



MALLT . .

O'R

DYFFRYN.



Historical Sketch of Llantwit Faerdref



By

LEWIS WILLIAMS,

**Late Headmaster Llantwit
Faerdref Council Schools.**



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—
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"MALLT O'R DYFFRYN"

Being a historical sketch of the Parish of Llantwit Faerdref, taken from the old Parish Books of 1734: giving the history of Thomas Evans, Esq., and Malt Evans, of Dyffryn Dowlais; James Thomas, Esq., of Garth Fawr; Dic Dehewyd, the murderer; Twm o'r Trallwm; Will ap Evan and Gwennlian Thomas, y Prydyddion; Evan Ddu o'r Pant; Thomas Hopkin o'r Celyn, and Thomas Rosser, Ty'n y Waun, the lay Preachers; Old Nell of Ty Nell, and Mari Evans, Squire Evans' old servant,

By

LEWIS WILLIAMS,

(Late Headmaster of Llantwit
Faerdref Council Schools).

Dedicated

TO THE

Old inhabitants of Llantwit Faerdref and to my old scholars, some 3,000 in number. Proud of the numbers who hold, and have held for years, positions of usefulness in life as teachers, doctors, solicitors, ministers of the gospel, members of the House of Commons and other legislative bodies, and also in the Industrial World. I think I have reason to feel proud that I have been instrumental, although in a humble way, in the bands of Providence, to give a helping hand to so many to better their positions in life, in the material as well as in the spiritual world, having served as a teacher in the Public Schools for 52 years and as a Sunday School teacher for 40 years: my wish is that this small sketch of the lot of our forefathers may be found worthy of your patronage: may peace and happiness be your attendants each and all, and when the Great Disposer of all things arrests the full play of the pulse of existence and produces the final pause, may you all quit the field in sweet contentment in that you have endeavoured faithfully to discharge your duties to your God, your neighbours, and your parish.

Your Friend and Old Master,

LEWIS WILLIAMS.

March 20th, 1912.

INTRODUCTION.

Two things pressed their importance upon my mind e'er I began to commit this little tale to paper. Firstly, whether I should write in Welsh or English; and secondly, that it was my duty to make clear to the present generation where, and how, I obtained the materials.

The old people, who would certainly get the most pleasure in reading a description of the daily life of their grandfathers and great grandfathers, demand that I should write in Welsh. But English would be the most profitable to the younger generations and those who know so little of their parish and who take such little interest in the customs and habits of those who now lie in deep sleep in the different graveyards of the parish.

The materials from which this story has been compiled, and which are here given a safer permanency than that of tradition, have been passed down from father to son. That interesting and educative custom in vogue among the old Welsh people of spending the long winter nights around a bright fire, reacting the doings of the departed worthies and relating tales of *bendith y mamau* is already fast dying out. I have not met a man for years who ever heard of *cwn annwn* or *yr hen gaseg wen*; *canwyllau cyrph* have all been extinguished by other means of amusing people. I had the chief points of the history of Mallt Evan - modernised. Maud Evans - from the late Mrs. Charles James; the hiding of the communion vessels and the history of Trallwm public-house from our old friend William Lewis, Croes-cade; the working of the coal mines and the rhyming verse from the late David Williams of Dyffryn Bach; and the custom of carrying fire from one farmhouse to another before matches were known, from Mrs. Mary Thomas of Dyffryn Bach. I am much indebted also to our old and interesting friend, the late Mr. William Morgan, Dyrysgoed, for many incidents too numerous to mention singly. His mind and that of his sister was teeming with traditions - old tales of, and incidents in, the lives of those whose staff of life was at best barley bread. Many old rhymes, sayings, and curious incidents I have had from our old friends Richard and William Thomas, formerly of Tymawr, Efail Isaf, in whose excellent memories they have been preserved since their boyhood. Dick Dehewyd is almost forgotten by our present generation. Twm o'r Trallwm and Mary Evan who earned a hard livelihood by working upon the road, are now entirely forgotten by the oldest inhabitant, and so also is Miles the Constable, The history of these I have had from old writings and documents.

I have done my best to set out in their true colours the materials, which I have spent years collecting and the traditions which I have treasured in my mind. I have winnowed the evil from the good and cast it aside for burial, as the presentation of evil serves no good purpose to coming generations. It is often the case that the good, which deserves to live, is buried in deep oblivion, while the evil, like obnoxious weeds, grows more rampant when those responsible for it lie in deep sleep in the parish graveyards. Yet it will be impossible for me to give a fair picture of our forefathers in this parish without touching lightly here and there upon some habits and customs that added no credit to them. Although these habits did not carry with them any very serious wrong or depravity, they help us to understand the daily life of those who lived during the period extending from 1738 to 1870, to form a truer contrast between their daily life and our own, and to see the immense improvement in every phase of life.

It is a pity that the question of parish histories has been so woefully neglected throughout the ages. What is preserved has been done more by accident than by design. I have reason to think that in future there will be no such negligence, as the Press has made such negligence almost impossible. In future the question will be the preservation of materials rather than the want of them.

This short historical sketch was thought out on a bed of sickness, when the body was as limp as wetted paper. While in this state of great weakness a small voice censored me hourly for my negligence in delaying putting in a permanent form the materials - the traditions gathered from old inhabitants - I had been collecting for years, pertaining to the history of the parish. Now, having regained a little of my former strength, I have undertaken the task in spite of an unsteady hand and an injured memory; conditions not at all favourable to the collation of scattered materials. If, therefore, this short description of the life of the old inhabitants of Llantwit should fall under the critical eye of one who has an idea of how the farming community lived 70 or 80 years ago and the hardships they underwent to get the bare necessities of life, I would crave his sympathetic forbearance.

It was a Saturday night in February, 1738, cold, dark, and threatening a depth of snow. It had been preparing for a snow-storm for a few days, and the farmers had anticipated the severity of the weather by loading their coal-houses from the Brynmenyn Pits. The poor, and they were the majority, had collected all the firewood they could get, from the woods on both sides of the Dowlais brook. They hardly ever asked the consent of the farmers; such was the state of things at this time, and the poverty of the farm labourers was so great, that it was an established custom, amounting almost to a right, that the poor could collect and use for fire all the withered wood they could get.

Late that afternoon there might have been seen sitting in one of the most comfortable old armchairs made of twisted straw, a man, not old by any means, because he was on the right side of sixty, strong in limb, and good in health, with every faculty in splendid working order, above his neighbours in height by several inches. The slight tendency to stoop was certainly the result of bending over the plough for 40 long winters. He was looked upon as the best plough in the parish. His hands showed evident signs of hard work. His eyes were blue and peeped upon the outer world from beneath bushy eyebrows which seemed very anxious to protect them from the rude attacks of the elements. His nose slightly aquiline, his forehead broad, while his hair showed slight signs of thinning.

The old *cadair wellt*, or straw arm-chair, has disappeared by today. After many enquiries the author has failed to find anyone among the youth of the parish who has ever seen one, while the last maker of these chairs known to him has been gathered to his fathers for 50 years. It was in such an armchair sat Thomas Ievan or Evans as his descendants now sign their name. Evans is a much later form in the old parish books. His name is Thomas Evan or Ievan as it was pronounced. There he sat, a splendid specimen of manhood; physically and mentally; socially and religiously.

It was no wonder his contemporaries were proud of him, and reposed such great confidence in him. There was hardly a vestry in which he did not figure, and his advice accepted in preference to that of the clergyman who was sent by the Vicar of Llantrisant to attend to the spiritual needs of the parish, This clergyman did not live in the parish but came here to take Sunday service, bury the dead, marry the young, and christen the babies. Up to 1745 there was no dissenting or Nonconformist chapel in the parish.

Thomas Evan's only rival in popularity and influence was James Thomas, the owner of the Garth Estate. Thomas Evan's position in the parish will be understood by perusing the following record which has been copied letter by letter and word by word from an old parish document :-

“A vestry was held on the 27th of February 1688, at the dwelling-house of Bess Hopkins, widow, in the parish of Llantwit Vayrdre in the County of Glamorgan. It is by the inhabitants assembled agreed and resolved that Jane the widow of Edmund Andrews’ house rent of sixteen shillings shall be paid to Edmund from the 13th day of May next and also it is agreed to pay into the hands of Phillip Williams the sum of Five pounds to pay the debts of his son in law John Richard, on this condition, that he keeps and maintains his daughter and her four children during the said Phillip William’s life so that they be not chargeable or burdensome to the Parish of Llantwit Vayrdre. Allowed the above.”

"THOMAS EVAN.

"RICHARD THOMAS."

"JAMES THOMAS."

"FRANCIS EVANS.”

At the time referred to in this chapter Thomas Evan was the owner and tenant of Dyffryn Dowlais Farm, a homestead which was even then a very old house having withstood the storms for at least 300 years. The farm house is a fine specimen of the buildings erected by our ancestors in the days of long ago. Its walls in the chief parts are 5 feet thick - our forefathers built for the third and fourth generations as well as for themselves. At this time Thomas Evan was a widower with one child Mallt now written Maud or Matilda of whom more will be related in the succeeding pages.

CHAPTER II.

Thomas Evan, after spending a busy day in the cold air, was not long seated in his cosy old chair, before a good fire, e’er sleep came on; but his slumbers were soon rudely disturbed by the sudden opening of the door.

"Father," cried a voice.

Thomas Evan turned round sharply and beheld a young woman, upon whose graceful form the flickering firelight danced, enhancing its beauty, standing on the threshold. "I am sorry, father, to disturb you," said Mallt, for it was she, who, suspecting the meaning of the silence in the kitchen and having just completed her preparations in the next room, had suddenly opened the door.

"I am afraid," she continued, "I have kept you waiting for your meal, which has now been waiting for you. This is how it was, father, I slipped into the dairy to turn the cheese, as I suddenly found out that Mary had forgotten or neglected to do so this morning, and, I see, I was longer than I intended when I went."

"Never mind, Mallt, my dear," replied her father, "I know you would never think of delaying my food longer than was necessary.

It was my fault to fall asleep; or rather the fault of this easy arm chair and your nice fire. Now I am ready and will come in, for I do not want to wait for an appetite for a meal, to-day's cold wind and long hours have done their duty in that respect."

Mallt led her father into the middle room, for so the old farmhouses are arranged: kitchen, middle room and upper room. There she placed him by the side of the fire while she sat opposite.

Thomas Evan never in his life felt prouder of his beautiful young daughter than this evening. The sun had already gone down behind the Vol Hill and the shades of night had begun to fall; while the Garth Mountain was fast disappearing in the gloom.

"Father," said Mallt, " you seem to me to be more tired than usual, and no wonder, for you were fully an hour later by our dial, than your custom is, before you came home. The road is bad, but your way is not heavier than usual from the Colliery."

