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### Y Wenhwysseg

O'r golofn "Edward II in Glamorgan", Pennod XI, gan y Parchedig John Griffith, Nant-y-moel, yn y Weekly Mail, 29 Mawrth 1902. Tudalen 8.

(Fe'i ceir hefyd yn y llyfr "Edward II in Glamorgan", John Griffith, 1902. Tudalennau 177-179)

Ceir fersiwn ar ffurf tudalen IAH = Iaith Arwyddnodi Huperdestun / Hypertext Markup Language = HTML yn y fan hon:

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(delwedd 8112)

The right place-name is the one which has made itself. It is always the best. It is surprising how the old Welsh parish names of the Vale have survived alongside of the English fancy names. We look to the remarkable vitality of the Gwentian dialect for a sedative to the present craze for English place-names. The Gwentian recovered the portions once thoroughly Anglicised, and the tourist will come across English names in the Vale, like Hamston Fawr, illustrative of the re-conquest. The writer is indebted to Mr. J. H. Westyr-Evans, of Cardiff, for information showing that the parish of Sully alone has escaped the recoil, so to speak, of the Gwentian dialect. It seems also that this parish has been inhabited all along by non-Welsh people, the descendants, perhaps, of some Norsemen who may have settled there.

When the Gwentian speech re-invaded the Vale the people, both Welsh and English, had become one. The Normans did their very best, and succeeded to a large extent, more by diplomacy than by force, in pulling down the wall of partition. But there was no real peace and goodwill until the Gwentian was once more spoken along the long coast-line, by people flourishing Norman and English surnames. The earlier charters of Glamorgan, which concerned the people, are addressed to three classes, French, English, and Welsh. Both Latin and French were used officially. The Welsh language, as has been noticed, was recognised in the Welsh commote courts. Hence a number of dual names for districts where there were both English and Welsh communities, such as Coity Anglicana and Coity Wallicana; Avan Anglicana and Avan Wallicana; Kidwelly Anglicana and Kidwelly Wallicana, just as there were in Breconshire a Welsh and an English Talgarth, Hay, and Pencelli. There are noble Norman precedents for the establishment of Welsh courts throughout Wales.

A hundred years from now not only Glamorgan but South Wales also will be overwhelmingly Gwentian in speech. Every Welsh dialect is now spoken here, but the children of the immigrants talk and play in Y Wenhwysg, the Gwentian dialect. The speech of the English settlers in Welsh communities becomes also Gwentian in pronunciation. No other dialect survives one generation here. The ruined conditions of former hives of industry in some parts of Glamorgan and Monmouth remind us that the limit of our industrial development will be reached sooner or later. With the inevitable ebbing of the tide of immigration, and with any stand-still-ness in our communal life, the Gwentian will re-assert itself. You can put any insurance both on the people and the speech of Sikuria. The latter has a remarkable power for borrowing and giving a classic touch to English words. The Gwentian of the future will be something like the following specimen spoken at a certain meeting a short time ago. "I ni weti grondo achu speech dda iawn. Fe exposws y sharatwr ffalasi argiwmnt yr ochor arath, a fe explodws i bubble hi." Whether such a dialect deserves to live is a question which is nobody's business to decide. The Gwentian lives, and will live, for one thing as a protest against every political meddling with a people's speech. Even a hole-and-corner dialect will survive dynasties of Bismarcks. Little Malta on such a question makes her voice heard at Westminster. The flowing tide of scholarship is strongly in favour of such survivals.

For some generations, the hillmen looked upon the English settlements in the Vale as their fair game whenever they chose to go on the war-path. But a force stronger than even the Gwentian dialect gradually united them. The hills became represented in the Norman castles and English towns of the Vale by the fair daughters of Welsh freemen.

An old "triban" records the chief commodities which were exchanged between Bro and Blaenau, the Vale and the Uplands.

"Dywedir er's peth oesa'  
Taw burch o'r Fro yw'r gora',  
Ond cyn boddlonf'r cyflawn serch  
Rhaid yw cael merch o'r Blaena'."

For ages it has been said  
That a cow from the Vale is the best,  
But for the full satisfaction of love,  
You must go to the Uplands for a wife.

The bard was either a Blaenau man or a love-sick Bro bachelor. "Gwartheg Morganwg," Glamorgan cattle, were once famous. Equally historical is the fact that the Blaenau, where the natives have enjoyed a continuity of tenure for a fabulous time, have yielded an inexhaustible supply of fair women to grace the goodlier homesteads of the Bro. It is one of a few commodities which can be supplied without impoverishing the Hills.

