

UP 1217.5 IS 1962

PAM

PEASANT CULTURE

INAUGURAL LECTURE

*of the Professor of Welsh
Delivered at the College*

on

30th January, 1962

by

Professor T. J. MORGAN
M.A., D.Litt. (Wales)



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF SWANSEA

LF1217.S IS 1962

PAM

1001619860



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF SWANSEA

PEASANT CULTURE

INAUGURAL LECTURE

*of the Professor of Welsh
Delivered at the College*

on

30th January, 1962

by

Professor T. J. MORGAN
M.A., D.Litt. (Wales)

76/976

(Emeritus Professor T. J. Morgan, as a Vice-Principal of the College, retired in September, 1975. Since his inaugural lecture, originally given in January, 1962, had long been out of print and there was still a demand for copies, it was decided to reprint it. Emeritus Professor Morgan was asked to write a "postscript." This is printed at the end of the text of the original lecture).

PEASANT CULTURE

Before I come to the subject-matter of the lecture, I feel I must mention, with pleasure and no little pride, that the third professor of Welsh in Swansea is a former pupil of the first and second professors. It is, I expect, a very rare experience for a professor when delivering his inaugural address to have, not only his immediate predecessor present, but the previous occupant of the Chair also; and as they were both my teachers, it is, believe me, a very chastening experience.

Gan fy mod i wedi fy ngeni a'm magu'n anghydfurfiwr, naturiol iawn imi beidio ag arddel unrhyw ddaliadau parthed yr olyniaeth esgobol; cyfaddefiad syml yw dweud hynny, nid dadlau; ond ym myd ysgolheictod Cymraeg, anodd peidio â chredu yn yr olyniaeth academiaidd, a'r ymdeimlad hwn o olyniaeth yw'r ysbrydiaeth bennaf, oblegid nid athrawon yn unig ydym, nid dysgwyr yn unig yn darlithio ac yn arholi; rhaid inni fod yn gynheiliaid diwylliant, yn geidwaid ar drysor cenedl y Cymry, a disgwylir inni ddiogelu'r trysor cenedlaethol a'i estyn i genhedlaeth newydd, ynghyd ag awydd cenhadol wrth iddynt ei dderbyn o'n dwylo a'i drosglwyddo ymhellach i'r dyfodol. Wrth dalu'r deyrnged hon i ymroddiad a gwasanaeth Henry Lewis a Stephen Williams gobeithio'r wyf y llwyddwn eto yn yr adran Gymraeg, y pennaeth a'i gydweithwyr, i lunio dolen gyfan gref i'w rhoi wrth yr hen gadwyn. Yr ydym yn gymdeithas mor glòs yn adrannau Cymraeg y Brifysgol, ni allwn beidio â chael ein hysgogi gan ysgolheictod ac ymchwil pob Coleg fel ei gilydd: fe gefais y fraint o gydweithio â W. J. Gruffydd a Griffith John Williams: a chefais y cyfle i adnabod Ifor Williams a Lloyd Jones, Parry Williams a Thomas Parry, Saunders Lewis a Williams Parry ac eraill, a'r peth pennaf a ddymunwn i fyddai meddu hudlath i ailgreu bob hyn a hyn yr awyrgylch trydanol a oedd o'm cwmpas i'n fyfyrwr ac yn ddarlithydd ifanc, awyrgylch y cyfnod creadigol arbennig pryd yr oedd fy hen athrawon ac eraill a enwais yn gwneud eu cyfraniadau mawr.

You heard the Professor of Modern History speak of

the difficulty of choosing a subject for his inaugural lecture. My difficulty has been twofold, choosing a subject and deciding upon a medium. The syntax of consonantal mutations, I felt, did not lend itself to the occasion very happily ; and I suspect that the permutations of style of the medieval poet would almost certainly be misconstrued and cause an embarrassing titter, especially during the football season ; and I saw no reason why I should ruin my lecture before it was composed, leave alone delivered, by the associations of the word ' permutations '. It did occur to me that as I had come to my present post from an administrative position it might be something of a novelty to lecture on university administration. I went no farther with this proposal than the actual title of the address, which was to be ' The Academic Underworld ', and decided it would be best to keep the materials in store for my memoirs.

' Peasant Culture ' was chosen partly because it is one that interests me very much ; but I have a better reason for making it the subject of my inaugural lecture. I am giving to the words a meaning of my own. The word ' peasant ' brings to mind a rural setting, farm labourers tied to the land or lonely shepherds and scattered cottages, and one has a mental picture of the kitchen of the spinning wheel or quilting frame, and willow canes for basket-making and the carving of love spoons. Describing these rural crafts would be a more correct interpretation of the subject than my view of the words ' peasant ' and ' culture '. Some of my peasants may be farm labourers or shepherds, but most of them will be miners and steel and tinsplate workers, and their wives and children. If I had been brought up in Caernarvonshire my peasantry would be mainly quarrymen, but the Chair of Welsh in Swansea has been filled from the beginning by men whose background is the industrial life of Swansea Valley. And I was hoping that an examination of the cultural activity of this community during that background period would help to chart our lives and our outlook—and that the lecture would be received as a tribute to my predecessors.

I have no doubt that I am also actuated by the motive which I am in the habit of calling ' the ship on the horizon incentive '. It is one of the most powerful urges in literature to see an event or a period or a form of society or a type of character or activity as if it were slipping away into oblivion, and to take up a pen to hold back the inevitable process of time and change, by the making of a record in written words which try to give permanence to the essence of the period or society even if all else sinks over the horizon and disappears from all sight and memory. I have lived long enough to be aware of this mutability, and in any case the process of change during my lifetime has been so great, in the external aspects of the life of this community, and in its very essence, that I cannot keep down the urge to re-create the scene.

The meaning I am giving to the word ' culture ' needs explanation, for, with due apologies, I have already indicated that I have not in mind the rural crafts and amusements and sidelines of a scattered, lonely agricultural society, such as quilting and basket-weaving and folksongs and barn dances and hurling matches. Quite simply I want to inject into the words of my subject the attempts, however crude, of an industrial peasantry to acquire the cultural accomplishments and pleasures and refinements which normally belonged to higher forms of society, more civilized, more urban and urbane, more intellectual and educated, more artistic and aesthetic. Those are big words to juxtapose alongside the word ' peasantry ' and some may think that sweeping claims are to be made for this peasant community ; but I also said ' attempts ' and used the word ' crude ' ; and having applied those qualifying words, I venture to think the use of the big words like ' aesthetic ' will be justified. You will see my meaning at once if I just mention, as a foretaste and as an illustration, instances such as choirs, largely composed of miners and tinsplate workers and their wives and children, fifty years ago singing Dvorák's *Stabat Mater* in Latin, in nonconformist chapels of puritanical origin, with top-ranking singers from Carl Rosa and the London

stage as soloists. That is my theme in brief ; it is not meant to be a sweeping claim ; it is simply an historical fact.

