WELSH FAIRY TALES.

By Professor RHYS.

VI. Beddgelert, Drws y Coed, etc.

The best living authority I have found on the folk-lore of Beddgelert, Drws y Coed, and the surrounding district, is Mr. William Jones, now of Llangollen. He has written a good deal on the subject in the *Brython*, and in competition essays for various literary meetings in Wales. I have one such essay of his, together with the *Brython*, before me, and I have, besides, had a number of letters from him, most of which contain some additional information. To meet the rule laid down by the editor of the *Cymmrodor*, I have asked Mr. Jones to give me a little of his own history. This he has been kind enough to do; and, as I have so far followed no particular order in these jottings, I shall now give the reader the substance of his letters in English, as I am anxious that no item should be lost or be inaccessible to English students of folk-lore. What is unintelligible to me may not be so to Max Müller or Andrew Lang.

"I was bred and born," says Mr. Jones, "in the parish of Beddgelert, one of the most rustic neighbourhoods and least subject to change in the whole country. Some of the old Welsh customs remained within my memory, in spite of the adverse influence of the Calvinistic Reformation, as it is termed, and I have myself witnessed several Knitting Nights and Nuptial Feasts *(Neithiorau)*, which, be it noticed, are not to be confounded with weddings, as they were feasts which followed the weddings at a week's interval. At these gatherings, the song

and story formed an element of prime importance in the entertainment, at a time when the Reformation alluded to had already blown the blast of extinction on the Merry Nights (*Noswyliau Llawen*) and Saints' Fêtes[1] (*Gwyl Mabsantau*) before my time, though many of my aged acquaintances remembered them well, and retained a vivid recollection of scores of the amusing tales they used to relate for the best at the last-mentioned long-night meetings. I have heard not a few of them reproduced by men of that generation. As an example of the old-fashioned ways of the people of Beddgelert in my early days, I may mention the way in which wives and children used to be named. The custom was that the wife never took her husband's family name, but retained the one she had as a spinster. Thus my grandmother on my mother's side was called Ellen Hughes, daughter to Hugh Williams of Gwastad Anas. The name of her husband, my grandfather, was William Prichard [= W. ab Rhisiart, or Richard's son], son to Richard William of the Efail Newydd. The name of their eldest son, my uncle (brother to my mother), was Hugh Hughes, and the second son's name was Richard William. The mother had the privilege of naming her first-born after her own family in case it was a boy; but if it happened to be a girl, she took her name from the father's family, for which reason my mother's maiden name was Catherine Williams. This remained her name to the day of her death; and the old people at Beddgelert persisted in calling me, so long as I was at home, William Prichard, after my grandfather, as I was my mother's eldest child."

[1] These were held, so far as I can gather from the descriptions usually given of them, exactly as I have seen a *kermess* or *kirchmesse* celebrated at Heidelberg, or rather the village over the Neckar, opposite that town. It was in 1869, but I forget what saint it was, with whose name the *kermess* was supposed to be connected: the chief features of it were dancing and beer drinking.

"Most of the tales I have collected," says Mr. Jones, "relate to the parishes of Beddgelert and Dolwyddelen. My kindred have lived for generations in those two parishes, and they are very numerous; in fact, it used to be said that the people of Dolwyddelen and Beddgelert were all cousins. They were mostly small farmers, and jealous of all strangers, so that they married almost without exception from the one parish into the other. This intermixture helped to carry the tales of the one parish to the other, and to perpetuate them on the hearths of their homes from generation to generation, until they were swept away by another influence in this century. Many of my ancestors seem to have been very fond of stories, poetry, and singing, and I have been told that some of them were very skilled in these things. So also, in the case of my parents, the memory of the past had a great charm for them on both sides; and when the relatives from Dolwyddelen and Beddgelert met in either parish, there used to be no end to the recounting of pedigrees and the repeating of tales for the best. By listening to them, I had been filled with desire to become an adept in pedigrees and legends. My parents used to let me go every evening to the house of my grandfather, William ab Rhisiart, the clerk, to hear tales, and listen to edifying books being read. My grandfather was a reader 'without his rival', and 'he used to beat the parson hollow'. Many people used to meet at Pen y Bont in the evenings to converse together, and some of them were exceedingly eloquent at their stories now and then. Of course, I listened with eager ears and open mouth, in order, if I heard anything new, to be able to repeat it to my mother. She, not willing to let herself be beaten, would probably relate another like it, which she had heard from her mother, grandmother, or her old aunt of Gwastad Anas, who was a fairly good verse-wright of the homely kind. Then my father, if he did not happen to be busy with his

music-book, would also give us a tale he had heard from his grandmother or grandfather, the old John Jones of Ty'n Llan, Dolwyddelen, or by somebody else in the house. That is one source from which I got my knowledge of folk-lore; but this ceased when we moved from Beddgelert to Carnarvon in the year 1841. My grandfather died in 1844, aged seventy-eight.

"Besides those who used to come to my grandfather's house and to his workshop to relate stories, the blacksmith's shop, especially on a rainy day, used to be a capital place for a story, and many a time did I lurk there, instead of going to school, in order to hear old William Dafydd, the sawyer, who, peace be to his ashes! drank many a hornfull from the *Big Quart* without ever breaking down, and old Ifan Owen, the fisherman, tearing away for the best at their stories, sometimes a tissue of lies and sometimes truth. The former was mischievous, up to all kinds of tricks, and funny. He made everybody laugh, while the latter preserved the gravity of a saint, however lying a tale he might be relating. The latter's best stories were about the Water Spirit, or, as he called it, *Llamhigyn y Dwr*, or, the Water Leaper. He had not himself seen the *Llamhigyn*, but his father had seen it 'hundreds of·times'. Many an evening he had prevented him from catching a single fish in Llyn Gwynan, and, when the fisherman got on this theme, then his eloquence was apt to become highly pollysyllabic in its adjectives. Once in particular, when he had been angling for hours towards the close of the day, without taking anything, he found that something took the fly clean off the hook each time he cast his line. After moving from one spot to another on the lake, he fished opposite the Benlan Wen, when something gave his line a frightful pluck, 'and, by the gallows, I gave another pluck', as the fisherman used to say, 'with all the force of my arm: out it came, and up it went off the hook, whilst I turned my head

to see, and it dashed against the cliff of Benlan, so that it blazed like lightning.' He used to add, 'If that was not the *Llamhigyn*, it must have been the very devil himself.' That cliff must be two hundred yards from the shore at least. As to his father, he had seen the Water Spirit many times, and he had also been fishing in the Llyn Glas (Ffynon Las) once upon a time, when he hooked a wonderful and fearful monster: it was not like a fish, but rather resembled a toad, but that it had a tail and wings instead of legs. He pulled it easily enough towards the shore, but, as its head was coming out of the water, it gave a terrible shriek that was enough to split the fisherman's bones to the marrow, and, had there not been a friend standing by, he would have fallen headlong into the lake, and been possibly dragged like a sheep into the deep; for there is a tradition that if a sheep got into the Llyn Glas, it could not be got out again, as something would at once drag it to the bottom. This used to be the belief of the shepherds of Cwm Dyli, within my memory, and they acted on it in never letting their dogs go at the sheep in the neighbourhood of this lake. These two funny fellows, William Dafydd and Ifan Owen, died long ago, without leaving any of their descendants blessed with as much as the faintest gossamer thread of the storyteller's mantle. The former, if he had been still living, would now be no less than 129 years of age, and the latter about 120."

We shall have to return, some other time, to the Water Spirit, as Mr. Jones has given me a good deal more about him. He proceeds to say that he had stories from sources besides those mentioned, namely, from Lowri Robat, wife of Rhisiart Edwart, the "Old Guide", from his old aunt of Gwastad Anas, from William Wmffra, husband to his grandmother's sister, from his grandmother, who was a native of Dolwyddelen, and had been brought up at Pwllgwernog Nanmor, from her sister, from Gruffudd Prisiart of Nanmor,

afterwards of Glan Colwyn, who gave him the legend of Owen Lawgoch (Edward Llwyd's "Gwr Blew"), and the story of the bogie of Penpwll Coch. "But the chief story-teller of his time at Beddgelert was Twm Ifan Siams, who was brother", Mr. Jones goes on to say, "I believe, to Dafydd Sion Siams of the Penrhyn, who was a bard and pedigree-man. He lived at Nanmor, but I know not what his vocation was; his relations, however, were small farmers, carpenters, and masons: it is not improbable that he also was an artizan, as he was conversant with numbers, magnitudes, and letters, and left behind him a volume forming a pedigree-book, known at Nanmor as the *Barcud Mawr* or *Great Kite*, as Gruffudd Prisiart told me. The latter had been reading it many a time in order to know the origin of somebody or other. All I can remember of this character is that he was very old—over 90—and that he went from house to house in his old age to relate tales and recount pedigrees; great was the welcome he had from everybody everywhere. I remember, also, that he was small of stature, nimble, witty, exceedingly amusing, and always ready with his say on every subject. He was in the habit of calling on my grandfather in his rambles, and very cordial was the reception which my parents always gave him on account of his tales and his knowledge of pedigrees. The story of the Afanc, as given in this collection, is from his mouth. You will observe how little difference there is between his version[1] and that known to Edward Llwyd in the year 1695. I had related this story to a friend of mine at Portmadoc, who was grandson or great-grandson to Dafydd Sion Siams of the Penrhyn, in 1858, when he called my attention to the same story in the *Cambrian Journal* from the correspondence of Edward Llwyd. I was surprised at the similarity between the two versions and I went to Beddgelert to Gruffudd Rhisiart, who was related to Twm Sion Siams. I read the story to him, and I

[1] I find that I cannot give that and similar ones this time.

found that he had heard it related by his uncle just as it was by me, and in the *Cambrian Journal.* Twm Ifan Siams had funny stories about the tricks of *Gwrach y Rhibyn*, the *Bodach Glas*, and the *Bwbach Llwyd*, which he localised in Nanmor and Llanfrothen; he had, also, a very eloquent tale about the courtship between a sailor from Moel y Gest, near Portmadoc, and a mermaid, of which I retain a fairly good recollection. I believe Twm died in the year 1835-6, aged about 95."

So far, I have freely translated Mr. Jones's account of himself and his authorities as given me in the letter I have already referred to as dated in June last year. I would now add the substance of his general remarks about the fairies, as he had heard them described, and as he has expressed himself in his Essay for the competition on folk-lore at the Carnarvon Eisteddfod in 1880: "The traditions respecting the *Tylwyth Teg* vary according to the situation of the districts with which they are connected, and many more such traditions continue to be remembered among the inhabitants of the mountains than by those of the more level country. In some places, the *Tylwyth Teg* are described as small folks of a thieving nature, who used to live in summer among the fern bushes in the mountains, and in winter in the heather and gorse. These were wont to frequent the fairs and to steal money from the farmers' pockets, where they placed in their stead their own fairy money, which looked like the coin of the realm, but, when they were paid for anything bought with them, they would vanish in the pockets of the seller. In other districts they were described as a little bigger and stronger folk; but these latter were also of a thieving disposition. They would lurk around people's houses, looking for an opportunity to steal butter and cheese from the dairies, and keep skulking about the cow-yards, in order to milk the cows and the goats, which they did so thoroughly that many a morning there was not a drop of

milk to be had. But the principal mischief these used to do was to carry away unbaptised infants, and place in their stead their own wretched and peevish offspring. They were said to live in hidden caves in the mountains, and I have heard one old man asserting that he was sure that it was beneath Moel Eilio, a mountain lying between Llanberis and Cwellyn, the Tylwyth Teg of Nant y Bettws lived, whom he had seen many a time when he was a lad; and that, if anyone came across the mouth of their cave, that he would find there a wonderful amount of wealth, 'for they were thieves without their like'. There is still another species of *Tylwyth Teg*, very unlike the foregoing ones in their nature and habits. Not only were they far more beautiful and comely than the others, but they were honest and kind towards mortals. Their whole nature was replete with joy and fun, nor were they hardly ever seen except engaged in some merry-making or other. They might be seen on bright moonlight nights at it, singing and caroling playfully on the fair meadows and the green slopes, at other times dancing lightly on the tops of the rushes in the valleys. They were also wont to be seen hunting in full force on the backs of their grey horses; for this kind were rich, and kept horses and servants. Though it used to be said that they were spiritual and immortal beings, still they ate and drank like human beings, as well as married and had children. They were also remarkable for their cleanliness and wont to reward neat maid-servants and hospitable wives. So the housewives used to exhort the girls to clean their houses thoroughly every night before going to bed, saying that if the *Tylwyth Teg* happened to come in, they would be sure to leave money for them somewhere, but that they were not to tell anyone in case they found some, lest the *Tylwyth* should be offended and come no more. The women, also, used to order a tinful of water to be placed at the foot of the stairs,

a clean cloth on the table, with bread and its accompaniments *(bara ac enllyn)* placed on it, so that, if the *Tylwyth* came in to eat, the maids should have their recompense on the hob as well as unstinted praise for keeping the house clean, or, as Mr. Jones has it in verse:—

"'Eu rhent ar y pentan,
A llwyr glod o bae llawr glan.'

"Thus, whether the fairies came or not to pay a visit to them during their sleep, the houses would be clean by the morning, and the table set for breakfast. It appears that the places most frequently resorted to by this species were rushy combes surrounded by smooth hills with round tops, also the banks of rivers and the borders of lakes; but they were seldom seen at any time near rocks or cliffs. So more tales about them are found in districts of the former description than anywhere else, and among them may be mentioned Penmachno, Dolwyddelen, the sides of Moel Siabod, Llandegai Mountain, and from there to Llanberis, to Nantlle Lakes, to Moel Tryfan and Nant y Bettws, the upper portion of the parish of Beddgelert from Drws y Coed to the Pennant, and the district beginning from there, and including the level part of Eifion to Celynnog Fawr. I have very little doubt that there are many traditions about them in the neighbourhood of the Eifl and in Lleyn, but I know but little about these last. This kind of fairies was said to live underground, and the way to their country lay under hollow banks that overhung the deepest parts of the lakes, or the deepest pools in the rivers, so that mortals could not follow them further than the water, should they try to go after them. They used to come out in broad daylight, two or three together, and now and then a shepherd, so the saying went, used to talk and chat with them. Sometimes, moreover, he fell over head and ears in love with their damsels, but they did not readily allow a mortal to touch them.

The time they were to be seen in their greatest glee was at night when the moon was full, when they celebrated their nocturnal merrymaking *(noswaith lawen)*. That night, at twelve o'clock to the minute, they were to be seen rising out of the ground in every combe and valley; then, joining hands, they formed into circles, and began singing and dancing with might and main until the cock crew, when they vanished. Many used to go to look at them those nights, but it was dangerous to go too near them, lest they should lure one into their circle; for if they did that, they would throw a charm over him, which would make him invisible to his companions, and they would keep him with them as long as he lived. At times, some went too near them, and got snatched in; and at other times, a love-inspired youth, fascinated by the charms of one of their damsels, rushed in foolhardily to try to seize on one of them, and got instantly surrounded and covered from sight. But if he could be got out before the cock crew he would be no worse; but once they disappeared without his having been got out, he would never more be seen in the land of the living. The way such a one was got out was by means of a long stick of mountain ash *(pren criafol)*, which two or more strong men had to hold with its end in the middle of the circle, so that when he came round in his turn in the dance he might take hold of it, for he is there bodily though not visible, so that he cannot go past without coming across the stick. Then the others pull him out, for the fairies dare not touch the mountain ash any more than any other spirit."

We now proceed to give some of Mr. Jones's tales. The first is one which he published in the fourth volume of the *Brython*, page 70, whence the following free translation is made of it. I may premise that the editor of the *Brython*, in a note, mentions that this tale is not only like the Ystrad one, given in the *Cymmrodor*, vol. iv, pp. 188-194, but also to one

told of the son of the farmer of Braich y Dinas, in the parish of Llanfihangel y Pennant, which I have not seen :—

"In the north-west corner of the parish of Beddgelert there is a place which used to be called by the old inhabitants the Land of the Fairies, and it reaches from Cwm Hafod Ruffydd along the slope of the mountain of Drws y Coed as far as Llyn y Dywarchen. The old people of former times used to find much pleasure and amusement in this district in listening every moonlight night to the charming music of the Fair Family, and in looking at their dancing and their mirthful sports. Once on a time, a long while ago, there lived at the upper Drws y Coed a youth, who was joyous and active, brave and determined of heart. This young man amused himself every night by looking on and listening to them. One night they had come to a field near the house, near the shore of Llyn y Dywarchen, to pass a merry night. He went, as usual, to look at them, when his glances at once fell on one of the ladies, who possessed such beauty as he had never seen in a human being. Her appearance was like that of alabaster; her voice was as agreeable as the nightingale's, and as unruffled as the zephyr in a flower-garden at the noon of a long summer's day; and her gait was pretty and aristocratic; her feet moved in the dance as lightly on the grass as the rays of the sun had a few hours before on the lake hard by. He fell in love with her over head and ears, and in the strength of that passion—for what is stronger than love?—he rushed, when the bustle was at its height, into the midst of the fair crowd, and snatched the graceful damsel in his arms, and ran instantly with her to the house. When the Fair Family saw the violence effected by a mortal, they broke up the dance and ran after her towards the house; but, when they got there, the door had been bolted with iron, wherefore they could not get near her or touch her in any way; and the damsel had

been placed securely in a chamber. The youth, having her now under his roof, as is the saying, endeavoured, with all his talent, to win her affection and to induce her to wed. But she would on no account hear of it at first; on seeing his persistence, however, and that he would not let her free to return to her people, she consented to be his servant if he could find out her name; but she would not be married to him. As he thought that was not impossible, he half agreed to the condition; but, after bothering his head with all the names known in that neighbourhood, he found himself no nearer his point, though he was not willing to give up the search hurriedly. One night, as he was going home from Carnarvon market, he saw a number of the Fair Folks in a turbary not far from his path. They seemed to him to be engaged in an important deliberation, and it struck him that they were planning how to recover their abducted sister. He thought, moreover, that if he could secretly get within hearing, that he might possibly find her name out. On looking carefully around, he saw that a ditch ran through the turbary and passed near the spot where they stood. So he made his way round to the ditch, and crept, on all fours, along it until he was within hearing of the Family. After listening a little, he found that their deliberation was as to the fate of the lady he had carried away, and he heard one of them crying, piteously, 'O Penelop, O Penelop, my sister, why didst thou run away with a mortal!' 'Penelop,' said the young man to himself, 'that must be the name of my beloved; that is enough.' At once he began to creep back quietly, and he returned home safely without having been seen by the Fairies. When he got into the house, he called out to the girl, saying, 'Penelop, my beloved one, come here!' and she came forward and asked, in astonishment, 'O, mortal, who has betrayed my name to thee?' Then, lifting up her tiny folded hands, she exclaimed, 'Alas, my fate, my fate!' But she

grew contented with her fate, and took to her work in earnest. Everything in the house and on the farm prospered under her charge. There was no better or cleanlier housewife in the neighbourhood around, or one that was more provident than she. The young man, however, was not satisfied that she should be a servant to him, and, after he had long and persistently sought it, she consented to be married, on the one condition, that, if ever he should touch her with iron, she would be free to leave him and return to her family. He agreed to that condition, since he believed that such a thing would never happen at his hands. So they were married, and lived several years happily and comfortably together. Two children were born to them, a boy and a girl, the picture of their mother and the idols of their father. But one morning, when the husband wanted to go to the fair at Carnarvon, he went out to catch a filly that was grazing in the field by the house; but for the life of him he could not catch her, and he called to his wife to come to assist him. She came without delay, and they managed to drive the filly to a secure corner, as they thought; but, as the man approached to catch her, she rushed past him. In his excitement, he threw the bridle after her; but, who should be running in the direction of it, but his wife! The iron bit struck her on the cheek, and she vanished out of sight on the spot. Her husband never saw her any more; but one cold frosty night, a long time after this event, he was awakened from his sleep by somebody rubbing the glass of his window, and, after he had given an answer, he recognised the gentle and tender voice of his wife saying to him:—

> "'Lest my son should find it cold,
> Place on him his father's coat;
> Lest the fair one find it cold,
> Place on her my petticoat.'

