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Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire.

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(2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn
- 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Cyhoeddwyd ysgrifau Elias Owen o 1871 ymlaen yn y Montgomeryshire Collections
(Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire).

Rhan 1 / Cyfrol IV / 1871 / 49-54
Rhan 2 / Cyfrol IV / 1871 / 433-440
Rhan 3 / Cyfrol V / 1872 / 199-202
Rhan 4 / Cyfrol VI / 1873 / 243-248
Rhan 5 / Cyfrol VII / 1874 / 117-124
Rhan 6 / Cyfrol VII / 1874 / 393-404
Rhan 7 / Cyfrol VIII / 1875 / 117-122
Rhan 8 / Cyfrol VIII / 1875 / 351-358
Rhan 9 / Cyfrol IX / 1876 / 403-410
Rhan 10 / Cyfrol X / 1877 / 207-220
Rhan 11 / Cyfrol XI / 1878 / 317-324
Rhan 12 / Cyfrol XIV / 1881 / 139-146
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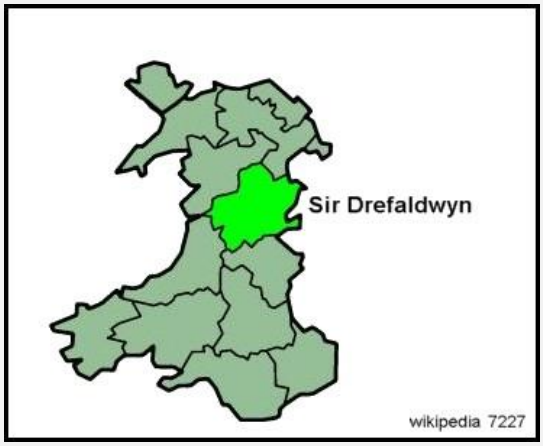

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VOL. IV.

LONDON :

J. RUSSELL SMITH, 36, SOHO SQUARE.

1871.

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CONTENTS OF VOLUME IV.

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ARCHAIC WORDS, PHRASES, ETC., OF MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

THE inhabitants of the eastern borders of Montgomeryshire, adjoining Shropshire, and even so far up the valley of the Severn as Llanidloes, speak a language which contains many archaisms, and their vocabulary contains words peculiar to itself, and many also similar and germane to those of Lancashire, South Scotland, and other provincial dialects in England. Offa's Dyke, the line of demarcation between Celt and Saxon for a thousand years, skirts the boundary of the county passing into Shropshire, a little to the east of the town of Montgomery; and in the north, it passes over the Llanymynech hills. Following this dyke, we may hear on one side pure Saxon words, while on the other Welsh is spoken. This is the case in the neighbourhood of Llanymynech, but as we proceed south, in the direction of Welshpool and Montgomery, English is now generally used. This preference on one side the boundary for English, and on the other for Welsh, was very perceptible fifty years ago, but at present Welsh appears to recede, and not only does the Welsh language disappear from these parts, but the peculiar pronunciation, words, and phrases once in common use, handed down from the time when Mercia was a distinct kingdom, and its people distinguished from the other Saxon tribes by their own shibboleths, are gradually dying out, and it is only in the familiar conversations of the lower orders in the more secluded districts that we can meet with a provincialism worth making a note of. Schools, railways, and the cheap press are all at work,

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Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

and if these fast becoming obsolete words and expressions are to be perpetuated, they can only be so by being collected and deposited in the pages of such a publication as that issued by the Powys-Land Club. As a proof that the language of the working people in Montgomeryshire is undergoing a change, and that English is gradually usurping the supremacy, the writer will relate an anecdote in which he himself figures. A good many years since I wanted to pay a visit to a Roman mine on Llanymynech hills, but after a fruitless ramble, I descended, to seek information, to a village, through which the railway now runs, but then no iron horse frightened the drowsy kine with his terrible puffings. I could not make the villagers understand what I was in search of. But, after a time, one of them said, "Do you mean *ogo-hole*, sir?" It turned out that that was what I wished to find. Here are two words, meaning the same thing, joined together, and applied to the place which formerly was known by the Welsh speaking population by the name of "*yr ogof*" (the cave). The succeeding English speaking population not being aware that *ogof*, or as it is usually pronounced in Welsh, *ogo*, was equivalent to the word cave, added thereto the word hole. So, here we have a double appellative, and from this circumstance we may infer that the people to whom the word *ogof* was intelligible have been succeeded by a people to whom that word conveys no idea, but to whom the word hole is familiar, that is, the English language is now spoken where formerly Welsh was spoken. We meet with similar appellatives in other parts of the country.

I shall, without any attempt at classification, select from my list of words those that I think most striking, and make them the subject of an occasional paper; I will not attempt, as a rule, to trace their derivation, for they linger so disguised that it is difficult to ascertain their origin.

If a child wants his bread and butter, he asks for a *piece*. The same word is used in Philadelphia, as in the following lines:

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 1.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 4. 1871. Tudalennau 49-54.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

"And on the dresser you will find
At twelve o'clock your *piece*.
The *piece* was two nice corn-meal cakes."
Notes and Queries, September 24th, 1870.

"What a *nesh* thing you are," says a mother to her shivering child, who rushes to the fire as soon as he can on a cold winter's morning. This word in the sense of delicate, tender, soft, is the A. S. nesc. This word is to be met with in Cheshire and other parts.

To start is to *oss*. "Wen bin e gween to oss?" says a countryman to his fellow-workman. "I be gween now, bin e gween?" (going) "Iss" (yes) is the answer.

"Who *cleped* on me?" enquires a discovered culprit, indignantly. In the *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer says of his Prioress:

"And sche was *clept* Madame Englentyne."—Prologue, 121.

That is, called. William de Swynderby, contemporary with Chaucer, likewise uses the word in the sense of named or called. In the time of Shakespeare it retained the same meaning. Hamlet says:

"They *clepe* us drunkards."—Act I, scene 3.

The word at present signifies to blab, rather than to name. In Welsh we have the word "*clepian*."

A boy who plays truant is called a *micher*, and playing truant is *miching*. The word is similarly applied in Pennsylvania (see *Notes and Queries*, 4th S. vi, 249).

Hamlet: Marry, this is *miching* mallecho; it means mischief.—Act III, scene 2.

The Shakspearian commentators are at variance as to the meaning of this puzzling term. It is said to come from the Spanish, meaning concealed mischief. That something of the kind is implied can be inferred from the context. Miching we see is still a current word; but what of mallecho or malicho? for it is given in both ways.

"O what a *nawf!*" exclaims a person who has observed

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Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 4. 1871. Tudalennau 49-54.
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or heard of another's silly actions or words. It is occasionally pronounced as an *oaf;* or, perhaps, the sound would be better represented by *o.of*, the first o taking the sound of o in nor, and the second the sound of o in off. It is nearly synonymous with soft, in the sense with which it is used in the sentence, "What a soft you are," but *nawf* does not carry with it the idea of so great imbecility as soft. It conveys almost a sense of tenderness when applied by a mother to her child. Every one tolerates the term *nawf* with a good-natured smile, when the word soft, addressed to the same individual, would to a certain degree raise his choler. "*Gnoffe*" is found in Chaucer.

"I dunna know where the hen lays, dust tee?" asks one servant to another. "I binna sure, but I seed her in the *talant*," answers the other. *Talant* means hayloft.

There are several words in English which have lost the sense in which they were formerly used. *Starve* is one of these. A couple of centuries ago it was equivalent to cold. Milton applies the epithet starved to a serenader, not in the sense of wanting food, but his serenader is excessively cold from staying too long in the biting wind, entertaining his lady-love with music and song. Now a starved person, in England, is understood to be a famished person. The word is still used in its original sense in Montgomeryshire. A lad running home says: "Mother, give me a piece, for I am just *clemmed*, and do let me stand before the fire to eat it, for I am just *starved*." Clemmed in the sense of wanting food is current in Lancashire, and so is starved in its obsolete sense. In Welsh we have "*starvio*."

Gaw-bee, an uncouth rustic. The term is applied commonly by the inhabitants of towns to country-folks. In *Notes and Queries*, 4th S. iv, p. 72, is published a Lancashire song: "The Country Gaby." Mr. James Nicholson, in his introduction to the song, writes: "For the benefit of those not well up in this dialect I may observe that 'gaby' is pronounced as if written "gaw-bee," which is the exact pronunciation of the word in Montgomeryshire. The country gaby says in the song:

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 1.
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Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

"I could manage ought in th' working line,
But they made rare fun o' some words o' mine;
For I could not mon that talking fine,
I wur such a country gaby."

Sawnee, noodle, a silly person. Both terms are used in much the same sense. They are epithets somewhat similar in meaning to nawf. If a distinction were to be drawn between these two words, perhaps noodle would imply a greater degree of intellectual incapacity than sawnee. Nevertheless, nawf, gawbee, sawnee and noodle are all loosely and promiscuously used. A person wishing to shew his disapprobation of another's doing, or wishing to persuade a friend from undertaking anything, exclaims: "Oh! yo canna be such a nawf!" The surrounding company joins in one with: "I never heerd of such a sawnee." "What a noodle!" chimes in a third; whilst a fourth positively affirms, that the man is a "gawbee."

With a few observations on the pronunciation of certain words, I shall bring this paper to a close.

Father is pronounced as if written, *fadder*, a taking the sound of a, in fare, and dd, the sound of th in whether. This word, thus pronounced, is, both in meaning and sound, Saxon. *Ave* is pronounced so as to rhyme with fair, dare, etc., as in the following stanzas:

"If ladies are
But young and fair
They have the gift to know it."

and:

"Touch a Welshman if you dare,
We the true-born Britons are;
We held our country safe and sound,
Before you Saxons trod the ground."

This word was so pronounced by the educated and upper classes in the last century; and we occasionally meet with a distinguished septuagenarian who adheres to this pronunciation.

Calf is pronounced as if written *cave;* another version

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 1.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 4. 1871. Tudalennau 49-54.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

of this word is *cauve*. The writer is acquainted with a lad, who when reading the eleventh chapter of St. John, upon coming to the words, "It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it," supposed that the whole narrative given in that chapter was a silly hoax, and it was not without explanation that he perceived that the misapprehension was caused by an unfashionable pronunciation.

ELIAS OWEN.

Llanllechid, Carnarvonshire.

(*To be continued.*)

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 1. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 4. 1871. Tudalennau 49-54.
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ILLUSTRATIONS.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 2. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 4. 1871. Tudalennau 433-440
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

ARCHAIC WORDS, PHRASES, ETC., OF MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

No. II.

A SINGULAR peculiarity in the dialect of Montgomeryshire is the frequent use of the letter *n* as a final letter. This peculiarity was at one time not so exclusively confined to the borders of Wales as at present. Dr. Guest, in his *History of English Rhythms*, referring to the Brut of Layamon, says :—"The language of Layamon may perhaps (at least in substance) be considered as a dialect spoken in south Gloucestershire during the twelfth century. One of its striking peculiarities is its *nunnation*—many words end in *n* which are strangers to that letter, not only in the Anglo-Saxon, but in all the later dialects of our language." Although it is now believed that the dialect of Layamon is not that of Gloucestershire, but that of the adjoining county, Worcestershire, the fact remains that a considerable portion of the west of England some six centuries ago made much more extensive use of *n* as a terminal letter than in our days. It appears, however, from Sir Frederic Madden's introductory remarks upon the language of Layamon's Brut, that the nunnation which characterised the original Brut was discontinued in the later text of Layamon. He states, referring thereto, that "the *n* final is generally elided even in regular forms, and therefore we should hardly expect to find in it any instance of *nunnation*." Whether this elision was for the purpose of making the later issue agree with the then current language of Worcestershire, or

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Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

whether the nunnation was avoided for some other reason, such as to suit readers of other parts of the kingdom where this peculiarity did not prevail, is a matter of not much moment. It is, however, highly interesting to notice, that this partiality for *n* terminations, so characteristic of the older text of the Brut of Layamon, still lingers in Montgomeryshire. Thus we have *liken*, for like, as in the sentence, "Do as yo *liken*;" *plasen*, for please; *maden*, for made; *weren*, for were; *weran*, for where have; *gween*, for going; *housen*, for houses; *hosen*, for stockings, as the plural for hose. This word was in common use when the authorised version of the Bible was published, as may be inferred from its appearance in the following verse:—

"Then these men were bound in their coats, their *hosen* and their hats."—*Daniel*, ch. iii, v. 21.

Hosan is the Welsh for stocking, or hose. *Bin* is used instead of are; as "Bin e there" (are you there). Chaucer says :—

"The greatest clerkes *ben* not the wysest men."

Seen is occasionally heard doing service for saw. This use of the perfect participle for the past tense is, however, not very prevalent in Montgomeryshire. Its locality is more to the east, being common in Staffordshire, and other English counties.

Seed is the word which takes the place of the past tense of the verb to see, both in Montgomeryshire and Shropshire, and this word is generally heard even among farmers and tradesmen. Towards the end of July, 1869, the following paragraph went the round of the papers. "A jury at the Montgomeryshire Quarter Sessions found a tramp guilty of theft, but at the same time recommended the man to mercy. 'On what ground?' asked the chairman. The foreman replied, first, that he did not know; but, after a lengthy conference with his brother jurymen, he thus seriously delivered himself before a laughing court. 'We recom-

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mend him to mercy because no one *seed* him commit the crime.'"

Words ending in *d* preceded by *oun* are pronouced as if they ended with *n;* bound becomes *boun;* hound, *houn;* sound, *soun*, etc. This elision of *d* may be traced in Chaucer :—

> "Thou wottest well that speech is *soun*,
> Or elles no man might it hear."

Send is not unfrequently pronounced as if written *sen;* and the third person singular, present tense of this verb, becomes *sens;* as "John *sens* Tom," for "John sends Tom." Both sen and sens are current in certain parts of Scotland. The *d* in "and" is not generally sounded.

The possessive pronoun ours becomes *ourn*, his, *hisn;* but this latter term is not by any means confined to the borders of Wales, as the following well known lines will testify :—

> "He that prigs what isn't *hisn*,
> When he's cotched will go to prison."

In words of more than one syllable ending in *ing*, the letters *ng*, which represent a simple single elementary sound, as in the word king, are generally pronounced as the letter *n;* thus, loving becomes *lovin*, etc. This, however, is a vulgarism which may be heard in almost every part of the kingdom.

Another peculiarity is the tendency to make past tenses end in *d*. Thus we hear *bringd*, for brought; *shewd*, for shewn; *knowd*, for knew; *sawd*, for sawn, the perfect participle of the verb to saw; *sawd*, for saw, the past tense of the verb to see; *ketched*, for caught, etc. This peculiarity is not confined to Wales. In the Tichborne case, the claimant, in describing an accident supposed to be a link in his identification, says :—

> "A hook *ketched* me in the eye."
> *Standard*, Thursday, June 1, 1871.

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Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 4. 1871. Tudalennau 433-440
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

In forming past tenses, the working people reason from analogy, and hence their blunder.

Having said thus much upon certain peculiarities of the Montgomeryshire dialect, I will now proceed with the list of words used in the country.

Conster, to argue with a considerable amount of warmth; or, rather, the word is applied to the twaddle and ebullition of temper which takes the place of reason when an opponent has the best of the argument. The word is generally used in connection with female bickerings. "She would *conster* with me," is an apologetic remark for a reciprocity of abuse. In Welsh we have the word *constro*, which, however, is not found in the dictionaries. This word is current in Carnarvonshire, in the sense of to pry about, or to search with perturbation of mind.

Clampers, a derisive term for finery, useless, or ornamental furniture. I once heard a person, when describing a house which he had visited, say:—"There was a piano there, a harp, and all such *clampers*." A mother says to her child, when amusing itself with its playthings, "Put those *clampers* away," meaning, thereby, the little one's toys.

Couse, to drive or *course* away. "*Couse* the pig from the yard."

Rap, to exchange. "I'll *rap* with yo."

Raps, news. "I heerd such *raps*."

Azings, the drops of rain which fall from roofs during, but particularly after, a shower of rain. "Does it rain?" "No, but the *azings* are dropping."

Aizing, sauntering about. "What are you *aizing* about for?"

Gallas, frolicsome. This word is given in Mr. Hartshorne's *Salopia Antiqua* as being common in Shropshire, but there it seems to have a different sense to what it has in the adjoining county, Montgomeryshire. Mr. Hartshorne makes the following remark thereon:—

> "Gallows, gallous, adj., applied to a person who, by bad conduct, stands a fair chance of reaching one. Ex. "He's an onlucky gallous dog."—*Hartshorne's Salopia Antiqua*, p. 439.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 2.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 4. 1871. Tudalennau 433-440
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Edder, or *nedder*, an adder. The *dd* has the sound of *th* in "whether." The word is usually pronounced *nedder* when preceded by an *a*; as, "I seed *a nedder*," not "*an edder*." When the article *a*, or *an*, does not come before, the *n* does not appear. This seems to have been the case when Piers the Ploughman wrote:—

"Each a werd that he warp
Was of a *nedders* tongue."—*Piers Ploughman.*
Each word that he uttered
Was of an adder's tongue.

Upon referring to Mr. Hartshorne's Glossary, I find *edder*, *ether*, is the word for an adder, or any kind of snake, in Shropshire.

Wool, for will. "*Wool* yo do this"—"Will you do this?" *Wol* for will appears in Chaucer.

"We *wol meddle* (intermix) us each in other."
Chaucer's House of Fame.

Meddle is often heard, but in the lapse of time it has undergone a change in meaning, but this change is not very great. It still has the notion of to touch, to interfere officiously with. "Dunna *meddle* with that knife." "Dunna *meddle* with other people's business." As applied in the last sentence, meddle has pretty nearly the sense which it had when Chaucer lived.

Slither, a slide. "There are fine *slithers* on that pool."

Slither, v. to slide.

Shrode, fierce, savage. A term applied to a vicious bull.

Shettance, riddance. "She's gone, and good *shettance* too."

Gad, to walk lazily about. This Biblical word is gradually dying out.

"Why *gaddest* thou about so much to change thy way?"
Jeremiah, chap. ii, v. 36.

Gad is applied to a person who saunters about, not because he has nothing to do, but because he has enough to do, but no inclination to do it.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 2.
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Tack, a taint. "There's a tack on the butter."

Sken, to pry about.

Clout, worn out clothes that are torn up for other purposes, rags.

"Ebed-melech . . . took thence old cast *clouts* and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah."—*Jeremiah*, chap. xxxviii, v. 11.

"A *clout* upon that head."—*Hamlet*, act ii, sc. ii.

An expression similar to this in Hamlet is still common, and is derived probably from the custom at one time all but universal, of wrapping the heads of infants with various bands to help nature in properly forming the head. "Go home, put a *clout* upon thy head and go to bed," may be often heard, and implies that the person to whom the advice is given has a head not properly developed.

Clout, a blow. "Give him a *clout* in th' face."

"Did Sandy hear ye,
Ye wadna miss to get a *clout*."
Ritson's English Songs, vol. i, p. 183.[1]

Clout, to patch. "*Clout* these shoes."

"The inhabitants of Gibeon . . . . did work wilily . . . . and took sacks upon their asses . . . and old shoes and *clouted* upon their feet."—*Joshua*, chap. ix, v. 4, 5.

Clout, to strike. "*Clout* him in the face."

"Baxter lads hae seal'd a vow,
To skelp and *clout* the guard."—*Fergusson's Poems*.[1]

The word *clout* in the sense of to patch, may have been derived from the Welsh word *clwt*, a piece; and likewise *clout*, a blow, from the Welsh *clewtan*, a blow.

