

## Thomas Stephens and the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion: Letters from the *Cambrian* 1842–3

Considerable information regarding cultural and intellectual habits may be gleaned from the extensive archive of nineteenth-century newspapers and periodicals held by The National Library of Wales. Sometimes a series of articles or letters reveals so much about both the form and content of contemporary public discourse and the personalities involved that it deserves to be made more publicly accessible. The acerbic letters written by Thomas Stephens ('B.C.D.') of Merthyr Tydfil to the editor of the *Cambrian* between November 1842 and March 1843, and the vigorous replies they received from prominent contemporary figures, among them Thomas Price ('Carnhuanawc'), Taliesin Williams ('Taliesin ab Iolo') and James James ('Iago Emlyn'), constitute such a collection. These 'public letters' bear testimony to the emergence of Thomas Stephens (then only twenty-one years old) as an astute, unyielding and harsh cultural critic.<sup>1</sup> They illuminate the fierceness of the debate about the function and conduct of eisteddfodic prize competitions in the decade before the 'Treachery of the Blue Books' in 1847 subdued such public dispute, at least in the English language. They also shed light on the ideas of a group of Welsh middle-class 'progressives' who sought to replace the reigning paradigm of romanticism in Welsh culture with a more scientific approach to history and national culture.<sup>2</sup> In addition, they reveal attempts to establish cultural rules to govern the 'fair' use of bardic names and pseudonyms in Victorian Wales. Last, but not least, references to the continuation of the debate in other newspapers, such as the *Merthyr Guardian* and the *Silurian*, as well as at public meetings and in a high-street pharmacy, demonstrate how consensus was reached in the 'walking town' of Merthyr Tydfil in the 1840s.<sup>3</sup>

On 22 October 1842 the *Cambrian*, the most important newspaper in Wales, ran an extensive report on the ninth Eisteddfod of the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society, which was then at the zenith of its national and international cultural fame.<sup>4</sup> It described the festive pavilion and proceedings, and listed gentry organizers and sponsors such as Lord James Stuart, Sir Benjamin Hall and Lady Hamlyn Williams. The most illustrious guest in 1842 was Chundermohun Chatterjee, nephew of Dwarkanauth Tagore, who was on a visit to Wales 'with a view of investigating our national customs'.<sup>5</sup> His presence was noted with much enthusiasm and a series of *englynion* marking his visit was commissioned on the first day, followed by a second series to celebrate the first birthday of Prince Edward Albert, son of Queen Victoria and her Consort. Pride of place, however, was given to a detailed account of the rapturously received speeches and adjudications of the historian Thomas Price ('Carnhuanawc'), who outlined some of the achievements of the Welsh Manuscripts Society founded under the auspices of the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society and celebrated the influence of Welsh legend on medieval European literature.<sup>6</sup> Also reported at length was the address given by the respected Merthyr schoolmaster, bard and druid Taliesin Williams ('Taliesin ab Iolo'), in which he bemoaned the fact that Welsh literature had not been favoured with the royal attention which Scottish literature had received, and alluded to the druidic origins of the eisteddfod.<sup>7</sup> The remainder of the article was taken up with detailed information about the thirty-two prize competitions and their adjudications, and with an account of the evening dinner and its numerous toasts to the royal family.

This report was followed, between 5 November 1842 and 18 March 1843, by a series of ten long letters from 'B.C.D.' to the editor, which constituted a general critique of the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society and the direction of the eisteddfod

movement. The missives exhibited a wide range of scholarly learning and revealed an analytic mind of a scientific bent; but they also showed a tendency to savagely and, at times, unfairly criticize and berate acknowledged cultural leaders and their deeds. The letters reflected the personal disappointment of an unsuccessful competitor as well as the +rebellious cultural values of a highly articulate and learned young man. The replies which 'B.C.D.' received from some of the established figures he had singled out for criticism served only to fuel the vehemence of his writing, all of which was expressed under cover of his mysterious pseudonym. The secret was only revealed after the direct intervention of Taliesin Williams ('Taliesin ab Iolo') following public discussion of the case. The ninth letter of 'B.C.D.' revealed that the anonymous correspondent was Thomas Stephens (1821–75), a twenty-one year-old chemist at Merthyr Tydfil.<sup>8</sup> Only his tenth and final letter was signed 'Thomas Stephens (B.C.D.)'.

His collection of ten letters articulated a detailed critique of the ninth Abergavenny eisteddfod as an example of the parlous state of affairs of the eisteddfod movement. Only two of the thirty-two competitions gained the young man's full support, namely the 'Essay on the place which the Welsh language occupies among the languages of the Celtic family', which was awarded to the German Carl Meyer, and the 'Best collection of twelve ancient unpublished traditional tales, relating to the county of Glamorgan', which was won by Morgan Rhys of Ystradowen. The sponsors of other prizes (for instance, prizes 3, 4, 7, 11 and 12) were accused of showing 'bad taste' in setting 'worse than useless subjects' which did not celebrate ancient national traditions, elucidate the history of the country or cultivate its music or literature.<sup>9</sup> They therefore did not add to the 'improvement, morally, socially, and intellectually, of the inhabitants of Wales'.<sup>10</sup> Most prizes, in the opinion of 'B.C.D.', made a 'Detestable mockery!' of the eisteddfod tradition.<sup>11</sup> Instead of 'storing the mind with useful information' or 'aiding man to obtain scientific information', the Abergavenny eisteddfodau entertained the Welsh with an 'empty show'.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the harshness of his opinions, had 'B.C.D.' restricted himself to abstract criticism and the formulation of his vision for a more modern eisteddfod, his letters might not have exasperated his contemporaries as much as they did. However, he made a point of personally vilifying the organizers and adjudicators of several eisteddfodau under cover of his pseudonym. His first target was the highly revered Thomas Price, who happened to be the adjudicator of the competition for the best 'Address to the working classes, on the advantages which their children will derive from a careful attention to their religious and moral education', to which Thomas Stephens, it was revealed later, had unsuccessfully submitted an essay.<sup>13</sup> The censure of the adjudication was followed by unflattering remarks about Price's groundbreaking history of Wales, *Hanes Cymru a Chenedl y Cymry* (1836–42). 'B.C.D.' concluded his first letter by suggesting more worthwhile subjects for prize essays, such as the development of the Welsh legal system and the history of Wales during the Wars of the Roses and the civil wars. His proposals mirror fields of which he had intimate knowledge and essays with which he won subsequent eisteddfod competitions.<sup>14</sup> There was, thus, an element of self-interest in his attacks, a feature which was noted by several correspondents. Next, the 'unfortunate wight', eisteddfod secretary Ieuan ap Gruffydd, was accused of composing his own entries after the closing date of the competition, and of other instances of misconduct in his office.<sup>15</sup> 'B.C.D.' also hinted at improprieties involving Taliesin Williams and Daniel Evans ('Daniel Ddu') at the 'Gwent and Dyfed Royal Eisteddfod and Musical Festival' of Cardiff in 1834, and sat in judgement on some of the most important gentry patrons of

early nineteenth-century eisteddfodau, the ‘Ladies Charlotte Guest, Hall, and Greenly’.<sup>16</sup> He traduced the former for her ‘vicious morality’ and the latter two for patronizing literature ‘more for the sake of show than real patriotism’. Indeed, the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion, so ‘B.C.D.’ claimed, had become synonymous with ‘deceit, chicane, and pusillanimity’.<sup>17</sup> The society was ‘a loathsome ulcer, upon an otherwise healthy body’.<sup>18</sup> The leader of the famed Breton delegation of 1838, Theodore Hersart de La Villemarqué, was openly accused of plagiarizing the *Mabinogi* (a charge which was probably true),<sup>19</sup> while William Williams (‘Caledfryn’), a well-known poet and adjudicator, received this acerbic epitaph:

’Neath this stone thou stingless liest, – this day  
No honour deservest;  
Thou who ne’er hadst mercy shown,  
’Mid universal hate sleep on.<sup>20</sup>

The work of well-known poets was also censured in detail and they were denounced personally. The prize-winning elegy by John Jones (‘Tegid’) to Lady Greenly (‘Llwydilas’) was ‘trash’, with every stanza bearing ‘evidence of mental embarrassment’. Its author’s ‘knowledge of human nature’ was deemed ‘very scanty, and of taste, still less’.<sup>21</sup> The Independent minister James James (‘Iago Emlyn’), who composed the winning series of *englynion* on the young Prince Albert and on Chundermohun Chatterjee, was dubbed ‘the most ridiculous man, and miserable poetaster in existence’, a poet who could ‘command neither knowledge nor language to bear him out’.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, much of the critique formulated by ‘B.C.D.’ was perceptive and foreshadowed some developments in the eisteddfod movement and in Welsh scholarship later in the century. For instance, his comments on the work of Taliesin Williams, for all their viciousness, combined insightful doubts about the antiquity of the druidism of Edward Williams (‘Iolo Morganwg’) and his son Taliesin with an attack on its dubious value as an expression of the modern national aspirations of Wales.<sup>23</sup> Letters written in support of ‘B.C.D.’ and references to his private correspondence indicate that he expressed the opinions of a group of south-Walian literati rather than just his own.<sup>24</sup>

The merit of ‘B.C.D.’’s opinions, however, was undermined by his rashness and by the personal nature of his anonymous animadversions. It was the combination of vindictiveness and perceived cowardliness that provoked a vigorous response. Most of the replies published in the *Cambrian* and the *Merthyr Guardian*, as well as references to discussing the letters of ‘B.C.D.’ in a public meeting, criticized him for violating an assumed cultural rule of ‘fair play’ which governed the use of bardic names and pseudonyms. In a measured response Thomas Price expressed his dismay at being ‘fired at by a man behind a parapet’ and signed his own name rather than using his well-known bardic pseudonym.<sup>25</sup> Price suspected that ‘B.C.D.’ and the author of the essay whose introductory passages he had criticized in his adjudication were the same person. However, like other contemporaries, he considered it a waste of time to engage in lengthy public discourse with a truly unknown pseudonymous writer. Taliesin Williams took a different stance. He entered the debate with a strongly-worded letter defending ‘the living *and the dead*’ – Thomas Price and the Druids – because they had been anonymously vilified.<sup>26</sup> When Williams’s suspicions about the identity of the author deepened, he personally confronted the man he suspected to be ‘B.C.D.’ in his shop and published a report of his visit in the *Cambrian*, thus bringing the name of the culprit into the public domain.<sup>27</sup> In this letter

he succinctly clarified why Thomas Stephens's use of a pseudonym was considered inappropriate; it was not conducive to a 'fair hearing'.<sup>28</sup>

The issue of the *Cambrian* which carried the first reply by Taliesin Williams also printed the first letter by James James, whose *englynion* to Prince Albert and Chundermohun Chatterjee had been berated and whose honesty had been doubted by 'B.C.D.'. Like Williams, James not only defended himself, but began with other bards and adjudicators, like Walter Davies ('Gwallter Mechain') and William Williams ('Caledfryn'). He demonstrated the importance of Edward Williams's history and manual of *cynganedd*, *Cyfrinach y Beirdd*, by disproving his critic's knowledge of its rules, and advising the 'disappointed and unsuccessful' candidate to study the rules of Welsh poetry before competing again.<sup>29</sup> A week later James submitted a light-hearted and rather saucy poem in which he explained the genesis of the *englynion*.<sup>30</sup> He had, as a later letter revealed, gained knowledge of the identity of 'B.C.D.' and had decided to mock the dour young zealot with a frivolous poem describing the alcohol-fuelled and enjoyable genesis of his own work.<sup>31</sup> A renewed assault by 'B.C.D.', however, made it impossible for James to forgive the 'naughty boy'. He demolished the 'dunce' in two more letters, in which he argued that neither his knowledge of *cynganedd* nor his French were satisfactory, and recommended that the chemist stick to his 'gallipots' in future.<sup>32</sup> On 1 April 1843 he was granted the last word in this battle of words.<sup>33</sup> Thomas Stephens did not reply. He had either been silenced by the thinly veiled threat of legal action from Taliesin Williams or – upon reading a poem which extolled 'ab Iolo' as the 'loved minstrel of Cambria!' – had realized that he had underestimated the following of his main adversary.<sup>34</sup>

Through the series of letters that he wrote to the *Cambrian* in 1842–3 Thomas Stephens first emerged as the most critical native commentator on Welsh culture and public life in early and mid-Victorian Wales. Thirty years later biographical sketches lauded him as the 'historian Wales needed', but also noted that he was a severe critic, too 'cold and collected' to win the affection of his contemporaries.<sup>35</sup> This public correspondence illustrates the early appearance of these traits. It shows that the young Stephens was aware of his superior intellect and learning, and that he was already filled with bitterness against contemporaries and institutions which did not honour his gifts or heed his advice. The exasperated replies 'B.C.D.' received, and the unusual direct action taken by Taliesin Williams to ensure his unmasking, reveal how far he had transgressed beyond the limits of acceptable Victorian behaviour. They help to explain the animosity with which many of his later writings were received and may have contributed to the exclusion of his essay on the Madoc legend from the competition at the 'Grand Eisteddfod of Llangollen' in 1858.<sup>36</sup> As a scholar and cultural critic Thomas Stephens merited greater praise than his contemporaries gave him, but those who dare to 'laugh at the impotent malice of . . . weakminded men' rarely win plaudits.<sup>37</sup>

**Relevant letters in the *Cambrian* and *The [Glamorgan, Monmouthshire, Brecon Gazette, Cardiff Advertiser and] Merthyr Guardian***

(Letters which are not reproduced here have been marked with an \*.)

\**The Cambrian*, 24 September 1843: Advertisement of the ninth Anniversary and Eisteddfod of the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society

\**The Cambrian*, 22 October 1842: Detailed account of the Eisteddfod

*The Cambrian*, 5 November 1842: 'B.C.D.', Letter 1

*The Cambrian*, 12 November 1842: 'B.C.D.', Letter 2  
 ———: Letter by T. Price [Thomas Price 'Carnhuanawc'] in defence of himself

\**Merthyr Guardian*, 19 November 1842: Reprint of letter by Thomas Price, with supportive editorial comments

\*————: Publication of the prize-winning elegy to Lady Greenly by John Jones ('Tegid'), with a 'memoir' and a translation of the poem

*The Cambrian*, 19 November 1842: 'B.C.D.', Letter 3

\**The Cambrian*, 3 December 1842: Letter by 'Cantab' in support of 'B.C.D.'  
 ———: 'B.C.D.', Letter 4

\**Merthyr Guardian*, 3 December 1842: Letter by 'Patera Ligneá' [Taliesin Williams, 'Taliesin ab Iolo'] in support of Thomas Price, with apologies from the editors for omitting it the previous week

\**The Cambrian*, 10 December 1842: Letter by 'Nicendus' in reply to 'Cantab'

\**Merthyr Guardian*, 10 December 1842: Letter by 'B.C.D.' in defence of his pseudonym

*The Cambrian*, 31 December 1842: 'B.C.D.', Letter 5

\**Merthyr Guardian*, 31 December 1842: Letter by Morgan Lloyd inviting 'Patera Ligneá' to defend druidism by providing proof of its history

\**Merthyr Guardian*, 7 January 1843: Letter by 'Patera Ligneá' against the use of pseudonyms

*The Cambrian*, 14 January 1843: 'B.C.D.', Letter 6

*The Cambrian*, 21 January 1843: 'B.C.D.', Letter 7

*The Cambrian*, 28 January 1843: 'B.C.D.', Letter 8

*The Cambrian*, 4 February 1843: Letter by Taliesin Williams ('ab Iolo')  
 ———: Letter by 'Iago Emlyn' (James James)

*The Cambrian*, 11 February 1843: Thomas Stephens, Letter 9; 'B.C.D.', P.S. to the letter  
 ———: Poem by 'Iago Emlyn'

*The Cambrian*, 18 February 1843: Letter by Taliesin Williams ('ab Iolo')  
 ———: Letter by 'Iago Emlyn'

\**The Cambrian*, 25 February 1843: Corrections to letter by Taliesin Williams  
 ———: Letter by 'Iago Emlyn'

*Merthyr Guardian*, 11 March 1843: Poem, 'Impromptu! Addressed to Taliesin Williams, Esq., by his early pupil, Wm. Millbourne Kirkhouse'

*The Cambrian*, 18 March 1843: Thomas Stephens ('B.C.D.'), Letter 10

\**Merthyr Guardian*, 18 March 1843: Letter by 'Ap Iago ap Iolo ap Beelzebub' complaining about the whole correspondence

*The Cambrian*, 1 April 1843: Letter by 'Iago Emlyn'

- <sup>1</sup> They help us trace ‘Stephens’s first involvement in popular culture’, a gap in our knowledge pointed out by Brynley F. Roberts, ‘Welsh Scholarship in Merthyr Tydfil’, *Merthyr Historian*, 10 (1999), 58. For a reference to ‘public letters’, see William D. Jones, “‘Going into Print’: Published Immigrant Letters, Webs of Personal Relations, and the Emergence of the Welsh Public Sphere” in Bruce S. Elliott, David A. Gerber, and Suzanne M. Sinke (eds.), *Letters across Borders: The Epistolary Practices of International Migrants* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp. 175–99.
- <sup>2</sup> The argument exposed in the letters is perhaps the first public acting out of the ‘unfortunate polarisation between two aspects of a national revival’. See Emyr Humphreys, *The Taliesin Tradition: A Quest for Welsh Identity* (Bridgend, 1989), p. 144.
- <sup>3</sup> *The Cambrian*, 28 January 1843; *ibid.*, 18 February 1843. For the urban structure of this ‘walking town’, see Harold Carter and Sandra Wheatley, *Merthyr Tydfil in 1851: A Study of the Spatial Structure of a Welsh Industrial Town* (Cardiff, 1982).
- <sup>4</sup> *The Cambrian*, 22 October 1842. The programme of the eisteddfod had appeared in the *Cambrian* on 24 September 1842. For a history of the society, see Mair Elvet Thomas, *Afiath yng Ngwent: Hanes Cymdeithas Cymreigyddion y Fenni 1833–1854* (Caerdydd, 1978). For the international impact, see David Thorne, ‘Cymreigyddion y Fenni a Dechreuadau Ieitheg Gymharol yng Nghymru’, *National Library of Wales Journal*, 27 (1991), 97–107.
- <sup>5</sup> *The Cambrian*, 22 October 1842.
- <sup>6</sup> For Thomas Price (‘Carnhuanawc’), see Jane Williams (‘Ysgafell’) (ed.), *The Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc, Vicar of Cwmdû, Breconshire; and Rural Dean* (2 vols., Llandovery, 1855).
- <sup>7</sup> For Taliesin Williams (‘Taliesin ab Iolo’), see Brynley F. Roberts, “‘The Age of Restitution’: Taliesin ab Iolo and the Reception of Iolo Morganwg” in Geraint H. Jenkins (ed.), *A Rattleskull Genius: The Many Faces of Iolo Morganwg* (Cardiff, 2006), pp. 461–79.
- <sup>8</sup> *The Cambrian*, 4 February 1843; *ibid.*, 11 February 1843: Thomas Stephens, Letter 9.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 November 1842: ‘B.C.D.’, Letter 1; *ibid.*, 12 November 1842: ‘B.C.D.’, Letter 2; *ibid.*, 19 November 1842: ‘B.C.D.’, Letter 3.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 November 1842: ‘B.C.D.’, Letter 2.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 January: ‘B.C.D.’, Letter 8.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 November 1842: ‘B.C.D.’, Letter 1.
- <sup>14</sup> The manuscripts of most of these essays are in the Thomas Stephens archive at the National Library of Wales.
- <sup>15</sup> *The Cambrian*, 19 November 1842: ‘B.C.D.’, Letter 3.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* Taliesin Williams had been ‘Corresponding (Welsh) Secretary’ of the Cardiff eisteddfod of 1834, at which he also won the chair for his ode on the Druids. Daniel Evans corresponded with him and had also been an adjudicator.
- <sup>17</sup> *The Cambrian*, 28 January 1843: ‘B.C.D.’, Letter 8.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 November 1842: ‘B.C.D.’, Letter 3. See Mary-Ann Constantine, *The Truth against the World: Iolo Morganwg and Romantic Forgery* (Cardiff, 2007), pp. 158–9.
- <sup>20</sup> *The Cambrian*, 21 January 1843: ‘B.C.D.’, Letter 7.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 December 1842: ‘B.C.D.’, Letter 5.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 January 1843: ‘B.C.D.’, Letter 7; *ibid.*, 18 March 1843: Thomas Stephens (‘B.C.D.’), Letter 10.
- <sup>23</sup> *The Cambrian*, 18 March 1843: Thomas Stephens (B.C.D.), Letter 10. On Stephens’s critique of druidism, see Marion Löffler, *The Literary and Historical Legacy of Iolo Morganwg, 1826–1926* (Cardiff, 2007), pp. 100, 134–7, 186–98.
- <sup>24</sup> See, for instance, his allusion to the comments made by ‘Caswallon’, *The Cambrian*, 14 January 1843: ‘B.C.D.’, Letter 6. See the letter by ‘Cantab’, *ibid.*, 3 December 1842.
- <sup>25</sup> *The Cambrian*, 12 November 1842; *Merthyr Guardian*, 19 November 1842. The editors of the *Merthyr Guardian* warmly endorsed Price’s rebuke of ‘B.C.D.’.
- <sup>26</sup> *Merthyr Guardian*, 3 December 1842.
- <sup>27</sup> *The Cambrian*, 4 February 1843; *ibid.*, 11 February 1843: Thomas Stephens, Letter 9.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 February 1843.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* It is noteworthy that Thomas Stephens, later a major critic of Iolo Morganwg’s legacy, had illustrated his criticism with citations from *Cyfrinach y Beirdd*.
- <sup>30</sup> *The Cambrian*, 11 February 1843.

