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EDUCATION IN WALES
DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

*Inaugural Lecture of the
Professor of Education
delivered at the College on
2 December 1947*

by

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M.A., D.Litt., F.S.A.

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EDUCATION IN WALES DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

AT the beginning of the last century the people of Britain realized that it was possible for all its children to be given instruction in schools, and in time the word *schooling* acquired a definite significance. Systematic instruction within the school walls tended to displace other forms of learning; and it is one of the merits of the Education Act of 1944 that it has re-affirmed the importance of extra-curricular activities, and has shown how important is the contribution that can be made by societies and clubs to the well-being of our young people. It is only by clearly distinguishing between education and learning that the comprehensiveness of the 1944 Act can be fully appreciated.

We must not forget, however, that never has the importance of informal and non-institutionalized education been completely ignored: indeed, it is only by carefully assessing the quality of this informal education that we can fully understand the cultural life of Wales during the Middle Ages. If we fix our standards in terms of the number and the size of schools and colleges, we shall have a very inadequate picture. A knowledge of educational charters will naturally be necessary for our study; but even more instructive will be our study of social conditions, which may actually explain the presence or the absence of schools at any given period, and account for the character of schools which did exist.

Our first task, in order to have a clear picture of the educational standards in Wales during the Middle Ages, will be to ascertain the needs and aspirations of the people themselves. Of course, medieval society in all countries had much in common; but there were certain

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distinctly Welsh features which have too frequently been ignored, and these will prove indispensable to our study.¹

When Archbishop Peckham visited St. Davids in 1284, he suggested that Welsh youths should be removed from Wales to England for their education, because the clergy were incompetent to give proper instruction.² He further suggested that the Welsh should be induced to live in towns in order to benefit from the humanizing influence of society. He did recognize, however, that the Welsh had a distinctive character. The implied faults discovered by the archbishop and his suggested remedies must be judged, as it were, from within the Welsh people themselves. Were there any standards other than those adopted by the archbishop, by which we should judge the Welsh youth? Were there no traces of the former brilliant school of Rhygyfarch and of Sulien Ddoeth left at St. Davids? Were the archbishop's standards and remedies the right ones?

The descendants of the English [says Professor Gruffydd], who had come to Wales to keep it in order, became more Welsh than the Welsh themselves: by the time of Elizabeth, or earlier, the old Welsh culture had completely absorbed them: Salesbury and Middleton, Stradling and Burkinshaw, Puleston and Thelwell were inordinately proud of their Welsh blood and of their Welsh language and culture.³

The difference between foreign and native assessment

¹ It would be foolish, however, to assume that a nation can be indicted, as G. G. Coulton would like to do, when he says 'Hereford diocese was, of course, considerably influenced by "wild Wales"', and this report is the worst I know . . . *Medieval Panorama*, p. 176.

² The first official visitation of Welsh dioceses ever held by an English metropolitan. In his *Injunctions* he ordered the application of the law of celibacy of the clergy, and demanded that the Welsh dress like those in England, that church services be performed at canonical hours, that members of the cathedral live near their cathedral, that portionary churches be abolished, adequate stipends be provided for vicars deputizing for non-resident rectors and canons, and schools set up on the English model. See *Haddan and Stubbs*, i. 569.

³ *Dafydd ap Gwilym*, pp. 11, 13, Welsh Univ. Press.

must be clearly understood. Consider the following two pictures. The first shows how a Welsh petition was rejected by Parliament in the reign of Henry IV. Parliament was requested to deal sympathetically with the discontented Welshmen, followers of Owen Glyn Dŵr: the reply given by Parliament was that it was not concerned with those barefooted rascals ('se de illis scurris nudipedibus non curare'). That there *were* barefooted people in Wales there can be no doubt, and there were surely rascals in Wales as elsewhere; but Owen Glyn Dŵr and his followers were not barefooted rascals. Our second picture is also of Glyn Dŵr, and it has been given to us by Shakespeare.

For I was train'd up in an English court
Where, being but young, I fram'd to the harp
Many an English ditty, lovely well,
And gave the tongue an helpful ornament. *I Henry IV.*

This picture is distinctly favourable to Glyn Dŵr, for he was undoubtedly 'a worthy gentleman, exceedingly well read'. But the picture has been put, as it were, in the wrong frame.¹ Glyn Dŵr could play the harp, he could sing English ditties: he had learned much at the Inns of Court in London where he had lived with the gallants of his day: but no mention is made by Shakespeare of the culture of the people of Glyndyfrdwy and Sycharth, and the early training of his own people has been completely ignored. Glyn Dŵr was first and foremost a Welsh gentleman, proud of his stock, loyal to his own native culture.²

¹ 'It has been said of history that it consists of small truths and great untruths, and it would be possible to cite histories which, while remaining faithful to historical standards of truth in matters of dates and accurate use of sources, have nevertheless given a wholly false view of the real forces behind the events which they were describing.' *Religion in Education*, xv. iii. 85.

² See Iolo Goch's poems to Glyn Dŵr (*Iolo Goch ac Eraill*, XIII, XIV, XV).

Owen Glyn Dŵr was a student of law at Westminster (see *Annales*

Medieval Wales, like England, was a land of contrasts, with its nobility and the landowning gentry, its noble prelates and abbots, on the one hand, and on the other hand the wretched peasant who was frequently little better than a serf. In one respect, however, the Welsh were different from the English, for the language of the native gentry remained Welsh, and the serf and his lord respected the traditional tongue, though English and Anglo-Norman were frequently heard and spoken.

Besides the Norman boroughs, such as Caernarvon and Conway, where the shy monoglot Welsh peasant went to buy and sell, there were other places of assembly which played a much more important part in his life, namely, the churches and 'kirk' towns.¹

The life of the villein could be very miserable: Professor Gruffydd says that

the condition of the villein class was never worse than during the Middle Ages. They had no more right to their personal freedom than had their master's cattle. In the reign of Henry VI Ednyfed Fychan of Rhandir Gadog in Anglesey sold seven peasants and their children and their children's children yet unborn to William ap Gruffydd of Porthamal.²

And the poet Tudur Aled maintained that it was the churl's task to provide wealth for his elegant master.³

Hen. IV, p. 333), probably at the end of the reign of Edward III. According to one account he was a student for seven years. Fortescue, *De Laudibus Legum Angliae*, cap. xlix (see *Owen Glendower*, Oxford, 1931, p. 20), says that 'the Inns of court had become a kind of upper-class university, too expensive for any but the well-to-do, and providing an education which was more social than professional'. Gruffydd Fychan was resolved, it would appear, that his heir should lack nothing in this respect, and in point of fact, it does not seem that Owen in any particular fell short of the social standard of his age and class. Lincoln's Inn was founded c. 1310: the Temple was sold to students of Common Law in the reign of Edward III. These students had come out of Thavies' Inn in Holborn. Wat Tyler burned it and the records in 1383.

For an account of the education of the sons of the nobility in England, see A. W. Parry, *Education in the Middle Ages*, 1920 (Univ. Tutor. Press), pp. 117 ff.

¹ *Dafydd ap Gwilym*. ² *Llenyddiaeth Cymru*, p. 25 (translated).

³ Mae carliaid, macwy irlan,
I gasglu aur i'r gwas glân.

Yet, as Salzman, in *English Life in the Middle Ages*, p. 34, says,

Even with the peasantry, although the greater number of them were unfree, bound down to the manor to which they belonged, and practically the property of their lord, in actual practice they were better off than in theory. While they had no legal right, beyond protection for their lives and limbs, against their lord, they were practically on a level with free men as regards all persons but their lord, and even his power was considerably limited by custom.

Inside the classes themselves, privilege was associated with duty, and Welsh writings testify that in theory at least freedom and responsibility went together.

It is therefore a difficult task to present a complete picture of a 'tidy' educational system in Wales during the Middle Ages. The better classes had opportunities for acquiring education and assimilating cultures of other lands, whereas for the poorer classes a school learning for vocation or profession was possible only in exceptional circumstances, and this was mainly the concern of the church authorities.¹

THE CHURCH AND EDUCATION

The education imparted by the Church was naturally similar in all countries. Wales was a part of the Catholic world: it was in direct communication with the Continent, and the influence of Rome was directly felt in Wales as in other countries.² Naturally, therefore, the findings

¹ There are three arts which a villein may not teach his son without his lord's permission, scholarship, bardism, and smith-craft; because if his lord permits the scholar to wear a tonsure, or a smith to enter a smithy, or a bard to sing, then no one can afterwards enslave them.

Teir kelydyt nys dysc tayawc y vab heb ganhat y arglwyd, yscolheictawt, a bardoniaeth, a gofanaeth. Kanys o diodef y arglwyd hyt pan rother corun y yscolheick, neu yny el gof yn y efeil, neu vard wrth y gerd, ny eill neb eu keithiwaw gwedy hynny. *Laws of Hywel Dda*.

² Bishop Adam of Bangor, who had been a Canon of Paris, was present at the Lateran Council. He was also present at the Westminster Council.

of the Papal Councils, such as those of the Lateran Council of 1179, for example, were noted by the clergy of Wales, and it may be assumed that the type of education that was sponsored by the Vatican was adopted in Wales. There were, however, certain features in the education provided by the Church in Wales which were peculiarly Welsh in character.

The Council of the Lateran (1179) decreed that every cathedral should provide free schools for clerks and for the poor.

De Magistris

Et ne aliquid exigatur pro licentia docendi.

Ecclesia cathedralis providere debet magistro de beneficio, qui clericos eiusdem ecclesiae et alios pauperes gratis doceat: et vendens licentiam docendi aut interdicens idoneum ad docendum beneficio privetur.¹

There is no direct evidence to show that this decree was obeyed in Wales, but there is no reason to suppose that it was ignored. At the Council of Westminster it was decreed that

- (a) if any priest wishes to send his nephew or any other relation to be taught in the churches which are entrusted to us to govern, we grant this most willingly,
- (b) priests shall keep schools in these towns and teach little boys gratis,
- (c) priests ought to have a school of schoolmasters in their houses, and if any devout person wishes to entrust his little ones to them for instruction, they ought to receive them willingly, and teach them kindly. . . .²

The Welsh people, the laity, were in communication with religious and educational movements on the Continent: like Catholics of other nations they went on pilgrimages to Rome and to the church of Santiago da

¹ See Leach, *Educational Charters*, p. 123.