I am not going to entangle myself in a definition of 'culture', for whatever definition one uses, one will be caught out arguing in a circle. As children we used to look up the word 'small' in the dictionary (out of sheer devilment, of course) and find that it was given as 'little' ; and then we looked up 'little' and found that its meaning was 'small'. If you do not know the meaning of 'small' there is no point in looking up a dictionary to be told it means 'little, not big'. These words must be known intuitively, and understood as self-evident and axiomatic ; and I propose to take the word 'culture' in the same way, which, surely, is not unfair in a university context. And yet I want to talk around it, in order to apply various usages and facets of its meaning to the community I am describing. It, or the things which make up our culture help to make life more bearable and interesting : stories and plays and pictures and music fill up the vacuum of the hours and days not occupied by serious pursuits, and help to remove the unbearable boredom of inaction and empty leisure hours. They take us out of ourselves into a world of fantasy and imagination ; out of the humdrum routine and dullness and meaninglessness of getting our bread-and-scrape ; into a world of design and order and beauty ; into a world of magic and wonder and heroic deeds ; out of drabness and dissonance into a world of colour and music. Monotony is exchanged, if only momentarily, for expectancy and excitement. We can use all sorts of words to describe the transformation and transfiguration—this experience of living for a while on another plane or in another world—escape, uplift, catharsis, ecstasy, 'a state of rapture', says the dictionary, 'in which the soul, liberated from the body, is engaged in the contemplation of divine things.'

The material comforts of cultivated society were little known to this community ; in fact their industrial surroundings made life more miserable and depressing than the life of the countryside which their grandfathers knew,

and their long hours in the mine and the sheetmill would if anything tend to brutalize them far more, and make them less refined. It is difficult to explain the influences which counteracted those forces and tendencies which should have made the industrial peasantry more loutish and uncouth ; but there can be no doubt at all that the cumulative effect of the religious revivals was to tame the brute force. Whatever view we may hold of revivalism and puritanism, these most decidedly acted as brakes to curb the natural tendencies. But this form of religion would never be the means and instrument of encouraging art and culture : in fact, it would discourage most manifestations of art and culture. But puritanism having tamed man, and deprived him of the care-free attitude, could not continue indefinitely to keep a strict repressive hold ; and sooner or later the puritan grip would slacken, and the natural desire for song and performance and entertainment would reassert itself ; but it would do so within the chapel context. Even after the tether has been untied, the tamed instinct does not stray but continues to graze within the range of the original tether. One could describe the emergence of our modern literature and our present culture as a result of this tug against the repressive force of over-religiousness : or in other terms, they are the result of the friction between other-worldly puritanism and the urge towards worldliness and natural expression and care-free living ; and the compromise which followed. You can explain the growth of the modern competitive eisteddfod in this way : or Daniel Owen and the growth of the Welsh novel ; or writers like W. J. Gruffydd. What I have just said about over-religiousness and repression and friction and compromise is a summary of W. J. Gruffydd's *apologia pro vita sua*. The Welsh novel has its origin and its greatest achievement in the very centre of repressive Calvinistic Methodism, and this friction provides the main theme. And when we recall the plays written fifty years ago by the first generation of Welsh playwrights, we cannot fail to see that the recurring theme is the struggle between stern

morality and religious arrogance and self-righteousness on the one hand, and 'honest doubt' and liberal outlook and human frailty and lapses on the other. The modern eisteddfod started in taverns at the end of the eighteenth century, and was an affair of the Devil and anglican clergy; the friendship of eisteddfod and chapel took a long time to evolve; but when they became firm friends and then engaged and later married, the fertilization of this cross-breeding was highly successful and the progeny produced was prodigious. Not only did the number of festivals increase enormously, the whole content and objectives of the eisteddfod came to be dominated by the chapel. The eisteddfod started as an organization to stimulate interest in Welsh poetry; but this feeble little plant grew into a jungle of choirs and anthems and choruses from oratorios. And the annual performance of an oratorio in the nonconformist chapel was, as it were, the legalized permitted entertainment of a puritan community, emerging from a long period of extreme repression. The fling and tumult of the oratorio and the release of energy are exactly like the egress of the children of a primary school let loose into the school playground after a morning's discipline and good behaviour.

I am anticipating a bit for I was tempted to wander off after this explanatory theme. I was encircling the word 'culture'; and although I am avoiding a precise definition and relying instead on the assumption that it is axiomatic, I do want to stress the literal meaning of the root of the word culture and the root of the Welsh equivalent *diwylliant*. One does not need any special instruction to go at once to the original meaning, of cultivating land; but to make full use of the underlying metaphor, think of all the processes involved: clearing away the tangle of forest, removing the stones that blunt the ploughshare; the straight, disciplined furrows, the seed, the crop, the harvest. It may be too much like a parable, but it makes a parallel to the civilizing and educative processes of organized community life and social intercourse and music and literature, and everything covered by the word

'culture'. The Welsh equivalent *diwylliant* hits you like a neon light advertisement; for its root is the word *gwyll*, a variant of *gwyllt*, meaning 'wild', and *diwyllio'r tir* literally means 'to unwild the land', and used metaphorically, 'to unbarbarize man', or to de-lout him. (I have been lent copies of programmes of the week-night activities of a nonconformist chapel over fifty years ago: the covers and title-pages are bilingual: the society is called 'Diwylliadol' or 'Cultural' in Welsh; in English it is called 'Mutual Improvement Society'.)