- <sup>31</sup> Ibid. The poem well illustrates the atmosphere in such all-male Cymreigyddion meetings at public houses, and is a good example of the friendly bardic jousting which occurred in the pages of the Victorian press.
- <sup>32</sup> *The Cambrian*, 11 February 1843: 'B.C.D.', Letter 9; *ibid.*, 18 February 1843; *ibid.*, 25 February 1843.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 April 1843.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 February 1843; *Merthyr Guardian*, 11 March 1842: Poem, 'Impromptu! Addressed to Taliesin Williams, Esq., by his early pupil, Wm. Millbourne Kirkhouse' (Millbourne Kirkhouse regularly contributed poems to the *Merthyr Guardian*); *The Cambrian*, 18 March 1843: Thomas Stephens ('B.C.D.'). Letter 10.
- <sup>35</sup> Charles Wilkins, 'Men Whom I have Known: Thomas Stephens', *Cymru Fu*, 9 November 1889, 72.
- <sup>36</sup> Löffler, *The Literary and Historical Legacy of Iolo Morganwg*, pp. 56–7.
- <sup>37</sup> *The Cambrian*, 28 January 1843: 'B.C.D.', Letter 8.

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## THE LETTERS<sup>37</sup>

***The Cambrian*, 5 November 1842**

ABERGAVENNY CYMREIGYDDION

LETTER 1

*To the EDITOR of The CAMBRIAN*

SIR, – It may not be amiss to offer a few remarks upon the late eisteddfod before the excitement occasioned by it shall have subsided, and without making further preface I will direct the attention of your readers to the distribution of the prizes. Prize 1 was one worthy of the Society, and the successful competitor, if we may judge from Dr. Pritchard's lucid adjudication, one of no ordinary merit. The Society will, it is hoped, take measures to ensure its speedy publication, as it cannot fail to be highly interesting to all lovers of Wales and Welsh literature. The announcement of the intention to publish 'Vortimer's Essay', in accordance with the expressed wishes of the judges, by its author Arthur James Johnes, Esq. (in the supplement to the *Hereford Times* of Saturday), is hailed with pleasure. I cannot refrain from expressing my sincere approbation of the Society's selection of judge. The author of the 'Oriental Origin of the Celtic Nations' is one of the fittest men that could be appointed to the office. I am only surprised that the committee, which is the quintessence of prejudice and folly, should have fixed upon Dr. Pritchard, who, in his 'Researches into the Physical History of Man', boldly bids defiance to existing prejudices in his search after truth. Did the Society exhibit equal good sense upon all occasions, it were needless to praise, and unjust to condemn. Prize 2, awarded to Mr. Thos. Jenkins, Dowlais. I have no desire to impeach Carnhuanawc's integrity, still less would I insinuate incompetency; but in his adjudication on this subject he did not appear to be altogether divested of prejudice. His endeavours to combat the views of one of the other competitors evidenced that that was no mean composition which required serious refutation at his hands. I spoke of his endeavours, for such they were, and no more. The offensive passages, as far as could be gathered from Mr. Price, were a few prefatory remarks calling in question not the utility of the eisteddfodau in the spirit they were proceeded in, and profess to be actuated by, but in their actual management; and also the benefits which the Welshmen of the present age have derived from having the military exploits and butchering propensities of their ancestors recorded to them. These are positions which cannot be controverted, for though the attempt was made, backed by Mr. Price's eloquence, the correctness of the position still remains apparent. As to the actual benefits derived, the worthy judge, [in] spite of his patriotic efforts, left us as much in the dark as ever, and only demonstrated that much more good might be done, under proper management, than there actually is by our eisteddfodau. From the nature of the subject, the objectionable passages could have formed but a small portion of the whole address; and it cannot be concealed that a writer, who boldly dared to break through the trammels of prejudice, may have been able to write an address worthy of the commendation of an unprejudiced judge. But as to what the real merits were of the address itself – the views advanced therein – or the manner in which they were treated, we were allowed to know nothing; and were only permitted to view, through false colouring, a few prefatory remarks. There were but two prizes (1 and 2) in the whole thirty-one worthy of the notice of Welshmen and Welsh writers; and to Sir John Guest is awarded the merit of having, in proposing the second prize, exhibited taste far better, and more accordant with the enlightened spirit of the age, than all the rest put together – to use a Welsh phrase, 'Na holl Gymru



penbaladr'. I take this opportunity, also, to compliment the inhabitants of the Principality on the very good taste which induced eight Welshmen to compete upon this subject, and to congratulate Mr. T. Jenkins upon his success though it is hoped that this, coming from me, may not be thought such 'damning fame as Duneiads only give'.

Prizes 3 and 4 were not, I am happy to find, competed for. It is a source of pleasure to me, for the reasons that offering prizes for such subjects exhibiting very bad taste in the donors, Welsh writers shewed very good taste in declining to write upon them; and that Sir Benjamin Hall and Lady Edwards have an opportunity offered them to substitute others, more worthy of the nobility of an intelligent and time-honoured race. In the subjects offered there is no scope for originality; for to answer the requisition, it was merely necessary to translate some book of travels in Wales. It is hoped, therefore, that the worthy personages named will avail themselves of the opportunity offered them, and substitute others, such as an 'Essay on Ancient British Government' (to be written after the models of Heeren), 'Researches into Ancient Politics', and 'Muller's History of the Dorians', and a 'History of the Social, Moral, and Political Condition of the Welsh people during the wars of York and Lancaster' – a very dark period in the history of both England and Wales. These are subjects well worthy of attention. An ably-written essay on British Government would supply a blank in Welsh literature. There is little or nothing written in the language calculated to throw light upon it, although there are ample materials for the purpose. Writers upon Welsh history treat but little of it, and then but very superficially. Wotton's 'Leges Walliæ' are anything but satisfactory, even for the circumscribed period they refer to. I am sorry to say that Mr. Price's *Hanes Cymru* is but ill calculated to supply this defect. That work, though it has great merit I am proud to state, is yet disfigured by prejudices, numberless inconsistencies, confused and ill-matured views, and unpardonable neglect. An enquiry into this subject would show to what extent the Sons of the Anglo-Saxons were indebted to those of Wales; and in conjunction with the few remnants that are preserved of the Brehon Laws of Ireland, throw great light upon the much-agitated point of the origin and development of the feudal system. The history of Wales, during the contest of the Rival Roses, would show the Welsh in quite a novel position, and exhibit the influence which peculiar views and customs had in determining their conduct toward the contending parties. But as it is not my intention to write a metaphysical disquisition at present, I shall leave the propriety of adopting these subjects, in preference to those objected to, for the joint consideration of the donors and the Cymreigyddion Society, and return to notice the other subjects, with your permission, next week, when I shall take the liberty to offer a few remarks, for the consideration of those who have contributed towards the prizes for 1845, and for their guidance in the selection of subjects, worthy of the Society and its supporters; and am, sir, with many thanks for the admission of this into your paper,

Yours, obliged,

B.C.D.

Nov. 1st, 1842.

***The Cambrian*, 12 November 1842**

ABERGAVENNYCYMREIGYDDION

LETTER 2

*To the EDITOR of The CAMBRIAN*

SIR, – In pursuance of the object stated in my first letter, I again appear before your readers; but before proceeding with the subject matter of this, beg to request them to

read 'projected' instead of 'proceeded' in the sentence 'the spirit they were proceeded (projected) in'; and for the 'Sons of the Anglo-Saxons' read 'Laws of the Anglo-Saxons' – mistakes occasioned by that system of hieroglyphics denominated 'my handwriting'. Now to business – Prizes 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, being for poetry, shall be noticed collectively in my next letter, when some criticisms will be offered upon some of the poetical compositions. The next coming in review is Prize 10, for the best twelve Welsh traditional tales, given by J. H. Vivian, Esq., M.P., who, in his judicious selection of the subject, has set an example worthy of the imitation of those becoming subscribers for the next eisteddfod. Next in point of utility to the written literature of nations may be ranked their traditions, whether we regard them as historical evidences, supplying oft-times the deficiencies of better-authenticated records; or as the faithful portraiture of national character, unfolding in its gradual steps the progress of that second civilization, termed by the French historian and premier Guizot, 'Modern European Civilization'; exhibiting the admixture of the Germanic elementary character (which is analogous to, and of kindred origin and development with, that of the Welsh), and those of Greece and Rome, and the formation of a new and distinct character, combining the energy of the new with the elegance of the old world in the present population of Europe; and supplying a key to unlock the store of national ideas, where we view the hidden motives of which history exhibits only the effects embodied in human actions. As the mere collecting of the tales requires no exercise of talent on the part of the competitors, there can be but little doubt of its having been justly awarded.

Prize 11 is liable to the same objections as 3 and 4. It is of too local a character, of very little general interest, and must have been suggested by some intriguer who is, or hopes to be, in possession of all the available information on the subject. The eisteddfodau purport to be held for the celebration of ancient national usages – elucidation of the history, cultivation of the music, propagation of the literature – and improvement, morally, socially, and intellectually, of the inhabitants of Wales. Since such are the ostensible objects, in the name of common sense let me ask if these are to be obtained by the means employed, by offering for competition such subjects as these, subjects unconnected with any feature in national character, or with any recorded action (worthy of commemoration) in Welsh history; subjects whose only claim upon the notice of Welsh literary characters is the pecuniary reward. Of what utility is it, or what interest can it afford the public to know, that Sitsyllt ab Dyfnwal was Lord of Llanover; and to find that the only feature of the national manners of a past age displayed in his character was its brutality, without any redeeming traits. Who his descendants are, I neither know nor care, but am sure that if ever they deserved, they have received the meed<sup>37</sup> of public applause their deeds entitled them to. Singularly enough, on almost every occasion they had to censure the silly prejudices of the Society. The Welsh public, and Welsh literati in particular, exhibit in their actions conduct highly flattering to the writer's love of his countrymen, and entitle themselves to unqualified approbation. In declining to write upon this worse than useless subject, they entitled themselves to all the praise which a censor of the malpractices of others is enabled to give. I here take the liberty to suggest to T. Wakeman, Esq., the propriety of increasing the reward, and changing the subject for one better calculated to illustrate national history and character; such, for instance, as a history of the part taken by the Welsh in the Civil War between Charles I and the Parliament, which, independent of its historical interest, and the light it is calculated to throw upon 'Dissent in Wales', affords ample scope for the display of ingenuity and talent. The Society seem to be actuated by some powerful infatuation in favour of commemorating those brutal butchers, of whom so many are found mentioned in the

pages of the Welsh historian. Here we have another (Prize 12) useless subject, liable to the same objections as those already referred to. It is a prize of four guineas for the best account of the Prichard descendants of Caradoc Freichfras (Caradoc the brawny-armed), a vaunting braggart, whose only claim (if it deserves to be termed so) is that of having been the greatest drunkard at the fabled Round Table of Arthur's equally fabled self. Do the Prichard family derive any honour from the fact of their being Caradoc's descendants? If they do, what are they? His butchering and dissipated propensities evidently debar him from having any species of claim upon the notice of the present age. If the Prichard family have any claim of their own upon the gratitude of posterity, let them claim it for themselves, and it will doubtless be allowed. Were the question asked, of what utility is it to offer such subjects for competition, will any one have the hardihood to say, in defence of the Society, that this nonsensical subject – permitting the exercise of neither the talents of the historian, nor the ingenuity and sagacity of the essayist, and precluding the possibility of the exhibition of intellectual powers of any class or character whatever – is calculated to foster native talent? Detestable mockery! How can talent, native or otherwise, co-exist, become associated, or be rendered compatible with such pursuits as writing upon topics so barren. This was awarded to Ieuan ab Gruffydd, the secretary, who had given all the information that could be got relative to the parties referred to. The worthy judge may easily be credited, when he says, 'So far no chronicler would defile his pages by entering into lengthy details, or indeed at all referring to such worthless characters.' With your permission I shall offer (upon a future occasion) some further remarks upon this award.

Nov. 8, 1842.

Yours, obediently, B.C.D.

***The Cambrian, 12 November 1842***

*To the EDITOR of The CAMBRIAN*

SIR, – In consequence of the manner in which my attention has been directed to the communication of B.C.D. in your last, I can scarcely refuse it some degree of notice, but as it is by no means a pleasant thing to stand out on open ground to be fired at by a man behind a parapet, your anonymous friend must excuse me if I make my parley as brief as possible, and retire from such a post with such expedition as I may. I am charged by B.C.D. with having, at the late Abergavenny eisteddfod, acted in a prejudiced manner by giving an undue importance and a 'false colouring' to 'a few prefatory remarks' in a certain composition, and thus unjustly depriving it of the prize. Now, in reply to this, I will ask what authority I could have for lessening the importance of or separating these passages from the rest of the work. These 'prefatory remarks', as he terms them, appeared to me as much an integral part of the composition as the middle or end, or any other portion of it. 'Tis true I might have drawn my pen through them, as well as through whatever other blemishes I might discover, and counted them for nothing in summing up the merits and defects of the composition, and the writer would, perhaps, not trouble you with any remarks upon such a mode of adjudication. But what would the other competitors have thought of such proceeding? Your correspondent seems never to have taken this question into consideration.

In the next place, as to giving 'a false colouring' to these passages, I think had such been my wish, I should have found the task utterly impracticable. The wording was too distinct and unequivocal to admit of but one construction. They contained a most direct and unmitigated censure upon the Society's proceedings, condemning

unsparingly the selection of subjects from its first formation down, with the exception of that particular one which the writer deemed worthy of exercise of his talents. There could be no mistaking the meaning of this censure, or disguising the original colouring. It was couched in language as free of ambiguity as that in which B.C.D. has embodied the same sentiments; indeed the last writer seems to have dipped his pen in the same depository of gall with the essayist himself. How any person could advance such sentiments with any prospect of success, or expect that the Society would so far stultify itself as to adopt them, appears to me quite unaccountable. If a competitor will step out of his way to introduce offensive matter, it is rather too much to expect that the adjudicator is to undertake the office of reviser, and rectify the errors upon which he is to pronounce an opinion. And besides all this, I have not yet been able to discover what the working classes, for whom this address was intended, could profit by a tirade against the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion.

As to B.C.D.'s remarks upon my *Hanes Cymru*, no one will more readily concur in the chief part of them than myself, for, though I may not always agree as to the instances, no one can more sincerely lament 'its numberless inconsistencies, confused and ill-matured views, and unpardonable neglect'. Nor will any one hail with greater delight the reverse of all these hard names in the more perfect work with which B.C.D. may at some time favour the world.

I remain, &c., &c.,  
T. Price

Nov. 9, 1842.

***The Cambrian*, 19 November 1842**  
ABERGAVERNYYCYMREIGYDDION  
LETTER 3  
*To the EDITOR of The CAMBRIAN*

SIR, – In my last you erroneously represent me quoting the Rev. T. Price, and have enclosed a sentence in inverted commas, when such had not been used. Your readers are therefore requested to read, 'When he says so, for no chronicler', &c.; and also to suppress a superfluous 'they' in the sentence, 'On almost every occasion (they) had to condemn', &c.