² See *ibid.*, pp. 140, 141.

Compostella.¹ Many of the church dignitaries in Wales, Welshmen and foreigners, were actively engaged in the affairs of the Catholic Church: reference has already been made to the presence of Bishop Adam at the Lateran Council. It may be added that Robert Grossetête, Bishop of Lincoln, that eminent scholar and teacher, numbered among his pupils Thomas Wallensis, a remarkable scholar, who became Archdeacon of Lincoln and afterwards Bishop of St. Davids. This Thomas was reader to the Franciscan school at Oxford before he became Archdeacon of Lincoln. Again, John Wallensis (d. 1285), author of *Arbor Vitae* and of a number of books of sermons and philosophical works, a doctor of the University of Paris, was a teacher at Grossetête's school in Oxford.²

Before we proceed to our study of the schools sponsored by the Church in Wales, reference should be made to the standard of book-learning at this time. Professor Galbraith (*The Literacy of the Medieval English Kings*) maintained that 'the medieval potentate did not read and write, because he had neither the need nor the wish, having others to do these things for him; that social prejudice rendered reading and writing *infra dignitatem*

¹ The poet Gruffudd Gryg visited Compostella, and Dafydd ap Gwilym possibly went there and also to Rome. In 1284 Edward I and his queen Eleanor went on a pilgrimage to St. Davids.

Note Lewis Glyn Cothi's ode to Dafydd ap Siôn of Kilvay near Swansea, who went on a pilgrimage to Rome, and his poem to Gruffudd ap Rhys ab Ieuan of Branäs, who went as a pilgrim to Compostella.

Lewys Morgannwg went on a pilgrimage to Rome, and in a poem recording this he describes what he saw there and how he had audience with the Pope.

Llawen wyf a'm lliw yn wael,
Yn Rhyfain er fy nhrefael

Llywelyn ap Hywel ab Ieuan ap Gronwy also went on a pilgrimage to Rome during the last half of the fifteenth century.

² There is no room to doubt that the *Studia Generalia* of the Continent, and the schools of Oxford and Cambridge, were regularly visited by students from Wales. Thomas Wallensis was a teacher of divinity in Paris in 1238.

for the noble class, and that in any case they are no necessary index to the level of education.' 'Literacy', says Coulton, 'in the ordinary medieval sense, i.e. the knowledge of Latin, was not necessarily education as understood nowadays.'¹ Here are two important facts which apply generally to the Middle Ages, but the members of the upper classes in Wales were frequently skilled in the poetic art, able to read and write, jealous of their native tongue; and the dignitaries of the Church, though skilled in the Latin of the Church, were not unmindful of the blandishments of their own language and literature. Whenever we deal with literacy in Wales, we must not lose sight of the importance of the native language in the life of the people, because Welsh was a respected language having a dignified position in the life of all classes.

THE EARLY EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

Documentary evidence regarding the education of the young in the Middle Ages is very scanty.² We learn, however, from a canon law, dated *c.* 1160, that fees were not to be charged for licence to teach. Pope Alexander III (1159-81) commenting on this, said:

Strictly prohibit for the future any exaction or promise of anything from anyone in your diocese [?Winchester, ?Vienne] for licence to teach. If, however, anything shall have been paid or promised, you shall cause the promise to be released, and that which has been paid returned without any appeal; knowing that it was written, 'Freely ye have received, freely give'.³

This decision affected also teachers of more advanced subjects. The chancellor of a diocese replaced an older

¹ See Coulton, *Medieval Panorama*, p. 226.

² The records of the Church in Wales are very scanty for the pre-Reformation period, and do not begin to be numerous until the seventeenth century (see 'Records of the Church in Wales', by J. Conway Davies, *National Library of Wales Journal*, iv. (1905), 1-34).

³ Leach, *Educational Charters*, p. 119.

office, the *scolasticus* (*ysgolhaig*), also recognized as *magister scholarum*. He was given charge of all the education of the diocese; he gave lectures in the theological school of the cathedral, and, presumably, gave permission for others to teach in schools. Sometimes these teachers charged fees, but in a synod held at Westminster, 1138, this was forbidden. As need arose for teachers to give instruction to older people, including clergy who were found by archdeacons in their visitations to be insufficiently educated, chancellors saw an opportunity for imposing a charge for licence to teach in cathedral schools and in schools attached to the larger churches. This practice was condemned by synods and councils.

We . . . command your brotherhood . . . plainly ordering that whatever fit and learned persons wish to keep schools of literature shall be allowed to keep schools without any molestation or exaction, lest learning, which ought to be freely given to all, should henceforth seem to be exposed for sale at a price.¹

It was naturally the task of the parish priest to see to the education of children. The scheme was not an ambitious one, and according to the Statute of Winchester, 1295,

rectors and vicars and parish priests are warned to teach children of the parishes to know the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Salutation of the Blessed Virgin. . . . Let the boys' parents also be induced to let their boys when they have learned to read the psalter, learn singing also, so that after they have learned higher subjects they may not be compelled to return to this, nor, as being ignorant of this, be always less fit for divine service.²

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 233, 235. Dafydd Ddu Hiraddug, to whom has been attributed the composition of an early Welsh bardic grammar, is credited with the Welsh translation of the *Officium Beatae Mariae* (see *Myfyrian Archaeology*, pp. 367 ff.). The *Te Deum* of this Officium is elsewhere attributed to Ieuan ap Rhydderch (*c.* 1430-70). The *Ave Maria* in its Welsh form read: Henpych gwell, Fair, cyflawn o rad, Duw gyd a thi: bendigaid wyt ym mhlith y gwragedd, a bendigedig yw ffrwyth dy groth di, Iesu.

Chaucer, who was contemporary with Glyn Dŵr, chose as his type of parochial clergy a man who

wayted after no pompe and reverence
Ne maked him a spyced conscience,
But Cristes lore and his apostles twelve
He taughte, but first he folwed it himselve.

And his 'clerk of Oxenford' was one of whom he could say

Souninge in moral vertu was his speche.
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

The boys in the parish schools were taught to sing Latin hymns and songs, not necessarily understanding their meaning, and they learned to read, and possibly to write.¹

The Chapter Acts of Lincoln (1305) give us an account of the control of song schools.

Be it remembered that on Saturday immediately following the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, all the parish clerks of the churches of the city of Lincoln were teaching boys in the churches to sing; and being present in the Chapter before masters Robert de Lacy and William of Thornton, who charged them that they had held adulterine schools to the prejudice of the liberty of the mother church, they firmly denied that they were keeping any schools in their churches, or teaching boys to sing; but they could not deny that they had never done so. Therefore the said masters, Robert and William, made them swear, holding the most holy Gospels, that they would not henceforth keep any adulterine schools in the churches, nor teach boys songs or music without licence from the [song] master.²

It is a fact worth recording that there were definite links between Lincoln and Wales during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Bishop Beck of St. Davids (1280) was a Lincolnshire man; John Thoresby, also

¹ Norman-French displaced English as the language into which Latin would be translated, in English schools, until the middle of the fourteenth century. Welsh was not thus displaced.

² Leach, *Educational Charters*, pp. 233, 235.

a native of Lincoln, and Prebend of the cathedral, became Bishop of St. Davids, and in 1348 he called upon the chancellor of the diocese to fulfil the duties of his office by delivering lectures in divinity at St. Davids.¹ This instruction was in keeping with the recommendations of the Lateran Council:

In every cathedral or other church of sufficient means a master ought to be elected by the prelates of the chapter, and the income of a prebend assigned to him and in every metropolitan church a theologian ought to be elected. And if the church is not rich enough to provide a grammarian and theologian, it shall provide for the theologian out of the revenues of the church, and cause provision to be made for the grammarian in some church of his city or diocese.

Educational facilities were not plentiful in Wales; nor is it likely that prelates and clergy were uniformly keen to impart knowledge.² Our danger is to assume that there were no facilities at all. The *Black Book of St. Davids*, written about 1280, gives us full information about the lands and property held by the Church in the diocese; but, unfortunately, references to schools and to schoolmasters are completely lacking. We are told, however, that there were 67 *capellani* in the diocese, and of these 27 are named. There were song schools at St. Davids, Llandaff, St. Asaph, Bangor, Ruthin, Llangadog, Abergwili, Brecon, Wrexham. Leach (*English Schools at the Reformation*) notes that a school for beginners was kept at Brecon by the chaplain of the college there. The Chantry of St. Davids near the cathedral at St. Davids had in 1365 a master, 7 chaplains, and 2 choristers: the collegiate church at Abergwili (1283) had 21 prebends,

¹ Bishop Thoresby had been King's Proctor at Rome, Master of the Rolls, and Keeper of the Privy Seal before his consecration as bishop. He afterwards became Archbishop of York. He was one of the most learned of his day.

² For a decidedly gloomy picture of life in the Middle Ages the reader should consult the works of G. G. Coulton.

priests, deacons, and subdeacons, and the collegiate church of Llanddewi Brefi (1287) had 13 prebends. These collegiate churches were secular, not monastic; and they were usually served by a dean and chapter. Designed for continual worship (perpetual adoration), they were ideal centres for study and instruction.¹

From parish, chantry, and song schools, and from the tuition of parish priests or other clerics, pupils could proceed to higher education. There are some historians who have deprecated the action of bishops in diverting stipends of parish priests and using them to support collegiate churches, because much good work might have been done in parishes which, by this change, were too often without any spiritual help. Even more serious was the transference of parish monies to monastic institutions. The influence of a collegiate church was not as great as that of many parish priests, though the standard of scholarship in the collegiate church would naturally tend to be high.

