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# Heroes of the Nations

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FACTA DUCIS VIVUNT, OPEROSAEQUE  
GLORIA REBUM.—OVID, IN LIVIAM RES.

THE HERO'S DEEDS AND HARD-WON  
FAME SHALL LIVE.

# OWEN GLYNDWR



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GLYNDWR'S MOUNT, GLYNDYFRDWY.

Miss Walker.  
*Frontispiece.*

# OWEN GLYNDWR

## AND THE LAST STRUGGLE FOR WELSH INDEPENDENCE

WITH A BRIEF SKETCH OF WELSH HISTORY

BY

ARTHUR GRANVILLE BRADLEY

AUTHOR OF "HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS IN NORTH WALES," "SKETCHES  
FROM OLD VIRGINIA," "THE FIGHT WITH FRANCE  
FOR NORTH AMERICA," ETC.

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G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

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## PREFACE

**I**F this little book purported to be a biography in the ordinary sense of the word, the scantiness of purely personal detail relating to its hero might be a fair subject of criticism. But men of the Glyndwr type live in history rather by their deeds, and the deeds of those they lead and inspire. This is peculiarly the case with the last and the most celebrated among the soldier patriots of Wales. Though so little remains to tell us of the actual man himself, this very fact has thrown a certain glamour and mystery about his name even in the Principality. While numbers of well-informed Englishmen are inclined to regard him, so far as they regard him at all, as a semi-mythical hero under obligations to Shakespeare for such measure of renown and immortality as he enjoys, if the shade of Henry the Fourth could be called up as a witness it would tell a very different story. It is at any rate quite certain that for the first few years of the fifteenth century, both to England and to Wales, to friends and to foes, Owen was in very truth a sufficiently real personality. What we do know of him, apart from his work, might well suggest infinite possibilities to the novelist and the poet. It is my business, how-

ever, to deal only with facts or to record legends and traditions for what they are worth, as illustrating the men and the time.

Glyndwr is without doubt the national hero of the majority of Welshmen. Precisely why he takes precedence of warrior princes who before his day struggled so bravely with the Anglo-Norman power and often with more permanent success, is not now to the point. My readers will be able to form some opinion of their own as to the soundness of the Welsh verdict. But these are matters, after all, outside logic and argument. It is a question of sentiment which has its roots perhaps in sound reasons now forgotten. There are in existence several brief and more or less accurate accounts of Glyndwr's rising. Those of Thomas, written early in this century, and of Pennant, embodied in his well known *Tours in Wales*, are the most noteworthy,—while one or two interesting papers represent all the recent contributions to the subject. There has not hitherto, however, been any attempt to collect in book form all that is known of this celebrated Welshman and the movement he headed. I have, therefore, good reason to believe that the mere collection and arrangement of this in one accessible and handy volume will not be unwelcome, to Welsh readers especially. Thus much at least I think I have achieved, and the thought will be some consolation, at any rate, if I have failed in the not very easy task of presenting the narrative in sufficiently popular and readable guise. But I hope also to engage the interest of readers other than Welshmen in the story

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of Glyndwr and his times. If one were to say that the attitude of nearly all Englishmen towards Wales in an historical sense is represented by a total blank, I feel quite sure that the statement would neither be denied nor resented.

Under this assumption it was thought well to attempt a somewhat fuller picture of Wales than that presented by the Glyndwr period alone, and to lead up to this by an outline sketch of Welsh history. The earlier part, particularly, of this contains much contentious matter. But in such a rapid, superficial survey as will fully answer our purpose here, there has scarcely been occasion to go below those salient features that are pretty generally agreed upon by historians. The kind manner in which my *Highways and Byways of North Wales* was received, not only by English readers but by Welsh friends and the Welsh press, makes me venture to hope that my presumption as a Saxon in making this more serious excursion into the domain of Welsh history will be overlooked in consideration of the subject dealt with.

A continuous intimacy of many years with the Glyndyfrdwy region begat a natural interest in the notable personage who had once owned it, and this gradually ripened into a desire to fill, however inadequately, what seemed to me an obvious want. Before venturing on the task I took some pains to ascertain whether any Welsh writer had the matter in contemplation, and so far as information gathered in the most authoritative quarters could be effective it was in the negative. As this was at a time when



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the Welsh people were considering some form of National memorial to Glyndwr, the absence both in fact and in prospect of any accessible memoir of him overcame what diffidence on racial grounds I had naturally felt and encouraged me in my desire to supply the want.

