

ca 1883 (Fishes presentations)

MEET OF THE GLAMORGAN HOUNDS AT NEWTON HOUSE.

[By MORIEN.]

On Thursday morning at eleven o'clock the first meet of the season of the Glamorganshire Hounds took place at the residence of the master, Mr. J. S. Gibbon, Newton House, near Ystradowen. The day was beautifully fine, and the lovely landscape, with its numerous trees decked in the variegated tints of autumn, presented a most charming picture. Newton House is situated in the midst of green fields, and is almost surrounded by a fringe of tall trees. The spot is the centre of interesting associations, for within a short distance is the grave of Owain ap Morgan, King of Morganwg, after whom Ystradowen is named. At Ystradowen the Glamorgan bards were wont to meet in the olden days under the patronage of Judge Daniel Jenkins, of Hensole Castle. The last-named was the stout old gentleman who declined to kneel before the rebel Parliament of England, and told them if they sent him to the scaffold he would ascend it with the Bible under one arm and the Magna Charta under the other. Sir Harry Vane saved him from the ire of the House of Commons by "an amusing speech," during which, likely enough, Sir Harry made merry over the Welshman's hot blood. Near here, too, is Maindy Chapel, where the pathetic, but liping, Shadrach Davies ministered during many years. On the brow of the adjacent hill is the ruined castle of Talyvan, once the home of a Welsh princely family, and afterwards the headquarters of one of the petty lordships of Glamorgan. And, interesting beyond everything else, it is the locality from which sprung the Welsh patriot, Sir Leoline Jenkins, Knight; whose benefactions to the district of his nativity are still enjoyed by the poor of the neighbourhood. It seems that he never forgot the village church of Ystradowen during his most distinguished days in the Metropolis, and while he was the associate of the learned, and favoured and trusted by Charles II. This is seen in the fact that he gave the tenor bell to this little country church, for the expense of keeping which in repair a portion of land was afterwards given by Sir Leoline's brother. Does not this fact prove that while the roar of London fell on the knight's ears his quiet thoughts often reverted to this secluded spot and the music of its Sabbath bell? But I must not linger to dream about the past. I must hurry across the fields to the "meet." Near the residence of the respected Master of the Glamorgan Hounds I came across the veritably "oldest inhabitant" in the whole district. He wore corduroy trousers, a thin jacket, and on his head a huntsman's black velvet cap. His face was very red, and, in answer to my questionings, he told me that many years ago his mistress— he did not tell me who she was—had counselled him not to drink spirits, and, said he, "I never drink anything but beer." He informed me that he was 88 years of age, and "as healthy as a brick," adding, "I need not thank anyone but God for that, and I don't." His name is David John, and he is commonly called "Old Warrior." He moved about as nimbly as a youth of twenty, and, judging by the shouts and the emphatic hunting phrases I heard him giving expression to during the day, his lungs are still very good, and he does not fear Old Nick himself. Knowing that he had always lived at Cowbridge, I asked him whether he knew Iolo Morganwg. He seemed as surprised at the question as if I had asked him whether he had ever shouted "Tally-ho!" "I should think so," was his indignant reply, and he instantly began to repeat some lines of a song said by him to have been composed by the Sage of Glamorgan in his moments of ease. The reader will wait a moment to hear "Old Iolo's" voice. The following, then, is what "Old Warrior" declared to me the Bard of Glamorgan had composed:—

Cowbridge bath no solid food,
And none of milk-sop drinkers;
No shallow, phibosophic fools,
But great and glorious thinkers,

Richard, of the Horse and Groom,
Remember what I tell ye;
Hardly in his house finds room,
And monstrous is his belly.

Tunbell Key will act his part,
A toper of renown, sir;
He said he'd drink with all his heart,
To beat all in the town, sir.

Plasterer Williams will be there,
A man of pompous words, sir;
He'll talk and drink in his elbow chair
As great as any lord, sir.

"Plasterer Williams" is no other than Iolo Morganwg himself, and from what we know of the character of the old bard the above doggerel lines were probably penned by some less exalted genius with a view to satirise him who was really "as great as any lord, sir."