Hitherto things rather than men, principles rather than actions, have been the objects of censure; but the less pleasing office of censuring personal conduct is now thrust upon me, and much as the office is disliked, duty to Wales, Welshmen, and the cause of Welsh literature, imperatively demands its performance. If misconduct forces me to say 'things strong, severe, and personal', it should be regretted that the necessity for it exists, rather than that it is being done. The unfortunate wight who comes under the lash at this conjuncture is Ieuan ab Gruffydd, the secretary, a good, easy man, whose delinquences (amounting to a breach of trust) appear to have originated in sheer good nature, but are not on that account less culpable, that consideration merely entitling him to a mitigation of the censure. Not to know what was proper, and what improper conduct, is incapacity; to know and act contrarily is treachery. He has been in the habit of corresponding with persons who are competitors for the prizes offered, of detailing to them the number of compositions received, the private expressions of the judge's opinions, and the probable result of the competition. Further, a strong suspicion exists that he has been in the habit of composing works after the time allowed for sending in the compositions of others; for from a letter of his to a correspondent, bearing [a] date several days after the 1st of August, 1840, I find that the work for which he obtained a prize two years ago was

not written at that time. How long are the compositions allowed to remain in the secretary's hands before being transferred to those of the judge? Does it not appear that the judge countenances (to say the least) those doings? Any writer making such applications ought to have his name made known to the judge, and excluded from competing. So repugnant to my feelings is the duty which I am now called upon to perform that your readers will, it is hoped, permit a reiteration of what has been said above, and believe me when it is said that envy, pique, or resentment have no share in determining my conduct, nor are my feelings in any measure influenced thereby. It is an important duty, which every one who is interested in the proceedings of these societies, who take upon them to support Welsh habits and customs, and for the furtherance thereof claim national support, must feel themselves called upon to perform, and that the more imperatively, since the evils complained of are frequently occurring. The misconduct of the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society and its officers is ostensibly the subject of censure, yet similar improprieties of other societies in their past transactions may be advantageously referred to. One instance in particular relative to a late Cardiff eisteddfod deserves mention here, where the successful candidate for the chair prize was at the same time the corresponding secretary, the identity of whose handwriting in that capacity, with that of his poem, afforded Daniel Ddu an opportunity, had he been so disposed, to have turned the knowledge thus obtained to the prejudice of other competitors. I think it is my duty to mention this, though both Daniel Ddu and the party referred to are unhesitatingly exculpated from any charge of dishonesty, nor can the expressions used without injustice be insidiously construed. The exposition of these faults and bad management is not so much the object in view, as the prevention of such occurrences in future; and though it is felt to be a duty to condemn their misconduct, no one would derive greater satisfaction from finding irreproachable the proceedings of the Abergavenny Society. These things have been done, and the attention of the committee is now called to them, as upon their being remedied depends the permanence of the institution. The serious attention of the Rev. Thos. Price is called to this matter, for he will inevitably become implicated in the charges, which must necessarily be made.

It was my intention to have taken the poetical subjects into consideration this week, but subsequent reflection induced me to change my plan. Having seen Tegid's elegy in a contemporary paper, it was thought advisable to devote this letter to matters which were reserved for a later stage, and defer to next week, when it will be more mature, a critique upon the poetry, which will be rendered impartial, and show the writer to be actuated by a love of justice and zeal for public good. Under these circumstances I will content myself with briefly discussing the merits of the subjects, touching their claim to public notice. First comes the elegy in commemoration of Lady Greenly – a lady whose manifold claims upon the gratitude of Welshmen it were futile to deny as unjust and ungenerous to resist. She was, in truth, a proper object of a nation's love, a poet's praise, and a patriot's reverence; and compared with those for whom these are too often possessed, virtues as transcendently superior as are those of a Bentham, a Paley, and a Brougham, to the most sottish brute who wears the form of humanity. Welsh literature boasts of three lady patronesses, such as no literature or nation was ever blessed with. In vain we seek parallels in the literary history of past and present ages. Aspasia, Eudocia, and Anna Comrena present themselves to my mind and claim the institution of comparison between them and Ladies Charlotte Guest, Hall, and Greenly. But they seek in vain: the vicious morality of the first lessens the homage we would willingly pay to the splendour of her intellect, while the two latter lie under a charge of having patronised literature more for the sake of show

than real patriotism. To attempt a delineation of her many virtues would be as inconsistent with my design as above my ability.

Besides a fate attends on all I write,  
That when I a[i]m at praise they say I bite.

Pope's Imitation of

——— Stultè quem diligit urget  
Præcipue cum se numeris commendat. – Hor.<sup>37</sup>

I am therefore under a double obligation to refrain. Comte de Villemarque has shown the folly of trusting to appearances, and consequently bad taste of the Society in their selection of Prize 6, by plagiarizing the Mabinogion. Prize 7 is in very bad taste. There is but little of Druidism known, and that not by any means deserving of being perpetuated, much less commended, though some men, of good sense in other respects, insult humanity and intelligence by boasting themselves lineally descended from those *silvestres homines*, whom Orpheus is said:

Cædibus et victu foedo deterruit. – Hor. *Art Poet.*<sup>37</sup>

Prize 8, Guttyn Peris. I must be allowed to praise the judicious censure passed by Caledfryn, two years ago, on the extravagance of the bards in exalting every person whom they have to commemorate, no matter who he may be, or for what renowned, to an equality with such men as Milton and Newton, to whom may be added William Ellery Channing, the most exemplary character of this or any other age. It is a good subject, but not of sufficient interest for a leading Cymreigyddion Society.

Prize 9 is very judicious.

Mr. Price's letter, besides containing two assumptions unwarranted by my expressions – that B.C.D. is the writer of the essay spoken of, and making me to state the prize had been unjustly awarded, has no reference to me. Yet I congratulate myself for two discoveries which his letter has helped me to make – that my letter was clearly and forcibly written, and that I am not the only person who has thought the Society deserving of censure. Alone to stem the torrent of abuses, and set oneself up a mark for the shafts of the numerous advocates, perpetrators and abettors of corruption, is anything but a comfortable position, though it may contribute to personal gratification, and flatter one's vanity and ambition; and however much one may be pleased at being the 'observed of all observers', it is consolatory to find there are assistants in the good work of reform. His remarks are directed against the essayist who may, if he chooses, take up the cudgels in his own defence, and make good use of Mina's confession, that 'the Society would not stultify itself' by listening to such 'unsparing condemnation' as has been dealt to them, nor award a prize (however well deserved) to a writer who had the honesty and daring to assail their darling prejudices. How absurd it is in Mr. Price to ask me, 'How any person could have advanced such sentiments, with any prospect of success, when Gweithiwr (who I take to be the writer of the condemned essay), in the *Silurian* of Nov. 5th, declares that he did not expect it'. Indeed, it would be a matter of surprise if he had, and rather a subject of congratulation than silence, if he had produced a work so transcendantly meritorious as to have paralyzed the hostile array of prejudices and folly, and secured the prize in their spite, notwithstanding Mr. P.'s sneer at his honesty, of which, if Gweithiwr's candour be a fair criterion, I should think highly.

Nov. 15, 1842.

I am, sir, yours, obliged,  
B.C.D.

***The Cambrian*, 3 December 1842**  
ABERGAVENNYCYMREIGYDDION  
LETTER 4  
*To the EDITOR of The CAMBRIAN*

SIR, – In my last, ‘Mina’s’ should be ‘Minos’; Pluto’s Lord Chief Justice was the person referred to, not the Spanish patriot.

In all ages, and among all nations, poetry and music have been cherished and cultivated. Their general characters are, in the majority of cases, analogous; yet some features are found to be essentially different, and point, with apparent precision, to distinct features in the moral and social characters of their respective cultivators. Exaggeration forms an important part in the composition of the *Iliad* and the *Eneid*, but the works of the Welsh bards are characterized by the strictness of their adhesion to truth; a principle inculcated in all their bardic rules (*Cyfrinach y Beirdd*, pp. 28 and 33). Though such were the principles by which their works were regulated, there are those who say that if ‘Gwir yn erbyn y byd’ [Truth against the world] was their motto, their conduct was equally as much at variance with their professions as that of the *Guardian*, who sports the same. The poetry of the Welsh is disfigured by the fondness of the bards for show, and the too great use of figures which is found in all early poetry, and has been censured by all good critics. Dafydd ab Gwilym uses them in abundance, as did the English bards prior to the reign of Elizabeth (Campbell’s *British Poets*; Percy’s *Relics*, &c., &c.). To enter into an examination of the reasons that poetry is so much cherished by, and so intimately connected with, the intellectual life of the Welsh people would, compared with any benefits that would result therefrom, be a waste of time and labour. Suffice it, therefore, that such is the case. But while the majority of the people are keenly susceptible to its pleasing influence, and thoroughly conversant with its characteristics, the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society, the most stultified body of men in existence, either do not, or will not, know what Welsh poetry consists of. It is gratifying to find, upon such excellent authority as Mr. Price’s, that the Society will not attempt to ‘stultify itself’ further; but it can afford but little pleasure to learn that the men who give out poetical subjects for competition, and attempt to define the nature of the various species of poetry, know not the difference between a song and an elegy, a ballad and a didactic, or an epic poem. What bard could understand what species of composition they desired, with reference to Lady Greenly? The subject, one would naturally think, was fitted for an elegy, while (if they knew what) they required a song, and that to the beautiful air of ‘Cwypiad y dail’. Beautiful air, indeed! Who ever before heard it called so? What musician ever thought it beautiful? I do not know what they meant by it, nor, apparently, does any one else, unless it is altogether a deception to cover deficient funds, or render them available for other purposes. The wholesale condemnation of the poetical compositions two years ago is explicable to me in no other way than that of a combination, between Caledfryn and the Society, to exclude all, excepting his North Walian friend Hughes. To assert that there were none worthy of the prizes offered appears to be false. It is evident that there were some compositions of great merit sent in then, for there were passages quoted by Caledfryn from them, compared with which the best part of Tegid’s elegy is the drivelling of a schoolboy. It is not to be supposed that Tegid intended this as a prize composition. It is more probable that his

name has been lent to the Society, for the furtherance of some vile purpose. If, on the contrary, Tegid wrote his best, then to his shame be it spoken, that he knows little or nothing of what he had in hand. The thing, which for convenience sake, shall be termed an elegy, though for the life of me I cannot say whether it is a lyric or epic composition, has many beautiful lines, and some musical ones, but scarcely one fitted to the subject. It is disconnected and confused, and written in defiance of all poetical rules. The only fault found in it by the judge was that it was too short. In stating that, he must have been totally ignorant of the nature of lyric poetry, and of the Society's requisition. He could not have known what he talked about, for it is too long for a song, and totally at variance with the rule laid down for elegies. The rule is, 'Dylit adrodd yn fyrbwyll gampau a theilyngdod y dyn neu'r peth a gwyner am dano drwy hiraeth a galar; a byrr sôn am ragorau a champau, a'r drefn yn ledwyllt hanner-gamp; cann ni bydd celfydd a thrybwyll bryd wrth gwyn a galar' [You should concisely extol the accomplishments and worthiness of the man or whatever is being lamented in grief and mourning; and briefly mention virtues and achievements, and in a somewhat confused and less than perfect order; since one's mind is not skilful and rational when grieving and bereaved] (*Cyvrinach y Beirdd* 'Galargerdd', p. 40). Instead of complying with this rule, and briefly describing her good qualities, he has made it an epic, and it is nothing else than an eulogy. In ode-writing it is a rule that the writer should be all fervour and all flame, and to assume it if he does not possess it (Blair's *Lectures*, p. 480). This very obvious rule Tegid has thought proper to transgress. He uses no extravagant expressions of sorrow:

Prudd *ddigon* fy meddyliau  
My thoughts are *sufficiently depressed*.

He cannot afford to be *very* sorry; but he has sufficient sorrow for such an occasion. The difference between my translation and that published in the *Guardian* and *Hereford Times*, which is in every line improved, will be immediately perceptible. The poet recalls times, when

Un a ganai gerdd mor fwyn,  
Gyda'r delyn, mammaeth swyn  
*Nes gweled pawb mor llon a'r wyn*  
Y gwanwyn irlas wedd.

One who sang a song, so melodiously  
With the harp; fosterer of spells  
*Till all were seen, merry as lambs,*  
The green-tinted spring.

Was there anything as unconnected and absurd by poet ever penned? 'Merry as lambs'! What a brilliant conception! And what a captivating performer! Orpheus is not to be compared to her. We have read in Horace of song-inspired stones,

Saxa movere sono testudinis, &c. – *De. Art. Poet.*<sup>37</sup>

and in Virgil, of the inhabitants of the Tartarean regions forgetting their torments at the sound of music:

Quin ipsæ stupuere domus, atque intima Leti



but did not expect to find the extravagance of Grecian mythology imitated by a Welsh bard of this age, and upon such a subject.

What have we next?

Dysgedig oedd, a chall, a doeth.

She was learned, intelligent, and wise.

What an incongruous mixture we have here! Wisdom, and ‘merry lambs’; philosophy, and harp-playing. The transition from one series of objects to another should always be easy. They should appear naturally to arise from the subject. The transition from ‘lively’ to ‘severe’ is here shockingly abrupt and unwarrantable, and is also contrary to an express rule, which shall be quoted hereafter (*Cyfrinach y Beirdd*, p. 24).

In the third stanza, we are informed that Lady Greenly

Rose in the morning, with the dawn,

To read in her *big* Bible.

(Holy Bible in the translation.)

Bore godai gyda’r wawr,

I ddarllen yn ei *Bibl mawr*.

This is what could hardly have been expected from Tegid. Does the man who thought it so necessary to have the Bible re-translated, prize one only on account of its magnitude? Could he have found no juster expression than ‘Bibl mawr’? One would believe that it is intended as a burlesque. It certainly has that appearance. Perhaps he intended to imitate Burns, who uses a similar expression, but with infinitely greater propriety:

The sire turns o’er, wi’ patriarchal grace,

The big Ha’-Bible, ance his father’s pride.

‘The Cottar’s Saturday Night’

Any one acquainted with cottage economy will perceive the justness of the allusion. A cottar’s child calls it ‘big’, because it is always the largest, and often the only, book in the house. Otherwise the allusion is absurd. In a palace where there are books of various sizes and sorts it is never termed the ‘big Bible’ but ‘the Bible’. So that upon the most justifiable view of it, Tegid has plagiarized what was a very happy idea, and made himself ridiculous.

‘A fynd Duw bid’, hyn oedd iaith,

Ac araeth ei chalon.

‘God’s will be done’, this was the language

And oration of her heart.

‘Poetry is the best words placed in the best manner’ (Johnson’s *Rambler*). This is among the most ordinary prose I ever read, and most unlike poetry. But that is not its only fault. The first expression is happy and appropriate; but ‘araeth ei chalon’ is

arrant nonsense. It has no tangible meaning whatever, and what it wants there is not easily explained.

(To be continued.)

After apologizing for having trespassed so far upon your valuable columns, and your numerous readers' attention, I beg to subscribe myself,

Yours, obliged,  
B.C.D.

November 22, 1842.

***The Cambrian, 31 December 1842***

ABERGAVENNY CYMREIGYDDION

LETTER 5

*To the EDITOR of The CAMBRIAN*

SIR, – The following is in continuation of the 4th letter. Is it not a wide stretch of imagination to suppose it possible for the old bards, long since dead, to be present?

Neu'r cynfeirdd *pen, bresennol*.

We have a novel subject for an eulogy in 'Myfyr Syn'.

Ah! llawer gwaith ar lechwedd bryn,  
Y gwelwyd hi mewn *myfyr syn*.

Ah! many times on a hill side,  
Was she seen, in serious meditation.

It might naturally, and very properly be thought that human beings are entitled to the gratitude of their kindred, not so much for the possession as for the judicious use of knowledge. The poet should not pursue a metaphor, until the spirit is quite exhausted in a series of cold conceits (Goldsmith's *Essays on Belles Lettres*). It becomes, when pursued far, quite nauseous (Blair's *Lectures*, p. 175; Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* – Art. Cowley, Prior, and Young). Let us now see what an insipid, extravagant, and illogical use Tegid has made of a very pretty metaphor.

Yn derbyn gwybodaeth  
O law anian yn mhob lle,  
Tros wyneb byd hyd entrych ne';  
O'r dwyrain, 'llewin, gogledd, de,  
Trwy'r eang gre'digaeth.

Receiving knowledge  
From the hand of Nature everywhere,  
Over the face of the world to the surface of heaven;  
From east, west, north, and south;  
Throughout the vast creation.

'From the hand of Nature' is itself a bold metaphor. But for Nature to have an extended hand, from each of the four points of the compass, outdoes absurdity. Knowledge is conveyed by external impressions – by the whole body of nature. To use such an expression as 'the hand of Nature', instead of assisting the understanding,

as a simile should, gives neither an adequate nor a clear description. For the other fault Tegid, who is a scholar, may plead the example of Homer, when he describes a storm:

———— East and West together roar,  
And South and North, roll mountains to the shore.  
Pope – *Odyssey*, Book V.

Or of Virgil, who is still more extravagant:

Incubuerunt mari, totumque a sedibus imis  
Una Eurasi notusque ruunt creberque procellis  
Africus.  
*Eneid*, Lib. I.

East, West and South engage with furious sweep,  
And from its lowest bed, upturn the foaming deep.

But neither the one nor the other are entitled to credence when at variance with reason. Besides, we believe Horace when he says, that

———— dormitat Homerus.  
  
Homer himself hath been observed to nod.  
Earl Roscommon

In spite of Pope's assertion to the contrary:

Nor is it Homer nods, but we that dream.  
*Essay on Criticism*

The excellence of a whole may excuse, but cannot justify, a faulty part. How can Llwydla, with any propriety, be represented meditating upon a knowledge which she had yet to acquire? Had there not existed a presumption to the contrary, we should have thought ourselves reading the laudation of a pet-boy's acquisitions, from a too-fond mother, in the fifth stanza. That your readers may judge for themselves, a translation is herewith given:

Yn gywir iawn oedd gywrair un,  
&c., &c., &c.

*Very correct she was an ingenious one;*  
She drew the outline of the fields,  
And the cattle on the meadows,  
The goats upon yonder rocks,  
The picture of sheep, the picture of a merry young girl,  
And the lambs playing on the hill side,  
The picture of country and town, the picture of a ship on the wave,  
The picture of a wild-rushing river:  
And after improving her talent,  
She attended to the poor in the evening,

Placing meat before him, giving wood, coal, *peat*;  
*Seasonably* giving clothing.

Compare with the other translation.

What is to be thought of such lines as the first? The translator avoids the absurdity by omitting it. Tegid gives an enumeration of various pictures, but confuses the description, by referring to particular ones. 'The goats upon yonder rocks' is of that character, but is improved by the translator, who omits 'yonder', corresponding to 'draw', in the original. Of similar subjects we have seen poets make use, to advantage. A candidate, two years ago, whose signature was 'Un a'i gwelodd', has placed in my hands the elegy he sent in then. In it I find the personal character of Llwydlaas sketched with great ability, and in purely elegiac strains. While noticing her pictorial productions, he represents the objects thereof, lamenting that, since her death, no one remains to honour them justly by so doing. Personification, within proper limits, has in poetry a very good effect. Milton may be quoted, to show that it is justifiable:

Earth *felt* the wound, and Nature from her seat,  
*Sighing*, through all her works, *gave* signs of woe.  
'Paradise Lost', Book IX.

And Collins, to show its beautiful effect:

The year's best sweets, shall duteous *rise*,  
To deck its poet's sylvan grave.  
'Ode to Thompson'.

Again:

The genial meads assign'd to bless  
Thy life, shall *mourn* thy early doom.  
Ibid.

For comparison's sake, the following, from the unsuccessful poem of 'Un a'i gwelodd', is given:

Pwy sy'n teilyngu galarnad yr helyg,  
Bedw, a fflamwydd, a'r deri eangfryd?  
Pwy ond un dynai, yn fedrus eu lluniau,  
Lle baent yn rhesi ar hen wlad y brynau,  
Ac a fyfyriai dan nawdd eu cysgodau?