A full list of the authorities I have consulted in the preparation of this work would, I have reason to understand, be too ponderous a supplement to a volume of this kind. Before noting any of them, however, I must first acknowledge the very great obligations I am under to Mr. Wylie for his invaluable and exhaustive history of Henry IV.; not merely for the information contained in the text of his book, but for his copious notes which have been most helpful in indicating many sources of information connected with the persons and events of the time. The following are some of the chief works consulted: Dr. Powell's translation of Humphrey Lloyd's *History of Wales* from the chronicle of Caradoc of Llancarvan, Ellis' original letters, *Annales Cambriæ*, Rymer's *Fœdera*, Williams' *History of Wales*, Warrington's *History of Wales*, Tyler's *Henry V.*, Adam of Usk, Matthew of Paris, Hardyng's and other chronicles, Giraldus Cambrensis, the historians Carte, Walsingham, and Holinshed, Bridgeman's *Princes of South Wales*, Lloyd's *History of the Princes of Powys Fadog*, the Iolo MSS., Owen's *Ancient Laws and Institutions of Wales*, *Archæologia Cambrensis*, the Brut, and, of course, the Rolls series. Among living writers who have been helpful in various ways and have my best thanks are

---

Mr. Robert Owen, of Welshpool, the author of *Powysland*, the Revd. W. G. Dymock Fletcher, of Shrewsbury, who has made a special study of the neighbouring battle-field ; Professor Tout, who has published an interesting lecture on Glyndwr and some instructive maps connected with the period ; and Mr. Henry Owen, the well known authority on Pembrokeshire and author of *Gerald the Welshman* ; nor must I omit a word of thanks to Mr. Owen Edwards, whose kind encouragement materially influenced my decision to undertake this book.

I am under most particular obligations to that well known Welsh scholar, Mr. T. Marchant Williams, for suggestions and criticisms when the book was still in manuscript, and also to my lamented friend, the late Mr. St. John Boddington, of Huntington Court, Herefordshire, for assistance of a somewhat similar nature.

I am also greatly indebted to Miss Walker, of Corwen, for several photographic scenes in Glyndyfrdwy, which she most kindly took with an especial view to reproduction in these pages, and to Messrs. H. H. Hughes and W. D. Haydon, both of Shrewsbury, who rendered a like service in the matter of Glyndwr's other residence at Sycherth.



## ERRATA.

- Page 46. Footnote should be omitted.
- Page 100, line 9. *Omit the words*, Gryffydd Llwyd, much better known by his bardic name of.
- Page 110, line 4 from bottom. *Omit the words*, the "Castell y Gwern Loch."
- Page 150. Add footnote as follows: Cayo is a parish on the Carmarthenshire side of the Teify, ten miles from Lampeter,—the place which Lewis Glyncothi, a native of the district, "loved like a beaver for its festivities, its music, etc."
- Page 280, line 6 from bottom. *For* A quite recently published manuscript from, *read* A manuscript in.  
Omit footnote.
- Page 297, line 4 from bottom and first two lines on page 298. *For present wording read* "out with Glyndwr," while, as has been already related, he rewarded his more faithful lieges in the borough of Welshpool by a wide extension of their corporation limits.
- Page 325, lines 12–15. *Omit* previously only a few, *etc.*, to close of sentence.



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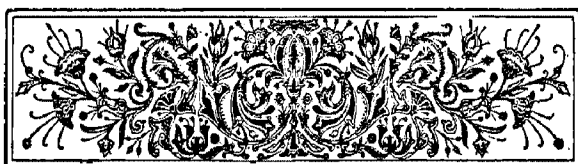
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## APPENDIX