It is said that the descendants of this family still continue in

these neighbourhoods, and that they are easily to be recognised by their light and fair complexion. A similar story is related of the son of the farmer of Braich y Dinas in Llanfihangel y Pennant, and it used to be said that most of the inhabitants of that neighbourhood were formerly of a light complexion. I have often heard old people saying that it was only necessary, within their memory, to point out, in the fair at Penmorfa, anyone as being of the breed of the *Tylwyth*, to have plenty of fighting for that day at least."

The reader may compare with this tale the following, for which I have to thank Mr. Samuel Rhys Williams, whose words I give, followed by a translation:—

"Yr oedd gwr ieuanc o gymmydogaeth Drws y Coed yn dychwelyd adref o Beddgelert ar noswaith loergan lleuad, pan ar gyfer Llyn y Gader gwelai nifer o'r boneddigesau a elwir y Tylwyth Teg yn myned trwy eu chwareuon nosawl. Swynwyd y llanc yn y fan gan brydferthwch y rhianod hyn, ac yn neillduol un o honynt. Collodd y llywodraeth arno ei hunan i'r fath raddau fel y penderfynodd neidio i'r cylch a dwyn yn ysbail iddo yr hon oedd wedi myned a'i galon mor llwyr. Cyflawnodd ei fwriad a dygodd y foneddiges gydag ef adref. Bu yn wraig iddo, a ganwyd plant iddynt. Yn ddamweiniol, tra yn cyflawni rhyw orchwyl, digwyddodd iddo ei tharo a haiarn ac ar amrantiad diflanodd ei anwylyd o'i olwg ac nis gwelodd hi mwyach, ond ddarfod iddi ddyfod at ffenestr ei ystafell wely un noswaith ar ol hyn a'i annog i fod yn dirion wrth y plant a'i bod hi yn aros gerllaw y ty yn Llyn y Dywarchen. Y mae y traddodiad yn ein hysbysu hefyd ddarfod i'r gwr hwn symud i fyw o Drws y Coed i Ystrad Betws Garmon."

"A young man, from the neighbourhood of Drws y Coed, was returning home, one bright moonlight night, from Beddgelert; when he came opposite the lake called Llyn y Gader, he saw a number of the ladies known as the *Tylwyth Teg*,

going through their nightly frolics. The youth was charmed at once by the beauty of these ladies, and especially by one of them. He so far lost his control over himself, that he resolved to leap into the circle and carry away, as his spoil, the one who had so completely robbed him of his heart. He accomplished his intention, and carried the lady with him home. She became his wife, and children were born to them. Accidentally, while at some work or other, it happened to him to strike her with iron, and, in a twinkling of an eye, his beloved one disappeared from his sight. He saw her no more, except that she came to his bedroom window one night afterwards, and told him to be tender towards the children, and that she was staying near the house in the lake called Llyn y Dywarchen. The tradition also informs us that this man moved from Drws y Coed to live at Ystrad near Bettws Garmon."

The name Llyn y Dywarchen, I may add, means the Lake of the Sod, or of the Turf: it is the one with the floating island, described thus by Giraldus: "Alter enim insulam habet erraticam, vi ventorum impellentium ad oppositas plerumque lacus partes errabundam. Hic armenta pascentia nonnunquam pastores ad longinquas subito partes translata mirantur." Sheep are known to get on the floating islet, and it is still believed to float them away from the shore. Mr. S. Rhys Williams, it will be noticed, has given the substance of the legend rather than the story itself. I now proceed to translate the same tale as given in Welsh in *Cymru Fu* (pp. 474-7 of the edition of Messrs. Hughes and Son of Wrexham), in a very different dress—it is from Glasynys's pen, and, as might be expected, decked out with all the literary adornments he delighted in. The language he used was his own, but there is no reason to think he invented any of the incidents:—"The farmer of Drws y Coed's son was one misty day engaged as shepherd on the side of the mountain, a little below Cwm Marchnad, and, as he crossed a

rushy flat, he saw a wonderfully handsome little woman standing under a clump of rushes. Her yellow and curly hair hung down in ringed locks, and her eyes were as blue as the clear sky, while her forehead was as white as the wavy face of a snowdrift that had nestled on the side of Snowdon only a single night. Her two plump cheeks were each like a red rose, and her pretty-lipped mouth might make an angel eager to kiss her. The youth approached her, filled with love for her, and, with delicacy and affection, asked her if he might have a chat with her. She smiled kindly, and, reaching out her hand, said to him, 'Idol of my hopes, thou hast come at last!' They begin to associate secretly, and to meet one another daily here and there on the moors around the banks of Llyn y Gader; at last, their love had waxed so violent that the young man could not be at peace either day or night, as he was always thinking of her or humming to himself a verse of poetry about Bella's charms [a pretty verse of Glasynys's own composition, which I will not spoil by trying to translate]. The yellow-haired youth was now and then lost for a long while, and nobody could divine his history. His acquaintances believed that he had been fascinated; but at last the secret was found out. There were about Llyn y Dywarchen shady and concealing copses; it is there he was wont to go, and the she-elf would always be there awaiting him, and it is therefore the place where they used to meet got to be called Llwyn y Forwyn, or the Maiden's Grove. After fondly loving for a long time, it was resolved to wed; but it was needful to get the leave of the damsel's father. One moonlight night it was agreed to meet in the wood, and the appointment was duly kept by the young man, but there was no sign of the subterranean folks coming, until the moon disappeared behind the Garn. Then the two arrived, and the old man at once proceeded to say to the suitor: 'Thou shalt have my daughter on the condition that thou do not strike

her with iron. If thou ever touch her with that, she will no longer be thine, but shall return to her own.' The man consented readily, and great was his joy. They were betrothed, and seldom was a handsomer pair seen at the altar. It was rumoured that a huge sum of money as dowry had arrived with the pretty lady to Drws y Coed on the evening of her nuptials. Soon after, the mountain shepherd of Cwm Marchnad passed for a rich and very influential man. In the course of time they had children, and no happier people ever lived together than their parents. Everything went on regularly and prosperously for a number of years; they became exceedingly rich, but the sweet is not to be had without the bitter. One day they both went out on horseback, and they happened to go near Llyn y Gader, when the wife's horse got into a bog and sank to his belly in it. After the husband had got Bella off his back, he succeeded with much trouble in getting the horse out, and then he let him go. Then he lifted her on the back of his own, but, unfortunately, in trying quickly to place her foot in the stirrup, the iron part of the same slipped, and struck her—or, rather, it touched her at the knee-joint. Before they had made good half their way home, several of the diminutive family began to appear to them, and the sound of sweet singing was heard on the side of the hill. Before the husband reached Drws y Coed his wife had left him, and it is supposed that she fled to Llwyn y Forwyn, and thence to the world below to Faery. She left her dear little ones to the care of her beloved, and no more came near them. Some say, however, that she sometimes got to see her beloved one in the following manner. As the law of her country did not allow of her frequenting the earth with an earthly being, she and her mother invented a way of avoiding the one thing and of securing the other. A great piece of sod was set to float on the surface of the lake, and on that she used to be for long hours,

freely conversing in tenderness with her consort on shore; by means of that plan they managed to live together until he breathed his last. Their descendants owned Drws y Coed for many generations, and they intermarried and mixed with the people of the district. Moreover, many a fierce fight took place in later times at the Gwyl Mabsants of Dolbenmaen and Penmorfa, because the men of Eifionydd had a habit of annoying the people of Pennant by calling them Bellisians. In a note, Glasynys remarks that this tale is located in many districts without much variation, except in the names of the places; this, however, could not apply to the latter part, which suits Llyn y Dywarchen alone. Now I return to another tale sent me by Mr. Jones; unless I am mistaken it has not hitherto been published, so I give the Welsh as well as a free translation of it.

"Yr oedd ystori am fab Braich y Dinas a adroddai y diweddar hybarch Elis Owen o Gefn y Meusydd yn lled debyg i chwedl mab yr Ystrad gan Glasynys, sef iddo hudo un o ferched y Tylwyth Teg i lawr o Foel Hebog a'i chipio i mewn i'r ty drwy orthrech; ac wedi hyny efe a'i perswadiodd i ymbriodi ag ef ar yr un telerau ag y gwnaeth mab yr Ystrad. Ond clywais hen foneddiges o'r enw Mrs. Roberts, un o ferched yr Isallt, a'r hon oedd lawer hyn na Mr. Owen, yn ei hadrodd yn wahanol. Yr oedd yr hen wreigan hon yn credu yn nilysrwydd y chwedl, oblegid yr oedd hi 'yn cofio rhai o'r teulu, waeth be' ddeudo neb.' Dirwynai ei hedau yn debyg i hyn:—Yn yr amser gynt—ond o ran hyny pan oedd hi yn ferch ifange—yr oedd llawer iawn o Dylwyth Teg yn trigo mewn rhyw ogofau yn y Foel o Gwm Ystradllyn hyd i flaen y Pennant. Yr oedd y Tylwyth hwn yn llawer iawn harddach na dim a welid mewn un rhan arall o'r wlad. Yr oeddynt o ran maint yn fwy o lawer na'r rhai cyffredin, yn lan eu pryd tu hwnt i bawb, eu gwallt yn oleu fel llin, eu llygaid yn loyw leision. Yr oeddynt yn ymddangos mewn

rhyw le neu gilydd yn chwareu, canu ac ymddifyru bob nos deg a goleu; a byddai swn eu canu yn denu y llangciau a'r merched ifaingc i fyned i'w gweled; ac os byddent yn digwydd bod o bryd goleu hwy a ymgomient a hwynt, ond ni adawent i un person o liw tywyll ddod yn agos atynt, eithr cilient ymaith o ffordd y cyfryw un. Yrwan yr oedd mab Braich y Dinas yn llangc hardd, heini, bywiog ac o bryd glan, goleu a serchiadol. Yr oedd hwn yn hoff iawn o edrych ar y Tylwyth, a byddai yn cael ymgom a rhai o honynt yn aml, ond yn benaf ag un o'r merched yr hon oedd yn rhagori arnynt oll mewn glendid a synwyr; ac o fynych gyfarfod syrthiodd y ddau mewn cariad a'u gilydd, eithr ni fynai hi ymbriodi ag ef, ond addawodd fyned i'w wasanaeth, a chydunodd, i'w gyfarfod yn Mhant—nid wyf yn cofio yr enw i gyd—dranoeth, oblegid nid oedd wiw iddi geisio myned gyd ag ef yn ngwydd y lleill. Felly tranoeth aeth i fynu i'r Foel, a chyfarfyddodd y rhian ef yn ol ei haddewid, ac aeth gydag ef adref, ac ymgymerodd a'r swydd o laethwraig, a buan y dechreuodd pobpeth lwyddo o dan ei llaw: yr oedd yr ymenyn a'r caws yn cynyddu beunydd. Hir a thaer y bu y llangc yn ceisio ganddi briodi. A hi a addawodd, os medrai ef gael allan ei henw. Ni wyddai Mrs. Roberts drwy ba ystryw y llwyddodd i gael hwnw, ond hyny a fu, a daeth ef i'r ty un noswaith a galwodd ar 'Sibi', a phan glywodd hi ei henw, hi a aeth i lewygfa; ond pan ddaeth atti ei hun, hi a ymfoddlonodd i briodi ar yr amod nad oedd ef i gyffwrdd a hi a haiarn ac nad oedd bollt haiarn i fod ar y drws na chlo ychwaith, a hyny a fu; priodwyd hwynt, a buont fyw yn gysurus am lawer o flynyddoedd, a ganwyd iddynt amryw blant. Y diwedd a fu fel hyn: yr oedd ef wedi myned un diwrnod i dori baich o frwyn at doi, a tharawodd y cryman yn y baich i fyned adref; fel yr oedd yn nesu at y gadlas, rhedodd Sibi i'w gyfarfod, a thaflodd ynteu y baich brwyn yn ddireidus tu ag atti, a rhag iddo ddyfod ar ei thraws ceisiodd

ei atal a'i llaw, yr hon a gyffyrddodd a'r cryman; a hi a ddiflanodd o'r golwg yn y fan yn nghysgod y baich brwyn: ni welwyd ac ni chlywyd dim oddiwrthi mwyach."

"There was a story respecting the son of the farmer of Braich y Dinas, which used to be related by the late Mr. Ellis Owen of Cefn y Meusydd, somewhat in the same way as that about the Ystrad youth, as told by Glasynys; that is to say, he enticed one of the damsels of the Fair Family to come down from Moel Hebog, and then he carried her by force into the house, and afterwards persuaded her to wed on the same conditions as the young man of Ystrad did. But I have heard an old lady called Mrs. Roberts, who had been brought up at Isallt, and who was older than Mr. Owen, relating it differently. This old woman believed in the truth of the story, as 'she remembered some of the family, whatever any body might say.' She used to spin her yarn somewhat as follows:—In old times—but, for the matter of that, when she was a young woman—there were a great many of the Fair Family living in certain caves in the Foel from Cwm Ystradllyn down to the upper part of Pennant. This family was much handsomer than any seen in any other part of the country. In point of stature they were much bigger than the ordinary ones, fair of complexion beyond everybody, with hair that was as light as flax, and eyes that were of a clear blue colour. They showed themselves in one spot or another, engaged in playing, singing, and jollifying every light night. The sound of their singing used to draw the lads and the young women to look at them; and, should they be of clear complexion, they would chat with them; but they would let no person of dark colour come near them, and they moved away from such a one. Now the young man of Braich y Dinas was a handsome, vigorous, and lively stripling, of fair, clear, and attractive complexion. He was very fond of looking at the Fair Family, and had a chat

with some of them often, but chiefly with one of the damsels, who surpassed all the rest in beauty and good sense. The result of frequently meeting was that they fell in love with one another, but she would not marry him. She promised, however, to go to service to him, and agreed to meet him at Pant y—I have forgotten the rest of the name—the day after, as it would not do for her to go with him while the others happened to be looking on. So he went up the next day to the Foel, and the damsel met him according to her promise, and went with him home, where she took to the duties of dairymaid. Soon everything began to prosper under her hand; the butter and the cheese were daily growing in quantity. Long and importunately did the youth try to get her to marry him. She promised to do so provided he could find out her name. Mrs. Roberts did not know by what manœuvre he succeeded in getting it, but it was done, and he came into the house one night and called to 'Sibi', and when she heard her name she fainted away. When, however, she recovered her consciousness, she consented to marry on the condition that he was not to touch her with iron, and that there was not to be a bolt of iron on the door, or a lock either. It was agreed, and they were married; they lived together comfortably many years, and had children born to them. The end came thus: he had gone one day to cut a bundle of rushes for thatching, and planted the reaping-hook in the bundle to go home. As he drew towards the haggart, Sibi ran out to meet him, and he mischievously threw the bundle of rushes towards her, when she, to prevent its hitting her, tried to stop it with her hand, which touched the reaping-hook. She vanished on the spot out of sight behind the bundle of rushes, and nothing more was seen or heard of her."

Mr. Ellis Owen, alluded to above, was a highly respected gentleman, well known in Wales, for his literary and anti-

quarian tastes. He was born in 1789 at Cefn y Meusydd, near Tremadoc, where he continued to live till the day of his death, which was the 27th of January 1868. His literary remains, preceded by a short biography, were published in 1877 by Mr. Robert Isaac Jones of Tremadoc; but it contains no fairy tales so far as I have been able to find. A tale which reminds one of that given me by Mr. D. E. Davies respecting the Corwrion midwife, referred to at page 210 of the previous volume, was published by Mr. W. Jones in the fourth volume of the *Brython*, page 251; freely rendered into English, it runs thus:—

"Once on a time, when a midwife from Nanhwynan had newly got to the Hafodydd Brithion to pursue her calling, a gentleman came to the door on a fine grey steed and bade her come with him at once. Such was the authority with which he spoke, that the poor midwife durst not refuse to go, however much it was her duty to stay where she was. So she mounted behind him, and off they went, like the flight of a swallow, through Cwmllan, over the Bwlch, down Nant yr Aran, and over the Gadair to Cwm Hafod Ruffydd before the poor woman had time even to say Oh! When they had got there, she saw before her a magnificent mansion, splendidly lit up with such lamps as she had never before seen. They entered the court, and a crowd of servants in expensive liveries came to meet them, and she was at once led through the great hall into a bed-chamber, the like of which she had never seen. There the mistress of the house, to whom she had been fetched, was awaiting her. She got through her duties successfully, and stayed there until the lady had completely recovered, nor had she spent any part of her life so merrily; there was there nought but festivity day and night: dancing, singing, and endless rejoicing reigned there. But merry as it was, she found she must go, and the nobleman gave her a large purse, with the order not

to open it until she had got into her own house; then he bade one of his servants escort her the same way she had come. When she reached home she opened the purse, and, to her great joy, it was full of money, and she lived happily on those earnings to the end of her life."

With regard to Mr. D. E. Davies's tale of the Corwrion midwife, and the reference wanting to Mr. Sikes's book, I may now mention in passing, that it should be to pp. 86-8, where Mr. Sikes gives a tale differing from both Davies's and Jones's, in that the Fairies are there made to appear as devils to the nurse, who had accidentally used a certain ointment which she was not to place near her own eyes. Instead of being rewarded for her services she was only too glad to be deposited anyhow near her home; "but", as the story goes on to relate, "very many years afterwards, being at a fair, she saw a man stealing something from a stall, and, with one corner of her eye, beheld her old master pushing the man's elbow. Unthinkingly she said, 'How are you, master? how are the children?' He said, 'How did you see me?' She answered, 'With the corner of my left eye.' From that moment she was blind of her left eye, and lived many years with only her right." Such is the end of the tale which Mr. Sikes quotes from a rare book called *Cambrian Superstitions*, published by W. Howells at Tipton in 1831.

"But the Fair Family did not", Mr. Jones goes on to say, "always give mortals the means of good living; sometimes they made a good deal of fun of them. Once on a time, the Drws y Coed man was going home, rather merry than sad, along the old road over the Gader, from Beddgelert fair, when he saw, on coming near the top of the Gader, a fine handsome house near the road, in which there was a rare merrymaking. He knew perfectly well that there was no such a building to be anywhere on his way, and that made him think that he

had lost his way and gone astray; so he resolved to turn into the house to ask for lodgings, which were given him. At once, when he entered, he took it to be a nuptial feast (*neithior*) by reason of the jollity, the singing, and the dancing; the house was full of young men, young women, and children, all merry and exerting themselves to the utmost. The company began to disappear one by one, and he asked if he might go to bed, when he was led to a splendid chamber, where there was a bed of the softest down with snow-white clothes on it. He stripped at once, went into it, and slept quietly enough till the morning. The first thing to come to his mind when he lay half asleep, half awake, was the jollity of the night before, and the fact of his sleeping in a splendid chamber in the strange house. He opened his eyes to survey it, but it was too wide; he was sleeping on the naked swamp, with a clump of rushes as his pillow, and the blue sky as his coverlet."

Mr. Jones mentions that, within his memory, there were still people in his neighbourhood who believed that the fairies stole unbaptized children and placed their own in their stead: he gives the following story about the farmer's wife of Dyffryn Mymbyr, near Capel Curig, and her infant:—

"Yr oedd y wraig hon wedi rhoddi genedigaeth i blentyn iach a heinif yn nechreu y cynhauaf ryw haf blin a thymhestlog: ac o herwydd fod y tyddyn getyn o ffordd oddiwrth lan na chapel, a'r hin mor hynod a wlawiog, esgeuluswyd beddyddio y plentyn yn yr amser arferol, sef cyn ei fod yn wyth niwrnod oed. Ryw ddiwrnod teg yn nghanol y cynhauaf blin aeth y wraig allan i'r maes gyda'r rhelyw o'r teulu i geisio achub y cynhauaf, a gadawodd y baban yn cysgu yn ei gryd o dan ofal ei nain, yr hon oedd hen a methiantus, ac yn analluog i fyned lawer o gwmpas. Syrthiodd yr hen wreigan i gysgu, a thra yr oedd hi felly, daeth y Tylwyth i fewn, a chymerasant y baban o'r cryd, a dodasant un arall yn ei le.