Pwy sy'n teulyngu distilliad y llysiau,  
Ond yr un chwiliodd eu dirgel rinweddau,  
Ac a weinyddodd o'u sudd feddyginiaeth,  
Llesiol a phrydlawn i dlodion y dalaeth,  
Fel gwnaeth ein Llwydlaas heb fustudd danodiaeth?

#### TRANSLATION

For whom should shrubs and drooping willows weep,  
And birch and beech and oak on dale and steep;  
For whom but her who with a skilful hand

Their forms pourtrayed amid the mountain land,  
And musing 'neath their shade did love to stand.

Who doth deserve the tears of flowers distill'd,  
But she whom knowledge of their virtues filled;  
Who of their balmy essence did impart,  
That which might heal the low in health and heart,  
And ne'er with taunts caus'd what she'd heal to smart.

Caledfryn took great pains (as a salvo to his conscience for the injustice he did) to condemn this poem, and that, too, for what was justified by the practice of the best poets of all ages; and had been, and are considered, excellences, by all good judges. Towards the close of this stanza, we have another of those very abrupt transitions, which were reprobated in the last letter. Instead of quoting the rule, for which there is no space, it is referred to the common sense of your readers:

Gofalai am y tlawd prydawn.  
10th line of the English above.

'Prydnawn', being governed by 'Gofalai', should be '*brydnawn*'. It is ungrammatical; and the following is incorrect:

Rhoi bwyd o'i flaen, rhoi coed, glo, *mawn*.  
11th line above.

'Peat' is never used for fuel in Monmouthshire. It is judiciously, but not unjustly, omitted in the other translation. 'Nis dylai Fardd roddi gair yn ei gerdd, a ellir gwadu arno ai gelwyddo' [A poet should not include a word in his poem that can be denied and make him a liar] (*Cyf. y Beirdd*, p. 33).

Etto hoffai'n hiaith yn fwy  
O! *mwyfwy* o lawer.

Yet she loved our language (the Welsh) more,  
O! *more and more* by a great deal.

To say 'she loved the Welsh *more and more* than any other language' is a solecism in grammar, had it no other fault.

'Eos Glennydd Gwy' (the Nightingale of the Banks of Wye) is an inappropriate and extravagant figure. What has a nightingale to do with language? Verily, Tegid does not appear to know what he is about. His organ of judgment is apparently very small, or else its function has been suspended. In another place, he terms Llwydlaeth 'Eos ei Chenedlaeth', as if she had been a public songstress; whereas her social position restricted the exercise of her vocal powers to very narrow limits. We may allow a poet to be extravagant, and on difficult subjects obscure; but on no account can he be permitted to be inconsistent. If she was 'Eos ei Chenedlaeth' (the nightingale of her generation), how could she be restricted to 'Glennydd Gwy', and if restricted to that locality, how could she be 'Eos ei Chenedlaeth'? A simile, to be perfect, must both illustrate and ennoble the subject, must shew it to the understanding in a clearer view, and display it to the fancy with greater dignity (Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* – Art. Pope). Have Tegid's similes these properties? He must be endowed

with wonderful perceptive powers, who can conscientiously say that they do anything but obscure, and debase. What has the panegyric, which in the last four lines of the 6th stanza has been pronounced on the Welsh language, to do with an elegy to Lady Greenly?

O wefus merch o ddengar ddawn,  
Mwyn serchlawn

[From the lips of a maiden with innate charm,  
Gentle and loving]

is adapted to a love song, and is very properly applied to Llwydlas. Tegid is a Christian, of such exquisite sensibility, as to be offended at

——Clywed bennydd,  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Mae hi'n byd tragwyddawl draw,

——Continually hearing,  
That she is in the distant everlasting world.

He is shocked at Llwydlas, having been permitted to enter heaven! Such is the legitimate meaning of his expressions. Such is the meaning they convey, and we shudder at the Christianity they exhibit. Hitherto, it has been thought, the musical instruments were the means by which melody was made. In this state of ignorance it is probable we may have remained, had not Tegid kindly come forward and shown the contrary.

Ag euraidd delyn yn ei llaw,  
Mwyn alaw'n llawn moliant.

With a golden harp in her hand,  
Sweet melody full of praise.

The translator kindly prefixes 'making' to the last line; and has thus given meaning to what before had none. The translation thus reads thus:

With a golden harp in her hand  
*Making* sweet melody full of praise.

But Tegid has no verb in the last line, and the word 'making' is without a corresponding one in the original. Consequently, according to Tegid, the harp itself is the melody; and not the instrument by which it is made. No man in his right senses would write such stuff. A few words more upon its general character. An elegy is the effusion of a contemplative mind, sometimes plaintive, and always serious, and therefore superior to the glitter of slight ornaments (Shenstone's Preface to his Poems). Tegid's elegy has but very little that entitles it to the name; it is, as has been before observed, an encomiastic poem – a description, which, according to Caledfryn, is perfect, of Lady Greenly's various accomplishments, without any other expression of sorrow than that she was in heaven. What have her acquisitions as a songstress, musical performer, painter, and linguist, to do with an elegy? Are these likely to be

thought of, by a mourner, in the manner Tegid uses them? Sorrow rejects variety, and affects uniformity of complaint. Tegid does not appear to have considered, for one moment, what a real mourner's feelings are. His knowledge of human nature would seem to be very scanty, and of taste, still less. He once possessed genius, but that he still does may be with propriety doubted. If Caledfryn regrets its being so short, it is opined Tegid does not, for every line shows him to have been at his wit's end. There is hardly a line in the whole poem that can be called poetry. Every stanza bears evidence of mental embarrassment. Who would wish to be tormented with more of such trash? We have seen poems composed for guinea prizes worth ten of it. It is a disgrace to society, and to Caledfryn, that such a contemptible performance should be honoured with any share of approbation, much less be declared worthy of such a prize. It is an insult to the intelligence of the inhabitants of the Principality. How the Society could for a moment suppose that their trickery would not be detected, or Caledfryn hope that his dishonesty would be forgiven is what I leave the public to judge; and without any regret, take leave of Tegid and his performance, to subscribe myself,

Yours obliged,  
B.C.D.

December 7th, 1842.

P.S. For the information of D. Jones, who will not or does not understand English when plainly written, I will turn commentator, and that upon my own scribblings. Three ancients claim to be compared to three modern ladies; but, their claims are inadmissible. Why? 'The vicious morality of the first (Aspasia) lessens the homage we would willingly pay to the splendour of her intellect; while the two latter (Anna Comnena and Eudocia) lie under the charge of having patronized literature, more for the sake of show than from real patriotism.' How can Ladies Hall and Greenly be degraded by a comparison with the ancients when it is declared in the same letter that 'it is in vain we seek parallels in the literary history of past and present ages'. Many a fool by being silent has been reputed wise. Will D. Jones take the hint and save me the trouble of supplying a commentary to so luminous a text? As a man of common sense I cannot condescend to return the abusive epithets which this 'man of learning' and of 'skill in characters' (in which capacity he has two errors) thought it became him to use. Patera Ligneia, a writer in the *Guardian*, has been replied to in the same journal.

B.C.D.

***The Cambrian*, 14 January 1843**

ABERGAVENNYCYMREIGYDDION

LETTER 6

*To the EDITOR of The CAMBRIAN*

SIR, – Pursuant to my expressed intention, I beg to call the attention of your readers to the prize *englynion*. The *englyn* is a metre found only in the poetry of the Welsh bards, to whom it is very well known, and is by them more frequently used than any other. The better to illustrate the meaning of the term and facilitate the task of following me in the observations which will, in the course of this letter, be made, an *englyn* is given as an example. The one which is fixed upon is a description of Night, and is considered to be the most harmonious in the language:

Nos dywell yn dystewi, – *caddug*  
Yn cuddio'r Eryri;

Yr haul yn ngwely'r heli,  
A'r lloer yn arianu'r lli.

Rev. Walter Davies

[Dark night becomes silent, mist  
Conceals Snowdonia;  
The sun lies in its sea bed,  
And the moon coats the water with silver.]

In Welsh poetry, and more particularly in *englynion*, it is required that the consonants in the former should correspond with those in the latter half of a line. The first line should consist of ten syllables, having a word to which the term recurrent has been given, the consonants in which must be rendered consonant or correspondent with those in the former half of the second line. Thus in 'caddug' (the recurrent word, or *gair cyrch*) the 'dd' consonant or corresponds in sound to the 'dd' in 'cuddio', in the second line. The 's d' in the first line correspond with 's t' in 'dystewi'. In the third, 'r h' correspond to 'r h' in the latter half. So, also, in the last 'r ll' to 'r ll'. Its faults are that 'the first line is one syllable too short; the third line has two gross faults – the words "gwely" and "heli" form a *proest*; and there is what is called *dybryd sain* (see *Cyv. y Beirdd*, p. 237) existing between the same words. The second remark also applies to the last line, – "nu" in "arianu", and "lli", nearly rhyme.' This short extract is taken from one of a series of letters upon Welsh poetry which appeared in the *Guardian*, at the close of 1840, from the able pen of a clergyman and perfect scholar who modestly contents himself with being known as Raphael. I give these few remarks upon the construction of an *englyn*, to which I shall not again recur, but confine my observations to the *englynion*, with reference to taste; leaving your readers themselves to judge how far the construction of Iago Emlyn's lines are in conformity therewith.

#### ENGLYNION TO THE PRINCE OF WALES

##### 1.

Blin oeddem er's blynyddau, – byd isel,  
Heb d'wysog; a gwaeau  
Llywelyn gwelwyn yn gwau,  
Foddysig o fedd oesau.

The words 'gwelwyn' (pale), and 'fodd' (manner), part of 'foddysig' (bruised manner), have no other reference to the object (Llywelyn's woes) than as filling up the line (*geiriau llanw*). If Llewelyn's woes were 'bruised', they were necessarily in a 'bruised manner'. What has Llewelyn's paleness to do with the weaving of his woes at this distance of time? What have Llewelyn's woes to do with the sorrow of the Welsh nation at not having a prince?

##### 2.

Ond Iorweth greulon nerthol, – hwn a roes  
In' ri genedigol;  
Wael rwysg i Walia, ar ol  
Ei thywysog coeth oesol.

If Edward II was a native sovereign ('ri genedigol'), what cause has Wales, or Iago Emlyn, to complain? This gentleman is, apparently, no Welsh grammarian, or he



would have known that the substantive qualifies the adjective, and not vice versa, as he has it. Why has he made ‘rwyg’ a noun of the feminine gender? ‘Rhwyg’, and ‘gwael’, are the primitive forms, or nominative cases. ‘Oesol’ is another superfluous word (*gair llanw*). Every man, be he prince or peasant, is but temporary. After mourning over the woes of Wales (or Llywelyn), he in the next place insults it:

3.

Cymru! taw, daeth camrau ter – ein Albert,  
 I’n helbul esmwythder;  
 Hwn a saif tra gweno ser,  
 O hynafiaid Hanover.

The Prince of Wales was born on the 9th of November 1841 and on the 13th of October 1842 we hear of his splendid strides! Who before ever heard of the splendid strides (‘camrau têr’) of an infant? The author first complains of its distresses, and then insultingly bids ‘Wales! be silent’, be joyful, weep no longer, ‘the splendid strides of our Albert came to disturb our tranquillity’. We have here distress and tranquillity, grief and joy, in one breath. Byron, on a certain occasion, having committed a bull, expressed himself ashamed at not being an Irishman. Iago Emlyn should put into court a similar plea. This friend to his country received ten guineas for writing these verses. Which ought we most to blame – the author for expressing, or Caledfryn for countenancing, such obnoxious sentiments? As has been before observed, great license is permitted to poets, but never to carry their exaggerations so far as to make statements palpably false, as the bard (?) does when speaking of the Prince of Wales: ‘He will stand as long as the stars shine!’ We are told on authority which, as a Christian minister, Iago Emlyn should reverence, that the life of man is seventy years. Surely the stars will shine longer than that. Another circumstance, which discountenances the assumption, is the celebrity of the last Prince of Wales (George IV) as a bacchanalian. Should the present prince, when he grows up to be a man, dutifully tread in the footsteps of his predecessor, not a few falls may be calculated upon. Another gross impropriety in these is that the prince is praised for actions purporting to be already done; praised, too, for disturbing a nation’s tranquillity! He should know that ‘daeth’ (came) is the past tense of ‘dyfod’ (to come), and that it is improper to represent the prince as *having come*, for he has never touched Welsh ground. Caswallon, an unsuccessful competitor, beautifully, and very properly, expresses a hope that the king (to be) may become possessed of those good qualities, which the other foolishly attributes to the infant:

2.

Drwy’r blodeuyn gwyn teg wedd, – y gwelir  
 Prif argoelion rhinwedd;  
 Ein Hior hael rho dyner hedd,  
 A muria hwn a mawredd.  
 Caswallon, sef Gwilym Ild

Gwilym Ild’s *englynion* are far superior to the successful ones. Indeed, there is not one of Iago Emlyn’s *englynion* which, in the regularity of its *cynganeddion*, nobleness of sentiment, and energetic and consistent expression, can be compared with this. I will expose one more fault, and then conclude: ‘A fag tirion Victoria’. Last line in the 4th *englyn*. In English the adjective admits of no inflexion; but the Welsh, French, German, Latin, with other languages, both ancient and modern, require it.

‘Victoria’ is feminine; ‘tirion’ (kind, or tender) is masculine. To accord with grammatical rules, it should be softened into ‘dirion’. The last two *englynion* have nothing in them deserving of praise, and are too contemptible for criticism. How, then, came the author to be rewarded with the premium? It is a question more easily asked than answered. Who would not serve a fellow-minister, and travelling companion, when it is in his power? This letter is too long already; Iago Emlyn’s *englynion* on the Indian Prince must therefore be left till next week. Accept my sincere apologies for having so far trespassed upon your limits, while I remain,

Your obedient servant,

Jan 4. 1843.

B.C.D.

*ENGLYNION TO THE PRINCE OF WALES*  
TRANSLATION (LITERAL)

1.

We were sorrowful for years – wretched state,  
Without a prince – and the woes  
Of *pale* Llewelyn weaving  
In a *bruised manner* from the bed of ages.

2.

But the powerful and stern Edward – he gave  
Us a native sovereign,  
Poor substitute to Wales after  
Her *temporarily* pleasing prince.

3.

Wales! be silent, the splendid strides of our Albert – came  
*To disturb our tranquillity,*  
This one will stand while the stars smile  
Of Hanoverian ancestry.

4.

\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*

The tender Victoria will nurse.

Iago Emlyn

CASWALLON’S *ENGLYN*

In the opening bud we trace – plainly,  
Resemblance to virtue’s face,  
Gracious God this infant bless,  
And invest *with future* greatness.

***The Cambrian*, 21 January 1843**  
ABERGAVERNYY CYMREIGYDDION  
LETTER 7  
*To the EDITOR of The CAMBRIAN*

SIR, – The *englynion* on the Indian Prince come next under notice. As they have never been published they shall be here given complete, for the satisfaction of your numerous readers. The first *englyn* opens with an address to the prince:

1.

Nai Tagore un teg eurwawr, – o achau  
Uchel iawn a chlodfawr.  
A gwaith maith ei ewythr mawr;  
Dilyn wnelo hyd elawr.

Tagore's nephew, fair golden-tinted one,  
Of high and praiseworthy ancestry.  
And the prolonged work of his great uncle;  
May he follow to his bier.

The very bad taste in making abrupt transitions from one series of ideas to others wholly distinct has been severely reprobated already. For the double object of giving as complete a body of criticism as the objects treated will admit of, and of showing that the criticisms are anything but arbitrary, I will quote the rule. 'Dyfaled y Bardd yr hyn o beth a fo ar fyfyr, a than sylw a sel-drem gantho yn berffaith eglurbwyll ac anianbwyll, yn y cyfryw fodd ag y bo'n cael ei arwain ar hyd lwybr cymmwys at achos, meddwl, a selwedd, a myfyrdod amrafael', &c. [May the poet describe that which is in his mind, and under consideration and in his view in a perfectly clear and cautious manner, in such a way that he is guided along a direct path to a cause, meaning, and perception, and to various themes of meditation, &c.] (*Cyv. y Beirdd*, p. 24). Again: 'Na ddoded unpeth arni (y gerdd), nag unrhyw beth ynddi, nas gellir ei iawn gydgymlu a'i gydweddu a'r parthau eraill o heni' [Do not put anything in it (the poem), or include anything that cannot be properly connected to, or does not conform with, the other parts of the poem] (*Cyv. y Beirdd*, p. 18). Further, be it observed that an *englyn* is amenable to that Aristotelian rule, which requires that a poem, and consequently a verse, as an integral part thereof, should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Here we have a beginning, and part of a middle, totally unconnected with, and having no reference whatever to, its concluding portion. The conjunction 'and' is put to effect in a clumsy junction of these discordant ingredients. The prince's personal attractions joined to the good works of his uncle!

2.

A wariodd filoedd o arian – *da les*,  
Idd ei wlad *ei hunan*;  
Hyn dystir yn Hindostan,  
Drwy ddysg i'n mysg fawr a man.

3.

Boed mael i'r byd o'i ymweliad, – yma  
Sydd amod rhwng dwy wlad,

*Du a gwyn yn deg wniad,*  
Mewn heddd y byddo'u mwynhad.

2.

He spent *thousands* of money, – *beneficial good*,  
To his country, *his own*;  
This is testified in Hindostan  
By knowledge among great and small.

3.

May his visit produce good to the world, – here  
It is a covenant between two countries,  
Black and white fairly joined.  
May their enjoyment be in peace.

The second *englyn* has no reference to the prince at all, and it would be difficult to say why it is placed there. It will be seen to have two instances of tautology, placed in italics. In the third, the bard represents something forming a covenant between two countries. What is it? It is really too bad of Caledfryn to pass over such egregious faults. What a precious piece of tailoring we have in the third line – ‘Black and white fairly sewed together’. Joseph’s waistcoat was nothing to this. It will be seen that in order to make a sense out of it, I have rendered it ‘joined’ not ‘sewed’. To take a more lenient view: does the mention of black and white convey to the mind the ideas of Indian and European?

4.

Da yw undeb dy waed Indiaidd, – *frwdias*  
I’th frodyr Britanaidd;  
Gwyr trugarog wresog wraidd,  
Yngolau efangylaidd.

5.

Da ged i’w gweled Gwalia, – a *doethion*  
*Y Gymdeithas yma.*  
’Nawr gwen ein hawen, hi â  
Draw i’w randir drwy’r India.

4.

The union of the Indian blood is good, – *warm feeling*  
To thy Britannic brethren;  
Merciful men of generous root,  
In the light of the Gospel.

5.

It is pleasurable to see Gwalia, – and the sages  
Of this Society;  
Now smiles our *awen*, – she will go  
To his province through *the* India.

What! an union between the Indian princes and British blood. When, where, and how was this brought about? This personage appears to care but little whether his

statements are true or false, or whether his verses are good or bad, as long as Caledfryn judges. 'Frwdias' is a *gair llanw*, serving no other purpose than alliterating with 'frodyr'. 'Wresog wraidd' is a similar instance of corrupt grammar to that noticed in my last.