"You say what is quite right, Mallt, but I see in the merry twinkle in your eye that you have some hidden charge against me, which perhaps you think is a sufficient reason for my lateness in coming home."

"And perhaps, father," said Mallt, "your guilt has caused you to give expression to that suspicion. I think if I repeat to you the rhyme which Mary taught me a few days ago, it will explain to you the reason for my suspicion:

"Mae llawer un yn 'rofyfyn
Mynd i wel'd yr engine
Sy'n tynu dŵr trwy bibau tin
Ar odrau Bryn y Menyn."

"Who taught that to Mary, I should like to know," said Thomas Evan.

"Oh," said Mallt, "'the rhymer, as usual, was Twm o'r Trallwm."

"I thought so," said Thomas Evan, "but I begin to suspect that Mary, who is already not too good a girl, is getting too fond of Twm's company. She does not, as was her habit, come home before, or just a little after me. But there it is, the old Welsh proverb is quite true, although it is somewhat below the usual refined diction of the old Welsh proverbs which express a truth in language to which there cannot be any objection; 'I bob barcut y mae barcutan.'

"I don't like to say a word of remonstrance to her, father; she is a few years older, and one would expect her to have a wiser head than mine."

"What did you say, Mallt?" asked her father. "It is often the case that heads do not grow wiser as years roll on. Growth in wisdom, or discretion, as we Welsh put it, is a very complex development, as it depends upon so many things. Mary, you know, never had a day's schooling. There was no school nearer than Cowbridge Grammar School, and very few in our parish could afford to send their children, even for one year, to that school. My father did send me there for six months and by means of the squire and curate, whenever they called, or I called upon them, I was enabled to go

through my books, especially my arithmetic book. My father's great wish was that I should be able to measure a piece of land, and read to him the news from the war, for Squire Thomas of Garth Fawr did get a newspaper once a fortnight. From a schooling point an unfrocked clergyman was a great blessing to the parish. He settled down in one of the small cottages in Church Village and earned his little bread and cheese, receiving an occasional pint of Cowbridge beer from old Bess Hopkins of Trallwm."

Silence fell on the little party with some suddenness, and Thomas Evan spent the remainder of the evening in thoughtful reverie. These fits of silence were nothing new to Mallt and she had long ceased attempting, when he withdrew as it were into himself, to entice her father by loving quips and cranks back again into the life and warmth of the family circle. Mallt was the unconscious cause of her father's reveries. Squire Evan's greatest pleasure was watching his beautiful daughter developing into womanhood, but as the woman grew out of the child he saw the form of her mother in all her movements; her voice awoke in his heart accents that once made the old rafters ring with joy; in her deportment and even in her innocent little foibles he saw her mother, and tears often filled his eyes in spite of his strongest efforts to suppress them. But all these traits or features in her character, both physical and mental, conjured up in his mind's eye the form and spirit of her mother, and once more he saw her moving about and doing her household duties as of old. Some evenings, while her father sat in his old *cadair wellt* and she herself was occupied in the room, she would happen to turn round suddenly and catch her father watching her intently, with eyes filled with tears. Being a little startled at his serious face and tears she would ask the reason, but her father never revealed the truth and did his utmost to allay her suspicion.

Mallt's mother's name is not known, the only item known about her mother that was told to me is that she died either at child-birth or when Mallt was still a baby a few weeks old. Had she lived to see Mallt in her 18th year no mother could be prouder of her daughter than she would have been. Every mother in the parish was proud of Mallt and had a smile and a kind word for her whenever they met, while on the other hand Mallt had a smile, which was not easily forgotten, for all, whatever their position in life.

Miss Mallt was slightly taller than the average woman of her time. In figure she was slight, and very nimble in her movements. A wealth of hair which hung in golden ringlets down her shoulders formed a crown of glory to a face of surpassing beauty. Her cheeks were like the first blush of dawn in their soft, pure pinkness; the light in her blue eyes danced with life and joy like the scintillating of a million stars on a frosty night.

"Grudd fad is llygad glas, llon, - a dwy ael
Is dellt crych - felynion;
Ha! fe alwyd nefolion
I holhti aur yn wallt i hon."

Her temperament was as sweet as her face was beautiful. No stranger passed her without satisfying an intense desire to have another look at her. Sometimes she herself broke the canon of propriety by looking back as if to say, "I cannot help it, and I don't blame you." But nothing annoyed her more than to find that it was possible that any action or word on her part might be construed by her neighbours to mean that she was conscious of her charms and wished her neighbours to be conscious of them also. This caused her to be a little reserved and shy in her behaviour, but all those who knew her knew the reason and overlooked her failings.

Although Mallt was quite free from any ailment yet she was not constitutionally strong and it would have been to the betterment of her health if she had taken less interest in household duties, and especially those of the dairy. It was in that sphere she found happiness, and in spite of her father's frequent admonitions she was always found engaged in these duties.

CHAPTER III.

The Trallwm was a public-house situated where Mr. Llewellyn Hughes now lives. It was a thatched house one storey high with a small room at the pine end facing the east, two small rooms fronting the road and a small back kitchen. At the end of the kitchen hardly a yard lower than the ground floor, was a small cellar with just sufficient space to keep two small casks of beer on a strong oaken bench. On a shelf above Old Bess sometimes kept a bottle of wine or some other liquor for the use of an occasional caller such as the Squire of Garth Fawr, or a new clergyman or any stranger invited to a local wedding. Both the bottle and cask required her careful watching from morning till night, for Twm o'r Trallwm found as many excuses to visit this little storage as there were blackberries on the hedges of Tir y Beily, or Tir Treharne. Facing the road also there was a little stable for the use of passers by; the door cut into two parts, upper and lower, a copy of the usual Welsh barn door.

Mrs. Elizabeth Hopkins or Old Bess of Trallwm as she was called by the inhabitants at the time, was the tenant of this wayside inn which has figured so much in the history of this parish. Old Bess, apart from the consideration of profit, was always quite ready to assist the poor although nothing but a pauper herself, as the following resolution passed by the vestry shows:

"At the special vestry, held at the dwelling house of Elizabeth Hopkins in the Parish of Llantwit Fardre in the County of Glamorgan it is resolved agreed and appointed by the Major part of the inhabitants of the said parish now here assembled on the present occasion 11th day of September 1688 that the overseers of the poor for the said parish pay Evan Jones of the parish of Llantrisant Malster the sum of one pound twelve shillings for two bushels of malt and

two pounds of hops which are given to the said Elizabeth Hopkins in gratitude for her keeping and maintaining Evan Hopkins' three children and in future the same to be kept at the rate of 2s. a week which has been to our certain knowledge kept by her to her great injury and resolved also that this, by us subscribers hereto, buy a a pair of new shoes with all convenient speed to be given to Catherine Jonathan widow.

Signed by

MARK THOMAS BYLES.

THOMAS WILLIAMS.

THOMAS ROSSER.

and THOMAS EVANS in his own handwriting.”

Bess o'r Trallwm was slightly below the average height of the women of today and carried no superfluous amount of flesh. Her eyes were black; her hair of which she had a good crop was of the same colour. She was very active, and found sitting down in her kitchen with nothing to do the most tedious time of the day. But as it is with active people so soon as she sat down her quick eye was certain to find out some small turn that ought to be done, and done at once; there was no delay until that afternoon or evening. She had always found that the afternoon and evening brought their own bundles of duties, which were heavy enough without adding those of another part of the day to them.

After years of this active life it had become a proverb in the parish that if a house-wife was exceptionally busy and industrious she was another Bess o'r Trallwm, never found resting. No one ever passed Trallwm Inn, on horseback or on foot, without seeing Bess trotting about with door open and a little pillar of smoke issuing from the chimney.

Squire Thomas of Garth Fawr used in the early morning to look carefully through the window towards Bryntirion, and when he saw the smoke curling up from the chimney of the little inn he gave no quiet to the servant girls and men until he could hear the horses in the farm - yard and see the cows milked. The Squire would then roll himself up in the blanket, and there followed silence and perfect peace which all the household did their best not to disturb till after breakfast.

Bess had been blessed with a sound constitution as her face and assiduous application to work bore witness. In personal appearance she was always neat and tidy; there was never a sudden disappearance to place her cap at the proper angle, or to look to see if her locks were in a presentable state whenever a passer-by called.

At the time of our sketch a few white hairs might be seen on her temple, not so much the result of anxious thought as anxious care to make both ends meet. She was a widow, and from generosity of heart had taken cares and responsibilities upon herself which she might have escaped easily, as can be inferred from the resolution

passed by the vestry. Orphan children always found in her a friend, and never a child passed without being offered something to eat. Many a deserted child found shelter and food with her until the vestry found someone willing to take charge of it.

The reader should understand that there were no workhouses at this time; all the poor, adult and young, were taken, as lodgers, chiefly by the farmers, and a few by the labourers, who received from the parish a certain amount weekly -for their maintenance. Times were so bad that it was often very difficult to find lodgings for the paupers. People thought themselves very lucky if they had enough barley (which was 14s. to 20s., per bushel) bread to eat; wheaten bread was out of the question, the labourer never saw it, nor did he taste fresh meat except perhaps a few times in the year. Yet for years Old Bess o'r Trallwm, in the midst of hard and strenuous living, mothered the orphan and friendless, and harboured the deserted and shelterless without any recompense, until at last the churchwardens and overseers at their vestry meeting resolved that she deserved some recognition of her humane and charitable work.

Before proceeding further we should make it clear that Old Bess, who kept the old public-house by the Church some 150 years later, was not a descendant of Old Bess o'r Trallwm. This Old Bess who was so well-known to the people of Llantwit 40 or 50 years ago, was really not a native of Llantwit. She came from the Caerphilly district and at first kept a farm, afterwards a public-house. Bess o'r Trallwm was born and bred in the parish and became more noted than her namesake of 150 years afterwards.

Old Bess o'r Trallwm brewed her own beer and Twm o'r Trallwm drank it, when he could do so unaware to his generous benefactress. But who was Twm? Well, that question was asked many times by the parishioners of both Bess and Twm, but no one ever had a satisfactory answer. Bess did not know. He was left in the parish by a passing stranger - whether by his father or not was never known. He was left there, and Bess from kindness of heart gave him food and shelter, as she had done to others before and did after. She was not responsible for the bad blood in him, but she was responsible for his idle up-bringing. When he was old and strong enough he ought to have been sent to earn his daily bread, but he was not, and remained throughout his life a burden upon a generous old widow. At first Twm could only speak English but as no one in the parish except the curate and the vestry clerk knew a word of English he was soon able to speak Welsh.