I told myself before I set down a single sentence of this lecture that I was not on any account to moralize, and I was to guard against idealizing the peasantry and the cultural activity of the period I had in mind. I do not wish to make extravagant claims about its achievements, but I think we must be fair to this community and this period. All I wish to do is to describe this peasant culture, but if one is going to be critical and to apply standards of evaluation, it is just silly and priggish to compare the achievements of Salem Bon-y-maen and the Edinburgh Festival, or Ystradgynlais Operatic and Sadler's Wells. If one is to use measurements at all, one should measure the distance between Spohr's *Last Judgement* and Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* in Latin and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*—between these and leaning on a gate and whippets and Sunday papers and pools. To be fair to it, you cannot expect this peasantry to be original, to make an original contribution and have original ideas, i.e. ideas of its own. It is a class that must be led or given a lead or an example to follow; and it should be judged by the example it has chosen to follow; and here I come back to my underlying theme, that under the title of 'peasant culture' I am trying to describe the attempts of a peasant community, whose misfortune it had been for two centuries to lose its natural leadership, to produce new leaders from its own ranks, and to participate in the culture and education and entertainments and artistic expression of higher forms of society and more complex and developed forms of civilized living.

It will remove any sense of superiority we may have, and help us to understand this earlier period a little better if we remind ourselves that if it were not for the fairly modern system of secondary and higher education, most of us would by nature be members of this peasantry. This is far from being a sneer ; it is a piece of logic. The mechanism of our modern educational system discovers our talents, classifies them, puts them on a conveyor belt, screens them, transports them and processes and labels them, and we find ourselves educated and cultured—all of us possessing great powers of leadership. These talents and innate powers exist independently of our external educational system, and these abilities and potentialities which we in varying degrees have manifested were possessed by our grandparents ; and to a very great extent we can explain the development of this peasant culture as the gropings and fumbings of these abilities to assert themselves and come out into the open ; and get some kind of prominence and recognition. The present Vice-Chancellor and I were both marvelling in a discussion we once had, that ordinary people in the nineteenth century would flock in hundreds to a preaching festival and sit listening intently to a two-hour sermon composed of abstract and abstruse theological argument. We did not cease to marvel but it became somehow credible when we were able to create parallels. The core of that congregation absorbed in the lengthy theological exposition contained potential vice-chancellors and university professors and administrators, and in any case these people were listening to something that was not only interesting to them but of profound importance affecting their hopes of eternal salvation. Their descendants are able to listen with interest and intelligence to abstract and abstruse lectures on physics and semantics. This is just another way of saying that no matter how much better educated we are than our grandparents, they were not less intelligent ; or put positively, they had as much intelligence as we have in our generation ; and one could easily go on and on giving endless proofs of this self-evident truth,

and illustrations of these latent intelligences, fumbling and groping in the period of underdevelopment.

On the other hand it would be wrong to say that our great grandparents and grandparents had more intelligence. They had a different conditioning and they had different ideals : they attached more importance to weightiness and to oratory and to individual striving and self-improvement ; but when I come to describe their accomplishments as versifiers and choristers, I don't wish to suggest that everybody knew the twenty-four strict metres and could conjure up an ode in an evening, or that every chapelgoer knew Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* off by heart. 'One cannot produce statistics and one can only describe this by means of metaphor such as ' ferment ' and ' effervescence '. Alongside the announcements of oratorios and lectures in the local newspapers of fifty years ago, there were also announcements of boxing matches or ' Glove contests ', as they were politely called. I will try to convey what I have in mind by means of a preacherly illustration. The thermometer has a long series of degrees marked on it, but the difference between normal temperature and the high temperature of a fever is just a matter of a few degrees ; and the variation from one period to another is a matter of a few degrees ; but these few makes a difference and can actually colour and characterize a period.

Within the space of a lecture I can only give a few samples and illustrations of this cultural ferment and of the improving processes. I will first touch upon the growth during the nineteenth century of the tradition of versification. We are familiar today with the idea of protecting birds and especially the idea of ensuring that a species which has become rare should not become completely extinct ; and we have heard of examples of a species which had dwindled almost to the point of disappearing being saved, and then protected in such a way that the birds had multiplied and the species become safely re-established. That illustrates what happened to traditional Welsh poetry at the end of the eighteenth century and early

nineteenth century. The system of metrics and alliteration which had been developed and codified during the medieval period by a highly skilled professional order of poets got very near to the point of complete extinction, and the literary societies that were established in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were in a way societies for the protection of this rare and beautifully plumed bird of traditional Welsh poetry. The competitive eisteddfod became the main implement of this protection ; that is, prizes were given for the best odes written in this highly intricate and rabbinically codified style of versification. To remind ourselves again of the underlying theme : here was a complex system of poetry which had been the preserve and secret of the professional bard, which required a very long period of apprenticeship to become proficient and eligible to practise ; which had been used almost exclusively to bring a flush of pleasure to the faces of princes and lords and ladies, being put into the hands of amateurs and eventually into the hands of literate peasants. This complexity of poetry could not have been produced except within the bounds of a princely court, for it requires the sort of concentration of resources which you see in the shape of a pyramid, where you have a whole structure built in order to reach a point at the top. I have tried by these means to convey the exclusiveness of this style of poetry, the high degree of skill and ornamentation involved. It requires books of hundreds of pages today to set out this intricate prosody and style ; but no one can be proficient by memorizing all the rules of the game. To make poetry, assuming that one has the knack and knowledge of the rules, one has to read the classics and study the models, to get the idiom, the right touch, the tricks of the trade. And as a result of the eisteddfod and the publication of texts and primers, and the popularization of literary societies this aristocratic poetry became the accomplishment and plaything of shepherds and quarrymen and coalminers. When Billingsley made Nantgarw china he used a type of clay which was much too delicate to stand the heat of the kiln, with the result

that he had a very high percentage of failures and rejects ; but some articles survived. I would be prepared to say that the percentage of rejects out of the sum total of traditional poetry manufactured by the nineteenth century in the strict metres was higher than Billingsley's percentage ; but some of it came off. But I don't think it right to estimate the value of all this activity by the smallish number of specimens that would get admitted into an anthology. This activity should be looked upon as a manifestation of skill and as mastery over a difficult medium, and we should think not of the thin anthology but of the enormous satisfaction which successful completion of a task gave ; in other words, think of the ' kick ' they got out of it. When young coal-miners in Cwmllynfell chalked *englymion* on the sides of coal-trams they had no thought of anthologies : to them, it was like solving a mathematical problem.

The eighteenth century bequeathed another kind of verse-making to the nineteenth century, the hymns of the religious revival and other kinds of religious and moral poetry of the hymn writers. Some of the early hymn writers were of a peasant character and the hymns they wrote have an unmistakable colloquial familiar style, and, although it may appear pernickety, I have to admit to a feeling that our religious poetry is much too facile, almost to the point of being slapdash. The colloquial character of the early hymn writers and this facile style gave rise to a notion that anybody could write verses in Welsh, and this really had a bad effect for far too many people ' had a go ' and managed to turn out verses that fitted hymn tunes. The rivalry of denominations played no small part in prodding people into a state of authorship and publication.