A boy taught by a parish priest would study his elementary Latin grammar, Priscian or Donatus, and then would be introduced to the rudiments of the *Trivium* as a prelude to the study of the *Seven Liberal Arts*.² He would later carry on his studies perhaps in one of the *Studia Generalia*, or as a monk he might study in an abbey or monastery. Coulton paints a gloomy picture of education in the Middle Ages. He says,³ 'The evidence of clerical ignorance all through the Middle Ages, and, un-

¹ Browne-Willis, *Survey of St. Asaph*, p. 62, notes that Leoline de Bromfield, when bishop, 1310, arranged for the support of four vicars choral and four canons, and 'made orders for singing and other services in the church'.

² This consisted of *trivium*—grammar, dialectic, rhetoric; *quadrivium*—arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy. The course led on to the study of *theology*. The *seven liberal arts* were known in Welsh as *Y saith gelfyddyd*.

³ 'Pre-reformation Religious Education', *Contemporary Review*, Oct. 1906, and reprinted in *Ten Medieval Studies*, 1930, pp. 109 ff.

fortunately for a generation or so after the Reformation, is overwhelming.' He condescends to admit, however, that there were two distinct categories of parish clergy. On the one hand were the beneficed clergy who belonged generally to the rich and influential classes, and of whom about 75 per cent had been presented with livings, not only before they had taken holy orders, but even in their youth or boyhood. The first act of such clerics, on receiving their benefices, was often to go to the university. On the other hand were the poor curates, clergy of poor lineage, who might not have studied, but who generally were doomed to vegetate on the lowest wages, while the fruits of their parishes were mainly consumed by absentees.

According to Coulton's account, the more fortunately placed clerics did enjoy higher education.

Not only did many students stay for a lengthy period at the universities, but they frequently returned at intervals to qualify for higher degrees. After a period of study lasting three or four years, a student qualified for the degree of *baccalaureus artium*, and after another three years of study he qualified for the degree of *magister*. To obtain the *ius docendi* a further course of study was prescribed. Other degrees awarded for still further study were those of *baccalaureus* and *doctor legum*, and the crowning glory of the academic scholar was the acquisition of the doctorate of both Canon and Civil Laws (*doctor utriusque iuris*).¹ The disputations for these degrees were conducted in Latin. Scholars, though they were in later life lawyers, politicians, doctors, and prelates, were generally clerics. It is noteworthy that at

¹ For a description of the Oxford curriculum in 1267 see H. Anstey, *Munimenta Academica Oxon.* I. 34 (Rolls Series, 1868), and Leach, *Educational Charters*, p. 190.

Lewis ab Ieuan, known as Bishop Byford, was trained at the Roman court. He was Bachelor of Civil Law. Archdeacon Griffith Yonge, B.C.L. and B.Can.L. (? D.Can.L. in 1402) was Glyn Dŵr's chancellor and ambassador to the French king in 1405.

Adam of Usk, historian and ecclesiastical lawyer, was B.Can.L.

Bishop Trevor of St. Asaph (d. 1410) was *doctor utriusque iuris*, and a notary.

Oxford and Paris masters and scholars alike 'were all clerks, possessing the tonsure and wearing the clerical garb, though not necessarily even in minor orders. They could thus claim the privileges of ecclesiastical jurisdiction.'¹ We have already noticed that John Thoresby was a diplomat before he became Bishop of St. Davids. Specialization, in our modern sense of the term, was not a feature of the Middle Ages. The university naturally recognized the wisdom of learning French, and ability to hold lay-courts and to plead in French was demanded of those who sought the office of notary.²

MONASTICISM IN WALES

Wales was rich in monastic houses, and throughout the Middle Ages the Welsh poets were pleased to compose their eulogies to the abbots and the priors.³ In spite of

¹ R. S. Rait, *Life in the Medieval University*, Camb. Univ. Press, p. 47.

² *Ibid.*, p. 136.

Bishop Trevor of St. Asaph was a notary as well as a doctor of Civil and Canon Laws.

Anglo-Norman was the language of the aristocracy, of the court, and, until the reign of Henry IV, the language of Parliament.

³ The Benedictines, or Black Monks, followed the rule of St. Benedict (529). When Odo the Abbot of Cluny in Burgundy modified the rule of St. Benedict he founded the order of Cluniacs. Odo gave pride of place to mental activity, and the reformed Benedictines were held to be refined and scholarly. There was a Cluniac cell at Malpas, near Newport, and one at St. Clears. Since these houses were all under the rule of Cluny, they were regarded as foreign cells. It is noteworthy that they were established in the vicinity of Norman castles, e.g. Chepstow, Abergavenny, Monmouth, Basaleg, Usk (nunnery), Brecon, Ewenny, Cardigan, Caldy (? Tironian), Kidwelly, Monkton, St. Dogmaels. The Cistercians, or White Monks, were the followers of St. Bernard (1115), but the order was actually first founded by Robert de Molême in 1098. This order was very popular in Wales: the outlook of the Cistercians was more in keeping with that of the Welsh people than was that of the Benedictines. There were Cistercian cells at Whitland, Strata Florida, Strata Marcella, Cwm Hir, Cymmer, Aberconway, Valle Crucis, Milford, Tintern, Neath, Basingwerk, Llansantffraid (nunnery) nr. Aberystwyth, Margam, Talley.

There were also in Wales a few Austinian canonries (e.g. at Carmarthen, Haverfordwest, Llanthony, Bedd Gelert). These Augustinians claimed to be followers of St. Augustine of Hippo: they combined the rule of monasticism with the duties of the parish priest. The Hospitallers had

the well-known faults of the monastic system towards the end of the Middle Ages, it demands an honourable mention in the history of Welsh education.¹ The monks were historians, authors of many theological and philosophical works, translators into Welsh from French and Latin: and by their labours as copyists we have such books at our disposal as *The Black Book of Caermarthen*, the *Annales de Margan*, *The Black Book of Chirk*, *The*

two cells in Wales, one at Ysbyty Ifan in north Wales, and the other at Slebech in Pembrokeshire.

Several priory churches served as parish churches and as the monks' church, as, for instance, the churches of Ewenny, Brecon, Monkton, and Ruthin.

In pre-Norman Wales there was a system of mother churches which corresponded with the *cantref* system in the secular government. They were generally of monastic origin, served by an abbot and canons (*claswyr*). These *claswyr* might be laymen and married: there were among them priests for priestly duties. Lesser churches were served by *clas* communities. The survivors of the mother church system were the portionary churches, which archbishop Peckham sought to abolish. Abergwili and Llanddewibrefi became collegiate churches, and although Clynnog Fawr and Holyhead, the ancient abbeys of Beuno and Cybi, were refounded as collegiate churches with provost and canons we know next to nothing about their history.

¹ Siôn Cent criticizes the monks and the friars for forsaking their old vows.

Y myneich aml eu mw nai
Muriau teg, mawr yw eu tai.
Breisgion ynt ar eu brasgig,
Breisgion difeinyddion dig.
A'r brodyr pregethwyr gynt
A oeddynt heb dda iddynt,

Cryfion ynt yn eu crefydd,
Cryfion ddiffoddyddion ffydd.

We cannot fully estimate the extent of our losses of manuscripts caused by warfare, destruction of buildings, &c. After the dissolutions of the monasteries many manuscripts went into the ownership of laymen, but some were irretrievably lost. It is remarkable that so much has survived.

Lewis Dwnn at the beginning of his book of genealogies acknowledges his debt to the records which he had consulted at the homes of the gentry, and he admits that they were collected and written by abbots and priors of the religious houses of Glamorgan.

Towards the middle of the fourteenth century it became customary for professional poets to make transcriptions of important works, and patrons of poets engaged them to make these copies.

Bruts, &c. Gutun Owain maintained that the monks of Conway and those of Strata Florida compared their chronicles once every three years. When Giraldus Cambrensis left for Rome he deposited his manuscripts for safe keeping at Strata Florida.

These monastic houses served as medieval inns, clubs, and distributing houses for news of current events. The monks were certainly not cut off from the affairs of the world around them. Some of these were cells of foreign houses; others, especially the Cistercian Abbeys, were distinctly Welsh in spirit.¹ The abbots of these houses, themselves interested in Welsh literature, and themselves descended from noble Welsh families, welcomed poets to stay with them, and they encouraged them in their calling. The poets, in turn, paid for their hospitality by composing their eulogistic poems. Thus Dafydd Nanmor praised Strata Florida, Guto'r Glyn praised the Abbot of Gloucester and the Abbot of Valle Crucis, Lewis Glyn Cothi praised Caermarthen priory. Poets often retired to abbeys to end their days. Guto'r Glyn in his old age suffered from blindness and in his period of trial he found a friend in the Abbot of Valle Crucis.² Guto had such a high opinion of the churchmen and abbots, to whom he sang eulogies, that a contemporary poet criticized him as a flatterer of clerics.

Guto, gwenieithio, a wna
O chwant cael ariant clera.
Enwi angor dan gorun
Ei Nudd hael, ni weddai hyn.

¹ e.g. Strata Florida, Abbey Cwm Hir, Neath, Talley, Whitland, Strata Marcella, Aberconway, Valle Crucis, Tintern, Cymmer near Dolgelly. In time many of the foreign cells became patrons of Welsh learning, and their priors were frequently Welshmen.

² Gutun Owain was keenly interested in the abbeys of Basingwerk and Valle Crucis, and Iorwerth Fynglwyd (d. 1527) sang to the glories of Margam. Iorwerth looked upon Margam as the happy retreat of the poets, especially when, during the years 1500-7, the Abbot Dafydd was head of the institution.

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN THE MONASTERIES

It is unlikely that arrangements were made in monastic houses to give systematic instruction to children, as was done in the early British monasteries; but it seems very likely that monks acted as tutors to children when requested to do so. The clergy of the collegiate churches and the Austinian canons probably undertook the work of teaching children.

MUSIC

From the testimonies of the poets we may assume that music was fairly well cultivated in the monastic houses and in the larger churches. The poet Gruffudd Gryg describes how the people greeted the installation of an organ in the cathedral of Bangor. This took place at the end of the fourteenth century: his contemporary, the poet Dafydd ap Gwilym, was also present. Dafydd Nanmor (c. 1460) describes the restoration of the organ at Strata Florida by Abbot Morgan. Guto'r Glyn finds a minster of singers in the abbey of Strata Florida.