Twm o'r Trallwm, as he was called by all, having been left a nameless child, stranded in the parish, was given the name of Thomas Evans; Williams and Evans being then the most common names in the locality. No one knew, and no one-ever came to know, his real name; he did not know himself. In stature he was below the average; strong in limb, and if he had been desirous of doing work he might have accomplished a good deal in his day, but he never did any; in fact, he was another Will Wimble. He would mend a bucket occasionally, light fire sometimes in the morning, carry out the

ashes, cut sticks and fetch them from a neighbouring hedge without allowing the damage done to trouble him in the least. He was quite willing to fetch a pitcher of water from Ty person if the jug was not a very heavy one. Setting the garden was not included in his sphere of usefulness, although he was fairly willing to dig a few potatoes for his dinner, especially if a rabbit had been caught in his net the previous night.

Twm's facial expression was a queer one. He had a slight obliquity in both eyes (which were black in colour); no one could tell at whom he was looking, nor in which direction his glances were cast. He had a slightly florid complexion; nose of no particular shape except that it receded from the eye towards the mouth - it had a tendency to be slightly elevated and Twm made it more so when his honour was insulted by such hints as that it was time now that he tried to earn his living. But on the whole Twm's was a pleasant expression ; there was always a merry twinkle in his face that made every one think that he was at perfect peace with himself and with all his neighbours. He never had a bad word to say about anybody. He was on friendly terms with all the world and especially with him- self, in whose conduct there was never anything wrong. Whatever he did he always considered was done well and could not be improved upon. He saw nothing wrong in helping a widow to consume her loaf, and thought he was doing a very important duty by fetching a few shillings weekly relief from the Overseers of the Poor, which he always handed over to Old Bess.

He always had the idea that he deserved a higher rate of relief than what the Overseers gave him. He often attended the vestry and expressed surprise that his relief had not been increased seeing that Bess was now getting old and infirm, which signs he noticed with some concern. At one vestry, Thomas Evan, Dyffryn, suggested to him that he should try the job of winding up coal at the little pit at Brynmenyn and help to weigh and load it into the carts. He felt surprised at such a proposal—as surprised as his nature allowed him to be. He showed by signs that he was shocked at the idea of leaving the old lady all day alone in the house while he was providing both of them with what the parish had supplied them gratis now for such a long time. Thomas Evan of the Dyffryn was a gentleman from whom he had never expected such a thing. Why should the Overseers do so? And the natural expression of Twm's nose was enhanced by a dignified toss of the head.

"Besides," said Twm to himself, "why did they not suggest that the person should go down to help David David the collier; he has nothing to do all the week and gets greater pay than me and he has no old widow to take care of?"

But it must not be forgotten that Twm did a good deal of service to Old Bess. Leaning on the door of the little stable he drew the attention of all passers by to the fact that it was hot, or cold, or sultry, or that a fresh cask had been brought in that morning found on the seashore near Marcross or Llantwit Major, but he had had no time, so far, nor help, to lift it on the stand in the little cellar, and

therefore he had not been able to taste it. The trick was often successful. The traveller, curious to know what kind of stuff was in this mysterious cask, went in and assisted Twm to place it on the bench. The cask was tapped, Twm had a good dose gratis but his helper had to pay for his dose. It must be confessed that Twm took the profit on many a pint in that way but he would insist to Old Bess that it made business, if not always a profitable one.

Whenever Twm had to go to the cellar for a vessel of beer, Bess compelled him to whistle one of his tunes as a security that he was doing his duty, and that only. To overcome this difficulty Twm had taught Dick Dehewyd Uchaf to whistle the same tune and so Old Bess was cheated when these thirsty fellows were together in the house.

Twm's chief amusement was practical joking, and the tricks which he played upon the old and young were very successful for a long time. But one day, while Twm was elaborating one of his jokes, the curate, who had been preaching at the church the previous Sunday, gave the whole show away in the presence of a numerous company of the youth of the parish and a goodly number of the farmers who had been attending a vestry. His trick was this. He would become possessed of an old newspaper which he changed as often as he could - certainly not once a month.

In the winter, on the morning after a severe storm, and often during most of the next days, Twm was found leaning as usual over the little door of the stable with a newspaper hanging down from his hands; and he never allowed anyone to pass without drawing his attention to the serious and awful results of the storm. The same storm would do for a long time according to his luck in getting another newspaper. He held the paper upside down to show the effects of the storm. They could see the ships nicely poised on the top of the masts but how they balanced so well Twm never did explain, being of opinion that it was not his business to deal with such difficult questions.

On the Monday in question Twm was expatiating on the results of the storm of the Saturday and Sunday previous, and showing to the passing crowd six ships blown by the violence of the storm hull up through the seething water when unfortunately for Twm, when he was in the middle of his usual harangue, the curate made his appearance, and, joining the crowd, disclosed Twm's trick.

"But, Mr. Evans, your paper is upside down; turn it the other way," said the curate.

With subdued anger, he grudgingly did so, and the ships righting themselves, sailed away without any signs of having suffered from the violence of the storm. Then followed a loud laugh at Twm's expense. Dick Dehewyd, Twm's greatest pal, was the only one in the crowd who did not enjoy the disclosure.

Dick was the tenant of Dehewyd Fach, or, as it was called then, and as it was always written in the old documents, Dehewyd Uchaf. Dick took no interest in parochial matters, nor, in fact, in any social matters; one thing alone occupied his mind, and that was drink and how to get it. He preferred to spend his day, even in the midst of the harvest; in the Trallwm Inn than with his family in the field gathering in the produce of his farm. During sowing time he would spend days with Twm, a full decanter by his side, while he ought to have been between the horns of the plough preparing the ground for his next crop of barley, of which most of the bread eaten in the parish at this time was made. The decanter and Twm's yarns occupied a more important place in Dick's mind than the comfort of his family.

Dick was a very strongly built man, short and stumpy in stature, with a thick crop of red curly hair. He had little or no control over his passions even when sober, and many a time when in drink his neighbours were given sufficient cause to be afraid, before the perpetration of the terrible deed which sent a thrill of horror throughout all the neighbouring parishes. Tradition cannot point to another character like Dick, either before or after.

Dick, unlike Twm, had no redeeming feature, at least as far as his history has come down to the present generation; Twm had no dangerous elements in his nature. Dick, when in drink, was more like a human tiger than a rational being. Twm never-grew out of his boyhood, he was never anything else than an overgrown boy, devoid of the sense of honour. He joined in mischief from no other motive than fun, but Dick found enjoyment in inflicting pain. The parish constables were often the objects of his tricks, when sober, and when drunk he was a terror to them. William Edwards, of the Colliers, never gave him a welcome, and when Dick called there, whether by night or by day, he always waited anxiously for his departure; filling his last decanter always gave him pleasure and drew from him a deep sigh of relief.

At this time Thomas Hopkin and Morgan David were the two constables. A special Vestry had been held to consider the question of parish constables, as Evan Miles, who had been appointed at the last Vestry, refused to act, the salary promised (5s. for the year) being in his opinion too mean for a year's service while such a dangerous character as Dick lived in the parish.

Evan Miles was a weaver by trade, of very poor health at best, of very little value in a struggle, or any rough contest serious or otherwise. But, perhaps, what brought him mostly into contempt with the young spirits of the parish was his weak, querulous voice, which, when he commanded His Majesty's subjects not to break the peace only brought laughter in response. He was himself a man of peace, and never enjoyed a trip to Caerphilly or Cardiff with a prisoner,

although he was paid a shilling for it. It is no wonder that the unpleasant duties of a parish constable had no charm for him, especially after what happened to him one night at the Colliers Inn. It appears to have been an old trick in this parish played upon certain persons of small stature and forgiving natures.

One night there was considerable horse-play going on at the Colliers, and William Edwards, the landlord, after vain attempts at stopping it, refused to supply any more drink, and sent for the parish constables. It cannot be said that they were soon on the spot, but rather, like Cowper's schoolboy, they crept there at a snail's pace.

When they came things were as rowdy as ever. Dick, who had a sack of chad with which to make a new bed for the servant, was there, and the moment he saw the two constables his eyes flashed dangerously and he became as one possessed of an evil spirit. Miles's order for silence and quiet, given in that weak querulous voice, was greeted with loud laughter. Dick got up, upset the table, and fell heavily on the floor. As soon as he regained his feet he rushed and emptied the sack of chaff on the heads of the two constables. He then seized Evan Miles, shouted upon Twm to open and hold the sack, and pushed Evan in. When he had tied the mouth of the sack he called upon his fellow toppers to wind it up to the ceiling, and there, the sack with the struggling constable inside, was hung. The poor fellow was crying piteously for help.

"Listen," said Dick, "to my little porker crying for his barley meal!"

Just at this moment Thomas Evan entered the room accompanied by Mary, the servant, and in a loud voice demanded silence. He discovered in a moment what had been done, and jumping on the table, he cut down the poor suspended constable, who was on the point of fainting. At the Squire's entrance there was a rush to the door, led by Twm, who was as much ashamed that Mary had seen him as he was disconcerted that Mr. Evan had caught him mixed up in such company, and a helper in the committal of such a brutal deed. Dick was not troubled with such fine scruples and stood his ground. William Edwards did not allow Mr. Evan to go home until the gang had separated altogether.

Mary Evan went up to the Trallwm Inn to make sure that Twm had arrived home. There she found him, apparently deeply repentant, sitting on the bench in the chimney place, watching the flames spirit upwards and then die away; his thoughts doubtless with his boon companions at the revelry and bacchanalia. Mary took no notice of Twm, but, after saluting old Bess, plunged into the narration of the events of the evening. Twm tried by gestures to stop her voluble tongue but to no purpose. When she was about to depart, Twm offered to bear her company, but Mary preemptorily refused, and Twm sank back quite abashed into his chair, while Bess, with flushed face, said, "Well, now, Twm, you have done it at last."

When Mary passed out of the room and sailed down the road towards Old Church Village, Twm's heart sank low. He thought he

had never seen Mary looking so stately before, while Mary, conscious that Twm was looking after her, kept her head much higher than was usually her habit. Twm returned to the house very much troubled that Mary had treated him so severely, while old Bess, on her side, did not spare him; she more than hinted to him that his only chance for a wife had gone.

"Twm," she said, "you are not a very likely match at best with those squint eyes and nondescript nose, but when you add such scandalous conduct, which you can help, to defects which you cannot help, your case is hopeless. I am getting old and infirm, and if something cannot be done for you soon you will be homeless, for no one will take you in except David David's widow, at Penygraig, by Heol y Cawl. The overseers also thought of raising my pay by a shilling a week, but your conduct with Dick Dehewyd has spoilt all. You see I am punished although I am innocent. I cannot help your silly prank!"

By now, big tears were trickling down Twm's cheek, and being unable to hear old Bess's scathing remarks any longer, he blubbered, through his tears, "Mother, can you do something for me?" He looked repentant, but not for the cruel part he played in nearly smothering a weak and asthmatic old man. He was unable to repent for participation in such a deed; he thought it added to his popularity in the parish; among the thoughtless youths he certainly was more popular, but the loss of the company and respect of Mary touched him deeply. He saw the future was black to him. No other girl had condescended to talk to him or allow him to accompany her home. It was, therefore, no wonder that he besought Bess's aid.