Lout, a dunce, a silly person. "What a *lout* of a boy."

Dout, do out, to put a light out, to extinguish. "*Dout* the candle."

In "Hamlet," act iv, sc. 7, Laertes says:—

[1] Taken from *Salopia Antiqua*, p. 363, where other examples may be seen.

"Adieu, my Lord;
I have a speech of fire that fain would blaze,
But that this folly *douts* it."

Snive, to swarm or crowd. "What a *snive* of bees."

To be *brainsick*, to be irrational, to rave, to be delirious.

"LADY M. "Why, worthy Thane,
You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So *brainsickly* of things."—*Macbeth*, act ii, sc. 2.

Brave, out-spoken Latimer, in a sermon preached before Edward VI at Westminster, 22nd March, 1549, exclaims :—

"Ye *braynsycke* fooles."

Drab, a prostitute. A term of reproach upon women, formerly implying an unchaste woman. "Go to the house, you *drab*."

"Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling *drabbing*, —you may go so far."—*Hamlet*, act ii, sc. 1.

"I would rather be known for the spurious issue of a highwayman, ditch-delivered of a *drab*."
Sir P. Francis, *Notes and Queries*, July 1871, p. 4.

Rip, a rough uncouth woman.

Crowner, a coroner.

"The *crowner* hath set on her, and finds it Christian burial."
Hamlet, act v, sc. 1.

Quest, inquest.

"Ay, marry is't; crowner's *quest* law."—*Hamlet*, act v, sc. 1.

Lungous, a cruel vindictive person. "Did you ever see such a *lungous* man, he kicked the other man on the ground, bit him, and no one could make him be quiet."

Clip, to embrace by encircling the neck with the arms.

"You elements that *clip* us round about."
Othello, act iii, sc. 3.

"O, let me *clip* you in arms as sound."
Coriolanus, act i, sc. 6.

Great, intimate, familiar, friendly. "They are very

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 2.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 4. 1871. Tudalennau 433-440
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

great," that is, they are very great friends. This word in the sense of intimate is current in other Welsh counties and in Scotland. Mr. Hartshorne, remarking thereon, says that it is "a word now chiefly confined to the vocabulary of schoolboys, though formerly in higher circulation." A remark which does not hold good with regard to Montgomeryshire, where great has still a large circulation amongst adults and children, but by-and-bye it may come to the schoolboy stage, and then finally disappear.

Stut, to stammer.

Nec, to pelt. "He is *necking* the ducks," that is, throwing stones at them with the intention of *knocking* them.

Nec, the word used when calling young pigs together to feed them.

Plug, to pull, possibly a corruption of pluck. "A fish *plugs* the hook." "I saw four horses *plugging* a wagon."

Lazing, gleaning. "Mother is *lazing* in yonder field."

Fretchet, peevish, irritable. The word is chiefly used in reference to babies and children.

Reeve, to corrugate, as to *reeve* the forehead.

Fiddy-faddy, adj. Always at work but never finishing anything. A *fiddy-faddy* man is a fussy man.

Sloven, slanney, flommucky. These words have much the same meaning in ordinary conversation, and as might be expected, are often used one for the other. It is difficult, if possible, to define so as to clearly shew the different shades of meaning which each word has or was intended to convey. They all carry with them the idea of untidiness. Perhaps, though, the first word refers more immediately to women who are untidy in dress or person; the second and third to those who lack order in their household affairs; but this distinction is certainly not made by the persons who use these words.

ELIAS OWEN.

(To be continued.)

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 2. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 4. 1871. Tudalennau 433-440
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

COLLECTIONS

HISTORICAL & ARCHÆOLOGICAL

RELATING TO

MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

ISSUED BY THE

POWYS-LAND CLUB

FOR THE USE OF ITS MEMBERS.

VOL. V.

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J. RUSSELL SMITH, 36, SOHO SQUARE.

1872.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 3. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 5. 1872. Tudalennau 199-202.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 3. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 5. 1872. Tudalennau 199-202.
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ARCHAIC WORDS, PHRASES, ETC., OF MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

By Rev. ELIAS OWEN, B.A.

No. III.

There are two words which are used instead of the comparative conjunction *than*, viz., *nor* and *then;* but these two words cannot be said to be current in the same parts of the county. In the southern part, in the neighbourhood of the Severn, *nor* is in general use, but in the northern parts *then* is more prevalent. Thus, in such expressions as "I am taller *than* John," we meet with the following forms: "I am taller *nor* John," and "I am taller *then* John," and these words are employed to the exclusion of *than*. *Then*, as in present use in Montgomeryshire, seems to have been so used in the time of Queen Elizabeth, as may be seen from the following lines:—

> "And sternely bad him other business plie
> *Then* hunt the steps of pure unspotted maid."
> *Faerie Queene*, c. ii, 46.

Anungst, opposite. "He planted the tree *anungst* the door," *i.e.*, opposite the door. *Anungst* is pronounced so as to rhyme with amongst.

Agen, against, by. "I'll do it *agen* yo come home."

Ax, to ask. This word is often met with in early English writers.

Begum, an interjectional expression. When a person's attention is called to a certain object some distance off, he exclaims, "*Begum*, I see it."

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 3. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 5. 1872. Tudalennau 199-202.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Bust, to burst. A rather common vulgarism. In the Tichborne case the claimant says :—

"The biscuits were all spread about the place. The bag had *busted*."—*Standard*, June 1, 1871.

Bruck, a brook.

Bledder, a bladder. The *dd* taking the sound of *th* in whether.

Brat, the pinafore worn by children.

Brat, a child. "Go away, you little *brat*."

Belluck, to cry audibly, to roar. "That child is always *bellucking*," that is, always crying. "That bull is *bellucking* at summat," that is, bellowing at something. This word, with a slight difference in sound, is common in Shropshire. Mr. Hartshorne, in his *Salopia Antiqua*, gives the following forms of this word : "Bellock, bullock, and bluckn, the last pronounced very short," neither of which agrees entirely with the *belluck* of Montgomeryshire. The various shades of difference observable in the pronunciation of this word in two neighbouring counties show how easily words become corrupted when not protected by a written language.

Crabbit, saucy, sharp-tongued.

Causey. The pavement on the side of streets is called the causey, a corruption of cause-way. An English sea-captain, writing about one hundred and twenty years ago of the chief town of New Spain, says that "the streets are wide and well paved, and run at right angles to one another," and that "there are five *causeys* running through the gate into the city."

Collow, soot. "There is *collow* on yor face." "Iss I dare say, I snuffed the candle with my finger just now."

Cooch, and *crool*, to squat. A partridge when frightened is said to cooch, and children, when playing hide-and-seek, cooch, or crouch, behind any object which they suppose to be well adapted for hiding them from their pursuers. Chickens, when nestling themselves under the hen's breast, are said "to cooch under

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 3.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 5. 1872. Tudalennau 199-202.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

her wings." *Crool* likewise means to squat, but to squat from excessive cold.

Cocket, pert, swaggering, easily offended. "What a *cocket* lad that is."

Cockrell, a cock. "That *cockrell* crows every night; someone is sure to die."

Dock, to *do off*, to deprive, to lessen, to disappoint.

Douck, to dip into water. Children, when bathing, are said "to douck over their head and ears." The water ouzel (*cinclus aquaticus*) in the neighbourhood of Llanidloes goes by the name of the white-breast-doucker, a descriptive and expressive name, as this bird may frequently be seen dropping itself into the river in pursuit of its prey.

Drench, to draw clothes through the water, to get wet. "I got sich a *drenching* yesterday, it rained all day long." In Wiclif's Bible we read :—

"His chosen princes weren *drenched* in the reed see."
Exodus, ch. xv.

Daggles, the spots of dirt thrown up when walking. "Yo have *daggled* your trowsers all over."

Daggling, drizzling. "It is oncommon *daggling* this morning" is an expression which may be heard when a drizzling rain is falling.

Emer, *emest*, nearer, nearest. "This way is *emer*," or "this is the *emest* way."

Farrow, a litter of pigs. *Farrowing*, the bringing forth of young pigs.

"Pour in sow's blood that hath eaten her nine *farrow*."
Macbeth, act iv, sc. 1.

Fould, a farm-yard, or other enclosure attached to a house or building. Probably a corruption of *fold*.

Fuddle, spree. "He is on the fuddle," that is, he is on for a spree by drinking himself drunk in a public-house. This word is current in Lancashire.

"And almost made us *fuddled* (drunk) with drinking the Prince's health."

Grindle-stone, a grindstone.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 3. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 5. 1872. Tudalennau 199-202.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Gobbler, a person who swallows his food greedily in large pieces, from *gob*, the mouth. The verb to gobble, from the same root, is common. These words were once in more general use than at present.

> "And that more wondrous was, in either jaw
> Three ranckes of yron teeth enraunged were,
> In which yet trickling blood and *gobbets* raw
> Of late devoured bodies disappeare."
>
> *Faerie Queene*, c. xi, 13.

Giggle, to titter. This word is common in Cornwall, Cheshire, Montgomeryshire, and most probably in other parts. A person who laughs at what is best known to himself, when apparently there is no cause even for a smile, and whose manners and conversation are light and foolish, is called a giggler, in strict accordance with the derivation of the word, Welsh, *gêg;* A.-Saxon, *gegas, gegas-spræc*, nugatorius sermo.

Kit, a stye; as "a pig's *kit*," "the calves' *kit*."

Moither, moider, to bewilder, from the Welsh word *byddaru*, to deafen, to stun.

Openayment. The exact meaning of this word I am unable to give. I have heard of its having been applied under the following circumstances. A young girl was to be married, and had entered the church with her intended husband, when the mother opposed the marriage in the following words, "My daughter is under age, and *openayment* to the world." In pronouncing the word both *a* and *y* are sounded, but very rapidly, the *a* taking the sound of *a* in fate. I have heard that the term *openayment* is applied to a dilapidated building, through the roof of which the sky can be seen.

Owlert, the owl.

Pilk, a minnow.

Pitching, a pavement. Roads or streets that are paved are said to be pitched. A woman describing a portion of the Roman road that runs through the ground belonging to Caersws Church, told me that it was *pitched*, that is, paved with stones.

(*To be continued.*)

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 3. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 5. 1872. Tudalennau 199-202.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

ARCHAIC WORDS, PHRASES, ETC., OF MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

By the Rev. ELIAS OWEN, B.A.

No. IV.

After the appearance of my last instalment of words, I received a letter from my friend the Rev. R. Harries Jones, M.A., vicar of Llanidloes, calling my attention to the fact that the words I had given as provincialisms of Montgomeryshire were likewise common in Lancashire. I have no doubt—though I have not the means of verifying what I now advance—that all, or nearly all, the words current in Montgomeryshire are likewise to be heard, though slightly changed, perhaps, in Cheshire, Lancashire, Westmorland, Cumberland, Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, and Wigton, or that they are co-extensive with the limits of the ancient kingdom of Strathclyde. I am aware that several of the words which I have given in my lists are likewise to be found in various parts of England, and they may be considered as the lingering remains of a language spoken by a people having a common origin. I believe it was a fancy of Iolo Morganwg's that all the words ever spoken in England and Wales by the inhabitants thereof might still be discovered amongst the people.

But to return to Mr. Jones's letter. It is certainly singular that the dialects of Lancashire and Montgomeryshire should at the present day resemble each other so strongly. We have only to take *Tim Bobbin*, and open any page, and we shall find that these dialects are substantially one. The following sentence

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire, No. iv.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 6. 1873. 243-248.
Rev. Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

will serve as an illustration: "Well, on if I *dunnaw* try thee, titter or latter, *ittle* be o marvel." *Dunnaw*, in Montgomeryshire becomes *dunna; ittle* (it will) is the same in both counties. The above quotation will likewise serve to show certain points of dissimilarities between the speech of both counties. I may, however, say, that a Montgomeryshire man would immediately understand the extract just given when spoken by a Lancashire man. The points of difference are, that *on* for *and*, and *o* for *a*, become respectively in Montgomeryshire *an* and *a;* and *titter* and *latter*, above used, are not to be met with in Montgomeryshire. It seems, though, that *an* for *and* is not uncommon even in *Tim Bobbin.* I find therein such expressions as the following, "An I con tell thee." In agreement with the contraction *ittle* we have *thattle* (that will) in both counties. The points of resemblance, though, are really so many that a paper might be written thereon, and perhaps in some future number of the *Montgomeryshire Collections* such a paper from the pen of one who has resided in both counties, and who is highly qualified for such an undertaking, will appear.

Affront, to offend. "I *affronted* him unknowns" (I offended him unwittingly).

> "Good my liege,
> Your preparation can *affront* no less
> Than what you hear of."
>
> *Cymbeline*, act iv, scene 3.

Commonly, *affront* signified confront, face. In this latter sense it is used in *Hamlet.*

> "That he, as 'twere by accident, may here *affront* Ophelia."
>
> *Hamlet*, act iii, scene 1.

And in the same sense it is used by Milton.

> "And with their darkness durst *affront* his light."
>
> *Paradise Lost*, book i, 391.

It appears, from Shakspere's unsteady use of the

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire, No. iv.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 6. 1873. 243-248.
Rev. Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

word, that it was in his time employed in the double sense of to offend and to confront. Piers Plowman uses the word in the sense of to offend. In Montgomeryshire it always carries the meaning which I have given above.

Aukurt, awkward. "He has an uncommon *aukurt* gait." Perhaps *oc-kerd* represents the sound of this word better than *aukurt*.

Affeerd, afraid.

Afore, before. Occasionally this word is shortened into 'fore. "I can do it 'fore thee."

Bytak, a small farm, generally held with a larger one by the same tenant. The bytak usually consists of a few acres of ground with a hovel thereon. The word is common in Welsh-speaking counties, as well as in the English-speaking parts of Montgomeryshire.

Backstone, an iron pan upon which oatmeal and other cakes are baked. A backstone cake is one which has been baked upon this kind of pan.

Blows, blossoms. The flowers of all plants are called blows. "The wind has blown the apple *blows* all about."

Cruds, curds. The transposition of letters is not uncommon.

Cheer, chair. The long sound of *e* is often used instead of the long sound of *a*; as breek for brake. "Take care that yo dunna *breek* it." Great, becomes greet; and there, theer, etc.

Chop, to remove a thing from one place to another quickly. "*Chop* the beesom by the pump and drive the pig out of the garden in a minute." "*Chop* yo'r top coat on and run after him."

Crack, a bad tempered person. "He's a reg'lar *crack*, hee'd jest as lief strike yo as no."

Childern, children. Another instance of transposition of letters; or, perhaps, the word should be *childer*, the plural of Anglo-Saxon *cild*.

Clicket, the latch of a door. The word *clicket* seems to be derived from the Welsh word *clicied*, a door-latch. Clicket is common in Shropshire.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire, No. iv.
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Rev. Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Canna and *conna* are both to be met with as contractions of can not. *Canna* is current in those parts of the county where Welsh is not extinct; and *conna* in English-speaking parishes, particularly along the borders of Shropshire and Montgomeryshire.

Choked, to be excessively thirsty. "I'm jest *choked*, do give me a drop of water to drink."

Camp, a trial of strength, a feat. When a person does an act which he supposes another cannot do, he challenges him to attempt the same in the following words: "There's a *camp* for you." The word camp is Welsh, in which language it means a contest, a game, a trick, a feat, a qualification. The twenty-four games of the Welsh were called *campau*; as, *gwrawl gampau* (manly feats or qualifications), *mabawl gampau* (boyish feats), *gogampau* (inferior feats). *Camp*, in the sense of a friendly contest of rivalry, is still used by the English speaking people of Montgomeryshire. Even when no trial of strength takes place, it is employed as a term of admiration of a person's achievements. It appears from several writers in *Notes and Queries*, that *campe, kempe, or kemp* is common in the county of Londonderry, Norfolk, Northumberland, etc. I cannot say whether any of these writers are aware of the existence of the word in Welsh. The derivation of *kemp* has been discussed in *Notes and Queries* (4th series, viii, 264, 357, 444, and in ix, 119). The Rev. W. W. Skeat, M.A., Cambridge, traces the word through several European languages, and suggests that it is of Scandanavian origin. The following is Mr. Skeat's note:—"Kemp. This word presents no difficulty, being simply the A. S. *camp*, Du. *kamp*, Ger. *kampf*, a fight, a contest. The spelling (with an *e*) suggests that it is, however, of Scandinavian origin; cf. Sw. *kampe*, Dan. *kæmpe*, A. S. *cempa*, a fighter; whence, through the French, the English word, *champion*. The Icelandic has *kapp*, strife; *kappi*, a champion. The Cleveland word *kemp*, to contend, is duly entered in Atkinson's *Glossary of the Cleveland Dialect*,

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire, No. iv.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 6. 1873. 243-248.
Rev. Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

One writer in *Notes and Queries* says that *kemp* is a common Scotch word. It has a singularly extensive currency, being found in England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and the northern parts of Europe.

Chuck, to throw.

Dither, to shake. Applied to the chattering of the teeth, or shaking of the body from excessive cold.

Daunt, to dishearten.

Duff, dough. The word dough is pronounced so as to rhyme with gruff, and not as if it rhymed with glow.

Del, deal. "A greet *del* more nor that."

Enow, enough.

Ess, coal, peat, or wood ashes.

Fiss, pl. *fisses*, fist, fists.

Gylan, *cylan*, the bank of a river. "He fell over the *gylan* into the river."

Hadlan, headland, that part of ploughed fields nearest the hedges. The breadth of the *hadlan* is a little greater than the length of a horse, measuring from the hedge. It is the space required for the turning of the horses at the end of the furrows.

Hush, pronounced *hoosh*, to push.

Hafe, half.

Hod, *hog*, a hole in the ground into which potatoes are stowed during the winter. *Hodding* potatoes is covering them over with earth for winter keep.

Mace, acorn.

Mase, p. tense of the verb to make. "It *mase* no matter" (it makes no difference).

Pikgrate, the grate on the top of the ash-hole of a kitchen fireplace.

Piclates, pikelets, a kind of tea-cake, baked on a pan and considered as a dainty.

Proffer, to offer.

Pluckin, a twitching; as in St. Vitus's dance.

Prodigal, proud.

Ratlin, the smallest or last pig in a litter.

Souse, to wet, to dip often in the water.

> "Oft *soust* in swelling Tetley's saltish teare."
>
> *Faerie Queene*, canto iii, 31.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire, No. iv.
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Rev. Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Souse, to strike. In the Lincoln Rebellion (1536), to prevent the suppression of monasteries, a Welsh monk "wished he had the king (Henry VIII) on Snowdon, that he might *souse* his head against the stones." This word, in the sense of a smart blow, is current in Shropshire.

Solar, an upstairs room, the room in a house above the first floor.

Stall, to be exhausted, to come to a stand from over exertion. "That horse is *stalled* on the steep."

Steep, a rising piece of ground, an incline.

Skip, a glance. "I saw it all at a *skip*."

Steel, stall, the haft of a knife, the handle of a whip.

Trouse. The stems of the potato plant are so called in the neighbourhood of Llanidloes; but about Caersws, eight miles from Llanidloes, potato stems are called *rice*, whilst the brushings cut off hedges are called in and about Caersws, *trouse*.

Tot, a very small jug. "Mother sent me for a *totful* of milk."