Mwstr anant, meistr awenydd

We have already noticed that Leoline de Bromfield, as Bishop of St. Asaph, had arranged for the support of four vicars choral in the cathedral, and that he 'made orders for singing and other services in the church'.¹ Shortly before the Dissolution of the Monasteries the poet Lewis Morgannwg, in his eulogy of Neath Abbey, maintained that his greatest joy was to walk in the cloisters, feast

¹ Gutun Owain has a reference to the choir of singers at Valle Crucis and to the beauty of the choir buildings.

Aur fynychle yw'r fynachlog
A'i chor sy well na Chaersallog:
A drud doriadau
Y dail a'r delwau
A lleisiau lliosog.

his eyes on the beauty of the architecture and listen to the sweet singing of the monks:

Y clych a'r menyh a'r mwynion foliant
Mynych ogoniant mynaich gwynion.

Music, being one of the subjects of the *Quadrivium*, was studied by many, and the ability to take part in the church services was a special qualification, as seen in the Statute of Winchester, 1295, where we read that boys were to be encouraged to read the psalter and learn music early.

THE FRIARS

No study of education in Wales at this time would be complete without reference to the friars. The preaching friars or Dominicans came into Britain in 1221. They landed with their leader Gilbert de Fraxineto, twelve in number, somewhere near Canterbury and proceeded to Oxford, where they settled. The bishops of Wales soon included Dominicans among their number.¹ The Franciscans or Minorites were exceedingly popular in Wales, and their popularity may be appreciated when we remember that it was they who kept alive the popular interest in the fate of Richard II after his deposition, and that they helped greatly to fan the flame of patriotism during the rebellion of Glyn Dŵr.² The Franciscans contributed much to early university education gener-

¹ e.g. Hywel ab Ednyfed, Bishop of St. Asaph, 1240; Brian II, Bishop of St. Asaph, 1268, known as the *Black Friar of Nannau* (*Y Brawd Du o Nannau*); Alexander Bache, Bishop of St. Asaph, 1390. Bishop Anian of St. Asaph was confessor to Edward I: he was temporarily deprived of his bishopric because of his pro-Welsh tendencies. After the burning of his cathedral in 1282, he sought in vain to be allowed to transfer the see to Rhuddlan.

² The heavy penalties imposed by Henry IV upon the Minorites testify to their loyalty to the Welsh cause under Glyn Dŵr. It is related that when the books of the Grey Friars at Cardiff were burned in the castle by Glyn Dŵr's followers, they were told that they had no one to blame but themselves; for they should have known that Glyn Dŵr would have spared the friary.

For skill in school divinity the Franciscans beat all other orders quite out of distance. (Fuller, *Church History*.)

ally, and before the year 1354 there was a competent teacher in thirty out of the forty Franciscan houses in Britain. The university of Paris complained bitterly of the lack of students there, and attributed this to the popularity of the friar teachers.¹

Thus, education in Wales during the Middle Ages, in so far as it was sponsored by the Church, was very much like what was found in other districts—the parish priest acting as teacher in his school and as a private tutor when occasion arose, the monk and the canons, the friars, the masters of schools attached to large churches, all contributed their share. Further education was possible in the monasteries for those who wished to take vows, in collegiate schools, and at universities. But the virility of the Welsh language naturally had a profound effect on all these Welsh institutions, and the prose writings, both religious and secular, which were composed and transcribed by ecclesiastics, and the testimonies of the poets to their scholarship and love of learning, give us a fairly adequate picture of the importance of church education during this period.²

¹ The Benedictines had houses in Bangor, Rhuddlan, Brecon, Haverfordwest, Cardiff. The Franciscans had houses in Cardiff, Carmarthen, Llanfaes.

The Carmelite friars, or White friars, had a house in Denbigh, and the Austin friars one at Newport. See 'The Friaries in Wales', *Arch. Camb.* VI series, xiv. 323.

² Giraldus Cambrensis was taught by his uncle David Fitzgerald, Bishop of St. Davids, and later he went to Gloucester and Paris. In his *Gemma Ecclesiastica* he condemns the ignorance of the clergy, stating that their lack of knowledge of Latin made them incapable of taking the church services worthily. Was his condemnation somewhat too severe? See *Gemma Ecclesiastica*, D. II, cap. xxxv, xxxvi (Rolls Series, 1862).

Non solum autem in minoribus sacerdotibus, sed etiam in maioribus, abbatibus scilicet, prioribus, magnis ecclesiarum decanis, episcopis, et archiepiscopis tales interdum defectus invenies. Audivi auribus meis quendam abbatem verba Domini ad mulierem Samaritanam sic recitanti: 'Quinque viros habuisti, et qui nunc "habes non est tuum vir"?' Et iterum cuidam clerico pauperi Hibernico eleemosynam petenti, sic respondentem audivi: 'Ubi sunt vacca tuas?'

THE EDUCATION OF A GENTLEMAN

We shall now proceed to an examination of the educational ideals of medieval Wales. The chief of the merits of medieval education, as Monroe has well expressed it, was its unity. 'There was an internal unity possessed by the intellectual life itself; there was an external unity of the intellectual life in connection with the religious, the ecclesiastical, the artistic, the political, the economical, the social aspects of life. This unity was found in the dominant religious thought.'¹

Nominalism and Realism

When Moslem philosophers in the ninth and tenth centuries brought back to Europe the teachings of the philosopher Aristotle, which had been taken to them after the closing down of the Athenian schools of philosophy by the Emperor Justinian, a great force was set free in Christendom. Avicenna (980-1037) gave prominence to the question of the ultimate value of the universal and the particulars subsumed under it. This problem was taken up seriously, and the implications of the answers were far-reaching. The orthodox schoolmen believed that *ideas, concepts, universals*, constituted the only reality (*res*), following the teaching of Plato, and they were known as *realists*. To them general concepts were archetypes in the divine reason, and the phenomenal existences and the *species* were mere copies of the thoughts of the Deity. Another school of thought, influenced by Averroes' commentaries on Aristotle, maintained that matter is eternal, that ideas and universals are just names, though valuable. Matter contains *forms* which transform it into its final states under the influence of higher forms, or, in the last resort, of God. The soul of man is inseparable from his brain, says Averroes, and it perishes with it;

¹ *Text Book in the History of Education* (1909), p. 328.

but Reason that dwells in man is immortal. This school was known in the Middle Ages as the *Nominalists*, since universals were to them just names. There was a third interpretation given by Peter Abelard, who maintained that universals are dependent upon phenomenal form, except when they are *conceptions* existing in the divine mind before the creation of the phenomenal form. This view is known as *Conceptualism*. The schoolmen were also much influenced by the question, whether there were two types of knowledge, *natural* knowledge and *theological* knowledge. In other words, can we know by light of *reason* and by light of *revelation*?

Mr. Saunders Lewis, in his scholarly treatment of the *realism* of the medieval Welsh grammarian, Einion Offeiriad, says that:

To understand the poetry of any period in the middle ages we must remember the synthetic nature of the mind of the period, and also the close connection between every branch of knowledge. Poetry could not be justified unless it had a *worth* which was philosophically demonstrable. 'We must know how we are to praise every *thing (res)* that is mentioned in song, and we must know what things (*res*) deserve to be sung to.' This was the new and valuable contribution which Einion Offeiriad made to Welsh literature about the year 1322.¹

Mr. Lewis suggests that Einion was taught at one of the Cistercian schools in Wales. It seems unlikely that he went to Oxford, where realism was already giving way to nominalism. And Einion was clearly a realist. From the time of Grossetête Oxford had favoured nominalism, and had Einion been a student at Oxford, he would have been contemporary with William of Occam (1312-18), *the invincible doctor*,² who attacked the entire realist

¹ *Braslun o Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg*, ch. iv. This is an invaluable chapter to students of Welsh education. For a full treatment of Einion's grammar, and other grammars, see *Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid*.

Offeiriad = priest.

² William of Occam held that what was true for natural knowledge

system, and who repudiated any attempt to harmonize theology with philosophy or faith with natural knowledge.

When Einion prepared his grammar for the poets, he made it plain that it was the poet's task to sing in praise of reality (*res*), and

- (a) since nothing that is evil can be a reality (*res*) for evil is a *nihil*; therefore poetry can treat only of what is good. If the poet cannot speak well of the subject of his muse, he must be silent. Silence gives its own message. The highest good is God Himself, the almighty creator and the spiritual father of all creatures. Nothing exists that was not originally in the mind of the God, i.e. in the eternal ideas.¹
- (b) Whenever the poet describes or praises, he does so *sub aeternitatis specie*. 'A nobleman is praised for his bravery and strength and military qualities, his good appearance and his fine stock, his gentleness and liberality and wisdom. . . .' The poet sees the ideal nobleman, the ideal abbot, the ideal lady: these are realities in the mind of the Creator, and he will approach this as nearly as possible in his verse.
- (c) All *realities* can be classified, beginning with the *summum genus* and proceeding downward to the *species* and still further to the *infimae species*, which cannot be divided any further.

This *realism* was in general accord with the views of the poets, and it suited their system, since they were the interpreters of social life, and it fell to their lot in their sphere to inspire and to lead, as surely as the priest in his sphere. But scholars could not be indifferent to the

(science and philosophy) might be quite false in theology, and the revelation of theology is supreme.

¹ Ni phryda neb i'r drwg.