And then there is another motive of very deep significance. Within the bounds of the Welsh language, and in the Wales of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the only means of demonstrating that one had abilities that were out of the ordinary run, and of proving that one had a little education and a claim to some amount

of culture, was to adopt a bardic name and write poetry and compete ; or put in another way, if one had acquired literacy and education, the only use one could make of them was by writing Welsh poetry. There was perhaps another form of expression, namely preaching, and at this distance away, it is safe to say that in vast numbers of cases, the decision to enter the ministry was largely motivated by a desire for higher education, for it took one from the farm or coalmine or slate quarry to the preparatory school and the denominational academy and later to the university. What I am trying to prove is that when it became possible to receive a higher education without having to enter the ministry as a condition, the call became much fainter, almost to a point of inaudibility ; and in the same way, when other manifestations became available for one's abilities and one's claim to be cultured and educated, it was not so necessary to adopt a bardic title and write poetry. These two things went together in very many cases, entering the ministry and becoming a poet, and until he was overshadowed by the professor-poet, the preacher-poet was the outstanding figure of the literary scene in Wales. These motives have gone a long way, I hope, towards explaining why Wales in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had such an enormous number of people who called themselves poets and had bardic titles, out of all proportion to the total population. But I must now bring in the most important reason, the external stimulus of the eisteddfodic competitions. The eisteddfod in course of time came to be mainly a musical affair, but the literary competitions were retained in most. There would be a chief poetry competition for which the chair would be awarded or a crown, and a few more competitions for shorter poems in the strict and in the free metres. In the first decade of this century the eisteddfod had become so widely and firmly established, there must have been hundreds and hundreds of them held during the course of a year, quite apart from the very small things we derisively called 'penny-readings'. As there would be dozens of entrants in each competition in these

several hundreds of eisteddfodau, the mind simply boggles, and gives up the attempt of counting the total tonnage of bardic output. There were several poets who had won thirty or forty chairs ; and there was one who won well over a hundred. One could go on and on to describe the national and local newspapers, the denominational magazines and the literary journals that used to be filled with verses, like city streets during a traffic jam—poems bumper to bumper for miles.

I cannot attempt to evaluate this overproduction of verse and rime ; but I am not going to dismiss it either. No matter how much a newer age may sneer at them, these men had an enormous 'kick' out of their versemaking. What is far more important to us is this : there was no educational system nurturing and sustaining the Welsh language, but it was this host of versifiers who became the educated public who bought Welsh books and took in the literary journals ; they were versifiers on their own account, but they were also the consumer public of Welsh literature and, believe me, we are now sorely missing these people who dabbled in verse.

In any extended treatment of this subject a great deal of time and space should deservedly be given to the chapel, to its religious services and its social functions. It would not be the object of that analysis to deal with the spiritual aspects, the saving of souls or the interpretation of the word of God ; but to consider the chapel as a centre of social life, and its religious services and other meetings as cultural influences. The word 'entertainment' may be ill-chosen and offensive when speaking of the great figures of the pulpit, but I am going to risk the word 'performers'. With so much talent going into the ministry, and with so much value being placed on the sermon and on oratory, and with such competition between denominations, there were bound to be wonderful performances in the pulpit, ranging from the highly dramatic and emotional to the comic and waggish, and we in this age of debris have been left with a collection of anecdotes and impressions and recollections of how

they got their effects. There were superb storytellers amongst them and when you are told on good authority that a whole congregation would involuntarily turn their gaze to look through the window expecting to see the lots sheep in the brambles outside, you have some idea of the power of the storyteller and how electrified the atmosphere must have been. There were others who kept their congregations in a constant titter, and a few like Dafydd Ifans, Ffynnon Henry, who made their congregations scream with laughter. We need not be too solemn about it : all this was entertainment within a religious context. When I have listened to sermons reproduced in order to give an impression of the style of the older preachers I have in all seriousness felt the shivers, awe-inspiring shivers. A study of the sermon as performance and composition and technique would demonstrate a parallel that our great-grandparents, although on a much smaller scale, got the entertainment and aesthetic pleasures which their descendants get deluged upon them today—excitement, sentiment, thrills and laughs, hair-raising drama, acting, storytelling, parable, illustration, which took them out of themselves and away from the ordinariness of their bread-and-scrape lives and the shabbiness of their surroundings, to exist for a while in a supernatural world. Let us apply simple logic. Our grandparents did not flock to chapels for soul-saving motives only ; and they would not go in hundreds to listen to bores ; the crowds quite naturally sought out the great performers.

In this scamper over chapel activities and influences it would be a pity not to mention two other aspects, quite briefly. Because of our peculiar history and the absence of a Welsh educational system (that is, education teaching Welsh as a subject, leave alone using Welsh as a medium of instruction) the religious service in the lives and experience of the great majority was the only occasion where they heard Welsh used in an educated and polished manner. Although it can never be measured statistically, this had an enormous influence. It brought about a

respect for the language. It was not a mere *patois* spoken by the rabble but a language that had dignity and distinction in form and content. This gave the language tremendous prestige, and I am quite convinced that this prestige has done more than anything else during the crisis period in its history to protect the language. Prestige is like cement ; it is the thing that prevents crumbling.

Because of the nature of the services and the democratic character of church government, a goodly number of the rank and file were forced or cajoled to take part and to take office ; and this meant being secretary or treasurer or delegates to conferences or quarterly meetings ; it meant public speaking in a small way and acquiring some kind of gumption in public affairs. And these obligations and opportunities would be greatly increased with the growth of the secular institutions and functions of the chapel—the eisteddfod, the concert, the Mutual Improvement Society ; the dramatic society. There was no doubt a good deal of clumsiness in all this, but there had to be a chrysalis stage. There is a one-act Welsh play, *The Committee*, by D. T. Davies which brings this out wonderfully : the struggle, almost amounting to strangulation, to put on a starched collar on a week-night to attend a meeting to arrange the eisteddfod programme, is a comic symbol of what was happening also to the coalminer's colloquial Welsh and to his status and behaviour.

