyd mai " Dog course " gawsent hwy o'r hen sach ;
Carse fe ga'l " Dog course " ar y bryn.

Fe gofiodd y tri fod Dai'r Clochydd o'r Llan
Wedi bod gyda Twm am y cŵn ;
Fe'u rhoddodd nhw'n rhad, os ychi'n y man,
Mor dewed â bloneg, mor ddued â'r tán,
A'r oll gafodd e' 'nawr yn ol, fel ei ran,
Oedd tair sleis o *Roast dog*, mi a wn.

Ni chlywodd y tri erio'd ddiwedd ar hyn :
Pan fuasent â'u prancie ar waith
Buase cyfarth i'w glywed ar lechwedd a bryn,
A phobun yn edrych, fel esgus, yn syn,
Ac ambell i edliw ym mharlwr yr *Inn*
Pan fydde y blê yn rhy faith.

* * *

Fel yna 'roedd bechgyn direidus y lle ;
Ac 'roedd Tomos yn ben ar y tri ;
Ac eto, 'doedd neb yn fwy hael dan y ne',
Na neb yn fwy hawddgar o'r Gogledd i'r De,
Nâ'r tri, er yn aml yn frwd mewn rhyw blê,
Ac er, weithiau, eu bod ar y 'sbri.

Fel yna 'roedd hefyd yr hen Scweier Prys,—
Un o ddynion digrifaf y fro :
Nid oediodd erio'd ; nid oedd byth ar ei frys ;
Yn aml fe weithie yn llewys ei grys ;
A pharche y rhai oedd yn byw drwy eu chwŷs,
Ac fe gare ga'l *joke* ambell dro.

Arabedd ein tadau ddiflanna o'n gwlad ;
Mwy o sebon, llai glendid y sydd :
Athrylith a wywa ; mae steil ar wellâd ;
Mae'r meistr a'r gweithiwr am hyn yn 'run bâd ;
Canolradd undonedd sy 'nawr—pwy a wâd ?—
Ai fel hyn bydd y Cymry a fydd ?

YSGOL BWLCHCORN.

(*See page* 28.)

Mae gennyf gof am fachgen bach
Yn mynd i'r ysgol ddyddiol ;
A'i frat bach gwyn, a'i wyneb iach,
A'i olwg loyw, siriol—
Mi wn pwy yw :
Gwn, fel 'rwyf byw !
Myfi yn blentyn gwisgi,
A than fy mraich
Ryw fychan faich
O lyfrau fynnwn ddysgu.

Ar lechwedd bryn, mewn hudol fan,
'Roedd 'sgoldy o'r hen ddullwedd ;
'Rwy'n gweld fy hun yn dringo i'r lan
Yn awr fel petae llynedd :
'Rwy'n cofio'n dda
Y bythol bla
Oedd Saesneg main i'm henaid :
Am iaith fy mam
(O chwithig gam !)
Mi gawn *Welsh Note* yn ddibaid.

'Rwy'n cofio am un hafddydd mwyn,
Pan hawliem wyliau'n unllef,
Fod sŵn yr adar yn y llwyn
Yn fwy na fedrwn oddef ;
Awr ginio ddaeth,
A'r athro aeth,
A chlow'd y drws mewn hwyliau ;
Ac, ar ol tro,
Trwy dwll y clo
Addawyd mis o wyliau.*

*Yr hen arferiad o " Dorri'r Ysgol."

Mae'r athro eto'n fyw, mi wn ;
Mi'i gwelais yn yr Hydref ;
'Roedd wedi crymu dan ei bwn,
A bron â myned adref :
'Rwy'n synnu'n fawr
Ar lawer awr
Faint oeddem yn ddyledus
I'r athro llon,
Oedd fwyn ei fron,
A ninnau'n blant direidus !

CAEL FY MESUR AM Y SIWT GYNTAF.

(*See page* 29.)

'Rwyf yn cofio yn dda am fore f'oes,
Pryd y teimlais ryw uchel gais
Am gael gwared o'r anfri o noethni coes,
A chael llodrau yn lle'r is-bais :
Nid oedd dim yn y byd allai ddyfod i'm rhan,
I ddolurio fy ysbryd llon,
Fel rhyw hurtyn a'm galwai yn " Lizzie Ann,"
Gan fy nghanmol yn ffraeth fel " hon."