Ni ddyly prydydd vod yn oganwr a gwneuthur sswydd klerwr, kans sswydd prydydd yw molli. Ni ddyly oganu neb nes no'i brofi dair gwaith, ond tewi a'i voli a ddichon. See *Braslun*, p. 61.

inherent difficulties in the realistic interpretation. Ever since Robert Grossetête had begun his school at Oxford, *nominalism* had threatened the claims of *realism*. Grossetête was one of the encyclopaedic thinkers of the world: Roger Bacon maintained that he

employed himself in the scientific questions which Aristotle had treated, and he knew and described the questions with which the books of Aristotle deal, a hundred thousand times better than they can be understood from the perverse translations of that author.¹

Yet Grossetête favoured a modified *realism*, and would ascribe an objective reality to universal notions. To Grossetête's school came such scholars as Adam Marsh, Duns Scotus, William of Occam, John Wallensis, and Thomas Wallensis. Scotus was a moderate *realist*, but Occam was a thorough-going *nominalist*, who insisted that it was possible to study logic and all forms of human (natural) knowledge without reference to metaphysics and theology. Occam's work encouraged scientific research, and at Oxford great advances were made in the *scientia experimentalis*.

The poet Ieuan ap Rhydderch had been to Oxford, and he was proud of his knowledge of the sciences, and, without minimizing the value of ideals as taught by Einion, he sees the importance of the world of human experience. His use of the pronoun I illustrates this. (I learned . . . I knew . . . I have proved . . . I understood . . . I have read . . . I have studied . . . I have had . . . I have kept.) Another poet, who was very concerned with the world as he found it, was Siôn Cent. Tradition has made him a magician and a scholar who had obtained a doctor's degree: it is not yet possible to disentangle the many legends that have grown up around him, but there is every reason to accept the belief that he was a scholar,

¹ *Compendium Studii*, ed. Brewer, p. 69, quoted from *Robert Grossetête*, Stevenson, Macmillan, 1909, p. 42.

and that he prized highly the right of man to study facts as they occurred, and that he had faith in the *scientia experimentalis*.¹ He maintained that it was his duty as a poet to study the world around him, for suffering was something real, pain was as much a reality as pleasure.

Astudio'dd wyf, was didwyll,
Ystad y byd, astud bwyll;
Astud boen, ystod benyd,—
Ystad bardd astudio byd.
Astrus erioed mewn ystryw
Ystyr y byd, ynyfyd yw.
Llawn dialedd, llawn dolur,
Llawn lliid, llawn gofid o gur.²

Thus scholasticism, dealing with the problem of fusion of philosophy and theology, finding its expression in systematized forms of learning, found expression in Wales in the work of Einion, a realist, on the one hand, and in the works of people like Siôn Cent and Ieuan ap Rhydderch, nominalists, on the other.

It was Einion's advice to the poet to look for the good in his patron. The teacher should be praised for his wisdom, his eloquence, his skill in the laws, his native ability, his mastery of the arts, his prowess in debates, his gentleness and good breeding, his liberality and good manners, his amiability, and other praiseworthy qualities.³ This does not mean that the poet should be encouraged to flatter his patron. Later poets adopted a device known as exaggeration (*gormodaeth*), and it seems that, when the philosophical implications of Einion's classification of virtues and merits were less cogent, it became natural to put into high relief the good qualities

¹ See *Braslun*, pp. 104 ff.

² *Iolo Goch ac Eraill*, p. 271.

³ Athrawon a volir o doethineb, a chymendawt, a goruchelder kyfreitheu, a chanon, a dyfnder ethrylithyr, achelvydodeu, a budugolyaeth yn amryssoneu, ac adfwynder, a thegwch, a boned, a haelyoni, a devodeu da, a hegarwch, a phetheu eraill kanmoledic. *Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid*, p. 15.

of patrons in the manner of a Pindar. No poet, however, would dare attribute to a patron qualities which he did not possess.

When Guto'r Glyn had occasion to reply to Hywel Dafi, who had accused him of over-praising a friend, he did not deny the charge, but justified his action. He claimed the right to describe in fair words his patron's qualities, *but he did not mislead*. He asks, 'What is flattery but fair speech?'¹

Ni cheisiaf o chanaf chwaith,
Wedi gwin wadu gweniaith:
Minnau'n dyst, ni mynnwn dwyll
Mewn gweniaith, myn y gannwyll.

Beth yw gweniaith ond iaith deg?
O thraethir y gwir a'r gau,
Y gair tecaf yw'r gorau.
Ni thraethir y gwir i gyd
Yn llyfr, nac yn unlle hefyd.

The poet's reluctance to praise a patron would be immediately noted by his hearers, and Guto'r Glyn implies this when he tells Harri Gruffydd of Ewyas that 'it is difficult to praise a hard hearted man'.

Mwy nid hawdd, er amnaid teg,
Moli gŵr fal y garreg.
Cloi dy dda, caledu'dd wyd
Caledach no'r clo ydwyd.

Our reading of the works of the poets will impress upon us an important fact, that responsibility was always inherent in opportunity. In this they were exponents of an important tenet of the Middle Ages. It therefore naturally followed that the poet looked for definite virtues in people of different walks of life. Every class had its special duties to perform, and virtues were discernible in their fulfilment. The squire, though perhaps not a

¹ Beth yw gweniaith ond iaith deg?

man of learning, would be interested in the learning of others; he would be a patron of learning, interested in the purity and elegance of the Welsh language and its literature. Acquainted with the laws of chivalry, he would not transgress the laws of hospitality.

Thus, from the many references which we find in the poets to the accomplishments and virtues of people of all walks of life, we can build up an adequate educational theory for Wales in the Middle Ages.

HOSPITALITY

To live a full life attention must be paid to the claims of hospitality. When we are hospitable we must not look for rewards in return: the act itself brings its own reward.

Pair rannu, er nas prynan,
Bwyd i'r byd o'i bedwar ban.
Ef a borthai y'w dai da
Wledd Rys luoedd yr Asia.

Myn Garmon, digon o dâl
A bair Duw, heb roi dial.¹

Houses of such hospitable people were the frequent meeting-places of the poets. Iolo Goch found Sycharth, the home of Glyn Dŵr, such a centre of learning and culture.

I'w lys yn ddyfrys ydd af,
O'r deucant odidocaf:
Llys barwn, lle syberwyd,
Lle daw beirdd aml, lle da byd.

The poet would naturally be delighted to find that his patron was a man of learning and genuinely interested in literature.² And there were many such among the gentry, many of whom were themselves no mean poets.

¹ Dafydd Nanmor, to Rhys ap Maredudd of Towyn, who, so says the poet, had the best table of all from Dover to Anglesey.

² Iolo Goch has a delightful description of life in the bishop's palace at St. Asaph, when he spent some time there at the invitation of Bishop Trevor.

Dafydd Nanmor describes one Rhys ap Llywelyn ap Cadwgan as an orator, who was wise like Solomon, fluent like Gwalchmai, and one whose judgement was proverbial. His scholarship was evident to all.

Dan i ddaint erioed ni ddoeth
Ar i ene air anoeth,
Mwy no ffebai, Gwalchmai gwŷdd,
Dafod Sele ap Dafydd.
Y fo a rydd o gyfrwyddyd
Ar y bar i wŷr y byd.
I roi barn dihareb yw;
Ar ddadl kyfarwydd ydyw.
Drwy synnwyr i gŵyr i gyd
Veddwl y saith gelfyddyd.¹

He was also a true son of the church.

Karu Duw may, kariad mawr,
Yr Eglwys a'i beriglawr:
Llyna ŵr, os llawen neb,
Llawen i wên a'i wyneb.

The virtues of the ecclesiastic were different, for they embraced sanctity, wisdom, knowledge, hospitality, and a sense of duty towards his institution. Guto'r Glyn in his praise of the Abbot of Strata Marcella refers to the abbot's wisdom and his knowledge of the arts.

Ei enau doeth a'i wên deg
A dry'r mydr drwy rymadeg.

Ieuan Deulwyn also praised Dafydd, the Abbot of Strata Florida, as a Latin scholar

Er ben fu air o'i ben fo [Er pan]
I bu Ladin heb lwydo
Diachos oedd Rydychen
Am fod art ym Meifod wen.

¹ This Rhys knew the *contents* of the liberal arts. One is reminded of the claims of many these days to know subjects through reading reviews and digests.

Cf. Fo wŷr yn gall farnu i gyd
Foddion y saith gelfyddyd. *Wm. Llŷn*, xxxiv. 27.

This Ieuan had apparently visited many monastic houses from Powys to Cardigan, and although he was ready to admit that there were other good abbots, he was not diffident in his praise of his patron:

Bostio'r wyf drwy Bowys draw
Nad ysgogodd dysg iddaw:
Er bod hwnt ryw abad da,
No ssiomed y ssy yma.¹

The list of abbots, bishops, and church dignitaries whose eulogies have reached us is a long one; and from the descriptions which these provide, it is clear that the standard of learning was high during the Middle Ages. Ithel ap Robert, Canon of Bangor and Archdeacon of St. Asaph (1375), was one of Iolo Goch's patrons; another was Bishop Trevor of St. Asaph, a *doctor utriusque iuris*, one whom Iolo called the poet's friend, a *book of metrics*, and a *massbook of the faith*:

Priodawr gyfaill prydydd
Prydlyfr, offerenllyfr ffydd.

¹ In the poet's praise of the abbot's mastery of Latin and of the high standard of scholarship at Strata Florida, that made Oxford unnecessary for students, we have an example of poetic exaggeration, which was fully appreciated by the poet's hearers. The implication of the passage is that the abbot was a cultured scholar and that there was no doubt regarding the high standard of learning at the abbey.

Ieuan Deulwyn (c. 1480) speaks of Dafydd, Abbot of Maenan, as a Latin scholar and an authority on canon law:

Lle cyntaf yw'r meistr Dafydd
Llwyd yn rhoi Lladin yn rhydd:
Abad, may bywyd y Môn (ym Môn)
Aber Konwy, brig kanon.

Guto'r Glyn is lavish in his praises to Dafydd Kyffin of Llangedwyn, Vicar of Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant. He was a doctor of laws:

Llyma eurwr llên eiriau,
Llawer o ddysg yn lle'r ddau;
Dysgu'r gyfraith a'r ieithoedd
A dysgu art ei dasg oedd:
A chwynnu sifl a chanon,
Chwilio'r hawl, a chloi ar hon.