Willow, to search carefully. I *willowed* everywhere for it, but cudna fine it." Perhaps this word is a corruption of the Welsh word *chwilio*, to search. I have noticed that the Welsh-speaking inhabitants of the southern parts of the county omit the letter *ch* when an initial; thus, *chwech* (six) becomes *wech*, and, in accordance with this rule, *chwilio* would become *wilio*, and the conversion of *wilio* into *willo*, *willow*, would thence easily follow.

Whisket, a basket. A word which is common in Lancashire; as "He whoast (heaved) his *whisket* oer't." —*Tim Bobbin*.

Witherwathering, undecided, changeable; sometimes inclining to one opinion and then recoiling therefrom, veering from one extreme to another, in an unsettled agitated state of mind.

(*To be continued.*)

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire, No. iv.
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ARCHAIC WORDS, PHRASES, ETC., OF MONTGOMERYSHIRE.[1]

By the Rev. ELIAS OWEN, B.A.

No. V.

A writer in the "Bye-gones" column of the *Oswestry Advertiser*, for October 22nd, 1873, calls attention to my glossary of Montgomeryshire words, for the purpose of eliciting from me an answer to a query, which I shall give in his own words. I had intended answering "Chatterton's" question in the *Oswestry Advertiser*, but upon reconsideration thought that since "Chatterton" is a reader of the Powys-land Club publication, his question had better be answered in the periodical in which the list of words appeared, that is, in the *Montgomeryshire Collections*.

Chatterton's communication is as follows:—"I observe that on pp. 243-8 of the new number of *Montgomeryshire Collections*, the Rev. E. Owen continues his glossary of words. It would appear that the Rev. Harries Jones of Llanidloes, has taken exception to some in the previous lists, as 'common in Lancashire.' Mr. Owen admits this, and replies, 'that all, or nearly all, the words current in Montgomeryshire are likewise to be heard, though slightly changed perhaps, in Cheshire, Lancashire, Westmoreland, Cumberland, Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, and Wigton,' and he believes they are 'co-extensive with the limits of the ancient kingdom of Strathclyde.' Now these words are generally *Saxon*, or at any rate of Teutonic origin. The language of the

[1] Continued from vol. vi, p. 248.

inhabitants of this ancient kingdom of Strathclyde, if there was such a kingdom, is said to have been Welsh. How does he reconcile these?"

The writer of the foregoing remarks doubts the existence of the kingdom of Strathclyde; so I had better at once give my authority for believing that there was such a kingdom.

Under the year A.D. 924, I find in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* the following entry; "This year Edward was chosen for father and for lord by the king of the Scots, and by the Scots, and king Reginald, and by all the Northumbrians, and also the king of the *Strath-clyde Britons*, and by all the *Strath-clyde Britons*."

It appears, therefore, from this quotation, that there was an ancient kingdom of Britons known to the Saxons by the very name which I applied to them in my last paper. And the following extracts from *Brut y Tywysogion* will prove, I think, that the Welsh knew of the existence of this kingdom, as well as the Saxons, and furthermore, claimed affinity thereto.

In *Brut y Tywysogion* we are informed, under the year A.D. 890, that: "The men of *Strath-clyde*, who would not unite with the Saxons, were obliged to leave their country and go to Gwynedd."

Again, A.D. 943: "The same year *Strath-clyde* was devastated by the Saxons, who killed all they could find in their way of the Britons belonging thereto."

So much upon this point. I will now proceed to "Chatterton's" query. He wishes me to reconcile the fact that the words in my glossary are generally of Saxon origin, with the fact that the language of the inhabitants of the ancient kingdom of Strathclyde was Welsh. To this I will say, that in the fusion of two races speaking different languages, and both, at the time the amalgamation takes place, in a low state of civilisation, the language of the more numerous will supplant the language of the less numerous race; or, at least, predominate over it to such a degree that the speech of the mixed race, while maintaining evident

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 5.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 7. 1874. Tudalennau 117-124.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

traces of the superseded language, will be chiefly made up of the words of the language of the tribe superior to the other in numbers. This appears to have been the case in Lancashire, Cumberland, and the southern parts of Scotland. But it is not in the number of words only, evidently derived from the Welsh, to be met with in those parts, but also in the intonation and general manner of speaking of the inhabitants, that we discover traces of the influence of Welsh upon the language of those places. Processes analogous to what I have described are now taking place in Wales, particularly in Montgomeryshire. It is true, we find in Montgomeryshire a great number of words of Saxon origin which are of necessity heard in other parts of the kingdom, but we hear likewise a certain number of metamorphosed Welsh words which are not heard in England. This is also the case in Lancashire, where there are a good many Welsh-like words which are not understood in the rest of England, and the same can be said of Westmoreland, Cumberland, etc. I look upon Lancashire, and the other counties I have named, as circumstanced somewhat similar to Montgomeryshire, each having a substratum of Welsh underneath a heavy deposit of English, and hence, probably the similarity of the provincialisms of these counties.

For the purpose of throwing light upon what I have just advanced, I will give a brief history of the progress of the Saxons in the kingdom of Strathclyde, which kingdom, extended from Chester to the valley of the Clyde.

From *Bede*, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, we learn that in the first decade of the seventh century, Æthelfrith struck at Chester, which he burnt and destroyed. The opposing Brit-Welsh he routed, and slaughtered the monks of Bangor, who fought against him with their prayers. *Gildas*, speaking metaphorically with reference to Æthelfrith's conquest, says that a fire went through the land. The inhabitants were either put to the sword, or became the slaves of the conquerors.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 5.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 7. 1874. Tudalennau 117-124.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Thus the power of Strathclyde was broken, and the North Welsh severed from the West Welsh. Cheshire, and most likely South Lancashire, were seized at this time by the victors, and from the days of Æthelfrith have been peopled chiefly by Saxons.

The northern portion of the kingdom of Strathclyde remained intact until subdued by Ecfrith, or Eckfrid, between the years A.D. 670-685. But the inhabitants seem to have regained their independence, and although they elected as their king, Edward, the son of Alfred the Great, in A.D. 924; they had a native king in A.D. 975. In the interval between these two dates, the Saxons made an unsuccessful attempt to regain their supremacy. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* informs us, under the year A.D. 945, that "King Eadmund harrowed all Cumberland." But no crop followed this harrowing, for shortly after, we find from *Brut y Tywysogion*, that Dunwallon was king of Strathclyde, of which Cumberland was a part. The entry is as follows: "A.D. 975, Dunwallon, king of Strathclyde, went to Rome and took the tonsure." From this date to the Norman conquest, the Saxon power ceased to be formidable, and the Celtic population of the ancient kingdom of Strathclyde was left undisturbed in the north west of England and south-west of Scotland, where their descendants remain, more or less assimilated to the Saxon, to this day.

I should feel thankful to "Chatterton" or any other gentleman for the slightest assistance towards making my list of words as complete a glossary of Montgomeryshire terms as possible. Even a peculiar pronunciation of a common word will be acceptable. No one need be afraid of sending me a word which is likewise heard in other counties. It will be more useful and interesting to record such words than those that are exclusively local. In the rules and directions for word-collectors issued in January by the English Dialect Society, I find the following sensible direction. "It is not at all necessary for you to ascertain that the word which you

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 5. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 7. 1874. Tudalennau 117-124.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

'locate' is *so peculiar* to the town or district mentioned as *not* to be in common use elsewhere. Remember, too, that the present rules relate only to the way in which the work should be prepared, not to the final form in which it is to appear. Non-observance of this rule will lead to great disappointment, and frequently to miserable failure; whilst the observance of it will lead to the most interesting results, enabling us, in some cases, fairly to map out the whole range of country (sometimes extending over seven or eight counties) over which the use of the word prevails. The *commonest* words will, in this way, prove of the highest interest. But if collector A leaves out a word because it occurs in B's district, and B leaves it out because it occurs in A's district, the *apparent* result will be that a word in common use over two districts will seem to be unknown in either! Many glossaries have been deprived in this way of their most characteristic words."

Aftermath, or *latter math*, both words being current in Montgomeryshire, the second mowing or the second crop of grass, which, though occasionally harvested, is generally grazed. Aftermath becomes after-grass in Shropshire. I am indebted to the Rev. R. Harries Jones, the vicar of Llanidloes, for the following information. "The Lancashire word for what we call here aftermath or latter-math is *eddish*, and corresponds with the Welsh word *adloedd*, which means *ad-ladd*, to mow again; *lladd gwair* (mowing hay)." Adloedd often becomes adladd (ad=re, again, as in reproduce; *lladd*, to kill, to cut, etc.) Mr. Longfellow's new volume of poems is called *Aftermath*, being a continuation of his *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, and he thus prettily describes it:—

"When the summer fields are mown,
When the birds are fledged and flown,
And the dry leaves strew the path;
With the falling of the snow,
With the cawing of the crow,
Once again the fields we mow,
And gather in the *aftermath*."

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 5. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 7. 1874. Tudalennau 117-124.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Mr. Longfellow's *Aftermath* is a second mowing, but in these parts the word is applied, improperly it may be, to the second crop of hay even in its growing state.

Brivit, to ferret after or search for a thing. A person told me that a certain discovery was made whilst a drawer was being *brivited*; *i.e.*, whilst its contents were being thoroughly inspected.

Crudled, curdled, congealed. "My blood *crudled* when I saw him fall off the bridge." "The milk *crudled* in a minute." The word is used by Spencer of cold.

> "Till *crudled* cold his corage gan assaile."
>
> *Faery Queene*, book i, vii, 6.

> "The *crudled* cold ran to her well of life."
>
> *Faery Queene*, ix, 52.

Cornel, corner.

Cummund, come. "The man has *cummund*."

Camlas or *Gamlas* (the initial *c* and *g* being interchangeable in Welsh), a pool near a river. It seems that these pools, which have this distinctive name, were at one time in the bed of the river, and being deeper than the other parts of the river, were left as they are after the river had changed its course. The word camlas is given in Dr. O. Pughe's dictionary as pure Welsh. He derives it from *cam*, crooked, and *glas*, blue, etc. A derivation which does not describe the thing defined. His explanation of the term is as follows. "A trench or ditch; a narrow inlet of the sea. Tir camlas, land intersected with rivulets or ditches." It seems to me rather that, allowing the etymology of the first part of the word, we must look elsewhere for the meaning of the latter part. There are no less than four rivers in Montgomeryshire called *Dulas*, two of which are not far distant from Caersws. Could not Dulas be translated blackwater, and camlas a crooked pool? Gwellt-y-gamlas (zostera marina) is the Welsh for sea-wrack. There are a good number of places in Wales in which las appears, as Llanddulas, Dowlas, or Dowlais, etc.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 5. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 7. 1874. Tudalennau 117-124.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Even, material. A country woman goes to town to buy so many yards of corduroy to make trousers for her lad, but she does not know how many yards will be required, so she tells the shopman that she does not know how much *even* will do for a lad of ten years old, but that he, the shopman, does. The carpenter tells a customer that he has *even* enough to make him a box, either of deal or oak.

Greet, great. It appears that the pronunciation of the word great was unsettled so late as Johnson's time. In Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Croker's edition, page 233, I find Johnson saying: "When I published the plan for my dictionary, Lord Chesterfield told me that the word *great* should be pronounced so as to rhyme to *state*; and Sir William Yonge sent me word that it should be pronounced so as to rhyme to *seat*, and that none but an Irishman would pronounce it *grait*." The editor makes a note upon the above: "The pronunciation is now settled beyond question in Lord Chesterfield's way." It is curious to find that in these parts the word *great* is still pronounced so as to rhyme with *seat*.

Glat, a hole in a hedge. Akin to *glade*, an opening in a wood.

Peannet, a magpie. A corruption of the Welsh, pia, pioden, a magpie; the vowel i in Welsh having the same sound as *e* in English when short.

Pentice, the open shed of a blacksmith's shop where horses are shod. This word may be derived either from the English *pent-hous* or from the Welsh *pendist*, which comes from *pen*, head, and *dist*, a joist. Thus, should the joists of a house be projected to form another roof and walls be built up to meet it, we have a *pendist* or *pentice*. Pendist is a common word in North Wales.

Swinge, to singe. "That clout is *swinging* — I smell it."

"The scorching flame sore *swinged* all his face."
Faery Queene, xi, 26.

Slawns, sloes.

Simple, unwell, sickly. "How is your child to-day?" "But *simple*, indeed, sir."

Tyne or *tine*, to repair hedges or fences. "Our hedges want *tyning* a del."

Viage, a journey, a rejoicing. "There's going to be a great *viage* at the wedding next week." Perhaps the *viage* or *voyage* means a great gathering of people, and consequently of journeys or walkings to and fro at the place of assembly. The word *voyage* is used by Spenser in the sense that we use the word journey.

> "So diversly discoursing of their loves,
> The golden sunne his glistring head gan shew,
> And sad remembrance, now the prince amoves,
> With fresh desire his *voyage* to pursue."
>
> *Faery Queene*, ix, 18.

Wnt (the *w* to be sounded as *oo* in good, or *w* in well), a mole. *Oont* or *wnt* is a corruption of the old English word *want*, a mole. Want is still used provincially for a mole in several parts of England. In Dorsetshire it has the same name as in Montgomeryshire.

(To be continued.)

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 5. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 7. 1874. Tudalennau 117-124.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

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ARCHAIC WORDS, PHRASES, ETC., OF MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

By the Rev. ELIAS OWEN, B.A.

No. 6.

In the introduction to my last instalment of Montgomeryshire words (*Mont. Coll.*, vol. vii, p. 120), I stated that the inhabitants of the northern portion of the kingdom of Strathclyde, although subdued by Eckfrid, or Egfrid, seemed to have regained their independence after the death of that king, A.D. 685, and I quoted, in corroboration of my statement, certain passages from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and *Brut-y-Tywysogion*; but, as the subject is a controverted one, and not altogether uninteresting, nor, in an ethnological sense, foreign to the matter I have in hand, I will adduce further evidence from original sources to show that the northern Britons regained their independence after their subjugation by Egfrid.

Bede, speaking of the last act of Egfrid, says:

"That same king (Egfrid) rashly leading his army to ravage the province of the Picts much against the advice of his friends . . . the enemy made show how as if they fled, and the king was drawn into the straits of inaccessible mountains and slain, with the greatest part of his forces."

A.D., 685. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle:*

"And the same year, on the 13th before the kalends of June, King Egfrid was slain near the North Sea, and a great army with him."

William of Malmesbury records the above-mentioned disaster in these words:

"As he (Egfrid) was leading an expedition against the Picts, and eagerly pursuing them as they purposely retired to some secluded mountains, he perished with almost all his forces; the few who escaped by flight carried home news of the event."

Bede moans over this catastrophe and its immediate results in these words:

"From that time the hopes and strength of the English crown began to waver and retrograde, for the Picts recovered their lands . . . . *and some of the Britons their liberty*, which they now have enjoyed for about forty-six years."

This, therefore, brings down the history of the North Britons to the year A.D. 731, at which time, at least, a portion of them were in possession of their lost independence. Up to this date the Northumbrians had not recovered from the effects of their defeat in A.D. 685. Their valour, which commenced to decay upon the death of Egfrid and the destruction of his army, was, in Bede's time, waning, and their territories curtailed. The Picts in the north had thrown off their yoke, and some of the Britons had by arms regained their liberty. Why all did not obtain their freedom at the same time I cannot say; but, presuming that Bede's *some* refers to a part of the Strathclyde Britons, which I am rather inclined to believe it does, then the fact that a portion of them had recovered their independence would act as a powerful incentive to those still in subjugation to regain their freedom. Ultimately, I believe, all the Strathclyde Britons freed themselves from Saxon control.

I will make one other quotation from *Bede*. He says, referring to Alfrid, the successor of Egfrid:

"Alfrid succeeded Egfrid in the throne, being a man most learned in scripture, said to be brother to the other, and son to King Oswy; he nobly retrieved the ruined state of the kingdom, *though within narrower bounds*."

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 6.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 7. 1874. Tudalennau 339-404.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

The "narrower bounds," consistently with what *Bede* has already told us, were caused by the successful revolt of the Picts and Britons and the consequent rending of their territories from Northumbria. It was within these narrower bounds that Alfrid reigned, "and nobly retrieved the ruined state of the kingdom." But Bede, reviewing the state of the kingdom twenty-six years after the death of Alfrid, described it as wavering and retrograding, and this downward movement, he says, commenced with the overthrow of Egfrid in A.D. 685, when the "Picts recovered their lands and some of the Britons their liberty," which they enjoyed A.D. 731, the year in which *Bede* ends his history.

I have only to add that Bede was a Northumbrian, and that he lived during the years A.D. 673-735 in that country, and consequently the information he gives of profane events occurring in Northumbria between the years A.D. 685-731, with or without corroboration, may be considered authentic.

But to proceed with my argument, I find that when the Danes visited England they made a lodgment in Northumbria, but they only ravaged the country of the Picts and Strathclyde Britons. In the entry which records this fact, the Strathclyde Britons are mentioned in such a manner that their independence might be inferred therefrom. But I do not wish to make too much of this, particularly as the same chronicle contains a more positive statement respecting the point under consideration.

The following is the entry now referred to :

A.D. 875. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.* "This year the army (Danish) went to Repton, and Halfdene (one of the Danish king's) went with some of the army into Northumbria . . . . and the army subdued the land (Northumbria), and ofttimes spoiled the Picts and the Strathclyde Britons."

Here we are informed that the Northumbrians, the previous subjugators of the Picts and North Britons,

are themselves subdued whilst these latter are merely spoiled. Had the Strathclyde Britons been subject to the Northumbrians at the time that Halfdene conquered them, it would seem probable that their subjugation would be involved in the overthrow of their masters, and that when Northumbria fell Strathclyde would fall to, just as the conquest of England would carry with it the conquest of Wales. But, instead of quietly submitting to the Danes in a submissive manner, as became a dispirited servile people, to whom a change of masters was a matter of indifference—a mere change of evils, we find that they were so far independent and powerful that, although the Black Nation ofttimes made marauding expeditions into the country of the Picts and Britons, they made no settlement therein; a fact to be accounted for by supposing that the several inroads of the Danes were so manfully opposed that they could do no more than devastate that country which they were unable to conquer.

I now come to a statement in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* which requires but little comment. It is as follows:

"A.D. 924. And they chose him (Edward) for father and for lord, the king of the Scots and the whole nation of the Scots, and Reginald and the son of Eadulf, and all those who dwell in North-humbria, as well English as Danes, and Northmen and others, and also *the king of the Strath-clyde Britons*, and *all* the Strathclyde Britons."

Here Northumbria is brought before us as inhabited by various races, the Scots as having a king, and the Strathclyde Britons as having a king. Therefore, according to the testimony of the authority just quoted, it seems that the Strathclyde Britons had a king of their own to reign over them in A.D. 924, and that consequently they must have regained their independence after their subjugation by Egfrid in 670-685.

As already shown, *Bede* states that *some* of the Strathclyde Britons recovered their liberty upon the

death of Egfrid, but the extract above given speaks of *all* the Strathclyde Britons, as concurring with their king in choosing Edward "for father and for lord." And what other inference can be drawn from such a statement than that in A.D. 924 all the Strathclyde Britons were independent of the Saxons.

From the tenth century to the conquest of England by the Normans, the Saxons were in no condition to enlarge their boundaries, and therefore those inhabitants of the land whom they had not previously overcome, were left alone to govern themselves in their own way. Thus the Celtic population of the north-west of England and south-west of Scotland outlived the Saxon domination in England, and although at the present day the inhabitants of those districts are more or less blended with the Saxon, still I believe there are observable physical and lingual divergences between them and the English proper. In fact such differences as exist between the inhabitants of Montgomeryshire and Kent, or any other county where the Saxon element predominates over the Celtic, exist also between the population of the ancient kingdom of Strathclyde and the more English counties of England.