Yn mhen enyd dechreuodd hwn erain a chwyno nes deffro y nain, ac aeth at y cryd, lle y gwelodd gleiriach hen eiddil crebachlyd yn ymstwyrian yn flin. 'O'r wchw!' ebai hi, 'y mae yr hen Dylwyth wedi bod yma;' ac yn ddioed chwythodd yn y corn i alw y fam, yr hon a ddaeth yno yn ddiatreg; a phan glywodd y crio yn y cryd, rhedodd ato, a chododd y bychan i fynu heb sylwi arno, a hi a'i cofleidiodd, a'i suodd ac a'i swcrodd at eu bronnau, ond nid oedd dim yn tycio, parhau i nadu yn ddidor yr oedd nes bron a hollti ei chalon; ac ni wyddai pa beth i wneud i'w ddistewi. O'r diwedd hi a edrychodd arno, a gwelodd nad oedd yn debyg i'w mhebyn hi, ac aeth yn loes i'w chalon: edrychodd arno drachefn, ond po fwyaf yr edrychai arno, hyllaf yn y byd oedd hi yn ei weled; anfonodd am ei gwr o'r cae, a gyrodd ef i ymholi am wr cyfarwydd yn rhywle er mwyn cael ei gynghor; ac ar ol hir holi dywedodd rhywun wrtho fod person Trawsfynydd yn gyfarwydd yn nghyfrinion yr ysprydion; ac efe a aeth ato, ac archodd hwnw iddo gymeryd rhaw a'i gorchuddio a halen, a thori llun croes yn yr halen; yna ei chymeryd i'r ystafell lle yr oedd mab y Tylwyth, ac ar ol agor y ffenestr, ei rhoddi ar y tan hyd nes y llosgai yr halen; a hwy a wnaethant felly, a phan aeth yr halen yn eiriasboeth fe aeth yr erthyl croes ymaith yn anweledig iddynt hwy, ac ar drothwy y drws hwy a gawsant y baban arall yn iach a dianaf."

"This woman had given birth to a healthy and vigorous child at the beginning of the harvest, one wretched and inclement summer. As the homestead was a considerable distance from church or chapel, and the weather so very rainy, it was neglected to baptize the child at the usual[1] time, that is to say, before it was eight days old. One fine day, in the middle of this wretched harvest, the mother went to the field with the rest of the family to try to secure the harvest,

[1] So Mr. Jones puts it: I am not acquainted with any other part of the Principality where the children are baptized eight days old.

and left her baby sleeping in his cradle in his grandmother's charge, who was aged and so decrepit as to be unable to go much about. The old woman fell asleep, and, while she was in that state, the *Tylwyth Teg* came in and took away the baby, placing another in its stead. Very shortly the latter began to whine and groan, so that the grandmother woke up; she went to the cradle, where she saw a slender wizened old man moving restlessly and peevishly about. 'Alas! alas!' said she, 'the old *Tylwyth* have been here;' and she at once blew in the horn to call the mother home, who came without delay. As she heard the crying in the cradle, she ran towards it, and lifted the little one without looking at him; she hugged him, put him to her breast, and sang lullaby to him, but nothing was of any avail, as he continued, without stopping, to scream enough to break her heart; and she knew not what to do to calm him. At last she looked at him: she saw that he was not like her dear little boy, and her heart was pierced with agony. She looked at him again, and the more she examined him the uglier he seemed to her. She sent for her husband home from the field, and told him to search for a skilled man somewhere or other; and, after a long search, he was told by somebody that the parson of Trawsfynydd was skilled in the secrets of the spirits; so he went to him. The latter bade him take a shovel and cover it with salt, and make the figure of the cross in the salt; then to take it to the chamber where the fairy child was, and, after taking care to open the window, to place the shovel on the fire until the salt was burnt. This was done, and when the salt had got white hot, the peevish abortion went away, seen of no one, and they found the other baby whole and unscathed at the doorstep."

In answer to a question of mine with regard to gossamer, which is called in North Wales *edafedd gwawn* or *gwawn* yarn, Mr. Jones tells me in a letter, dated April 1881, that it

used to be called *Rhaffau 'r Tylwyth Teg*, that is to say, the Ropes of the Fair Family, which were associated with the diminutive, mischievous, and wanton kind of Fairies, that dwelt in marshy and rushy places, or among the fern and the heather. It used to be said that, if a man should lie down and fall asleep in any such a spot, the Fairies would come and bind him with their ropes so that he could not move, and that then they would cover him with a sheet made of their ropes, which would make him invisible. This was illustrated by him by the following tale he had heard from his mother:—

"Clywais fy mam yn adrodd chwedl am fab y Ffridd, yr hwn wrth ddychwelyd adref o ffair Beddgelert yn rhywle oddeutu Pen Cae'r Gors a welodd beth afrifed o'r Tylwyth Bach yn neidio a phrangcio ar benau y grug. Efe a eisteddodd i lawr i edrych arnynt, a daeth hun drosto: ymollyngodd i lawr a chysgodd yn drwm. A phan oedd felly, ymosododd yr holl lu arno a rhwymasant ef mor dyn fel na allasai symud: yna hwy a'i cuddiasant ef a'r tudded gwawn fel na allai neb ei weled os digwyddai iddo lefain am help. Yr oedd ei deulu yn ei ddisgwyl adref yn gynar y nos hono, ac wrth ei weled yn oedi yn hwyr, aethant yn anesmwyth am dano ac aethpwyd i'w gyfarfod, eithr ni welent ddim oddiwrtho, ac aed gan belled a'r pentref, lle eu hyspyswyd ei fod wedi myned tu ag adref yn gynar gyda gwr Hafod Ruffydd. Felly aed tua'r Hafod i edrych a oedd yno; ond dywedodd gwr yr Hafod eu bod wedi ymwahanu ar Bont Glan y Gors, pawb tua'i fan ei hun. Yna chwiliwyd yn fanwl bob ochr i'r ffordd oddiyno i'r Ffridd heb weled dim oddiwrtho. Buwyd yn chwilio yr holl ardal drwy y dydd dranoeth ond yn ofer. Fodd bynag oddeutu yr un amser nos dranoeth daeth y Tylwyth ac a'i rhyddhasant, ac yn fuan efe a ddeffrôdd wedi cysgu o hono drwy y nos a'r dydd blaenorol. Ar ol iddo ddeffro ni wyddai amcan daear yn mha le yr

oedd, a chrwydro y bu hyd ochrau y Gader a'r Gors Fawr hyd nes y canodd y ceiliog, pryd yr adnabu yn mha le yr oedd, sef o fewn llai na chwarter milltir i'w gartref."

"I have heard my mother relating a tale about the son of the farmer of Ffridd, who, while on his way home from Beddgelert Fair, somewhere near Pen Cae'r Gors, saw an endless number of the diminutive Family leaping and capering on the tops of the heather. He sat him down to look at them, and sleep came over him; he let himself down on the ground, and slept heavily. When he was so, the whole host attacked him, and they bound him so tightly that he could not have stirred; then they covered him with the gossamer sheet, so that nobody could see him in case he called for help. His people expected him home early that evening, and, as they saw him delaying till late, they got uneasy about him. So one went to meet him, but no trace of him was seen, and they went so far as the village, where they were informed that he had started home in good time with the farmer of Hafod Ruffydd. So they went to the Hafod to see if he was there; but the farmer told them that they had parted on the Glan y Gors Bridge to go to their respective homes. A minute search was then made on both sides of the road from there to the Ffridd, but without seeing any trace of him. They kept searching the whole neighbourhood during the whole of the next day, but in vain. However, about the same time the following night, the Family came and liberated him, and he shortly woke up, after sleeping through the previous night and day. When he woke he had no idea where on earth he was; so he wandered about on the slopes of the Gader and near the Gors Fawr, until the cock crew, when he became aware where he was, namely, less than a quarter of a mile from his home."

The late Mr. Owen of Cefn Meusydd has already been alluded to. I have not been able to get at much of the folk-

lore with which he was familiar, but, in reply to some questions of mine, Mr. R. J. Jones of Tremadoc, his biographer, and the publisher of the *Brython*, so long as it existed, has kindly ransacked his memory. He writes to me in Welsh to the following effect:—

"I will tell you what I heard from Mr. Owen and my mother when I was a lad, about fifty-seven years ago. The former used to say that the people of Pennant in Eifionydd had a nickname, namely, that of Belsiaid y Pennant, or the Belsians of the Pennant; that, when he was a boy, if anybody called out Belsiaid y Pennant at the Penmorfa Fair, every man jack of them would come out, and fighting always ensued. The antiquary used to explain it thus. 'Some two or three hundred years ago, Sir Robert of the Nant, one of Sir Richard Bulkeley's ancestors, had a son and heir who was extravagant and wild. He married a gipsy, and they had children born to them; but, as the family regarded this marriage a disgrace to their ancient stem, it is said that the father, the next time the vagabonds came round, gave a large sum of money to the father of the girl for taking her away with him. This having been done, the rumour was spread abroad that it was one of the Fairies the youth had married, and that she had gone with him to catch a pony, when he threw the bridle at it to prevent it passing, and the iron of the bridle touched the wife; then that she at once disappeared, as the Fairies always do so when touched with iron. However, the two children were put out to nurse, and the one of them, who was a girl, was brought up at Plas y Pennant, and her name was Pelisha; her descendants remain to this day in the Nant, and are called Bellis, who are believed there, to this day, to be derived from the *Tylwyth Teg*. Nothing offends them more than to be reminded of this.'"

Mr. R. J. Jones goes on to relate another tale as follows:—

"Dywedir fod lle a elwir yr Hafod Rugog mewn cwm anial yn y mynydd lle y byddai y Tylwyth Teg yn arferol a mynychu; ac y byddent yn trwblio'r hen wraig am fenthyg rhywbeth neu gilydd. Dywedodd hithau: 'Cewch os caniatewch ddau beth cyntaf—i'r peth cyntaf y cyffyrddaf ag ef wrth y drws dori, a'r peth cyntaf y rhof fy llaw arno yn y ty estyn haner llath.' Yr oedd careg afael, fel ei gelwir, yn y mur wrth y drws ar ei ffordd, ac yr oedd ganddi ddefnydd syrcyn gwlanen yn rhy fyr o haner llath. Ond yn anffodus wrth ddod a'i chawellad mawn i'r ty bu agos iddi a syrthio: rhoes ei llaw ar ben ei chlun i ymarbed a thorodd hono, a chan faint y boen cyffyrddodd yny ty a'i thrwyn yr hwn a estynodd haner llath."

"It is said that there was a place called Hafod Rugog in a wild hollow among the mountains, where the Fair Family were in the habit of resorting, and that they used to trouble the old woman of Hafod for the loan of one thing or another. So she said, one day, 'You shall have it, if you will grant me first two things—that the first thing I touch at the door break, and that the first thing I put my hand on in the house be lengthened half a yard.' There was a binding stone, *carreg afael*, as it is called, in the wall near the door, which was in her way, and she had flannel for a jerkin which was half a yard too short. But, unfortunately, as she came, with her basket full of turf on her back to the house, she nearly fell down: she put her hand, in order to save herself, to her knee-joint, when that broke; and, owing to the pain, when she had got into the house, she touched her nose with her hand, when the former grew half a yard longer."

Mr. Jones goes on to notice how the old folks used to believe that the Fairies were wont to appear in the marshes near Cwellyn Lake, not far from Rhyd Ddu, to sing and dance, and that it was considered dangerous to approach them on those occasions lest one should be fascinated.

The next four stories are to be found in *Cymru Fu* at pages 175-9, whence I have taken the liberty of translating them into English. They were contributed by Glasynys, whose name has already occurred so often in connection with these Welsh legends, that the reader ought to know more about him; but I have been disappointed in my attempt to get a short account of his life to insert here. All I can say is, that I made his acquaintance in 1865 in Anglesey, where he had a curacy near Holyhead. His name was Owen Wyn Jones, he was in the prime of life, and an enthusiast for Welsh antiquities; he was born and bred, I believe, in the neighbourhood of Snowdon, and his death took place about ten years ago. He certainly deserves a biography, and the student of Welsh folk-lore must needs feel the want of it; so let us hope that the editor of the *Cymmrodor* may be able to procure one for publication ere long.

(1.) "When the people of the Gors Goch one evening had just gone to bed, lo! they heard a great row and disturbance around the house. One could not at all comprehend what it might be that made a noise that time of night. Both the husband and the wife had waked up, quite unable to make out what there might be there. The children also woke, but no one could utter a word; their tongues had all stuck to the roof of their mouths. The husband, however, at last managed to move, and to ask, 'Who is there? What do you want?' Then he was answered from without by a small silvery voice, 'It is room we want to dress our children.' The door was opened, a dozen small beings came in, and began to search for an earthen pitcher with water; there they remained for some hours, washing and titivating themselves. As the day was breaking, they went away, leaving behind them a fine present for the kindness they had received. Often afterwards did the Gors Goch folks have the

company of this Family. But once there happened to be there a fine roll of a pretty baby in his cradle. The Fair Family came, and, as the baby had not been baptized, they took the liberty of changing him for one of their own. They left behind in his stead an abominable creature that would do nothing but cry and scream every day of the week. The mother was nearly breaking her heart on account of the misfortune, and greatly afraid of telling anybody about it. But everybody got to see that there was something wrong at the Gors Goch, which was proved before long by the mother dying of longing for her child. The other children died broken-hearted after their mother, and the husband was left alone with the little elf without any one to comfort them. But shortly after, one began to resort again to the hearth of the Gors Goch to dress children, and the gift, which had formerly been silver money, became henceforth pure gold. In the course of a few years the elf became the heir of a large farm in North Wales, and that is why the old people used to say 'Shoe the elf with gold and he will grow' (*Fe ddaw gwiddon yn fawr ond ei bedoli ag aur*). That is the legend of the Gors Goch."

(2.) "Once, when William Ellis of the Gilwern was fishing on the bank of the Cwm Silin Lake, on a dark misty day, he had seen no living Christian from the time when he left Nantlle. But as he was in a happy mood, throwing his line, he beheld over against him in a clump of rushes a large crowd of people, or things in the shape of people about a foot in stature, and engaged in leaping and dancing. He looked on for hours, and he never heard, as he said, such music in his life before. But William went too near them, when they threw a kind of dust into his eyes, and, while he was wiping it away, the little Family took the opportunity of betaking themselves somewhere out of his sight, so that he neither saw nor heard anything more of them."

(3.) "There is a similar story respecting a place called Llyn y Ffynonau. There was no end of jollifying there, of dancing, harping, and fiddling, with the servant-man of Gelli Ffrydan and his two dogs in the midst of the crowd, leaping and capering as nimbly as anybody else. At it they were for three days and three nights, without stopping; and had it not been for a skilled man, who lived not far off, and got to know how things were going on, the poor fellow would, without doubt, have danced himself to death. But he was rescued that time."

(4.) "The fourth story is one, which he says he heard from his mother; but he has elaborated it in his usual fashion, and the proper names are undoubtedly his own:—'Once on a time, a shepherd-boy had gone up the mountain. That day, like many a day before and after, was exceedingly misty. Now, though he was well acquainted with the place, he lost his way, and walked backwards and forwards for many a long hour. At last he got into a low rushy spot, where he saw before him many circular rings. He at once recalled the place, and began to fear the worst. He had heard, many hundreds of times, of the bitter experiences in those rings of many a shepherd who had happened to chance on the dancing-place or the circles of the Fair Family. He hastened away as fast as ever he could, lest he should be ruined like the rest; but, though he exerted himself to the point of perspiring and losing his breath, there he was, and there he continued to be, a long time. At last he was met by a little fat old man, with merry blue eyes, who asked him what he was doing. He answered that it was trying to find his way homewards he was. 'Oh,' said he, 'come after me, and do not utter a word until I bid thee.' This he did, following him on and on until they came to an oval stone; and the little old fat man lifted it, after tapping the middle of it three times with his walking-stick. There was there a narrow path with

stairs to be seen here and there; and a sort of whitish light, inclining to grey and blue, was to be seen radiating from the stones. 'Follow me fearlessly,' said the fat man; 'no harm will be done thee.' So on the poor youth went, as reluctantly as a dog to be hanged. But presently a fine, wooded, fertile country spread itself out before them, with well-arranged mansions dotting it over, while every kind of apparent magnificence met the eye and seemed to smile in its landscape; the bright waters of its rivers meandered in twisted streams, and its hills were covered with the luxuriant verdure of their grassy growth, and the mountains with a glossy fleece of smooth pasture. By the time they had reached the stout gentleman's mansion, the young man's senses had been bewildered by the sweet cadence of the music which the birds poured forth from the groves; then there was gold there to dazzle his eyes, and silver flashing on his sight. He saw there all kinds of musical instruments and all sorts of things for playing; but he could discern no inhabitant in the whole place; and, when he sat down to eat, the dishes on the table came to their places of themselves, and disappeared when one had done with them. This puzzled him beyond measure; moreover, he heard people talking together around him, but for the life of him he could see no one but his old friend. At length the fat man said to him: 'Thou canst now talk as much as it may please thee;' but, when he attempted to move his tongue it would no more stir than if it had been a lump of ice, which greatly frightened him. At this point, a fine old lady, with health and benevolence beaming in her face, came to them and slightly smiled at the shepherd; the mother was followed by her three daughters, who were remarkably beautiful. They gazed with somewhat playful looks at him, and at length began to talk to him; but his tongue would not wag. Then one of the girls came to him, and, playing with his yellow and curly locks, gave him

a smart kiss on his ruddy lips. This loosened the string that bound his tongue, and he began to talk freely and eloquently. There he was, under the charm of that kiss, in the bliss of happiness; and there he remained a year and a day without knowing that he had passed more than a day among them; for he had got into a country where there was no reckoning of time. But by and by he began to feel somewhat of a longing to visit his old home, and asked the stout man if he might go. 'Stay a little yet,' said he, 'and thou shalt go for a while.' That passed: he stayed on; but Olwen, for that was the name of the damsel that had kissed him, was very unwilling that he should depart. She looked sad every time he talked of going away; nor was he himself without feeling a sort of a cold thrill passing through him at the thought of leaving her. On condition, however, of returning, he obtained leave to go, provided with plenty of gold and silver, of trinkets and gems. When he reached home, nobody knew who he was; it had been the belief that he had been killed by another shepherd, who found it necessary to betake himself hastily far away to America, lest he should be hanged without delay. But here is Enion Las at home, and everybody wonders especially to see that the shepherd had got to look like a wealthy man: his manners, his dress, his language, and the treasure he had with him, all conspired to give him the air of a gentleman. He went back one Thursday night, the first of the moon that month, as suddenly as he had left the first time, and nobody knew whither. There was great joy in the country below when Einion returned thither, and nobody was more rejoiced at it than Olwen, his beloved. The two were right impatient to get married; but it was necessary to do that quietly, for the Family below hated nothing more than fuss and noise; so, in a sort of a half secret fashion, they were wedded. Einion was very desirous to go once more among his own people, accompanied, to be

sure, by his wife. After he had been long entreating the old man for leave, they set out on two white ponies, that were, in fact, more like snow than anything else in point of colour, So he arrived with his consort in his old home, and it was the opinion of all that Einion's wife was the handsomest person they had anywhere seen. Whilst at home, a son was born to them, to whom they gave the name of Taliesin. Einion was now in the enjoyment of high repute, and his wife received proper respect. Their wealth was immense, and soon they acquired a large estate; but it was not long till people began to inquire after the pedigree of Einion's wife—the country was of opinion that it was not the right thing to be without a pedigree. Einion was questioned about it, without his giving any satisfactory answer, and one came to the conclusion that she was one of the Fair Family (*Tylwyth Teg*). 'Certainly,' replied Einion, 'there can be no doubt that she comes from a very fair family; for she has two sisters who are as fair as she, and, if you saw them together, you would admit that name to be a capital one.' This, then, is the reason why the remarkable family in the land of Charm and Phantasy (*Hud a Lledrith*) are called the Fair Family."