### THE BARDS

THE Bards as a class were so deeply interwoven with the whole life of ancient Wales and, though long shorn of most of their official glory, played so prominent a part in the rising of Glyndwr, that it seems desirable that a chapter touching on the subject should be included in this book. Within such limits the subject can only be treated in the most general and elementary manner. Yet such treatment is excusable from the fact that the slenderest and most inefficient description of Welsh song and Welsh singers must contain matter unknown to most English readers. I imagine that few of these would resent being asked to divest their minds of the time-honoured notion that the teaching of the Druids was nothing but a bloodthirsty and barbarous superstition. At any rate, Bardism and Druidism being practically the same thing, one is obliged to remind those readers who may never have given the matter any attention at all, that among the ancient Britons of the Goidel stock who inhabited most of Wales and the West previous to the Cymric immigration, Druidism was the fountain of law, authority, religion, and,

above all, of education. The Druids, with their three orders, were a caste apart for which those who were qualified by good character and noble birth to do so, laboriously trained themselves. They decided all controversies whether public or private, judged all causes, from murder to boundary disputes, and administered both rewards and punishments. Those who ventured to defy them were excommunicated, which was equivalent to becoming moral and social lepers.

The three orders were known as Druids, Bards, and Ovates. The first were priests and judges, the second poets; the third were the least aristocratic, practised the arts and sciences, and were, moreover, a probationary or qualifying order through which candidates for the other two, who were on the same level of dignity, had to pass. As everyone knows, there was an Arch-Druid of the Isle of Britain who had his sanctuary in Anglesey. But it is a matter of much less common knowledge how close was the connection between the Druids and Christianity in the Roman period and even afterwards. The Romans, with conquest foremost in their minds, most naturally aimed at the native rulers of the people and made these bardic orders the objects of their special attack. Their slaughter on the banks of the Menai as described by Tacitus, and the destruction of the Sacred Groves of Mona, are among our familiar traditions.

The Druid orders fled to Ireland, Brittany, and elsewhere. But in time, when the Romans, strong in their seats, grew tolerant, the exiles returned and

quietly resumed, in West Britain at any rate, something like their old positions.

When Christianity pushed its way from the West into the island, the bardic orders, unable to resist it, seem by degrees to have accepted the situation and to have become the priests of the new faith, as they had been the custodians and expounders of the old. This transition was the less difficult seeing that the Druids preached all the ordinary tenets of morality, and the immortality of the soul. To what extent the early Christianity of western Britain was tainted with the superstition of the Druids is a question upon which experts have written volumes, and it need not detain us here. A notable effort was made in the fourth century to merge Christianity, so to speak, in the old British faith, and Morgan or Pelagius, "sea-born," of Bangor Iscoed was the apostle of this attempted reaction. He left the island about A.D. 400, and his converts in what we now call Wales were numerous and active. The movement is historically known as the "Pelagian heresy" and has some additional importance from the number of ecclesiastics that came from over the sea for the purpose of denouncing it.

But all this is rather the religious than the secular side of Bardism, the leading feature of whose teaching in pre-Roman days had been the committal to memory of its literature, both prose and verse. Writing was discountenanced, as the possession of these stores of learning thus laboriously acquired were a valuable asset of the initiated. Three was the mystic number in the recitation of all axioms

and precepts, for many of these were committed to writing later on in the seventh and tenth centuries, and are now familiar as the Welsh "Triads."

The bards, as a lay order, remained of great importance. In the laws of Howel Dda (tenth century) the royal bard stands eighth among the officers of the State. The fine for insulting him was six cows and twenty silver pennies. His value was 126 cows, his land was free, and he had the use of a house. His noblest duty was to sing "The Monarchy of Britain" at the head of his chieftain's army when victorious. The number of songs he had to sing to the King and Queen respectively during the social hours was clearly defined, as were his claims upon each. Among the latter was a specified portion of the spoils of war, a chessboard made from the horn of a sea-fish from the King, and a ring from the Queen. It was the business of the bards, moreover, to preserve genealogies, and they were practically tutors to the rising generation of the aristocracy. Every family of position in Wales had its domestic bard, while below these there were a great number of strolling minstrels who visited the dwellings of the inferior people, from whom they exacted gifts of money ("cymmorthau") as well as free quarters.