In discussing any question, such as this under consideration, bearing upon those parts of the country, where the Celts once predominated, but where at present they exist amalgamated with or assimilated to the Saxon, the ethnological aspect of such a question should not be lost sight of. Even should the apparent results be such as were not expected, a thorough sifting of the matter can but lead to interesting and trustworthy information, and now that it is contemplated to make a systematic and accurate survey of archaic and dialectical words heard at present in England, or found in books or glossaries, it is of real importance that a too contracted view of what a county glossary ought to include or exclude should not be taken.

As, however, objections have been made to my list of words, because some of them may be seen or heard in

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 6.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 7. 1874. Tudalennau 339-404.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

other places, I will state that I did not trouble myself to ascertain whether a word I had heard in Montgomeryshire existed in other places or not, but when I knew this to be the case, I invariably stated the fact. I was more concerned to make a collection of Montgomeryshire words, meaning thereby such words as are heard in Montgomeryshire, than to inspect the works of others. I have, however, occasionally referred to Hartshorne's *Salopia Antiqua*, Shropshire being the adjoining county to Montgomeryshire; and the readers of the *Mont. Coll.* will observe that I have now and again mentioned Mr. Hartshorne's *Glossary* in the course of my remarks upon certain words. It appears that the plan I adopted was in agreement with the rules of the English Dialect Society, and the Manchester Literary Club. I gave an extract from the first named society in my last contribution (*Mont. Coll.*, vol. vii, 120-121), upon this point, and I will now make two extracts, one from each report of these respective societies, upon the same matter.

The opinion of the English Dialect Society in favour of the inclusive glossary, is expressed as follows:

"Quite *common words* will acquire a new value and interest when duly labelled with the localities in which they are used. . . . Members are cautioned against considering the words with which they are familiar, as *peculiar* to their own district. Occasionally this is the case. But more frequently, a word which is called peculiar to Lancashire or Yorkshire, is not at all unknown in Kent and Surrey, and few facts are more interesting than the sporadic distribution of some words. Thus, the Furness word *ta-year* for *this year*, like our *to-day* for *this day*, is well commented on in the introduction to Mr. J. P. Morris's *Furness Glossary*, and he pointed out that it occurs in Chaucer. But Chaucer was better acquainted with the South of England, and it is accordingly not surprising to find in Dr. Pegge's MS. *Kentish Glossary*, the following entry:—"To-year, this year, as to-day is this day." See also *Ta-year* in Moor's *Suffolk Words*. We may fairly hope, in this way, to get quite a new light upon the subject of the distribution of words."

This quotation also shows how difficult it is to say

what words are peculiar to any district. Here we have variations of the same expression heard in places wide apart of each other. It is the exclusive property of neither county, but nevertheless it is better to record such words in glossaries of both places, rather than omit them from a glossary of one of the places merely because they happen to be heard in the other.

The Glossary Committee of the Manchester Literary Club, in discussing "What ought a local glossary to include and exclude?" has, after a very considerable correspondence upon the subject, come to the conclusion to adopt as the basis of their glossary the inclusive principle. The report says:

"Words are fragments of history . . . and to adopt the plan of excluding words, which are to be found in other county glossaries, would be to cut away one of the historical links which binds us to history." . . . The report goes on to say, quoting the words of the Rev. W. W. Skeat, director and honorary secretary of the English Dialect Society . . . . "all county glossaries must be made on the inclusive system, otherwise the most characteristic and the most common words of all are actually omitted. County division has nothing to do with the language. The rule is to record all your common and idiomatic words. . . . Your calling a word Lancashire means that you can answer for its being used there, and means also that you express no opinion as to its use elsewhere. Else when we come hereafter to map out our words, and state the exact number of counties over which the use of the word *heal* or *hell* ranges, we shall put down that it is unknown in Lancashire, and a curious result that will be! Such is our rule, and those counties that omit to claim their words will be held not to possess them, and it will be their own faults."

It seems to me superfluous to add any further arguments in favour of the inclusive county glossary, so I now proceed with my list of words in the manner I have already done.

When I have exhausted my subject, I intend making an alphabetical list of the words given, and thus I hope to remedy the disadvantage arising from the want of arrangement in the lists already published.

I may add that when I first commenced writing on

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 6.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 7. 1874. Tudalennau 339-404.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

the English of Montgomeryshire, I had no intention of forming a glossary, but having come to reside in my native county, after a long absence therefrom, the work has grown in my hands in a manner that I had not anticipated.

Cassetly or *cassently*. This word is applied to uncertain showery weather; thus, "'Tis *cassently* weather," or, as a woman said to me the other day, "It is a *cassetly* harvest," meaning thereby that the rain fell rather too much to do good to the grain then ready for the sickle. I have heard no other form of the word.

Cat. A rather short piece of wood, a little wee thing, and possibly a small portion of anything. Thus, "have you finished your work John?" "No ma'm, I've got that *cat* to saw yet." A small weak lamb is said to be "a *cat* of a thing." The word *cwta* in Welsh, from which *cat* might have been taken, means short, etc.

Cop, a ridge. The highest or middle part of a furrow is called the cop. Moulding up potatoes with a plough is called "copping potatoes". This word is taken bodily by the English-speaking people of Montgomeryshire from Welsh; thus "cop, *s.*, the top, or summit".—Dr. O. Pughe's *Dictionary*.

Coppy, a wood or coppice.

Dubbit, blunted, or stupid. An axe which has lost its edge from overuse is described as being "worn *dubbit*". A child that is not over-bright is, in the hilly parts of Llandinam, said to be "as *dubbit* as possible".

Fullbert, a polecat. Fullbert is in ordinary use with people who are unable to speak Welsh. A polecat in modern Welsh is *ffwlbart*, and this word is pronounced much like the word fullbert.

Gostrell. A small hand-barrel of various capacity, from one to ten quarts, used for carrying drink to the farm workmen. The only difference between this word and the Welsh word *costrel*, a flaggon, is, that the *c* in Welsh becomes *g* in its derivative.

Glaster, a drink made of butter-milk and water

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 6.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 7. 1874. Tudalennau 339-404.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

mixed. Derived from the Welsh word *glasdwr*, common in all parts of the country.

Heerd, heard. "I never *heerd* sich a thing." Boswell caught Johnson pronouncing the word heard as it is pronounced in Montgomeryshire. He records the fact in his *Life of Johnson* in these words:

"I perceived that he (Johnson) pronounced the word *heard* as if spelt with a double *e*, *heerd*, instead of pronouncing it *herd*, as is most usually done. When spoken to about it, Johnson defended his pronunciation, stating that his reason for so doing was, that if it were pronounced *herd* there would be a single exception from the English pronunciation of the syllable *ear*, and he thought it better not to have that exception."—Croker's *Boswell*, p. 56.

It is not unlikely that Johnson's pronunciation was, as surmised by Dr. Hall, a provincialism, just as his pronunciation of the word punch, *poonsh*, was a Lichfield provincialism. Be this as it may, *heerd* still keeps its ground in the colloquial English of Montgomeryshire.

Hoop, a measure of two bowls. Four of these bowls made a peck, and eight made a strike; three strike made a bag of wheat.

"Miller, miller, wind your horn,
You shall be hung for stealing corn;
First a *hoop*, and then a peck,
And then a halter round your neck."

Old Song.

Harp, to become thin, to deteriorate. The word is applied to sheep whose condition has changed for the worse; as "yo'r sheep *harp*".

Her is generally made to do service for she; as "*Her* sed *her'd* do it". This peculiarity is also common in the vale of Gloucester.

I have noticed that some people apply a word much like *her* in sound to males. But it is not exactly *her*, nor *hur*. I cannot easily combine letters to convey the correct sound. It resembles the sound of the letter *y* in Welsh when properly pronounced. Dryden hu-

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 6.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 7. 1874. Tudalennau 339-404.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

mourously alludes to this misapplication of *hur*, as he has it, in the ballad, Shenkin.

"Of noble race was Shenkin,
Of the line of Owen Tudor;
But *hur* renown was fled and gone,
Since cruel Jove pursued *hur*."

This stanza is transcribed from the *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i, p. 146. An example will suffice to show how the word is used. "Where's your husband, Mrs. Edwards?" "*Hur's* in the fould."

Hackle—to arrange sheaves of wheat so as to protect them from the rain. *Hackling* is as follows. The mows consist of four or six sheaves piled together in the harvest field. Two sheaves placed together on the top of the mows, with the ears downward as a kind of cap to ward off the rain from the mow, is called *hackling* the wheat.

Kaiment or *kymet*—A kind of sickness to which sheep are subject. It takes them in the head, and they turn round and round until they fall down. I have been told that it is caused by a grub, which may be extracted. This is the word used in the neighbourhood of Montgomery for this ailment; whilst in these parts the Welsh word *Pendro*, slightly altered, is in general use for the same complaint. I believe the word *kymet* is also applied to any dizziness, and to a person supposed to be "not quite right in the head."

Keip or *kipe*—The word rhymes to ripe, a large kind of basket.

Mundle, a ladle—a long piece of wood for turning food whilst it is being cooked in a pot.

Moulywart—A mole. This word is used in the north-west part of Montgomeryshire, while the word for a mole in the south part of the county is *wnt*, i.e. *oont*. Moldwarp, a mole, is found in Shakespeare.

Onder—evening. "I'm toch in the *onder* nor in the morning."

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Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Ornery—ordinary, mean.

Piggin—a wooden bowl in which broth, etc., is served to farm servants.

Ruck—a heap, a huddling together, as "a *ruck* of stones," "I saw about a dozen of yo all in a *ruck*."

Rasty—the outside parts of bacon, which by exposure to the air have become discoloured, are called rasty. "I wonna eat yor *rasty* bacon." Rasty rhymes to tasty.

Rommalee, or rommelly—a strong, heavy, or coarse rank kind of crop; rommelly hay is unfit for cows. It is given to horses and young stock. "You have a very *rommelly* crop of hay on that field."

Rean, rane, or rene—the channel between two butts in a ploughed field.

Suck—a ploughshare, the iron which forms the nose of a plough. It is called in Welsh *swch*, or *swch aradr*, *suck* is *swch* Anglicised.

Strave—stray—The word is used in reference to sheep in the following sense: After shearing season there are to be seen on the mountain sheep which have not been deprived of their fleece. This is a sign that they have strayed from their walk, and consequently they are called strave sheep. The person who collects these sheep is called the strave man. After the strave man has succeeded in securing these sheep, he takes them upon a set day to a certain specified place for the purpose of identification. The farmers who have lost sheep assemble at this place. This gathering of farmers is called a strave meeting.

Stinge—a spite. "Why did he poison your dog?" "Oh I spose he had a *stinge* agen me."

Skew—oblique—a rick made out of the perpendicular is said to be "all of a skew."

Scawen—The elderberry tree. This word is nearly identical with the Welsh word *ysgawen*, an elderberry tree, from which it is evidently derived.

Thrave—several, a good number. Twenty-four sheaves of wheat are called a thrave. I heard a person

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 6.
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Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

speaking of a crowd of people, say that there were a whole thrave of them.

Toch—(the *ch* takes the Welsh sound of the letters ch), stronger, tougher, in better working order. See word *onder*.

Yead, head. The *y* likewise occasionally is substituted for *h* in the words, herbs, heap, etc., as yerbs, yeap. This peculiarity is not confined to Montgomeryshire.

(*To be continued.*)

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Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 7.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 8. 1875. Tudalennau 117-122.
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ARCHAIC WORDS, PHRASES, ETC., OF MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

By the Rev. ELIAS OWEN, B.A.

No. VII.

Afore, before.

"And in this Trinity none is *afore*, or after other."—*Athanasian Creed.*

Acause, because.

Arga, argay, an embankment on the side of a river, a dam across a river. The word arga is common in the level part of the county where the country is subject to floods. It is usual in those parts to make a parochial charge towards keeping the river embankments, or argays, as they are there called, in order. The word arga is derived from Welsh "argae", from which it differs but slightly in sound.

Beddow, a dull person. This word is current in the parish of Llandinam.

Bwgan, a ghost, a hobgoblin, a bugbear. The word is Welsh, and is to be seen in Dr. Owen Pughe's Dictionary.

Brumhook, a billhook.

Blether, a bladder. The *th* in blether has the sound of *th*, whether.

Bumm, or *Bumbailiff*, a person who executes writs of distraint. Current in the south of the county.

Bout, a bolt.

Bout, to bolt.

Bay, a cowhouse.

Boosey, a kind of manger placed near the ground, in which the food for cows is placed.

Bastechild, a bastard.

Boutin, bolt. A bundle of straw. The straw from

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 7.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 8. 1875. Tudalennau 117-122.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

six sheaves makes a boutin, but usually any moderate-sized bundle of straw is called a boutin. This word is common in the neighbourhood of Welshpool.

Bottle, a large bundle of straw. This word is current about Llanidloes.

Butt, the ground between two reans or channels in a ploughed field. It consists usually of fourteen furrows, or it may consist of less; but should, however, the space exceed fourteen furrows, it is called a *plank*.

Coist, quice, a wild pigeon. Quice is the usual name for this bird about Llanidloes. Coist is heard further north.

Conterary, contrary, cantankerous. "There's no dealing with him, he is so *conterary*."

Crot, crod, a small, chubby child. This word comes from Welsh "crwt, a round, dumpy fellow."—Dr. O. Pughe.

Craggin, cragen, a shell. Cragen is Welsh.

Cout, a colt. Cout rhymes to bout in about.

Clenk, to hit, to strike.

Clenker, a blow: "I gave him a *clenker* in the face."

Cre-af-ol, the berries of the mountain ash.

Cute, sharp, expert, acute. This word is also in use in Swaledale, Yorkshire, see Captain Harland's *Glossary*, published by the English Dialect Society.

Cundary, to be much put about, an uneasiness of mind. "The old woman was in sich a *cundary*, wanting to know who would pay her for her work." A young blacksmith, who was obliged, on account of bad health, to leave his work for a few days, told the writer that he was sure his employers would be in a *cundary* when they found he was not at his work, for they were very short of hands.

Diff, deaf.

Diffrothen, a lazy, worthless person. In use in Llandinam parish. Probably from the Welsh word diffrwyth, unfruitful, unprofitable.

Elder, a cow's udder.

Fearn, fern.

Fild, field.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 7.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 8. 1875. Tudalennau 117-122.

Foret, forward, advanced. "He inna so foret as he ought to be", says a mother, respecting her son's progress in school.

Flen, a flea.

Frum, premature: "That field of wheat is too *frum* to stand the winter", *i.e.*, the blade is too much grown to withstand the frosts of winter. The term is applied to a precocious child, and to things and persons prematurely ripe.

Fistful, or *fissful*, handful.

Favours, resembles. "Yo favour yor father in yor face, but yor voice is like yor uncle William's."

Glebber, blabber.

Grotts, hulled oats.

Hout, hold. "Take *hout* on it."

Homber, hammer.

Heft, weight.

Hoontyluck, a mole hillock. In Tregynon these hillocks are called *oontlocks*. In Llandinam *woontlocks*.

Kex, kecks, decayed stems of hemlock.

Kiddle, saliva. This word is common in Shropshire.

Kit, a sty; as a pig's kit.

Keck, to stammer.

Kail, to upset, to topple over; probably a corruption of keel, the bottom of a boat, etc., which becomes uppermost when the boat is capsized.

Lather, ladder. The *th* has the same sound as in blether (see above).

Lown, a rate.

Lewn, a portion of work done by a thatcher with one relay of straw.

Looby, a stupid fellow.

Lissum, lizum, lissom, pliable, easily bent. Upon referring to *Salopia Antiqua*, I find that the word lissom is common in Shropshire.

Nailposser, nailpasser, a gimlet.

Pwn (w=oo), to punch, to beat: "I got his head under my arm, and *pwnned* it well."

Puke, to vomit. Common in the south part of the county.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 7. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 8. 1875. Tudalennau 117-122.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Pennerth, a pennyworth.

Plank, a portion of ploughed land (see Butt).

Pletch, to plash hedges.

Rove, to entangle, used in reference to entangled thread, yarn, etc. "Baby has roved the thread, so that I cannot get a length out of it."

Rotch, light gravelly soil. This word is used about Trefeglwys.

Rundell, a decayed tree; a tree with a hollow trunk. Applied to trees *in situ*, and chiefly to old oak trees.

Sally, the willow tree.

Shonk, lively, healthy. This word is taken from the Welsh, sionc. Dr. O. Pughe speaks of sionc as follows: "Sionc, *a.* (si-onc), brisk, nimble, active, flippant.

Shishering, whispering.

Stock, to dig with a maddock. "To stock potatoes" is to dig between the potatoe rows with a maddock.

Stump, *v.*, to mash boiled potatoes into one consistent mass.

Stump, *s.*, mashed potatoes.

Stumper, *s.*, a wooden utensil with which potatoes are mashed.

Swp, a heap. This word is borrowed from the Welsh word *swp*, and has the same meanings which *swp* has. "He fell all in a *swp*" means that the person fell in a heap, and not lengthwise.

Skellet, a copper saucepan; but it differs in shape from the common saucepan in having no handle nor bulging sides.

Scrip, to snatch.

> "I resisted him, and tore out of his hold, and in so doing he *scripped* the shawl which was on my arm from me."
> —*Newtown and Welshpool Express*, Dec. 8, 1874.

Seemerly, seemingly, apparently. "He died a fresh man, *seemerly*."

Shoves, sheaves.

Spit, likeness: "He's the very *spit* of his father".

Ted, to spread hay to dry in harvest-time.

Te, thou. In these parts of Montgomeryshire, where English is all but the language of the people, *te* for

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 7.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 8. 1875. Tudalennau 117-122.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

thou is generally affixed to a verb, as "a'tte going?" "art thou going?" "biste well?" "art thou well?" "wytte now?" "will you now?" I think *te* is used only in interrogations, at least I cannot recall a single instance in which it is otherwise employed. In Captain Harland's *Glossary*, previously referred to, I find the word *te*. It is mentioned as follows :—

> "Te (tu) for thee, but used for thou : "whar's te been?" "where hast thou been?"

Ti (i=e), is Welsh for thou.

Too-ert, toward.

The-ar, there. In the more English parts of Montgomeryshire I have heard *there* pronounced as *thear*, and *chair* as *chear*; but this pronunciation does not prevail in, for instance, Llanidloes, which was Welsh when *thear* made its appearance in the county, nor probably will it ever gain a footing there, nor in other parts where it does not at present exist, for such provincialisms were introduced into Montgomeryshire at a time when English was less settled than it is, and learning less common; and these two causes combined procured for such words an existence amongst the illiterate; but when these causes have entirely disappeared, as they have already done to a considerable degree, byewords cannot gain an entrance into the country. It is, however, curious to notice how far a vulgarism has travelled, and how tenacious of life it is. *Thear* was a Lichfieldian barbarism in Johnson's day, and Boswell twitted him thereon. Johnson, with a laudable affection for his native place, had stated that the inhabitants of Lichfield "spoke the purest English". "I", says Boswell, "doubted as to the last article of this eulogy, for they had several provincial sounds, as *there*, pronounced like *fear*, instead of like *fair*" (Croker's edition, p. 489).

Tump, a hole or trench in the ground, in which potatoes are kept during winter. The potatoes are placed in this trench with straw upon them, and then a mound of earth is raised over them, and this is the potatoe tump.