The two next tales of Glasynys's appear in *Cymru Fu*, at pp. 478-9; the first of them is to be compared with one already related, while the other is unlike anything that I can now recall:—

(5.) "Cwmllan was the principal resort of the Fair Family, and the shepherds of Hafod Llan used to see them daily in the ages of faith gone by. Once, on a misty afternoon, one of them had been searching for sheep towards Nant y Bettws. When he had crossed Bwlch Cwmllan, and was hastening laboriously down, he saw an endless number of little folks singing and dancing in a lively and light-footed fashion, while the handsomest girls he had ever seen anywhere were at it preparing a banquet. He went to them and had a share

of their dainties, and it seemed to him that he had never in his life tasted anything approaching their dishes. When the twilight came, they spread their tents, and the man never before saw such beauty and ingenuity. They gave him a soft bed of yielding down, with sheets of the finest linen, and he went to rest as proud as if he had been a prince. But, alas! next morning, after all the jollity and sham-splendour, the poor man, when he opened his eyes, found that his bed was but a clump of bulrushes, and his pillow a lump of moss. Nevertheless, he found silver money in his shoes, and afterwards he continued for a long time to find, every week, a piece of coined money between two stones near the spot where he had slept. One day, however, he told a friend of his the secret respecting the money, and he never found any after that."

(6.) "Another of these shepherds was one day urging his dog at the sheep in Cwmllan, when he heard a kind of low noise in the cleft of a rock. He turned to look, when he found there some kind of a creature weeping plenteously. He approached, and drew out a wee lass; very shortly afterwards, behold! two middle-aged men came to him to thank him for his kindness, and, when about to part, one of them gave him a walking-stick, as a souvenir of his good deed. The year after this, every sheep in his possession had two ewe-lambs; and so his sheep continued to breed for some years. But one night he had stayed in the village until it was rather late, and there hardly ever was a more tempestuous night than that: the wind howled, and the clouds shed their contents in sheets of rain, while the darkness was such that next to nothing could be seen. As he was crossing the river that comes down from Cwmllan, when its flood was sweeping all before it in a terrible current, he somehow let go the walking-stick from his hand; and when one went next morning up the Cwm, one found that nearly all the sheep had been swept away by the flood, and that the farmer's wealth had gone almost as it came—with the walking-stick."

The shorter versions given by Glasynys are probably more nearly given as he heard them, than the longer ones, which may be suspected of having been a good deal spun out by him; but there is probably very little in any of them of his own invention, though the question may be difficult to answer whence he got his materials in each instance. In one this is quite clear, though he does not state it, namely, the story of the sojourn of Elfod the Shepherd in Fairyland, as given in *Cymru Fu*, page 477; it is no other than a second or third-hand reproduction of that recorded about the South Wales priest, Eliodorus, by Giraldus, in his *Itinerarium Kambriæ*, i, 8, where it should be consulted by any one who has doubts about the antiquity of tales of this kind. But the longest tale published by Glasynys is the one about the mermaid in *Cymru Fu*, pp. 434-444; where he got this from I have not been able to find out, but it has probably been pieced together from various sources. I feel sure that some of the materials at least were Welsh, besides the characters known in Welsh mythology as Nefydd Naf Neifion, Gwyn ab Nudd, Gwydion ab Dôn, Dylan and Ceridwen, who have been recklessly introduced into it. He locates it, apparently, somewhere on the coast of Carnarvonshire, the leading place being called Ogof Deio, or David's Cave, which so far as I know is not an actual name, but one suggested by "David Jones", as sailors' slang for the sea. In hopes that somebody will communicate to the Editor of the *Cymmrodor* any bits of this tale which may still be current on points of the coast of Wales, I here give an abstract of it.

"Once upon a time, a poor fisherman made the acquaintance of a mermaid in a cave on the sea-coast; at first she screeched wildly, but, when she got a little calmer, she told him to go off out of the way of her brother, and to return betimes the day after. In getting

away, he was tossed into the sea, and tossed out on the land with a rope, which had got wound about his waist, on pulling at this he got ashore a coffer full of treasure, which he occupied the night in carrying home. He was somewhat late in revisiting the cave the next day, and saw no mermaid come there to meet him according to her promise. But the following night he was roused out of his sleep by a visit from her to his home, when she told him to come in time next day. On his way thither, he learnt from some fishermen that they had been labouring in vain during the night, as a great big mermaid had opened their nets in order to pick the best fish, while she let the rest escape. When he reached the cave he found the mermaid there combing her hair; she surprised him by telling him that she had come to live among the inhabitants of the land, though she was, according to her own account, a king's daughter. She was no longer stark naked, but dressed like a lady; in one hand she held a diadem of pure gold, and in the other a cap of wonderful workmanship, the former of which she placed on her head while she handed the latter to Ifan Morgan, with the order that he should keep it. Then she related to him how she had noticed him when he was a ruddy boy, out fishing in his father's white boat, and heard him sing a song which made her love him, and how she had tried to repeat this song at her father's court, where everybody wanted to get it. Many a time, she said, she had been anxiously listening if she might hear it again, but all in vain. So she had obtained permission from her family to come with treasures and see if he would not teach it her; but she soon saw that she would not succeed without appearing in the form in which she now was. After saying that her name was Nefyn, daughter of Nefydd Naf Neifion, and niece to Gwyn son of Nudd, and Gwydion son of Dôn, she calmed his feelings on the subject of the humble cottage in which

he lived. Presently he asked her to be his wife, and she consented on the condition that he should always keep the cap she had given him out of her sight and teach her the song. They were married and lived happy together, and had children born them five times, a son and a daughter each time; they frequently went to the cave, and no one knew what treasures they had got there; but once on a time they went out in a boat pleasuring, as was their wont, with six or seven of the children accompanying them, and when they were far from the land a great storm arose; besides the usual accompaniments of a storm at sea, most unearthly screeches and noises were heard, which frightened the children and made their mother look uncomfortable; but presently she bent her head over the side of the boat, and whispered something they did not catch; to their surprise the sea was instantly calm. They got home comfortably, but the elder children were puzzled greatly by their mother's influence over the sea; it was not long after this till they so teased some ill-natured old women that they told them all about the uncanny origin of their mother. The eldest boy was vexed at this, and remembered how his mother had spoken to somebody near the boat at sea, and that he was never allowed to go with his parents to Ogof Deio; he recalled, also, his mother's account of the strange countries she had seen. Once there came also to Ifan Morgan's home, which was now a mansion, a visitor the children were not even allowed to see, and one night, when the young moon had sunk behind the western horizon, Ifan and his wife went quietly out of the house, telling a servant that they would not return for three weeks or a month, which was overheard by the eldest son. So he followed them very quietly until he saw them on the strand, where he beheld his mother casting a sort of leather mantle round herself and his father, and throwing themselves into

the hollow of a billow that came to fetch them. The son went home, broke his heart, and died in nine days at finding out that his mother was a mermaid; on seeing her brother dead his twin sister went and threw herself into the sea, but, instead of being drowned, she was taken up on his steed by a fine looking knight, who then galloped away over the waves as if they had been dry and level land. The servants were in doubt what to do, now that Nefydd Morgan was dead and Eilonwy had thrown herself into the sea; but Tegid, the second son, who feared nothing, said that Nefydd's body should be taken to the strand, as somebody was likely to come to fetch it for burial among his mother's family. At midnight a knight arrived, who said the funeral was to be at three that morning, and told them that their brother would come back to them, as Gwydion ab Dôn was going to give him a heart that no weight could break, that Eilonwy was soon to be wedded to one of the finest and bravest of the knights of Gwerddonau Llion, and that their parents were with Gwyn ab Nudd in the Gwaelodion. The body was accordingly taken to the beach, and, as soon as the wave touched it, out of his coffin leaped Nefydd like a porpoise. He was seen then to walk away arm-in-arm with Gwydion ab Dôn to a ship that was in waiting, and most enchanting music was heard by those on shore; but soon the ship sailed away, hardly touching the tops of the billows. After a year and a day had elapsed Ifan Morgan, the father, came home, looking much better and more gentlemanly than he had ever done before; he had never spoken of Nefyn, his wife, until Tegid one day asked him what about his mother; she had gone, he said, in search of Eilonwy, who had run away from her husband in Gwerddonau Llion, with Glanfryd ab Gloywfraint. She would be back soon, he thought, and describe to them all the wonders they had seen. Ifan Morgan went to bed that

night, and was found dead in it in the morning; it was thought that his death had been caused by a black knight, who had been seen haunting the place at midnight for some time, and always disappearing, when pursued, into a well that bubbled forth in a dark recess near at hand. The day of Ifan Morgan's funeral, Nefyn, his wife, returned, and bewailed him with many tears; she was never more seen on the dry land. Tegid had now the charge of the family, and he conducted himself in all things as behove a man and a gentleman of high principles and great generosity. He was very wealthy, but often grieved by the thought of his father's murder. One day, when he and two of his brothers were out in a boat fishing in the neighbouring bay, they were driven by the wind to the most wonderful place they had ever seen. The sea there was as smooth as glass, and as bright as the clearest light, while beneath it, and not far from them, they saw a most splendid country with fertile fields and dales covered with pastures; with flowery hedges, groves clad in their green foliage, and forests gently waving their leafy luxuriance, with rivers lazily contemplating their own tortuous courses, and with mansions here and there of the most beautiful and ingenious description; and presently they saw that the inhabitants amused themselves with all kinds of merriment and frolicking, and that here and there they had music and engaged in the most energetic dancing; in fact, the rippling waves seemed to have absorbed their full of the music, so that the faint echo of it, as gently given forth by the waves, never ceased to charm their ears until they reached the shore. That night the three brothers had the same dream, namely that the black Knight who had throttled their father was in hiding in a cave on the coast: so they made for the cave in the morning, but the black knight fled from them and galloped off on the waves as if he had been riding for amusement over a

meadow. That day their sisters on returning home from school had to cross a piece of sea, when a tempest arose and sunk the vessel, drowning all on board, and the brothers ascribed this to the Black Knight. About this time there was great consternation among the fishermen on account of a sea-serpent that twined itself about the rocks near the caves, and nothing would do but that Tegid and his brothers should go out to kill it; but when one day they came near the spot frequented by it, they heard a deep voice saying to them, 'Do not kill your sister,' so they wondered greatly and suddenly went home. But that night Tegid returned there alone, and called his sister by her name, and after waiting a long while she crept towards him in the shape of a sea-serpent, and said that she must remain some time in that form on account of her having run away with one who was not her husband; she went on to say that she had seen their sisters walking with their mother, and that their father would soon be in the cave. But all of a sudden there came the Black Knight, who unsheathes a sword that looked like a flame of fire and begins to cut her into a thousand bits, which however united as fast as he cut it, and became as whole as before. The end was that she twisted herself in a coil round his throat and bit him terribly in his breast. At this point a White Knight comes and runs him through with his spear, so that he fell instantly, while the White Knight went off hurriedly with the sea-serpent in a coil round his neck. Tegid ran away for his life, but not before some monster more terrible than anything he had ever seen had begun to attack him; it haunted him in all kinds of ways, sometimes it would be like a sea, but Tegid was able to swim; sometimes it would be a mountain of ice, but Tegid was able to climb it; and sometimes it was like a furnace of intense fire, but the heat had no effect on him; but it appeared mostly as a combination of the beast of prey and the venomous

reptile. Suddenly, however, a young man appeared, taking hold of Tegid's arm and encouraging him, when the monster fled away screeching, and a host of knights in splendid array and on proudly prancing horses came to him; among them he found his brothers, and he went with them to his mother's country. He was especially welcome there, and he found all happy and present save his father only, whom he thought of fetching from the world above, having in fact got leave to do so from his grandfather. His mother and his brothers came with him to search for his father's body, and with him came Gwydion ab Dôn and Gwyn ab Nudd, but he would not be wakened. So Tegid, who loved his father greatly, asked leave to remain on his father's grave, where he remains to this day. His mother is wont to come there to soothe him, and his brothers send him gifts, while he sends his gifts to Nefydd Naf Neifion, his grandfather; it is also said that his twin-sister, Ceridwen, has long since come to live near him, to make the glad gladder and the pretty prettier, and to maintain her dignity and honour in peace and tranquillity."

The latter part of this tale, the mention of Ceridwen, and of Tegid remaining on his father's grave, is evidently a reference to Llyn Tegid or Bala Lake, and to the legend of Taliesin; so the story has undoubtedly been pieced together, but it was not all invented, as is proved by the reference to the curious cap the husband was to keep out of the wedded mermaid's sight—in Irish legends this cap has particular importance attached to it, of which Glasynys cannot have been aware, for he knew of no use to make of it. The teaching of the song to the wife is also not mentioned after the marriage; but the introduction of it at all is remarkable; at any rate I have not noticed anything parallel to it in other tales. The incident of the tempest, when the mermaid spoke to somebody by the side of the boat, reminds one of Undine during the trip on the Danube. But it is, perhaps,

useless to go into details till one has ascertained how much of the story has been based on genuine Welsh folklore. But, while I am on this point, I venture to append here an Irish tale, which will serve to explain the meaning of the mermaid's cap, as necessary to her comfort in the water world. I am indebted for it to the kindness of Dr. Norman Moore, of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, who tells me, in a letter dated March the 7th, 1882, that he and the Miss Raynells of Killynon, heard it from an old woman named Mrs. Dolan, who lives on the property of the late Mr. Cooke, of Cookesborough, in Westmeath; the following was her tale: "There was a man named Mahon had a farm on the edge of Loch Owel. He noticed that his corn was trampled, and he sat up all night to watch it. He saw horses, colts and fillies rather, come up out of the lake and trample it. He chased them, and they fled into the lake. The next night he saw them again, and among them a beautiful girl and a cap of salmon skin off her head, and it shone in the moonlight; and he caught her and embraced her, and carried her off to his house and married her, and she was a very good housewife, as all those lake people are, and kept his house beautifully; and one day in the harvest, when the men were in the fields, she went into the house and there she looked on the hurdle for some lard to make colcaunen [Dr. Moore explains this to be cabbages and potatoes, pounded and mixed with butter or lard] for the men, and she saw her old cap of fish skin, and she put it on her head and ran straight down into the lake and was never seen any more, and Mahon he was terribly grieved, and he died soon after of a decline. She had had three children, and I often saw them in the Mullingar market. They were farmers, too, on Loch Owel."

Before leaving Carnarvonshire, I may add a reference to Pennant's *Tours in Wales*: in the edition published in

London in 1810, we are told, volume ii, page 335, that Mr. Pennant learned "that, in fairy days, those diminutive gentry kept their revels" on the margins of the Snowdon lake, called Llyn Coch. There is no legend now extant, so far as I can ascertain, about the Llyn Coch Fairies.

Just as these sheets were about to be placed in the printer's hands, I was favoured by Mr. Howell Thomas, of the Local Government Board, with a legend written out by Mr. G. B. Gattie, to which I take the liberty of prefixing his letter to Mr. Thomas; it is dated Walham Grove, London, S.W., April 27th, 1882, and runs as follows:—

"I had quite forgotten the enclosed, which I had jotted down during my recent illness, and ought to have sent you long ago. Of course, the wording is very rough, as no care has been taken on that point.

"It is interesting, as being another version of a very pretty old legend which my mother used to repeat. She was descended from a very old north Welsh family; indeed, I believe my esteemed grandfather went so far as to trace his descent from the great patriot Owen Glendower himself!

"My mother delighted not only in the ancient folklore, legends, and fairy tales of the Principality, with which she was perfectly familiar, but especially in the lovely national melodies, all of which she knew by heart; and, being highly accomplished, would never tire of playing or singing them.

"You will see the legend is, in the main, much as related by Professor Rhys, though differing somewhat in the singular terms of the marriage contract."

"The scene of the legend, as related by my late mother was, of course, a lake, the Welsh name of which I have, unfortunately, forgotten, but it was somewhere, I think, near Llanberis, and the hero a stalwart young farmer. One hot day, riding by the lake, he took his horse into the water to drink, and, whilst looking straight down over

his horse's ears into the smooth surface, he became aware of a most lovely face, just beneath the tide, looking up archly at him. Quite bewildered, he earnestly beckoned, and by degrees the head and shoulders which belonged to the face emerged from the water. Overcome with emotion, and nearly maddened by the blaze of beauty so suddenly put before him, he leaped from his horse and rushed wildly into the lake to try to clasp the lovely vision to his heart. As this was a clear case of 'love at first sight', the poor young man was not, of course, answerable for his actions. But the vision had vanished beneath the waves, to instantly reappear, however, a yard or two off, with the most provoking of smiles, and holding out her beautiful white hands towards her admirer, but slipping off into deep water the moment he approached.

"For many days the young farmer frequented the lake, but without again seeing the beautiful Naiad, until one day he sat down by the margin hoping that she would appear, and yet dreading her appearance, for this latter to him simply meant loss of all peace. Yet he rushed on his fate, like the love-sick shepherd in the old Italian romance, who watched the sleeping beauty, yet dreaded her awakening:—'Io perderò la pace, quando si sveglierà!'

"The young man had brought the remains of his frugal dinner with him, and was quietly munching, by way of dessert, an apple of rare and delicious quality, from a tree which grew upon a neighbouring estate. Suddenly the lady appeared in all her rare beauty almost close to him, and begged him to 'throw' her one of his apples. This was altogether too much, and he replied by holding out the tempting morsel, exhibiting its beautiful red and green sides, saying that, if she really wanted it, she must fetch it herself. Upon this she came up quite close, and, as she took the apple from his left hand, he dexterously seized tight hold

of her with his right, and held her fast. She, however, nothing daunted, bawled lustily, at the top of her voice, for help, and made such an outrageous noise, that at length a most respectable looking old gentlemen appeared suddenly out of the midst of the lake. He had a superb white beard, and was simply and classically attired merely in a single wreath of beautiful water lilies wound round his loins, which was possibly his summer costume, the weather being hot. He politely requested to know what was the matter, and what the young farmer wanted with his daughter. The case was thereupon explained, but not without the usual amount of nervous trepidation which usually happens to love-sick swains when called into the awful presence of 'Papa' to 'explain their intentions'!

"After a long parley the lady, at length, agreed to become the young man's wife, on two conditions which he was to solemnly promise to keep. These conditions were that he was never to strike her with *steel* or *clay* (earth), conditions to which the young man very readily assented. As these were primitive days, when people were happy and honest, there were no lawyers to encumber the Holy Estate with lengthy settlements, and to fill their own pockets with heavy fees; matters were therefore soon settled, and the lady married to the young farmer on the spot by the very respectable old lake deity, her papa.

"The story goes on to say that the union was followed by two sons and two daughters. The eldest son became a great physician, and all his descendants after him were celebrated for their great proficiency in the noble healing art. The second son was a mighty craftsman in all works appertaining to the manufacture and use of iron and metals. Indeed it has been hinted that, his little corracle of bull's hide having become old and unsafe, he conceived the brilliant idea of making one of thin iron. This he actually accomplished,

and, to the intense amazement of the wondering populace, he constantly used it for fishing, or other purposes, on the lake, where he paddled about in perfect security. This important fact ought to be more generally known, as it gives him a fair claim to the introduction of iron ship-building (*pace* the shades of Beaufort and Brunel).

"Of the two daughters, one is said to have invented the small ten-stringed harp, and the other the spinning wheel. Thus were introduced the arts of medicine, manufactures, music and woollen work.

"As the old ballad says (applying the quotation to the father and mother):—

> 'They lived for more than forty year
> Right long and happilie!'