Bess looked at him seriously for a moment and said, "Twm, - are you not ashamed to ask an old woman - and a widow besides - to intercede between you and Mary? I am not unwilling to advise you in a way, but I am afraid if the young people come to know that I have been down in Dyffryn Dowlais on behalf of you, they will make a laughing-stock of you. But I have a better plan, and it is this. Go down to see Squire Evan - and especially Miss Mallt - first of all, and tell the Squire how sorry you are for what was done that night, promising at the same time that he will never see you again in such company. At the same time watch for the opportunity of seeing Miss Mallt and tell her your business; I am sure she will listen sympathetically to you and will put in a word for you with Mary. But mind, before you go, put on that new hat and tie I bought you at the last Caerphilly fair; you told me once that Mary was fond of that tie. Let me see that you have tied it neatly before you go. Mind you hold up your head and look as straight as you can at her, for if she will not speak to you, you can see her, and as it is your duty, make an ample apology for your conduct so as to smooth down her ruffled feelings?"

CHAPTER V.

When old Bess had finished her lesson to Twm he had become as pliant as a glove as the old Welsh proverb goes, and was prepared to do anything at her bidding. Next day, having occasion to go to Tir Treharne, now called Cross Cade, Bess thought she would pay a visit to Dyffryn Dowlais to intercede for Twm.

"Twm," she said when leaving, "you mind the house till I come back; I am going to Tir Treharne on a little business and may call elsewhere on a more important matter before returning. Remember in my absence, let 'good conduct' be your motto, for it is in people's absence character is tested. What you are ashamed to do in my presence you should certainly be ashamed to do in my absence?"

She turned round on the doorstep, and as a parting piece of advice said: "Twm, everything done in secret will come to light."

There was one on the Vol cutting fern who kept an eagle eye on her movements, and as soon as she was out of the way, the scythe was hidden in the hedge, and within ten minutes there was a knock at the door of Trallwm Inn. Luckily, Twm had seen Dick coming and, with the sound advice of old Bess still ringing in his ears, he had the strength for once, by keeping out of sight and leaving the door unanswered, to be true to his trust. Dick, not to be thwarted in his determination to have his pint of beer, went forward to the village, but to his disgust found Squire James Thomas, Squire Thomas Evan, the two constables, Thomas Edwards of the old public house, the parson and most of the villagers collected there busily discussing the events of the previous night.

Dick entered the inn and William Edwards followed with the bad news that he was quite out of beer, and to thoroughly convince Dick of the truth of his statement he took him to the little room where the beer was usually kept and showed him the empty cask. Dick at once turned on his heels and went out feeling as if he would like to kick in the bottom of the cask, which had no business to be empty - the supply should be perennial not intermittent. He now took to the field so as to try to get entrance at the back of the Trallwm Inn, but Twm was his match again. He had now left the premises altogether and had taken up a position from which he could watch every approaching passer-by, and so he completely thwarted Dick in his purpose to get drink that afternoon.

Meanwhile, old Bess had reached Dyffryn Dowlais. When passing over the green in front of the house, she was seen by Thomas Evan, who immediately called upon Mallt to see who was at the door. Mary would not have thought herself sufficiently presentable to see one whom, and whose business, she did not know. She was impatient with herself afterwards that she did not go at once to the door. Old Bess herself was glad to see Miss Mallt.

"Please, Miss Mallt," said Bess, curtsying, "may I see you privately for a few seconds?"

"Certainly, Aunt Bess," said Miss Mallt, adopting the old Welsh form of address. It was the Welsh custom till a very few years ago to call old people "aunt" or "uncle" in token of respect.

Bess was shown into the upper room and seated by a bright fire while Mallt took a seat by her side. Taking hold of her hand she said, "Well, Aunt Bess, I hope there is nothing serious!"

"No, Miss Mallt, it is not so serious that you and I are not able to settle it if you will kindly assist me in the business. Indeed, I know that Miss Mallt can do it herself but I have been expressly asked to interfere in the affair."

"But, Aunt Bess, you have not yet told me what your business is; you have so far roused my curiosity to such a degree that it is almost breaking."

"Begging your pardon, Miss Mallt, it is of such a nature that really I do not know how to divulge it to you, I am so clumsy in my speech. You are a scholar, Miss Mallt, and you understand the affair better than I do. I am getting old and out of touch with such affairs altogether. There are now many years gone since I was in a similar position."

"Aunt Bess! Aunt Bess! Come! come! do tell me your business! Has anyone been making a proposal to you? Thomas Hopkin the constable for instance, or?"—

"For shame, Miss Mallt! I can almost feel the blush on my face, ruddy as it is," said Bess, looking down and trying to hide her face in her flannel apron. When at last she lifted up her face, Mallt apologised for her hasty and thoughtless words. When the words had escaped her lips she remembered that Thomas Hopkin and Bess were not on the best of terms. They had had a serious dispute over a question, with Bess, of business, but of morals and waste of the rates with Thomas Hopkin.

Bess, giving up diplomacy, now came to the simple facts she had intended to communicate to Mallt.

"Well, Miss Mallt," she said, "my business is this: Twm and Mary have had a quarrel and I wish to get your help to get them together again. Twm is fast pining away. When he came home after the quarrel he did not want any food, and he hardly slept all night. He is crying like a child and does not say a word to me, and when anyone comes in he keeps out of sight. If he loses Mary I do not know what will become of him. No one suits him as well as Mary."

"But, Aunt Bess! why do you come to me for advice? I have never had any experience in settling lovers' quarrels!"

"Because you know Mary, Miss Mallt, and are better able than I to make apologies for Twm, and put his case before her. I am certain that he will break his heart unless Mary forgives him."

"Does he deserve forgiveness for nearly smothering a weak and harmless old man? Mary feels very much, Aunt Bess, that anybody with whom she is friendly should associate with a man of Dick Dehewyd's character, and I really fear that it will be very

difficult, if not impossible, to get Mary to speak to anyone who has helped him in his mad and drunken pranks."

"I quite agree with you, Miss Mallt, that all actions of the kind should be condemned most severely, and that the constables should be assisted in their work and not obstructed and assaulted. If the respectable and responsible parishioners do not help the constables to enforce law and order, neither life nor property will be safe. You know, Miss Mallt, that Dick Dehewyd is a very dangerous character, and is not fit to be at liberty. Everybody is afraid of him, and should anyone dare to refuse him drink he becomes like a madman, tearing and raging about the room, knocking everybody about, and damaging what furniture stands in the way. I am really sorry for his poor wife."

"Then, Aunt, you should insist upon Twm keeping away from him altogether. This is the awful effect of the drink. You see, Aunt Bess, it ruins a man's health, breaks up his family circle, and makes him an object of fear throughout the parish. Dick has so lost his love and respect for his wife and family that he would spend his last penny on drink and allow his children to starve. This is worse than bestial. The animal will shed its last drop of blood to feed and protect its young, but man - the lord of the animal - whom God made in His own image, and into whose nostrils He breathed the breath of life, grovels in the mud and slime to satiate his lust - Pah!!

"Miss Mallt! Miss Mallt! don't be so angry! I'm afraid I've offended you. You should not blame drink for all this. Men of Dick's temperament would be dangerous whether they had drink or not, We are not all as bad as Dick!"

"No, Aunt Bess dear, you have not offended me, and I'm not angry with you. My blood boils when I think of the awful havoc wrought by drink in our little parish. I detest the whole business with a burning hatred. The great majority of our neighbours are slaves to this awful curse."

"But, Miss Mallt, we shouldn't condemn all our neighbours because a few drink too much. The intemperate in drink are often the intemperate in other things; and drink is not the only cause of intemperance. If people would only drink in moderation there could be no serious, objection, and moreover it is essential to life."

"I do not agree with you, Aunt Bess. Whether drink be taken in moderation or not, it is not necessary; it is simply taken to satisfy an insatiable, lustful craving, and therefore should not be taken at all. I cannot understand anybody glutting himself with the filthy stuff - ach y fi! The ox drinks but its fill of the limpid stream, but of beer, man, as an old englyngwr once sang :

‘Ond, dyn ffol, yntau, ni phaid, -
Myn lanw mwy na'i lonaid.’ ”

"Remember, Miss Mallt, "quoth Bess in an apologetic tone, "the best men in the parish constantly call at the Trallwm for a pot

of ale; I know that Thomas Hopkin goes about the parish preaching against drinking, but what can he know, he's only a farm servant. The clergyman - and he's a scholar and ought to know - quotes verses from the Bible in favour of taking strong drink. He calls with me as often as anybody in the parish, and takes his ale regularly. Thomas Hopkin has a spite against me, and because of that, he says that my beer is no good ——"

"I am sorry, Bess, to interrupt you in your little speech. He does not say that, what he says is, that there is no good in anybody's beer."

"That is, perhaps," said Bess, "because he never takes a glass except with Thomas Edwards in the village, who always keeps such inferior stuff."

"No! no! no!" said Mallt, as if reiteration strengthened her statement, "Thomas Hopkin is a very straight man, he does not frequent any public-house. Have you not noticed that for a long time now he spends much of his time in the church reading the big Bible? People who read their Bible earnestly cannot get enjoyment in a public-house, nor in drink. Have you never heard, Aunt Bess, that 'wine is a mocker,' 'strong drink is raging,' 'a Christian cannot stand in the way of sinners, sinners shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous.' There is no happiness for the righteous at the fireside of a public-house."

"But, Miss Mallt! Miss Mallt! I beg your pardon, I cannot argue the matter with you! I have no time to go to church, for, often when I go there someone calls and he cannot be supplied because I cannot trust Twm with the keys. But I am keeping you too long from your household duties. Do promise me to say a word to Mary on behalf of Twm, and he shall come down this evening to speak to Mary himself. I am very much delighted that you have listened to me so long, and now good evening."

Bess hastened home along the old path that leads through Dehewyd lawn, the stiles of which are still to be seen. She was very anxious to know how things had turned out in her absence, for Twm always consumed a large part of her profits in her absence, and when in possession of her keys.

When Bess reached home the doors, front and back, were locked, and as no one answered her knocking, she went to the field behind the house and called the chickens. Twm, who was hiding in the little grove about 50 yards away, heard her, and keeping behind the hedge crept stealthily up and told her all that had happened in her absence. Both took the precaution to go in as they did not know what moment Dick might return to demand drink.

Bess went in for other reasons also. She wanted to give instructions to Twm to go to see Mary, how to act when he met her, and to help him to make himself presentable for the interview. Twm did not feel quite at home in this "dress rehearsal" as it were, but submitted patiently, thinking that old Bess understood the exigencies of the occasion better than he. During the whole time spent in pre-

paring him for his visit to Mary his mind was very busy thinking of how and what to say when they met. He knew who had the readier tongue, and therefore felt more guilty and conscience-stricken because of his conduct, which he now confessed was unjustifiable upon any grounds, and absolutely unprovoked.