Thrashel, a flail.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 7.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 8. 1875. Tudalennau 117-122.
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Urchin, a hedgehog.

Wheddy, tiresome, tedious. Wheddy appears in these parts to be used solely in reference to the act of passing from place to place, but always with the idea that the journey jades the traveller. This word has been discussed in *Byegones*, and as what the writers say throws light upon the word, I will take the liberty to transcribe their words. Chatterton writes as follows:—

> "Weddy...It means that the piece of ground a person may be ploughing is more than it looks, or that a road a person is walking on is longer than he expected it to be, between two given points. 'That's a weddy bit of ground, John, yo are ploughing'; or, 'It is a weddy bit of road from Cilgwrgan to the Court.'"—*Byegones*, in *Oswestry Advertiser*, April 29, 1874.

"R. E. D." remarks as follows:—

> "*Weddy* in Shropshire takes the form of *Wady*. Any food that is very solid and satisfying is said to be 'Wady atin.' The word is usually applied to something that is done slowly and laboriously, or that is tedious. Hartshorne gives the following in his *Salopian Glossary*—'Wady, Wēādy, *adj*. This has been noticed both by Ray and Bailey as a Shropshire word, and they seem to have caught entirely the spirit of its meaning in the definition they have given. The latter explains it thus: 'A wheady mile, a mile beyond expectation, a tedious one'; and the former says a wheady mile is a long mile, a mile longer than it seems to be. And thus, too, every task or labour which turns out to be greater than was at one time anticipated, or anything that is peculiarly long, tedious, or wearisome, is a 'weady job,' or described as 'mighty waydy.' Anglo-Saxon *wide*, longus. The common word to *wade* is probably akin to this."—*Byegones*, May 20th, 1874.

Wheddy seems less confined in signification in Shropshire than in Montgomeryshire; and as the *w* is followed by the aspirate *h* in Montgomeryshire, the word has a slightly different pronunciation in both counties.

Whitty-tree, mountain ash; or, as it is sometimes called, the whitty-*berry* tree.

Yow, yew, ewe.

Youl, howl.

Yarly, early.

[*To be continued.*

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 7. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 8. 1875. Tudalennau 117-122.

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Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

ARCHAIC WORDS, PHRASES, ETC., OF MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

By the Rev. ELIAS OWEN, B.A.

No. VIII.

Abide, to endure, suffer. "I can't abide him, he is so overbearing."

Aisterhole. A hole in the back of the chimney just above the hob, of various size, but usually just big enough to admit the hand. A brick taken endways out of the chimney wall would make a good aisterhole. The "maister's" pipes and the "mistresses" matches are usually kept in this recess, and bits of dry sticks for lighting the indispensable 'bacco pipe, are stowed away here to be always handy and ready for use. Such holes are to be seen only in old houses in which the chimneys are open and large, with seats on each side the fire, and thus the fireplace in such abodes is the most agreeable place in the house, particularly of a winter's evening when the winds are howling through every crevice in the building.

Aister, called also *esster*, the back of the chimney from side to side, and extending some distance above the fire. Occasionally the *aister* is protected from the weather by a kind of roof in the chimney through which there is left an escape for the smoke. This provision adds to the attractions of a seat on the hob when the storms of winter are raging. The *aister* is also called the *backaister*, though one would expect that both names could not apply to the same place. Both words, however, are current about Caersws without any difference in meaning. In Ray's *Collection of North Country Words* the word *easter* is given. This

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 8. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 8. 1875. Tudalennau 351-358.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

word is evidently another form of *aister*, as will be seen from the following quotation :—

> "*Easter*, sb., the back of the chimney or chimney stack."—*English Dialect Society*, No. 6, p. 41.

Backaister, see *aister*.

Betting, or *bettin*, virgin sward, the surface of the soil which has never been broken up ; but the sward is not called *betting* until it is pared. The word will be better understood by explaining the process of "cutting the betting". The first thing that is done in bringing a portion of upland into cultivation is to bare the surface and then to pare it with a betting knife or plough of peculiar formation, which cuts or peels off the sward, the sward which is pared off is called betting. The betting after exposure to the air until it is dried, is gathered into heaps and then burned, and this is called "burning the betting". The ashes are then spread over the ground and ploughed into it, as manure for oats, &c. *Betting* is common in Welsh, as 'Tori betyn,' &c. The word appears in Ray's *Collection*, 1691, *of North Country Words* :—

> "Betting, sb., '*betting* of ground,' *i.e.*, burning land after it is pared."—*English Dialect Society*, No. 6, p. 32.

Bait. Refreshment partaken of by farm servants about ten o'clock in the forenoon, and four o'clock in the afternoon, a kind of luncheon between meals to enable the labourers to *wait* for their dinner and supper. Milton uses the word bait in the sense of delay.

> "For evil news rides post, while good news *baits*."—*Samson Agonistes*, line 1538.

Bout, a journey up and down a butt in ploughing.

Coolins (oo=oo in cool) *cool-lings*, those sheep of a flock or pigs of a litter which remain unsold after the best have been disposed of. The smallest and poorest sheep and pigs are by way of depreciation called *cool-ings*. Sheep and pigs of this kind are called in Welsh

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 8. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 8. 1875. Tudalennau 351-358.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

cwlyn. They have a similar word in Sussex, as will be seen from the following extract from the Rev. W. D. Parish's *Dictionary of the Sussex Dialect*.

> "Culls, or cullers, m., the inferior sheep of a flock culled from the rest, and offered for sale in a lot by themselves."

Crabbed, stunted in growth.
Cowshon, dried cow's dung.
Cratch, the hind side of a cart or waggon.
Dozen, to stun.
Dunning, fading away, get worse and worse day after day. The word is applied to sick people of whose recovery there is but little hope. "Poor thing, she is *dunning* away oncommon fast"—she is finishing her journey through life rapidly.
Ebb, shallow, not sufficiently deep. "Don't you think that grave is too *ebb*?" "It certainly does not look deep." Drains or excavations that are too shallow are said to be ebb.
Fegg, withered grass which remains in meadows throughout the winter, grass which has not been eaten off the fields by the stock in the fall of the year, and remains in tufts here and there along the fields. A field of fegg is a field that contains quantities of such grass. "There's nothing but fegg on that field, but the sheep will eat it with the young grass in the spring." Fegg is heard in Welsh in some parts of Wales. It is also given in Ray's *Collection of North Country Words:*

> "Fegg, sb., long grass remaining in winter."—*English Dialect Society*, No. 6, p. 43.

And also another form of the same word is given in page 43 of the same publication:—

> "Fegge, sb., long grass remaining in pastures till winter."

This latter form is not current in these parts, and it is only the withered grass, whether long or short, that is called fegg in Montgomeryshire.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 8. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 8. 1875. Tudalennau 351-358.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Grout, grounds, sediment. "There's nothing but grouts in the bottom of the bottle."

Grout, a rumbling noise heard in horse's bowels when they are trotting or at other times.

Gurgins, a kind of coarse flour. Wheat was formerly ground in the country mills so as to produce sack flour, gurgins, and bran, and sack flour was further refined into firsts and seconds. The gurgins was the next to bran, and was at one time the flour with which the working man's loaf was made. A dark or brown loaf it was, but it is said to have been healthy. The expression "white bread" is common in Wales, and points to a time when there was black bread in the country. The white loaf was eaten by the better-to-do class, while the gurgin loaf was found on the poor man's table. Gurgins are now called sharps, and this kind of flour is only used for fattening stock.

Husky, dry, cold weather. "It's very *husky* weather," is an expression which the writer heard for the first time last March. It means that the wind and temperature are such that thereby vegetation is retarded. Before the weather can be husky, the wind must be either north or east, and the time of the year must be Spring.

Imple order, perfect order, everything clean and in its proper place. "The maister gets into sich a towering passion, if everything is'nt in *imple* order."

Another form of "imple order" is "ample order", and even "apple-pie order" is often heard, but what kind of order "apple-pie order" is, the writer is quite unable to say.

Jurgy, in a sulky threatening manner. "I made the bull go off, but he went away oncommon *jurgy*." *Jurgy* seems to be derived from the same root as the Latin word *jurgium*, or possibly it is a corruption of the word *jurgium*. The word jurgy is applied to the surly threatening manner of a bull when, unwillingly, he is driven from the cows or out of a field.

Kilt, killed. "He *kilt* the adder with a hazel rod."

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 8. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 8. 1875. Tudalennau 351-358.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Bishop Thirlwall and his friends Julius Hare and Whewell, when at Cambridge, attempted to revive this manner of writing the perfect participle. Thus they wrote "preacht" for preached, and "publisht" for published, but they were not followed by others, and the Bishop and Whewell ultimately abandoned the undertaking.

> "That unspotted lam
> That for the sinners of al the world was *kilt*.
> —*F. Queene*, c. x, 57.

Lyer, lier, liar, a gloss. Lyer rhymes to buyer. If a farm is in good trim it is said to have a lyer on it. A horse with a shining coat has a lyer, even a sheep with a good oily fleece is said to have a better lyer than one with a dry hairy fleece. Lyer appears to be a descriptive term for everything that is well looked after and consequently in good condition, and as some animals, as the horse, actually shine when properly fed and attended to such a word as *lyer* was probably originally applied to them, and from them to other animals and things which showed signs of careful looking after. Perhaps *lyer* is an abbreviation of the Welsh word *dyscleirio*, to shine.

Maggal, a noose made of hair, or brass wire, to catch fish, rabbits, etc.

Ommost, almost.

Scade, a person given to scolding, a regular scold, a quarrelsome person.

> "What are you *scading* about, you noisy old thing," said a cottager to a hen that in a querulous tone was asking for a bit of bread in the presence of the writer.

Screen, a coffin. This word is also common with the Welsh speaking people of this neighbourhood, as well as with the English speaking population. It is current here in English and Welsh. The Welsh use it to the exclusion of the word *arch*, a coffin, whilst the English employ both it and the word coffin.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 8.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 8. 1875. Tudalennau 351-358.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Scrout, a drudge, a servant girl that does the lowest kind of work, such as scrubbing the floors, &c.

Slade, to bask, "The cat and dog are slading before the fire."

Stelsh, the wood pillar to which a cow is fastened in the bay.

Stope, to leave a farmer's service, having obtained from him more than one's due. "Jack is a bad un, he *stoped* his master", *i. e.*, left his master's employment, having raised more than his wages.

Soundly. This word is used in many senses in these parts. The following examples will show how it is employed.

> "He feathers me *soundly*," said by the father of a young man who had been long ill, and was the while supported by his parent, a labouring man.
>
> "I fretted *soundly*," spoken by a man who grieved after a certain thing which he had done.
>
> "I'll stick to it *soundly*, so as to finish it afore night."
>
> "How is Mr. Parry?" "Well hur's bin very bad, but hur's getting on *soundly* now."

Sight, a quantity, "Oh, you may take them all, I've a *sight* of them at home."

Swag, to sway to and fro.

Tend, attend, watch, wait upon. "John *tends* the cow this morning for fear she'll get into the wheat, and William is *tending* the baby."

> "I to the lords will intercede, not doubting
> Their favourable ear, that I may fetch him
> From forth this loathsome prison-house, to abide
> With me, where my redoubl'd love and care,
> With nursing diligence, to me glad office,
> May ever *tend* about thee to old age."
>
> —*Samson Agonistes*, 920-5.

Trouseket, an open cart for carrying branches of trees, etc.

Tast, taste, "Let's *tast* it, boy." Tast rhymes with fast. This pronunciation of taste was very common in the south of Montgomeryshire from twenty to thirty

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 8. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 8. 1875. Tudalennau 351-358.

years ago. It is still so pronounced by those who use the word when speaking Welsh, and it can also be met with in secluded districts by those who speak English.

> "Ne scarse good morsell all his life did *tast*."—*F. Queene*, c. iv, 28.

Trigg, sb., a small trench indicating the boundary between two townships, parishes, etc.; the wedge-like space between two furrows. A person describing the feats of a favourite dog said, "We had been out some time and I lost my old dog, but going to the top of a bank I saw the old thing course a hare in a fallow, but he was too old to catch her, for every time he was upon the hare she squatted in the *trigg* and the poor old dog passed over her." Two men, the one an Englishman, and the other an English speaking Welshman, meeting on the hill between Carno and Trefeglwys, spake thus to each other, "Please tell me where's the *mere*, for I should like to know what parish I am in." The answer was, "Oh, you have not passed the *trigg*, you are still in the parish of Trefeglwys."

Trigg, v. a., to mark out by cutting away the sod. The place from which the sod is taken is called the trigg.

This word has been ventilated in *Bye-Gones. Idloes* writes thereon as follows :

> "*Trig* or *Trigg* (July 29, 1874). In the neighbourhood of Llanidloes this word is used to signify a small gutter, trench, or other mark which serves as a boundary, generally between two sheep walks. The word frequently crops up in the disputes among the sheep farmers: 'I coursed his sheep cos they crossed the *trig*,' was an expression used a short time ago in a local county court. In *Salopia Antiqua* (p. 600), *trig* is defined as a small gutter, but nothing is said regarding its use. Halliwell quotes Mr. Hartshorne's explanation. I believe the word is also used as a verb—*trig* it out, to mark it out."

Oswald says :

> "I am not aware that 'trig' is ever used to signify

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 8. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 8. 1875. Tudalennau 351-358.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

> 'neat' on the borders of Wales. When we mark out ground for sale, we 'Trig it out', *i.e.*, put pegs in the ground to show the extent of each lot....—*Bye-Gones, reprint*, 1874, p. 90.

Vessel, abbreviation of universal, "What have you there, John?" "I have nothing in the *vessel* world."

In *Thoresby's* letter to Ray, 1703, published by the *English Dialect Society*, he gives *varsall* in his list of Yorkshire words thus:

> "*Varsall*, adj., universal."—*Eng. Dia. Society*, No. 6, p. 108.

Whimpering, pining away, in a dying state; applied to persons and plants. When spoken of women it implies that they are fading away of grief.

Wenten, went. This old form of the perfect of the verb to go is found in *Wiclif's Bible*.

> "And to tweyne of him *wenten* in that day into a castel."—St. Luke, xxiv, 13.

(*To be continued.*)

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 8. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 8. 1875. Tudalennau 353-358.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

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Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 9. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 9. 1876. Tudalennau 403-410.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 9. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 9. 1876. Tudalennau 403-410.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

ARCHAIC WORDS, PHRASES, ETC., OF MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

(*Continued from Vol.* viii, *p.* 358.)

By the REV. ELIAS OWEN, B.A.

No. IX.

Although the word phrases has appeared at the head of my papers, I have hitherto introduced no Montgomeryshire phrases into my contributions to comment thereon. I will, however, on this occasion, preface my list of words with a few expressions that I have heard in Montgomeryshire. They may not be peculiar to the county, but there they are in the county. Sometimes a saying may be traced to its Welsh origin, and sometimes it is one that has found a shelter in Montgomeryshire.

"It *holds* to the rain", said a respectable English farmer to me one day. The meaning of the expression is seen at once, but the use of the word *hold* in the above sense at the first glimpse seems to be strange, still it is in common use in the above form in Llanwnog parish, and it is an exact equivalent of the Welsh word *dal*, hold. "Y mae hi yn *dal* i wlawio" (It holds to rain), is a Welsh phrase.

"It is as dry as *pouce*", *i. e.*, It is as dry as powder.

"He's as wet as a thatcher." When a person has been well drenched, and wishes to let others know how wet he is, he states that he is as wet as a thatcher. This saying is not over intelligible to those who are unacquainted with rural occupations. In agricultural districts the person who covers stacks of hay or ricks of wheat with a straw roof is called a thetcher, or thatcher, but why should he become the very embodiment of moisture? The following seems to be the reason :—The

straw that is used by him in thatching is steeped in water before it is used, and consequently the thatcher soon becomes wet by handling the wet straw. His occupation is a wet one, and hence the expression.

"He is wet *through* the skin." Since we are upon the subject of rain, the strange phrase "wet *through* the skin" may just as well be mentioned. "Wet *to* the skin" is bad enough, but to be wet *through* the skin is still worse, and hardly conceivable, but with the fact I have nothing to do, it is the expression only that I have to mention.

"He's as mad as a tup in a halter." A ram with a rope around its neck is anything but contented and comfortable—he is restive in the extreme, and although not really insane he has become the synonym for a maniac.

"The one is as good as the other, and better too." When comparing two things which are much alike, this expression is often heard. 'The one is as good as the other is good;' nay, the one is better than the other which is good. The preference is here given to one which is said to be as good, and better than the other. The worse is made to be the better. Greater praise is given in such an expression to that which in itself is worse than that to which it is compared. There is something like this in Welsh, "Y bydd y foreu megis heddyw, ac yn well o lawer",—To-morrow will be as to-day, and very much better. A saying of this kind has on the face of it a fallacy, for things cannot be as good and at the same time better the one than the other. Possibly, the expression is intended to ridicule those who, without reason, prefer one of two things that are identical in value.

"For ever and a day." Eternity itself is here limited, and the time spoken of is a whole day longer than eternity. A very very long time must that be which is fully twenty-four hours longer than eternity. I have heard of a person, who, as a climax in his sermon, was in the habit of saying that such and such would last to the *end* of eternity, and that certainly was not bad; but, "For ever and a day" outdoes the preacher's

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 9.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 9. 1876. Tudalennau 403-410.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

hyperbole. Montgomeryshire cannot claim this large phrase as its own. It has come to the dells of Montgomeryshire, and has made its home there; but it is evidently a fugitive. In a version of the Psalms in a Bible of 1615, the following verse occurs :—

> "What is his goodnesse clean decayed
> *For ever and a day*,
> Or is his promise now delayed
> And doth his truth decay?" *Psalm* 77-8.

Longfellow, in his piece called *The Children's Hour*, uses the same expression.

"Very runnable, and nothing amazing." This expression is used to describe a person whose character is not over trustworthy. In appearance he may be good, or feasible,—this is intimated by the word runnable, and as water escapes the grasp, so does he. There is nothing tangible about the person. No reliance can be placed in such a one. Should you fondly suppose he is equal to his outward appearance and fair words, and should you act towards him as if you "heeded not what others might say", you will rue your mistake. Such seems to be one meaning of the expression. It has, however, another, and that not so bad a one as that now given. It means that the man does not go beyond mediocrity. There is nothing amazing in him, nothing wonderful, he may be taking, but he is after all only an ordinary person. You are mistaken in supposing that he is a superior person—he is only an average—a runnable man.

"He is no great shakes", is another derogatory expression. "What do you think of so and so?" "Oh, I hear he is no great shakes." "But, they say, he is a gentleman!" "Tut, he is no great shakes." With such words is conveyed the spleen or envy of a person towards another, with whom the speaker may have no acquaintance, and of whose circumstances he knows next to nothing.

"He's not naughty, but he's very wicked." There is a nice distinction drawn in this saying between naughty and wicked. Generally, a naughty boy is synonymous

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 9.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 9. 1876. Tudalennau 403-410.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

with a wicked boy ; but such is not the case in the above saying. Naughty, in this expression, means of nought, worthless, useless. The saying might be paraphrased thus :—"He is not a boy of nought, although he is very wicked;" "He is not an imbecile, good for nought, although he is a bad child;" "The boy is of some value, although he be wicked."

"Beat all to winder rags", *i. e.*, Beaten into shreds. Spoken also of a person who in competition with others far outstrips his opponents, and thus he is said to beat them into winder rags. The following expression has the same meaning :—

"I'll beat him *hollow*", *i. e.*, I will beat him so that there will be no comparison between us. "Well, how did the race come off?" "Oh, Silverwing beat them all hollow."