Da ged i'w gweled Gwalia, – a *doethion*  
Y Gymdeithas yma.

*Mirabile dictu!* The sages of this Society! Why is it pleasurable to see them? What connection is there between that pleasure and the flight of the *awen* to the prince's territories, *through the* India? Hast thou learnt anything of geography, 'honest Iago'? Is it possible for any one to understand what is meant in the two first lines of the last *englyn*?

6.

I hyglod gwrr ein gwlad gywrain, – doethach  
Fydd o deithio Brydain;  
A phelydrau'n golau'n gain,  
Dorro drwy niwl y dwyrain.

6.

To the noble extreme of our ingenious country; – wiser  
Will be from travelling Britain;  
May the globules of our light delightfully  
Break through the clouds of the east.

What is, or to be, 'to our ingenious country'? Who, or what will be wiser? Those of your readers who are adepts in French will understand my meaning in saying that in the Welsh, when two consonants come together, one ending, and another beginning a word, that [the] latter has its sound softened. In French a word is not changed, but the pronunciation is, while in the Welsh the word, or rather its first consonant, is changed. Thus, instead of saying 'carreg mawr' we say 'carreg fawr'; and of course, the reason which indicates thus would forbid any deviation, when the last word terminated in a vowel. For that reason 'deithio Brydain' is improper; it should be 'deithio Prydain'. The Welsh differs from the French in this, that the last consonant of the first word, and not the first of the second, is changed. To illustrate this, the familiar phrase *Parlez vous Francais?* (Do you speak French? or, rather, Speak you the French language? according to the French idiom) will do as well as a further-fetched one. Observe that it is not pronounced as it is written, but as if written thus: *Parle(y) vous Francai*; the 'z' being dropped, and a 'y' sound given to the 'e'. Adjectives in Welsh are subjected to the same change, to denote the feminine gender.

Not a crack or flaw was held excusable by Caledfryn, two years ago. He then wielded his critical club with savage ferocity. The result, he with admirable effrontery tells us, is the production of better poetry this time! He called them poetry, and poetry fit to be ranked alongside with Pope's! Ye Muses, little did you expect to find in Wales, and in Tegid too, a rival to the bard of Twickenham! The poem which, going under Tegid's name, has been, in Letters 4 and 5, shown to be a heap of absurdities, is thus characterised by Caledfryn: 'It might be likened', as Montgomery said of Pope's *Poems*, 'to pictures in mosaic work, each word of which was a gem; but more precious in its place, than a more costly one, which did not fit that place in colour, shape, and size.' Worthy printer's devil! Place in italics this specimen of judicial

effrontery, and then, gentle reader, contrast it with the critique of B.C.D. Caledfryn calls Tegid's poem, and these *englynion*, poetry. Had he not done so, I should have been obligated to borrow a term from my brother crusader against these Saracens, and designate them, as Cantab does, 'Bedlamitish' (No. 1, Letter A). Before descending from my Aristarchian throne, I would say a few words more to and of Caledfryn, and it shall be in the form of an epitaph; for from a motley group of confused thoughts and extravagant figures, in a blank-verse poem, called 'The Grave', I perceive he has some serious misgivings as to his latter end.

— Some inspir'd Milton yet may rise,  
And chaunt his warbling notes above my grave.  
Caledfryn's 'Grave'

Apollo hears thy prayer, yet grants but half! For Milton he sends a B.C.D. and for warbling notes this epitaph:

Tan garreg yr wyt yn gorwedd, – heddyw  
Ni haeddyt anrhydedd;  
Dydi y gwr didrugaredd  
Cas gan bawb cwsg yn y bedd.

#### TRANSLATION

'Neath this stone thou stingless liest, – this day  
No honour deservest;  
Thou who ne'er hadst mercy shown,  
'Mid universal hate sleep on.

Mr. Editor, – I purpose appearing (with your kind permission) before your readers once more, when some further remarks will be made upon the judges and their judgments, with some general observations upon the utility of the Society.

Yours, obediently,  
B.C.D.

Jan. 19, 1843.

P.S. When Patera Lignea succeeds in producing anything worthy of my attention, he shall have it.

***The Cambrian, 28 January 1843***

ABERGAVENNYCYMREIGYDDION

LETTER 8

*To the EDITOR of The CAMBRIAN*

'I do not give you to posterity as patterns to imitate, but as examples to deter; and as your conduct comprehends everything that wise or honest men should avoid, I mean to make you a negative instruction to your successors for ever.' – Junius.

SIR, – From the details which have been gone through, in the first seven letters, it will be perceived that the Society have not the most distant claim to general, or particular, approbation. The man who would so far outrage public feeling as to claim for them the slightest share of praise would be with indignation censured, for offering so gross an insult to the intelligence of Welshmen, if not branded with infamy, and be pointed

out as an enemy to his country. If in the course of this letter any compliments should be paid to, or anything approaching to partiality, expressed for the Society, it should be considered to emanate from the writer's generosity, rather than to have been extorted as a tribute of justice to any portion of its conduct. Presumptuous without dignity, and degraded by choice, rather than necessity, we cannot extend to them the lenient admiration with which we view the bold, though often guilty conduct of great men, nor the compassion with which the distresses of just men are contemplated. Sensible how little favour is deserved, I shall carefully avoid offending public good sense, where nothing can be pleaded in extenuation.

To rake from deserved oblivion the monkish relics of an ignorant and priestridden age, when they should disseminate useful knowledge; to eulogise inhuman and brutal butchers, when they should form moral and intellectual men; to cherish absurd and illiberal national prejudices, when they should enlighten the national mind; to make an ostentatious show of liberality in allowing public competition, yet appointing men as judges, the Cimmerian darkness,<sup>(1)</sup> of whose minds the rays of liberal knowledge have never illumined; to give prizes for subjects calculated to improve the human race, yet appointing judges thereon, whose greatest abhorrence it is to see the mass of mankind other than breathing-machines, without a ray of thought, save such as would render them subservient to their tyrannical purposes; to squander hundreds of pounds for useless marquees and pavilions, while pretending to consult the interests of the Welsh public; to become the apologists of the corrupt practices and bungling decisions of their judges, when the unfitness of their heads and hearts is evident to the whole nation, are contradictions which the Society will have to reconcile, before they again solicit public support.

At a time when men's minds, tired of wallowing in the mire of ignorance, direct their energies to refine the manners, and increase the happiness of the age – when institutions are honoured, proportionably to the exertion they make to procure – patriots distinguished by their efforts to increase, and sentiments appreciated for their tendency to promote – the improvement of man, morally and intellectually, and the amelioration of his social and political condition; the existence of an institution like the Abergavenny Society is singularly anomalous. It is an institution, which, instead of storing the mind with useful information, attempts to entertain it with empty show; instead of aiding man to obtain scientific information, bids him admire the ignorance of past ages. Contrasted with the rapid strides which knowledge is making, in it we see presented a loathsome ulcer, upon an otherwise healthy body. Far from being a powerful patron of native literature, a promoter of native industry, and a fostering parent of native talent, which, supported by the opulence and patriotism of Welsh gentlemen, and possessing the confidence of the Welsh public, it should have been, the Abergavenny Society's pretensions, integrity, and conduct have become synonymous with deceit, chicane, and pusillanimity. Contrast it with other periodical assemblies. Opinions may vary as to whether the results were beneficial or pernicious, but none deny the magnitude of the influence which the Councils of Nice, of Laodicea, and of Trent, exerted over the whole of Europe. The eisteddfodau, under the auspices of Gruffydd ab Cynan, and Gruffydd ab Rhys, in the twelfth century, established *cynghanedd* in Welsh poetry, and (as I am prepared to prove) materially improved the structure of the Welsh language. The last Carmarthen eisteddfod released Welsh poetry from the monkish puzzles which a previous one had imposed upon it. May the next one be productive of good! The programme of the last Swansea eisteddfod comprised the most judicious selection of prizes ever offered to a Welsh public. They were proposed and published (I believe) under the superintendence of the Rev. J. Jenkins, M.A., a gentleman whose conduct is too well known, and whose

character is too generally appreciated, to be enhanced by any complimentary expressions emanating from me. What has the Abergavenny Society done to gain applause, or deserve encouragement? The immediate answer is, 'It has published the *Liber Landavensis*, *Coelbren y Beirdd*, and the *Mabinogion*.' Admitted. The first is a work which, while conducive to no good, is productive of positive injury, by inducing the mind to brood over 'the solitary, vindictive malice of monks'. It is a work purporting to consist of historical documents, but upon the veracity of whose statements the historian, according to the Rev. T. Price, cannot rely.<sup>(2)</sup> The author of *Coelbren y Beirdd* has left untouched that which it was most important to know, viz., the analogy between the bardic and other early alphabets. There is presumptive evidence to show that the practice of cutting letters on wood was known to most nations of antiquity; and positive evidence that it was to the Jews,<sup>(3)</sup> Greeks,<sup>(4)</sup> Romans,<sup>(5)</sup> and Germans,<sup>(6)</sup> and is known to the North-American Indians.<sup>(7)</sup> What we want to know is what were the forms of the alphabet – not the fact of their being used. We should then be able to render efficient assistance to philology, in solving the question of the oriental origin of the Celtic nations. To Grimm, Boeck, and Potts, we owe all the information we have on the subject; to the author of this treatise – none. The price of the *Mabinogion* restricts the sphere of its usefulness. The injudicious selection of its prizes has already been reprobated. Where, then, shall we look for its good works? Beheld with contempt, and protected by its insignificance, it has contrived to protract an existence of miserable show, and utter inutility. But tenacious as may be its hold upon the prejudiced and partial minds of many, unless they alter their conduct, it will soon be completely and irrevocably torn asunder. Its show of fallacious prosperity, but real bankruptcy, will ensure it but an ephemeral existence.

Can that society be rationally entitled to public confidence, the pliancy of whose judges in complying with its absurd requisitions, are the only qualifications required to become the *Aristarchi* (or *Aristarchuses*, if the English grammarian likes it better) of Welsh literature; the narrow minded censors of the works of men of undoubted talents; of ideas which they cannot appreciate, and of views, the sublimity, and justness of which they cannot conceive? Critical principles change with the successive appointments and depositions of its judges. Ab Iolo and Cawrdaf were their gods yesterday – Caledfryn, to day, holds that high office. As an illustration, it would not be irrelevant to state that, at the last eisteddfod but two, Ab Iolo declared a *cerdd arwest* to be preferable to an *awdl*; and Iolo Mynwy a better bard than Caledfryn! For greater perspicuity, I will give his words, as reported in the *Guardian*. Addressing Sir Charles Morgan, he said, 'Sir, this composition (Iolo Mynwy's *cerdd arwest*) is an ode of the first order, and had the chair medal been given for the best poetical composition, and not been restricted to any particular subject, I should have no hesitation in saying that this should have won it.' Caledfryn won the chair-prize. It appears that there was then one Southwalian bard superior to all the Northwalians, not excepting Caledfryn himself. Caledfryn declared two years ago that there was not a Southwalian who could write an *awdl* worthy of a two guinea prize! Mark the inference. I am called a slanderer, and by one of these judges, if I mistake not. What can be a greater slander upon the Society, and upon themselves, than the respective decisions of these rival judges? Malicious (truth?) statements made, upon certainly respectable authority, of eulogies passed upon compositions which had never been read; where the handwriting alone had been considered an unequivocal testimony, that they were the best that had ever been or would be written.

With many, presumptive evidence amounts to proof; these judges will have to thank the forbearance of 'a slanderer', for not bringing upon them the execrations of a cajoled nation, in not publishing damning facts, upon authority which scepticism



would not reject. My conduct shall show that a *llyffant* (a toad, the term applied to B.C.D. at a late public meeting by Ab Iolo) possesses more gentlemanly feelings than ‘Prif-fardd Deheudir’ ever had, or, at least, exhibited; and we judge of men by their conduct. I laugh at the impotent malice of such very weakminded men. Like ghosts in the infernal regions, which pass in rapid succession, and are lost in the gloomy caverns of Tartarus;<sup>(8)</sup> the judges of composition at Abergavenny are seen for a moment, and then lost in the oblivion of indifference; unsubstantial as shadows, their deeds and abilities alike insufficient to obtain for them a temporary celebrity. Not a liberal thought, not an enlightened idea is ever polluted by the sanction of the Abergavenny Inquisition. But, Argus like, ever dreading, they anxiously watch, lest the rays of truth should penetrate through the dark veil, in which they delight to see the human mind enveloped. Should a writer dare to question the propriety of their conduct; hint that the members of the Society are not Solons, one and all; doubt that national folly is the consummation of human wisdom; advance humane and civilized views, or express a wish to see the inhabitants of the Principality noble, just, and intelligent? The Rev. T. Price steps forward and informs us ‘that no writer advancing such sentiments, can, with propriety, expect success; nor will the Society stultify itself so far as to adopt them’. (See Mr. Price’s letter in the *Cambrian* of Nov. 5.) Reader! Historian, essayist, bard, whoever, whatever, wherever thou art, hear the decree of the Cymreigyddion Society: if any writer attempt to expose, or bring into disrepute, the collective folly of two thousand years, which has been handed down to us by our forefathers, whose prejudices we, in duty bound, cherish; if any writer dare to assert that the manners of our savage, barbarous ancestors, which we religiously preserve and practice, are not of the wisest, most humane, and dignified character; if any one hint that that portion of the human family who inhabit the mountains of Wales, whose ancestral descent can be traced back some forty millions of years before the creation of the world – the descendants of men who had composed *englynion* ages ere Adam had learnt his a, b, c – are not the noblest, wisest, and best of men, or advance any system, and express any sentiments, having for their object the amelioration of social misery, the cultivation of the human mind, or the diffusion of general knowledge, he does so upon pain of our displeasure, with the certainty of encountering our determined hostility, and ‘without any prospect of success’. I blush to own that such folly exists while under the necessity of exposing it. Will it be believed that a writer, for expressing his convictions upon the impropriety and inutility of their proceedings, incurred the severe censure of Mr. Price at the last eisteddfod, when he complained of the ‘unmitigated censure’ which Gweithiwr had dealt to the Society; and expressed a hope that the writer was not a Welshman? For the honour of Wales, I hope he is. What! Should every native of the Principality be so devoid of perception as not to perceive their folly, and of integrity as not to expose their vices? When we find utterance given to such sentiments, well may we exclaim with the Roman patriot:

I would rather be a dog and bark at the moon,  
Than such a *Welshman*  
Shakespeare

as many a one who pretends to be. To return to the judges. Are we sure that what a judge disapproves of is really bad? Are we sure that when Ab Iolo says a composition is good, that it is so; and when Caledfryn disapproves of it, that it is bad? Are we sure that what is liked to-day will not be disliked of to-morrow? Are we sure that our admiration of the epic poems of Homer, Virgil, and Milton; the didactic poems of Pope, Crabbe, and Byron; and the lyrics of Gray, Collins, and Wordsworth, will not

fade away before the rising glories of a Tegid, or a Caledfryn! Does our admiration of poetry, or any other composition, rest upon fixed principles? Byron thought not. (See letter to the Rev. W. L. Bowles by Lord Byron.) Had I not been possessed of better authorities than the decisions of our Welsh Solons, I should have thought so too. Lord Byron triumphantly established what he argued against. Since, therefore, there are fixed principles by which admiration or dislike of literary compositions is guided, when will our judges learn what they are? We may pardon incapacity, but can never tolerate judicial dishonesty. We may pardon a Squeers – the natural asperity of whose character age has increased – with whom anger has become virtue, and habit justice, for not coinciding with a more humane being, who wishes to substitute more pacific measures for corporeal punishment; or a bigot who will not tolerate sentiments at variance with his convictions; but we behold, with the utmost abhorrence, that judge of composition, who, on account of an offensive expression in a preface, withholds a prize which an essay was otherwise entitled to; – that instructor of youth, who, from the diffusion of knowledge, dreads the subversion of institutions founded in ignorance; and that coward, who, not daring publicly to express his convictions, privately stabs an author's fame, and maligns his character. (See *Silurian*, Nov. 5.) Would it be consistent for one moment to suppose that the decisions of such men will have confidence reposed in them? To this picture the Rev. T. Price is the only exception – he only is a man of intelligence.

'Who is B.C.D., Mr. Editor?' once asked a pompous pedant. What matters it what name I bear? I am above requiring the assistance, and above dreading the resentment of the Society, or its supporters. If my statements are false, contradict them; if my opinions are erroneous, refute them; if my censures are unjust, defend the objects of them. What would they be better if I gave my name? It would be found unsullied, and one upon which they could fix no stain. I have supported my statements with proofs, my censures were not uncalled for. If in the present letter, every sentence has its object, every line its mission; they will be felt by the guilty only.

Many thanks to you, Mr. Editor, for your kindness. Reader, I leave thee to meet (it is hoped) under happier auspices, when we can exclaim with Lewis Glyn Cothi: 'Llyma holl Gymru yn gwenu i gyd' [The whole of Wales is smiling].

January 25, 1843.

B.C.D.

NOTE (1) — In lonely land and gloomy cells,  
The dusky nation of Cimmeria dwells.

*Odyssey*, Book XI.

The Cymry, the inhabitants of Wales, were descendants of those who are in the Greek of Homer termed 'Kimmeroi'.

(2) 'Nid yw ond cyfiawnder hyspysu fy marn fod ei haneswyr gwedi ymddwyn tuag atto gyda gerwinder, braidd cyfiawnadwy. Nid tebygol yr arbedent ddrwgliwiad pan caent gyfleusdra.' [It is only right that I should express my opinion that its historians have behaved towards it with a harshness that can hardly be justified. It is not likely that they should refrain from biased interpretation when the opportunity might arise.] *Hanes Cymru*, p. 551.

(3) Scriptures. Ezekiel, chap. xxxvii. 18, 19, 20.

(4) Solon's Laws were cut on wooden tablets.

(5) *Leges incidere ligno*. Horace. To hew (or cut) the laws in (or on) wood.

(6) Tacitus *De mor. Germ* (Of the manners of the Germans).

(7) See any work on North America and arrow-headed characters.

(8) Lest I should be accused of plagiarising, it might as well be said that this image is borrowed from Virgil.

—— *umbræque silentes.*  
Ye gliding ghosts!

***The Cambrian, 4 February 1843***  
*To the EDITOR of The CAMBRIAN*

SIR, — Your readers cannot fail to acknowledge that the persevering malignity of your correspondent B.C.D. has been allowed ample scope of accusation, with but little interruption and none from me, till now; although an extreme violation of truth has characterised his letters, of which I have only seen four. As soon as my attention was directed to them, I felt convinced that I could name the author; which conviction was fully confirmed, when the last letter appeared; consequently, taking my son with me, to witness the interview (a very necessary caution to prevent further falsehoods), I went to the shop of B.C.D., of this place, and, stating as my motive the calumnies heaped upon me by him, demanded to know whether he was, or was not, the person who had written under that signature. It would have well employed the talents of Hogarth to delineate his countenance, as he stood aghast at the question: but, perceiving that I would ultimately make the same demand of you, if he declined answering, he acknowledged that he was B.C.D. Will it astonish your readers, and especially those who have read his last charge, that I first, and immediately, applied to him the most opprobrious epithets that language can apply to such calumniators; and then defied him to produce the ‘damning facts’ of his base threat. He said, ‘They shall appear before the public’: awaiting which appearance, I shall not, now, further describe my knowledge of his conduct.