"One day it happened that the wife expressed a great wish for some of those same delicious apples of which she was so fond, and of which their neighbour often sent them a supply. Off went the farmer, like a good husband that he was, and brought back, not only some apples, but a beautiful young sapling, seven or eight feet high, bearing the same apple, as a present from their friend. This they at once proceeded to set, he digging and she holding; but the hole not being quite deep enough he again set to work, with increased energy, with his spade, and stooping very low threw out the *last* shovel-full over his shoulder—alas! without looking—full into the breast of his wife. She dropped the sapling and solemnly warned him that one of the two conditions of their marriage contract had been broken. Accident was pleaded, but in vain, there was the unfortunate fact—*he had struck her with clay!* Looking upon the sapling as the cause of this great trouble he determined to return it forthwith to his kind neighbour. Taking a bridle in his hand he proceeded to the field to catch his horse, his wife kindly helping him. They both

ran up, one on each side, but, as the unruly steed showed no signs of stopping, the husband attempted to throw the bridle over his head. Not having visited Mexico in his travels, and thereby learned the use of the lassò, he missed his horse's head and—misfortune of misfortunes—struck his wife in the face with the iron bit, thus breaking the second condition! *He had struck her with steel!* She no sooner received the blow than—like Esau—she "cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry," and bidding her husband a last farewell, fled down the hill with lightning speed, dashed into the lake and disappeared beneath the smooth and glassy waters! Thus, it may be said that, if an apple—indirectly—occasioned the beginning of her married life, so an apple brought about its sad termination."

VII. MERIONETH.

The parish of Llanfachraith and its traditions have been the subject of some contributions to the first volume of the *Taliesin* (Clarke, Ruthin: 1859-60), pages 132-7, by a writer who calls himself Cofiadur. It was Glasynys, I believe, for the style seems to be his: he pretends to copy from an old manuscript of Hugh Bifan's—both the MS. and its owner were fictions of Glasynys's, I am told. These jottings contain two or three items about the fairies which seem to be genuine:—

"The bottom of Llyn Cynnwch is level with the hearthstone of the house of Dol y Clochydd. Its depth was found out owing to the sweetheart of one of Siwsi's girls having lost his way to her from Nannau, where he was a servant. The poor man had fallen into the lake, and gone down and down, when he found it becoming clearer the lower he got, until at last he alighted on a level spot where everybody and everything looked much as he had observed on the dry land. When he had reached the bottom of the lake, a short

fat old gentleman came to him and asked his business; he told him how it happened that he had come. He met with great welcome, and he stayed there a month without knowing that he had been there three days, and when he was going to leave, he was led out to his beloved by the inhabitants of the lake bottom. He asserted that the whole way was level except in one place, where they descended about a fathom into the ground, but, he added, it was necessary to ascend about as much to reach the hearthstone of Dol y Clochydd; but the most wonderful thing was that the stone lifted itself as he came up from the subterranean road towards it. It was thus the sweetheart arrived there one evening, when the girl was by the fire weeping for him. Siwsi had been out some days before, and she knew all about it though she said nothing to anybody. This, then, was the way the depth of Llyn Cynnwch got to be known."

Then he has a few sentences about an old house called Ceimarch:—"Ceimarch was an old mansion of considerable name, and in old times it was considered next, in the whole district, to Nannau in point of importance. There was a deep ditch round it, which was always kept full of water, with the view of keeping off vagabonds and thieves, as well as other lawless folks, that they might not take the inmates by surprise. But, in distant ages, this place was very noted for being visited frequently by the Fair Family. They used to come to the ditch to wash themselves, and to cross the water in boats made of the bark of the rowan tree, or else birch, and they came into the house to pay their rent for trampling the ground around the place. They always placed a piece of money under a pitcher, and the result was that the family living there became remarkably rich. But somehow, after the lapse of many years, the owner of the place offended them, by showing disrespect for their Diminutive Family: soon the world began to go against him, and it was not

long before he got low in life. Everything turned against him, and everybody formerly believed that all this came to his share, because he had incurred the displeasure of the Fair Family."

In the fifth volume of the *Brython*, p. 456, in the course of an Essay on the history of the Lordship of Mawddwy in Merioneth, considered the best in a competition at an Eisteddfod, held at Dinas Mawddwy, August 2nd, 1855, Glasynys gives the following bit about the Fairies of that neighbourhood: "The side of the Aran Fawddwy is a great place for the Fair Family; they are ever at it playing their games on the hillsides about this spot. It is said that they are numberless likewise about Bwlch y Groes. Once a boy crossed over near the approach of night, one summer eve, from the Gadfa to Mawddwy, and on his return he saw near Aber Rhiwlech a swarm of the Little Family at it dancing at full pelt. The boy began to run, with two of the maidens in pursuit of him, entreating him to stay; but Robin, for that was his name, kept running, and the two elves failed altogether in catching him, otherwise he would have been taken a prisoner of love. There are plenty of their dancing-rings to be seen on the hillsides between Aber Rhiwlech and Bwlch y Groes."

Here I would introduce two short tales, which I have only just now received, namely, from Mr. E. S. Roberts, Master of the Llantysilio School, near Llangollen. He has learnt them from one Abel Evans, who lives at present in the parish of Llantysilio; he is a native of the parish of Llandrillo on the slopes of the Berwyn, and of a glen in the same, known as Cwm Pennant, so called from its being drained by the Pennant, on its way to join the Dee. Now, Cwm Pennant was the resort of Fairies, or of a certain family of them, and the occurrence, related in the following tale, must have taken place no less than seventy years ago: it was well known to the late Mrs. Ellen Edwards of Llandrillo:—

"Ryw ddiwrnod aeth dau gyfaill i hela dwfrgwn ar hyd lannau afon Pennant, a thra yn cyfeirio eu camrau tuagat yr afon gwelsant ryw greadur bychan lliwgoch yn rhedeg yn gyflym iawn ar draws un o'r dolydd yn nghyfeiriad yr afon. Ymaeth a nhw ar ei ol. Gwelsant ei fod wedi myned odditan wraidd coeden yn ochr yr afon i ymguddio. Yr oedd y ddau ddyn yn meddwl mae dwfrgi ydoedd, ond ar yr un pryd yn methu a deall paham yr ymddanghosai i'w llygaid yn lliwgoch. Yr oeddynt yn dymuno cyl ddal yn fyw, ac ymaith yr aeth un o honynt i ffarmdy gerllaw i cfyn am sach, yr hon a gafwyd, er mwyn rhoi y creadur ynddi. Yr oedd yno ddau dwll o tan wraidd y pren, a thra daliai un y sach yn agored ar un twll yr oedd y llall yn hwthio ffon i'r twll arall, ac yn y man aeth y creadur i'r sach. Yr oedd y ddau ddyn yn meddwl ei bod wedi dal dwfrgi, yr hyn a ystyrient yn orchest nid bychan. Cychwynasant gartref yn llawen ond cyn eu myned hyd lled cae, llefarodd llettywr y sach mewn ton drist gan ddywedyd—'Y mae fy mam yn galw am danaf, O, mae fy mam yn galw am danaf,' yr hyn a roddodd fraw mawr i'r ddau heliwr, ac yn y man taflasant y sach i lawr, a mawr oedd eu rhyfeddod a'u dychryn pan welsant ddyn bach mewn gwisg goch yn rhedeg o'r sach tuagat yr afon. Fe a ddiflanodd o'i golwg yn mysg y drysni ar fin yr afon. Yr oedd y ddau wedi eu brawychu yn ddirfawr ac yn teimlo mae doethach oedd myned gartref yn hytrach nag ymyraeth yn mhellach a Thylwyth Teg."

"One day, two friends went to hunt otters on the banks of the Pennant, and when they were directing their steps towards the river, they beheld some small creature of a red colour running fast across the meadows in the direction of the river. Off they ran after it, and saw that it went beneath the roots of a tree on the brink of the river to hide itself. The two men thought it was an otter, but, at the same time, they could not understand why it seemed to them to be of a

red colour. They wished to take it alive, and off one of them went to a farm-house that was not far away to ask for a sack, which he got, to put the creature into it. Now, there were two holes under the roots of the tree, and while one held the sack with its mouth open over one of them, the other pushed his stick into the other hole, and presently the creature went into the sack. The two men thought they had caught an otter, which they looked upon as no small feat. They set out for home, but before they had proceeded the width of one field, the inmate of the sack spoke to them in a sad voice, and said, 'My mother is calling for me; oh, my mother is calling for me!' This gave the two hunters a great fright, so that they at once threw down the sack; and great was their surprise to see a little man in a red dress running out of the sack towards the river. He disappeared from their sight in the bushes by the river. The two men were terrified greatly, and felt that it was more prudent to go home than meddle any further with the Fair Family."

The other story, which I now reproduce, was obtained by Mr. Roberts from the same Abel Evans. He learnt it from Mrs. Ellen Edwards, and it refers to a point in her lifetime, which Abel Evans fixes at ninety years ago. Mr. Roberts has not succeeded in recovering the name of the cottager of whom it speaks; but he lived on the side of the Berwyn, above Cwm Pennant, where till lately a cottage used to stand, near which the Fairies had one of their resorts:—

"Yr oedd perchen y bwthyn wedi amaethu rhyw ran fychan o'r mynydd ger llaw y ty er mwyn plannu pytatws ynddo. Felly y gwnaeth. Mewn coeden yn agos i'r fan canfyddodd nyth bran. Fe feddyliodd mae doeth fuasai iddo ddryllio y nyth cyn amlhau o'r brain. Fe a esgynodd y goeden ac a ddrylliodd y nyth, ac wedi disgyn i lawr canfyddodd gylch glas (fairy ring) oddiamgylch y pren, ac ar y gylch fe welodd hanner coron er ei fawr lawenydd. Wrth

fyned heibio yr un fan y boreu canlynol fe gafodd hanner coron yn yr un man ag y cafodd y dydd o'r blaen. Hyna fu am amryw ddyddiau. Un diwrnod dywedodd wrth gyfaill am eu hap dda ac a ddangosodd y fan a'r lle y cawsai yr hanner coron bob boreu. Wel y boreu canlynol nid oedd yno na hanner coron na dim arall iddo; oherwydd yr oedd wedi torri rheolau y Tylwythion trwy wneud eu haelioni yn hysbys. Y mae y Tylwythion o'r farn na ddylai y llaw aswy wybod yr hyn a wna y llaw ddehau."

"The occupier of the cottage had tilled a small portion of the mountain side near his home in order to plant potatoes, which he did. He observed that there was a rook's nest on a tree which was not far from this spot, and it struck him that it would be prudent to break the nest before the rooks multiplied. So he climbed the tree and broke the nest, and after coming down, he noticed a green circle (a fairy ring) round the tree, and on this ring he espied, to his great joy, half-a-crown. As he went by the same spot the following morning, he had another half-a-crown in the same place as before. So it happened for several days; but one day he told a friend of his good luck, and showed him the spot where he had half-a-crown every morning. Now, the next morning there was no half-a-crown there for him, nor anything else, because he had broken the rule of the Fair Folks, by making their liberality known, they being of opinion that the left hand should not know what the right hand does." So runs this short tale, which the old lady, Mrs. Edwards, and the people of the neighbourhood explained as an instance of the gratitude of the Fairies to a man who had rendered them a service, which in this case was supposed to have consisted in ridding them of the rooks that disturbed their merry-makings in the green ring beneath the branches of the tree.

It would be unpardonable to pass away from Merioneth

without alluding to the Stray Cow of Llyn Barfog. The story appears in Welsh in the *Brython* for 1860, pp. 183-4, but the contributor, who closely imitated Glasynys's style, says that he got his materials from a paper by the late Dr. Pughe of Aberdovey, by which he seems to have meant an article contributed by the latter to the *Archæologia Cambrensis*, and published in the volume for 1853, pp. 201-5. Dr. Pughe dwells in that article a good deal on the scenery of the corner of Merioneth in the rear of Aberdovey; but the chief thing in his paper is the legend connected with Llyn Barfog, which he rendered into English as the Bearded Lake. It is, however, just possible that it was originally Llyn y Barfog, or the Lake of the Bearded One. It is described as a mountain lake in a secluded spot in the upland country behind Aberdovey; but I shall let Dr. Pughe speak for himself:—

"The lovers of Cambrian lore are aware that the *Triads*, in their record of the Deluge, affirm that it was occasioned by a mystic Afanc y Llyn, crocodile of the lake, breaking the banks of Llyn Llion, the lake of waters; and the recurrence of that catastrophe was prevented only by Hu Gadarn, the bold man of power, dragging away the Afanc by aid of his Ychain Banawg, or large-horned oxen. Many a lakelet in our land has put forward its claim to the location of Llyn Llion; amongst the rest, this lake. Be that as it may, King Arthur and his war-horse have the credit amongst the mountaineers here of ridding them of the monster, in place of Hu the Mighty, in proof of which is shown an impression on a neighbouring rock, bearing a resemblance to those made by the shoe or hoof of a horse, as having been left there by his charger when our British Hercules was engaged in this redoubtable act of prowess; and this impression has been given the name of Carn March Arthur, the hoof of Arthur's horse, which it retains to this day. It is believed to be very perilous to let the waters out of the lake, and re-

cently an aged inhabitant of the district informed the writer that she recollected this being done during a period of long drought, in order to procure motive power for Llyn Pair Mill, and that long continued heavy rains followed. No wonder our bold but superstitious progenitors, awe-struck by the solitude of the spot—the dark sepial tint of its waters, unrelieved by the flitting apparition of a single fish, and seldom visited by the tenants of the air—should have established it as a canon in their creed of terror, that the lake formed one of the many communications between this outward world of ours and the inner or lower one of Annwn—the unknown world[1]—the dominion of Gwyn ap Nudd, the mythic king of the fabled realm, peopled by those children of mystery, Plant Annwn; and the belief is still current amongst the inhabitants of our mountains in the occasional visitations of the Gwragedd Annwn, or dames of Elfin land, to this upper world of ours. A shrewd old hill farmer (Thomas Abergraes by name) well skilled in the folk-lore of the district, informed me that, in years gone by, though when exactly, he was too young to remember, those dames were wont to make their appearance, arrayed in green, in the neighbourhood of Llyn Barfog, chiefly at eventide, accompanied by their kine and hounds, and that, on quiet summer nights in particular, these ban-hounds were often to be heard in full cry, pursuing their prey—the souls of doomed men dying without baptism and penance—along the upland township of Cefnrhosucha. Many a farmer had a sight of their comely milk-white kine; many a swain had his soul turned to romance and poesy by a sudden vision of themselves in the guise of damsels arrayed in green, and radiant in beauty and grace; and many a sportsman had his

[1] I should not like to vouch for the accuracy of Dr. Pughe's rendering of this and the other Welsh names he has introduced: that involves difficult questions.

path crossed by their white hounds of supernatural fleetness and comeliness, the Cwn Annwn; but never had any one been favoured with more than a passing view of either, till an old farmer residing at Dyssyrnant, in the adjoining valley of Dyffryn Gwyn, became at last the lucky captor of one of their milk-white kine. The acquaintance which the Gwartheg y Llyn, the kine of the lake, had formed with the former's cattle, like the loves of the angels for the daughters of men, became the means of capture; and the farmer was thereby enabled to add the mystic cow to his own herd, an event in all cases believed to be most conducive to the worldly prosperity of him who should make so fortunate an acquisition. Never was there such a cow, never such calves, never such milk and butter, or cheese, and the fame of the Fuwch Gyfeiliorn, the stray cow, was soon spread abroad through that central part of Wales known as the district of Rhwng y ddwy Afon, from the banks of the Mawddach to those of the Dofwy[1]—from Aberdiswnwy[2] to Abercorris. The farmer, from a small beginning, rapidly became, like Job, a man of substance, possessed of thriving herds of cattle—a very patriarch among the mountains. But, alas! wanting Job's restraining grace, his wealth made him proud, his pride made him forget his obligation to the Elfin cow, and fearing she might soon become too old to be profitable, he fattened her for the butcher, and then even she did not fail to distinguish herself, for a more monstrously fat beast was never seen. At last the day of slaughter came—an eventful day in the annals of a mountain farm—the killing of a fat cow, and such a monster of obesity! No wonder all the neighbours were gathered together to see the sight. The old farmer looked upon the

[1] The doctor meant the river known as Dyfi or Dovey; but he would seem to have had an etymology in his mind.

[2] This involves the name of the river called Disynwy.

preparations in self-pleased importance; the butcher felt he was about no common feat of his craft, and, baring his arm, he struck the blow—not now fatal, for before even an hair had been injured, his arm was paralysed—the knife dropped from his hand, and the whole company was electrified by a piercing cry, that awakened echo in a dozen hills, and made the welkin ring again; and lo and behold! the whole assemblage saw a female figure clad in green, with uplifted arms, standing on one of the craigs overhanging Llyn Barfog, and heard her calling with a voice loud as thunder:—

'Dere di velen Einion,
Cyrn Cyveiliorn—braith y Llyn,
A'r voel Dodin,
Codwch, dewch adre.'

'Come yellow Anvil, stray horns,
Speckled one of the lake, and of the hornless Dodin,
Arise, Come home."[1]

And no sooner were these words of power uttered, than the original lake cow, and all her progeny to the third and fourth generations, were in full flight towards the heights of Llyn Barfog, as if pursued by the evil one. Self-interest quickly roused the farmer, who followed in pursuit, till breathless and panting, he gained an eminence overlooking the lake, but with no better success than to behold the green-attired dame leisurely descending mid-lake, accompanied by the fugitive cows, and her calves formed in a circle around her, they tossing their tails, she waving her hands in a scorn, as much as to say, 'You may catch us, my friend, if you can', as they

[1] It would, I think, be a little nearer the mark as follows:—
"Come Einion's Yellow one,
The Stray Horns, the Particoloured one of the Lake,
And the Hornless Dodin
Arise, come home."
However, one would like to know first whether *Dodin* was not rather *Dodyn*, to rhyme with *Llyn*.

disappeared beneath the dark waters of the lake, leaving only the yellow water-lily to mark the spot where they vanished, and to perpetuate the memory of this strange event. Meanwhile, the farmer looked with rueful countenance upon the spot where the elfin herd disappeared, and had ample leisure to deplore the effects of his greediness, as with them also departed the prosperity which had hitherto attended him, and he became impoverished to a degree below his original circumstances; and, in his altered circumstances, few felt pity for one who, in the noontide flow of prosperity, had shown himself so far forgetful of favours received, as to purpose slaying his benefactor."

Dr. Pughe did a very good thing in saving this legend from oblivion, but it would be very interesting to know how much of it is still current among the inhabitants of the retired district around Llyn Barfog. But to flit from the latter to the neighbouring watering-place, the question suggests itself to me as to the Bells of Aberdovey, with their melodious *un, dau, tri, pedwar, pump, chwech,* whether they were not Fairy bells—is there anything historical about them? The readers of Mr. Sikes's book need not be told that Welsh music connects itself in various ways with the belief in Fairies.

