

Welsh Melodies

From Collections of Songs
With Music by John Darry
Words by

Felicia Hemans

Taken here from
Poems of Felicia Hemans
Blackwood
1872
Pages 145-153

(Excepting 'The Lament of the Last Druid',
Which is from The Cambro-Briton
Volume III, pages 122-123)

Compiled
By
Deter J. Bolton

The Welsh Melodies were published in two volumes. What became Volume Two in 1821 and Volume One in the following year. Those in Volume Two had words by a number of authors, whereas those in Volume One were all from Felicia Hemans.

Volume 2 (1821)

The Green Isles of Ocean	1
The Lament of the Last Druid	2
The Hirlas Horn	3

Volume 1 (1822)

Druid Chorus, on the Landing of the Romans	4
The Sea Song of Gavran	5
The Hall of Cynddylan is gloomy tonight	6
The Rock of Cader Idris	7
The Lament of Llywarch Hen	8
Gruffydd's Feast	9
The Cambrian in America	10
Sons of the Fair Isle forget not the time (The Fair Isle)	11
Taliesin's Prophecy	12
Owain Glyndwr's War Song	13
Prince Madog's Farewell	14
Caswallon's Triumph	15
Press on my steed, I hear the swell (Howel's Song)	16
The Mountain Fires	17
White Snowdon (Eryri Wen)	18
The Chant of the Bards	19

To these, the Collected Works add the following:

The Harp of Wales	20
The Dying Bard's Prophecy	21

 THE LAMENT OF THE LAST DRUID *.

 AIR—" *The Melody of Mona.*"

I.

THE harp is hush'd on Mona's shore,
 And mute the voice of mystic lore,
 And the deep woods lie low!
 Where were the *Dark Isle's* † vengeful gods,
 When thus their shrines and dread abodes
 Received the insulting foe?

Who shall recal the Druid Seers,
 They that could lift the veil of years?
 The home is silent midst the slain,
 And *I alone on earth remain,*
 On the wild winds to pour one strain,
 A dirge for Mona's woe!

II.

The stars on Mona's rocks look down,
 And far *Eryri's* * mountain-crown,
 And Ocean's glitt'ring wave;
 But those, who track'd, with gifted eyes,
 Their burning pathway through the skies,
 Lie slumbering in the grave!
 There, too, shall rest the lore sublime,
 The secrets of primæval Time;
 For Mona's Guardian Powers are fled,
 Her oaks have bow'd their crested head †;
 Take me, ye dwellings of the dead,
 Homes of the wise and brave!

* This beautiful Melody is from Mr. Parry's second volume of "Welsh Melodies," just published, and is the composition (we mean the words only) of Mrs. Hemans, of the productions of whose muse it is scarcely possible to speak in terms exceeding their merit. We mean to trespass again upon Mr. Parry's very interesting volume.—ED.

† Anglesea, (or Mona,) from its thick woods of oak, was anciently called the *Dark Island.*"

"* *Eryri*—the Snowdon mountains."

† In A.D. 58, *Suetonius Paulinus*, the Roman General, penetrated into Mona, but was opposed by the *Druids*, whom he overpowered, cut down their groves, and massacred a vast many of them. Those, who escaped, retired to Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man. But about the year 286 *Cratylinth*, a King of Scotland, expelled them from that country, and from the Isle of Man, which was the Presidency of the Order.—*Vide Warrington's History of Wales.*"

THE HIRLAS HORN.

FILL high the blue hirlas that shines like the wave³
 When sunbeams are bright on the spray of the
 sea ;
 And bear thou the rich foaming mead to the brave,
 The dragons of battle, the sons of the free !
 To those from whose spears, in the shock of the
 fight, [the field ;
 A beam, like heaven's lightning,⁴ flash'd over
 To those who came rushing as storms in their might,
 Who have shiver'd the helmet, and cloven the
 shield ;
 The sound of whose strife was like oceans afar,
 When lances were red from the harvest of war.

Fill high the blue hirlas ! O cup-bearer, fill
 For the lords of the field in their festival's hour,
 And let the mead foam, like the stream of the hill
 That bursts o'er the rock in the pride of its power :
 Praise, praise to the mighty, fill high the smooth
 horn
 Of honour and mirth,⁵ for the conflict is o'er ;
 And round let the golden-tipp'd hirlas be borne
 To the lion-defenders of Gwynedd's fair shore,
 Who rush'd to the field where the glory was won,
 As eagles that soar from their cliffs to the sun.