A look at a few numbers of the local newspapers of fifty years ago and seeing evidence of the social and cultural life of church and chapel and certain secular institutions such as the I.L.P. and the Plebs League, or the amateur operatic and dramatic societies, make one feel that an ant-heap has been disturbed—debates, lectures, papers, performances, evening classes arranged by the local education authorities, or courses of lectures, as in Pontardawe, by the University of Oxford Extension Board. There was an epidemic of concerts and a contagion of eisteddfodau. A writer wishing to compose a whimsical essay or a scrapbook programme would positively pounce on the long lists of names that appeared regularly under

the headline 'Musical Successes', which gave the results of examinations in all sorts of grades held by the examining boards of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music, the London College of Music, Trinity, Victoria, &c. This was the age of the certificate and of putting letters after your name. The corollaries of these would be the advertisements of private music teachers, that they had vacancies for pupils wishing to be prepared for these examinations, and were available to be engaged as adjudicators and conductors of singing festivals. And then the size and frequency of the advertisements of three or four shops in Swansea for the sale of pianos. It is obvious that pianos were selling well; in our present-day jargon, the piano was the status symbol of the period, the front-room of the miner's home taking on some semblance of the middle-class drawing-room. Whether we in our clever way call it a status symbol or just simply a piano, it was the means of providing lots of children with a musical education and turning them into eisteddfod competitors and accompanists and organists.

The words 'epidemic', 'contagion' a moment ago were quite deliberately chosen. You will find all sorts of examples of an idea or an institution spreading from place to place, due sometimes to chapel rivalry, but generally because the thing was in the air. 'A number of local gentlemen feel that it is high time to organise an eisteddfod on a large scale at Seven Sisters. They argue that if it can be done successfully at Colbren, Abercrave, Rhiwfawr and Cwmtwrch, it can be done at Seven Sisters'—that comes from the *Llais Llafur* of 18 May 1912. On 27 January it reported that a new organ was now installed in Carmel Chapel, Gwauncaegurwen; that a new organ was being installed at Tabernacle, Cwmgors (a few yards away), and that Siloh C. M. have also 'determined to go in for a new organ'. You can read in the local press in January 1912 that Llanelly Amateur Operatic Society were doing the *Mikado*. The Swansea Society had decided to give Gilbert and Sullivan a rest and were doing *Merrie England*; and at a meeting in Neath it had been decided

to form a society; there were already fifty members and they were likely to put on Gilbert and Sullivan. Then if one followed this idea up one would find that before long there was an operatic society in Clydach (which apart from Parry's *Blodwen*, did things like *Samson and Delilah*); a society at Pontardawe which did Gilbert and Sullivan annually; and a society at Ystradgynlais which cutlived them all. The Ystradgynlais Choral Union did *Maritana* in January 1919; *Bohemian Girl* in the autumn; and in between did Handel's *Messiah* in the spring. This society went on later to do *Faust*, *Carmen*, *Il Trovatore*, *La Traviata*, *Aida*, *Rigoletto*, *Pagliacci*, and *Cavalleria Rusticana*; and it will add a dimension to one's appraisal of all this as an undertaking if I give just a few names from the list of singers engaged for the principal parts—Joan Hammond, Eva Turner, Kathleen Ferrier, Victoria Elliott.

You may get the impression from burlesque programmes and parodies that the local eisteddfod was a very piffling affair and that the officials and adjudicators and competitors were half-wits and troglodytes. We are not touchy about it, but the outsider should be warned that the burlesques, done in imitation Dylan Thomas style, are quite phoney, and are just cashing in on the English reader or listener's ignorance and gullibility. There were aspects of comedy, of course, easily parodied; lots of them were small and local and sub-standard; somehow, the eisteddfod movement was like a field of mushrooms, with most of the eisteddfodau like shy little buttons not worth the picking, but here and there some large expanses would come into the open. Where there were very big chapels or public halls or huge marquees you could hold the eisteddfod which sometimes arrogated to itself the strange epithet 'semi-national'. The adjudicators in these would in our idiom be men of professorial status. I noted three eisteddfodau around Swansea in the spring of 1912, Swansea Cymrodorion, Pontardawe, and Rhiwfawr, which gave a £30 prize for the chief choral competition. Carmel Abercrave offered £30 to the male choirs and only £10 to the mixed choirs.

Pontardawe in June 1913 went up to £40, when the test pieces were from Elgar and Gwilym Gwent. But the eisteddfod in Llandyssul on 7 August 1912 had a prize of £80 for the chief choral, £40 for the male voice, and £15 for the ladies' choir. And the two music adjudicators were Coleridge Taylor and Dr. Vaughan Thomas. We can poke fun at these and earn a few guineas on the radio, but these were not 'penny-readings' to say the least : and some of the soloists who won in these eisteddfodau were before long studying in the Royal Academy or singing with the Carl Rosa Company. We may have other means now of discovering talent and a scholarship system to send young singers of promise to the Academy ; but fifty years ago the eisteddfod was the talent-spotting device, even if it worked as a by-product. And although Handel and Mendelssohn and Joseph Parry provided the staple diet of the soloists of the beta and gamma classes, those who moved up into the alpha category got their champion solos from Verdi, Donizetti, Weber, or Schubert. At this point I am able to put in a footnote, for after writing this portion I managed to get copies of programmes of the Tabernacle Murrison eisteddfodau for the years 1906 and 1913. It is only fair to say that this eisteddfod was really high-water mark in the Swansea area, more especially on the musical side—in fact, it was not too strong on the literary side. The 1913 Eisteddfod took up three days, 25, 26, 27 December, with the annual oratorio concert on the night of the 26th, which happened to be Mendelssohn's *St. Paul*. There were two classes of competition for soloists, and in the top class there were two set pieces, one a Welsh air and the other a more extended song : the soprano was from a Mozart opera ; the contralto was Gounod ; the tenor was Puccini ; the baritone Coleridge Taylor.

Now that the local eisteddfod has gone into decline, we find it really difficult to understand the extraordinary vogue it enjoyed forty or fifty years ago. They were so normal ; they simply appeared out of the ground like indigenous plants : an eisteddfod was liable to spring up

anywhere—in completely English-speaking areas, like Reynoldston in Gower ; or as part of the activities of an I.L.P. branch, or in Chicago. No wonder it used to be said that wherever a few Welshmen got together, even if it were in a camp for prisoners of war or in the depths of hell, there were three things they could form at once—a rugby team, a male voice party, and an eisteddfod committee. There is, in fact, a genre of Welsh short stories which have their setting in the eisteddfod and rely for effect on the acquaintance of the Welsh reader with the atmosphere and idiom, of the eisteddfod—the gusto and rivalry, the bad luck, the injustice, and words like *Worthy* and *We never* were normal Welsh.