In treating of individual and well-known bards one naturally turns for a beginning to the sixth century, when that famous quartet, Taliesin, Merddyn, Aneurin, and Llywarch Hên, flourished. Several poems either actually their work or purporting to be so are extant. To linger over a period so dim,

however great the names that adorn it, would be out of place here. That all four were great kings of song in their time is beyond doubt. The legends that distinguish them are comparatively familiar: how Taliesin was found floating in a leather bottle in Prince Elphin's salmon weir near Aberdovey, how Merddyn as a boy astonished the advisers of Vortigern and became his good angel, and how Llywarch Hên, at a hundred and fifty years of age, witnessed the slaughter of the last of his four-and-twenty sons in battle against the Saxons. His poem on the death of Cynddylan, Prince of Powys, seizes the imagination, not so much from the description the poet-warrior gives of the death of his friend and his own sons in a decisive combat which he himself took part in, but from the almost certain fact that from the top of the Wrekin he saw the Saxons destroy and sack Uriconium ("the white town"), whose ruins are such a striking feature among the sights of Shropshire.

From these four giants until 1080 there is little left whereby to judge of the merits of the bards, and no great record of their names. That they sang and played and gave counsel and kept genealogies is beyond question, but it was not till after the Norman conquest of England that they began to leave much behind them in the way of written documents.

When Prince Griffith ap Kynan returned from Ireland to Wales and the poet Meilir arose to sing his triumphs and good qualities, a new era in bardic history may be said to have commenced. The intellectual and religious revival that distinguished the



twelfth century in Western Europe was conspicuous in Wales. The bards were no longer singing merely of battles, but of nature and kindred subjects, with a delicacy that showed them to be men of taste and culture. In the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, in spite of war and conquest, the age was a golden one in Welsh song. Between eighty and ninety bards of this period have left poems behind them as a witness of their various styles and merits, while there are no literary remains whatever of very many who are known to have been quite famous in their day. Thousands, too, of popular songs must have existed that the jealousy of the composers or, more probably, the price of parchment consigned to oblivion.

“When the literary revival of this period reached Wales, its people,” says Mr. Stephens in the *Literature of the Kymri*, “were better prepared than their neighbours for intellectual effort.” “An order of bards existed, numerous and well disciplined; a language in all its fullness and richness was in use among all classes of people, and as a necessary consequence their literature was superior, more copious, and richer than that of any contemporaneous nation. The fabulous literature so prized by others was in no great repute, but gave way to the public preference for the more laboured and artistic productions of the bards.”

Several Welsh Princes of commanding character and unusual ability came to the front in the long struggle with the Norman power, and were no unworthy sources of bardic inspiration. Many of them aspired themselves to literary as well as mar-

tial fame, of whom Owain Cyfeiliog, Prince of Upper Powys, was the most notable. Poetry was in high repute. Eisteddfodau were held periodically with much ceremony and splendour, and were sometimes advertised a year in advance, not only throughout Wales but in Ireland and other portions of the British Islands. Not poetry alone but literature generally and music, of course, both vocal and instrumental, were subjects of competition, while Rhys ap Tudor, a long-lived and distinguished Prince of South Wales, revived, after a sojourn in Brittany, the system of the Round Table. To Englishmen the long list of bards who adorned the period between the Norman arrival and Glyndwr's rising would be mere names, but even to those who may only read the works of the most notable in translations, they are of great interest if only as a reflection of life and thought at a time when England and English were still almost silent.

Gwalchmai, the son of a distinguished father, Meilir, already mentioned, was among the first of the revived school, whose work is regarded by Celtic scholars as of the first quality. His love of nature is prominent in many of the poems he has left :

“ At the break of day, and at evening's close,  
I love the sweet musicians who so fondly dwell  
In dear, plaintive murmurs, and the accents of woe ;  
I love the birds and their sweet voices  
In the soothing lays of the wood.”

Owain Gwynedd was the hero-king of Gwalchmai's day. His repulse of an attack made by Henry the

Second's fleet under the command of an unpatriotic Prince of Powys in Anglesey is the subject of the bard's chief heroic poem :

“ Now thickens still the frantic war,  
 The flashing death-strokes gleam afar,  
 Spear rings on spear, flight urges flight,  
 And drowning victims plunge to-night  
 Till Menai's over-burthened tide,  
 Wide-blushing with the streaming gore,  
 And choked with carnage, ebbs no more ;  
 While mail-clad warriors on her side  
 In anguish drag their deep-gash'd wounds along,  
 And 'fore the King's Red chiefs are heap'd the  
 mangled throng.”