VIII. DYFED.

There is one kind of Fairy tale of which I think I have hitherto not given the reader a specimen: a good one is given in the third volume of the *Brython*, at p. 459, by a contributor who calls himself Idnerth ab Gwgan, who, I learn from Mr. Silvan Evans, the Editor, was no other than the Rev. Benjamin Williams, best known to Welsh antiquarians by his bardic name of Gwynionydd. The preface to the tale is also interesting, so I am tempted to render the whole into English as follows:—

"The Fair Family were wonderful creatures in the ima-

ginary world: they encamped, they walked, and they capered a great deal in former ages in our country, according to what we learn from some of our old people. It may be supposed that they were very little folks like the children of Rhys Ddwfn; for the old people used to imagine that they were wont to visit their hearths in great numbers in ages gone by. The girls at the farm-houses used to make the hearths clean after supper, and to place a cauldron full of water near the fire; and so they thought that the Fair Family came there to play at night, bringing sweethearts for the young women, and leaving pieces of money on the hob for them in the morning. Sometimes they might be seen as splendid hosts exercising themselves on our hills. They were very fond of the mountains of Dyfed; travellers between Lampeter and Cardigan used to see them on the hill of Llanwenog, but, by the time they had reached there, the fairies would be far away on the hills of Llandyssul, and when one had got where one expected to see the Family together in tidy array, they would be seen very busily engaged on the tops of Crug y Balog; when one got there they would be on Blaen Pant ar Fi, moving on and on to Bryn Bwa, and, finally, to some place or other in the lower part of Dyfed. Like the soldiers of our earthly world, they were possessed of terribly fascinating music; and in the autumnal season they had their rings, still named from them, in which they sang and danced. The young man of Llech y Derwydd[1] was his father's only son, as well as heir to the farm: so he was very dear to his father and his mother, nay, he was the light of their eyes. Now, the head servant and the son were bosom friends: they were like brothers together, or rather twin brothers. As the son and the servant were such friends, the farmer's wife used to get exactly the same kind of clothes prepared for the servant as for her son. The two

[1] Or, *Llech y Deri*, as Mr. Williams tells me in a letter, where he adds that he does not know the place, but that he took it to be in the Hundred of Cemmes.

fell in love with two handsome young women of very good reputation in the neighbourhood. The two couples were soon joined in honest wedlock, and great was the merry-making on the occasion. The servant had a suitable place to live on the farm of Llech y Derwydd; but about half a year after the son's marriage, he and his friend went out for sport, when the servant withdrew to a wild and retired corner to look for game. He returned presently for his friend, but when he got there he could not see him anywhere: he kept looking around for some time for him, shouting and whistling, but there was no sign of his friend. By and by, he went home to Llech y Derwydd expecting to see him, but no one knew anything about him. Great was the sorrow of his family through the night; but next day the anxiety was still greater. They went to see the place where his friend had seen him last: it was hard to tell whether his mother or his wife wept the more bitterly; but the father was a little better, though he also looked as if he were half mad with grief. The spot was examined, and, to their surprise, they saw a Fairy ring close by, and the servant recollected that he had heard the sound of very fascinating music somewhere or other about the time in question. It was at once agreed that the man had been unfortunate enough to have got into the ring of the Family, and to have been carried away by them, nobody knew whither. Weeks and months passed away, and a son was born to the heir of Llech y Derwydd, but the young father was not there to see his child, which the old people thought very hard. However, the little one grew up the very picture of his father, and great was his influence over his grandfather and grandmother; in fact he was everything with them. He grew up to be a man, and he married a good-looking girl in that neighbourhood; but her family did not enjoy the reputation of being kind-hearted people. The old folks

died, and their daughter-in-law also. One windy afternoon, in the month of October, the family of Llech y Derwydd beheld a tall thin old man, with his beard and hair white as snow, coming towards the house, and they thought he was a Jew. The servant maids stared at him, and their mistress laughed at the 'old Jew', at the same time that she lifted the children up to see him one after another. He came to the door and entered boldly enough, asking about his parents. The mistress answered him in an unusually surly and contemptuous tone, wondering why the 'drunken old Jew had come there', because they thought he had been drinking, and that he would otherwise not have spoken so. The old man cast wondering and anxious looks around on everything in the house, feeling as he did greatly surprised; but it was the little children about the floor that drew his attention most: his looks were full of disappointment and sorrow. He related the whole of his account, saying that he had been out the day before and that he was now returning. The mistress of the house told him that she had heard a tale about her husband's father, that he had been lost years before her birth while out sporting, whilst her father maintained that it was not true, but that he had been killed. She became angry, and quite lost her temper at seeing 'the old Jew' not going away. The old man was roused, saying that he was the owner of the house, and that he must have his rights. He then went out to see his possessions, and presently went to the house of the servant, where, to his surprise, things had greatly changed; after conversing with an aged man, who sat by the fire, the one began to scrutinize the other more and more. The aged man by the fire told him what had been the fate of his old friend the heir of Llech y Derwydd. They talked deliberately of the events of their youth, but it all seemed like a dream; in short, the old man in the corner concluded that his visitor was his old friend

the heir of Llech y Derwydd returning from the land of the Fair Family, after spending half a hundred years there. The other old man, with the snow-white beard, believed in his history, and much did they talk together and question one another for many hours. The old man by the fire said that the master of Llech y Derwydd was away from home that day, and he induced his aged visitor to eat some food, but, to the horror of all, the eater fell down dead on the spot. There is no record that an inquest was held over him, but the tale relates that the cause of it was that he ate food after having been so long in the world of the Fair Family. His old friend insisted on seeing him buried by the side of his ancestors; but the rudeness of the mistress of Llech y Derwydd to her father-in-law brought a curse on the family that clung to it to distant generations, and until the place had been sold nine times."

A tale like this is to be found related of Idwal of Nant-clwyd in *Cymru Fu*, p. 85. I said a tale like this, but, on reconsidering the matter, I should say it is the very same tale passed through the hands of Glasynys, or some one of his imitators. Another of this kind will be found in the *Brython*, ii, p. 170, and several similar ones also in Sikes's book, chap. vi, either given at length, or referred to, as in the case of that of Llwyn y Nef, or Heaven's Grove, a place near Celynnog Fawr, in the county of Carnarvon. This last version is remarkable as substituting the music and felicity of Heaven for the merry dancing and fiddling of the Fairies, and the man charmed is no longer a farmer or shepherd, but a pious monk of Celynnog. The tale is given by Glasynys in *Cymru Fu*, pp. 183-4, where it was copied from the third volume of the *Brython*, p. 111, in which he had previously published it. Several versions of it in rhyme come down from the eighteenth century, and the Rev. D. Silvan Evans has brought together twenty-six of these stanzas in *St. David's*

College Magazine for 1881, pp. 191-200, where he has put into a few paragraphs all that is known about the song of the *Hen Wr o'r Coed*, or the Old Man of the Wood, in his usually clear and critical style.

A tale from the other end of the district, once occupied by Celts of the same branch as the Kymry, makes the man, and not the Fairies, supply the music. I owe it to the kindness of Mr. A. Clark, Fellow of Lincoln College, who heard it from the late sexton of the parish of Dollar, in Clackmannanshire. The latter died some twelve years ago, aged seventy: he had learnt the tale from his father. The following are Mr. Clark's words:—

"Glendevon is a parish and village in the Ochils in County Perth, about five miles from Dollar as you come up Glen Queich and down by Gloomhill. Glen Queich is a narrowish glen between two grassy hills—at the top of the glen is a round hill of no great height, but very neat shape, the grass of which is always short and trim, and the ferns on the shoulder of a very marked green. This, as you come up the glen, seems entirely to block the way. It is called the 'Maiden Castle'. Only when you come quite close, do you see the path winding round the foot of it. A little further on is a fine spring, bordered with flat stones, in the middle of a neat, turfy spot, called the 'Maiden's Well'.

"This road, till the new toll-road was made on the other side of the hills, was the thoroughfare between Dollar and Glendevon.

"The Legend, as told by the 'Bethrel'.

"A piper, carrying his pipes, was coming from Glendevon to Dollar in the grey of the evening. He crossed the Garchel (a little stream running into the Queich burn), and looked at the 'Maiden Castle', and saw only the grey hillside and heard only the wind soughing through the bent. He

had got beyond it when he heard a burst of lively music; he turned round and instead of the dark knoll saw a great castle, with lights blazing from the windows, and heard the noise of dancing issuing from the open door. He went back incautiously, and a procession issuing forth at that moment, he was caught and taken in to a great hall ablaze with lights, and people dancing on the floor. He had to pipe to them for a day or two, but he got anxious, because he knew his people would be wondering why he didn't come back in the morning as he had promised. The fairies seemed to sympathise with his anxiety, and promised to let him go if he played a favorite tune of his, which they seemed fond of, to their satisfaction. He played his very best, the dance went fast and furious, and at its close he was greeted with loud applause. On his release he found himself alone, in the grey of the evening, beside the dark hillock, and no sound was heard save the purr of the burn and the soughing of the wind through the bent. Instead of completing his journey to Dollar, he walked hastily back to Glendevon to relieve his folks' anxiety. He entered his father's house and found no kent face there. On his protesting that he had gone only a day or two ago, and waxing loud in his bewildered talk, a grey old man was roused from a doze behind the fire; and told how he had heard when a boy from his father that a piper had gone away to Dollar in a quiet evening, and had never been heard or seen since, nor any trace of him found. He had been in the 'castle' for a hundred years."

The term, *Plant Rhys Ddwfn*, or the children of Rhys the Deep, has already been brought before the reader, and the following account of them is given by Gwynionydd in the first volume of the *Brython*, p. 130, which deserves being cited at length:—"There is a tale current in Dyfed, that there is or rather that there has been, a country between Cemmaes, the northern Hundred of Pembrokeshire, and

Aberdaron in Lleyn. The chief patriarch of the inhabitants was Rhys Ddwfn, and his descendants used to be called after him the Children of Rhys Ddwfn. They were, it is said, a sufficiently handsome race, but remarkably small in size. It is stated that certain herbs of a strange nature grew in their land, so that they were able to keep their country from being seen by even the most sharpsighted of invaders. There is no account that these remarkable herbs grew in any part of the world excepting in a small spot about a square yard in area, in a certain part of Cemmaes. If it chanced that a man stood alone on it, he beheld the whole of the territory of *Plant Rhys Ddwfn;* but the moment he moved he would lose sight of it altogether, and it would have been utterly vain for him to look for his foot-prints. The Rhysians had not much land; they lived in towns. So they were wont in former times to come to market to Cardigan, and to raise the prices of things terribly. They were seen of no one coming or going, but only seen there in the market. When prices happened to be high, and the corn all sold, however much there might have been there in the morning, the poor used to say to one another on the way home, 'Oh! *they* were there to-day', meaning *Plant Rhys Ddwfn.* So they were dear friends in the estimation of Sion Phil Hywel the farmer; but not so high in the opinion of Dafydd the labourer. It is said, however, that they were very honest and resolute men. A certain Gruffydd ab Einon was wont to sell them more corn than anybody else, and so he was a great friend of theirs. He was honoured by them beyond all his contemporaries in being led on a visit to their home. As they were great traders like the Phœnicians of old, they had treasures from all countries under the sun. Gruffydd, after feasting his eyes to satiety on their wonders, was led back by them loaded with presents. But before taking leave of them, he

asked them how they succeeded in keeping themselves safe from invaders, as one of their number might become unfaithful, and go beyond the virtue of the herbs that formed their safety. 'O!' replied the little old man of shrewd looks, 'just as Ireland has been blessed with a soil on which venomous reptiles cannot live, so with our land, no traitor can live here. Look at the sand on the seashore, perfect unity prevails there, and so among us. Rhys, the father of our race, bade us, even to the most distant descendant, honour our parents and ancestors; love our own wives without looking at those of our neighbours; and do our best for our children and grandchildren. And he said that if they did so, no one of them would ever prove unfaithful to another or become what you call a traitor. The latter is a wholly imaginary character among us; strange pictures are drawn of him with his feet like those of an ass, with a nest of snakes in his bosom, with a head like the devil's, with hands somewhat like a man's, while one of them holds a large knife, and the family lies dead around the figure. Good bye!' When Gruffydd looked about him he lost sight of the country of *Plant Rhys*, and found himself near his home. He became very wealthy after this, and continued a great friend of *Plant Rhys* so long as he lived. After Gruffydd's death they came to market again, but such was the greed of the farmers, like Gruffydd before them, for riches, and so unreasonable were the prices they asked for their corn, that the Rhysians took offence and came no more to Cardigan to market. The old people used to think that they now went to Fishguard market, as very strange people were wont to be seen there."

With this should be compared, pages 9 and 10 of Sikes' book, where mention is made of sailors on the coast of Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire, "who still talk of the green meadows of enchantment lying in the Irish Channel to the

west of Pembrokeshire", and of men who had landed on them, or seen them suddenly vanishing. The author then goes on without giving any clue to the source on which he drew, in the following strain :—"The fairies inhabiting these islands are said to have regularly attended the markets at Milford Haven and Laugharne. They made their purchases without speaking, laid down their money and departed, always leaving the exact sum required, which they seemed to know, without asking the price of anything. Sometimes they were invisible; but they were often seen by sharp-eyed persons. There was always one special butcher at Milford Haven upon whom the fairies bestowed their patronage, instead of distributing their favours indiscriminately. The Milford Haven folk could see the green Fairy Islands distinctly, lying out a short distance from land; and the general belief was that they were densely peopled with fairies. It was also said that the latter went to and fro between the islands and the shore, through a subterranean gallery under the bottom of the sea."

Another tale given in the *Brython*, vol. ii, p. 20, by a writer who gives his name as B. Davies, will serve to show, short though it be, that the term *Plant Rhys Ddwfn* was not confined to those honestly dealing Fairies, but was used in a sense wholly synonymous with that of *Tylwyth Teg*, as understood in other parts of Wales. It is as follows :—"One hot calm day, when the sun of heaven was brilliantly shining, and the hay in the dales was being busily made by lads and lasses, and by grown-up people of both sexes, a woman in the neighbourhood of Emlyn placed her one-year old infant in the *gadair* or chair, as the cradle is called in these parts, and out she went to the field for a while, intending to return, when her neighbour, an old woman, overtaken by the decrepitude of eighty summers, should call to her that her darling was crying. It was not long before she heard the

old woman calling to her; she ran hurriedly, and as soon as she set foot on the kitchen floor she took her little one in her arms as usual, saying to him, 'O my little one! thy mother's delight art thou! I would not take the world for thee, etc.' But to her surprise he had a very old look about him, and the more the tender-hearted mother gazed at his face, the stranger it seemed to her, so that at last she placed him in the cradle and told her trouble and sorrow to her relations and acquaintances. And after this one and the other had given his opinion, it was agreed at last that it was one of *Rhys Ddwfn's* children that was in the cradle, and not her dearly loved baby. In this distress there was nothing to do but to fetch a sorcerer, as fast as the fastest horse could gallop. He said, when he saw the child, that he had seen his like before, and that it would be a hard job to get rid of him, though not such a very hard job this time. The shovel was made red hot in the fire by one of the Cefnarth[1] boys, and held before the child's face; and in an instant the short little old man took to his heels, and neither he nor his like was seen afterwards, from Abercuch to Aberbargoed at any rate. The mother, it is said, found her darling unscathed the next moment. I remember also hearing that the strange son was as old as the grandfather of the one that had been lost."[2]

As I see no reason to make any great distinction between lake-maidens and sea-maidens, I now give Gwynionydd's account of the mermaid, who was found by a fisherman from St. Dogmel's, near Cardigan, *Brython*, i, p. 82:—

[1] This is more usually written and pronounced Cenarth, the name of a parish on the Teivi, where the three counties of Cardigan, Pembroke, and Carmarthen meet.

[2] B. Davies, that is, Benjamin Davies, who gives this tale, was, as I learn from Gwynionydd, a native of Cenarth. He was a schoolmaster for about twelve years, and died in October 1859 at Merthyr, near Carmarthen; he describes him as a good and intelligent man.

"One fine afternoon in summer, in the beginning of the last century, a fisherman, whose name was Pergrin,[1] went to a recess in the rock, near Pen Cemmaes, where he found a sea-maiden doing her hair, and he took the water-lady prisoner to his boat. . . . We know not what language is used by sea-maidens . . . . but this one, this time at any rate, talked, it is said, very good Welsh; for when she was in despair in Pergrin's custody, weeping copiously, and with her tresses all dishevelled, she called out: 'Pergrin, if thou wilt let me go, I will give thee three shouts in thy time of greatest need.' So, in wonder and fear, he let her go to walk the streets of the deep, and visit her sweethearts there. Days and weeks passed without Pergrin seeing her after this; but one hot afternoon, when the sea was pretty calm, and the fisherman had no thought of danger, behold his old acquaintance showing her head and locks, and shouting out, in a loud voice: 'Pergrin! Pergrin! Pergrin! take up thy nets, take up the nets, take up the nets!' Pergrin and his companion instantly obeyed the message, and drew in their nets with great haste. In they went, past the bar, and by the time they had reached the Pwll Cam, the most terrible storm had overspread the sea, while Pergrin and his companion were safe on land. Twice nine others had gone out with them, but they were all drowned without having the chance of obeying the warning of the water-lady."

A writer in the fourth volume of the *Brython*, p. 194, states that the people of Nefyn in Lleyn claim the story of Pergrin and the Mermaid as belonging to them, which proves that a similar legend has been current there; add to this the fact mentioned in the *Brython*, iii, p. 336, that a red mermaid, with yellow hair, on a white field, figures in the coat of arms

[1] This name which may have come from Little England below Wales, was once not uncommon in South Cardiganshire, as Mr. Williams informs me, but it is now changed as a surname into Davies and Jones!

of one branch of a family derived from Glasfryn, in the parish of Llangybi, in Eifionydd—perhaps it would not be too much to expect some member of this family to give our readers the history of this device. We have already suggested that Glasynys's story was made up, to a certain extent, of materials found on the coasts of Carnarvonshire. A small batch of stories about South Wales Mermaids, is given by a writer, who calls himself Ab Nadol,[1] in the *Brython*, iv, p. 310, as follows:—

"A few rockmen are said to have been working, about eighty years ago, in a quarry near Porth y Rhaw, when the day was calm and clear, with nature, as it were, feasting, the flowers shedding sweet scent around, and the hot sunshine beaming into the jagged rocks. Though an occasional wave rose to strike the romantic cliffs, the sea was like a placid lake, with its light coverlet of blue attractive enough to entice one of the ladies of *Rhys Ddwfn* forth from the town, seen by Daniel Huws off Trefin, as he was journeying between Fishguard and St. Davids, in the year 1858, to make her way to the top of a stone and to sit on it to disentangle her flowing silvery hair. Whilst she was cleaning herself, the rockmen went down, and when they got near her they perceived that, from her waist upwards, she was like the lasses of Wales, but that, from her waist downwards, she had the body of a fish. And, when they began to talk to her, they found she spoke Welsh, though she only uttered the following few words to them: 'Reaping in Pembrokeshire and weeding in Carmarthenshire.' Off she then went to walk in the depth of the sea towards her home. Another tale is repeated about a mermaid, said to have been caught by men below the land of Llanwnda, near the spot, if not on the spot, where the French made their landing afterwards, and three miles to the west of Fishguard. It then goes on to say that they carried

[1] Perhaps some one of the Cymmrodorion will tell us who he was.

her to their home, and kept her in a secure place for some time; before long, she begged to be allowed to return to the Brine Land, and gave the people of the house three bits of advice; "but I only remember one of them", he writes, "and this is it: 'Skim the surface of the pottage before adding sweet milk to it: it will be whiter and sweeter, and less of it will do.' I was told that this family follow the three advices to this day."

After putting the foregoing bits together, I was favoured by Mr. Benjamin Williams, though he was at the time in the bitterness of domestic bereavement, with notes on the tales and the persons from whom he heard them. Mr. Williams is better known to Welsh antiquaries by his bardic name of Gwynionydd, and his communications form the contents of two or three letters, mostly answers to queries of mine. The following is the substance of them:—Mr. Williams is a native of the valley of Troed yr Aur in the Cardiganshire parish of Penbryn or Llanfihangel Penbryn, where I had once the pleasure of examining the ancient monument of Corbalengi. He spent a part of his youth at Verwig, in the parish of that name, in the angle between the northern bank of the Teivi and the Cardigan Bay. He heard of Rhys Ddwfn's Children first from a distant relative of his father's, a Catherine Thomas, who came to visit her daughter, who lived not far from his father's house: that would now be from forty-eight to fifty years ago. He was very young at the time, and formed a wonderful idea of those creatures, which was partly due also to the talk of one James Davies or Siams Mocyn, who was very well up in folk-lore, and was one of his father's next-door neighbours. He was an old man, and nephew to the musician, David Jenkin Morgan. The only spot near Mr. Williams's home, that used to be frequented by the Fairies, was Cefn y Ceirw, or the Stags' Ridge, a large farm, so called from having been kept as a park for their deer by

the Lewises of Abernant Bychan. He adds that the late Mr. Philipps of Aberglasney was very fond of talking of things in his native neighbourhood, and of mentioning the Fairies at Cefn y Ceirw. It was after moving to Verwig that Mr. Williams began to put the tales he heard on paper: then he came in contact with three brothers, whose names were John, Owen, and Thomas Evans. They were well to do and respectable bachelors, living together on the large farm of Hafod Ruffydd. Thomas was a man of very strong common sense, and worth consulting on any subject: he was a good arithmetician, and a constant reader of *Seren Gomer* from its first appearance. He thoroughly understood the bardic metres, and had a fair knowledge of music. He was well versed in Scripture, and filled the office of deacon at the Baptist Chapel. His death took place in the year 1864. Now, the eldest of the three brothers, the one named John, or Siôn, was then about seventy-five years of age, and he thoroughly believed in the tales about the Fairies, as will be seen from the following short dialogue:—

Siôn: "Williams bach, ma'n rhaid i bod nhw'i gâl: yr w i'n cofio yn amser Bone fod marchnad Aberteifi yn llawn o lafir yn y bore—digon yno am fis—ond cin pen hanner awr yr ôdd y cwbwl wedi darfod. Nid ôdd possib i gweld nhwi: mâ gida nhwi faint a fynnon nhwi o arian."