Fill higher the hirlas ! forgetting not those
 Who shared its bright draught in the days
 which are fled !
 Though cold on their mountains the valiant repose,
 Their lot shall be lovely—renown to the dead !
 While harps in the hall of the feast shall be strung,
 While regal Eryri with snow shall be crown'd—
 So long by the bards shall their battles be sung,
 And the heart of the hero shall burn at the sound.
 The free winds of Maelor¹ shall swell with their
 name,
 And Owain's rich hirlas be fill'd to their fame.

³ " Fetch the horn, that we may drink together, whose
 gloss is like the waves of the sea ; whose green handles show
 the skill of the artist, and are tipped with gold."—From the
Hirlas Horn of OWAIN CYFEILLOG.

⁴ " Heard ye in Maelor the noise of war, the horrid din
 of arms, their furious onset, loud as in the battle of Bangor,
 where fire flashed out of their spears ?"—From the same.

⁵ " Fill, then, the yellow-lipped horn—badge of honour
 and mirth."—From the same.

¹ Maelor, part of the counties of Denbigh and Flint, ac-
 cording to the modern division.

DRUID CHORUS ON THE LANDING OF
THE ROMANS.

By the dread and viewless powers
Whom the storms and seas obey,
From the Dark Isle's³ mystic bowers,
Romans! o'er the deep away!
Think ye, 'tis but nature's gloom
O'er our shadowy coast which broods?
By the altar and the tomb,
Shun these haunted solitudes!

Know ye Mona's awful spells?
She the rolling orbs can stay!
She the mighty grave compels
Back to yield its fetter'd prey!
Fear ye not the lightning stroke?
Mark ye not the fiery sky?
Hence!—around our central oak
Gods are gathering—Romans, fly!

³ *Ynys Dywyll*, or the Dark Island—an ancient name for Anglesey.

THE SEA-SONG OF GAFRAN.²

WATCH ye well ! The moon is shrouded
 On her bright throne ;
 Storms are gathering, stars are clouded,
 Waves make wild moan.
 'Tis no night of hearth-fires glowing,
 And gay songs and wine-cups flowing ;
 But of winds, in darkness blowing,
 O'er seas unknown !

In the dwellings of our fathers,
 Round the glad blaze,
 Now the festive circle gathers
 With harps and lays ;
 Now the rush-strewn halls are ringing,
 Steps are bounding, bards are singing,
 —Ay ! the hour to all is bringing
 Peace, joy, or praise.

Save to us, our night-watch keeping,
 Storm-winds to brave,
 While the very sea-bird sleeping
 Rests in its cave !
 Think of us when hearths are beaming,
 Think of us when mead is streaming,
 Ye, of whom our souls are dreaming
 On the dark wave !

² See note to the "Green Isles of Ocean."

THE HALL OF CYNDDYLAN.

THE Hall of Cynddylan is gloomy to-night;¹
 I weep, for the grave has extinguish'd its light;
 The beam of the lamp from its summit is o'er,
 The blaze of its hearth shall give welcome no more!

The Hall of Cynddylan is voiceless and still,
 The sound of its harpings hath died on the hill!
 Be silent for ever, thou desolate scene,
 Nor let e'en an echo recall what hath been!

The Hall of Cynddylan is lonely and bare,
 No banquet, no guest, not a footstep is there!
 Oh! where are the warriors who circled its board?
 —The grass will soon wave where the mead-cup
 was pour'd!

The Hall of Cynddylan is loveless to-night,
 Since he is departed whose smile made it bright!
 I mourn; but the sigh of my soul shall be brief,
 The pathway is short to the grave of my chief!

¹ "The Hall of Cynddylan is gloomy this night,
 Without fire, without bed—
 I must weep awhile, and then be silent.

The Hall of Cynddylan is gloomy this night,
 Without fire, without being lighted—
 Be thou encircled with spreading silence!

The Hall of Cynddylan is without love this night,
 Since he that own'd it is no more—
 Ah Death! it will be but a short time he will leave me.