CHAPTER VI.

Tradition tells us very little about Mary Evan, .she has been almost entirely forgotten. Not being such a noted character as Twm o'r Trallwm, she did not create such an impression upon the minds of either old or young and therefore the memory of her was almost entirely obliterated soon after her death.

Mary was the only daughter of Morgan and Margaret Evan of the Cwm Farm. Morgan attended the vestries of the parish for some years, which signified that he was a man of some importance, but after his death his widow received parish relief.* Their daughter Mary had been blessed with an excellent constitution; every organ was perfect, every muscle free from pain, and as an important corollary to these valuable gifts she was as active as she was robust, and hardly knew what fatigue meant. She was slightly above medium height, with round face, somewhat flat black eyes, sallow complexion and high cheek bones. Her hair was coal-black, her, lips rather thick, and from behind displayed a splendid double row of white teeth in their full glory. Her voice was not very musical but her laugh was so hearty that the Squire was often constrained to join in before he knew the cause, and laughed more heartily still when he was told what had happened.

In these days people generally were not so particular as to the quality, as the quantity of the work done. Mary was proficient in the latter but her work could not always bear much criticism. As Miss Mallt used to say, Mary's fingers were all thumbs but her arms were objects of envy to all who had work to do.

She had an excellent temper, and her patience was unlimited. The evils of each day did not settle deeply in her breast. A night's sleep, and the duties of a busy day, generally wore away all traces of afflictions, troubles, and sorrows. Life in these days was extremely monotonous, and to have a happy buoyant spirit about and in a house was a valuable asset, and for this reason the Squire would not part with Mary for anything.

The death of her father was a heavy blow to Mary; it knocked all laughter out of her heart, and for some months not a smile was to be seen on her face. Her prolonged sadness endeared her all the more to the Squire and Mallt, who tried on every occasion to raise Mary's spirits to their old and natural state. Mallt soon found out that nothing cheered her more than the history of prayer meetings, and the reading of the Scriptures. By persevering on this path Mallt was not long before she discovered slight changes in Mary. Sunshine

* Note A

was not only beginning to enter her heart but the daily life of the Squire and Mallt was sweetened, and so, little by little, Mary's happy, contagious laugh returned once again.*

The social condition of the parish was bad. The poor were crushed down by heavy taxation, while the farmers, who were always considered to be well-to-do, were seriously handicapped and many of them overwhelmed by poverty. Thomas Evan was rich, as rich was understood in these days of small means and very low wages. His name never appeared on the paupers' list, and the parishioners inferred from this that he must have a very "heavy stocking." In addition, he was the owner of his own farm and was never in want of any of the comforts of life. But as a proof positive of his wealth his habit of taking snuff, especially in church, as was the custom of gentlemen of means at the time, was cited.

The moral and religious life of the country was at a very low ebb, the souls of the people being in the hands of the irreligious hirelings of a degenerate church. One of the most obnoxious, immodest and immoral customs of the times was the taking of snuff in church.† This habit had taken a firm hold of the Squire, who always handed the box round, and it was offered even to the officiating clergyman, who accepted a pinch, because it was a sure and evident sign of gentle breeding, and also he did not wish to offend so influential a parishioner as the Squire of Dyffryn Dowlais.

Nevertheless, Mallt always brought the Squire to book. She administered the reproof in such a tender manner, and with such a sweet smile that her father soon began to doubt that this filthy habit was worthy of the Lord's House. Mallt would often quote a verse, or a phrase from the Scriptures in justification of her condemnation of her father's habit, and the prevailing custom of the times.

Mallt's revolt against her father's habits was only the harbinger of a greater revolt that was rising in the parish, which resulted in the total secession of the large majority of the people from the Parish Church. The instigator and pioneer of this movement was Thomas Hopkin the constable. "Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, for ever," had been burnt into his brain by spiritual fire, and he could not bear to see the holy sanctuary polluted and defiled by the "spiritual" leaders themselves. Mallt and he agreed entirely in the opinion that taking snuff in church, and supplying drink to the vestry in the church porch were decidedly customs that did not become the House of the Lord.

Thomas Hopkin had succeeded already in introducing some reforms. The vestry was considering the advisability of meeting at the Trallwm Inn, and this was strongly opposed by Thomas Hopkin, who insisted that the vestry should meet at the church porch as from time immemorial. He knew that very few went home sober from the vestry, and this when drink had been brought there, how much worse would it be when drink was on the premises, and a good fire, with arm chairs, settles, pipes and all comforts close by?

* Note B

† Note D

The dispute went on fiercely for some months. Bess did her best to get the vestry to meet at her house, and she had many a staunch friend in the vestry. As the drink supplied was paid for out of the rates. what did they trouble? Principle never bothered them! Their only concern was free drink. This was the standard of morality among Bess's friends on the vestry. The standard to-day is very little higher; principle must come second to personal advantage. *Meus* is incomparably higher than *tuus*. Selfishness is a power never to be despised. But Thomas Hopkin was immovable, and he came out of the struggle with flying colours, not only keeping the vestry out of the public-house but removing the beer supplied off the rates also.*

Thomas Hopkin, apart from his office of constable, was not a very popular man in the parish for several years after this great measure of reform, but, in spite of the petty annoyances of the soakers of the parish he held his head high, and walked erect along the path of duty without repenting. He always passed the Trallwm In in spite of Twm's smiles and pleasantries. No blandishments could turn him aside from the path of rectitude and sobriety.

The people had drifted to a dreadful state of indifference, and no effort was made to win them back. It is quite true that the services in the Parish Church were fairly regular, but they were so formal, monotonous, insipid, and cold that the people had got tired of attending them. The dead were buried, the children were baptised, and the youth were married, but even these ordinances had lost almost entirely their religious element. The spiritually minded amongst the people were more scoffed at, and ridiculed, than feared and respected.

No sermon was preached to combat the irreligious life of the people, and where their life was not generally immoral no efforts were made to induce the non-religious to give serious attention to the claims of religion. Indeed, the sinful habits and customs of the people were never rebuked from the pulpit. But Thomas Hopkin, the farm servant at the Celyn, who had stood so steadfastly against drunkenness, and for purity and honesty in the vestries, was now beginning to make a stand against other evil habits of the people besides drunkenness. He encouraged them by private exhortation to lead better and purer lives, and once or twice of late had spoken publicly in the farm. houses on matters pertaining to their spiritual welfare. He soon became the talk of the parish and was made the target for the scoffs and sneers, not only of the lowest, but often of those who, we would think, had some respect for religion. But, of course, as the prayers and exhortations were those of a common farm servant they were worthy only of the gross remarks of buffoons at the two public-houses of the parish. These insults and this buffoonery had no effect on Thomas Hopkin, he was too serious in his advocacy of religion. His own soul having been fired with a consuming zeal for the spread of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only remedy for the deplorable state of the people, these sneers, scoffs

* Note D.

coarse jests, and more than once, brutal treatment, only served to make him more zealous, faithful and brave in his Master's service. He exhorted in the farm-houses oftener, and the neighbours began to collect in large numbers to listen - and listen attentively and with profit to their souls - to the mission of the inspired farm-servant.

But his fame was not confined to his own parish, it spread abroad as the Gospel has always done. No power can hedge it in, so, in these days it overflowed its circumscribed bounds and strangers began to call for Thomas's help to hold prayer meetings elsewhere, for they were new to the people. They had never heard of prayer meetings before. A desire was now rising in the hearts of the people to pour their anxieties and tribulations themselves, both publicly and secretly, into the ears of their Creator, and to implore for help to live a purer life.

Among Thomas Hopkin's helpers at these meetings were Mallt of the Dyffryn and Old Nell of Ty Nell. Mallt was well known for some time to be of a religious turn of mind, and was influenced powerfully by the religious reform that was beginning to be felt in the country.

Mallt and Nell were so regular in their attendance that, if one of them were absent, there was immediate enquiry as to the cause. Everyone of the little group of worshippers was anxious to know whether serious sickness or accident had prevented her, for they all knew that there must be something more than a trifling excuse. It was well known throughout the whole locality that, during Thomas Hopkin's absence, Nell had more than once carried on the services herself. Neither Nell nor the little congregation felt Thomas Hopkin's absence so hard to bear when Mallt was there to help them. The absence of their leader only strengthened their trust in Him whom they all loved so intensely.

When the Squire saw Mallt taking such an active part in this new religious movement in the parish he felt occasionally an irresistible impulse to accompany her to the prayer meetings. His irregular attendance did not last long for the Squire of Dyffryn and Squire Thomas of Garth Fawr were often seen going to the meetings arm in arm, and by their earnest conversation it could be easily understood that a complete change had taken place. New things and fresh matters occupied the mind. The fair, the market, the farm, and the gun had seceded almost into the shades of the unconscious, and religion, its history and daily demands, occupied the threshold of their consciousness. Their first thoughts in the morning and their last thoughts at night were concerning prayer meetings, preaching of the Gospel, and enquiries about the coming preacher. They lived in a new world, among new things. Old cares, worries, and troubles had disappeared, and life had become more bearable and happy. Everything new appeared to them in a different light, and for different purposes. Sunday was now a day of rest and meditation on spiritual matters. The servant men and women often expressed their surprise at the change that had come over their masters, and compared their

present conduct towards them with that of years gone by. The masterful tone of former days had been softened, but the obedience was more thorough, and their service more honest in consequence.

Such was the spiritual success of these meetings, and Thomas Hopkin's mission, that a Church was formed, and for 45 years held its meetings - prayer, preaching and society meetings - in the farm-houses of the neighbourhood, especially at Maesteg, Tynywaun, Ty Nell, and Celyn; afterwards, in 1785, Bryntirion Chapel was built.

Dr. Hughes, of Liverpool, gives an interesting account in "Hanes Methodistiaeth" of the prayer meetings held by Thomas Hopkin and a friend from Llanwonno at Llandaff.

Thomas Hopkin died in 1777. The farm-servant preacher lies buried in the parish churchyard unnamed and alone.

"Sounds no lament where the preacher lies sleeping,
No stone is raised his last lodging to grace;
There . . . no friend and no brother come weeping
To break the deep silence that hallows the place."

This is the history of the heroes of Cambria, from its great "Llyw Olaf" to the humble worker in God's vineyard. Their resting places are known to few;

"But God's angel will be keeping
Ward above His servant's grave."

The bleat of the sheep, with the low, rolling accompaniment of the thunder and the storm is the dirge of God's shepherds, whilst the hirelings lie where the organ-peals break the silence of cloister and nave. The mountain heather works a protective chain-mail with its roots, and spreads out its green fingers, mournfully clanging its bells in sorrowful remembrance over the grave of the patriot; the tyrant and despot lie crushed under a weight of cold, unsympathetic marble. Truly, life is a mystery only explained by the still more mysterious Beyond, We see "the wicked in great power and spreading himself like a green bay tree," The Christian receives no tangible reward. After a life of persecution and pain in the service of his Master his experience is:

"Of all the work my hand hath wrought
Beneath the sky,
Save a place in kindly human thought,
No gain have I."