BARDIC TRAINING

We have already seen that according to the *Laws of Hywel Dda* no one should apply himself to bardism without the express permission of his lord and master. Freeman who sought to join the circle of accepted and acknowledged bards underwent a long and thorough training.¹

Before the year 1282, when Llywelyn ap Gruffudd was slain, and when the independent Principality came to an end, there were two classes of poets at the court. These were

1. The master bard or *pencerdd*, who was a member of the prince's cabinet, and whose prerogative it was to compose verses dealing with social and political life of the court, verses which were restrained and dignified, following the traditional system of versification, and recording the magnificence of the court.

2. The bard of the 'household' or *bardd teulu*, who sang more popularly, and entertained the 'household' and ladies of the court.

Places were reserved at court for these poets, and their rights and privileges were jealously guarded.

It was the *pencerdd's* prerogative to sit on the left of the *edling* (the heir). He had his land free, and he was the first to sing in the

¹ These laws were compiled at Whitland (Ty Gwyn ar Dâf) in the tenth century. The oldest manuscript, however, dates from the beginning of the thirteenth, and it was not known what was the original form of the laws. It is clear, however, that in the days of Hywel and during the following centuries Welsh was a language rich in legal and technical terms, and could be used to express unequivocally the most complicated legal problems of the day. There were skilled lawyers among the laymen and the clergy. We read in the introduction to the laws:

'He therefore takes six men from every commote in Wales, and brings them to Whitland, and there were present those who held croziers in Wales, including archbishops and bishops and abbots and good teachers; and of that number twelve of the wisest laics were chosen and one wisest scholar who was named Blegywryd, to make good laws, and to do away with the bad ones. . . .'

This was the period when Asser visited the court of King Alfred.

hall. He received a gift at every wedding at which, presumably, he sang his verses.

A bard becomes a *pencerdd* after he has won a chair. No one is allowed to solicit within the *pencerdd*'s jurisdiction without his permission, unless the poet who solicits is of a neighbouring country (*gorwlad*).

When the King expresses a wish to hear a song, the *pencerdd* is to sing two songs about God and a third about the chieftains. When the queen desires to hear a song in her chamber, the *bardd teulu* will sing to her three songs, softly, lest the hall be disturbed.

The *bardd teulu* sings after the *pencerdd*. He sits next to the chief of the household, and receives a harp from the king and a gold ring from the queen, when he is granted his office.¹

Reciters (Y Cyfarwyddiaid)

Long before the coming of the Normans there was a class of people in Wales who had much in common with the poets, but whose special office was to recite traditional tales. Unfortunately these tales have not survived in the form in which they were recited in those days. They possibly consisted of prose versions interspersed with poetic dialogue. The narrators were classed as bards and, as Professor Parry maintains, poets were not only skilled in archaic verse recalling a long literary tradition, but were also skilled in recitation of tales, which were expressed in modern style and reflected the vitality of a living language. The two styles were kept quite distinct.²

¹ Dyllet y pencerdd yw eisted ar gled yr etling. Y tir a geiff yn ryd. Ef a dyly kanu yn gyntaf yn y neuad. Kyfarws neithawr a geiff nyd amgen pedeir ar hugeint y gan pop morwyn pan wrhao. . . .

Sef vyd penkerd y bard pan enillo kadeir. Ny eill neb bard erchi dim hyt y bo y penkeirdyaeth ef, heb y ganhat, onyt bard gorwlat vyd.

Pan vynho y brenhin gerd o gwarandaw, kanet y pencerdd deu ganu ymod duw, ar trydyd or penaethu. Pan vynho y vrenhines gerd o gwarandaw yn y hystavell, kanet y bard teulu tri chanu yn disson rac tervyscu y llys. . . .

Ar eil kanu a gan yn y neuad, kanys y pencerdd a dechreu. Eil nessaf yd eisted yr penteulu. Telyn a geiff y gan y brenhin, a modrwy eur y gan y vrenhines pan rother y swyd idaw. . . .

² *Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg*, p. 12. Yng nghymdeithas Gymreig yr hen oesoedd yr oedd gŵr a wyddai chwedlau ac a allai eu hadrodd yn hwyliog ar goedd llys lawn mor dderbyniol â bardd. Yr enw arno oedd *cyfarwydd*, a *chyfarwyddyd* y gelwid ei chwedlau.

When Gwydion and his friend Gilfaethwy went to the court of Pryderi, they went in the guise of bards. They were asked for a tale, and Gwydion said, 'Lord, we have a custom that the first night we come to a great man, the tale is told by a *pencerdd*.'¹

When poets attached themselves to the houses of the lesser nobility and gentry, after the disappearance of the princes, regulations controlling bardism were modified. These poets accepted invitations from hosts in various parts of Wales. The distinction between the *pencerdd* and the *bardd teulu* naturally disappeared, and a new class of poets grew up,² people who were possibly influenced

¹ Vide *Math, son of Mathonwy*. In this tale we read that 'Gwydion was the best reciter in the world, and that night he diverted the court with pleasant conversation and with tales'. In *Owein and Lunet* we find the following passage: 'I would have the pleasantest conversation that he promised me', said Cai. 'My man,' said Cynon, 'it would be fairer for you to do first what Arthur promised, and then we will tell you the best story we know.' . . . 'Now', said Cai, 'you should pay me my story.' 'Cynon,' said Owein, 'pay Cai his story.' 'Truly', said Owein, 'you are older than I am, and a better teller of tales, and you have seen more marvellous things. . . .' 'Do you begin', said Owein, 'with the rarest that you know.'

² These poets, known as *Y gler*, adopted a circuit as travelling minstrels, and they put up at the homes of their patrons. We have many examples of what is called the *clera* poem in which the poet describes his journeyings, his yearning to see his friend, the munificence of his host, &c. Note how Lewis Glyn Cothi began his ode to Maredudd ap Morgan ap Sir Dafydd Gam:

Mi af, cyn yr haf, fy rhan fu rhedeg
At Fredudd ap Morgan;
Minnau gaf yma'n gyfan
Mwy o aur fath no thalm o'r Fan.

Untrained minstrels were classed as vagabonds, and they are disparagingly termed *cler y dom*.

Clerwyr travelled to north and south Wales, and relied upon the dignity of their profession and the pride of the nobility in their stock and in the traditions of Wales for the good fellowship that prevailed. Many of these members of the gentry were themselves scholars and poets. We need mention only a few examples, such as Ieuan Llwyd ab Ieuan of Dyffryn Aeron and his son Rhydderch; and Hopcyn ap Thomas of Ynystawe in the fourteenth century. They were poets and teachers and patrons of learning. These bards, naturally, did not travel as *clerwyr*. Lewis Glyn Cothi mentions such poets as patrons of learning, possessors of libraries,

by the *clerici vagantes*, and who perhaps were urged to become wandering poets by the success of the wandering friars and the *joculatores*. The verse composed by these poets was possibly influenced by the *serenade*, the *aubade*, and *pastourelle* of the *trouvères*. As they went from place to place they were naturally influenced by the social life which they enjoyed in the houses of their patrons, and they collected and distributed information.

The master-poet of this class was Dafydd ap Gwilym, who made use of the popular poetry of his day, sung in

in whose homes it was a joy to spend a night in literary discussions. Siôn ap Rhys of Aberpergwm always opened his doors to scholars, Trahaearn ab Ieuan of Caerleon was a scholar of repute and owner of a good library, Rhydderch ap Rhys ap Llywelyn Voethus of Cethiniog was not only a scholar and patron of learning, but also an authority upon husbandry.

Note how Guto'r Glyn describes the pleasant time which he spent with his patron Rhys ap Siancyn of Glyn Neath, as they read together the books which his patron possessed, the *Chronicles*, *Lives of the Saints*, books of pedigrees, triads and narratives, and the poems of the *Gogynfeirdd*.

Af a gwawd, heb ofwy gŵg,
Efrawg yt o fro Gatwg.
Od af, mi a gaf gyfedd,
Blaen gwin o Fwlaen neu fedd.
Caf roddi cyfarwyddyd
Ym dros ben am deiroes byd.
Brud fal y bwriwyd efo,
A'r *cronicl*, eiriau cryno;
Buchedd seiniau ni bechynt,
Bonedd Owain Gwynedd gynt;
Bwrw rhuf, ti a'th burawr, Rhys,
Brenhinedd bro ein hynys,
Dwyn ar fyfyrdod ein dau
Drioedd ac ystorïau
Dysgu ym (llyna dasg iawn!)
Dalm mawr o odlau Meiriawn.
Clybod a gwybod o gwbl
Gwawd *Cynddelw*, gwedd ceinddwbl. p. 241.

Interest in history (*ystorïau*) is also recorded by Lewis Glyn Cothi:

Tri firwythlawn gerddor a ragorant:
Un yw bardd ei hun, ac a henwant;
Ail yw storiawr ac a alwant;
Trydydd teuluwr cywydd, os cânt:
A'r tri hyn a'u ffyn ar ffyniant dewin
Aur a gwin gan lin Godwin a gant. p. 78.

the tavern and fair by wandering minstrels, and who, neglecting the traditional ode (*awdl*), made folk poetry inside the framework of the *cywydd* an essential part of Welsh verse. But the Middle Ages did not welcome change whole-heartedly, and the claims of tradition were ever strong.¹ The influence of the past, the ideals of the Church, which ever prized security and continuity, checked this change, and in course of time the topics favoured by the poets tended to become standardized and stereotyped, and, though there were notable exceptions, the subjects generally favoured by the poets recalled to mind the poems of the earlier period and dealt with marriages, deaths, births, requests for gifts, praises of virtues of persons and districts, and religious topics.

THE SCHOOLS OF THE POETS

A *pencerdd* was allowed to train pupils in bardism: this was one of his privileges.² When the pupils had mastered all the rules of prosody and had satisfactorily studied

¹ Naturally there were *literati* who looked askance at these innovations, and who would not willingly accept the introduction of the *cywydd* and the topics favoured by the new school. The poet Casnodyn praised Ieuan Llwyd ab Ieuan of Dyffryn Aeron because he would not forsake the *awdl* for the *cywydd*, and because he clung tenaciously to the traditional type of verse.