Williams: "Siwt na fyse dynion yn i gweld nhwi ynte, Siôn?"

Siôn: "O mâ gida nhwi ddynion fel ninne yn pryni drostyn nhwi; ag y mâ nhwi fel yr hen siowmin yna yn gelli gneid pob tric."

Siôn: "My dear Williams, it must be that they exist: I remember Cardigan market, in the time of Bonaparte, full of corn in the morning—enough for a month—but in less than half an hour it was all gone. It was impossible to see them: they have as much money as they like."

Williams: "How is it, then, that men did not see them, Siôn?"

Siôn: "O, they have men like us to do the buying for them; and they can, like those old showmen, do every kind of trick."

At this kind of display of simplicity on the part of his brother, Thomas used to smile and say: "My brother Siôn believes such things as those"; for he had no belief in them himself. Still it is from his mouth that Mr. Williams published the tales in the *Brython*, which have been reproduced here, that of "Pergrin and the Mermaid", and all that of the "Heir of Llech y Derwydd", not to mention the ethical element in the account of Rhys Ddwfn's country and its people, probably the product of his mind. Thomas Evans, or as he was really called, Tommos Ifan, was given rather to grappling with the question of the origin of such beliefs; so one day he called Mr. Williams out, and led him to a spot, about four hundred yards from Bol y Fron, where the latter then lived: he pointed to the setting sun, and asked Mr. Williams what he thought of the glorious sunset before them. "It is all produced", he then observed, "by the reflection of the sun's rays on the mist: one might think", he went on to say, "that there was there a paradise of a country full of fields, forests, and everything that is desirable." And before they had moved away the grand scene had disappeared, when Tommos suggested that the idea of the existence of the country of Rhys Ddwfn's Children arose from the contemplation of that phenomenon. I have many a time viewed the same sort of scene, and never without its suggesting to my mind the same idea, that of a resplendent paradise in the west. It is the waking dream of a Celt no doubt, but it forms a key to a good deal of Celtic legend, which I cannot now stay to make use of. Suffice it to say that Tommos Ifan was probably far ahead of all the Welsh

historians who try to extract history from the story of *Cantre 'r Gwaelod*, or the Bottom Hundred, beneath the waves of the Cardigan Bay. Lastly, besides Mr. Williams' contributions to the *Brython*, and a small volume of poetry, entitled *Briallen glan Ceri*, some tales of his were published by Llallawg in *Bygones* some years ago, and he had the prize at the Cardigan Eisteddfod of 1866 for the best collection in Welsh of the folklore of Dyfed: he thinks that it contained in all thirty-six tales of all kinds, but since the manuscript, as the property of the Committee of that Eisteddfod, was sold, he cannot now consult it: in fact he is not certain as to who the owner of it may now be, though he has an idea that it is either the Rev. Rees Williams, Vicar of Whitchurch, Solva, Pembrokeshire; or R. D. Jenkins, Esq., of Cilbronau, Cardiganshire. Whoever the owner may be, he would probably be only too glad to have it published, and I mention this merely to call the attention of the Cymmrodorion and our Editor to it. The Eisteddfod is to be praised for encouraging local research, and sometimes also for burying the results in obscurity, but not always.

IX. GLAMORGAN.

Mr. Craigfryn Hughes, the author of a Welsh novellette,[1] with its scene laid in Glamorgan, having induced me to take a copy, I read it and found it full of local colouring. Then I ventured to sound the author on the question of Fairy Tales, and the reader of the *Cymmrodor* will be able to judge how hearty the response has been. Before reproducing the tale which Mr. Hughes has sent me, I will briefly put into English his account of himself and his authorities. Mr. Hughes lives at the Quakers' Yard, in the neighbourhood of Pontypridd, in Glamorgan. His father was not a believer

[1] *Y Ferch o Gefn Ydfa*, by Isaac Craigfryn Hughes, and published by Messrs. Daniel, Owen, Howell and Co., Cardiff. 1881.

in tales about Fairies or the like, and he learned all he knows of the traditions about them, in his father's absence, from his grandmother and other old people. This old lady's name was Rachel Hughes. She was born at Pandy Pont y Cymmer, near Pontypool, in the year 1773; but she came to live in the parish of Llanfabon, near the Quakers' Yard, when she was only twelve years of age. There she continued to live to the day of her death, which took place in 1864, so that she was about 91 years of age at the time. Mr. Hughes adds that he remembers many of the old inhabitants besides his grandmother, who were perfectly familiar with the story he has put on record; but only two of them are still alive, and those are both over 90 years old, with their minds overtaken by the childishness of old age, though it is only a short time since the death of another, who was, as he says, a walking library of tales about Corpse Candles, Ghosts, and *Bendith y Mamau*, or The Mothers' Blessing, as the Fairies are usually called in Glamorgan. Mr. Hughes's father tried to prevent his children being taught any tales about ghosts, corpse candles, or Fairies; but the grandmother found opportunities of telling them plenty, and Mr. Hughes vividly describes the effect on his mind when he was a boy; how frightened he used to feel; how he pulled the clothes over his head in bed; and how he half suffocated himself thereby under the effects of the fear the tales used to fill him with. Then, as to the locality, he makes the following remarks:—"There are few people who have not heard something or other about the old graveyard of the Quakers, which was made by Lydia Phil, a lady who lived at a neighbouring farmhouse, called Cefn y Fforest. This old graveyard lies in the eastern corner of the parish of Merthyr Tydfil, on land called Pantannas, as to the meaning of which there is much controversy. Some will have it that it is properly Pant yr Aros, or the Hollow of

the Staying, because travellers were sometimes stopped there over night by the swelling of the neighbouring river; others treat it as Pant yr Hanes, the Hollow of the Legend, in allusion to the following story. But before the graveyard was made, the spot was called Rhyd y Grug, or the Ford of the Heather, which grows thereabouts in abundance. In front of the old graveyard towards the south the rivers Taff and Bargoed, which some would make into Byrgoed or Short-Wood, meet with each other, and thence rush in one over terrible cliffs of the rock, in the recesses of which lie huge *cerwyni* or cauldron-like pools, called respectively the Gerwyn Fach, the Gerwyn Fawr, and the Gerwyn Ganol, where many a drowning has taken place. As one walks up over Tarren y Crynwyr or the Quakers' Rift, until Pantannas is reached, and proceeds northwards for about a mile and a half, one arrives at a farmhouse called Pen Craig Dâf[1], which means the top of the Taff Rock. The path between the two houses leads through fertile fields, in which may be seen, if one has eyes to observe, small rings which are greener than the rest of the ground. They are, in fact, green even as compared with the greenness around them—these are the

[1] On Pen Craig Dâf Mr. Hughes gives the following note:—It was the residence of Dafydd Morgan or "Counsellor Morgan", who, he says, was executed on Kensington Common for taking the side of the Pretender. He had retreated to Pen y Graig, where his abode was, in order to conceal himself; but he was discovered and carried away at night. Here follows a verse from an old ballad about him:—

"Dafydd Morgan ffel a ffol,
Fe aeth yn ol ei hyder:
Fe neidodd naid at *rebel* haid,
Pan drodd o blaid Pretender."

Taffy Morgan, shrewd and daft,
He did his bent go after—
He leaps a leap to rebel swarms,
And arms for the Pretender.

rings in which *Bendith y Mamau* used to meet to sing and dance all night. If a man happened to get inside one of these circles when the Fairies were there, he could not be got out in a hurry, as they would charm him and lead him into some of their caves, where they would keep him for ages, unawares to him, listening to their music. The rings vary greatly in size, but in point of form they are all either round or oval. I have heard my grandmother", says Mr. Hughes, " reciting and singing several of the songs the Fairies sang in these rings. One of them began thus:—

" ' Canu, canu, drwy y nos,
Dawnsio, dawnsio, ar waen y rhos
Yn ngoleuni 'r lleuad dlos:
Hapus ydym ni!

" ' Pawb ohonom sydd yn llon
Heb un gofid dan ei fron:
Canu, dawnsio, ar y ton[1]—
Dedwydd ydym ni!'

Singing, singing through the night,
Dancing, dancing with our might,
Where the moon the moor doth light,
Happy ever we!

One and all of merry mien,
Without sorrow are we seen,
Singing, dancing on the green:
Gladsome ever we!

Here follows the story of *Bendith y Mamau's* revenge in Mr. Hughes's own Welsh:—

" Yn un o'r canrifoedd a aethant heibio, preswyliai amaethwr yn nhyddyn Pantannas, a'r amser hwnw yr oedd bendith y mamau yn ymwelwyr aml ag amryw gaeau perthynol iddo ef,

[1] A *ton* is any green field that is used for grazing, and not meant to be mown, land which has, as it were, its skin of grassy turf unbroken for years by the plough.

a theimlai yntau gryn gasineb yn ei fynwes at yr 'atras fwstrog, lleisiog, a chynllwynig,' fel y galwai hwynt, a mynych yr hiraethai am allu dyfod o hyd i ryw lwybr er cael eu gwared oddiyno. O'r diwedd hysbyswyd ef gan hen reibwraig, fod y ffordd i gael eu gwared yn ddigon hawdd, ac ond iddo ef roddi godro un hwyr a boreu iddi hi, yr hysbysai y ffordd iddo gyrhaedd yr hyn a fawr ddymunai. Boddlonodd i'w thelerau, a derbyniodd yntau y cyfarwyddyd, yr hyn ydoedd fel y canlyn :—Ei fod i aredig yr holl gaeau i ba rai yr oedd eu hoff ymgyrchfan, ac ond iddynt hwy unwaith golli y ton glas, y digient, ac na ddeuent byth mwy i'w boeni drwy eu hymweliadau a'r lle.

"Dilynodd yr amaethwr ei chyfarwyddyd i'r llythyren, a choronwyd ei waith a llwyddiant. Nid oedd yr un o honynt i'w weled oddeutu y caeau yn awr; ac yn lle sain eu caniadau soniarus, a glywid bob amser yn dyrchu o Waen y Rhos, nid oedd dim ond y dystawrwydd trylwyraf yn teyrnasu o gylch eu hen a'u hoff ymgyrchfan.

"Hauodd yr amaethwr wenith, &c. yn y caeau, ac yr oedd y gwanwyn gwyrddlas wedi gwthio y gauaf oddiar ei sedd, ac ymddangosai y maesydd yn ardderchog, yn eu llifrai gwyrddleision a gwanwynol.

"Ond un prydnawn, ar ol i'r haul ymgilio i ystafelloedd y gorllewin, tra yr oedd amaethwr Pantanas yn dychwelyd tua ei gartref, cyfarfyddwyd ag ef gan fod bychan ar ffurf dyn, yn gwisgo hugan goch; a phan ddaeth gyferbyn ag ef dadweiniodd ei gledd bychan, gan gyfeirio ei flaen at yr amaethwr, a dywedyd,

Dial a ddaw
Y mae gerllaw.

"Ceisiodd yr amaethwr chwerthin, ond yr oedd rhywbeth yn edrychiad sarug a llym y gwr bychan, ag a barodd iddo deimlo yn hynod o annymunol.

"Ychydig o nosweithiau yn ddiweddarach, pan oedd y teulu

ar ymneullduo i'w gorphwysleoedd, dychrynwyd hwy yn fawr iawn gan drwst, fel pe byddai y ty yn syrthio i lawr bendramwnwgl, ac yn union ar ol i'r twrf beidio, clywent y geiriau bygythiol a ganlyn yn cael eu parablu yn uchel,

Daw dial

a dim yn rhagor.

"Pan oedd yr yd wedi cael ei fedi ac yn barod i gael ei gywain i'r ysgubor, yn sydyn ryw noswaith llosgwyd ef fel nad oedd yr un dywysen na gwellt yn i'w gael yn un man o'r caeau, ac nis gallasai neb fod wedi gosod yr yd ar dan ond Bendith y Mamau.

"Fel ag y mae yn naturiol i ni feddwl teimlodd yr amaethwr yn fawr oherwydd y tro, ac edifarhaodd yn ei galon ddarfod iddo erioed wrando a gwneuthur yn ol cyfarwyddyd yr hen reibwraig, ac felly ddwyn arno ddigofaint a chasineb Bendith y Mamau.

"Dranoeth i'r noswaith y llosgwyd yr yd fel yr oedd yn arolygu y difrod achoswyd gan y tan, wele'r gwr bychan ag ydoedd wedi ei gyfarfod ychydig o ddiwrnodau yn flaenorol yn ei gyfarfod eilwaith a chyda threm herfeiddiol pwyntiodd ei gleddyf ato gan ddywedyd,

Nid yw ond dechreu.

Trodd gwyneb yr amaethwr cyn wyned a'r marmor, a safodd gan alw y gwr bychan yn ol, ond bu y cor yn hynod o wydn ac anewyllysgar i droi ato, ond ar ol hir erfyn arno trodd yn ei ol gan ofyn yn sarug beth yr oedd yr amaethwr yn ei geisio, yr hwn a hysbysodd iddo ei fod yn berffaith foddlon i adael y caeau lle yr oedd eu hoff ymgyrchfan i dyfu yn don eilwaith, a rhoddi caniatad iddynt i ddyfod iddynt pryd y dewisont, ond yn unig iddynt beidio dial eu llid yn mhellach arno ef.

"'Na', oedd yr atebiad penderfynol, 'y mae gair y brenhin wedi ei roi y bydd iddo ymddial arnat hyd eithaf ei allu ac nid oes dim un gallu ar wyneb y greadigaeth a bair iddo gael ei dynu yn ol.'

"Dechreuodd yr amaethwr wylo ar hyn, ond yn mhen ychydig hysbysodd y gwr bychan y byddai iddo ef siarad a'i benaeth ar y mater, ac y cawsai efe wybod y canlyniad ond iddo ddyfod i'w gyfarfod ef yn y fan hono amser machludiad haul drennydd.

"Addawodd yr amaethwr ddyfod i'w gyfarfod, a phan ddaeth yr amser appwyntiedig o amgylch iddo i gyfarfod a'r bychan cafodd ef yno yn ei aros, ac hysbysodd iddo fod y penaeth wedi ystyried ei gais yn ddifrifol, ond gan fod ei air bob amser yn anghyfnewidiol y buasai y dialedd bygythiedig yn rhwym o gymeryd lle ar y teulu, ond ar gyfrif ei edifeirwch ef na chawsai ddigwydd yn ei amser ef nac eiddo ei blant.

"Llonyddodd hyny gryn lawer ar feddwl terfysglyd yr amaethwr, a dechreuodd Bendith y Mamau dalu eu hymweliadau a'r lle eilwaith a mynych y clywid sain eu cerddoriaeth felusber yn codi o'r caeau amgylchynol yn ystod y nos.

* * * * *

"Pasiodd canrif heibio heb i'r dialedd bygythiedig gael ei gyflawnu, ac er fod teulu Pantannas yn cael eu hadgofio yn awr ac eilwaith, y buasai yn sicr o ddigwydd hwyr neu hwyrach, eto wrth hir glywed y waedd,

Daw dial

ymgynnefinasant a hi nes eu bod yn barod i gredu na fuasai dim yn dyfod o'r bygythiad byth.

"Yr oedd etifedd Pantannas yn caru a merch i dirfeddianydd cymydogaethol a breswyliai mewn tyddyn o'r enw Pen Craig Daf. Yr oedd priodas y par dedwydd i gymeryd lle ym mhen ychydig wythnosau ac ymddangosai rhieni y cwpl ieuangc yn hynod o foddlon i'r ymuniad teuluol ag oedd ar gymeryd lle.

"Yr oedd yn amser y Nadolig—a thalodd y ddarpar wraig ieuangc ymweliad a theulu ei darpar wr, ac yr oedd yno wledd o wydd rostiedig yn baratoedig gogyfer a'r achlysur.

"Eisteddai y cwmni oddeutu y tan i adrodd rhyw chwedlau difyrus er mwyn pasio yr amser, pryd y cawsant eu dychrynu yn fawr gan lais treiddgar yn derchafu megis o wely yr afon yn gwaeddi

Daeth amser ymddial.

"Aethant oll allan i wrando a glywent y lleferydd eilwaith, ond nid oedd dim i'w glywed ond brochus drwst y dwfr wrth raiadru dros glogwyni aruthrol y cerwyni. Ond ni chawsant aros i wrando yn hir iawn cyn iddynt glywed yr un lleferydd eilwaith yn dyrchafu i fyny yn uwch na swn y dwfr pan yn bwrlymu dros ysgwyddau y graig, ac yn gwaeddi, Daeth yr amser.

"Nis gallent ddyfalu beth yr oedd yn ei arwyddo, a chymaint ydoedd eu braw a'u syndod fel nad allent lefaru yr un gair a'u gilydd. Yn mhen enyd dychwelasant i'r ty a chyn iddynt eistedd credent yn ddios fod yr adeilad yn cael ei ysgwyd idd ei sylfeini gan ryw dwrf y tuallan. Pan yr oedd yr oll wedi cael eu parlysio gan fraw, wele fenyw fechan yn gwneuthur ei hymddangosiad ar y bwrdd o'u blaen, yr hwn oedd yn sefyll yn agos i'r ffenestr.

"'Beth yr wyt yn ei geisio yma, y peth bychan hagr?' holai un o'r gwyddfodolion.

"'Nid oes gennyf unrhyw neges a thi, y gwr hir dafod', oedd atebiad y fenyw fechan. 'Ond yr wyf wedi cael fy anfon yma i adrodd rhyw bethau ag sydd ar ddigwydd i'r teulu hwn, a theulu arall o'r gymmydogaeth ag a ddichon fod o ddyddordeb iddynt, ond gan i mi dderbyn y fath sarhad oddiar law y gwr du ag sydd yn eistedd yn y cornel, ni fydd i mi godi y llen ag oedd yn cuddio y dyfodol allan o'u golwg.'

"'Atolwg os oes yn dy feddiant ryw wybodaeth parth dyfodol rhai o honom, ag a fyddai yn ddyddorol i ni gael ei glywed dwg hi allan,' ebai un arall o'r gwyddfodolion.

"'Na wnaf, ond yn unig hysbysu, fod calon gwyryf fel

llong ar y traeth yn methu cyrhaedd y porthladd o herwydd digalondid y *Pilot.*'

"A chyda ei bod yn llefaru y gair diweddaf diflanodd o'u gwydd, na wyddai neb i ba le na pha fodd!

"Drwy ystod ei hymweliad hi, peidiodd y waedd a godasai o'r afon, ond yn fuan ar ol iddi ddiflanu, dechreuodd eilwaith a chyhoeddi, 'Daeth amser dial'—ac ni pheidiodd am hir amser. Yr oedd y cynulliad wedi cael eu meddianu a gormod o fraw i fedru llefaru yr un gair, ac yr oedd llen o brudd-der yn daenedig dros wyneb pob un o honynt. Daeth amser iddynt i ymwahanu, ac aeth Rhydderch y mab i hebrwng Gwenfrewi ei gariadferch tua Phen Craig Daf, o ba siwrnai ni ddychwelodd byth.