Thomas Hopkin has entered into his reward, in the fullness of joy. Blessed be his memory.

CHAPTER VII.

On the evening of Bess's return from her interview with Miss Mallt, Twm started away from the Trallwm Inn with courtly jauntiness, and primed with instructions. When he reached Dyffryn Dowlais the night had closed in.

The same evening, in the kitchen of the old farmhouse, we might have seen a beautiful picture of comfort, ease, and happy homeliness. In his old *cadair wellt* the Squire lounged, while Mallt was engaged with her needlework, and Mary busied herself about the room, - the dim candle-light streamed across the lawn. The servant-men were chaffing in the old barn.

The silence of the night was broken with startling suddenness by a loud, blood-curdling baa-ing followed by a mumbling as of words.

The Squire started from his chair and said "Mallt! what a queer noise! Are the sheep in the garden?" With that he strode to the door to satisfy himself as to the nature and cause of the noise. But Mallt, with a quicker perception of what the situation really was, instantly interfered, and said, "Father! you sit down, Mary shall go to see what that baa-ing is."

But it was unnecessary to ask Mary to go; she had already unbolted the door and rushed out.

"Bah megys dafad!" came the cry in a louder tone, and with clearer enunciation, followed by a loud, screaming laugh as if the pent-up mirthfulness of many weeks had burst the sluice gates of the will. Even the Squire could not now hold himself, he pressed his hands to his sides and laughed as he had not laughed for years.

Mallt was curious to know what was the matter, and it was useless for the Squire to attempt to restrain her by saying that Mary would come in in a moment. As soon as she reached the lawn, the Squire heard Mallt give vent to her feelings in as unrestrained a manner as Mary had done.

"In the name of Ivor Bach," he exclaimed, "what can be the matter? I must go out to see for myself!"

Mallt, coming in at the same time, rushed into the little porch and blocked the door-way against the Squire, and taking him by the arm led him into the house. She then tried to explain to him the cause of her violent laughter but for some time it was a hopeless task, and the Squire at last asked her to sit down and compose herself.

As soon as Mallt was seated, there was another violent peal of laughter from Mary. The Squire, placing his hands on Mallt's shoulders, called upon Mary to come in, while Mallt begged her father to let her go out and have another look.

"Another look at what?" asked the Squire,

"Another look at Twm, father," replied Mallt. "Oh! it is

killing! I'll return in a minute and tell you all," and out she slipped to the lawn to join Mary.

Twm had just slipped round the pine end into the darkness while Mary dashed after him to prevail upon him to return as Miss Mallt had come out to see him again; but Twm refused. He had had enough of the girls' laughter. It was now that he had become conscious of the ridiculous way he, assisted by old Bess, had dressed himself.

Miss Mallt now went in, but before she could begin to describe Twm's appearance to her father she had another paroxysm of laughter.

"Oh, dear!" she exclaimed, "I feel quite bad. You knew, perhaps, father, that Mary has pouted with Twm for taking part with Dick Dehewyd in hanging the constable to the ceiling. Well, Mary was so offended with him for treating the old man so cruelly that she has never spoken to him since, and Twm, following his own feelings and Aunt Bess's instructions, has come down to make friends with Mary again. He has dressed himself, and, oh -" Here she began again to laugh, pressing her hands to her sides as if to prevent them splitting.

"Oh, dear, dear, how shall I describe him! He has a pair of soiled corduroy knee-breaches, something like a white shirt, blue stockings, a most fashionable pair of high-low shoes, a black swallow-tail coat with the greater part of the tails cut off, a white comforter like those the church's great men wear, about his throat, and Aunt Bess's black straw hat, with the brim out narrow, trimmed with a bit of yellow ribbon. The hat is set at a decided angle on his head, and he looks as consequential as if he were going up to London to open Parliament. His pocket handkerchief just peeps out from between two buttons of his green waistcoat; from his fob hangs a brass chain to which is attached a buckle about an inch square. I wish, father, you had seen him, but Mary has gone now to him and both are standing in the shade by the pine end, under the apple tree."

Mallt, prompted by feminine instinct, stopped suddenly in her description of Twm's personal appearance lest she might excite the Squire's curiosity so much as to cause him to go out and disturb them - for Twm and Mary would certainly scamper away in different directions the moment the Squire would make his appearance - and thus frustrate all the efforts of Mallt and Bess to bring about a reconciliation. So Mallt, by keeping up a long conversation with her father, gave Twm time to explain why he had joined Dick Dehewyd in his attack on the constable, and to express his regret that he had been implicated in the affair at all.

Luckily for Twm, Mary's feelings had been softened a good deal since that event by the tactful intercession of Mallt, and the entreaties of old Bess; and, as a result, the path to the place which he had formerly occupied in her affections had been made smoother and easier. Had Twm been obliged to depend upon his own eloquence, his mission to Mary would not have been such a complete success. Twm readily acknowledged his indebtedness to old Bess and Mallt, and availed himself of the first opportunity that presented itself

to thank them for their practical sympathy with him in his trouble. He was quite conscious of the fact that had he been left entirely to his own resources he would never have succeeded in rehabilitating himself in Mary's affections. Where was there such another Mary, one so capable to help him through the troubles and cares of life?

* * * *

Bess had spent a very anxious evening waiting for Twm's return. Sometimes she kept vigil at the front window, and sometimes at the window in the pent-house at the back. She had taken the precaution to bolt the doors as she was very much afraid of Dick Dehewyd calling during Twm's absence, for she knew he was prowling about.

There was now an undefined dread of Dick throughout the parish. No one cared to meet him by night or day. No one dared contradict him in the vestry, or public-house. Everyone seemed to be conscious that he would become dangerously violent for the very smallest cause, and they knew that he cared very little what injury he inflicted when in these paroxysms of temper.

Old Bess's state of mind can be more easily imagined than accurately described. She kept peeping through the window - now of one room, then of another, sometimes in the front, sometimes in the back, hoping every minute to see Twm or to hear his voice, and dreading to hear Dick's. As it grew darker and darker she now and again felt symptoms of fainting coming over her, and would sit down to recover, but then her own inactivity made matters worse. She fancied she heard the sound of footsteps when there were no footsteps, and voices when there were no voices.

At last she heard the latch raised and an attempt made to open the door, followed immediately by the call of "Mother." So welcome was the sound that there was no need for the visitor to call mother the second time. For a moment she forgot the number of her years and rushed to the door.

"Is that you, Twm?" she asked nervously through the key-hole.

"Yes, mother, I have come as quickly as I could from Mary," replied Twm.

The door was immediately opened and as quickly shut and bolted again, for she was in mortal dread that Dick would call some time that evening. As soon as Twm was in the passage, and the door again fastened, Bess gave a deep sigh of relief, led Twm to the old arm chair, and drew down the blinds.

"Well-, Twm," she said in a soft whisper when both were seated, "let me hear how things have turned out. But I need hardly ask you for I see and guess from the merry twinkle in your eyes that the little matter has been successfully settled."

"Yes, mother," said Twm, with an air of some consequence, "very soon after I reached the lawn in front of the house, I said 'bas, like a sheep and Mary rushed out much more willingly and readily than she had done for a long time. I don't know why, although I have been trying to guess the reason on my way home. I did not ask her because I guessed that her usual modesty would not

allow her to give me a straightforward answer. She told me not to say 'baa like a sheep,' but to say 'baa,' only, when I wanted to see her. I almost think that having lost the music of my voice for some time she was charmed when she heard it once again. I remember, mother, you telling me once that it was easier to light a fire on an old hearth than on a new one, and I am now of the same opinion as you, if that is what you meant by it. But, mother, thanks are due to you, I think, for the complete success. When Mary came out and saw me so stylishly dressed, with my hat set on one side, and the roses on my cheeks, she felt so happy and charmed that she screamed out with joy, and said, 'Oh, Twm, you are so charming.' I did not lose a second, I replied at once, 'Not more charming, Mary, than you are.' This so pleased her that I felt at once that my way was now tolerably smooth, and when she looked at me the second time she could not resist laughing. I now took Mary by the hand and drew her under the old apple tree, and, if I must tell you all, mother, I put my arms round her waist. We had a long chat undisturbed by the Squire. I do not know how it was but I told Mary so many pretty things, while she smiled upon me, and as far as I understood she believed them all. My tongue expressed the sentiments of my heart so readily and quickly that I was often surprised at my eloquence. The words seemed to come so easily and when I had paid Mary one nice compliment another suggested itself at once. It was with difficulty I could leave her, and to tell you the truth, mother, Mary did not show any inclination to leave me. At last Miss Mallt came to the door and said, softly, 'Mary! father is enquiring about you so you had better come in, and besides, Auntie Bess is perhaps by herself in the house and waiting for Twm!' So Mary gave me one loving look and we parted. I had expected a severe storm, and I had made up my mind to bear it with meekness and at the end ask her forgiveness, promising her at the same time never to hurt her feelings again. But there was no storm, on the contrary I really believe Mary was as pleased to see me as I was to see her."

"But don't you see, Twm bach," interposed old Bess, "Mallt and I had been putting your case before Mary, so, Twm, you should not take all the credit to yourself. It was our plan to dress you up in that charming way as we knew it would please Mary to see you dressed in style. There is a way to everyone's heart and we knew the way to Mary's. We trusted you would use your tongue to assist us as far as you could, and we are glad to find that you have played your part so well, But I am forgetting that you have not had food for some hours. Luckily I have some oatmeal porridge here and milk from Tir Treharn, so, if you'll reach down a trencher and spoon, you can satisfy yourself. I am very tired and have spent some very anxious hours since you left. These long dark nights tell very much upon my nerves. I have been too much afraid to keep a candle alight. There are some shipwrecked sailors about and their very appearance sends a thrill of horror through me. Dick, you know, is again in a dangerous mood and no one knows what may happen."

CHAPTER VIII.

Soon after the parting of Twm and Mary there came a knock at the door, and the sound of voices in conversation was heard.

Mallt was once again painting to her father the ridiculous figure which Twm cut when she and Mary went out. The Squire could not help smiling in spite of the fact that he was musing over weightier matters, and matters which had for some time occupied his mind nearly altogether. But whenever he heard Mallt's sweet voice his heart thrilled with delight, and the memory of another rose before his eyes, driving all other thoughts away. His emotions were such that he could not lift his face to look at her upon whose form was stamped the image of the wife who had forded the Jordan and landed in the Promised Land long, long years ago.