Owain Cyfeiliog, a Prince of Powys in the end of the twelfth century, though a noted warrior, is a leading instance of a royal bard. His chief poem, *The Hirlâs Horn* (drinking-cup), is famous wherever Welsh is spoken :

“ This horn we dedicate to joy ;  
 Then fill the Hirlâs horn, my boy,  
 That shineth like the sea,  
 Whose azure handles tipped with gold  
 Invite the grasp of Britons bold,  
 The sons of liberty.”

This is one of the longest poems of the twelfth century. The scene is the night after a battle, and the Prince with his warriors gathered round him in the banqueting-hall sends the brimming cup to each of his chieftains successively and enumerates their

respective deeds. A leading incident in the poem is when Owen, having eulogised the prowess of two favourite warriors in glowing terms, turns to their accustomed seats, and, finding them vacant, suddenly recalls the fact that they had fallen in the battle of the morning:

“ Ha! the cry of death—And do I miss them!  
O Christ! how I mourn their catastrophe!  
O lost Moreiddig—How greatly shall I need thee!”

A most suggestive poem by another Prince is a kind of summary of his progress through his dominions from the Ardudwy mountains,

“ Fast by the margin of the deep  
Where storms eternal uproar keep,”

to the hills above Llangollen where he proposes “to taste the social joys of Yale.” This is Howel, the illegitimate son of Owain Gwynedd, who seized and held for two years his father’s kingdom. Though so strenuous a warrior, his poems are rather of love and social life. He sings with much feeling of the joys of Wales; her fair landscape, her bright waters and green vales, her beauteous women and skimming seagulls, her fields clothed with tender trefoil, her far-reaching wilds, and plenteousness of game. Himself a successful stormer of castles, there is something richly suggestive in the action of a man laying down the torch and bloody sword and taking up the pen to describe his havoc:

“ The ravens croaked and human blood  
In ruddy streams poured o’er the land;

There burning houses war proclaimed ;  
 Churches in flames and palace halls ;  
 While sheets of fire scale the sky,  
 And warriors ' On to battle ! ' cry."

Then the author wholly changes his mood :

" Give me the fair, the gentle maid,  
 Of slender form, in mantle green ;  
 Whose woman's wit is ever staid,  
 Subdued by virtue's graceful mien.  
 Give me the maid, whose heart with mine  
 Shall blend each thought, each hope combine ;  
 Then, maiden fair as ocean's spray,  
 Gifted with Kymric wit's bright ray,  
 Say, am I thine ?  
 Art thou then mine ?  
 What ! silent now ?  
 Thy silence makes this bosom glow.  
 I choose thee, maiden, for thy gifts divine ;  
 'T is right to choose—then, fairest, choose me thine."

There is much misunderstanding as to the fashion in which the bards were treated by Edward the First. During war the leading minstrels were naturally identified with the patrons whose banners they followed and whose praises they sang; but the statement that they were put to death as bards rests on wholly secondary authority and seems doubtful. Stringent laws were certainly made against the lower order of minstrels who wandered homeless through the country, but they seem to have been devised as much for the protection of the common people, who were called on to support them, as against the men

themselves, who were regarded by the authorities as mendicants and idlers. The superior bards, who kept strictly to the houses of the great, were probably not often interfered with. These, though they had regular patrons and fixed places of abode, made extended tours from time to time in which there seems to have been no special distinction between North and South Wales. The hatred of the bards towards England was a marked feature of their time, and was so consistent that though many Welsh princes, in their jealousy, lent their swords, as we have seen, to the invader, no bards, so far as one knows, turned against their countrymen. For generations they prided themselves in being intellectually superior to the Saxon. They also saw, after the Norman conquest, the English race despised and held down by their conquerors, and a species of serfdom in use among the Saxons which had no prototype in their own country. The ordinary bards, however, had beyond all doubt sacrificed much of their old independence and become the creatures of their patrons and ready to sell their praises for patronage. Even the respectable Meilir confesses :

“ I had heaps of gold and velvet  
From frail princes for loving them.”

Llewelyn the Great, the second, that is to say, of the three Llewelyns, aroused the enthusiasm of Bardic literature and was the subject of much stirring eulogy :

“ None his valour could withstand,  
None could stem his furious hand.