The Hall of Cynddylan it is not easy this night,
 On the top of the rock of Hydwyth, [clinging feasts!]
 Without its lord, without company, without the cir-
 Owen's *Heroic Elegies of Llywarch Hen*.

THE ROCK OF CADER IDRIS.

[It is an old tradition of the Welsh bards, that on the summit of the mountain Cader Idris, is an excavation resembling a couch; and that whoever should pass a night in that hollow, would be found in the morning either dead, in a frenzy, or endowed with the highest poetical inspiration.]

I LAY on that rock where the storms have their
dwelling, cloud;
The birthplace of phantoms, the home of the
Around it for ever deep music is swelling,
The voice of the mountain-wind, solemn and loud.
Twas a midnight of shadows all fitfully streaming,
Of wild waves and breezes, that mingled their
moan; [ing;
Of dim shrouded stars, as from gulfs faintly gleam-
And I met the dread gloom of its grandeur alone.

I lay there in silence—a spirit came o'er me;
Man's tongue hath no language to speak what
I saw; [me,
Things glorious, unearthly, pass'd floating before
And my heart almost fainted with rapture and
awe.

I view'd the dread beings around us that hover,
Though veil'd by the mists of mortality's breath;
And I call'd upon darkness the vision to cover,
For a strife was within me of madness and death.

I saw them—the powers of the wind and the ocean,
The rush of whose pinion bears onward the
storms;

Like the sweep of the white-rolling wave was their
motion—
I felt their dim presence, but knew not their
forms!

I saw them—the mighty of ages departed—
The dead were around me that night on the hill:
From their eyes, as they pass'd, a cold radiance
they darted,—
There was light on my soul, but my heart's
blood was chill.

I saw what man looks on, and dies—but my spirit
Was strong, and triumphantly lived through
that hour;
And, as from the grave, I awoke to inherit
A flame all immortal, a voice, and a power!
Day burst on that rock with the purple cloud
crested,
And high Cader Idris rejoiced in the sun;—
But oh! what new glory all nature invested,
When the sense which gives soul to her beauty
was won!¹

1. No note is attached here.

 THE LAMENT OF LLYWARCH HEN.

[Llywarch Hen, or Llywarch the Aged, a celebrated bard and chief of the times of Arthur, was prince of Argoed, supposed to be a part of the present Cumberland. Having sustained the loss of his patrimony, and witnessed the fall of most of his sons, in the unequal contest maintained by the North Britons against the growing power of the Saxons, Llywarch was compelled to fly from his country, and seek refuge in Wales. He there found an asylum for some time in the residence of Cyddyhan, Prince of Powys, whose fall he pathetically laments in one of his poems. These are still extant; and his elegy on old age and the loss of his sons, is remarkable for its simplicity and beauty.—See *Cambrian Biography*, and *Owen's Heroic Elegies and other poems of Llywarch Hen.*]

THE bright hours return, and the blue sky is
ringing
With song, and the hills are all mantled with bloom;
But fairer than aught which the summer is bringing,
The beauty and youth gone to people the tomb!
Oh! why should I live to hear music resounding,
Which cannot awake ye, my lovely, my brave?
Why smile the waste flowers, my sad footsteps
surrounding?
—My sons! they but clothe the green turf of
your grave!

Alone on the rocks of the stranger I linger,
My spirit all wrapt in the past as a dream!
Mine ear hath no joy in the voice of the singer,³
Mine eye sparkles not to the sunlight's glad beam;
Yet, yet I live on, though forsaken and weeping!
—O grave! why refuse to the aged thy bed,
When valour's high heart on thy bosom is sleeping,
When youth's glorious flower is gone down to the
dead!

Fair were ye, my sons! and all kingly your bearing,
As on to the fields of your glory ye trode! [ing,
Each prince of my race the bright golden chain wear—
Each eye glancing fire, shrouded now by the sod!⁴
I weep when the blast of the trumpet is sounding,
Which rouses ye not, O my lovely! my brave!
When warriors and chiefs to their proud steeds
are bounding, [grave!⁵
I turn from heaven's light, for it smiles on your

3 "What I loved when I was a youth is hateful to me now."