It is said that the first performance of an oratorio in Wales was given by a choir conducted by Rosser Beynon in the mining valleys of Monmouthshire round about 1850, and you have all guessed aright which oratorio it was. The researches of a Ph.D. candidate will some day trace the progress of the movement westwards, probably slowed down not only by puritanical prejudice but far more by the absence of musical education. A factor of enormous importance, when the movement did get momentum, was the part played by the *sol-fa* notation. Although it is no intention of mine to trace the progress, it will help us to get our bearings if I give a few dates ; and the point of these is to show how erratic the movement was : in the same town or village, some chapels were much later than others starting the oratorio tradition, and some did not start at all. In January 1912 the Tabernacle Llanelly which was doing *Elijah* was said to have given ' an oratorio concert with unfailing regularity for the last thirty-three years '. Moriah Choir in the same town, doing *Acis and Galatea*, was giving its fifth annual oratorio. New Siloh Landore, which was doing Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* in March 1912, was giving its twentyfourth annual concert ; other chapel choirs in the same area were in that year giving their second annual concert. There is one reference that can on no account be omitted : the posters say that this year's oratorio in the Tabernacle

Morryston is the 85th annual concert. It will only be fair to say of a large number of churches, that they did not have sufficient members and therefore a big enough choir to tackle an oratorio. These would take on a sacred cantata, and of these there would be literally dozens and dozens in a year in and around Swansea, not to mention operettas or 'selections from oratorios'.

This was the period when Handel became a naturalized Welshman; 'Handel' has become one of the popular Christian names of Wales, and it was as natural to convert Handel and Haydn into Christian names as the names of native Welsh poets and preachers, like Elfed and Alun and Ceiriog. Some of you may remember the events of a particular rugby season about twelve years ago, when Haydn Tanner was unfit to play for Wales in the first match against England, and was replaced by Handel Greville of Llanelly. Greville played a very good game and Wales won; and despite the dictum that you should not change a winning side, here was the exception to the rule and Tanner was brought back to the side to play Scotland. The rugby writer of the *Sunday Times*, D. R. Gent, put it very neatly, that this was the only context in which Wales preferred Haydn to Handel.

It will be best to give an idea of the extent of this musical activity by going along two lines or dimensions—horizontally and vertically. Here briefly on the horizontal line are the oratorios which were being done in the Swansea area during January, February, and March 1912—there were many places which did not advertise in the press; and some would, no doubt, be giving their concerts in November and December; and in any case I omit everything which is less than an oratorio:

Capel y Cwm, Bon-y-maen: Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*—said to be the first performance in the Swansea district; Siloam, Pentre Estyll: Haydn's *Creation*; Cwmbwrla: Sullivan's *Prodigal Son*; Swansea Church Choral Society: Elgar's *King Olaf*; Caersalem Newydd, Treboeth: Mendelssohn's *St. Paul*; New Siloh, Landore: Dvorak's *Stabat Mater*; Mynyddbach: *Paradise*; Soar,

Pontardawe: *Messiah*; Tabernacle, Pontardawe: *Creation*; Sardis, Ystradgynlais: *Messiah*; Hermon Harmonic Society, Brynamman: Spohr's *Last Judgement* (and I could add in brackets that Tabernacle, Ystradgynlais, did Spohr in November). I have not gone outside the area: but the same kind of figures and records could be produced for areas like the Rhymney Valley, Merthyr and Dowlais, the Rhondda Valleys, Ammanford, Pontardulais, Llanelly.

This list, far from exhausting the whole area and the whole year, is sufficient to show that the Handelian grip was being loosened. Bach has only just arrived; but then Bach was what we would now call 'a late developer'. Brahms's *Requiem* and Verdi's *Requiem* would take some time to break through because of the papist undertones of the word 'requiem'; and works which had 'mass' in the title would remain in quarantine somewhat longer; but the Ladies' Choral Society of Pantêg Ystalyfera, 'a choir of 160 voices', did Mozart's *Twelfth Mass* in 1919. For the solo parts most of these local choirs would see to it that at least two of the four were top-ranking singers like Ben Davies, Norman Allin, Joseph Farrington, and in some cases all four were of this quality.

By a vertical line or dimension I mean a sequence of concerts produced by the same chapel; and as I could produce an almost complete list of the annual concerts of the Tabernacle Morryston, and yet do not wish to weary you with a list of names and dates, I find it difficult to compress. Take for granted that from 1890 to 1913 when Penfro Rowlands was conductor they did the usual Handel works, and Mendelssohn's and Haydn's: they did Elgar's *Banner of St. George*, Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* in Latin; *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* and *The Death of Minnehaha*, and on one of these occasions, in 1903, Coleridge Taylor himself was the guest conductor. I do not wish this vertical dimension to be understood as a mere record of a sequence of concerts, but as the enriching experience of a large number of people for twenty or twenty-five years or more. Not professionals, but

amateurs, raw amateurs relying on sol-fa ; not in a capital city, but in an industrial village, thinking it a duty and a pleasure (I am sure there was a sense of duty involved in it) to attend weekly rehearsals year after year, and during an average span of vocal lifetime learning fifteen or twenty or more full-length oratorios. I was told the other day by a member of this Morryston chapel—I think he is present this evening—that he joined the choir in 1899, and sang in every one from then on, i.e. most of those just mentioned during the period of Penfro Rowlands's conductorship, and for a further forty-two years or forty-two concerts under his successor. One needs a novelist, of course, to convey this experience and to catch the thrill—the floundering of the early rehearsals, the setbacks, the bad temper, the sudden turn like recovering from an illness, and then the bustle and inevitable *contre-temps* of the final preparations and the numinous glow of the big night.