Miss Mallt ran to the door and was heard to invite two men in. They were Thomas Hopkin o'r Celyn, the constable for the year, and Twm Ty'n y Waun as he was commonly known, or Thomas Rosser, the tenant of Ty Person and Tir ychain.

"Welcome, brethren," said the Squire, "come nearer the fire and take a seat, for I want to talk with you about our arrangements for next week."

"That is our business here also, Squire Evan," replied Thomas Rosser. "We have had a talk on the way and we called to see how the arrangements would suit your convenience."

"Well, brethren," said the Squire, "if they do not suit my convenience our business is of such importance that it demands that our convenience should suit it. The eternal welfare of our souls is of infinitely greater importance than the ploughing of the fields and the buying and selling of cattle. If, by attending the meetings of the brethren, I lose one Caerphilly fair, I have several other fairs before the end of the year."

"To hear you speak so, Squire Evan, fills my heart with such joy that my tongue cannot express my feelings," broke in Thomas Rosser.

"Our most pressing difficulty at present," said Thomas Hopkin, "is, how are we going to provide sitting accommodation for the people during the wet weather that is now threatening us. Our neighbours are vying with each other to set their premises at our disposal, but we haven't sufficient room yet for half the people, and it grieves me to see old people standing outside in the weather through-out our meeting; some of the evenings are cold, and decidedly uncomfortable for the young and middle-aged."

"That, Thomas Hopkin, has been troubling me also of late, and I have given some thought to the matter," said Squire Evan.

Just then another knock was heard at the door, and immediately

Squire Thomas o'r Garth Fawr entered. He was at once accosted warmly by all in the room.

"I rejoice to see you all, brethren," said the new comer, and without any further explanation continued : "I have come down to gee what arrangements can be made for next week. I hear that several of our friends are wishful to have meetings at their homes next week, and among them are Mrs. Matthews of Maesmawr; Margaret Morgan, Maesteg; Evan Morgan, Heol y Gawl; Matthew Ralph; Thomas Dafydd Tŷ'r Arlwydd; and we must not forget our friends at Dyrsgoed and Ty'n y waun, and it is quite possible there are others, but just at this moment I do not remember; the brethren here," pointing to Thomas Hopkin and Thomas Rosser, "know of some other families."

"Yes, Squire Thomas," said Thomas Rosser, "old Catherine Williams of Pentre'r Eglwys wishes us to come there at our first opportunity. I am sorry to say that she is very poorly, and Dr. Williams, Bridgend, does not expect her to live but a few days. It is therefore our bounden duty to call there to pray for her and show her our sympathy."

It was agreed, there and then, that the next prayer meeting should be in the house of old Catherine Williams.

Squire Evan new suggested that in future a few benches and chairs should be taken, during the afternoon before each meeting, to the house where the meeting was to be held. This plan was warmly accepted and was, accordingly, followed for many years.

Thomas Hopkin suggested also that when necessary, two or three meetings should be held every week, and that the Rev. Thos. Williams who was in charge of part of East Glamorgan, should be invited to give a call so that they might get some information as to the progress of the gospel in the localities under his care, and also to give them advice and *cyfarwyddyd*. Further, that they would make arrangements to get John Dafydd, Penybont; Siencyn Harry, Llangatwg; Thomas Edwards, Caerphilly; Jones, Llangan; William Thomas, Pil or Pyle; Davies, Castell Nedd; John Richard, Llansamlet; John Belcher, or one of the other itinerant preachers of the county, to deliver an occasional sermon, when passing to the West. These new arrangements would also assist Thomas Hopkin very much.

Thomas Hopkin was, as we have already said, a servant-man at the Celyn Farm, where he had been for years. His wage was very small, his library consisted of only three or four books, his time for reading and preparing sermons, or rather short addresses, was more limited still, but his seal and love for his Master, his burning desire to serve Him, to raise the religious tone of his neighbours, to plant in their hearts some reverence for the sanctity of the Sabbath day, and to improve their morals, were agencies which had greater influence upon him than even a library of books. He diligently read his Bible, so that his Bible, his love for his Master, and his great zeal for the

gospel, were the great and powerful motives which had made Thomas Hopkin the most industrious and busy man in the parish.

During the last year the office of Parish constable had occupied the greater part of his little leisure time; this gave him a chance of preaching many a useful sermon to these who needed advice most. The office brought him in contact with the wildest characters in the parish, and it is on record that throughout his year of office he was never assailed even by the roughest character, nor insulted even by the most foul-mouthed. When he began his duties as constable he was threatened more than once, but his purity of character, his sterling honesty, and his innocence brought him safely through his year of office without injury, and without loss of the great respect in which he was held by all the parishioners.

He received the princely sum of £1 0s. 3d. which he shared with Morgan Dafydd, his fellow constable.*

He fought steadfastly and manfully against the worst passions of the human heart, and the prejudices and immorality of the age.

Before breaking up this important meeting they sang a hymn, and Thomas Hopkin asked the blessing of the Lord upon their new arrangements.

This, really, was the meeting which ultimately laid down the foundation of the Church of Bryntirion.

Next day, soon after breakfast, two figures shadowed the window of the room facing the lawn, and shortly a gentle knocking was heard at the door.

Mary answered the door immediately, and cordially invited the visitors in; they were Nell of Ty Nell, and Mrs. Matthews of Maes-mawr. Both were well-known to Mary and she knew also that both were welcome visitors at Dyffryn Dowlais. They had heard of the meeting held the previous evening and both were very anxious to know what had passed. As the weather had grown cold, and both the visitors were getting on in years, Mary placed chairs for them before the bright fire. As soon as they were seated Miss Mallt began to relate the whole of the proceedings of the previous evening, and the part each speaker had taken, while the Squire would add, now and again, a word of explanation, or a reason why they had adopted a certain course.

During the recital, the news being so pleasant to the ears of the old ladies, it was impossible for them to sit quietly in their chairs, and more than once both of them were on their feet expressing full approval of what had been done. Before parting, Old Nelly engaged in prayer and thanked God for the hope of seeing better days, and having a more regular and systematic preaching of the eternal gospel.

Nell had felt of late from the infirmities of old age. She had been a widow for some years and many of the duties which had previously been done by her husband, such as buying and selling, attending markets at Cardiff, Merthyr, and Bridgend, instead of affording her some pleasure had become more than irksome, they were burdensome,

* Note E.

and a source of much unhappiness, and with advancing years became more troublesome than ever. Had it not been for the practical and regular help she received from her neighbours, these heavy duties would have compelled her to give up her farm; but her character, and her sincere piety were so widely known that no favour was refused to Nelly.

History, and tradition are silent as to who and what her husband was. Nell, although buried now for nearly two hundred years, yet speaks, and is remembered and revered by many of the old inhabitants of the parish, by whom she is looked upon as one of the chief founders of Calvinistic Methodism, and, which is greater still, of the revival of religion in the parish.

It is true there was a building called a church in the parish, and some kind of service, but as far as we can see there was little or no religion.

"Mae'r 'ffeiriaid, mae'r fferinwr, mae'r hwsmon a'r crefftwr,
Mae'r baili, a'r barnwr, a'r bonedd o'r bron,
Bob un am y cynta' yn digio'r Gorucha,
Heb wybod p'un waetha'u harferion."

" Mae'r 'ffeiriaid yn loetran, a'r barnwyr yn bribian,
Mae'r bonedd yn tiplan o dafarn i dwlc."

The words of the saintly Vicar of Llandovery can be applied to the state of religion in the parish at this time. We are very apt to think that the building is the church, but neither the building nor the place is the church. The church is the congregation of the faithful, whether they meet in a cathedral or a barn; whether they have a building or not. In this manner Bryntirion was a church for 45 years, notwithstanding the fact that it had no building. The church was founded in about 1740, Bryntirion was first built in 1785.

The history of one prayer meeting held at Ynys y Wern farm, now called Ty Nell, is on record. It was on a severe night and only a few of the nearest neighbours and the most zealous and enthusiastic were present. Amongst those present was a young man, the son of the Rev. Evan Morgan, of Cardiff, who, on being called to engage in Prayer, demurred, being very young. This touched Old Nell so much that she took his place herself and the prayer she offered was of such a character and fervency that it was never forgotten. Old people talk of it even today.

Nelly's prayers were always offered up in a very soft voice, as if she wanted to communicate the innermost thoughts of her soul to God alone. This made everybody very anxious to know what was going on between her and her Heavenly Father, who, as everyone felt when Old Nell prayed, was always so near as to cause a thrill of awe to run through the hearts of all present. At this memorable meeting she prayed with such fervency and unshaken trust and confidence in the goodness and presence of her Heavenly Father that one

of those present, being unable to restrain his emotions any longer, shouted out "yn ddiau y mae Duw yn y lle hwn" (verily the Lord is in this place). This remark was followed by warm and frequent responses, for every heart was full to overflowing.

The intense earnestness and manifest piety of the men and women who conducted these itinerant meetings, could not possibly have but one result, namely, the revival of religion in the parish, and the depletion of the few that did attend occasionally the parish church.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, and as late as forty years ago, it can hardly be said that there were services on more than two Sundays a month, and none at all during the week. Services of any kind in the week are of very recent date. Half-an-hour's conversation with the old inhabitants of the parish would be a valuable object lesson to the young and rising generation.

The sole cause of the revival of religion in the parish is the rise and presence of Nonconformity in the land. Everywhere in the country, in England as well as in Wales, the same deplorable state of things prevailed, and with the same result. The people took the matter of their eternal welfare into their own hands; left the church, as by law established, provided places of worship, chose their own ministers, organised a living, complete, and pure system of religious services more suitable to the age and infinitely more successful, while the church remained the handmaid of one political party, working for one political purpose, namely, the retarding and curtailment of human liberty.

We must not deceive ourselves into thinking that it was easy work to form a new religious community alongside an institution that had at its call the full power of the throne of England, and the more despotic power of the squire-archy of the land. For instance "on the 27th September, 1681, James Owen, a prominent Dissenter, was invited (with a veiled threat of imprisonment if he did not accept the invitation) by Bishop Lloyd of St. Asaph to justify his position, at a public meeting held in the Town Hall of Oswestry. A large number of clergy and landed gentry, the justices of the peace and a large crowd of people, met in the hall. James Owen was called upon to explain why he and others dared to preach, and minister the ordinances, without being ordained by the Bishop to the work. The debate lasted for 6 hours. The Bishop promised that the Dissenters should not suffer any persecution as a result of the public debate, and, in justice to the charitable Bishop, be it said, that he remained on friendly terms with James Owen until his death. But the attitude of the episcopal party towards the Dissenters was evident, for, at the end of the debate a justice of the peace addressed them, saying: "Yr ydyrn yn diolch i Dduw fod cleddyf gallu yn ein dwylaw ni; trwy ras Duw ni a'i cadwn ef, ac ni cha rydu; a gobeithiaf y gwna pob ynad cyfreithlon fel y gwnaf fi. Edrychwch atoch eich hunain, foneddigion; trwy ras Duw mi'ch diwreiddiaf chwi allan o'r wlad." ("We thank God that the sword of power is in our hands; and by the grace of God

we will keep it, and it shall not rust; and I hope that every loyal magistrate will do. Look to yourselves, gentlemen; by the grace of God I will uproot you out of the land.")