4 "Four and twenty sons to me have been/
Wearing the golden chain, and leading princes."

Elegies of Llywarch Hen.

The golden chain, as a badge of honour, worn by heroes, is frequently alluded to in the works of the ancient British bards.

5 "Hardly has the snow covered the vale,
When the warriors are hastening to the battle;
I do not go, I am hinder'd by infirmity."

Elegies of Llywarch Hen.

GRUFYDD'S FEAST.

[“ Gruffydd ab Rhys ab Tewdwr, having resisted the English successfully in the time of Stephen, and at last obtained from them an honourable peace, made a great feast at his palace in *Ystrad Tywi* to celebrate this event. To this feast, which was continued for forty days, he invited all who would come in peace from *Gwynedd*, *Powys*, the *Deheubarth*, Glamorgan, and the marches. Against the appointed time he prepared all kinds of delicious viands and liquors; with every entertainment of vocal and instrumental song; thus patronising the poets and musicians. He encouraged, too, all sorts of representations and manly games, and afterwards sent away all those who had excelled in them with honourable gifts.”—*Cambrian Biography*.]

LET the yellow mead shine for the sons of the brave,
By the bright festal torches around us that wave!
Set open the gates of the prince's wide hall,
And hang up the chief's ruddy spear on the wall!
There is peace in the land we have battled to save:
Then spread ye the feast, bid the wine-cup foam
high,¹
That those may rejoice who have fear'd not to die!

Let the horn whose loud blast gave the signal for
fight,
With the bees sunny nectar now sparkle in light;²
Let the rich draught it offers with gladness be
crown'd, [sound!
For the strong hearts in combat that leap'd at its
Like the billows' dark swell was the path of
their might,
Red, red as their blood, fill the wine-cup on high,
That those may rejoice who have fear'd not to die!

And wake ye the children of song from their dreams,
On *Maelor's* wild hills and by *Dyfed's* fair streams!³
Bid them haste with those strains of the lofty and
free,
Which shall flow down the waves of long ages to be.
Sheath the sword which hath given them un-
perishing themes, [high,
And pour the bright mead: let the wine-cup foam
That those may rejoice who have fear'd not to die!

¹ Wine, as well as mead, is frequently mentioned in the poems of the ancient British bards.

² The horn was used for two purposes—to sound the alarm in war, and to drink the mead at feasts.

³ *Dyfed*, (said to signify a land abounding with streams of water,) the modern *Pembrokeshire*.

THE CAMBRIAN IN AMERICA.

WHEN the last flush of eve is dying
 On boundless lakes afar that shine ;
 When winds amidst the palms are sighing,
 And fragrance breathes from every pine :⁴
 When stars through cypress-boughs are gleaming,
 And fire-flies wander bright and free,
 Still of thy harps, thy mountains dreaming,
 My thoughts, wild Cambria ! dwell with thee !

Alone o'er green savannas roving,
 Where some broad stream in silence flows,
 Or through th' eternal forests moving,
 One only home my spirit knows !
 Sweet land, whence memory ne'er hath parted !
 To thee on sleep's light wing I fly ;
 But happier could the weary-hearted
 Look on his own blue hills and die !

⁴ The aromatic odour of the pine has frequently been mentioned by travellers.

THE FAIR ISLE.*

FOR THE MELODY CALLED THE "WELSH GROUND."

[The Bard of the Palace, under the ancient Welsh princes, always accompanied the army when it marched into an enemy's country; and, while it was preparing for battle or dividing the spoils, he performed an ancient song, called *Undennach Prydain*, the Monarchy of Britain. It has been conjectured that this poem referred to the tradition of the Welsh, that the whole island had once been possessed by their ancestors, who were driven into a corner of it by their Saxon invaders. When the prince had received his share of the spoils, the bard, for the performance of this song, was rewarded with the most valuable beast that remained.—*JONES'S Historical Account of the Welsh Bards.*]

I.

Sons of the Fair Isle ! forget not the time
Ere spoilers had breathed the free air of your clime;
All that its eagles behold in their flight [height
Was yours, from the deep to each storm-mantled
Though from your race that proud birthright be
torn,
Unquench'd is the spirit for monarchy born.

CHORUS.

Darkly though clouds may hang o'er us awhile,
The crown shall not pass from the Beautiful Isle.