Reviews of literary works are, generally, if not always, given anonymously; and, although the mask is too often a protection for envy, or party rancour, still, the security it affords to fair criticism, so beneficial to the advancement of knowledge, more than overbalances the attendant evil; but, when personal character becomes the object of unprincipled vituperation and defamation, both the traducer and the vehicle of his injustice become equally responsible to the outraged party. Had B.C.D. come forward from his ‘Cimmerian darkness’ in an honest manner, and under his proper name, to advance his charges, he would have been at once confronted by the accused; and a fair hearing, under the prescribed amenities of social order, would have ensued; and where is a man of integrity who can sanction any other course? It was after the seventh phial of his wrath had been poured on me and others that I stood prominently forward, without the least disguise, before a considerable assembly, in defence, not of myself, but of the much traduced Carnhuanawc (the Rev. Thomas Price, of Llanfihangel Cwmdru), whose time has been assiduously devoted for so many years to Welsh literature; and whose kindness to humble merit is well known. On that occasion, and while deploring the decrease of local Welsh societies, attributable, principally, to the discord of unsuccessful competitors, I expressed my abhorrence of the gross accusations attempted to be spumed against Mr. Price, by the toads (*llyffwint*) at work ever since his last adjudications; but I made no particular allusion to B.C.D., although that paltry ape of Junius would, I knew, be immediately recognised by the audience as the principle object of my reprehension. Let every charge be at once brought forward, and I will immediately and finally reply.

I remain, sir, yours, obediently,  
Taliesin Williams (Ab Iolo)

Merthyr Tydfil, January 30th, 1843.

***The Cambrian*, 4 February 1843**  
Abergavenny Cymreigyddion  
To the EDITOR of *The CAMBRIAN*

SIR, – There is nothing like beginning with the beginning, and never was it more needful than on the present occasion, as it will prepare the minds of your readers to receive my observations on B.C.D.’s criticism on my successful stanzas to the Prince of Wales; and if I can prove, as I think I can, without difficulty, that there is not one error in the *englyn* of the Rev. Walter Davies, which he has attempted to murder, it will be quite sufficient to prove his inability to criticise Welsh poetry, whatever may be his knowledge of French, German, and Latin; and, consequently, that all and every [one of] his remarks are not to be regarded, as far as Welsh poetry is concerned. But to the afore-said *englyn*. It is true that there is an error in the first line, as B.C.D. has given it; but a monosyllable has been left out, which mistake could not have occurred from the author’s ignorance – the merest tyro in *cynghanedd* knows better. As for the last three lines, they are perfectly correct. Speaking of the third line, B.C.D. says, ‘It has two gross faults – the words “gwely” and “heli” form a *proest*’; but I say no, for this reason, the former is not in the *brif orphwysfa*, and even had it been, the apostrophized ‘r’ would have counteracted it. ‘There is’, he adds, ‘what is called *dybryd sain* existing between the same words.’ To this assertion, again I say, no; because the vowel ‘w’ and ‘e’ form a diphthong in ‘gwely’, so that there is no more similarity between ‘ngwely’r and ‘heli’, than ‘call’ and ‘clwppa’. Then he refers to *Cyv. y Beirdd*, p. 237, for a proof of the truth of his assertions; and if the above work is in B.C.D.’s library, as a book of reference, which he has never read, much less studied, I am not surprised at his ignorance – but that is not all; if he has referred to the page alluded to, and read it, I am really astonished at his stupidity, and the reader will, when he reads and understands a few instances of *dybryd sain*, which I shall quote therefrom. The term means no more than monotony, arising from a redundancy of the same consonants or vowels in the same line, e.g. ‘Adda a’i had’, ‘Awel – awen’, ‘Gal ag anhap a galar’, ‘A a a’r bardd i hir barch’, ‘Na chaf na chall na char chwaith’. Though an Englishman may not understand a word of the above poetry, he can easily see what *dybryd sain* means, from the many ‘a’s’ that he sees in it; no less than seven are seen in two of the above lines – the same number as there are of syllables. Now, then, to the proof. Let us bring up the first line of the *englyn*, which our would-be Welsh bard condemns under this error. ‘Yr haul yn ngwely’r heli’. Where is the *dybryd sain*? The line says, ‘It is not in me’. Again, ‘A’r lloer yn arianu’r lli’. This has shared the same fate, but its innocent language is, ‘Not guilty’. His definition of the recurrent word ‘caddug’, as it consones with ‘cuddio’, shows that he knows nothing at all of the subject he pretends to judge. He says that ‘dd’ in the one corresponds with ‘dd’ in the other, giving the bard a licence, of course, to prefix a sibilant, if he likes, to either; for instance, ‘caddug’ to alliterate with ‘cuddio’. According to B.C.D.’s idea, this would be perfect consonance. Here is a pretty fellow to judge *cynghanedd*. Lest I should be charged with having mistaken my man, I consider Raphael and B.C.D. the same; if not, my remarks will suit the latter very well who is as blind as his guide. It is not my intention to enter into many details respecting his critical observations on my poetry as it would occupy too large a space in your valuable paper. His criticism on my composition is chiefly of a philological character; and I find that he is as ignorant of the grammatical construction of the Welsh language as he is of *cynghanedd* – he does not appear to have a single idea of idiom. This, however, is not the worst part of his critique; he has rendered some

words of my work into English with an arbitrary freedom, giving a meaning that is not to be found in the original, arising from his ignorance of his native tongue! In the first stanza he translates ‘– o fedd oesau’, ‘from the *bed* of ages’, instead of ‘the *grave* of ages’. ‘Bedd’ is the radix for ‘grave’, the first radical ‘b’ being changed for its corresponding labial ‘f’, by case. Second stanza, third line – ‘Poor substitute *to* Wales’, &c., should be ‘*for* Wales’. This blunder arose from his ignorance of the English – a very common error among the vulgar Welsh. An illiterate Welshman should say, ‘This is *to* me’, instead of ‘*for* me’, which exactly answers the case in point. The fourth line, ‘Her *temporarily* pleasing prince’, gives no idea of the original, the sense of which, correctly rendered, would be ‘Her legitimate ancient prince’. But the beauty of his translation in the above line is that the Welsh adjective is metamorphosed into an adverb! In the first line of the third stanza ‘camau ter’ means, in plain English, ‘graceful steps’; but he has inflated it into ‘splendid strides’! This phrase reminds me of the celebrated Christopher Cole, of ocean-wading memory; or of a certain idiot, some time ago, that attempted to step from a low, dirty pool to the top of a mountain. The second line is ‘I’n helbul esmwythder’, the meaning of which is ‘Ease to our sorrows’; but this critic has translated it ‘To disturb our tranquillity’! He took ‘i’n’ for ‘i’, which means ‘to’, and ‘helbul’, a noun, for a verb, but of quite another signification, and having ‘to’ prefixed to it, is in the infinitive mood. Indeed, there is no end to his confusion.

He has not even done justice to our poor Caswallon. The last line of his *englyn*, i.e. ‘A muria hwn a mawredd’, which means ‘And surround this (prince, understood) with magnificence’, he has rendered, ‘And invest with future greatness’. Was there ever such stuff as this? He asks, ‘Why has he made “rwysg” a noun of the feminine gender?’ I answer that all Welsh authors have liberty to do so more than Englishmen, to take the same license with the abstract terms virtue, honour, &c. Of course he does not know that there is no neuter gender in the Welsh language.

He says that I am no Welsh grammarian or I would have known that the substantive qualifies the adjective, and not vice versa. I do not know any such thing, nor do I wish – it satisfies me to know that the contrary is the case. When the adjective precedes the substantive, it governs it. The following are instances: ‘oer ddwr’, ‘llwyd rew’, ‘coeg ddyn’, ‘gwag ogoniant’, ‘crach fardd’, &c., &c. Although the substantive generally takes the precedence of the adjective, the latter is often put before the former. We say ‘dyn da’, i.e. a good man, yet we are allowed to say ‘da ddyn’; the ‘d’ in ‘dyn’ is then inflected into ‘dd’, qualified by the adjective ‘da’, i.e. good, placed before it. In English, the adjective goes before the substantive, but the contrary is allowed, sometimes with more elegance, as ‘Church militant’.

I shall now adduce a few instances from the works of some of our most eminent bards, to prove the truth of my remarks.

‘Diboen ferch bael Godebog, &c.’ – Tudur Aled.

‘Da eres fam y dewrion.’ – Daniel Ddu.

‘Diboen’ is an adjective of the masculine gender, governing the feminine noun ‘merch’ – so in the other line. Reverse the above, and ‘diboen ferch’ becomes ‘merch ddiboen’, the substantive governing the adjective, ‘d’ in ‘diboen’ is softened into ‘dd’, as in the instance quoted; the ‘m’ in ‘merch’ is changed into its corresponding labial ‘f’. Reverse the second line, and ‘da eres fam’ becomes ‘mam eres dda’.

Again,

‘Ys da gwraig ystor yw ym.’ – Tudur Aled.

‘Golli tirion fanon fâd.’  
 ‘Tirion oedd o naturiaeth.’  
 ‘Canaid teg euraidd ei gwedd – y bu hon, &c.’ Ap Iorwerth.

In one of the above lines the same word is used that I employed in allusion to our (in a queen’s elegy) queen, i.e. ‘– *tirion* Victoria’; it is so simply because the adjective is before the noun; vice versa, ‘tirion’ would be softened into ‘dirion’, thus ‘Victoria *dirion*’, ‘d’ being the corresponding dental of ‘t’. I should not do justice to B.C.D., nor myself, in not noticing that his proposed amendment of the line ‘A fag tirion Victoria’ would not only entirely reverse the meaning of it, make it too long, and spoil the *cynghanedd* ‘d’ to consone with ‘t’, but run counter to the law of nature itself. ‘A fago dirion Victoria’ means that the infant prince should nurse the queen! There is something more natural in the allusion he makes to a bull, that he fathers upon me, which has begotten a calf – and a very great one it is. I am aware that it is not at all pleasant to be disappointed and unsuccessful, and I should advise B.C.D. to drop his French, German, and Latin, that he may study the rules of Welsh poetry, before he attempts to judge his betters, and he may perhaps gain a prize at the end of ten years of hard study; and let me tell him that he must become a very good customer of the chandler before he can expect to shine in the world of letters. The prizes I gained at the Carmarthen and Cardigan eisteddfodau drew forth a similar feeling of envy towards me.

But why should I care for the barking of every angry cur? I look to those eminent men that have been the judges of my compositions. B.C.D. had better publish my stanzas to the two princes in some newspaper, together with Caswallon’s, that the public may see them as the bards of North Wales did with my successful poem on ‘Noah’s Ark’, who were not satisfied with the adjudication that brought me the medal; the result was that the author of the second best, together with the other fourteen candidates were silent – they were obliged to give in.

Every tongue was at rest,  
 And I heard not a sound,

Save that of the billows against the foot of Ararat!

I, standing on aerial ground –  
 The mighty fallen – Giant’s drown’d!  
 Silver’d amid eternal show.  
 Unspotted from the mud below!

B.C.D. asks, ‘How came the author to be awarded with the premium?’ He then answers himself by asking another question, ‘Who would not serve a fellow-minister and travelling companion when it is in his power to do so?’ Now, here is a gross falsehood suggested, whether wilfully or otherwise, I cannot tell, but it is my duty to set it to rights by stating that I never had the pleasure of travelling a single step with Caledfryn in my life. He is a Welsh minister, living in North Wales; I live now in England, and at the time of the eisteddfod I held a pastorate in Somersetshire. Was it at all likely that I should be his travelling companion? As to the insinuation thrown out that Caledfryn, in awarding me the prize, served a fellow-minister, he had no idea that I had written on either of the subjects; and moreover than that, I was determined that the judges should not. I requested a friend of mine, with whom I stayed, to copy my work for me, lest they should discover the author by the autograph. I did not even

inclose my real name in a sealed letter; so that I took every care that the other candidates should have fair play. I likewise took very good care to be present on the platform, to answer to my signatures; and I had the honour to represent 'Caernarvon Castle', and 'Aurora'! B.C.D. may, if he likes to be more fully satisfied (as *drwg ei hun a debyg arall*), write to the gentleman above alluded to; his address is as follows: 'W. Price, Esq., Solicitor, Llanfoist, Monmouthshire'.

I should advise B.C.D. to drop the last initial of his name, and adopt the letter A instead, prefixed to the others; this would suit him better.

Jan. 25, 1843.

I am, your most obedient servant,  
Iago Emlyn

***The Cambrian*, 11 February 1843**

LETTER 9

*To the EDITOR of The CAMBRIAN*

SIR, – My reply to Mr. Taliesin Williams shall be brief and good tempered. He came to my residence on the 28th of January, when the following conversation took place: Ab Iolo *loquitur*: 'Mr. Stephens, I find myself shockingly vilified by a letter in the *Cambrian* of this day, signed B.C.D. Are you B.C.D.?'

T. S.: 'I am, sir.'

Ab Iolo: 'Then you are a villanous liar. What are the damning facts you have to charge against me?'

T. S.: 'All statements publicly made by me you are at liberty to question the truth of, and you shall be publicly replied to.'

Ab Iolo: 'You are a villanous liar.' Exit.

This is a correct statement, which I lay before the public without a word of comment, leaving them to decide whether it is most creditable to him or me. I would have pardoned him (while in anger) for the wanton insult he offered me, had he not defended it in your last; but unless he, next week, retracts and publicly apologises for these offensive expressions, they shall be severely resented. Not having contradicted the truth of my statements, nor attempted to clear away the heap of charges which he says he labours under, he has given me nothing to reply to.

Merthyr, Feb. 8, 1843.

I am, sir, yours, obediently,  
Thomas Stephens

P.S. In re. Iago Emlyn. I was wrong in translating 'fedd' into 'bed', although the sense is much improved. The adverb 'temporarily' alone will convey the meaning of the original, which does not mean 'legitimate ancient prince', nor any thing like it. For what has Wales been exchanged that he wishes me to write 'a poor substitute *for*' and not '*to* Wales'? What nonsense it would have been had I given a quite literal translation, thus, 'Poor sway for Wales!' Some isolated idiomatic phrases warrant his objections against 'wael rwysg' and 'dirion Victoria', although I could, had I space, quote hundreds of lines from the best Welsh bards to confirm my position. I will now turn critic, friend Iago, and begin with your first *englyn*. 'Foddysig', in the last line, is in the vocative case, or, at least, has a vocative signification. How fine it looks in English!

And the woes of pale Llewelyn weaving  
O! bruised manner from the grave of ages.

What a defiance to continuity of thought and common sense! How long has it been discovered that the ages have been buried? How long has the grave discontinued the practice of not giving up its tenants? What a commentary upon the doctrine of resurrection! Again, 'Cymru', in the third *englyn*, has an invocative meaning. If written in prose, it would run thus, 'O Gymru, &c.' 'Cymru', therefore, should be 'Gymru'. Where were your English and Welsh grammars when you wrote this, Iago? Now, to the most important objection of the whole 'Cymru taw, *daeth* camrau ter – ein Albert, in helbul esmwythder'. In English thus, 'O Wales, be silent, the splendid strides of your Albert came'. To what, Iago? You say, 'Ease to our sorrows'. Perhaps you mean to say that his steps came (?) *to give* ease to our sorrows. But where is the verb, thou best of grammarians and advisers? It is a rule that when two verbs come together the latter is placed in the infinitive mood, but you have no verb at all, and the prince's splendid strides (!) came (?) to no purpose. What a pity he should have made a waste journey! Raphael is not B.C.D., but his comments are perfectly just, in spite of your effort to prove the contrary. Who, at hearing Iago speak of his caution in concealing his name, will not exclaim:

This fellow's of exceeding honesty,  
And knows all qualities with a learned spirit  
Of human dealings.

*Othello*

It was once said of a plotting, yet 'honest Iago':

When devils will their blackest sins put on  
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,  
As I do now.

*Othello*

Iago, I have done with thee.

B.C.D.

***The Cambrian, 11 February 1843***

*To the EDITOR of The CAMBRIAN*

SIR, – Have the goodness to insert the following lines in your next *Cambrian*, for the amusement of your Welsh readers.

Yours, &c., Iago Emlyn

Cenais am bymtheg gini  
Yn lled hardd – *enillwyd hi* –  
Curais wyth o'r *tylwyth teg*,  
Cryf chwenych, curaf 'chwaneg!  
Hwy mewn tawch yn min y tan,  
Gwypaf pob un a'i gwppan,  
Yfed diod hynod hen –  
Gwed rhai i godi'r Awen,  
Gan chwiflio'u mwg, golwg hyll –  
Duodd yr *Haul*\* yn dywyll: –  
Iago fal llô'n yfed llaeth  
Myswynog, twym wasanaeth:



O 'mol e gododd i 'mhen –  
 Radd ddwyfol – *auraid hufen!*  
 Llaeth *Llanfoist* fu'n foist i fi,  
 Gyda *Price nice* yn nosi,  
 O mor hoff oedd ei sofffa,  
 Gwâl i din fel gwely da.

Hanes gwir – nos o gariad  
 Gyda'r Awen feinwen fad  
 Yno oes, a gwin cusan  
 Min angyles – lodes lân,  
 A'i gwallt torchog, gwyllt archwaeth  
 Dros ysgwyddau lliwiau llaeth,  
 A'i dwy fron yn eu dyfrhau  
 Donnent dan aur gydunau  
 Er ffynnu, ni orphenwyd  
 Y *trai'n llawn* – truan a llwyd  
 Wyf etto, ar ddotio'n ddall –  
 Bryn hiraeth am *Brice* arall!

\* The Tavern of the Cymreigyddion.

***The Cambrian*, 18 February 1843**  
*To the EDITOR of The CAMBRIAN*  
 Merthyr Tydfil, Feb. 13th, 1843

SIR, – Thomas Stephens, in his last communication, has perverted the expression he used, in reply to my indignant demand, that he would give publicity to the 'damning facts' which he basely held in intended terror over me. His real words were 'They shall appear before the public' and not 'All statements made by men, you are at liberty (how gracious!) to question the truth of, and you shall be replied to'. This, I am prepared to prove by evidence on oath. In conclusion, he thus advances another assertion, 'Not having contradicted the truth of my statements, nor attempted to clear away the heaps which he says he labours under, he has left me nothing to reply to.' Now, I refer you, and your readers, to my last letter (*Cambrian*, Feb. 4), for the truth or falsehood of this assertion. My words, in that communication, are as follows: 'Your correspondent, Thos. Stephens (for which the initials B.C.D. were substituted), has been allowed an ample scope of accusation, with but little interruption, and none from me, till now; although an extreme violation of truth has characterised his letters.' What stronger denial could I have made? What more unqualified charge of calumny could I have flung at him? But I did not close my denial here, for I additionally observed, 'When personal character becomes the object of vituperation and defamation, both the traducer and the vehicle of his injustice become equally responsible to the outraged party.' Could you, sir – could any other person, in his right reason – have mistaken the palpable meaning of such words? Do they not convey an unqualified contradiction of the truth of his statements? And does not my letter conclude thus: 'Let every charge be at once brought forward, and I will immediately and finally reply.' What heart in its right place would not have responded to this call?