While I was chatting with "Old Warrior," and, fear, wasting the time I ought to have devoted to other purposes, the visitors were rapidly entering the grounds of Newton House, and before our confab had come to a close the mounted red-coated huntsmen approached at a trot, surrounded by the splendid pack. The scene acted like magic on "Old Warrior's" nerves, and he behaved as Nimrod would have done in his old age—went after them. I passed through the door on to the lawn, where I found the master, the numerous host of the mansion, Mr. John Gibson, Sir Joseph Spearman, Bart., Col. Gould, St. Hilary; Captain Treharn, Mr. Birt St. Albyn Jenner, Col. Lindsay, and Mr. David Lindsay, The Woodlands; Mr. Daniel Owen, Ash Hall; Mr. Knight, Tregroes (Brazilian Consul); Mr. Tudor Crawshaw, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Treharne, Coedriglan; Mr. John Evans, Crofta; Mr. Knox, The Elms, Llantrisant; Mr. Arthur Treharne, Miss Tyler, Llanthony; Mr. Edward Price, Bridgend; Mr. W. V. Huntley, and Mr. W. Huntley, jun., Welsh St. Donat's; Mr. Williams, Llanannor Court; Mr. Wm. Thomas, Llanannor; Mr. Ash Hall; Dr. Williams, Llanannor; Mr. Edward Bradley, Crossways; Mr. and Mrs. Thurston Basset, Crossways; Mr. Bruce St. Nicholas; Mr. Thomas Thomas, The Beech, Cowbridge; Mr. Henry Thomas, St. Hilary; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, Cowbridge; Mr. David John, Pentre, Pentre; Mr. David Thomas and Mr. Evans, Cowbridge; Mr. D. T. Alexander, Penarth; Mr. Daniel Lougher; Mr. Thomas Morgan, St. Hilary; Mr. John Thomas, auctioneer, Cowbridge; Mr. W. A. Edwards, Llandow; Mr. William Thomas, Aberysthyn; Mr. Evan Lougher, Tregôl, &c. The scene was exceedingly pretty when all the company, several wearing pink, had assembled in front of the mansion, with its fine emerald lawn decked with flower beds and at the sides with evergreens. On the centre of the building, above the entrance, was the old coat of arms of the Welsh princes of Glamorgan before the Norman Conquest—viz., a boar's head, and on the shield the fleur de lis, indicating, apparently, the intermarriage of the Norman ancestors of the host with Welsh royalty. On the scroll is the Welsh motto, "Troy rhinoddia gonestroydd" ("Through virtue and honesty"). The word gonestroydd, however, proves that the motto is not ancient, for it is a hybrid word, and not pure Welsh. The Welsh for honesty is *adwynnwydd*. The above sentiments were cogitated while the hounds, squatting in front of the mansion, were preparing their vocal organs for the forthcoming chorus. Suddenly the huntsman's horn gave forth a merry "tal-lal-la, tal-lal-la," and away went the gay cavalcade, some of the hounds endeavouring, seemingly, to imitate the music of the buglehorn with their own vocal organs. Along the road *adward*, the moors we went, between Newton and Penllyn Castle, moors that were once, no doubt, a *lyn* or lake, where ancient Silurians plied their pleasure coracles. Soon after arriving at the other side of the moors, nearest Penllyn Castle, Reynard was a-foot, and broke cover in the direction of the wood below the before-mentioned castle, followed by the gallant pack in splendid style and in full chorus. He entered the thick wood and dodged the hounds there for a considerable time. Now the hounds were silent save for the noise that they made in their efforts to scent the trail. Then music would break forth afresh and away galloped the field of sportsman in the direction taken by the pack. After an hour and a half from the time the fox broke cover the cry of "Dead, oh!" was heard echoing from woods above. The company and hounds then proceeded past Stanley Wood, leaving Llanannor Court on the right, and entered Coedriglan. In ten minutes "Tally ho!" was heard, and "Tally ho!" was echoed most lustily by "Old Warrior" who had walked to the neighbourhood of Llanannor Court. On a rocky, open space far up in the centre of Coedriglan a number of people seemed wild with excitement, and roared forth "Tally ho! Tally ho!" at the same time throwing up their arms. "Duw anywl!" remarked "Old Warrior." "Odi'r dynion wedi colli ei senses?" Hinting quietly at the row he himself had been making, he remarked,

O wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see ourselves as others see us;
It wad frae mairie a blunder tibe us,
And foolish nation.