"I wont *pretend* to say", or, "I canna", or, "musna *pretend* to say." When there is considerable doubt in the mind of a person who answers the enquiries of another, he shows the unsettled state of his mind, or the uncertainty of his mind, by employing in his answer the word *pretend*, thus, "Do you think it will rain to-night?" "I won't pretend to say", *i. e.*, I won't attempt to say, or I won't presume to predict. There is much uncertainty respecting the affair, and consequently I will be silent thereon.

"Oh, she is dangerous, and not expected." An abbreviated expression, meaning that a person is dangerously ill, and not expected to live.

"The early bird gets the worm." People get up well betimes in agricultural places, and there are good tales of farmers thriving by getting up "before the cock crows". The necessity of early rising in country places is so great that country clocks are usually an hour before the day, and thus the horses are fed, and the washing begins, and a journey is undertaken by the clock an hour earlier than the day, and the mistress scolds the maid for getting up at six, when nothing can be done unless people are "out of it at five". A great

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 9.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 9. 1876. Tudalennau 403-410.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

virtue it is in maids to "put the washing out" with the rising of the sun ; and in carefully managed houses, the hedges are spread with sheets, etc., usually before breakfast time. Washing-day, as every one knows, is Monday, and there is a rivalry between the servant girls in one house to finish washing before those in a neighbouring house. All this conduces to the comfort of a household. Washing-day becomes washing-night, and there is nothing formidable in the undertaking. Early rising is inculcated in many ways by proverbs and various precepts ; and we are told in the saying at the beginning of this paragraph that "the early bird gets the worm". Poor early worm !

Aitches, aches, "How are you to-day, Mary?" "Very poorly, ma'm. I have aitches all over my body." This word is heard in and about the parish of Llandrinio.

Avenless, aimless, not thrifty—one that is always in difficulties. "Poor thing, I thought it would come to that, he was always sich a *avenless* kind of man." Thus would a person who failed in business be commiserated.

A, to, unto. "A woman like *a* me canna do much." *A*, as in above sentence, is generally used in conjunction with the word like.

Bank, to pass over, to avoid, to disappoint, to baulk. "Don't *bank* that hay man", *i.e.*, "Don't pass it by", said to a person raking hay, and leaving patches or bits of hay behind him. "He was *banking* the corners", *i.e.*, "Avoiding, or leaving the corners of the field untouched when mowing.

Brieff, a brief, a begging letter. "He is very poor, he is taking a *briff* round the parish." The custom, once common, of taking briefs regularly testified by persons holding responsible positions, round a parish, or even a county, has not altogether passed away from certain districts. It still lingers in Llanwnog, but it is fast becoming obsolete, and does not succeed in these days of parochial relief as it formerly did.

Cooth, a cold. "I ketched a cooth in my limbs, and

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 9.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 9. 1876. Tudalennau 403-410.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

I amna hafe well." This word is heard in the parts of the county adjoining Shropshire.

Brickle, fickle, unsettled. The word rhymes to fickle. "It be brickle weather, these days", *i.e.*, showery, unsettled weather.

Fussack, bloated, overgrown, said of a full-sized fat person. The word seems to be a corruption of full-sack. The full is transferred from the sack to the person, who, if lusty, is said to be "full his clothes", the clothes stand for the sack, and in this way a fat person is described as fussack—a fullsack.

Glemmy, a sudden burst of sunshine. "It's a *glemmy* day", a day in which the sun now and again peeps through the clouds.

Govlet, a handful. This word is very common in and about Llanidloes. It is used chiefly by gleaners. "How many *govlets* did you gather yesterday?" *i. e.*, How many handfuls. When a good handful of wheat has been gathered it is tied up by twisting a few of the wheat straws in the hand around it, and it then becomes a govlet. The word is derived from the Welsh *gafael*, a hold.

Grow, the gravel by the side of a river, etc. This word is common in the neighbourhood of Llanidloes, and also in other places by the side of the Severn. It is the Welsh word *gro*.

Hist, turn. This word is more common in the vocabulary of children than in that of men. The word is heard in Llanidloes, and also in Caersws, and probably in other parts of the county. The boy, whose turn it is to play marbles, or rather to try to strike the marbles in the ring, etc., shouts out when his turn has come, "*Hist* to me now, *hist* to me." When men have to do anything in rotation the hist shows who next takes up the work.

Leifer, or lifer, comparative of leif, or lif. "I would as lif do that as this." "Oh, I wudna, I'd lifer do the other." The word appears in Stapleton's translation of *Bede*, thus :—

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 9.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 9. 1876. Tudalennau 403-410.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

"Accompanied with a number of flattering favours, having *leifer* to commit their cause to open disputing then to seem to the people whom they have subverted to have nothing to say to the defence thereof."

Nogs, or noggs, the rough hemp. Every farm had its plot of ground for hemp, or its garddlin (gardd, garden, llin, hemp), and one of these plots has given its name to a part of Llandrinio parish, viz., Arddlin. But to return to the explanation of the word *nogs*. After the best fibres had been taken away, the refuse, *i.e.*, the coarser kind of hemp, was called *nogs*. This was spun, and manufactured into aprons and towels. A noggin apron was one that was made of the coarser kind of hemp. "Farmer Jones's girls were good girls. They worked in their noggin aprons every morning, and dressed up like any lady in the evening. They were not ashamed to be seen at work in their noggin aprons, no not they."

Nisgull, the least or last of a litter (see *ratlin* in former paper), the nestcull.

Owe, own. "The gentleman that owes that hall is very rich."

On, of, about. "You'll think *on* me sometimes."

Pilliner, same as boutin. (See *boutin*). Before threshing machines came into use, wheat was threshed by hand. A very important item was this threshing in farm work; and as everything ere long will be done by machinery in and about farms, I may just as well, for the purpose of throwing light upon the word pilliner, or boutin, enter a little more minutely into the process of pilliner making. I do this now, for, when old things have passed away the *Montgomeryshire Collections* will still be in existence, and they will be referred to as to a museum to see how things were in days of yore. So, to proceed, after the floor is swept the thresher places six sheaves of wheat side by side on the floor, and then, opposite them, he places six other sheaves, and after he has threshed all the wheat out of them he makes the straw up into two bundles, the six

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 9.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 9. 1876. Tudalennau 403-410.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

sheaves on one side form, when bound up into a bundle, a pilliner, or boutin ; and the six sheaves on the other side make another boutin ; so that twelve sheaves of wheat make two pilliners of straw.

Pletch, plash. To pletch, or plash a hedge, is to partially cut the quicks so as to enable the hedger to bend them ; and then after they are cut, he bends them at a angle, and by driving stakes into the hedge they are kept in that bent position. When the whole is dressed the hedge is pletched, or plashed.

Rouse, thin, weakly. " Those turkeys are rouse."

Shet, a lane, an entrance to a court containing houses by a covered passage formed by adjoining houses, a word heard in Llanidloes. In Welshpool a passage between two houses is so called.

Skuff, the nape of the neck. " He took him by the skuff of the neck, and threw him out of the house."

Splaight, a splutter. " There's a splaight", an exclamation uttered upon seeing a glass knocked over, and broken to pieces.

Stickan, a spoon, a large wooden spoon.

Slutch, or sludge, mud.

(To be continued.)

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 9. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol 9. 1876. Tudalennau 403-410.
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COLLECTIONS

HISTORICAL & ARCHÆOLOGICAL

RELATING TO

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AND ITS BORDERS.

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Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol X. 1877. Tudalennau 207-220.
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Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 10. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol X. 1877. Tudalennau 207-220.
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ARCHAIC WORDS, PHRASES, ETC., OF MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

By the Rev. ELIAS OWEN, B.A.

(*Continued from Vol.* ix. *p.* 410.)

No. X.

Market Peert or Pert. This phrase expresses the state of inebriation in which farmers and others are at the end of market-day. Those who are acquainted with the manner in which business is done in rural districts, with their small central market towns of a thousand or two inhabitants, are well aware that the produce of the farm and the live stock are taken generally to the town in the vicinity of the farms, and there disposed of; and commodities are bought for weeks to come, when the farmer lives a distance off, but for the ensuing week only, if he happens to live near the town; and thus market or fair-day is an important event, as it brings together the population of a district of perhaps thirty miles in circumference. The inhabitants within this area are usually related to each other by blood or marriage, or if not connected in this way, they become acquainted through meeting at the common market town. Friends meet friends upon market-days or fairs, and after business is over they take a glass or two together in the public houses which they are in the habit of "putting up at." Sometimes they become "unco happy" and chatty, if not noisy. Those who have not a trap leave rather early by the market train, but at the station it is easily seen that they have managed to become "market pert." Some frequenters

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 10.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol X. 1877. Tudalennau 207-220.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

of markets invariably leave the town with "three sheets in the wind", and of them it can safely be said as Burns sang of *Tam o' Shanter*,

> "That frae November till October,
> On market day thou was nae sober."

I am not aware that a person who has taken too much intoxicating liquors is described, out of Montgomeryshire, as "market pert." The words do not imply an unconscious state of drunkenness. Perhaps in other parts and upon other occasions a "market pert" person would be described as a "little gone", or "elevated", possibly he would not be called "tight" nor "screwed", but all these shades of inebriation prove the prevalence of drinking. Since an exact definition of "market pert" is very difficult to give, and as enough has been said to show what the term means, I will not attempt any further explanation of the words.

> "Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
> "Awake the *pert* and nimble spirit of mirth."
>
> *Midsummer Night's Dream*, I, i, 13, 14.

Rather for'ard, not quite sober. This expression is heard in the neighbourhood of Newtown.

Blind man's holiday. This is a common way of expressing the approach of night. It is heard more in the north parts of the county than in the south. A tailor before he lights his candle in the winter months incorrectly says, it will soon be "blind man's holiday" with me. In times gone by, when rush-lights were in use, and tallow candles scarce, the expression was a good one, and implied that darkness would necessitate a cessation from labour whether the worker wished it or not.

Buy a pig in a poke. Poke means bag. The word "pooak or pooak-seck" is common in the neighbourhood of Whitby, and in fact in the whole of Yorkshire. It is explained as follows in the Whitby Glossary issued by the *English Dialect Society* :—

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 10.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol X. 1877. Tudalennau 207-220.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

"*Pooak or pooak-seck*, a large coarse bag, or rather a long narrow bag, into which you have to dive to get to the bottom." The word *poke* is not heard in Montgomeryshire for a bag, but it appears as above. To "buy a pig in a poke" is a saw that requires no lengthy comments. The folly of buying unseen or unknown things is so apparent that it is strange that it should ever be done. Stranger still it is that it is so often done that a caution against such proceedings has taken the form of a proverb.

The following sayings that are heard in Montgomeryshire need no remarks :—

"As lively as a flen (flea)."
"As lousy as a badger."
"As long as oak and ash grow."

As drunk as a fiddler. This saying refers to a state of society differing in many respects to that of the present day, and so also does the saying, "As drunk as a lord." The sayings have happily outlived drunken lords and fiddlers. Both were to be found common enough in the last century, and drunken fiddlers were an outcome of the merry makings, wakes keeping, and village-green dancings that were not uncommon so late as thirty years ago. With drunken lords I have nothing to do, as they do not come within the scope of my paper. The fiddler was a necessary part of every village feast, and usually as long as he held out so long did the dancing continue. From the green the lads and lasses went to the neighbouring public-house, and they tripped it in the big parlour, or if that were too small the barn was converted into a ball-room, and on and on they whirled until morning. The dancing, though, was sometimes brought to an earlier close by the fiddlers having indulged over freely in the oft-proffered and oft-accepted glass. In our days the dancing-green is unfrequented in Montgomeryshire, and therefore fiddlers have disappeared. Should there be one still lingering and wandering in the county, he is, as regards his predecessors, in the same plight as

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 10.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol X. 1877. Tudalennau 207-220.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

was Sir Walter Scott's last minstrel with regard to his. He with him might say :—

> "For, well a day! their date was fled,
> His tuneful brethren all were dead;
> And he, neglected and oppressed,
> Wished to be with them and at rest."
>
> *Lay of the Last Minstrel.* Canto i, 9-13.

A power of, a large quantity. "I've *a power of* work to do before night." Spenser wrote that Robert Bruce sent over his brother Edward "with *a power of* Scottes and Red-shankes into Ireland."

Abundation, abundance, more than enough. Abundation is often abbreviated into bundation.

Agen. This word is singularly used in and about Llanidloes, and also in other parts of the county. Thus, "Have you done it, John?" "No, sir, I will do it *agen*", meaning some other time. When used, it does not mean a second time, but a first time, at a different or more convenient period. "I can't give it now, but I'll give it you *agen*", *i.e.*, at some more suitable season. English-speaking Welshmen often employ the word as given above. It appears to be a translation of the Welsh word *etto*, again, another time. But in English there is a somewhat similar use of the word again. Thus in the three Creeds, the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and that which is commonly called St. Athanasius's Creed, the word "again" occurs :—

> "The third day he rose *again* from the dead."
>
> *Apostles' Creed.*

And so also in the other two creeds now mentioned, and also in the Articles of Religion, the phrases "rose again" or "did rise again" occur. The fact would in one sense be fairly expressed by the words, "The third day he rose from the dead," as in Welsh, "y trydydd dydd y cyfododd o'r feirw." St. Paul writes, "But now is Christ risen from the dead." He does not say, "But now is Christ risen *again* from the dead." Not having risen before he could not with propriety be said to rise again. But when it is borne in mind that "rose again"

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 10.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol X. 1877. Tudalennau 207-220.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

is intended as a translation of the word "resurrexit"; *again* standing for the prefix *re*, and *rose* for *surrexit*, the difficulty in connexion with the word "again" in the creeds, etc., is lessened. The word resurrection, again rise, carries with it the sense of rising to a previous state of existence. Thus, first life, then death, and then the resurrection or life once more, or again, and hence the expression "rose again". "I lay down my life that I may take it *again*" (St. John x, 17) *i.e.*, rose again to life. *Agen* is sometimes abbreviated in Montgomeryshire to *'gen* ; but the usual pronunciation is agen, and this appears to have been the general pronunciation of "again" in the last century, as shown by the following quotation given in Walker's dictionary.

"I little thought of launching forth *agen*,
Amidst advent'rous rovers of the pen."

But in Shakespere's days, "again" was pronounced as rhyming with rain ; as,—

"When shall we three meet *again*—
In thunder, lightning, or in *rain*."
Macbeth, act i, sc. 1.

Brownsheelers, brownshellers, ripe hazel nuts, nuts ready to drop from the tree, nuts whose shells are browned.

Bloke, a single peat used for firing. In the neighbourhood of turbaries, which are common on the hill-tops in most places in Wales, the inhabitants during the summer months harvest peat for winter use. They build the peat into stacks near the house, and fill spare recesses in the house with their fuel. The peat is cut into pieces at the turbary in shape and size somewhat like a brick. When a mother tells a child to go and fetch a *bloke* for the fire, the little one obeys by bringing a single peat. This word is heard in Dolfor, a part of Kerry parish, and probably it is common in other parts. Peat is called turf in the neighbourhood of Newtown and Llanidloes.

Boke, to belch, to heave at the stomach, as when sick.

Bree, an insect that torments cattle in hot weather,

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 10.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol X. 1877. Tudalennau 207-220.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

a horse fly. This word is Welsh, and it is used as now given by the English-speaking people in Kerry parish. The Welsh word is *Pryf*. The *f* is dropped, as is often the case in colloquial Welsh with a final *f*, and then the word *pry* or *pree* is obtained. It might be observed that *pryf* has a more extensive application in Welsh than *bree* has, which is limited to the fly that irritates cows in summer.

Baily or *bailiff*, the head servant-man in a farm, the one who acts as foreman or manager in a farm under the "master" or tenant of the farm.

Buzzy or *bussy*, or *boosy* pasture, a pasture held by an outgoing tenant from day of notice to quit to the 1st of May following. This is really one field claimed by an outgoing tenant from Lady-day to May 1st. The incoming tenant can put his cattle on the farm at Lady-day except on one *boosy* pasture, which he cannot claim until the 1st of May. This arrangement is often a great convenience to an outgoing farmer.

Burr, a whetstone to sharpen sickles and scythes.

Burr, or *bur-dock*, a kind of weed with round prickly seed balls.

Bundation (*see* Abundation).

Bigsorted, proud, "stuck-up".

Bay, a space in a wall for a door, &c.

Bay, an empty space for storing fodder, generally joining the place where cattle are tied up. Sometimes any recess in a stable or cowhouse is termed a bay.

Bandy, game of bandy, game of hockey.

Backside the house, the back of a house.

Boltin, p. *boutins*, a bundle of straw. Current in the south part of the county. This word takes the form of *boutin* or *bolt* in the neighbourhood of Welshpool. (See *Montgomeryshire Collections*, vol. viii, p. 117.)

Bendro, a disease in the head of sheep which causes them to turn round and round, until they die. The sickness is a kind of water on the brain, which forms in a kind of bladder. There are shepherds so expert that they can

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 10.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol X. 1877. Tudalennau 207-220.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

find the part of the head where the cause of giddiness lies, and they are able to extract the bladder. The writer has seen a sheep which was successfully operated upon. This sheep sickness is called in some parts of the county, *Kaimet*, *Caimet*, or *Kymet*, but it is more generally called, even in the English speaking parts of the county, as above. The word is Welsh—*pendro*, *pen*, head ; *tro*, a turn ; a word highly descriptive of the sickness.

Buft, stutter, stammer. Usually heard in the participial form, as *bufting*, stuttering.

Blackberry hunters, blackberries ; common throughout the county. The hunters are those that gather the blackberries, but the berries are invariably called blackberry hunters by the hunters themselves.

Blackbird of the Church, the swift. This bird is so called in Llanidloes, probably because it nests in the church steeple.

Barm, yeast. Common in all parts of the county, and also in various parts of England. The fairy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* says :—

"And sometimes make the drink to bear no *barm*."

Act ii, sc. 1.

Baist, to beat. "I'll give thee a good *baisting* if thee dusna shut up."

Clane, quite, altogether, "He is *clane* off his head", *i.e.*, quite mad. "I'm *clane* done up", altogether exhausted. The word clean, pronounced clane, has found its way into colloquial Welsh. Thus in Carnarvonshire we hear the expression, "Dyn clen", *i.e.*, a kind obliging man. The same expression is also heard occasionally in Montgomeryshire Welsh, but a man of this description is generally in Montgomeryshire called a "Dyn *decha*," decha being a local form of *deheu*. Dyn decha, a handy man, also a kind man. Decha becomes *detha* in Denbighshire.

Cricks, pots, dishes, crockery.

Crock, a jug, cup, mug.

Charm, noise, uproar. "What a *charm* those people do make, to be sure."

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 10.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol X. 1877. Tudalennau 207-220.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Clamperation, fuss, bother. "What a clamperation about nothing."

Clamper, v. to make a fuss.

Clamper,v. has already been noticed in a former paper in the *Montgomeryshire Collections*, but in the neighbourhood of Newtown it has another meaning, viz., a scandal, and also disturbance. In this sense it is current in Mochtre parish.

Close, or *close-fisted*, stingy, niggardly.

Chitterlings, or *chitterlins*, pigs' bowels or intestines.

Cives, a sort of very small onion, used in flavouring broth, stuffing, &c.

Clucks, fingers. "What does Poll do in school, Emma?" "Her sucks her *clucks*, and looks like a *nawf*."

