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BY

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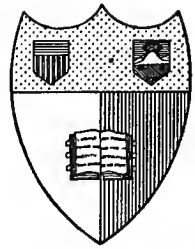

THE LITERARY RELATIONSHIPS OF DAFYDD AP GWILYM.[1]

BY

PROFESSOR W. LEWIS JONES, M.A.

Dafydd ap Gwilym occupies not only a unique place in the history of Welsh poetry, but is one of the most original singers who appeared in Europe before the Revival of Learning. He stands well-nigh without a kinsman among the poets of the Middle Ages—a lyric singer, whose "native wood-notes wild" are the utterance of a singularly individual and strong poetic impulse, and whose "first, fine, careless rapture" has never been quite recaptured by any Welsh poet who followed him. Despite the limitations imposed upon him by the rigorous structure of the *cywydd*, Dafydd's poetical gift was pre-eminently lyrical, and his supremacy among the Welsh bards of his own and subsequent times lies in the consummate skill with which he has subdued so difficult a metrical form as the *cywydd* to every mood of the lyric muse. Among the mediæval poets of Europe the famous German Minnesinger, Walther von der Vogelweide, is perhaps his nearest congener as a lyric singer, and in those of their poems which show the clear influence of the songs of the Troubadours there are many close resemblances between the Welsh poet and the German. But deriving much though Dafydd ap Gwilym did, as we

[1] Read before the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion at 20, Hanover Square, 28 May 1908; Chairman, Sir Francis Edwards, Bart., M.P.

shall see, from the conventional love-poetry of the Troubadours, he was too ingenuous and wayward a child of Nature to order his expression of the most elemental of human passions according to any literary precedent or to the requirements of any artificial poetical "code". Moreover, it is less in his love-songs than in his nature-poems that Dafydd's prime poetic gift most distinctively appears. Indeed, his lyrics of Nature—among which his poems on birds stand out as signal examples—are so unlike anything else in the whole range of mediæval literature as to constitute, in their kind, the most original contribution of the native genius of Wales to the world's poetry.

But, however original a poet's natural gift and manner of utterance may seem to be, he is, after all, the child of his age, and must of necessity owe much to the literary culture which was his birth-right. Dafydd's own countrymen, in particular, have been too much in the habit of regarding him as an untutored genius, and of scouting the suggestion that his poetry may have owed anything to external influences. The truth, however, is that Dafydd ap Gwilym was, for his time, a considerable scholar, and that, in his poetry, he drew largely both upon such books as were accessible to him and upon all the poetical lore and precept that came his way. My object in this paper is to trace some of the more obvious of his relationships with his predecessors in the art of poetry, and, more particularly, with the Provençal Troubadours. Several critics have already written a good deal about Dafydd's relation to the Welsh bards who preceded him, and of his indebtedness to those classical writers, chiefly Latin, who were popular in the Middle Ages. A very full and suggestive account of Dafydd's indebtedness to Latin literature appears in the 1905-06 volume of this Society's *Transactions*, from the pen of

Dr. Hartwell Jones; and his article derives additional interest from the parallels he draws between Dafydd and the mediæval Italian poets. I need, therefore, say but little upon this branch of my subject.

Historically, Dafydd ap Gwilym ushers in what is usually styled the third, and the most brilliant, period in the history of early Welsh poetry. Flourishing in the fourteenth century, he is the first great figure, and the most inspired singer, among the Welsh bards of the Renaissance. To begin with, his poems, or the collection of *cywyddau* that go under his name—for it is now well known that all the poems attributed to him in the printed editions cannot be authentic works of his[1]—stand in striking contrast, both in subject-matter and in form, to the poetry of his bardic predecessors in Wales. He is, beyond any question, our first great master of the *cywydd*. The editors of the 1789 edition of his poems even call him the inventor of the *cywydd*. It may be as difficult to prove this as it apparently is to account for the development of the *cywydd* form from the earlier measures used in Welsh poetry. The most obvious, as it may very well be the correct, explanation of the origin of the *cywydd* is that the last two lines of an *englyn* suggested to Dafydd, or some one else, the possibilities of a poem composed entirely of a succession of such rhyming couplets. It is scarcely credible that foreign influence had much, if anything, to do with it, for the main principles of the measure—*cynghanedd* and the variation of accent in each line of the couplet—appear to have been developed in Wales on entirely independent lines. It should not, however, be forgotten that the most popular poems in mediæval French were composed

[1] The determination of the authenticity of the various poems printed in the 1789 edition is one of the tasks that imperatively demand the attention of our Welsh scholars to-day.

in short rhyming couplets, and that, therefore, the idea of combining short couplets in Welsh in the form of an extended poem may have been derived, to some extent, from the French.[1] What is of greater importance is that the odes of Dafydd ap Gwilym are our earliest finished examples of the *cywydd* form, and that it was he who gave the *cywydd* its vogue and sanction as the most popular bardic measure containing *cynghanedd* from his day down to our own. His own contemporaries and their successors, from Gruffydd Gryg and Iolo Goch down to Tudur Aled and William Llŷn, turned out *cywyddau* by the hundred, and "the golden age of Welsh poetry", as it has been called, is emphatically the age of the *cywydd*. But Dafydd ap Gwilym surpasses all his brother bards in his easy mastery of his metrical instrument. He sings of Love and of Nature with such compelling force and fervour as to make the closely-knit lines of the *cywydd* musical with the strains of an apparently unpremeditated art.