II.

Ages may roll ere your children regain
The land for which heroes have perish'd in vain;
Yet, in the sound of your names shall be power,
Around her still gathering in glory's full hour.
Strong in the fame of the mighty that sleep,
Your Britain shall sit on the throne of the deep.

CHORUS.

Then shall their spirits rejoice in her smile,
Who died for the crown of the Beautiful Isle.

* *Ynys Prydain* was the ancient Welsh name of Britain, and signifies *fair* or *beautiful* *isle*.

TALIESIN'S PROPHECY.

[A prophecy of Taliesin relating to the ancient Britons is still extant, and has been strikingly verified. It is to the following effect :—

“ Their God they shall worship,
Their language they shall retain,
Their land they shall lose,
Except wild Wales.”]

A VOICE from time departed yet floats thy hills
among, [sung :
O Cambria ! thus thy prophet bard, thy Taliesin
“The path of unborn ages is traced upon my soul,
The clouds which mantle things unseen away
before me roll, [pass'd,
A light the depths revealing hath o'er my spirit
A rushing sound from days to be swells fitful in
the blast, [tongue
And tells me that for ever shall live the lofty
To which the harp of Mona's woods by freedom's
hand was strung.

“ Green island of the mighty !⁵ I see thine ancient
race
Driven from their fathers' realm to make the rocks
their dwelling-place !
I see from Uthyr's⁶ kingdom the sceptre pass away,
And many a line of bards and chiefs and princely
men decay.
But long as Arvon's mountains shall lift their
sovereign forms,
And wear the crown to which is given dominion
o'er the storms,
So long, their empire sharing, shall live the lofty
tongue
To which the harp of Mona's woods by freedom's
hand was strung !”

⁵ *Ynys y Ceddeirn*, or Isle of the Mighty—an ancient name given to Britain.

⁶ Uthyr Pendragon, king of Britain, supposed to have been the father of Arthur.

OWEN GLYNDWR'S WAR-SONG.

SAW ye the blazing star !¹
 The heavens look'd down on freedom's war,
 And lit her torch on high !
 Bright on the dragon crest²
 It tells that glory's wing shall rest,
 When warriors meet to die !
 Let earth's pale tyrants read despair
 And vengeance in its flame ;
 Hail ye, my bards ! the omen fair
 Of conquest and of fame,
 And swell the rushing mountain air
 With songs to Glendwr's name.

At the dead hour of night,
 Mark'd ye how each majestic height
 Burn'd in its awful beams ?
 Red shone th' eternal snows,
 And all the land, as bright it rose,
 Was full of glorious dreams !
 O eagles of the battle,³ rise !
 The hope of Gwynedd wakes !⁴
 It is your banner in the skies
 Through each dark cloud which breaks,
 And mantles with triumphal dyes
 Your thousand hills and lakes !

A sound is on the breeze,
 A murmur as of swelling seas !
 The Saxon on his way !
 Lo ! spear and shield and lance,
 From Deva's waves, with lightning glance,
 Reflected to the day !
 But who the torrent-wave compels
 A conqueror's chain to bear ?
 Let those who wake the soul that dwells
 On our free winds, beware !
 The greenest and the loveliest dells
 May be the lion's lair !

Of us *they* told, the seers,
 And monarch bards of elder years,
 Who walk'd on earth as powers !
 And in their burning strains,
 A spell of might and mystery reigns,
 To guard our mountain-towers !
 —In Snowdon's caves a prophet lay :⁵
 Before his gifted sight,
 The march of ages pass'd away
 With hero-footsteps bright ;
 But proudest in that long array,
 Was Glendwr's path of light !

¹ The year 1402 was ushered in with a comet or blazing star, which the bards interpreted as an omen favourable to the cause of Glendwr. It served to infuse spirit into the minds of a superstitious people, the first success of their chieftain confirmed this belief, and gave new vigour to their actions.—PENNANT.

² Owen Glendwr styled himself the *Dragon*; a name he assumed in imitation of Uthyr, whose victories over the Saxons were foretold by the appearances of a star with a dragon beneath, which Uthyr used as his badge; and on that account it became a favourite one with the Welsh.—PENNANT.