Cengle, or *sengle*, a strap or belt round a horse's belly. This is the Welsh word *cengyl*, a girth.

Clap, to put in quickly. "*Clap* it in the oven."

Curst, very cunning, or sharp.

Chump, a log of wood.

Cletch, a brood or hatch of chickens. Current in Dolfor and the parts thereabouts.

Cambrel, a piece of wood used for suspending sheep, pigs, &c. from, when they are being cut up. The cambrel is a crooked piece of wood from which the slaughtered beast is hung by its hind feet. This word is from the Welsh *cambren*, pronounced in some parts of Wales as if it were cambran (*cam*, crooked; *bren*, a piece of wood).

Crumble, a crumb. "She hasna eaten a *crumble* for three days."

Cricket, a kind of stool.

Cratch, pl. *cratches*, the skinny refuse of lard, that which is left after the lard has been melted down. The fat of pigs is placed over a fire, but the whole does not turn into lard; a skin remains which becomes crumbled. These pieces are called *cratches*, and also *scratches*.

Cratch, to eat heartily. "He cratches pretty well." "He is a good one to *cratch*." I believe the word is applied not only to the person whose appetite is good,

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 10.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol X. 1877. Tudalennau 207-220.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

but chiefly to one who makes a *cranching* noise when eating.

Dumbcake. This cake is made by a girl who wishes to dream of her future husband. It is made as follows :—The girl is to get everything required for the cake without speaking to any one. She is to be dumb during the baking of it. It is to be carried by the girl upstairs, and she is to go to her bedroom backwards. She is to undress with her back to the bed, get into the bed backwards, place the cake under her pillow, and then she will dream of her future husband. A not unlikely thing, since her mind would be so thoroughly taken up with one idea for so long a time before going to bed, that that one thought would be centred on the man whom the girl loved, and whom she wished to be her husband.

Douter, extinguisher, a do outer.

Dearn, stern or hard. This word is current in Mochtre parish, and probably in other parts of the county.

Drat thee, a kind of oath. "*Drat* thee, wst ti be quiate"—Drat thee, will you be quiet.

Danker me. This also is an expression something like an oath. "Danker me, how is it I conna do it.

Dun, do, *Dunna*, do not. A wealthy, but niggardly farmer said to his mother, who lived with him, upon the occasion of his sister's marriage, when more beer was required by the wedding party than he thought necessary, "Mother, what dun yo think?" "I dunna know, Richart." "The men want another jug o' drink, they dunna, dun they?" "Aye, they dun," was the mother's response.

Eft, lift, raise.

Entic, a whinchat. Current in Mochtre parish.

Egg or *hegg*, nightmare.

Elderberry tree, the alder tree. Heard about Llandrinio parish.

Flem, the pool near a mill which supplies it with water.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 10.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol X. 1877. Tudalennau 207-220.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Fitchoc, fitchet, a marten, a polecat.

Flakes, hurdles.

Gambo, a low cart without sides. When required, poles are inserted along the sides into iron staples. The gambo seems to be another name for a trouseket, or cart. Gambo and trouse cart are heard in Dolfor. (See *Montgomeryshire Collections*, vol. viii, page 356.)

Gulley, a gosling.

Gossips, godfathers and godmothers. A school in the north of the county was being examined, and the children were asked to give another word for godfathers and godmothers, when a child answered gossips, which was the local word for baptismal sponsors.

Hog, a yearling sheep.

Heck, to hiccup.

Hooze, hoozing, to wrap oneself up. "What do you *hooze* yourself up for?"

Heesh, hush. "Heesh'd, what's that?"

Hoodgy, or *hoo-gee*, to nestle quietly in the breast, to go to sleep. The word comes in a nursery song:—

> "*Hoo-sy* bye, babie,
> And sleep with your daddy
> Till mammy comes home from the mill."
>
> "Hoo-sy bye, babie, on the tree-top,
> When the wind blows the cradle will rock.

Jorum, a large quantity. "Well, I've a *jorum* of food on my plate, and no mistake."

Kawp, bark. "What's the dog kawping at."

Linnow, pliant, supple. "I'm as *linnow* now as ever," said by an aged man.

Lam, to beat.

Lewn, lunge, to hit. Both words in the sense of "to hit" heard in Llandinam parish. I have heard the word *lewn*, a blow, a hit, in Llanwnog parish.

Lowance, allowance.

Lockaday, an exclamation.

Mixen, a dunghill.

Methodee, a Methodist. The word is so pronounced in Llanwnog parish. The Calvinistic Methodists are thus

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 10.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol X. 1877. Tudalennau 207-220.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

called in this parish, and that too without intending thereby any marks of disrespect. It is strange that this word is also common in Lancashire. Thus, in *Mary Barton, a tale of Manchester Life*, we read as follows :—" He's worked with Carson that long, and were always a steady, civil spoken fellow, though, as I said afore, somewhat of a *methodee*."

Mind, to attend to, to guard—" The boy minds the sheep."

Mow, four or six sheaves, but more generally six, piled together in the harvest field.

Mammy, the rag that is stuffed in the mouth of a football to keep the bladder from protruding.

Nizen, *nisses*, or *nisses*, *nistes*, nests. All these forms of the word nests are heard in various parts of the county. Nizen is in the more English parts of the county adjoining Shropshire in the north. Nisses is common to the valley of the Severn. Nistes also is heard in the quiet nooks of the county. In Wickliffe's translation of the Bible we have the following :—

" Foxis hav dennes, and birddes of the air have nestis."
St. Luke ix, 58.

Nizen is worthy of note, as being another example of nouns whose plurals end in *en*, as ox, oxen, which is still current, just as house, housen, is still current in Montgomeryshire ; another plural of ness is nesses. There are other instances of words like nesses undergoing a similar change, as fiss, pl. fisses ; fists. The plural fistes is also heard in the county. But I have never heard fissen. Postes, as a plural of posts, is not uncommon.

Overlook, to bewitch. The belief in witchcraft is very general among the peasant classes along the border. It is no unusual thing for sickness or misfortune to be attributed to witchcraft. It was believed that a person's property could be "overlooked". The various writers of the interesting Parochial Histories which appear in the *Montgomeryshire Collections* have mentioned instances of the prevalence of superstitions which

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 10.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol X. 1877. Tudalennau 207-220.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

still linger in the county. Instances of this have come to the writer's knowledge during his parochial visits.

Oddments, odd numbers.

Odds, difference. "What *odds* to you," *i.e.*, "What difference does it make to you", meaning, that it makes no difference. "No *odds* to you"; it makes no difference to you. It concerns not you: "What 's the *odds*, so you're happy!"

Onks, to carry about, hawks. "She *onks* cabbage all about the town."

Oller, alder tree, so called in Llandinam parish. Along the borders of Montgomeryshire adjoining Radnorshire, and in Radnorshire, this tree is called *Orl.* In other parts of Montgomeryshire it is called *weller*, *waller*, *wooller*, *woller*.

Posey, *Powsi*, a bunch of flowers. Used in Welsh also, as in the following:—

"Myn'd ir ardd i ddewis *powsi*,
Pasio'r lavant, pasio'r lili,
Pasio'r *pinks* o'r rhosys cochion
Dewis powsi o ddana'l poethion."

Plack, a situation, a place, as it is called in Montgomeryshire.

Permant, to perambulate. The *permants*, or perambulations, were around the church, and for the following reason. It was a custom along the borders of Shropshire and Montgomeryshire for a servant girl who wished to pierce the future on sweetheart matters, to visit the churchyard about midnight, and while walking round the church to sow hempseed, and while so engaged to call upon her future husband to show himself. This custom is termed "Permants". That the custom was not altogether useless or barren in results, will appear from the following:—A servant girl who went through the performance, when she returned asked her mistress why she had sent the master to frighten her. "I did not," was the answer. The girl said, "Well, I saw him in the churchyard." "Then you'll be his second wife," said the mistress; and that servant girl is now

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 10.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol X. 1877. Tudalennau 207-220.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

the mistress where she once was a servant. Her mistress died, and in course of time her master married her.

Pink, a pied finch. A name corresponding with the note of the bird.

Pitch, a steep ascent. "The horse *stolled* on the *pitch* by our house."

Pissant, *pisspot*, an ant. *Pissant* in Mochtre, *Pisspot* in Llanidloes, Llanwnog, and other places.

Pikle, a hay fork.

Quell, to squeeze, or hug in one's arms. "When I go to bed this little child always sleeps in my arms and *quells* me round the neck." Heard in Dolfor.

Rumpus, a row, a noise, an uproar.

Rickets, a ricketyness in the limbs. A child with weak legs, and who is long before he walks, is said to have the rickets, and this is supposed to be the effects of bad nursing.

Rying sieve, formerly used for cleaning chaff, dirt, &c., from wheat.

Seats, large roots of hazel or other underwood used for making a hedge.

Slobber, sleet, or cold rain.

Skutch, or quitch—twitch grass. The roots of this weed grow rapidly, and it is so tenacious of life that it gives the farmer much trouble.

Shenkin, kettlebroth. Shenkin is made of bread, butter, and hot water seasoned with salt and pepper. It is also called Browis.

Sied, escheat. Stray sheep escheated by the lord of the manor. Such sheep are called in Welsh in Montgomeryshire, "Defaid sied."

Storm, a sharp frost. Current in Mochtre parish.

Splawfooted, having the feet turned outward.

Stock, v. to hoe, to dig with a mattock. "He is *stocking* potatoes."

Scotch, to stop a wheel. "Scotch the wheel," *i.e.*, place something behind the wheel to prevent the vehicle going down hill.

Sprott, to run about, to prowl about. "What are children sprotting about for."

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 10.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol X. 1877. Tudalennau 207-220.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Sclem, v., to steal eatables as a cat.

Sclem, n., a greedy child that is not satisfied with the food given it, but who helps himself in every possible way.

Stean, steen, an earthen conical-shaped pan or vessel.

Singles, shingles, a spreading inflammation. Heard in Dolfor.

Succourful, very fruitful, fertile. Heard in the neighbourhood of Montgomery.

Scooter, a spell, a long pull of work. "He's been working a tidy *scooter*."

Surging sieve, a sieve which was formerly used to clean flour from the bran.

Swingle, a swing used by children, consisting of a rope suspended from two trees, or some other immoveable supporter.

Spurt, to grow, to sprout. Wheat left long on the field in wet weather *spurts* or sprouts.

Soak, to harden by baking. Bread that is not well baked is not soaked.

Tid, timid, with the idea of carefulness combined.

Tender, mild, applied to the weather.

Thatchbirds, sparrows.

Tack, to put cattle on another farm for grass; to hire grazing for cattle when the pastures on a farm are insufficient to supply the stock with food.

Trapse, to rush about. "See the dog trapsing about the fould."

Tweek, or *tweak*, to press down. The cheese press *tweaks* out the whey from the curds.

Tap, a patch on a shoe.

Tap, v., to patch or repair shoes by putting on them a new piece of leather.

Wicked, frolicsome, playful.

Wooller (*see* Oller), the alder tree.

(*To be continued.*)

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 10.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol X. 1877. Tudalennau 207-220.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

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Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 11. Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XI. 1878. Tudalennau 317-324. Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Authors alone are responsible for facts and opinions.

*** See Vol. X, pages iii to xxxiii, for Table of Contents of Vols. I to X, also for the original proposal for formation of the Club and the Rules and amended Rules of the Club and Museum.

ARCHAIC WORDS, PHRASES, ETC., OF MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

By the Rev. ELIAS OWEN, M.A.

(*Continued from Vol.* x, *p.* 220.)

No. XI.

I will begin this paper with a few phrases that were often heard in Llanidloes some thirty years ago.

"Think *on* me." The preposition *on* in this expression takes the place of the preposition *of*, and "think *on* me" means, "think *of* me." Thus "You'll never think *on* me, when you are gone; out of sight out of mind, it will then be." "No," is the gallant response, "I'll think *on* you every breath I'll take."

The preposition *on* is used in other expressions than that now given. The other day I heard a person use the words, "top *on* the hill," for "top *of* the hill". Thus also I have often heard the expression "I'll think *on* what you have told me"; and again, "He spoke *on* it afore"; and again, "afore I begin on".

It appears that this use of the word *on* is not peculiar to Montgomeryshire. The Rev. T. L. O. Davies, in his book on *Bible English*, page 55, writes as follows on the word *on*:—"On is found for 'of' in 1 Sam. xxvii, 11, in a phrase that is still current, 'Lest they should tell on us,' *i.e.*, of us. The usage was frequent, *e.g.*, 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on.' (*Tempest*, iv, 1.) 'The bird is dead that we have made so much

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 11.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XI. 1878. Tudalennau 317-324.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

on.' (*Cymbeline*, iv, 2.) 'Amongst so many battles which in ten years time have rent the bowels of England, some on necessity would fall on that day (Sunday) (Fuller, *Ch. Hist.*, xi, ii, 43). We still say 'on purpose'." I have heard the expression "I begged on him to stop."

"*Take on.*" This phrase is used to indicate that the person who uses it, saw a certain party, or observed a certain thing, without indicating his observation. "I saw her in the street, but I didna take on that I seed her." A similar expression was formerly in use in Scotland. Dean Ramsay, in his *Reminiscences of Scottish Life*, p. 116, writes :—"I can remember a peculiar Scottish phrase very commonly used, which now seems to have passed away. I mean the expression 'to let on', indicating the notice or observation of some thing, or of some person. For example, 'I saw Mr. —— at the meeting, but I never let on that I knew he was present.'"

"*Under one,*" together, at the same time. "I'll bring up the two under one."

"*He's a dead un.*" *Dead* in such expressions as this means, sly, cunning, knowing, it is applied to a person that has, as it is said, his wits about him. The phrase is used in reference to various matters in which sharpness is observable. Thus, when a person is apparently getting the worse of an argument, his acquaintances who know his powers are not the least disconcerted, "Wait a bit," they say, "he is a dead un, he'll soon turn him topsy turvy."

"*A dead lay.*" These words are heard in the neighbourhood of Llanymynech. Their import will best be seen from the following example. A friend informs me that an old man speaking of a person whom he knew said "He is on some dead lay now," *i.e*, up to some mischief, about to do something not quite right, and possibly not quite honest. The words also imply perseverance in attaining an object in ways that are considered locally as "underhanded dealings".

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 11.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XI. 1878. Tudalennau 317-324.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

There are words in Montgomeryshire that retain the sense they formerly had in England, but which in modern English they no longer have. *Starve* for *cold* is one of these. But there are also words in Montgomeryshire that perhaps are used with a local meaning attached thereto; thus *comical*, which in modern English means mirthful, or diverting, in Montgomeryshire means impudent. There are in Montgomeryshire a good number of these two kinds of words, viz., those that are used in a sense which formerly belonged to them, but which now is obsolete, and those that seem to have a local meaning. I will give a few of these latter kind of words. I have here and there in my former papers given examples of the former class, and I shall most likely give a more complete list as I go on with my list of words. I have also given examples of those words that I suppose have a local sense, and now I will add thereto.

Comical, impudent, saucy. The following conversation will shew the sense in which this word is used. A farmer describing a labourer to a friend said—"I never saw sich a comical fellow in all my life. I offer'd him good wages, and he tould me to my face to keep them myself." The person addressed responded, "Well, he needna haf bin so comical, I know'd a time when he were glad enough of a job."

Jest, just, nearly. "How is Thomas to-day, John?" "Oh, sir, he's jest dead," meaning that he is very ill. A clergyman unacquainted with this use of the word along the borders of Wales found himself condoling with a party for a death that had not occurred. The vicar had started to visit a distant sick parishioner, and on the way he met the sick man's son, and immediately made enquiries after his father's health. The answer was "He is jest dead." "I am very sorry," said the clergyman, "will you kindly tell your mother that I was on my way to see your father when you met me." "But, sir," said the man, "my father would be very glad to see you." "To see me!" said the clergy-

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 11.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XI. 1878. Tudalennau 317-324.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

man, "did you not tell me that your father was dead?" "No, sir," said the man, "I said he was jest dead."

Keep, to make. I remember when a lad, often hearing some one or other of the teachers in the National School say to their noisy talking classes, "Don't keep a noise, boys"; and I well remember the master, who was a Londoner, and consequently unacquainted with Welsh idioms, would correct the monitors by saying, "That is what you want them to do, and why should you ask them to do what you don't want them to do—if they *keep* a noise they don't *make* a noise."

Keep, to put away. "Keep this for me," *i.e.*, put this away to save me doing so. "Keep it in its place," *i.e.*, put it in its proper place. The word keep is a translation of the Welsh word cadw.

Learn, teach. "Learn me how to do it," *i.e.*, teach me. This word was once generally used as it is now heard in Llanidloes. It occurs in the Book of Common Prayer.

"O *learn* me true understanding."—Ps. cxix, 66.

The Rev. J. L. O. Davies, in his *Bible English*, remarks respecting the word *learn*, that "it is never found in our Bible; we may conclude, therefore, that this signification of the word was passing away in 1611." Shakespeare uses the word in the *Tempest*, i, 2:

"You taught me language; and my profit on't
Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you
For learning me your language."

The words *teach* and *learn* are used in the sense we now use them in this very act. From the use that Caliban makes of *learn*, one would infer that he spoke somewhat imperfectly the language which Prospero had taught him. Prospero says:—

"I pitied thee,
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour,
But thy vile race
Though thou didst learn." . . . . .

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 11.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XI. 1878. Tudalennau 317-324.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

These quotations shew that Caliban used not the chaste language of his teacher Prospero.

Mr. Davies also takes note of the use of the word by Fuller in the *Pisgah sight of Palestine*, first published in 1650. "No doubt," Fuller writes, "as the corps had *learned* them, and followed the precedents of their idolatrous parents" (ii. xii. 22). From this quotation it appears that the use of the word in the sense of to teach, lingered even among the learned to the latter half of the seventeenth century. It is not unlikely that it continued for some time current in both senses among the educated class, until at last one sense only of the word was used by this class, and the people clung to the other use of the word.

So, short of, less, all but, "What is the length of that plank?" "It is four feet, *so* a quarter," *i.e.*, its length is $3\frac{3}{4}$ feet.

Abide, endure, "I can't *abide* that man." This word appears to have been used in Shakespeare's days in the way it now is in Montgomeryshire.

> "But thy vile race
> Though thou didst learn, had that in't which good natures
> Could not abide to be with;"
>
> *The Tempest* (i, 2.)

Evening. Afternoon. In Llanidloes the afternoon is always called evening. "Come to our house for tea this evening." "Thank you, I shall be delighted to do so." "Then mind you be in time, not later than three o'clock." "Ah," you say, "it's fortunate the time was named, or I fear I should have but a cold cup of tea had I gone later on in the day."

Having noticed several words heard in Montgomeryshire in a sense now no longer common, I will proceed with my list of words.

Ansel. The first bargain in the day. I have heard this word with the aspirate, as hansel. The first comer to a stall on market-day is addressed thus:—"Come, give us a ansel." This word is used about Buttington and other parts. I first heard it in Llanfyllin.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 11.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XI. 1878. Tudalennau 317-324.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

I observed to a young man last April that the snow had not entirely disappeared—there were patches of snow here and there by the hedges—"No," he said, "there's a *honsell.*" When asked for an explanation, he said, that the snow in the ditches was like an egg in a nest, waiting for more to come. I never heard the word in or about Llanidloes. Upon referring to my friend Mr. Hamer's list of Llanidloes words, I find he does not notice it; and either the word is not there, or it has escaped both his and my notice.