Like a whirlwind on the deep,  
See him through their squadrons sweep.  
Then was seen the crimson flood,  
Then was Offa bathed in blood,  
Then the Saxons fled with fright,  
Then they felt his royal might.

Dafydd Benfras, the author of this stanza, left many poems, and later on Griffith ap Yr Ynad Goch wrote what is regarded as among the finest of Welsh odes, on the death of the last Llewelyn, laying the blame of that catastrophe on the wickedness of his countrymen :

“ Hark how the howling wind and rain  
In loudest symphony complain ;  
Hark how the consecrated oaks,  
Unconscious of the woodman's strokes,  
With thundering crash proclaim he's gone,  
Fall in each other's arms and groan.  
Hark ! how the sullen trumpets roar.  
See ! how the white waves lash the shore.  
See how eclipsed the sun appears,  
See ! how the stars fall from their spheres,  
Each awful Heaven-sent prodigy,  
Ye sons of infidelity !  
Believe and tremble, guilty land.  
Lo ! thy destruction is at hand.”

After the Edwardian conquest in 1284 the note of the bards sensibly softened and attuned itself much more generally to love and nature. The song-birds particularly were in great request as recipients of poetic addresses and confidences.

“ And thou, lark,  
Bard of the morning dawn,  
Show to this maid  
My broken heart.”

While the same singer, Rhys Goch, describes thus the light tread of his ladylove :

“ As peahens stride in sun-ray heat,  
See her the earth elastic tread ;  
And where she walks, neath snow-white feet  
Not e'en a trefoil bends its head.

The latter part of the 14th century was extremely prolific in poetry which, with some notable exceptions, is regarded rather as showing a good general level than as producing any masterpieces. Dafydd ap Gwilym, the Welsh Ovid, is of course a striking exception. Over 250 of his poems are preserved, while Lewis Glyncothi, Gutyn Owain, Iolo Goch, Glyndwr's bard, and two or three more have left behind them something like 300 others. Dafydd ap Gwilym, who was buried at Strata Florida, holds one of the highest places in Cymric literature. It is as a love poet that he is chiefly distinguished, but his love of nature and his own beautiful country finds sole expression in many of his productions. His ode to Fair Glamorgan, written from “the heart of wild, wild Gwynedd,” asking the summer to be his messenger, is regarded as one of his best. In translation it is interesting as a contemporary picture, though a poetic one, of the richest Welsh province.

“ Radiant with corn and vineyards sweet,  
And lakes of fish and mansions neat,



With halls of stone where kindness dwells,  
And where each hospitable lord  
Heaps for the stranger guest his board,  
And where the generous wine-cup swells,  
With trees that bear the luscious pear,  
So thickly clustering everywhere.  
Her lofty woods with warblers teem,  
Her fields with flowers that love the stream,  
Her valleys varied crops display,  
Eight kinds of corn and three of hay ;  
Bright parlour with her trefoiled floor !  
Sweet garden, spread on ocean shore."

Quotations have already been made in the body of this book from Iolo Goch's ode to Glyndwr, and throughout the Wars of the Roses Lewis Glyncothi, Gutyn Owain, and Tudor Aled continued to sing of contemporary events.

The leading charge against Cymric poetry is that it is too prone to elaborate the mere art of versification at the expense of fire and animation. Alliteration was of course the chief method of ornament, though the rhyming of the terminal syllable was by no means always ignored. But, speaking generally, skill in the arrangement of words according to certain time-honoured conventions occupied more than an equitable share in the making of Welsh verse. A tendency to put mere sound above feeling and emotion did much to cramp it, and often forced it into mannerisms and affectations that would rather destroy than enhance the intrinsic merits of a composition.

"Beyond all rhetorical ornaments," says Giraldus Cambrensis, "they preferred the use of alliteration and that

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kind more especially which repeats the first letters or syllables of words. They made so much use of this ornament in every finished discourse that they thought nothing elegantly spoken without it."