"Cyn ymadael a'i fun dywedir iddynt dyngu bythol ffyddlondeb i'w gilydd, pe heb weled y naill y llall byth ond hyny, ac nad oedd dim a allai beri iddynt anghofio eu gilydd.

"Mae yn debygol i'r llangc Rhydderch pan yn dychwelyd gartref gael ei hun oddifewn i un o gylchoedd Bendith y Mamau, ac yna iddynt ei hud-ddenu i mewn i un o'u hogofau yn Nharren y Cigfrain, ac yno y bu.

* * * * *

"Ymae ynllawn bryd i ni droi ein gwynebau yn ol tua Phantannas a Phen Craig Daf. Yr oedd rhieni y bachgen anffodus yn mron gwallgofi. Nid oedd ganddynt yr un drychfeddwl i ba le i fyned i chwilio amdano, ac er chwilio yn mhob man a phob lle methwyd yn glir a dyfod o hyd iddo, na chael gair o' i hanes.

"Ychydig i fyny yn y cwm mewn ogof danddaearol trigfanai hen feudwy oedranus, yr hwn hefyd a ystyrid yn ddewin, o'r enw Gwerfyl. Aethant yn mhen ychydig wythnosau i ofyn iddo ef, a fedrai roddi iddynt ryw wybodaeth parthed i'w mab colledig—ond i ychydig bwrpas. Ni wnaeth yr hyn a adroddodd Gwerfyl wrthynt ond dyfnhau y clwyf a rhoi golwg fwy anobeithiol fyth ar yr amgylchiad. Ar ol iddynt hysbysu ynghylch ymddangosiad y fenyw fechan

ynghyd a'r llais wylofus a glywsent yn derchafu o'r afon y nos yr aeth ar goll, hysbysodd Gwerfyl iddynt mai y farn fygythiedig ar y teulu gan Fendith y Mamau, oedd wedi goddiweddid y llangc, ac nad oedd o un diben iddynt feddwl cael ei weled byth mwyach! Ond feallai y gwnelai ei ymddangosiad yn mhen oesau, ond ddim yn eu hamser hwy.

"Pasiai yr amser heibio, a chwyddodd yr wythnosau i fisoedd, a'r misoedd i flynyddoedd, a chasglwyd tad a mam Rhydderch at eu tadau. Yr oedd y lle o hyd yn parhau yr un, ond y preswylwyr yn newid yn barhaus, ac yr oedd yr adgofion am ei golledigaeth yn darfod yn gyflym, ond er hyny yr oedd un yn disgwyl ei ddychweliad yn ol yn barhaus, ac yn gobeithio megis yn erbyn gobaith am gael ei weled eilwaith. Bob boreu gyda bod dorau y wawr yn ymagor dros gaerog fynyddoedd y dwyrain gwelid hi bob tywydd yn rhedeg i ben bryn bychan, a chyda llygaid yn orlawn o ddagrau hiraethlon syllai i bob cyfeiriad i edrych a ganfyddai ryw argoel fod ei hanwylyd yn dychwelyd; ond i ddim pwrpas. Canol dydd gwelid hi eilwaith yn yr un man a phan ymgollai yr haul, fel pelen eiriasgoch o dân dros y terfyngylch, yr oedd hi yno.

"Edrychai nes yn agos bod yn ddall, ac wylai ei henaid allan o ddydd i ddydd ar ol anwylddyn ei chalon. O'r diwedd aeth y rhai sydd yn edrych drwy y ffenestri i omedd eu gwasanaeth iddi, ac yr oedd y pren almon yn coroni ei phen a'i flagur gwyryfol, ond parhai hi i edrych ond nid oedd yn dod. Yn llawn o ddyddiau ac yn aeddfed i'r bedd rhoddwyd terfyn ar ei holl obeithion a'i disgwyliadau gan angeu, a chludwyd ei gweddillion marwol i fynwent hen Gapel y Fan.

"Pasiai blynyddoedd heibio fel mwg, ac oesau fel cysgodion y boreu, ac nid oedd neb yn fyw ag oedd yn cofio Rhydderch, ond adroddid ei golliad disymwyth yn aml. Dylasem

fynegu na welwyd yr un o Fendith y Mamau, oddeutu y gymydogaeth wedi ei golliad, a pheidiodd sain eu cerddoriaeth o'r nos hono allan.

"Yr oedd Rhydderch wedi cael ei hud-ddenu i fyned gyda Bendith y Mamau—ac aethant ag ef i ffwrdd i'w hogof. Ar ol iddo aros yno dros ychydig o ddiwrnodau fel y tybiai, gofynodd am ganiatad i ddychwelyd, yr hyn a rwydd ganiatawyd iddo gan y brenhin. Daeth allan o'r ogof, ac yr oedd yn ganol dydd braf, a'r haul yn llewyrchu oddiar fynwes ffurfafen ddigwmwl. Cerddodd yn mlaen o Darren y Cigfrain hyd nes iddo ddyfod i olwg Capel y Fan, ond gymaint oedd ei syndod pan y gwelodd nad oedd yr un Capel yno! Pa le yr oedd wedi bod, a pha faint o amser? Gyda theimladau cymysgedig cyfeiriodd ei gamrau tua Phen Craig Daf, cartrefle ei anwylyd, ond nid oedd hi yno, ac nid oedd yn adwaen yr un dyn ag oedd yno chwaith. Ni fedrai gael gair o hanes ei gariad a chymerodd y rhai a breswylient yno mai gwallgofddyn ydoedd.

"Prysurodd eilwaith tua Phantannas, ac yr oedd ei syndod yn fwy fyth yno! Nid oedd yn adwaen yr un o honynt, ac ni wyddent hwythau ddim am dano yntau. O'r diwedd daeth gwr y tŷ i fewn, ac yr oedd hwnw yn cofio clywed ei dad cu yn adrodd am langc ag oedd wedi myned yn ddisymwyth i goll er ys peth canoedd o flynyddoedd yn ol, ond na wyddai neb i ba le. Rywfodd neu gilydd tarawodd gwr y tŷ ei ffon yn erbyn Rhydderch, pa un a ddiflanodd mewn cawod o lwch, ac ni chlywyd air o son beth ddaeth o hono mwyach!"

"In one of the centuries gone by, there lived a husbandman on the farm of Pantannas, and at that time *Bendith y Mamau* used to pay frequent visits to several of the fields which belonged to him. He cherished in his bosom a considerable hatred for the 'noisy, boisterous, and pernicious race', as he called them, and often did he long to be able to dis-

cover some way to rid the place of them. At last he was told by an old witch that the way to get rid of them was easy enough, and that she would tell him how to attain what he so greatly wished, if he gave her one evening's milking[1] and one morning's on his farm. He agreed to her conditions, and received from her advice, which was to the effect that he was to plough all the fields where they had their favourite resorts, and that, if they found the green pasture ground gone, they would take offence, and never return to trouble him with their visits to the spot. The husbandman followed the advice to the letter, and his work was crowned with success. Not a single one of them was now to be seen about the fields, and, instead of the sound of their sweet music, which used to be always heard rising from the meadow land, the most complete silence now reigned over their favourite resort. He sowed his land with wheat and other grain; the verdant spring had now thrust winter off his throne, and the fields appeared splendid in their vernal and green livery. But one evening, when the sun had retired to the chambers of the West, and when the good man of Pantannas was returning home, he was met by a diminutive being in the shape of a man, with a red coat on. When he had come right up to him, he unsheathed his little sword, and, directing the point towards the farmer, he said:—

Punishment cometh,
Fast it approacheth.

The farmer tried to laugh, but there was something in the surly and stern looks of the little fellow which made him feel exceedingly uncomfortable. A few nights afterwards, as the family were retiring to rest, they were very greatly frightened

[1] On this Mr. Hughes has a note to the effect that the whole of the milking used to be given in Glamorgan to workmen for assistance at the harvest, etc., and that it was not unfrequently enough for the making of two cheeses.

by a noise, as though the house was falling to pieces; and, immediately after the noise, they heard a voice uttering loudly the threatening words:—

Punishment cometh.

But nothing more was heard. When, however, the corn was reaped and ready to be carried to the barn, it was, all of a sudden, burnt up one night, so that neither an ear nor a straw of it could be found anywhere in the fields; and now nobody could have set the corn on fire but *Bendith y Mamau.* As one may naturally suppose, the farmer felt very much on account of this event, and he regretted in his heart having done according to the witch's direction, and so brought upon him the anger and hatred of *Bendith y Mamau.* The day after the night of the burning of the corn, as he was surveying the destruction caused by the fire, behold the little fellow, who had met him a few days before, meeting him again, and, with a challenging glance, he pointed his sword towards him, saying:—

It but beginneth.

The farmer's face turned as white as marble, and he stood calling the little fellow to come back; but the dwarf proved very unyielding and reluctant to turn to him; but, after long entreaty, he turned back, asking the farmer, in a surly tone, what he wanted, when he was told by the latter that he was quite willing to let the fields, in which their favourite resorts had been, grow again into green pasture ground, and to let them frequent them as often as they wished, provided they would no further wreak their anger on him. 'No,' was the determined reply, 'the word of the king has been given, that he will avenge himself on thee to the utmost of his power; and there is no power on the face of creation that will cause it to be withdrawn.' The farmer began to weep at this, and, after a while, the little fellow said that he would speak to his lord on the matter, and that he would let him know the result, if he would come there to meet him at the hour of sun-

set on the third day after. The farmer promised to meet him; and, when the time appointed for meeting the little one came, he found him awaiting him, and he was told by him that his lord and he had seriously considered his request, but that, as the king's word was ever unchangeable, the threatened vengeance was bound to take effect on the family; but that, on account of his repentance, it would not be allowed to happen in his time or that of his children. This calmed the disturbed mind of the farmer a good deal. *Bendith y Mamau* began again to pay frequent visits to the place, and their melodious singing was again heard at night in the fields around.

. . . . .

"A century passed by without seeing the threatened vengeance carried into effect; and, though the Pantannas family were reminded now and again that it was certain, sooner or later, to come, nevertheless, by long hearing the voice that said,—

Punishment cometh,

they got so used to it, that they were ready to believe that nothing would ever come of the threat. The heir of Pantannas paid his addresses to the daughter of a neighbouring landowner who lived at the farmhouse called Pen Craig Dâf, and the wedding of the happy pair was to take place in a few weeks, and their parents on both sides appeared exceedingly content with the union of the two families that was about to take place. It was Christmas time, and the *fiancée* paid a visit to the family of her would-be husband. There was a feast there of roast goose prepared for the occasion. Then the company sat round the fire to relate amusing tales to pass the time, when they were greatly frightened by a piercing voice, rising, as it were, from the bed of the river, and shrieking:—

The time is come.

They all went out to listen if they could hear the voice a second time, but nothing was to be heard save the angry noise

of the water as it cascaded over the dread cliffs of the *cerwyni*; they had not long, however, to wait till they heard again the same voice, rising above the noise of the river as it boiled over the shoulders of the rock. The words were repeated aloud:—

The time is come.

"They could not guess what it meant, and so great was their fright and astonishment, that no one could utter a word to another. Shortly they returned to the house, when they believed, that beyond doubt the building was being shaken to its foundations by some noise outside. When all were thus paralysed by fear, behold a little woman making her appearance on the table, which stood near the window. 'What dost thou, little ugly thing, want here?' asked one of those present. 'I have nothing to do with thee, O man of the long tongue,' said the little woman, 'but I have been sent here to recount some things that are about to happen to this family and another family in the neighbourhood, things that might be of interest to them; but, as I have received such an insult from the black man that sits in the corner, the veil that hides them from their sight shall not be lifted by me.' 'Pray,' said another of those present, 'if thou hast in thy possession any knowledge with regard to the future of any one of us that would interest us to hear, bring it forth.' 'No, I will but merely tell you that a certain maiden's heart is like a ship on the coast, unable to reach the harbour because the pilot has lost his courage.' As soon as she had cried out the last word, she vanished, no one knew whither or how. During her visit, the cry rising from the river had stopped, but soon afterwards it began again to proclaim that the time of vengeance was come; nor did it cease for a long while. The company had been possessed by too much terror for one to be able to address another, and a sheet of gloom had, as it were, been spread over the face of

each. The time for parting came, and Rhydderch, the heir, went to escort Gwenfrewi, his lady-love, home towards Pen Craig Dâf, a journey from which he never returned. But before bidding one another 'Good-bye', they are said to have sworn to each other eternal fidelity, even though they should never see one another from that moment forth, and that nothing should make the one forget the other. It is thought probable that the young man Rhydderch, on his way back towards home, got into one of the rings of *Bendith y Mamau*, that they allured him into one of their caves in Tarren y Cigfrain, and that there he remained.

"It is high time for us now to turn back towards Pantannas and Pen Craig Dâf. The parents of the unlucky youth were almost beside themselves; they had no idea where to go to look for him, and, though they searched every spot in the place, they failed completely to find him or to have a word of his history. A little higher up the country, there dwelt, in a cave underground, an aged hermit, called Gwerfyl, who was also regarded as a sorcerer. They went, a few weeks afterwards, to ask him whether he could give them any information about their lost son; but it was of little avail. What Gwerfyl told them did but deepen the wound and give the event a still more hopeless aspect. When they had told him of the appearance of the little woman, and the doleful cry heard rising from the river the night he was lost, he informed them that it was the judgment threatened to the family by *Bendith y Mamau* that had overtaken the youth, and that it was useless for them to think of ever seeing him again: possibly he might make his appearance after generations had gone by, but not in their age.

"Time passed, weeks grew into months, and months into years, while Rhydderch's father and mother were gathered to their fathers. The place continued the same, but the inhabitants constantly changed, so that the memory of Rhydderch's disappearance was fast dying away. Nevertheless, there

was one who expected his return all the while, and hoped, as it were against hope, to see him once more. Every morn, as the gates of the dawn opened beyond the castellated heights of the east, she might be seen, in all weathers, hastening to the top of a small hill, and, with eyes full of the tears of longing, gazing in every direction to see if she could behold any sign of her beloved's return; but in vain. At noon, she might be seen on the same spot again; she was also there at the hour when the sun was wont to hide himself, like a red-hot ball of fire, below the horizon. She gazed until she was nearly blind, and she wept forth her soul from day to day for the darling of her heart. At last they that look out at the windows began to decline their service and the almond tree commenced to crown her head with its virgin bloom. She continued to gaze, but he came not. Full of days, and ripe for the grave, death put an end to all her hopes and all her expectations. Her mortal remains were buried in the grave-yard of the old Chapel of the Fan.[1]

"Years passed away like smoke or morning shadows, and there was no longer anybody alive who remembered Rhydderch, but the tale of his suddenly missing was frequently in people's mouths. And we ought to have said that after the event no one of *Bendith y Mamau* was seen about the neighbourhood, and the sound of their music had ceased from that night. Rhydderch had been allured by them, and they took him into their cave. When he had stayed there only a few days, as he thought, he asked for permission to return, which was readily granted him by the king. He issued from the cave when it was a fine noon, with the sun beaming from the bosom of a cloudless firmament. He walked on from Tarren y Cigfrain until he came near the site of the Fan Chapel;

[1] The Fan is the highest mountain in the parish of Merthyr Tydfil, Mr. Hughes tell me; he adds that there was on its side once a chapel with a burial-ground. Its history seems to be lost, but human bones have, as he states, been frequently found there.

and what was his astonishment to find no chapel there! Where, he wondered, had he been, and how long away; so with mixed feelings he directed his steps towards Pen Craig Dâf, the home of his beloved one, but she was not there nor any one he knew either. He could get no word of the history of his sweetheart, and those who dwelt on the spot took him for a madman. He hastened then to Pantannas, where his astonishment was still greater. He knew nobody there and nobody knew anything about him. At last the man of the house came in, and he remembered hearing his grandfather relating how a youth had suddenly disappeared, nobody knew whither, some hundreds of years previously. Somehow or other the man of the house chanced to knock his walking-stick against Rhydderch, when the latter vanished in a shower of dust. Nothing more was ever heard as to what became of him."

Before leaving Glamorgan, I may add that Mr. Sikes associates Fairy Ladies with Crumlyn Lake near Briton Ferry in Glamorgan; but, as frequently happens with him, he does not deign to tell us where he got the legend from. "It is also believed", he says at p. 35, "that a large town lies swallowed up there, and that the *Gwragedd Annwn* have turned the submerged walls to use as the superstructure of their Fairy Palaces. Some claim to have seen the towers of beautiful castles lifting their battlements beneath the surface of the dark waters, and Fairy bells are at times heard ringing from the towers."

X.—Gwent.

I have no intention to go at length into the folk-lore of Gwent, but merely point out where the reader may find a good deal about it. In the first place, a credulous old Christian of the name of Edmund Jones of the Tranch, published at Trevecka, in the year 1779, a small volume entitled, *A Geographical, Historical, and Religious Account of*

the Parish of Aberystruth in the County of Monmouth, to which are added Memoirs of several Persons of Note who lived in the said Parish. In 1813, by which time he seems to have left this world for another, where he expected to understand all about the Fairies and their mysterious life, a small volume of his was published at Newport, bearing the title, *A Relation of Apparitions of Spirits in the County of Monmouth and the Principality of Wales, with other notable relations from England, together with Observations about them, and Instructions from them, designed to confute and to prevent the Infidelity of denying the Being and Apparition of Spirits, which tends to Irreligion and Atheism. By the late Rev. Edmund Jones of the Tranch.* These volumes have already been laid under contribution by Mr. Sikes, and the tales about apparitions in them are frequently of a ghastly nature, and sometimes loathsome: on the whole, they remind me more than anything else I have ever read, of the Breton tales, breathing fire and brimstone, which are beginning to be old-fashioned in Protestant countries. I shall at present only quote a passage of quite a different nature from the earlier volume, page 72; it is an important one, and runs thus: "It was the general opinion in times past, when these things were very frequent, that the fairies knew whatever was spoken in the air without the houses, not so much what was spoken in the houses. I suppose they chiefly knew what was spoken in the air at night. It was also said that they rather appeared to an uneven number of persons, to one, three, five, etc.; and oftener to men than to women. Thomas William Edmund of Havodavel, an honest pious man, who often saw them, declared that they appeared with one bigger than the rest going before them in the company."

The other day I chanced to be in the Golden Valley in Herefordshire, where the names in the churchyards seem nearly all to bespeak a Welsh population, though the Welsh language has not been heard there for ages. Among others

I noticed Joneses and Williamses in abundance at Abbey Dore, Evanses and Bevans, Prossers, Morgans and Prices, not to mention the Sayces—that is to say, Welshmen of English extraction or education, a name which may also be met with in Little England in Pembrokeshire, and probably on other English-Welsh borders. Happening to have to wait for a train at the Abbey Dore station, I got into conversation with the tenants of a cottage close by, and introduced the subject of the Fairies. The old man knew nothing about them, but his wife, Elizabeth Williams, had been a servant-girl at a place called Pen Poch, which she pronounced in the Welsh fashion; she said that it is near Llandeilo Cressenny in Monmouthshire. It is about forty years ago that she served at Pen Poch, and her mistress's name was Mrs. Evans, who was then about fifty years of age. Now Mrs. Evans was in the habit of impressing on her servant-girls' minds that, unless they made the house tidy before going to bed, and put everything in its place over night, the little people—the Fairies, she thinks she called them—would leave them no rest in bed at night, but they would come and pinch them like. If they put everything in its place, and left the house tidy like, it would be all right, and nobody would do anything to them like. That is all I could get from her without prompting her, which I did at length by suggesting to her that the Fairies might leave the tidy servants presents, a shilling on the hearth or the hob like. Yes, she thought there was something of that sort, and her way of answering me suggested that this was not the first time she heard of the shilling. She had never been lucky enough to have had one herself, nor did she know of anybody else that had got it like.

I need hardly say that I am unable this time also to put an end to these jottings, and that I quite expect that those who want more lively reading will wish me and my Fairies with Gwyn ab Nudd and his henchmen.