'Roedd rhyw ymchwydd di baid oddi tan fy mron
Am arddangos pob gwrol nôd,
A chael gwared o'r bais, a chario ffon,
Fel fy nhad, oedd yn fawr ei glod.
'Roedd fy nhad wedi addo fy nwyn cyn hir
I fy mesur gan deiliwr mwyn
Oedd yn byw yn y pentref—a'r goreu'n y sir
I wneud dillad heb gymell cwyn.

'Rwy'n atgofio y pleser pan ddaeth yr awr
Imi fyned yng nghwmni 'nhad
I fy mesur â llinyn o'm pen i'r llawr,
Fel rhyw ŵr yn ei lawn ystâd :
Pan yn cerdded trwy'r pentref y noswaith hon,
'Ro'wn yn prifio fwy, fwy, bob cam ;
A phwysigrwydd arbennig oedd dan fy mron,
A rhyw wrid ar fy ngrudd, fel fflam.

Rhyw chwech troedfedd a chwarter o deiliwr prudd
  Oedd yn ddeublyg ar ben y bwrdd :
'Roedd ei goesau ymhleth, a'i draed ynghudd,
  A'r hen " slibwrd " â'i drwyn bron cwrdd :
Wrth ddatblethu ei goesau, datblygodd hyd
  Oedd yn anferth i mi i'w weld,
A phan saethodd ei ben fry i'r gronglwyd glyd,
  'Roedd ei ysgwydd yn uwch nâ'r seld.

Ond yn ddifrys ymblygodd, wrth ddwys ymroi,
  Ac fe wenodd, pan ar fy mhen
Y gosododd ei law, gan fy araf droi,
  A'r llaw arall ar drawst uwchben :
Ar ol sylwi yn graff safai 'fyny'n syth,
  Gan ddweyd, " Gwnaiff y tro yn awr " :
Ond gwrthdystiais : " Ni fedrwch chwi fesur byth
  Heb y llinyn a'r ffugrau mawr."

Nid anghofiaf i byth y watwarus wên
  Roes y teiliwr wrth droi ar ffrws,
Ac wrth osod ei law oddi tan fy ngên,
  Ac ymbwyso ar ben y drws,
Y dywedodd : " Gwnaiff hyn y tro : mae'n glir
  Nad oes eisiau un llinyn byth
Os gŵr o'th faint di—a gweyd y gwir !
  Sydd am wisg—gan nad pa mor syth."

Felly gwywyd fy nhyfiant drwy'r weithred hon,
  A phwy ŵyr pa fath ryfedd gawr,
Oni bai yr hen deiliwr a'i wawdiaeth lon,
  Fyddwn i yn y byd yn awr !
Am flynyddoedd 'doedd gennyf fawr deimlad iach,
  Na'r un parch, at deilwriaid tal
Sydd â'u nodwydd bron beunydd mewn dynion bach,
  Yn lle gwneud ambell bwyth i ddal.

"DAI Y CRYDD BACH" A'R OFFEIRIAD.

(*See page* 36.)

CREADUR go hynod oedd " Dai y Crydd Bach ";
Peder troedfedd naw modfedd o hyd ;
Fe oedd y rhyfedda' a'r ola' o'i âch ;
Er lleied ei faint, 'roedd ê'n hynod o iach,
A medrus dros ben ; ond yn wastad â'i fach
Mewn offeiriad—hyn oedd ei hoff fryd.

Un diwrnod daeth 'ffeiriad, os y'ch chi'n y fan,
At Dai am ychydig o rodd
At godi rhyw eglwys fach, gan fod y Llan
Ymhell o'r gym'dogaeth ; os rhoddai ei ran,
Fe fyddai yn fantes i lawer un gwan ;
Ag 'roedd Dai ag ychydig o fodd.

Os do, tynnodd Dai ei gorff bach i'w lawn hyd,
A dywedodd, " Ond, Syr, 'wyddoch ch'i,
Os cwyd neb gwch gwenyn, y rhan hyn o'r byd,
Heb wenyn i'w lenwi, ond rhai fo ar fryd
Ymadel â chychod cyffwrddus a chlyd,
Sydd yn eiddo cym'dogion o fri,—

" Fod cosb yn ei aros fel torrwr deddf tir ?
Ac fel hyn dyle fod gyda ch'i !
Pa wennyn sy gennych, dywedwch y gwir,—
Yn perthyn i'ch eglwys y rhan hyn o'r sir,
Ond Beti Blaenpant a Dafi Cwmhir ?
Mae'r capeli yn myn'd â'r holl lu.