Llyw a'm dysgawdd hawdd hodd yaw gerdd berffaith
Nid fal sothach — iaith beirdd caith Caew.

Caew, according to Casnodyn, was a district that favoured this new poetry. Iolo Goch seems to belong as much to the older school as to the newer school of the *cywydd*.

'Y mae gwaith Iolo Goch yn perthyn i ysgol y gogynfeirdd ac i ysgol beirdd y cywydd' (*Iolo Goch ac Eraill*, p. lxxiv).

See Sir Idris Bell's translations of Dafydd ap Gwilym's poems in the *Cymmrodorion Transactions*, and Professor Sir Ifor Williams's article, 'Dafydd ap Gwilym a'r Glêr', in the *Transactions*, 1913-14, pp. 145-6.

² In the Eisteddfod Roll of Caerwys, 1524, it is stated that, 'when the Statute of Gruffudd ap Cynan was composed, the youngest sons of the gentle folk were ordained bards; and since it was so infrequently found that they were endowed with poetic gifts, and in order to preserve the art, it was decided to put under a lawful teacher any man who had the poetic gift and intelligence and understanding to master the art' (see T. Gwynn Jones, *Tudur Aled*, p. xiii, n.).

the topics contained in the courses prescribed, they in turn enjoyed the emoluments of bardism. It would seem that there was a close friendship between teacher and pupil.¹

The course prescribed was by no means an easy one; it lasted nine years and progress was recorded in grades (*graddau*). Unfortunately, we do not now possess the full details of the courses and of the gradings; but it is known that promotion frequently took place on festive occasions, especially at wedding festivities (*neithiorau*).² It is quite likely that even the topics dealt with were

¹ Note the tenderness of the poet when he composed his elegies to his teachers.

Bwrw Dafydd gelyydd dan gôr,
Bwrw ddoe'n unmeistr, bardd Nanmor

Gwae fi'n unig, f'awenydd,
O aros awr ar y sydd.
F'ewythr o waed, f'athro oedd,
Fynwes gwawd, fy nysg ydoedd. T.A. to Dafydd ab Edmwnd.
Diryfedd uwch graenfedd gro
I'm feithrin deigr am f'athro. Rhys Goch to Gruffydd Llwyd.

Dŵr a wylais drwy wylad
Dafnau tawch wedi f'un tad;
Duw a ddug, ni adawdd waig,
Dyn newyddfrau, deunydffraig

Prydfardd braisg, parodfardd brau,
Prydlwybr digwmpâr odlau. Lewys Morgannwg to Tudur Aled.

Teachers were sometimes relatives. Tudur Aled called Dafydd ab Edmwnd his uncle by blood

F'ewythr o waed, f'athro oedd.

The word *ewythr* (uncle) was not infrequently used by poets when referring to friends or patrons.

² Note Tudur Aled's description of his first promotion in the bardic school. This took place at a *neithior* in the home of Dafydd ab Ithel Fychan of Tegeingl.

Pob awenydd, pob ynys,
Penceirddiaid ionaid i lys;
Cefais aur hwn, cof sy rhawg,
Câr tlawd, o'r cwrt dyledawg;
Cyntaf neuadd y'm graddwyd
Fu oror llys f'eryr llwyd;
Am dri chof y'm dyrchafodd
Yn Neithior hwn, â thair rhodd.

allotted according to grades. Poets frequently met and discussed rules of prosody, and on occasions they criticized each other in verse (*cywyddau ymryson*).¹

About 1450 poets came together at Carmarthen to discuss rules of prosody, and another meeting was held at Caerwys in 1523. The meetings of poets were called *eisteddfodau*.

Most of the bardic lore was committed to memory by the pupils, but after making the necessary progress they would be allowed to make their own text-books.² Our libraries still bear witness to the indefatigable efforts of the Welsh poets in copying pedigrees, heraldic treatises, descriptions of churches, &c.³

Gruffudd ap Cynan is associated with a bardic *eisteddfod* at the beginning of the twelfth century and, according to the so-called Statute of Gruffudd ap Cynan, there were the following grades of poets:

1. Disgybl Ysbas (an ungraded pupil).
2. Disgybl Ysbas Graddol (a pupil admitted to the lowest grade. He has mastered five of the metres.)
3. Disgybl Disgyblaidd (a pupil who has mastered twelve of the metres).
4. Disgybl Penceirddiaid (one who has mastered the rules of grammar and twenty-one metres).
5. Pencerdd (master-poet who has mastered all the metres and the rules of cynghanedd).

A *pencerdd* acknowledged his debt to those who had

¹ Note the *cywyddau ymryson* of Dafydd ap Gwilym and Gruffudd Gryg, Richard ap Rhys Brydydd and Ierwerth Fynglwyd, &c.

² Is there not a danger that we to-day neglect memory-work because we have too easy access to books of reference?

³ Note how Dafydd ab Edmwnd and Gwilym Tew sought to systematize the rules of prosody.

The grammars of the *penceirddiaid* have been collected in *Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid*. See also *Cerdd Dafod* and T. Parry, 'Statud Gruffudd ap Cynan' (*Bulletin*, v. 25); T. Gwynn Jones, 'Bardism and Romance' (*Cymm. Transactions*, 1913-14); *Tudur Aled* (Welsh Univ. Press, 1926); T. Parry, *Hanes Llenyddiaeth*, ch. vi.

taught him, and the dignity of an *athro* was enhanced by the attainments of his pupils.

The course prescribed for pupils was standardized before the end of the sixteenth century, and it consisted of a study of the following topics:

- (a) rules of prosody, composition of the *cywydd*, *englyn*, and *awdl*;
- (b) a knowledge of pedigrees, heraldry, extent of property, &c.;
- (c) ancient poetry, narratives, modern poetry.

Tri pheth a berthyn ar wr wrth gerdd davawd: kerdd, a chof, a chyfarwyddyd.

Tair kaink yssydd ar gerdd davawd: kywyddau, ynglynion ac owdlau

Tri chof yssydd: iachau, arfau a Randiroedd

Tri chyfarwyddyd yssydd: hengerdd, ystoriau a barddoniaeth.

We have now a fair picture of the educated gentleman of Wales during the Middle Ages. It is a significant fact that the philosophy of the poets of Wales made it possible for them, in theory at least, to anticipate by a century the views of Castiglione, the author of *Il Cortegiano*, who gave to the world of the Renaissance his picture of the ideal courtier. When Ieuan ap Rhydderch, at the end of the fourteenth century, wrote his boastful poem (*Cywydd yFôst*), he undertook to enumerate truthfully all his accomplishments.¹ There are some passages in the poem the meaning of which is not quite clear, but the general theme is plain.

It appears that Ieuan had received a good early education: he was introduced to the subjects of the *trivium* when quite young, but we are not told where, or

¹ He says that he was urged to write the poem after recalling another poem written in the twelfth century, called *The Accomplishments of Hywel ab Owain* (*Gorhoffedd Hywel ab Owain*). This Hywel died in 1170 (see 'Ieuan ap Rhydderch', *B.B.C.S.* iv. i. 18).

I ddangos, myfrglos mawl,
Ei ragorau, ri gwrawl.

how.¹ He then proceeded with his studies as a *sophister*, during which period he read his Latin Bible and studied chronicles and the subjects of the *quadrivium*.² He also mastered French, which he held to be a charming language. His studies included the reading of Aristotle and Ptolemy (probably the *Theorica Planetorum* and the *Almagest*), and he was very proud of his progress in the use of the astrolabe. He claims to have acquired some knowledge of alchemy and the black arts and that he had an acquaintance with civil law.³

After enumerating his academic attainments, Ieuan proceeds to describe his other skills.⁴ He claims to have

¹ Was he taught at the collegiate school of Llanddewibrefi or did he get tuition from the monks of Strata Florida? His home was near Cardigan.

² The *quadrivium* was of much less importance than the imposing names of subjects imply. Geometry and music received comparatively little attention, and arithmetic and astronomy were at first employed mainly for the finding of the date of Easter; but the introduction of mathematical learning from Arabian sources in the thirteenth century greatly increased the scope and the importance of geometry and arithmetic, and brought in the study of algebra.

³
Yn gyntaf, oleuaf lwybr
Yn ieuanc, anian ewybr,
Dysgais yn brif dda drahydr
Dysg deg, ramadeg a'i mydr.
Cyfarwydd . . .

wyf yn y Bibl.

Gwn, dysgais, profais y prig
Yn gryno pob iawn gronig.
Dysgais yr eang Ffrangeg;
Doeth yw ei dysg, da iaith deg.

Gwn beth ddorwn byth eres,
Anial yw er na wna les,
Rhod y dynghedfen a'i rhan,
A rhyw igmars a rhagman

igmars = necromancy.
rhagman, cf. *raggeman*.

⁴
Trown bellach, try yn bwyllig
Tra doeth, ni myn un tro dig,
At gerddau ddeau ddiasw,
A champau a moesau masw.

Lewis Glyn Cothi has a fine description of a tournament held at Abermarlais by the sons of Thomas ap Gruffudd ap Nicholas. *L.G.C.*, p. 167. See also Dafydd Nanmor to Rhys of Towyn (*D.N.*, p. 13).

mastered the rules of prosody and to be able to sing to the harp. He is also skilled in chess, backgammon, and dice games. A skilled athlete, he can shoot as well as the archers of Southwark, he can hurl the discus and the javelin, and he is a good runner and swimmer. It is not strange, therefore, that he demands the respect of his peers, and that he has held many offices. Life has been pleasant to him: he has enjoyed wealth, the smiles of ladies, the exhilaration of hunting, and the kindly fellowship of the festivities. He has been granted all these blessings, and they are necessary to his full life. But all this does not dim his eye to the beauty of his beloved church at Llanddewibrefi¹ and of the unalloyed charm of righteous living, and, when the time comes for him to die, he hopes to be laid to rest in the consecrated ground of his church.