³ “Bring the horn to Tudwrou, *the Eagle of Battles*.”—See the *Hirlas Horn* of OWAIN CYFELIUG. The eagle is a very favourite image with the ancient Welsh poets.

⁴ Gwynedd, (pronounced Gwyneth,) North Wales.

⁵ Merlin, or Merddin Emrys, is said to have composed his prophecies on the future lot of the Britons, amongst the mountains of Snowdon. Many of these, and other ancient prophecies, were applied by Glyndwr to his own cause, and assisted him greatly in animating the spirit of his followers.

PRINCE MADOC'S FAREWELL.

WHY lingers my gaze where the last hues of day
 On the hills of my country in loveliness sleep ?
 Too fair is the sight for a wand'rer, whose way
 Lies far o'er the measureless worlds of the deep !
 Fall, shadows of twilight ! and veil the green shore,
 That the heart of the mighty may waver no more !

Why rise on my thoughts, ye free songs of the land
 Where the harp's lofty soul on each wild wind
 is borne ?
 Be hush'd, be forgotten ! for ne'er shall the hand
 Of minstrel with melody greet my return.
 —No ! no !—let your echoes still float on the breeze,
 And my heart shall be strong for the conquest of
 seas !

'Tis not for the land of my sires to give birth
 Unto bosoms that shrink when their trial is nigh ;
 Away ! we will bear over ocean and earth
 A name and a spirit that never shall die.
 My course to the winds, to the stars, I resign ;
 But my soul's quenchless fire, O my country ! is
 thine.

CASWALLON'S TRIUMPH.

[Caswallon (or Cassivelaunus) was elected to the supreme command of the Britons, (as recorded in the Triads,) for the purpose of opposing Cæsar, under the title of Elected Chief of Battle. Whatever impression the disciplined legions of Rome might have made on the Britons in the first instance, the subsequent departure of Cæsar they considered as a cause of triumph; and it is stated that Caswallon proclaimed an assembly of the various states of the island, for the purpose of celebrating that event by feasting and public rejoicing.—*Cambrian Biography.*]

FROM the glowing southern regions,
 Where the sun-god makes his dwelling,
 Came the Roman's crested legions
 O'er the deep, round Britain swelling.
 The wave grew dazzling as he pass'd,
 With light from spear and helmet cast;
 And sounds in every rushing blast
 Of a conqueror's march were telling.

But his eagle's royal pinion,
 Bowing earth beneath its glory,
 Could not shadow with dominion
 Our wild seas and mountains hoary!
 Back from their cloudy realm it flies,
 To float in light through softer skies;
 Oh! chainless winds of heaven arise!
 Bear a vanquish'd world the story!

Lords of earth! to Rome returning,
 Tell how Britain combat wages,
 How Caswallon's soul is burning
 When the storm of battle rages!
 And ye that shrine high deeds in song,
 O holy and immortal throng!
 The brightness of his name prolong,
 As a torch to stream through ages!

HOWEL'S SONG.

[Howel ab Einion Llygliw was a distinguished bard of the fourteenth century. A beautiful poem, addressed by him to Myfanwy Vychan, a celebrated beauty of those times, is still preserved amongst the remains of the Welsh bards. The ruins of Myfanwy's residence, Castle Dinas Brân, may yet be traced on a high hill near Llangollen.]

PRESS on, my steed ! I hear the swell ¹
 Of Valle Crucis' vesper-bell,
 Sweet floating from the holy dell
 O'er woods and waters round.
 Perchance the maid I love, e'en now,
 From Dinas Brân's majestic brow,
 Looks o'er the fairy world below,
 And listens to the sound !

I feel her presence on the scene !
 The summer air is more serene,
 The deep woods wave in richer green,
 The wave more gently flows !
 O fair as ocean's curling foam ! ²
 Lo ! with the balmy hour I come—
 The hour that brings the wanderer home,
 The weary to repose !

Haste ! on each mountain's darkening crest
 The glow hath died, the shadows rest,
 The twilight star on Deva's breast
 Gleams tremulously bright ;
 Speed for Myfanwy's bower on high !
 Though scorn may wound me from her eye,
 Oh ! better by the sun to die,
 Than live in rayless night !