As a key to T. S.'s attacks on me, I beg to state the following circumstance: the evening previous to the opening of the last Abergavenny eisteddfod Mr. Price

requested that I would look with him over three essays, that, from their closer competition for the prize, and their different characteristics, had employed his attention much more than the other compositions on the same subject; but, that he had satisfied his own mind respecting them. We met, together with Mr. Rees, of Llandovery, at the Angel Inn, for that purpose, and remained there till nearly day-break, in examining and deciding their respective merits; and we finally awarded, with perfect concurrence, the palm of merit to the essay announced the following day as the successful one. It has since fully transpired that Thomas Stephens's composition was one of the two rejected ones; and it is additionally said that he likewise failed on what has been generally termed the Great Prize; hence, I infer, the wrath of his disappointment.

At the public meeting I mentioned in my last I applied the term *llyffeint* (toads) to Mr. Price's vilifiers, having particularly in view T. S., whose froth suggested the emblem; but, although aiming his shafts indiscriminately at others, from his 'Cimmerian darkness', his own sacred name was not to be taken in vain, even in allusion; and he immediately puffed himself up for vengeance; which he, indeed, pretty lavishly spumed out. In this stage of rampancy, he dubs himself a gentleman, as follows: 'My conduct will show that a *llyffant* (a toad), the term applied to B.C.D. at a late public meeting, by Ab Iolo, possesses more gentlemanly feelings than Prif-fardd Deheudir ever had, &c.' Now, sir, I will cull out of his own mouth a few specimens of his 'gentlemanly feelings'.

When 'D. Jones', in his manly reply (in the *Guardian*, I believe), objected to the comparison that had strangely enough suggested itself to T. S.'s mind (*Cambrian*, Nov. 19), he was, in pretty intelligible terms, pronounced 'a fool' for the inference that he, with many others, thence drew. Soon after, in the same paper, T. S. calls Mr. Price 'Minos'; but this complimentary term having unluckily, in typographical error, been transformed to 'Mina's'; T. S. eagerly corrects the blunder in his 4th epistle, (*Cambrian*, Dec. 3); and further illuminates your readers, Mr. Editor, by informing them that 'Minos was Pluto's Lord Chief Justice'; in plain English, that Mr. Price was the Devil's Lord Chief Justice.

B.C.D. (Thomas Stephens, druggist, of Merthyr Tydfil) has frequently been called upon to stand forth and advance his charges under his proper name, like an honest man; but slander and continued defamation were the only returns he made; and made, too, as he evidently flattered himself, with impunity, from his 'Cimmerian darkness'. But, when another person attacks him (under a fictitious signature, I presume, for I have not been able to procure a sight of the *Silurian* he alludes to), the case is altered – his 'gentlemanly feelings' break out most ferociously, and he denounces the writer or some one else as that coward, who, not daring publicly to express his convictions, privately stabs an author's fame and maligns his character. See *Silurian*, Nov. 5.

To pass unnoticed, now, numerous other foul epithets – here we have – a fool; Minos, Pluto's Lord Chief Justice – alias the Devil's Lord Chief Justice (the truly worthy Mr. Price) – a private stabber of an author's fame, and a maligner of character.

In his 3d letter (*Cambrian*, Nov. 19), the following insidious assertion is advanced: 'One instance, in particular, relative to a late Cardiff eisteddfod, deserves mention here, where a successful candidate for the chair-prize was, at the same time, the corresponding secretary, the identity of whose handwriting in that capacity, with that of his poem, afforded Daniel Ddu an opportunity, had he been so disposed, to have turned the knowledge thus obtained to the prejudice of other competitors.' It is true, he then exculpates both parties from any such motive. I was appointed Welsh Corresponding Secretary to the committee of that distinguished eisteddfod, but I

corresponded with none of its three worthy judges during the whole period of its transactions. They are still alive, and can bear testimony to the truth of [this] assertion. With the honorary secretaries of that Society, I had the pleasure of some interesting correspondence. But I was the successful candidate for the chair-prize then, and the insinuation is manifest.

After quoting my eulogy, as one of the adjudicators, on Iolo Mynwy's 'Awdl Arwest', T. S. (*Cambrian*, Jan. 28), in his 8th letter, adds the following stricture, as a commentary: 'Statements are made, upon certainly respectable authority, of eulogies passed upon compositions which had never been read; where the handwriting alone had been considered an unequivocal testimony, that they were the best that had ever been or would be written.' Again, without intermission, he proceeds: 'these judges will have to thank the forbearance of a "slanderer" for not bringing upon them the execrations of a cajoled nation, in not publishing damning facts, upon authority which scepticism would not reject.' I leave it to the heads and hearts of your readers, sir, to appreciate rightly the character that could first of all give publicity to such flagitious charges, and then crouch in his 'Cimmerian darkness' from the call that demanded his 'respectable authorities', his 'authority which scepticism would not reject' for them.

In his 3rd letter (*Cambrian*, 19th Nov.) he premises his intention to say 'things strong, severe, and personal'; and, in good faith, he appears thenceforward quite rampant. At the close of his 8th letter (*Cambrian*, Jan. 28) he unequivocally says, 'every sentence has its object, every line its mission'. So has the calumny of every traducer of character; so has the bullet of every assassin in broad-day. To conclude, sir, Thomas Stephens seems anxious to stifle any denial of his charges by holding popular vengeance in terror over any one who should presume to advance a single word in favour of the accused. Hear him – (*Cambrian*, 19th Nov.) – 'The man who would so far outrage public feelings as to claim for them the slightest share of praise would be with indignation censured, if not branded with infamy, and be pointed at as an enemy to his country.' Earnestly entreating you to insert this in common justice, and also T. S.'s evidences and authorities, whenever presented, I engage to pursue this subject no longer in your columns – a court of justice will still be open for me.

I am, sir, yours obediently,  
Taliesin Williams (Ab Iolo)

### ***The Cambrian*, 18 February 1843**

ABERGAVERNYYCYMREIGYDDION

To the EDITOR of *The CAMBRIAN*

Dear Sir, – It is no wonder that B.C.D. commits so many blunders when we consider that he has not made himself acquainted with the subjects he pretends to criticise; the *englynion* to the Indian Prince, as he calls them, furnish an instance of this. The thesis of these stanzas included the prince and his uncle, and if B.C.D. had read the account of the Abergavenny eisteddfod, which he ought to have done, before putting pen to paper, he would have seen this in the proceedings of the first day. Then, like a man just awakened from sleep, and rubbing his eyes, he says: 'The second *englyn* has no reference to the prince at all, and it would be difficult to say why it is placed there.' Had our critic understood his text, he would have avoided this difficulty. A blind man should never venture to travel strange ground without a guide, and I wonder that Cantab did not stand at his elbow to keep him from all this mischief. In the first line of the first stanza, there is one word that is not in my MS, i.e. 'un', which makes the syllables eleven instead of ten. In the second stanza there are two errors that are not in

the original; the first is ‘da les’, instead of ‘dda les’; the second is that the recurrent word, and the last two words of the second line, are in italics, namely ‘*dda les, . . . ei hunan*’, in order, I suppose, to square with B.C.D.’s incorrect and inelegant rendering of the same. The *gair cyrch*, which he has erroneously translated ‘beneficial good’, does not even verge towards anything like a truism in the original. The second line ‘Idd ei wlad ei hunan’, means, in plain English, ‘To his own country’; but he has rendered it, in defiance of the rules of parsing, ‘To his country, *his own*’. He says that there are two instances of tautology in the third stanza, in italics. He means, ‘Sydd amod –’, and ‘Du a gwyn yn deg wniad’. The above comprise all the words he alludes to; of course, he considers the latter line a repetition of the sense of the former; this cannot be made more than one instance, according to Cocker. I do not charge B.C.D. with not being capable of reckoning two; he is to be pitied. The fact is, he sees double! But I deny the charge altogether. ‘Sydd amod –’ contemplates the visit of the illustrious stranger in the light of a covenant; and the line ‘*Du a gwyn yn deg wniad*’ merely refers to its mode or aspect, which, however, is purely accidental, signifying ‘black and white joined together’. When we speak of any kind of documents, we frequently say that they are in black and white, i.e. written with black ink on white paper; but who except B.C.D. would be so insane as to say that the black and white are the documents. It is not at all essential; they might be written with red ink on yellow parchment. He calls this a precious piece of tailoring. If a man may be known as to his calling, by his speech, I think that B.C.D. is a disciple of Snip. His translation of Caswallon’s *englyn* seems to countenance this hypothesis; and if he be the ninth part of a man, alas for the glory of his conqueror! There must have been a tremendous stretching and twisting, on his part, to convert a wall into a garment, or ‘*muria*’, ‘to surround with a wall’, into ‘to invest’. In reference to the same subject, he says: ‘Joseph’s waistcoat was nothing to this’. The word ‘waistcoat’ is not to be found in the sacred narrative. Does he really think that old Jacob, that venerable patriarch, was a *clo’ merchant*! It requires but one touch to nullify this nonsensical sentiment. Black and white are not considered colours. Joseph’s coat was of many colours – ergo, to join the former is nothing to the latter; and even though black and white were colours, they can be but two. How can many colours be nothing in comparison of them? What does the fellow mean? Joseph’s coat was a long tunic, with sleeves reaching to the wrists and ankles, worn by young men and maidens of the better class. The one in question, according to the original, was made of many pieces, and those of different colours, similar to our patchwork. B.C.D. must have had an eye to business – ‘his own’! in cutting up this loose, long, and ample coat, to make a waistcoat of it. What a lot of cabbage it would yield! B.C.D. says that ‘the word recurrent “*frwdias*” is a *gair llanw*, serving no other purpose than alliterating with “*frodyr*”’. That I deny; the meaning would not be complete without it, nor the philosophy of the sentiment – fervid Indian blood was necessary to mingle with that of the Welsh, which is proverbially warm; and I would say, ‘Strike the iron while it is hot’, and the ‘nail on its head’ – if it has one. The false grammar of ‘*wresog wraidd*’, as B.C.D. thinks it, I have already noticed in the first letter, in my remarks on the government of adjectives and substantives, to which I beg to refer the reader. In his criticism on the fifth stanza, he asks, ‘What connexion is there between the pleasure of the prince among the sages of the Society, and the flight of the *awen* “through the India”?’ I answer, the closest possible connexion, poetically speaking. The warm community of feeling between the literati of our beloved country, and their illustrious guest, could not fail to afford a kind of novel pleasure to the latter, who, on the following day, embarked for his native shore, highly delighted with what he had enjoyed, and who can tell but that the germ of the heavenly *awen* will spring up in his ferment mind, with an efflorescence

so rich and splendid, as for form an exotic, that shall astonish the natives, even amid oriental luxuriance itself. I perceive that, without any regard to idiom, he has rendered 'drwy'r India', 'through *the* India'. The Welsh article is often prefixed to the names of countries, as 'yr Amerig', 'gwlad yr Aifft', &c. The French do the same, as 'l'Angleterre'. B.C.D. of course would translate the latter, '*the* England'! The word 'Brydain', in the second line of the last stanza, should be 'Prydain', as it is in my MS; but his remarks on this and other parts of the *englyn* are exceedingly vague, arbitrary, and erroneous. In the first place, he asks: 'What is, or to be to our ingenious country? Who or what will be wiser?' I answer, the prince; and any one that makes use of his eyes in reading the *englyn* at issue, must know it – his double vision does not serve him at every turn.

He says, to those who are adepts in French, 'that in the Welsh, when two consonants come together, one ending and another beginning a word, the latter has its sound softened'. Of course, he means that it is so invariably, for the above sentence is an universal proposition, consequently, the subject is distributed. Now, it is my duty to expose the utter fallacy of it. Let any of your readers open a Welsh book and peruse a few pages and they will soon see the untruth of this assertion. How often do we meet with such phrases as the following: 'gogoniant mawr', 'dyn cryf', 'dwr croyw', 'bardd cywrain', 'cerrig calch', and thousands of others which might be named? But to come closer still to the point, in 'cerrig mawrion' the same consonant ends the first words as terminates 'carreg' in 'carreg mawr', and the same begins the second in both phrases, i.e. 'm', but there is no reflection in 'mawrion', and it were a libel on human speech to say 'cerrig fawrion'. He then quotes the French phrase *Parlez vous français?* to explain what he means, at the same time stating that it will do as well as a further-fetched one. I rather think that the above is all the French he knows, and that he could go no further; his omission of the *cedilla subscriptum* seems to confirm my suspicion.

Before he sports any more of his French he had better commit its ten conjugations to memory. Perhaps he will excuse me if I take the term 'further-fetched' in another sense than his own, as it will be very appropriate to the case in point. There never was anything so far-fetched as the French adduced by him to illustrate the subject; it is in fact quite foreign to the genius of the Welsh language – there is no more analogy between the quiescence of the French consonants and the inflection of the Welsh ones than there is between a cobbler dropping his wax and *lapsus linguae*! The inflection of 'm' into 'f' in 'carreg fawr' has no affinity at all with the non-pronunciation of 'z' in 'parlez vous'; to make the parallel unique, the 'g' should be elided; thus 'carre' fawr', which sounds very much like 'carri fawr', i.e. a great thong – a very good thing by the by for the back of a dunce, or to wollop a 'donkey that will not go'! But it were cruel to apply it to B.C.D.'s back, as he is floored – fair play – I shall not beat him on the ground, I do not think that I should use him so hard if I had an opportunity; if, for instance, at this moment his trotters were under my mahogany! In French, the quiescence of consonants relates entirely to pronunciation, without any regard to parts of speech, but the inflection of Welsh consonants arises from the interchange of palatals, dentals, labials, and gutturals, with their correspondents respectively, under the government of gender and case.

Let us look at the difference between these two languages in this respect. When there is an elision of the first radical in Welsh, as 'g' in the word 'gelyn', it becomes 'elyn', and though preceded by a vowel, no consonant is allowed to intervene to strengthen the pronunciation, e.g. 'ei elyn', i.e. his enemy. Again, 'gardd' when it becomes 'ardd' is just the same, we say 'ei ardd', i.e. his garden. In French, when a word ends in, and another next to it with, a vowel, the letter 't' is sometimes placed

between them, merely for the sake of euphony; in every other respect ‘t’ is only an arbitrary intruder. I will give an instance, in the form of a question, respecting B.C.D. *Vu-t-il à l’école? Again, N’y a-t-elle pas consenti? N’ a-t-il pas dépensé tout son argent?* B.C.D.’s ‘indicative reason’ (which he can neer explain), that ‘forbids any deviation’ when the first word ends in a vowel, or rather the ‘confusion of tongues’ therefrom arising, shows that French rules do not all square with those of the Welsh. B.C.D.’s rule in the instance given by him, viz. ‘carreg fawr’, is that the first letter of the last word is inflected, i.e. ‘m’ softened into ‘f’. Now, observe that ‘mawr’ is the primitive form or nominative case; according to this ‘deithio Brydain’ must be correct, because ‘Prydain’ is the radix, so that in correcting the error ‘deithio Brydain’, which must have been purely adventitious, he destroys his own argument at one blow. His reason for the inflection of the last consonant in his own words is ‘when two come together’, and if there is ‘no deviation’, as he afterwards tells us, ‘though the first word terminates in a vowel’, what dependence can be placed on [a] rule that he himself breaks as soon as he has given it?

From this mock logic, the following conclusion is inevitable, that what he affirms is and is not at the same time, or to be plainer, when two consonants meet, one of them is softened, but there is ‘no deviation’, when they do not meet, although the ‘reason indicative’, and no other is, when two consonants come together!! Let burlesque equal this if it can.

Thus have we driven B.C.D. off from British ground with his own weapons – fairly. This, Mr Editor, as you well known, is the *argumentum ad hominem*. If he go to France for aid, he will fare no better. If, as he says, the first consonant is softened though preceded by a vowel, which softening he compares to the quiescence of French consonants when two come together, of what avail is this? The French language affords no parallel to the inflection of a Welsh consonant preceded by a vowel, for our Gallic neighbours always pronounce their consonants when preceded by a vowel, and vice versa, as, *Je suis, Vous êtes, Venez ici, Quoi qu’il puisse entreprendre il ne reussira jamais, Peut-on être, &c., &c.*

To what absurdities will men run when they do not follow philosophical principles. Well may B.C.D. adopt a fictitious name to hide his diminished head; but shades of Junius, alas, what a falling off his here! What can he do in such a dilemma as this, Mr. Editor? Will you give him leave to exclaim with the nonplus’d Quaker – ‘The Lord rebuke thee, Iago’!

Yours, respectfully,  
Iago Emlyn

\* Vide Gesenius’s Hebrew Lexicon.

### ***The Cambrian, 25 February 1843***

*To the EDITOR of The CAMBRIAN*

SIR, – Since writing my last, I saw an attempt made by B.C.D. to answer my first letter in the *Cambrian*,<sup>37</sup> which calls for a few remarks from me; and as you intend to close the controversy with my second epistle, perhaps you will favour me with the insertion of this brief note along with it. I rather regret that the contest should be closed so soon; not but that its ending, under such circumstances, is without its advantages, for Iago to be in ‘at the death’ is something, but there is one drawback to this, i.e. the insertion of my *cywydd, solus*, in your last, which was intended to be an adjunct to my second letter. My ‘return from the slaughter’ would have been attended

with more *éclat à la Nimrod*, with my poetical trophy, yclept the tail. As I read the first line of B.C.D.'s last, I thought that I was going to have the honour of being his confessor. He says, 'I was wrong in translating "fedd" into "bed"'; to be sure he was, and he ought to have gone on in the same direction, confessing all his errors, and I would have forgiven him, 'naughty boy' as he is, and taught him a few lessons of pure Armoric, gratis. But, like a certain headstrong fellow-creature of his, he 'won't go' – stops short – stumbles – strikes his hoofs against the foot of the confessional, and brays out that the sense is much improved, though he was wrong in his translation! Nevertheless, I have not wielded my steel in vain – he has obeyed my orders in quitting his 'bed' for the 'grave', which, by the bye, is an illustration in character that 'gwely' is not the *briforphwysfa*. – Vide my first letter.

We must not listen to every stuff that we hear – gratuitous generalities must be rejected when brought to the test of an exact science as grammar is. He says that the adverb 'temporarily' alone gives the sense of the original. This, perhaps, might be true, if he could make out that the adjective 'oesol' is an adverb; but this cannot be done.