In my notes I have a complete record of the period 1919 to 1962 and it is simply staggering. Handel's *Messiah* has become a stop-gap now, for it was done in 1942, 1945, 1946 ; with *Elijah* in 1943 as a variation. And somehow they managed to do Verdi's *Requiem* in 1944. I should miss the point I have been trying to make if I gave you a long list of oratorios and names of distinguished singers as if to impress you : my theme from the beginning has been the effort of a peasantry, more particularly an industrial peasantry, to taste the culture of more developed social classes, and to eat from the dishes and sip from the goblets at tables laid for the jewelled and the braided. Think of the area which falls within the places I have mentioned—Capel y Cwm, Bon-y-maen ; Siloam, Pentre Estyll ; Caersalem Newydd, Treboeth ; New Siloh, Landore ; Tabernacle, Morryston : that is the area which is the subject of this College's special project, an acreage of scab, a leprous expanse left by the exhausted industries of the last hundred years, which looks like the curse of some evil power : I want to avoid sentimentality and false lyricism and I am not going to make clever con-

trasts between the desert and the cultural oases ; but when considered in cold blood or removed from the context, it is really unbelievable what frightful conditions men are prepared to put up with and to work in, oblivious of the frightfulness or taking it all for granted. But there is somehow a subtle correlation between the living conditions which this industrial wasteland implies and the kind of cultural activity which is represented by the chapel choir and the oratorio. It is not as straightforward as cause-and-effect or challenge-and-response ; it may be the fallacy of *post hoc propter hoc* but we feel deep down inside us that this cultural effervescence of the eisteddfod and the oratorio is a by-product of industrialism and its increased tempo or of the fusion of industrialism and religious enthusiasm and fling or abandon and mutual improvement.

The critics have given the late nineteenth century a terrible lambasting, and those characteristic growths which survived into the twentieth and have come within the survey of this lecture. That is not unnatural for each generation turns fierce critic of its immediate predecessor. In the study of Welsh literature we have made an extraordinary effort in the last thirty years in our attempt to interpret medieval poetry to rid our minds of our modern prejudices, to offset our own conditioning and indoctrination, and we believe that we have become better interpreters as a result of this ; we say to ourselves that it is not right or reasonable to judge a medieval work by using modern criteria and values. But why shouldn't we do the same when judging any period or community from which we differ : why not be as fair to nineteenth-century puritanism as we try to be to the medieval outlook ? It is a commonplace that every age feels impelled to turn harsh critic of the previous generation and to be much more sympathetic towards the grandparent's generation, which seems to mean—and this is a very comforting thought—that the effects of the first violent reaction are put right by the mere effluxion of time. Anyhow, the great danger and fallacy of our generation

would be to speak well of the previous generation only for preparing the way for our appearance. Why not give them retrospectively the right to live their own lives ?

POSTSCRIPT

As the lecture is being reprinted, I have been asked whether, after a lapse of years, I wish to add "further thoughts" to the text of the inaugural lecture.* Needless to say, I have a good deal more to say about the subject, but it would be wrong to go and rewrite the original lecture, and my "further thoughts" must be just a summary of certain conclusions—with mention of certain questions which I leave unanswered for the time being.

My recurring theme is the transformation, during the nineteenth century, especially in the latter part, in the lives of the under-privileged peasantry, or the working class of the industrialised context, the forces and means which changed the quality of their lives, gave them a cultural awareness, a desire to achieve something worthwhile, to improve their lot, to participate in the higher things of life, to play some part in 'leadership', and qualify to belong to a class of upper-peasantry, as it were.

*Those able to read Welsh may wish to know of the publication in 1972 of my book *Diwylliant Gwerin ac Ysgrifau Eraill* (Gwasg Gomer, Llandysul), 'Peasant Culture and other Essays'. Although an extended essay of considerable length, the essay of the title is still only an assembly of ideas connected with the subject which I hope to develop with further researches. A second essay deals at some length with a group of local poets in the Swansea and Amman Valleys which I use to exemplify the literary ferment of the period 1880-1920 in the lives of the cultural class of the eisteddfod competitor. A third essay on 'Gwenallt's Background' describes the Swansea Valley of the years 1910-1914,—chapel and steelworks, *eisteddfod* and strikes, oratorio and I.L.P., lecture given by Sir Edward Anwyl and address (on a Sunday afternoon) given by Keir Hardie. The other essays are on literary subjects not connected with the main subject. The *Glamorgan Historian* IX, 1973, pp. 105-122, has in it the paper read to a section of the British Association in September 1971, 'Peasant Culture of the Swansea Valley'.

This transforming process needs to be examined with two different focuses, the focus for viewing the change in the life of individual persons of unusual gifts, and the other focus for viewing the change which affects the life of the social class as a whole.

The lives of individuals of innate talent were changed in very many instances because nonconformity, or better still, the popularity of religion and the vogue of preaching encouraged young men to acquire the style of public utterance, and provided them with the means to equip themselves to be preachers and ministers. The Welsh for "prep. school" is a well-established idiom of the nineteenth century; but it connotes something very different in Welsh, for it means the privately-run school to which young men of twenty or twenty-five went, from coalmine and quarry, to receive, hurriedly, the education necessary to start preaching and to move on belatedly to theological college and to the university and to their ultimate destiny as ministers. One does not really need detailed research (for it is so well-known) to understand how the Welsh 'prep.' schools proliferated in order to meet the needs of the various denominations and provide for very large numbers of young men who felt the urge to be educated and to be ministers—and to be poets, as well, with bardic names.

The bardic name alone was sufficient in the eisteddfodic context, e.g. Crwys, Gwili, Dyfnallt; it would be the "middle" name in the ministerial context, W. Crwys Williams, J. Gwili Jenkins, J. Dyfnallt Owen. This is not poking fun at the use of a pretentious middle or bardic name: the adoption of the name stands for the transformation which converted William Williams into W. Crwys Williams, John Jenkins into J. Gwili Jenkins, John Owen into J. Dyfnallt Owen. And I am not getting my point across unless my audience and readers see the apprentice shoemaker becoming a great lyric poet, and the tinplate worker becoming a poet and New Testament scholar, and the young miner becoming a very distin-

guished preacher and influential editor of his denominational paper. (I have, by the way, chosen three examples of men who succeeded each other as archdruids, but that was not my intention.)

The bulk of the great output of "prep. school" and denominational academy became ministers and remained ministers; the practice of poetry and competing for chairs and crowns gave the preacher an added dimension. We are all aware of the leading part taken by the poet-preacher in the literary activity of this period. What needs emphasising is the part played by so many in what is called "public life," in the committee work of councils or in the running of denominational machinery, or in publishing and journalism. And the minister, because of his education and his prestige, played a leading part at a more local level, for instance, on school boards, or as chairman of a local eisteddfod organisation. "The reverend alderman" could be added to "poet-preacher" to illustrate the vocabulary of the period.