Mr. Stephens, by way of illustration, points out poems by the greater bards which from the first line to the last commence with the same letter. He also attributes the extraordinary elaboration in structure with which fashion was prone to cumber Welsh poetry to a desire for increasing the difficulties of composition and in consequence the exclusiveness of the bardic order. It is not surprising that in a country where war was the chief business of life it should be by far the favourite subject of the minstrel, particularly when one remembers that the celebration of his employer's exploits or intended exploits was the chief source of the domestic poet's livelihood. The wars of Glyndwr stirred again the old fighting note which after the Edwardian conquest had given way in a great measure to gentler themes. The old laws against the bards, enunciated by Edward I., now for long a dead letter, were renewed, but after this final submission of Wales it is doubtful if they continued to have much meaning, particularly amid the chaos of the ensuing Wars of the Roses, when the bards most certainly did their full share of singing.

I have said nothing of the music which both in early and mediæval Wales played such a prominent part in the national life. The harp was always the true national instrument, though the pipe or bagpipe was well known and in frequent use; but it was never

really popular, as in Ireland and Scotland, and this was surely a valuable testimony to the superior culture of the Welsh musicians. Griffith ap Kynan, King of North Wales about 1100, already mentioned, introduced it into the Eisteddfod as the result of his Irish education. The pipes had hitherto been forbidden, and the result at the celebrated Eisteddfod at Caerwys was that Griffith's prize of a silver pipe went to a Scotsman. The Welsh, in short, despised the instrument. Lewis Glyncothi has left an amusing satire on a piper. He finds himself in Flint at an English marriage, where the guests would have none of him or his harp, but "bawled for Will the Piper, low born wretch" who comes forward as best he may, "unlike a free enobled man."

"The churl did blow a grating shriek,  
The bag did swell, and harshly squeak,  
As does a goose from nightmare crying,  
Or dog crushed by a chest when dying,  
This whistling box's changeless note  
Is forced from turgid veins and throat ;  
Its sound is like a crane's harsh moan,  
Or like a gosling's latest groan."

Giraldus, half Welshman himself, writing after his extended tour through Wales, about 1200, with Archbishop Baldwin, says :

"The strangers who arrived in the morning were entertained until evening with the conversation of young women and with the music of the harp, for in this country almost every house is provided with both. Such an influence had the habit of music on the mind and its

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fascinating powers, that in every family or in every tribe, they esteemed skill in playing on the harp beyond any kind of learning. Again, by the sweetness of their musical instruments they soothe and delight the ear. They are rapid yet delicate in their modulation, and by the astonishing execution of their fingers and their swift transitions from discord to concord, produce the most pleasing harmony."

The part-singing of the Welsh seems also to have greatly struck Giraldus in contrast to the unison in which he heard the musicians of other nations perform.

To draw the line between the bard and musician would be of course impossible. Many writers of verse could only declaim; some could sing to their own accompaniment. The mass of musicians, however, we may take it, belonged to the lower grade of wandering bards, who played first, as we have seen, upon the national instrument, the harp, as well as upon the pipe and "crwth" (a kind of rude violin).

The tone of morality was certainly not high among the mediæval Welsh bards. They had long lost all touch with the order of the priesthood, and indeed monks and poets had become almost as a matter of course inimical to one another. The latter, too, maintained a steady hatred of the Saxon that was almost creditable, seeing how often their masters, for the sake of interest or revenge, took up arms against their fellow-countrymen.

It is sufficiently difficult merely to touch, and that in the slightest manner, so vast a subject as this. In recognising the insufficiency of such an attempt,

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I am almost thankful that the period of Glyndwr and the succeeding turmoil of the Wars of the Roses puts a reasonable limit to my remarks. For it goes without saying that when Wales settled down under the Tudors to its happy and humdrum existence, the martial attitude of the bards as feudal appanages and national firebrands altogether ceased. Welsh poets hereafter were private individuals, their song ceased for the most part to be of war; nor was the Saxon or the Lloegrian any longer an object of invective. The glory of this new United Britain to which they belonged was not without its inspiration, but it has been by no means a leading note in Welsh verse, which, speaking generally, has since in this particular sung upon a minor key.





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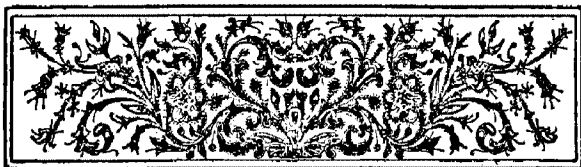
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## Heroes of the Nations.

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