" Gadewch y cwch gwenyn yn llonydd, da ch'i,
'Does dim gwenyn yn perthyn i'ch rhan
Ond a ellwch ddwyn o'r capeli bob tu,
A'r rhei'ny yn bennaf yn gwneuthur eu su
Oherwydd disgyblaeth am fod ar y 'sbri ;
Ac yn celu dan gesel y Llan.

" Da ch'i, ceisiwch lenwi bob cwch sy' ar lan,
Cyn y codwch rai gweigion bob tu ;
Os na ddaw y bobol i eglwys y Llan,
Treiwch wella y bregeth : os y'ch chi'n y fan,
'Fydd neb o'ch plwyfolion ry bell na rhy wan,
Os bydd 'chydig o fêl gennych ch'i."

Y GWEHYDD A'I ROEG.

(*See page* 52.)

Gwelaf ŵr cryf wrth ei wŷdd, ac yn gweu :
  Llencyn bach llonwych a saif ar ei bwys :
O ! y fath deimlad mae'r llun yn gyfleu :
  Cofion o'm mebyd sy dyner a dwys !
Cofiaf yn dda fy nhadcu yn ddigoeg
  Yn dysgu im' adrodd yn llwyr oddiar gof
Weddi yr Arglwydd fel 'roedd yn y Roeg
  Tra hithau, y wennol, yn saethu drwy'r stôf.

Llonydd yw'r gwŷdd er's blynyddoedd cyn hyn :
  Mud, er's hir ennyd, yw'r gwehydd mewn bedd :
Gwâg yw ei sedd yn ei fwth ar y bryn :
  Pruddaidd yw'r gweithdy, a llwydaidd ei wedd :
Mynd mae gwroniaid y dyddiau a fu,
  Ddysgent eu Groeg a'u Hebraeg wrth eu gwaith ;
Eraill a ruthrant o'r ysgol yn llu
  Yn perthyn i'r safon a rifir yn *saith.*

Mwy o gaboliad a llai o wellâd :
  Hyn yw'r diwylliant yn awr yn ein mysg :
Pob un yn gydradd drwy gydol y wlad :
  Pawb â'r un argraff, a phawb â'r un ddysg :
Efydd ac arian ac aur a gyfleir
  I gyd i'r un tawdd-dy i ddwyn yr un nôd ;
Counters, ac nid arian bathol, a geir,
  Yn aml mewn bri ymhob man is y rhod.

SYMUD O'R PENTREF.

(*See page* 53.)

Cofus gennyf am un Hydref
  Ar ddiwrnod teg ei hin,
Pan symudwyd o'r hen bentref
  Â theimladau dwys a blin :
Cofiaf symud celfi'r bwthyn
  Yn y drol i fyny'r rhiw :
Dan a minnau, y ddau blentyn,
  Gyda 'mam mewn cerbyd gwiw.

Trodd y ffordd ar ben y bryncyn,
  A diflannodd siop y crydd :
Collais olwg ar y bwthyn,
  Lle y gwelais gyntaf ddydd :
Aed ar hyd y ffordd yn ddichlyn,
  Ac yn araf dros y ffin,
Lle'r arferwn pan yn blentyn
  Droi yn ol yn llesg a blin.

Un tro'n unig yn fy mywyd
  'R eis o'r blaen mor bell i'r byd,
Oddiwrth fy nghynnes aelwyd,
  Ac o'm maethfa brydferth glyd :
Hyd yn hyn 'roedd cylch y bryniau
  A gofleidiai'r pentref gwiw
Imi'n ffurfio holl gyffiniau
  Cyfandiroedd cread Duw.

Torrais drwy'r hen orwel hudol
  Amgylchynnai f'esmwyth grud ;
Synnais weld mai llen symudol
  Oedd parwydydd clyd fy myd :
Dacw'r ffiniau 'nawr yn estyn
  Hyd orwelau draw'n y nudd,
A fy ngolwg syn yn disgyn
  Ar ororau gwledydd cudd !