1 "I have rode hard, mounted on a fine high-bred steed,
upon thy account, O thou with the countenance of cherry-
flower bloom. The speed was with eagerness, and the strong
long-hamm'd steed of Alban reached the summit of the high
land of Brán."

2 "My loving heart sinks with grief without thy sup-
port, O thou that hast the whiteness of the curling waves!
. . . . I know that this pain will avail me nothing
towards obtaining thy love, O thou whose countenance is
bright as the flowers of the hawthorn!"—HOWEL'S *Ode to
Myfanwy*.

THE MOUNTAIN FIRES.

[“ The custom retained in Wales of lighting fires (*Celcerdd*) on November eve, is said to be a traditional memorial of the massacre of the British chiefs by Hengist, on Salisbury plain. The practice is, however, of older date, and had reference originally to the *Alban Eileed*, or new-year.”—*Cambro-Briton*.

When these fires are kindled on the mountains, and seen through the darkness of a stormy night, casting a red and fitful glare over heath and rock, their effect is strikingly picturesque.]

LIGHT the hills ! till heaven is glowing
As with some red meteor's rays !
Winds of night, though rudely blowing,
Shall but fan the beacon-blaze.

Light the hills ! till flames are streaming
From Yr Wyddfa's sovereign steep,¹
To the waves round Mona gleaming,
Where the Roman track'd the deep !

Be the mountain watch-fires heighten'd,
Pile them to the stormy sky !
Till each torrent-wave is brighten'd,
Kindling as it rushes by.
Now each rock, the mist's high dwelling,
Towers in reddening light sublime ;
Heap the flames ! around them telling
Tales of Cambria's elder time.

Thus our sires, the fearless-hearted,
Many a solemn vigil kept,
When, in ages long departed,
O'er the noble dead they wept.
In the winds we hear their voices—
“ Sons ! though yours a brighter lot,
When the mountain-land rejoices,
Be her mighty unforgot ! ”

¹ Yr Wyddfa, the Welsh name of Snowdon, said to mean the conspicuous place, or object.

ERYRI WEN.

[“ Snowdon was held as sacred by the ancient Britons, as Parnassus was by the Greeks, and Ida by the Cretans. It is still said, that whosoever slept upon Snowdon would wake inspired, as much as if he had taken a nap on the hill of Apollo. The Welsh had always the strongest attachment to the tract of Snowdon. Our princes had, in addition to their title, that of Lord of Snowdon.”—*PENYANT.*]

THEIR was no dream, O monarch hill,
 With heaven's own azure crown'd !
 Who call'd thee—what thou shalt be still,
 White Snowdon !—holy ground.

They fabled not, thy sons who told
 Of the dread power enshrined .
 Within thy cloudy mantle's fold,
 And on thy rushing wind !

It shadow'd o'er thy silent height,
 It fill'd thy chainless air,
 Deep thoughts of majesty and might
 For ever breathing there.

Nor hath it fled ! the awful spell
 Yet holds unbroken sway,
 As when on that wild rock it fell
 Where Merddin Emrys lay !²

Though from their stormy haunts of yore
 Thine eagles long have flown,³
 As proud a flight the soul shall soar
 Yet from thy mountain-throne !

Pierce then the heavens, thou hill of streams !
 And make the snows thy crest !
 The sunlight of immortal dreams
 Around thee still shall rest.

Eryri ! temple of the bard !
 And fortress of the free !
 Midst rocks which heroes died to guard,
 Their spirit dwells with thee !

¹ Dinas Emrys, (the fortress of Ambrose,) a celebrated rock amongst the mountains of Snowdon, is said to be so called from having been the residence of Merddin Emrys, called by the Latins Merlinus Ambrosius, the celebrated prophet and magician: and there, tradition says, he wrote his prophecies concerning the future state of the Britons.

There is another curious tradition respecting a large stone, on the ascent of Snowdon, called *Maen du yr Arddu*, the black stone of Arddu. It is said, that if two persons were to sleep a night on this stone, in the morning one would find himself endowed with the gift of poetry, and the other would become insane.—WILLIAMS'S *Observations on the Snowdon Mountains*.

² It is believed amongst the inhabitants of these mountains, that eagles have heretofore bred in the lofty clefts of their rocks. Some wandering ones are still seen at times, though very rarely, amongst the precipices.—WILLIAMS'S *Observations on the Snowdon Mountains*.