This poem may be interpreted as an expression of Ieuan's idea of the education of a gentleman. He describes himself, though with lavish praise probably, and from the poem we can form our picture of the ideal gentleman scholar. That there were many people in Wales who had several, if not all, of Ieuan's accomplishments, may be proved from eulogies, some of which have already been mentioned.²

¹ Cefais einioes mewn cyfoeth,
Cof digriflawn, cyflawn, coeth.
Caf, a deuaf o'r diwedd,
Cyflawn rad, i wlad y wledd.
Caiff fy nghorff yn fy ngorffen
Coffhau'r pridd mewn y coffr pren,
Yng nghor eglur mur i mi
Yn Llan wiw Ddoewan Ddewi.
Yng nghlas Mair ddwysair ddiseml,
Yng nghalchfedd diomedd deml,
A'r nef ddwyre lle llawen,
A'r naid i'r enaid. Amen.

² Owain Fychan of Llanbryn-mair was skilled in music.
Brawd yw'n medru tant
I gyweirdeb a'i gyweirdant. *L.G.C.*, p. 447.

Rhydderch ap Rhys ap Llywelyn Voethus was a person of great wealth, the owner of many mansions. He was well read and well versed in the

The accomplishments of a Welsh gentleman in the Middle Ages were twenty-four in number, and they were thus classified:

- (a) manly skill:
- i. running, feats of strength, jumping, swimming, wrestling, riding;
 - ii. the use of weapons, viz. shooting, two-handed sword, sword and buckler, javelin;
- (b) youthful pastimes: greyhound-hunting, fishing, hawking;
- (c) domestic attainments, viz. bardism, elocution, reading Welsh, singing to the harp, heraldry, playing the harp, illustration;
- (d) indoor games, viz. chess, backgammon, dice games, and ability to tune the harp.¹

Scriptures, and was what the poet considered to be the complete Christian gentleman.

Trahaearn ab Ieuan of Caerleon was a wealthy and accomplished scholar, and one who loved to see everything around him elegant and in the best taste, and all his friends happy.

Dy gwpwrt, dy gwrt, sy gyrtiaidd,
Dy ddyg sydd amlach no'r gwrŷsg a'u gwraidd;
Dy lyfrau (eto'n Gymröaidd), ysgol
Wrth reol, ydynt wir athrawaidd. *L.G.C.*, p. 97.

Owain ap Thomas ap Thomas Fychan of Cethiniog was a comely man, skilled in games.

Mi a af i droi'n y cwrt main,
A'r ddaear ydd â Owain;
Ac ar ei ôl, i Gaer Wen,
Ac weithiau i Lan Gathen.
Edrych arno ef: hevyd
Ar y bar yn gadaw'r byd.
Ar redeg gorau ydyw,
Ar vaen ac ar vwa yw. *L.G.C.*, p. 213.

¹ Y pedair camp ar hugain.

O'r pedair camp ar hugain, deg gwrol gamp y sydd, nid amgen o hyny
chwech o rym corff, val hyn:
cryvder, rhedeg, neidiaw, noviaw, ymavael, marchogaeth, aphedwar
o rym arvau, nid amgen:
saethu, chwareu â chledd deuddwrn, chwareu â chledd a bwled,
chwareu â ffon ddwybig,
a deg mabolgamp â sydd, ac o hyny tair helwriaeth, nid amgen:
hela â milgi, hela pysg, hela ederyn.

These, then, were the accomplishments of a Welsh gentleman: add to them a knowledge of French and Latin, and an appreciation of all that was best in Welsh literature, then we have the accomplishments of the gentleman scholar.¹

The poet not only recorded these attainments; he was in a measure responsible for stimulating the ruling classes to maintain the standards ideally portrayed by Einion Offeiriad and his school.² We have seen how the poet and his patron could discuss social, political, and religious topics. In the homes of the gentry, during the frequent festivities, in times of prosperity or crises, conversation would turn about social, national, and even international affairs. Professor Gruffydd rightly maintained that it is not too much to claim that no society had a more cultured ruling class than Wales at this time.³

saith teuluaidd o'r mabolgampau sydd, sev ynt:
barddoniaeth, canu telyn, darllen Cymraeg, canu cywydd gan dant,
canu cywydd pedwar ac acenu, portreiauw, herodraeth,
pedair o'r campau sydd val hyn:
chwareu gwyddbwyll, chwareu tawlbwrdd, chwareu ffristial, cyweir-
iauw telyn.

¹ Many poets like Ieuan ap Rhydderch had been at a university. Ieuan ap Hywel ap Swrdwal had been at Oxford. He died young.

Dig wyf am dewi gofeg
Yn pen yn Rhydychen deg.

² Even though a *pencerdd* died, his song was immortal.
Mawr yw'r pwnc, os marw'r pencerdd,

Mair a'i gwyr na bydd marw'r gerdd. Iolo Goch to Ll. Goch.

³ Nid gormod maentumio na bu gan unrhyw wlad bendefigaeth fwy diwylliedig nag a oedd gan Gymru yn yr oes hon.

Note the findings of the report on *Welsh in Education and Life*, p. 20.

The intellectual activity of medieval Wales, under the bardic and monastic systems, can only be realized by those who are familiar with the contents of our manuscripts of that period, and the transcripts that were made later.

There were treatises in Welsh on theology, philosophy, astrology, botany, and medicine: there were Welsh versions of Greek and Latin authors, and abundant references to the heroes of classical and romantic epics are to be found in the works of the fifteenth-century bards: there were translations of the romances that were popular in France and Italy.

It is no exaggeration to say that Wales participated in the intellectual

The oppressive measures of Henry IV did not drive the Welsh people to deny their nationhood: that was done more effectively by the enticements of the Tudors.

UNIVERSITIES FOR WALES UNDER GLYN DŴR

When the Welsh scholar went to Oxford or Cambridge or to the universities on the Continent in search of knowledge, he went not as a Welsh-speaking Welshman, but as a scholar, a citizen of the world of scholarship. He would belong to one of the 'nations' for government purposes, but his language was Latin and the scholastic aims were mainly decided for him by his Mother Church. Yet he never ceased to be a Welshman. To-day a Welsh student can acquire his learning most expeditiously by claiming as little as possible for himself as a Welshman, and by adopting the standards of the university to which he may be attached.

Owen Glyn Dŵr requested a faculty from Pope Benedict XIII to found two universities in Wales, one in the north and the other in the south. Had these been founded it would not have been at all difficult to find teachers for them, since the language of scholarship would be Latin.¹

life of Western Europe, and it is only when we realize this, and the possibility of development as a free nation, that we see the effect of the Tudor policy in Wales in its proper light. For afterwards English culture came to be regarded as the only kind of culture that was possible, and intelligent Welshmen looked upon Welsh as a mere *patois*, and upon pre-Tudor Wales as a land of barbarians.

¹ Professor T. Parry says that apparently hardly any influence of the outside world is reflected in the works of the bards. One of the most notable characters in English civilization in the fifteenth century was Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, one of the heralds of the Renaissance in these islands, a man who collected a good library and who communicated constantly with the chief humanists in Italy, and who knew some of them personally. Humphrey was Justice of south and north Wales, and he spent a fair amount of time in Wales during the years 1420-45, and one of his intimate friends was Gruffudd ap Nicholas of Dynevor. Yet, according to Professor Parry, when Gruffudd became patron of the Carmarthen *Eisteddfod* in 1450, he did not mention the wonderful treasures which were

The vernacular was not used in the medieval universities: French was forbidden in the schools of Paris, and English at Oxford and Cambridge. It is tempting to attempt to picture what would have been the influence of a national university upon the Wales which we have described, that Wales which, in due course, would have welcomed the enthusiasm of the New Learning. What would have been the result of the combined influence of foreign and native teachers? How would an academic Dafydd ap Gwilym have inspired his students, and with what blend of scholarship and poetic inspiration would a professor of literature have used the scholarship of the

discovered in the Latin literature on the Continent or how his friend the Duke was receiving copies of everything new from his friends in Italy. The chief concern of Gruffydd, says Professor Parry, was to rearrange the poetic metres and to give prizes for vocal and string music; and as far as culture was concerned, Wales in the fifteenth century was extremely conservative in spite of its observance of changes in the world. It confined its interest only within the problems of wretched politics.

Professor Parry's statement is somewhat misleading, because we are not told that even in England the conservative element, characteristic of medievalism, prevailed long after Duke Humphrey's day. England was not seriously influenced by the Duke's interest in Latin and Greek culture. To quote from Lewis Einstein's *The Italian Renaissance in England* (Macmillan, 1902), 'In the early years of the 15th century when the lowest depths of intellectual torpor had been reached in England, the effects of a single man were to bring a great change, and introduce new rays of light. In Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, son of Henry IV, and in the cultivated circle of his friends, the intellectual hopes of his country were centred' (p. 3). 'Duke Humphrey had studied in his youth at Balliol and in after years the devotion he showed his university was to be his noblest trait. Oxford about that time had sunk to her lowest level. Scholasticism was dominant, but her reputation even in those studies was behind that of Paris' (p. 3). 'The fifteenth century was already nearing the end with the new learning in England still in its infancy. Its growth, although slow, had nevertheless been constant during the fifty years before Oxford began to emerge from medievalism. In the face of many difficulties there had been a steady movement in the direction of progress . . .' (p. 29). 'With the work of three Oxford friends, Thomas Linacre, William Grocyn and Thomas Latimer, modern English scholarship really began . . .' (p. 30).

It is not surprising that the new learning was outside the scope of the Carmarthen discussions. Is it possible that the author of *Cywydd y Fôst*, himself related to Gruffudd ap Nicholas, had actually met the Duke Humphrey?

university? What interpretation would he have given to Ap Gwilym's whimsical description of his own funeral?

An altar such as summer weaves,
 Enchancelled in the lattice leaves,
 Above a fair mosaic floor:
 And friars that know poesy,
 Grey masters of Latinity,
 Reading from leaf books over me,
 With grammar right and quantity;
 And, singing requiems all the day,
 The unmatched organ of the hay,
 And many a tuneful greenwood bell
 Shall chant o'er me its passing knell.¹

The spirit of Dafydd ap Gwilym, working a miracle in a medieval Welsh university! But it was not to be.

¹ Translated by Professor Gruffydd.



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