T'rawyd oerni trwy fy mynwes
  Gan *fyd newydd*—chwithig dro !—
Byd heb bared ; byd digynnes ;
  Byd heb drothwy ; byd heb do ;
Byd heb aelwyd : bellach, imi,
  Terfyn daear oedd y nudd !
Aeth rhyw arswyd a phetruster
  Trwy fy nwyfron dyner, brudd.

Pob newyddle ddaeth fel anffawd,
  Fy morefyd oedd ar goll—
Byd fu imi yn fydysawd
  Y Duw Mawr ; a'r oll yn oll !
Profais wacter yn fy mynwes,
  Ciliodd draw bob gwrthrych hedd,
Ond fy mam â'i chalon gynnes
  A fy nhad â'i bruddaidd wedd.

Hebrwng 'nhad 'roedd Dan ei gefnder,
  Ond ni allai ganu'n iach,
Nes, yn syth i'r lan o'r dyfnder,
  Daeth rhyw ddeigryn gloyw bach;
Yna'n union o'r agendor
  Daeth y llanw dwys wrth raid:
'Roedd y llifddor wedi agor—
  Saethai'r dagrau yn ddibaid.

Dyfnder alwai fyth ar ddyfnder
  O'r naill fynwes friw i'r llall:
Tonnau tristwch distaw'n dyner
  Lifent drostynt yn ddiball:
Hoff atgofion y gorffennol
  Yn finteioedd ddoent i'w cof:
Yna dwysdrem i'r dyfodol
  Cyn 'madawiad Dan y gof.

Ffarwel roes i mam a minnau,
  A fy nhad yn olaf oll;
Yna'n brudd trodd ar ei wadnau
  Fel mewn penbleth, ac ar goll:
'R olwg olaf gaed o'r cerbyd
  Oddiar lechwedd bach y cnol
Oedd ar Dan, fel delw adfyd
  Yn mud-syllu, cyn troi'n ol.

Ar rudd 'nhad mi welwn ddeigryn!
  Dyna'r cynta' im' weld erioed
Ar ei rudd, pan oeddwn blentyn;
  Y diweddaf, pan mewn oed,
Welais mewn cyfyngder amlwg,
  Lawer blwyddyn ar ol hyn,
Pan ddiflannodd 'mam o'i olwg
  Mewn goleulen yn y glyn.

Yn fy mynwes teimlais ddwyster
  Yr amgylchiad wnaeth i 'nhad
Ddiosg gwregys ei wir gryfder,
  A galaru'n ddinacâd:
Ond ni welais y canlyniad
  Fyddai'n deillio yn ddi-feth
O'r munudyn welodd raniad
  Y ddau fywyd oedd ymhleth.

'Roedd y ddau, fel Gwy a Hafren,
  Wedi tarddu o'r un lle,
Ac o fewn yr un ffurfafen—
  Un o'r dwyrain, un o'r de—
Ond annhebig i'r afonydd
  Am ryw bellter aent ynghyd,
Yn gyfredol gyda'i gilydd ;
  Ond yn awr fe drow'd eu bryd.

Ceisiodd un ryw redfa dawel
  Drwy ddyffrynnoedd llonydd, mwyn,
Lle rhydd si y dirion awel
  A sŵn dyfroedd ryfedd swyn :
Nid oedd twrw yn ei fywyd,
  Nac un brysio yn ei daith :
Ni chai syndod byth, nac arswyd,
  Ar ei yrfa bwyllog, faith.

Gwnaeth y llall ryw eang gylchdaith
  Mewn rhaeadrau troellog, serth,
Yn llawn ynni, hyder, gobaith,
  Pan yn anterth mawr ei nerth ;
A phan ddaeth y mwyn brynhawnddydd
  Gwych gan haul a'i euraid 'stôr,
Mwyn ddolennodd drwy y dolydd
  I ymgolli yn y môr.

Cyn i Hafren lifo'n gynnes
  I fôr Hafren nefoedd Duw
Clywodd lais ei hen gymhares
  Ar y traeth yn " suo huw "[1] :
Adnewyddwyd, ar y marian,
  Gyfrinachau'r dyddiau gynt,
Ac adroddwyd, mewn ymddiddan,
  Eu profiadau ar eu hynt.