CHANT OF THE BARDS BEFORE THEIR
MASSACRE BY EDWARD I.⁴

RAISE ye the sword ! let the death-stroke be given ;
Oh ! swift may it fall as the lightning of heaven !
So shall our spirits be free as our strains—
The children of song may not languish in chains !

Have ye not trampled our country's bright crest ?
Are heroes reposing in death on her breast ?
Red with their blood do her mountain-streams flow,
And think ye that still we would linger below ?

Rest, ye brave dead ! midst the hills of your sires,
Oh ! who would not slumber when freedom expires ?
Lonely and voiceless your halls must remain—
The children of song may not breathe in the chain !

⁴ This sanguinary deed is not attested by any historian of credit. And it deserves to be also noticed, that none of the bardic productions since the time of Edward make any allusion to such an event.—*Cambro-Briton*, vol. i., p. 195.

THE HARP OF WALES.

INTRODUCTORY STANZAS, INSCRIBED TO THE RUTHIN
WELSH LITERARY SOCIETY.

HARP of the mountain-land ! sound forth again
As when the foaming Hirlas¹ horn was crown'd,
And warrior hearts beat proudly to the strain,
And the bright mead at Owain's feast went round :
Wake with the spirit and the power of yore !
Harp of the ancient hills ! be heard once more !

Thy tones are not to cease ! The Roman came
O'er the blue waters with his thousand oars :
Through Mona's oaks he sent the wasting flame ;
The Druid shrines lay prostrate on our shores :
All gave their ashes to the wind and sea—
Ring out, thou harp ! he could not silence thee.

Thy tones are not to cease ! The Saxon pass'd,
His banners floated on Eryri's gales ;²
But thou wert heard above the trumpet's blast,
E'en when his towers rose loftiest o'er the vales !
Thine was the voice that cheer'd the brave and free ;
They had their hills, their chainless hearts, and thee .

Those were dark years !—They saw the valiant fall,
The rank weeds gathering round the chieftain's
 board,

The hearth left lonely in the ruin'd hall—
Yet power was *thine*—a gift in every chord !
Call back that spirit to the days of peace,
Thou noble harp ! thy tones are not to cease !

¹ Hirlas, from *hír*, long, and *glas*, blue or azure.

² Eryri, the Welsh name for the Snowdon mountains.

THE DYING BARD'S PROPHECY.¹

THE hall of harps is lone to-night,
 And cold the chieftain's hearth :
 It hath no mead, it hath no light ;
 No voice of melody, no sound of mirth.

The bow lies broken on the floor
 Whence the free step is gone ;
 The pilgrim turns him from the door [stone.
 Where minstrel-blood hath stain'd the threshold

" And I, too, go : my wound is deep,
 My brethren long have died ;
 Yet, ere my soul grow dark with sleep,
 Winds ! bear the spoiler one more tone of pride !

" Bear it where, on his battle-plain,
 Beneath the setting sun,
 He counts my country's noble slain—
 Say to him—Saxon, think not *all* is won.

" Thou hast laid low the warrior's head,
 The minstrel's chainless hand :
 Dreamer ! that numberest with the dead
 The burning spirit of the mountain-land !

" Think'st thou, because the song hath ceased,
 The soul of song is flown ?
 Think'st thou it woke to crown the feast,
 It lived beside the ruddy hearth alone ?

" No ! by our wrongs, and by our blood !
 We leave it pure and free ;
 Though hush'd awhile, that sounding flood
 Shall roll in joy through ages yet to be.

" We leave it midst our country's woe—
 The birthright of her breast ;
 We leave it as we leave the snow
 Bright and eternal on Eryri's crest.

We leave it with our fame to dwell
 Upon our children's breath ;
 Our voice in theirs through time shall swell—
 The bard hath gifts of prophecy from death.

He dies ; but yet the mountains stand,
 Yet sweeps the torrent's tide ;
 And this is yet Aneurin's² land—
 Winds ! bear the spoiler one more tone of pride !

¹ At the time of the supposed massacre of the Welsh bards by Edward the First.

² Aneurin, one of the noblest of the Welsh bards.