The Established Church was so indebted to the landed gentry and moneyed classes that she remains to this day the willing instrument in their hands for intimidation and other forms of persecution. Any minister within her fold today who sympathises with, and works for the people at large, has very little hope for preferment. He must use his influence and talents for the rich and privileged classes. Even the church-goer who is suspected even of entertaining liberal principles is looked upon with suspicion and distrust.

At the period under consideration the people had little or no political power, they were the slaves of the land-owners. Socially they had no leaders except the parish squire, who was generally one of the most immoral characters in his parish - not only non-religious but irreligious. Religiously they had been deserted by their hired shepherds, but after years of struggle between the inherent good left in the human heart and its evil propensity, the power that works for righteousness at last prevailed. The people took matters into their own hands politically, socially, and religiously, and, phoenix-like, out of the fiery struggle there arose liberalism in politics, purity in morals, and nonconformity in religion. The tithes - the loaves and the fishes - like the ashes in the nest, were left behind for those who have the conscience to receive pay for work which is left undone. This is only a question of time; the power that works for righteousness will ultimately prevail, and the "crack-brained fanatics" as the brilliant workers for good, such as Wesley and Whitfield, were called by the fine gentlemen of the time, will see of the fruits of their labour and be satisfied. The times have changed, but the upper classes still remain deplorably immoral.

CHAPTER IX.

One cold and stormy night, as Twm and Old Bess were basking in the warmth of a small, but bright coal fire, the door suddenly opened admitting Will ap Evan into the room. He came with the seemingly express purpose of acquainting Bess with the news of the death of old Catherine Williams.

Twm had just returned from the small pit on the Vol with a small bagful of coal. In old days there were several pits on the Vol. The colliers and the goal were wound up by means of windlass. When the vein was worked in a few yards, and the air became bad, another small pit was sunk a short distance away, and so on until they had worked a large portion of the outcrop. They never attempted to deal with ventilation. They worked in the foul air as long as

they could, then gave up the pit. Even as late as the thirties, William Lewis of Cross Cade remembers the working of one of these little pits by one of a family named Jonathan.

Twm, whether he paid for it or not, would never dream of bringing home a heavy load; he did not agree with such a policy. Twm was, and had always been, a strong advocate of the principle of broadening the basis of employment, or the division of labour. Work, according to Twm, should be sub-divided into smaller doses, and no one should be allowed to perform more than his fair share. The very thought of work in very many cases was the direct cause of much unhappiness. It was a standing joke among the farm servants that if Old Bess wanted to give Twm a sleepless night she had only to say that she wanted him to go to Caerphilly, or Llantrisant, the following day.

No sooner was Will seated than Twm, eyeing him closely, began to complain of the cold; but William ap Evan was fully wide-awake, and watched with much amusement Twm's little inducements to him to call for a drink. William was not averse to getting a vessel of Twm's concoction, but he could not very well afford, on 1s. 3d. a week poor relief, to treat Twm to one also. Besides, he could not think of not offering Twm a drink out of his pot, neither would he have the courage to cry halt when Twm was taking an extra long pull; so he resorted to strategy.

William ap Evan was somewhat of a poet, commonly called in Welsh *prydydd*, or rhymster. So to get out of the difficulty he asked Twm, "What do you think of this, Twm; you have such a line view of the Garth from here, and Auntie Bess sees it early every morning if you don't:

"Os gweli di'r Garth Ucha'
Yn gwisgo'i chlog yn fora,
Mi dala bunt cyn canol dydd
Bydd dagrau ar ei gruddia."

Twm enjoyed this immensely, and showed his appreciation by indulging in a long, loud, and hearty laugh. This was meant of course as a sincere compliment to Ap Evan, but when Twm saw that while he was hidden behind the laugh the rhymster had drained the vessel, his face straightened out and became serious and sad once more - the metamorphosis was almost miraculous. He had been bitterly disappointed when Will ap Evan ordered his drink because Old Bess had fetched it herself and so robbed him of the merest chance of getting a drop.

When Twm had recovered a little from the shock, he turned to Ap Evan and said, "Well, Will, what are the arrangements for the funeral?"

"I cannot say, yet," replied Ap Evan, "I came up from the village to ask Auntie Bess to come down to dress the corpse, and make the other arrangements. Of course you'll have to go to Llantrisant

to inform the curate of her death and fix the day for burial. I'll see the sexton."

"Of course," said Twm; "you always take the easiest job and give me the toughest?"

"Oh, no I!" intervened Old Bess, "I have the worst job by far, but you must understand that we will be paid for our work"

"Yes," replied Twm rather cautiously, "but when the Vestry people see that you and I are getting money from the parish, no one knows what they will do next, for they will have to pay for the burial of Old Catherine. They grudge paying two shillings for digging a grave, while they pay that parson from Llantrisant, without grumbling at all, for reading a page or two from a book, which is such an easy job."

"But," said Ap Evan, interrupting Twm in his speech, "the Vestry always rejoice to bury those who have been long on the parish because they generally live so long,"

"Now, Will," said Twm sharply, "that is meant for me. What would they do with the money if there were no poor people on the parish? I heard the clerk telling Squire Evan at the last Vestry that there was a good balance left last year. He thought Twm did not hear, nor understand, but Twm is all here. I wanted to ask for a rise, but you," nodding tartly to Old Bess, "told me not to. We had a little lark in the village and Dick tied that sickly constable in a sack and hung him up under the ceiling, and at once they raised the constable's salary from five shillings to ten and three halfpence, and the mean fellows took the three halfpence and passed our house as dry as chips. If I had only asked for sixpence more, the church-wardens would have looked at me as if I had committed murder; what are those constables good for if there is no row in the parish? We must have something for the rates we pay! But if Twm Hopkin had his way these constables would be paid for nothing at all."

"Well, Twm, I've no doubt you've got a grievance against the churchwardens, but I must go," broke in Ap Evan. "You'll see the curate tomorrow, and ask him to be here at three exact, on Thursday, for I hope the old woman will be buried decently and with no hurry. She was a good old soul although she lived in this bad village."

"It is no wonder that it has been said of it

Hon yw *city'r* Satan
Os bu un ar y ddaearen,
Rhaid i ddyn fod yn llawn o ras
I gadw ma's o'i safan."

"Especially," continued Twm, "as long as Will Edwards sells the beer he does."

"Put it this way, Twm," said Ap Evan:

"Nid hawdd i Catherine William
Oedd byw yn lan yn *city'r* Satan,
Rhaid ei bod yn llawn o ras
I gadw ma's o'i safan."

"Well done, Will," cried Old Bess, "Catty was a good old soul, for Miss Mallt says so. During her illness, hardly a week went by during some part of which Miss Mallt had not paid her a visit, read a portion of the Scriptures, and brought her something substantial to eat. She also brought Thomas Hopkin and his people there to hold prayer meetings. Old Catty had joined them and was going regularly to their meetings. Miss Mallt spoke most highly of her, and was very sorry to hear of her death."

William ap Evan was on the point of departing when Twm said:

"Pe byddai Wil ap Evan
Yn byw yn *city*'r Satan,
Ni fyddai neb ag eisieu gras
I gadw ma's o'i safan."

Atebodd ap Evan ef:

"Pe byddai Twm o'r Trallwm
Yn peidio yfed mordrwm,
Beth fyddai gwaith y ffeiriad llwm
I ddangos am ei ddegwm!"

and out he went.

There are two other verses given in the old manuscript, but the writing, paper and ink, are so bad that I cannot decipher them. William ap Evan, guessing from the writing, was advanced in years at this time; moreover, he is lost soon afterwards from the relief list. He is the last parishioner on the books, who kept up the old Welsh custom of writing his name with "ap." To-day he would be William Bevan. His farm was "Y Pentref," which we leave to the reader to locate, the ruins are still standing, but are of very little use.

As soon as William left, Bess made Twm prepare at once to go over to Llantrisant to acquaint the curate of the death of Catty William, and that the burial was to take place on Thursday, punctually at 3. Her purpose was to make things certain, as delays had happened more than once lately. So in half-an-hour Twm was on his way.

When he reached the Vicarage he found that the curate was away, and no one could tell him when he was likely to return. Twm waited till it was getting dark, and being afraid of returning home after dark he started his way back while it was yet light, leaving a message for the curate, with the hope that it would be given exactly as he gave it.

It was rumoured that the press-gang was about, and this caused Twm to get home without calling at any public-house on the way.

When Twm was passing down the road he saw two men at a distance discussing some question with great animation. As he drew near both turned their attention upon him, and they seemed to be greatly relieved on finding that he was an old acquaintance.

"Twm," said the lustier of the two, "do you know the press-gang is again in the neighbourhood?"

"Well, yes," answered Twm with a deep sigh.

"The fact is," said the lusty fellow, "we have already lost three of our farm servants within the last two days, and the people of Llantrisant have placed watchmen all round to try to find the track of the gang. Three strange fellows were seen yesterday between Llantwit and Tonyrefail, and before the morning, a man was lost."

Twm was now getting very nervous and wished he had not seen these men at all. He lost no time; off he goes at once, and to make sure of his own safety he had recourse to a bright idea. An old friend of his had lately broken his leg and, doubtless, he would willingly lend him his crutch. In less than five minutes Twm had secured the crutch, and without any further delay started for home, using the crutch as if he had a useless leg.

Twm was very fortunate to have adopted this stratagem, for, as he was crossing a field to avoid a long bend in the road near Beddau, he was watched by three desperate looking characters from a copse on the opposite side of the valley, and Twm's hobbling saved him.

"He's no good," said the big fellow, with a sabre cut on his cheek, that made him look fiercer than he was as he came out of Nature's hands. "We have plenty of hobblers on board already. If this lubber falls sprawling on a green field, what will he not do on board a tossing ship?"

"For all that he may be a good hand at grog," said another almost prophetically.

"The worse for us," growled the third in a very hoarse voice, "there's plenty on board already for that duty. Look how he struggles to get on his peg again! Hurrah! There he goes, like an empty boat before a gale!"

Twm, at the same time, was talking to himself. "If any of these rascals are looking on they'll soon be of opinion that a chap like me is of no use to them, and no credit to capture, that is, if they have any honour and pity still left in their hearts."

It will be noticed that the lower the intelligence the greater is the cunning. The want of intelligence takes refuge, as it were, in cunning - that low cunning that never gives credit to intelligence in another. So with Twm.

The press gang of course does not show itself in open daylight, otherwise it would be a complete failure. The success of their business depends entirely upon secrecy of action.