Cydymunodd eu hoff ddyfroedd,
  A chydredent trwy y ddôr
O dan heulog wên y nefoedd
  Dros y draethell tua'r môr.

[1]Cydgyferfydd Gwy a Hafren, ar ol hir wahaniad, cyn iddynt ill dwy ymgolli ym Môr Hafren : felly y ddau hen gyfaill.

Y WLAD A'R TREFYDD.

(*See page* 54.)

Pan gofiwyf fy mhrofiadau yn eu plith,
Mi deimlaf hiraeth dwys am dyddyn clyd,—
Am swyn yr adar, ac am berlau'r gwlith,
Ymhlith hoff gymydd gwlad, o olwg byd,—
Am dlws ddyffrynnoedd, gwych gan euraid yd
Neu gan weirgloddiau fyrdd, a hafddydd sych,—
Am ddolydd lle mae'r gwartheg mwyn ynghyd,—
Am hen lechweddau bryniau chwäog, brych,
Lle crwydra'r defaid, a lle prancia'r ŵyn,—
Am lwyni heirdd lle una'r adar llon
Eu cân â cherddi'r nentydd, o bêr swyn,—
Am goedydd sydd yn fôr o fawl o'r bron.

Gofynnaf weithiau'n brudd, Ai mantais yw
Cael byw ymhlith holl dwrf y trefydd mawr,
Yn sŵn yr hwtio a'r chwibanu bryw,
Y sgrech, a'r ddolef groch, drwy bob rhyw awr
O'r dydd a'r nos, heb byth gael cân o fawl
Mwyalchen, eos, nac aderyn du,
Na cherdd ehedydd o'r boreol wawl,
Na chrŵn y ddurtur idd ei chariad cu ?

Ai mantais ydyw colli ffrydiau'r wlad,
A grisial nant y mynydd a'i chlaer swyn
Pan lamo dros glogwyni, mewn mwynhad
O'i bywyd rhydd ; ac yna, ymhlith y brwyn
Fursenna'n ddengar gyda'r brithyll brych :
Neu'r afon dawel, yn y dyffryn hardd
Gofleidia'r gleisiad praff a'r siwin gwych ;
Ac ar ei glannau ddena fryd y bardd ?

Ai mantais, tybed, ydyw ffeirio'r rhai'n
Am ffrydiau lleidiog, pygliw gweithiau harn
Ac alcan, 'sbwriel pyllau glo, a drain,
Mieri, ysgall, oll yn garn
Mewn rhigol fu yn wely afon gynt ;
Ond heddyw'n gwter sorod, llaid, a thom,
Lle nad oes un pysgodyn ar ei hynt,
Na threillion un lysywen nychlyd lom ?

Ai mantais colli braenar, dôl, a glyn,
  A cholli awyr bur foreddydd haf,
A'r wybren glir uwch mynydd, ban, a bryn,
  Ac uwch encilion a hen lennyrch braf,
Er mwyn cael sawyr 'sgarthion gweithiau lu
  A esgyn fyth yn dawch i ffroenau'r nen,
A'r tywyll fwg a ddua'i hwyneb cu,
  Gan ddallu'r haul, y sêr, a'r lleuad wen ?

O Dduw, rho inni eto'r Eden hardd
  Adawyd gan ddynoliaeth oesoedd gynt,
Pan allan aeth o'r ffrwythlon dawel ardd
  I glywed gwŷs uchelgais ar ei hynt !
Mae'n hysbys inni'n awr fod cyfoeth a bri tref
  A moethau chwêg i'w cael, ond talu'r pris :
Anurddir gwlad ; pardduir wyneb nef ;
  Halogir nentydd y rhandiroedd is :

A diberfeddir bryniau o bob tu,
  A llenwir dyffryn hardd â llaid y pwll,
Gostegir cân a chrŵn y pluog lu,
  Â dwndwr 'sgrech a chwiban o bob twll :
Llindagir afon ag amhuredd tai
  Neu olchion du a seimlyd gweithiau fyrdd :
A, gwaethaf oll, ein Duw yn cael y bai
  Am flinfyd gwerin yn ei ffiaidd ffyrdd !