"Both? What?" asked "Old Warrior." He then, at the sound of the harp of Scotland, broke forth into singing—

Here's health to Geddon on King,
God speed his way to sway his whig,
For him most sound and most strong.

And,—

In walkie camp we were renowned,
For being the grandest on the ground.

Also,—

Ye Cossacks tall,
Ye Prussians all,

Morien writes:—From what I know of "Warrior," he must have felt that the statement your correspondent, "Alma Mater," that he is the lover of Iolo, is a serious reflection on character as a married man. I can well picture him standing, if not on the Bridge of Sighs, the Bridge of the Cow, indignantly denying soft impeachment, and emphasising his denials with language common, it is said, to other warriors in Flanders. But, to speak seriously, I beg to thank "Alma Mater" for giving the version of the doggerel verses to the "Cowbridge Toppers," and to hope that he will favour us with more crumbs from the table of the rhymer's fair village, which is noted for its geniuses, preference to whom many interesting anecdotes remain on the tongue of the inhabitants—"At I Gwlad." In this locality flourished Iolo Morganwg, Iolo Pardd Glas, &c. I fear, however, but too true that Cowbridge "society" retained until recent years a kind of feudal exclusiveness, a traditional caste, handed down from the Northerly nobles of the vale; hence "common" means "common" in the eyes of "society" because they earned their bread by manual labour—like immortals I have named were allowed to linger "chill penury" in the rich Vale of Glamorgan. When one reads of the neglect that transcended Welsh genius, Iolo Morganwg, endured at Cowbridge in his extreme old age one's blood boils with indignation. Had it not been for an English Quaker, named Redwood, it is probable that old Iolo would have been removed, as was Fardd Glas, to die in Bridgend Workhouse. We blush for the callousness of our forefathers, remember, if the Jews "killed their prophets," Welsh people of the Vale of Glamorgan on that part starved theirs.

Sir Walter Scott describes somewhere the gipsy of Leicester—"the gipsy" of Queen Elizabeth receiving condescendingly, but stiffly and proudly the homage of gentle Will Shakespeare. Scott's lookers-on might think it was the mortal doing homage to the immortal. Instead of "Gentle Willie," dressed in his plain velvet doublet, was the proudest heritage of the realm, England, and Leicester the "nobody," notwithstanding his nodding plumes and lofty air. Iolo encountered many Leicesters ("in the gaol of Wales." In the midst of his poverty he "The Psalms of the Church" and the wilder and one day departed hence with the setting sun.

I cannot believe, until it is proved otherwise, that Iolo Morganwg condescended to write a song called "Cowbridge Toppers." "Alma Mater" denies that "Plasterer Williams" was Iolo, as well known that Iolo was a stonemason by trade and that Welsh masons were frequently plasterers as well. But your correspondent states "Plastering Williams" was a relative of Iolo. Will he kindly let us hear more about relative? "Alma Mater" commits a serious blunder when stating that Judge David Jenkins, Hensole Castle, was a Parliamentarian. The judge would have resented the allegation indignantly. I have in my possession pamphlets published by Judge David Jenkins with a view to prove that the Parliamentary party were traitors to their King. Let me give a brief outline of his case. He was born at Pendeulwyn, Glamorganshire, admitted a commoner of Edmund Hall, Oxford, 1597. After taking his B.A. David Jenkins resided at Grey's Inn, and became eminent as a counsel. Charles I. appointed him Welsh judge 1645 he was made prisoner at Hereford for activity in the Royal cause. This took place the day of the Battle of Naseby. The defeated Royalists retreated to Hereford, where J. Jenkins was engaged in, I believe, asize at the Parliamentary Army followed, took Welsh judge into custody, and conveyed him to London. When placed at the bar of the House of Commons he denied the authority of the House and refused to kneel, stating if they sent him to the scaffold he would ascend it with the Bible under one arm and Magna Charta under the other. He was imprisoned and lodged in the Tower, and not in Windsor Castle, as stated "Alma Mater." The author states that it was Harry Morien who made the doggerel speech which served the old judge. Others state it was Sir Harry Vane who did. Judge Jenkins spent his last days as prisoner in the Tower, but was released in 1656, when he retired to Cowbridge, where he died, having been forfeited his estates and rights in 1660 his estates would not be restored until on December 5, 1667, and he died at the end of Cowbridge church.

"Alma Mater" has written a collection in his letter "mentarian" read "Staunch."