There is something of still greater importance to be said about the influence of the minister class. The minister may have been a ploughman or miner or slate quarry worker: his own sons are not going to be ploughmen or miners or slate quarry workers. They are going to college and to enter the professions, without the handicap which the father had, or the financial struggle to get by and just make it. Some will become ministers like their father, but here again it does not require research to show the numbers who entered the professions, especially law and medicine and public administration. The children of the manse were given not only a good start, but an attitude as well, which somehow led to promotion and captaincy in whatever profession they might be. In the paper referred to in the footnote I took Thomas Jones and Thomas Levi as my examples, both ministers in Morryston in the 18 sixties: Thomas Jones, apprentice weaver, then miner, with the minimum of academic training, came to be a very great preacher: two of his sons entered Parliament (David Brynmor Jones,

and Lief Jones who became Lord Rhayader), but his most distinguished son was Viriamu Jones, F.R.S., first principal of University College, Cardiff, and first Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wales. Thomas Levi, to name one thing only, is famous as founder and editor of a children's religious magazine: his son became professor of Law in Aberystwyth. Dozens and dozens of examples could be used, as variations on the theme of "the son of the manse." I have no command of the sociologist's jargon and I have to make this important point in simple language, that the minister and his son set an example which others might follow.

Something comparable could be said about the way the unusual musical talent, especially vocal talent, was brought up to a professional level. One need not go over the same ground again to show how the eisteddfod acted as a forcing-house or pit; but what does require stating is that there was a stage of attainment beyond success in the eisteddfod, the stage of becoming professional, full-time or part-time. Winning the "National" as a singer gave one the prestige which led to engagements (that is *paid* engagements) to sing as soloist in oratorios or, "celebrity concerts." Many of these "national winners" were content to get to the status of part-time professional, receiving 'engagements' within Wales or a more confined part of Wales. But some of these unusual talents of voice and intelligence and character were propelled by their success in the "National" to reach a higher plane, and went for training to the Royal Academy or some other College of Music: they were the ones who became full-time professionals and naturally their fame and 'engagements' extended far beyond Wales and not a few became world-famous. To see how professional these singers became one should go through back-numbers of *Y Cerddor*, the musicians' magazine, to read the pages of advertisements which these singers inserted regularly, and even if there were no other evidence one would conclude that the business of making music must have been very, very flourishing; it was obviously a seller's market. One is

afraid—I am, most certainly—to make any sort of claim that ‘we are a musical nation’: in fact, I reject the idea that we are innately musical. What appears to be a characteristic can be explained historically—hymn-singing festivals, tonic-solfa, eisteddfod competition for choirs and soloists, and over and above all this, the enormous prestige of becoming a great singer.

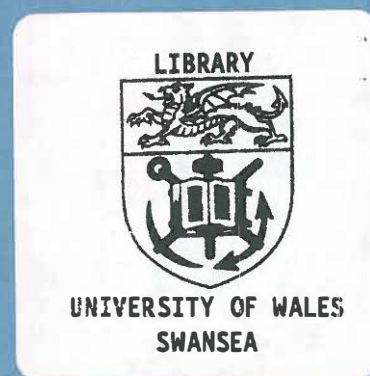
Having moved over to speak of music, I want here to mention two things which did not receive enough attention in the lecture. One is the evidence, quite early on, at the end of the eighteenth century and first quarter of the nineteenth, concerning peripatetic teachers of music going around on their own account to hold classes of musical instruction. One draws attention to the point of the words ‘on their own account’, because this sort of arrangement in our time comes from an official body or establishment, the section of the education department responsible for evening classes or the extra-mural department of a university. Back in the early eighteen-hundreds, how else could a class of this sort be held except by means of the teacher’s own initiative; and it is consistent with the pattern of things in the nineteenth century, the pattern of doing things ‘on their own account’; there could be no better example than the small privately run “prep. schools” of Welsh nonconformity. The question which fascinates one, and to which I would like to get the answer, is how on earth did the peripatetic music teacher manage to organise his classes. How did he get publicity? Where were they held? The idea of the peripatetic teacher and the circulating school is not unfamiliar to us; and it is not too difficult to understand how these could be *organised*, in spite of prejudice; but although the circulating school provides a sort of precedent, it is not easy to explain the music classes when one thinks of motivation, and what is required as a matter of organisation.

It is not difficult to understand how the music classes of the second half of the nineteenth century were held, for by this time the means of organisation had come into

being, the press for publicity and chapel “announcements” and plenty of chapels and chapel vestries as class-rooms, and “converts” to tonic-solfa who became veritable solfa evangelists, so enthusiastic were they to teach the new system. I am not using these words lightly, merely for effect. The new system was run by a “college” which arranged classes and the examination of candidates; but one should read reports of activities at local level to realise how much organisation was put into the propagation of Tonic Solfa; in fact, one is struck by its similarity to the organisation of a religious denomination, like that of the Presbyterian Church of Wales. And when the new “fellows,” the men allowed to put F.T.S.C. after their name, went around the land to hold the initial meetings which led to regular classes, they went with the dedication of missionaries. The enthusiasm of the movement can best be understood from the words (in Welsh) used by D. W. Lewis of Brynaman, the first man to be awarded the title of “Fellow,”—‘it spread like wild-fire’; and the extent to which it caught on in Wales (and in this way became the scaffolding of the choral tradition of oratorio and eisteddfod choral work) can be judged by the statistics of the examination results: these show year after year that the majority of the successful candidates in the several grades were from Wales.

I cannot include all my “further thoughts” but because of its importance I must make one “insertion,” to be read at the point where I imply that chapel membership had a refining influence, which was so important bearing in mind how degrading living conditions were in the industrial valleys. The influence of chapel membership was greatly helped by the temperance movement, in the process of “elevating the peasantry”—words taken from a hymn—the process of making men “respectable” in a good sense, teaching them not to squander, but to save; and to think of buying their own houses, and providing for the children’s education. The temperance movement had its organisation, and affected working class society, or the quality of life of that society, in a way which words

like 'total abstinence' fail to convey. Rather than dwell on the negative sense of these words, it is fairer to think of the positive or constructive meaning, and of the outcome of temperance. Local organisations built Temperance Halls, which in many places became the only available halls for concerts and *eisteddfodau*. Choirs and brass bands had their origin in the temperance movement; and many annual *eisteddfodau*, oratorio concerts and singing festivals started as activities of local temperance organisations. Temperance may have lost its appeal and influence in our time, but much can be said in its favour for the part it played to sow, in conditions which might easily demoralise and brutalise, the seed of self-respect and cultural uplift. These various movements and motivations and achievements are not separate, unrelated aspects or events: they are all organically connected in the transforming process affecting social life in the nineteenth century.



Gomer Press, Llandysul