Arrust, harvest. Heard in the north parts of the county.

Asinder, asunder.

Awkit, awkward.

Anyways, in anywise. "He won't allow you to." "Never heed, I'll do it anyways," *i.e.*, in any case, with, or without permission.

The word occurs in the Bible in several places,—thus:—"And if the people of the land do anyways hide their eyes from the man." *Lev.* xx, 4. See also *Num.* xxx, 15, and 2 *Chron.* xxxii, 13.—The word is found also in the Prayer Book:—"Those who are anyways afflicted or distressed."

Batter. An artificial bank, or slope.

Dearn, eager for, determined to have, or get a thing. "He was very dearn on it."

Dizoner, a blow which makes a person feel dizzy. "He gave me sich a dizoner on my head."

Far, a fair. Fairday is pronounced farday. Laughable mistakes are made by mispronunciations of words. The Rector of a certain parish told me that he was teaching his Sunday-school children one Sunday afternoon, and these words were read:—"Divers of them came from far." Wishing to ascertain whether the scholars understood the meaning of the passage, he asked them what the words meant. By-and-bye one of the children ventured an answer, and "'sposed they came from *a-far*"; meaning, a fair. The clergyman, not immediately perceiving the little one's misconception, said, "Yes,

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 11.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XI. 1878. Tudalennau 317-324.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

they came from afar, but what do you mean by divers." The child again, "'Sposed that the drivers of them came from the far." The clergyman now saw the little one's mistake, and further questioning elicited an answer, which showed that the little one thought it might have been "Oggestry far", from which the drivers were returning. Evidently this child had, on account of a local pronunciation of the word fair, misunderstood the whole sentence, and to his mind it merely meant that sheep or cattle drivers were returning from a fair. Probably he had never heard the word divers before, and by a little ingenuity he converted this word into drivers, and thus made sense of what before was meaningless to him.

Feef, or feif, a thief.

Fit, feet.

Fitches. Vetches. The word fitches for vetches, was once common. Thus, in Isaiah xxviii, 25:—"Doth not the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the *fitches?*"

Gallus, frolicsome. This word takes a substantive form, as frolicsomeness.

Hooze, or ooze, oftener used in its participial form, as hoozing or oozing, wrapping oneself up. For instance, a woman going out with a shawl wrapped over her head and shoulders, is accosted thus: "What's the matter, hoozing yourself up, arnt you well."

Loose, loose in, to let, or let in. "My shoes loose in wet." This use of the word loose is from the Welsh. It is merely a translation of the word gollwng, to loose or loosen, to let go; gollwng dwr, to let in water.

Lovechild, an illegitimate child.

Muggil, rubbish. There's a lot of muggil about.

Nan, what? If a person has not caught another's words, he says, "Nan?" and then the remark is repeated.

Scoot, a large piece, a scoot of land, a large piece of land. This word is heard in Kerry parish, in and about Sarn.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 11.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XI. 1878. Tudalennau 317-324.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Spunge, to spunge, to make oneself a burden to others, to force oneself upon a person's hospitality.

Spunger, the person who spunges.

Sop, to soak, to get thoroughly wet. "My feet are sopping wet." From the Welsh sopen, a wet mass—yn wlyb sopen, soaking wet.

Scroot, scrout, scrowt, a small insignificant person. "I never thought he could have done it, he is such a scroot of a man." There is a word similar to scroot in Welsh, crwtyn, and scroll seems to be a corruption of crwtyn. I have heard the word scrwtyn, used for crwtyn in Montgomeryshire by Welsh-speaking people, and this further shows the derivation of the word scroot through scrwtyn from crwtyn, a little dumpy fellow.

Them is used for those. Lately I heard these words —"*Them* as ar gween to Llanymynech." Them for those is to be met with in the Prayer Book. "Spare Thou them which confess their faults"; "Restore Thou them that are penitent"; "He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent."

Trod, to walk in mud. In the winter of 1877, I heard the word troddling for the first time. One person said to another, in my hearing, not far from Llanymynech station—"I'd rather be at home than troddling up here." The road was wet and muddy. Trode, a path, is found in Wright's *Dictionary*, and, possibly, the word *trod*, as heard in parts of Montgomeryshire, is connected therewith. But it resembles in sound the Welsh word troed, a foot, and troediaw, to foot, to tread, is still current in Welsh. It is not unlikely that *trod* is derived more immediately from the Welsh word troed than from *trode*, a pathway. Both words, probably, have a common origin.

Whittle. A small woollen shawl for throwing over the shoulders, so called in Llanidloes, where they are made.

(To be continued.)

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 11.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XI. 1878. Tudalennau 317-324.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

COLLECTIONS

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Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 12.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XIV. 1881. Tudalennau 147-144.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire.

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Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 12.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XIV. 1881. Tudalennau 147-144.
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ARCHAIC WORDS, PHRASES, ETC., OF MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

By the REV. ELIAS OWEN, M.A.

(*Continued from* Vol. xii, p. 324.)

From the names of places in the border land between England and Wales it will be seen that Welsh was spoken in places where at present it is not heard; and from places' names, however strangely disfigured by the tongue of the foreigner, we learn how tenacious of life is the name of a place. What is going on, and has gone on in Wales, has likewise occurred in other parts of England, and many an English town, river, and brook, mountain and dale, owes its name to the Celt, who, in ages long gone by, inhabited the whole country and freely roamed over the downs in the south of England and along the valleys of Derbyshire, and other parts of the kingdom, and gave names to the places therein that have come down to our days. These names, though, can in the lapse of time be hardly recognised in their modern garb even by a Welsh-speaking Welshman. It requires an ingenious aptitude for such a work ere the present name of an English place can be referred to its undoubtedly Celtic original appellation. The writer does not lay claim to such a gift, but in his various journeys, the somewhat disguised names of places, evidently at one time Welsh, strike his ear, and he has thought that it would be well to record a few, if only a few, of these names, merely to indicate what may be done by local word-worms who have the curiosity and time for collecting a list of place names undoubtedly derived

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 12.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XIV. 1881. Tudalennau 147-144.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

from the Welsh in former years. Such an undertaking would be interesting and useful, and there is ample scope for it in many parts of England, and particularly in the English counties adjoining Wales, as well as in the English-speaking parts of Wales.

The other day I was in the parish of Buttington, near Welshpool, and I had several instances of the corruption of the names of places from an intelligent lad who accompanied me in my walk. Pointing to a conical summit of a branch of the Breidden Hill, I asked him what it was called. He said, "That point there is called Pennyrozin."

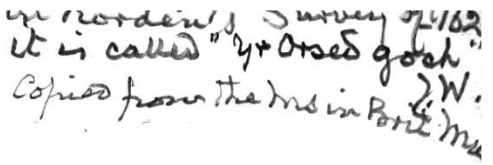
Pennyrozin. This word I took down just as the boy pronounced it. The first part was clear—the *pen*—but what could the *rozin* mean? This was the crux, but upon looking round the difficulty vanished. Stretching before me right up to the *Long Mynd Mountains* was a valley, which, before its cultivation, was a regular *rhos*, or moist meadow land. On the other side, again, was the Severn; and ere the land at the foot of the mountain was drained, that, too, must have been a *rhos;* hence, the plural of rhos, *rhosydd.* The *Penny* is made to do duty for *Pen y* (the top of), and the name undoubtedly at one time was *Pen-y-rhosydd,* which in the course of years has been corrupted into Pennyrozin.

A summit not far from Penyrhosydd was called by the boy *Molly golfa.* Here, again, a similar change to that which Penyrhosydd underwent was evident. The *Molly* of to-day was the *Moel y* of former days. *Moel* means a conical hill void of wood. The latter part of the name, viz., *golfa,* is not clear. There are those who derive it from *collfa,* a place of execution; others, again, think it comes from *gwylfa,* a watching-place. The *g* is certainly often dropped when an initial in Welsh words in Montgomeryshire, but other changes would be required to convert *wylfa* to *collfa,* and such changes as do not occur. Perhaps the root of the word is to be looked for in *coll,* hazel wood; thus, *Moel-y-gollfa* would mean the hazel wood hill.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 12.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XIV. 1881. Tudalennau 147-144.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Near Newtown, on the road to Kerry, is a place called locally *Vastry*. The present form of the word is rather obscured, but with a little thought the darkness is dispelled, and it is soon seen that Vastry comes from *Maes*, an open space, plain, or field, and *tref*, a homestead.

Rossett, a parish adjoining Cheshire, is evidently a corruption of *rhosydd*, marshy land.



Gresford derives its name from Croes, a cross, and fford, a road. A few hundred yards from the village is still to be seen the pedestal or base of a wayside cross.

Cytte, a place in Whittington parish, comes from *coed*, wood, and *ty*, a house.

Such changes as those now referred to are common; but there is another peculiarity observable in various parts of Wales, but more particularly so on the border land, that is the translating of the names of places from Welsh into English, both names being current at the same time. Thus in the valley of Trefeglwys there is a house known as *Tycoch*, and it is always so called by the Welsh-speaking population of those parts, while the English-speaking people call it *Redhouse*. Thus, too, we have *Whitehouse* for *Tygwyn*. In the neighbourhood of Denbigh stands the mother church of that parish. It is also one of those places that have the peculiarity alluded to. It is known to the Welshman as *Eglwyswen*, and to the Englishman, Whitechurch.

Whitechurch, the terminus of the Cambrian railway line, was once Eglwyswen.

Bettisfield, a station between Oswestry and Whitechurch, and which is also an ecclesiastical district, seems to be an attempt at a translation of the word *Caerbettws*. The *cae*, field, is translated, and the *bettws* is judiciously left alone, and this gives us the mongrel word Bettisfield.

I have no doubt that the key to the meaning of many names of places will be got by bearing in mind that partial or literal translations of Welsh names often took place.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 12.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XIV. 1881. Tudalennau 147-144.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

There is another peculiarity in reference to the names of places which shall be referred to, viz., the addition of a word in English, to make the meaning of the term intelligible to English-speaking people. Thus, not far from Llanymynech is a bridge now commonly called "*Pont Meredith Bridge*". *Pont* is the Welsh for bridge. This the English population either is ignorant of, or it has Anglicised the term, to make it a descriptive term to them. In the same manner *yr ogof*, the cave on the Llanymynech Hill, has been converted into "the ogo hole". In the uplands of Radnorshire, between Builtt and Knighton, is a lake, locally called Lynbucklyn Pool, llyn meaning pool, or lake. This combination of synonymous words is not uncommon.

Passing on from the names of places to words used in ordinary conversation, it is in this case also observable that there is an interchange of words between the Welsh and English. Some of these I have already mentioned in the course of these papers, such as *pendre*, for the sickness to which sheep are subject, and which affects their heads, and causes them to turn round and round; *glasder* for *glasdwr*, etc. Words like these are common. In this manner do concurrent languages affect each other.

In this paper I will put down, without alphabetical order, Welsh words, or words used by Welsh-speaking people in Montgomeryshire, that are either not used, or are not commonly used, in other parts of the principality.

Shettin, a hedge. In other parts of Wales a hedge is a *gwrych*. In Carnarvonshire, where stones are plentiful and trees scarce, the hedge becomes *clawdd*, a mound; but the divisions between field and field there are stone-built walls. *Shettin* has an English sound about it, and probably it is derived from *shut in*, to enclose.

Wttra, a lane; sometimes the *w* aspirated as *hwttra*. In Carnarvonshire a wttra is a lōn; in Denbighshire, a rhewl.

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 12.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XIV. 1881. Tudalennau 147-144.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Cog, a lump. A short, lusty fellow is called a cog—"Mae o yn glamp o gog lusti". The *cog* may be applied to thick-set, short men, but it is usually applied to children, as "Pan oeddwn i yn gog bach"—"When I was a little cog". "Cymmerwch *gog* o gaws"—"Take a cog, or lump, of cheese".

Anferth, which Dr. Owen Pugh gives as "without beauty, monstrous", is a word of wide application in Montgomeryshire. It answers somewhat to the word *ofnadwy*, terrible, frightful. It is one of those words intended to intensify an expression. "Yn sal anferth"—"very ill indeed", or "extremely ill". "Y mae yn rhewi yn anferth"—"It freezes very hard, or tremendously".

Manwes. An open sow that has not had pigs.

Mwlwg mawn, the peat-ash, or remains of peat after they are burnt. In some parts this is called *mwnws mawn*.

Caenen, a heavy fall of snow. This word is commonly used in Carno parish. In Cardiganshire the word used for the same thing is *Haen*.

Talch, coarse meal.

Stican, a spoon. In Carnarvonshire, and other parts of Wales, the usual word for a spoon is *llwy*. There is, however, a piece of wood used to stir the porridge called a *stican* in Carnarvonshire.

Grwn, a seed bed, called in parts of Wales *Gwely*. Thus, in Llanfair Caereinion they would say, "Dyma grwn o foron anferth o fawr"—"This is a very large bed of carrots". In Anglesey the same information would be conveyed thus—"Dima wely o *garaitch* mawr ofnadwy."

Moron, carrots. In some places called moron cochion, or red carrots, to distinguish them from parsnips, called moron gwynion, or white carrots. The usual name for this vegetable is a corruption of carrots, as given above.

Ffebrys, gooseberries. In Carnarvonshire the word used is a corruption of the English word, as coesberrins. Similar corruptions are used in other parts. In Llan-

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 12.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XIV. 1881. Tudalennau 147-144.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

fyllin, I have heard gooseberries called Eirin-Mair, Mary's plums.

Gomedd, to refuse. The common word is gwrthod, or nacâu, but gomedd is the word used in Llanfair, Montgomeryshire, and the parts there about. Thus, there a person would say, "Yr oedd o yn *gomedd* dod getha i", which in Flintshire would take the form—"Yr oedd o yn naca dod gyda mi"—"He refused to come with me."

Dannod, to upbraid, is a word that, while it is good Welsh, is, nevertheless, a local word. The usual word in other parts of North Wales is *edliw*, to upbraid, or reproach.

Ffwrn, an oven. The use of this word strikes a person from Carnarvonshire as singular, where an oven is a pobty, or baking-house.

Ffwrna, to bake, or, in Flintshire, "I rhoi yn y pobty"—is to put into the bakehouse.

Cligeth, a funeral. This is a word common to South Wales, as well as Montgomeryshire. It is an abbreviation of Claddedigaeth. In Anglesey and Carnarvonshire, a funeral is a cynhebrwng. In Montgomeryshire hebrwng is the word used when a person goes "to send a person on his way".

Gythge, necks. Gythge seems to be a corruption of the word gyddfau, plural of gwddf, neck.

Gwddwg, neck. A word heard in Llanfair, Montgomeryshire. "Y mae llawer a dolur gythge y mis yma"—"Many suffer from sore throats this month."

Enfedd, ripe. The usual word is addfed.

Modyd, for teimlo, to feel.

Moyn, to go for a thing, or to fetch a thing. The usual words in other parts of Wales are "Yn hol". The common use of the word moyn in Montgomeryshire would strike a Carnarvonshire person as very strange.

Da, cattle. This is a good Welsh word, but as applied to cattle it is not often heard out of the county; at least, I have not heard it. The usual

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 12.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XIV. 1881. Tudalennau 147-144.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

word for cattle is *gwartheg*, or *anifeiliaid*. In Denbighshire, cattle becomes *cattal*. Thus, in a booklet, by Robert Davies, Nantglyn, published in 1803, p. 27, is the line—

"Ac ar ei *gattal* gyrn."

Nant, a brook. In most counties in North Wales a nant is a dingle, or narrow valley, and not a brook. Thus sings the bard of Nantglyn of his native valley, Nantglyn—

"Nantglyn drwy'r flwyddyn yn flith—nant gyrchog,
Nant gorchwyl y fendith,
Nant winwydd, nant o wenith,
Nant is law, hwyl glaw, haul, gwlith."

Clwyd, a hen-roost.

Clwyd, a sort of a gate, which is not secured to its posts by hinges, but by a straw, or other kind of, rope. The word is in Dr. Owen Pugh's *Dictionary*, and is defined by him as a hurdle and wattled gate. It is a local term, and it is interesting to find it current in Montgomeryshire. It is common in Trefeglwys parish.

Plancio, to protest, or affirm a thing, as "Yr oedd yn *plancio* na wyddai ddim am y peth."—He protested that he knew nothing of the matter. This word is heard in Llangadfan parish.

Burr, a whetstone. It is called *calenhogi* in Flintshire. In some parts it is called *maen hogi*, and in other parts of Wales it goes by other names. *Burr* is heard in Llangyniew parish, Montgomeryshire.

Penty, a cottage standing alone, a detached house without land belonging thereto, a farm-servant's house built by itself, a hovel. The word is in Dr. Owen Pugh's *Dictionary*, but there it is defined as "a building added to the main house; penthouse, a shed; also, the head house". It is used in quite a different sense to this in Montgomeryshire, for instead of being "the head house", it is a mean building, standing by itself, without any pretension to distinction of any kind.

Blaid, cowhouse. The general term for cowhouse in

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 12.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XIV. 1881. Tudalennau 147-144.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

Welsh is *Beudy.* "Dew'ch a getho i i'r *blaid*"—"Come with me to the cowhouse"—is heard in Llangyniew for "Deuwch gyda mi i'r beudy" in more northern parts of Wales. In Flintshire a cowhouse is called a cor.

Wap, soon, immediately. The sense in which the word is used may be seen from the following example: "Ni a fyddwm wedi darfod *wap*"—"We shall finish in the twinkling of an eye". *Wap* is a slang term. In some parts of Wales the equivalent is *wap* is *toc,* which means instantaneous; thus, "Fyddwn wedi darfod toc."

Dyl means the same as *toc,* or *wap.*

Allusion has already been made in a former paper to the dropping of *ch,* when an initial letter, in the neighbourhood of Llanidloes. It appears, though, that this peculiarity extends to other parts of the county. Thus I am informed by my friend, the Rev. G. Edwards, M.A., that it is common in Llangadfan, of which parish the reverend gentleman is rector. My friend Mr. Griffiths, schoolmaster, Llangyniew, tells me that such also is the case in that parish. In Llanwnog and Llanidloes I have myself noticed repeatedly this provincialism. There is, however, a difference, which I think I have observed, in the pronunciation of such words as begin with *ch* in the eastern and western parts of the county; thus, in the western parts, where Welsh only is the language of the people, the *w* is preceded by the aspirate—thus, *chwech* becomes *hwech;* whilst in the eastern parts of the county there is a tendency to drop the aspirate altogether, and the *chwech* becomes *wech;* this, however, will require further corroboration. The peculiarity of dropping the *ch* leads to the abbreviation of words; thus, *chwyad* becomes *hwyd,* and *chwyaden hwyden.* In such words as these, where the initial is aspirated, it is difficult to state with certainty whether the *h* precedes or follows after the *w.* In the English word, *when,* and such like, the aspirate appears after the *w,* but it is a question whether in sound it does not precede it.

(To be continued.)

Archaic Words, Phrases, etc., of Montgomeryshire. Rhan 12.
Montgomeryshire Collections (Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire). Cyfrol XIV. 1881. Tudalennau 147-144.
Y Parchedig Elias Owen, B.A. (2 Rhagfyr 1833 Llandysilio, Sir Drefaldwyn - 19 Mai 1899 Llanyblodwel, Swydd Amwythig, Lloegr) (65 oed)

(Mae'n debyg bod rhan arall, Rhan 13, ar gael yng Nghyfrol 15 (1882), tua thudalen 425, ond nid yw'r gyfrol honno ar gael gennym)