'Some isolated idiomatic phrases (he adds) warranted his objections against "dirion Victoria", although I could, had I space, quote hundreds of lines, from the best Welsh bards, to confirm my position.' This precious *morceau* contains as much truth as his remarks on a 'fellow-minister' and 'travelling companion'. I defy him to quote a single line from the works of any Welsh grammarian in which the adjective does not govern the noun that follows it. Who told him that 'foddysig' is in the vocative case? And that 'Cymru', in the third *englyn*, being in the vocative, should be 'Gymru'? Proper names are not always inflected in the vocative, e.g. 'Baal gwrando ni', O. T.; 'Gwalia, mawr yw dy g'wilydd', Daniel Ddu; 'Caerfyrddin cei oer fore', Myrddin; 'O! Picton ffyddlon hoff oedd', D. S. He then gravely tells us that he could hardly mean it. I should think that in prose the vocative of 'Cymru' is 'O Gymru!' as if there were two grammars, one for prose, and another for poetry. To be convinced of the error that lies in this confusion we need only mention that 'o Gymru' is in the ablative case, meaning 'from Wales'. The right translation of the line 'Cymru taw', &c., which he has failed to render, is as follows: 'The graceful steps of our Albert have brought ease to our sorrows.' He asks: 'Where were your Welsh and English grammars when you wrote this, Iago?' I answer: in my head. It is not often that I want to read them, now; and I am quite certain that I never need even refer to them, whilst writing against B.C.D. He says that Raphael's comments on W. Davis's *englyn* are perfectly just, in spite of my efforts to prove the contrary. Let us try the thing. The reader will remember that one of the putative errors was a *proest*, which occurs when both the alliterating words end in a vowel, e.g. 'tarfu', 'tyrfa'. B.C.D. affirms that 'ngwely'r' and 'heli' fall under this charge. Let us apply the scale, 'ngwely'r heli'. The reader cannot fail to see that the first word ends in a consonant and the second in a vowel, i.e. 'r' and 'i'; but further still is the line in question from this blemish when we consider that 'haul' is the word that alliterates with 'heli', being in the *brif orphwysfa*, according to rule. No two words in the Welsh language can be farther from the alleged 'proestism' than 'haul' and 'heli'. Again, 'A'r lloer yn arianu'r lli'. This line is equally blameless, 'Lloer', in the *brif orphwysfa*, consones with 'lli' in the *brifodl*, 'r' ends the one, and 'i' the other; and before B.C.D. can make a *proest* of this and the other line, he must first of all prove that 'r' is a vowel, or that 'i' is a consonant! The predication that 'u' in 'arianu'r', and 'i' in 'lli', 'wel' in 'ngwely'r', and 'el' in 'heli', form *dybryd sain*, is equally erroneous. B.C.D. cuts a sorry figure in his last – not one reply has he made to the shameful exposures given of his ignorance. He appears crest fallen; half emerging his head, in a 'bruised manner', over the brim of his mortar, and

in a most pitiful tone utters 'his last dying speech', as he drops away – 'Iago, I have done with thee!'

The doubtful character of this modern Zuilus, during his fictitious reign, was held in solution, but now that the secret is out, instead of the 'great unknown' we have the 'little known'! He is 'gone to pot', Mr. Editor, and has found his level among his own precipitates! He is now in his element, and no doubt he clings with wondrous tenacity to the sediments of the alembic. This is very natural. There let him rest, a living experiment of the endearing union of chemical affinity! Stick to your gallipots, Vampyre.

With many thanks for your kindness, I am, Mr. Editor,  
Your most obedient servant,

Feb. 14, 1843.

Iago Emlyn

***Merthyr Guardian*, 11 March 1843**

Impromptu! Addressed to Taliesin Williams, Esq., by his early pupil, Wm. Millbourne Kirkhouse

Thou Parent Sun! whose radiant rays  
Cull fairest flowers, oh, what power is thine,  
To kindle genius in once barren minds,  
And bid them in their borrowed glory shine.  
How many souls hast thou inspired? whose pen  
Is but the engine of thy lofty mind;  
Whose towering intellect we all admire;  
Whose genial influence illumines mankind.  
Full oft I turn thy pages o'er, and ask,  
Oh! who can soar like thee, thrice gifted one,  
Into the realm of Fancy, and inure  
Imagination to abode upon  
The highest pinnacle of noble Fame?  
Thou cloth'st ideas in such sweet attire  
That language fails me when I would pourtray  
Thy just reward – the homage of the lyre!  
Most gifted bard! how oft it has been thine  
To light the flames of feeling – kindling fires  
Of vast conception – awakening thoughts  
Of the sublime. Oh! how my soul desires  
To touch that highest cord of Calliope's lyre,  
Which she has consecrated unto thee,  
Waking the strain thy pupil fain would weave  
To tell of thy ethereality.  
Others weave thee a garland, the garland of Fame;  
On history's tablet they chisel thy name; –  
I will sing of thy glories, and homage thy worth,  
Loved minstrel of Cambria! land of thy birth,  
May Harebell nor Cyprus ne'er darken thy brow,  
Nor thine be the loneliness 'gifted ones' knew;  
But laurel and olive their branches entwine,  
And the crown of the poet, Ab Iolo, be thine.  
Brighton.



***The Cambrian*, 18 March 1843**  
ABERGAVENNY CYMREIGYDDION  
LETTER 10  
*To the EDITOR of The CAMBRIAN*

‘Why should I play the Roman fool, and die  
On mine own sword? Whiles I see lives, the gashes  
Do better upon them.’ – *Macbeth*.

SIR, – My second reply to Taliesin Williams, Esq., if not brief, shall be good-tempered. When he said that my statements were untrue, he should have explained whether he meant all or part. If he meant that all were false, he has contradicted himself. He appropriates to himself the ‘damning facts’ which appeared in the 8th letter. Since the cap fits him, it would be folly for me to take it off. In writing of the Cardiff Society, I merely stated a fact. He admits its accuracy, but asserts that I have placed an insidious construction upon it. That no such intention existed will at once be made evident by the following extract from the letter in question: ‘I think it my duty to mention this, though both Daniel Ddu and the party referred to (T. W. Esq.), are unhesitatingly exculpated from any charge of dishonesty, nor can the expressions used, without injustice, be insidiously construed.’ How inconsistent with a character so full of cunning and malignity as mine is represented to be, it is to have paid Taliesin Williams, Esq., so very high a compliment, as to suppose (without any authority) that he had the virtue to resist the temptation, whereas I ought to have said nothing, but left the public to draw their own conclusions. When Mr. W.’s name is nowhere found (in these letters) in connection with any offensive or injurious expressions, one is ready to ask, why this animosity against me? Why apply to me such a host of epithets? A disproof of my statements alone can confirm his assertions, or in any measure affect me. While he avoids coming to particulars, and showing what parts of my letters are false, the public will not deem me ‘a villain’, but one who, consciously virtuous, calmly looks down upon the pigmy efforts of his detractors, and does not think their petty malignity worthy of notice.

I have been called ‘a slanderer’, and accused of ‘trading’ private character. Whom have I slandered – whose character have I traduced? Are they the secretaries, who held at the same time two offices, wholly incompatible, the proper performance of each of which was decidedly prejudicial to the other? Is it to be supposed they had the self-denial not to prosecute their personal interests to the prejudice of the other competitors? Before reading Ab Iolo’s last letter, I thought him guiltless, as will appear from the quotation in the first paragraph. Whether the schoolboy-eagerness with which he presses forward, declaring, ‘Indeed he did not write to the judges’, arises from conscious guilt, is a question for public decision. What reason can there be given for holding an office, if not with an intention to perform its duties? Where is the man, of common honesty, who would not, knowing himself to be a competitor, resign his employment? Were there none others capable of performing its duties? Taliesin Williams, Esq., has very effectively slandered his own character, but I have not. Whom have I slandered? Is it Taliesin Williams, Esq., who did not scruple to exalt his friend, at the expense of the reputation of all the bards of Wales, in declaring that the collective talent of Wales could not have produced a poetical composition to equal Iolo Mynwy’s *cerdd arwest*? Whose character have I traduced? Is it Caledfryn’s, who (to borrow a phrase from Mr. Williams’s Druidic records), ‘in the face of heaven, and

in the eye of light', declared that South Wales had not one bard of genius and talent (Ab Iolo of course, among those 'found wanting'); by which declaration he represents Ab Iolo to have uttered a gross falsehood when he said that Gwilym Ildid would soon be *prifardd*. Is it Mr. Price, the worthy and intelligent vicar of Cwmdru, whom I have slandered – whose character I have traduced? How comes Ab Iolo so sensitive for the honour of Mr. Price? Are there any choice pickings in the vicar's gift? I have already paid Mr. Price a compliment, which must be considered very high, for the character which extorts a compliment from me is not an ordinary one. I have censured Mr. P. for allowing antiquated prejudices to cloud his intellect – a censure which, from the want of the latter ingredient, does not so materially affect Ab Iolo as it otherwise would. He was censured for confining the attention of the Society, and the labours of literary characters, to subjects having no general interest. I desired that he would establish the Society upon a broader and more liberal basis – one more accordant with the spirit of the age; for it is the property of the human mind perpetually to advance, and the successive changes we observe in the institutions of countries have been, and are effected, in compliance to the demands of better defined, and more extensive intellectual views. I wished a share of the Society's patronage to be extended to Arts and Sciences, for it is a melancholy fact that from its foundation to the present day not one premium has been given for original compositions, or translations upon anything connected with art or science. Men are possessed already of certain notions of order, right, and justice, and he was not desired to infuse new views, nor endow with more refined conceptions, the minds of Welshmen, for of these they are already possessed, but know not how to use them. The necessity for improvement is an idea with which their minds are familiarised, nor is there anything forbidding them in the prospect of its being effected; and all he has to do is to concentrate and direct the ideas, which now inefficiently float upon the surface of society, into that channel which will most effectively ensure the desired object. He is acquainted with the means, and possesses the power. Let him exert himself, therefore, and posterity will bless his name. I am disposed to blame Mr. Price, since he had the control, for not having enquired into the characters of the decisions about to be given by his colleagues. What I have said of Ab Iolo should have been said by Caledfryn; what I have said of Caledfryn should have been done by Ab Iolo; and that which I have said of Caledfryn, Ab Iolo, and the Secretary should have been said by the Rev. Thomas Price.

He says, he 'never interrupted me'. Did he not try? Who was that pitiful creature whose faculties were limited by the precincts of a wooden tub (the English of *Patera Ligneæ*)? Who was that contemptible writer (P. L.) whose whole efforts could not attract my attention? Let any man peruse those letters, which have appeared in the *Guardian*, signed *Patera Ligneæ*, and doubt, if he can, that the same style pervades those of T. W., Esq., in the *Cambrian*. Let any one contemplate the alternate pompous and confused expressions which characterize a mind in the last stage of decay, struggling under a load of assumed importance, which it with difficulty sustains, and aiming at a real dignity, which it cannot reach, and say if these characteristics do not point T. W., Esq., out as the writer of the four. I have no doubt upon my mind that he is the writer, and that in denying it, he has deliberately uttered a falsehood.

Men, who belie by example that which they by precept inculcate, are the most pernicious members of society. How rich a field for sarcasm – how conspicuous a mark for satire is here presented! Did I wish to sport with the feelings, or become the censor of the moral turpitude of an individual, where could there have been found a better opportunity?

'Both (the Editor and B.C.D.) becomes', and 'insert this (letter) *in* common justice', are favourable specimens of academical grammar and classical English. The

perusal of an English grammar, though perhaps inconvenient, would be attended with infinite advantage to Mr. Williams. Mr. Williams has taken great pains to correct some typographical errors. How frail the literary fame whose stability the misspelling of a word can subvert! Whence will the lesser orbits derive light, if the 'radiant rays' of 'the Parent Sun'\* are intercepted? Who hereafter will 'kindle genius in a barren mind', if the borrowed glory of T. W., Esq., is obscured? *Sic transit gloria mundi* [Thus passes the glory of the world]!

As the Apostle Paul of absolute paganism, he is entitled to a moment's further attention. Some doubt his abilities; none believe him possessed of good manners; but all agree that, in the mystic groves of antiquity, he would have made an admirable Druid. Without the intellectual capacity to perceive that the Druidic butcheries were inhuman, or the moral refinement that would feel their manners repulsive, he would there have led a life of uninterrupted ease, without having his monarchical predilections thwarted by the more fastidious tastes of moderns. Nor would such a state be uncongenial with his present desires. 'The bird born in h—ll would fain in h—ll remain' are his own words, and, I presume, a correct interpretation of his wishes. He said that I was 'ignorant of Druidism', than which nothing could be truer. If Druidism was not that which historians represent it to have been, then I am as ignorant of what it really was as he is of every art and science which dignifies humanity, and distinguishes civilized man from the brutal savage. Upon triads of uncertain date, and of unknown origin, I place no reliance; of Druidic tenets, of modern invention, I am equally distrustful.

He complains of my having attacked him, than which nothing could have been further from my intention. It is the policy of those who wish to signalize themselves, or benefit the public, to fix upon none but the highest game.

Many, when they find that the coarseness of Mr. Williams has not met with a like return, will charge me with cowardice; but every rightly-constituted mind will coincide with me in considering him a fitter object of compassion than resentment. I war not against the weak. I bear him no illwill. He has attempted to injure me, yet would I wish to respect *his* character, and imitate *his* virtues. My friends know me to be neither 'a villain' nor 'a liar'. I can therefore well afford to forgive his misconduct.

Is it to be supposed that my attempts to expose the gross absurdities of Iago Emlyn's *englynion* can be rendered abortive by his farrago about trifling verbal errors? My object was to show that the judges of composition are the same now as they were in the days of Dewi Wyn. On no occasion have I wilfully misrepresented the original, though I might well laugh at the folly of a man who found not in the line of our monarchs one prince to make up for the loss of Llywelyn, until an Hanoverian Albert came to sight: who supposes that speaking of two persons at a time can excuse his incoherence; who in the frenzy of a pastor's eye, discovers (O, wonderful effects of *llaeth*!) that Wales, after 500 years of tranquillity, is in deep distress – in want of a prince; who, as if he was a slave-merchant, bids his country be silent while distressed; who thinks the disturbance of a nation's tranquillity a subject of praise – all this, I altogether omitted, or but partially noticed, caring only to show honestly the character of the Society and its judges. Had I the time which Iago Emlyn appears to have upon his hands, and chose to avail himself of the means at my disposal, I could, by a very few touches, have made Iago Emlyn appear the most ridiculous man, and miserable poetaster in existence. The instant he attempts to write anything substantial, he is lost; he can command neither knowledge nor language to bear him out; and this is the man who ingloriously triumphs upon a few inadvertencies on my part. Why did he not manfully grapple with my objections? Let no one suppose that these specimens of poetry were criticised on account of any intrinsic merit which they possessed. They

are such compositions as every ballad singer would be ashamed of. They derive their importance, in the eyes of the public, from their being the prize compositions at the last eisteddfod, and they were criticised in order to prevent such a gross abuse of public confidence. Need I expose the vile dishonesty and mean trickery of Iago's last letter? Need I notice the low scurrility and consummate impudence of this modern representative of the jovial monks of the Middle Ages?

On all occasions I have avoided personalities – have couched my observations in language at once comprehensive and inoffensive – and have avoided making any objections which were not of sufficient importance to be entitled to public notice. Whether I have done this from a patriotic or a piqued motive is what the public are left to decide. The promptitude with which the real name was given up will convince all of the sincerity of my motives, and integrity of my conduct, and that I did not assume a fictitious name to cloak the calumny of 'a traducer', or protect the machinations of 'an assassin'.

I must now be allowed to close a contest, which, from the extreme barrenness of my opponents' ideas, and the confusion of the few thoughts they have, can neither contribute any honour to me, nor be productive of advantage to the public. By inserting this last letter upon this subject, not 'in common justice', but in the valuable columns of the *Cambrian*, you will greatly oblige,

Your's obediently,  
Thomas Stephens (B.C.D.)

High-street, Merthyr, March 15, 1843.

\* See some fulsome balderdash, addressed to T. Williams, Esq., in the *Guardian* of last week. 'Praise undeserved is scandal in disguise.'

### ***The Cambrian*, 1 April 1843**

*To the EDITOR of The CAMBRIAN*

Dear Sir, – I thought that I had served B.C.D. out, as St. Patrick did the 'sarpints' [serpents] from the Emerald Isle, who, it is said, 'banished them for ever'. I perceive that I must give another twist to his neck, and have done with him. His attempts to criticise my work have proved altogether abortive; seeing himself done, he calls what he has been defeated in 'trifling verbal errors' and 'inadvertences'. I met him on his own ground fairly, and drove him up into a corner, from which he never can come out, unless he confess his errors, and give a practical illustration of a very funny caricature, which I recollect having seen some years ago, viz. an ass popping his head through the door of a pound, braying most sonorously, 'I have been roaming!' Or show what I have defied him to, and perform a few impossibilities, and effect certain transformations which the philosopher's stone never can. If he did not understand Welsh grammar nor *cynghanedd*, why dare he meddle with the work of one that does? What could he expect but an overthrow?

He asks, 'Why did he not manfully grapple with my objections?' by which I suppose he means the adjudication of the judges. That I have done as well as the rest, and from the statements made in my first letter, the public, I am sure, must be fully satisfied on that head. The fact that the Society has been of late more strict in awarding premiums only to compositions of merit, adds to the glory of my stanzas, whereby many heaps of rubbish, including B.C.D.'s unsuccessful pieces, have been rejected – destined never to see the light – they are consigned to oblivion – time will soon moulder them away – though bulky now, they will become 'small by degrees

and beautifully less!’ I calculate that I shall never feel those ‘touches’, which he says would make me ‘appear the most ridiculous man and miserable poetaster in existence’. I say that I shall never feel them. He cannot touch me in this respect, and all your readers know the same. He has made himself ‘the most ridiculous man in existence’ by making so many assertions, none of which he can substantiate.

From B.C.D.’s apparent angry tone, I should think that if he could make me out what he asserts he can, he would do so at once – why not do so? What is the use of his saying that he could knock me down, and not do it? Who will believe him? I cannot for the life of me imagine how a man, pale with ire, if he has the power he so much boast of can be such a coward as to ‘run away’, unless it be that he may ‘live to fight another day’. I fancy that he measures my abilities by the standard of his own: by his saying that I have much time on my hands, he of course thereby intimates that it took me a long period to answer his letters. If he is long about it, that is no reason that I should. My time is fully occupied in the duties of my profession. Replying to B.C.D. was only a little amusement – a mere pastime – not unlike a cat playing with a mouse. He alludes to ‘the low scurrility’ &c., of my last – he means my allusions to his profession; he did the same with me, by boldly attacking with profane hands the sacred prefix of my name, with which the matter in dispute had nothing to do, as it belonged entirely to my poetical character – with many thanks, Mr. Editor.

I beg to remain, your most obedient servant,

Portishead, March 20th, 1843.

Iago Emlyn