But, far more than in form, Dafydd's poetry stands out in contrast to that of his Welsh predecessors in its subject-matter. The second well-marked period in the history of Welsh poetry extends, roughly, from the beginning of the twelfth century down to the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd in 1282, and may be called the age of the Princes. The twelfth century was in Wales, as elsewhere, the beginning

[1] Mr. W. J. Gruffydd, the Welsh Lecturer at Cardiff University College, has some suggestive remarks on this point in a paper on "The Connection between Welsh and Continental Literature in the 14th and 15th Centuries" (p. 34), published in *The Transactions of the Guild of Graduates*, 1907-8. I had the pleasure of hearing his paper read at Bangor a few weeks before I was to read the present paper in London. As his paper, so far as it deals with D. ap Gwilym, traverses so much of the same ground as my own, I ought to say that the present paper had been written many months before, and for another purpose than a Cymmrodorion address.

of a period of remarkable literary activity, and, with the growth of the power of the Welsh princes, bards found both stimulating themes to sing of and conditions eminently favourable to the cultivation of their art. Moreover, some of the princes—Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd and Owain Cyfeiliog, for example—were among the most famous bards of this period, and remind us of those Courts of Southern France where the Troubadour's art became the study and the pastime even of kings. And, like Provence, Wales became, during the period of the Princes, a veritable "nest of singing birds". A mere list of the bards who are recorded to have sung from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries fills nearly four pages of Stephens's *Literature of the Kymry*. But, even apart from the difficulties of its language, the poetry of this period, as a whole, presents singularly few features of interest for us now. The bulk of it consists of eulogies and elegies of nobles and high-born dames of the day. Occasionally a fresh note is struck in some spirited lyric of Love, such as Hywel ab Owain's celebrated "Can y Dewis", or a brief lay of Nature, such as Gwalchmai's "Delight". But most of the bards found that their duty and profit alike lay in chanting the praises of their princes and their patrons. It is curious to note how, in an age of Romance, purely romantic subjects appear to have had no charm whatever for the Welsh bards. It is not to her poets that Wales owes her one supreme contribution to the greatest of the mediæval romantic cycles, but to her prose writers. We have, indeed, occasional allusions to the chief characters of Arthurian fable in bardic compositions, but to most of the bards, as to Dafydd ap Gwilym himself, Arthur and Guinevere, Peredur and Gwalchmai, Melwas and Medrawt are but names dimly syllabled on "the shores of old romance".

Although Dafydd, like the rest, is comparatively indifferent to romantic fable, the themes of his poetry introduce us to a world all but unknown to his predecessors. In him we find a poet alive, as no other Welsh bard who preceded him was, to the romance of Love and of Nature, and one whose relations with Morfudd constitute themselves a romantic episode not unworthy of a place side by side with the attachments celebrated in verse by the greatest of the Provençal Troubadours. And it is by reason of this, more than all, that Dafydd is entitled to be called an innovator, and the harbinger of a new epoch in the poetry of his country. Many of the new elements he brought into Welsh poetry were, as I have said, due to his native genius alone. His "eye to see" and his "daring to follow" Nature were God's gifts. No foreign poet could have taught him this, or those felicities of imagery and phrase which are the finest gems of Welsh poetic diction. But other, though intrinsically less important, features in his poetry are directly traceable both to his Latin culture and to his familiarity with the stock themes of the early lyric poetry of France, especially that of the Troubadours. Thus it is that in Dafydd's odes we detect the first considerable foreign influence upon the poetry of Wales. They bring Wales, for the first time, so far as poetry is concerned, into touch with the main currents of European literature.

The modern lyric poetry of Europe is the creation of the "early Renaissance" of the twelfth century, and the cradle of that lyric poetry was Provence. As Hallam long ago pointed out, "the songs of Provence became the source from which poetry for many centuries derived a great portion of its habitual language". But there were other forces at work besides the influence of the Troubadours of Provence which made for the growth of lyric, or lighter,

forms of poetry—and one or two of these have to be briefly noted in any account of Dafydd's literary relationships. The first is the Latin literature, ancient and mediæval, which the bard found to his hand. There can be no sort of doubt that Dafydd ap Gwilym knew Latin. Apart from the evidence furnished by his poems, it is obvious that a man brought up, as he was, in a courtly environment, would not lack knowledge of the language which was the chief instrument of culture in his time. And there were certain Latin books which no educated man of the time could be ignorant of. Chief among them were the works of Ovid. Virgil and Horace, also, were largely read, but, for the love-poets and the aspiring lyrists of the central Middle Age, Ovid was the supreme source of inspiration and suggestion. As I have already said, Dr. Hartwell Jones has so fully illustrated Dafydd's obligations to Latin writers as to make it unnecessary for me here to expatiate upon that side of his literary relationships. I need only say that Dafydd frequently refers to "Llyfr Ofydd"—Ovid's book—and that by it he means, more than all, Ovid's "Art of Love".[1] But why the first editors of Dafydd's works should have called him "the Ovid of Wales", it is difficult to discover. No two poets could well be more different in their exposition of the art of love. The Welsh bard is no morbid analyst of various phases of the passion, but is one whose gallantries seem to take their place naturally in the free life of a man who, largely in protest against the cloistral hypocrisies of his time, elected to fleet his days carelessly as a child of

[1] Mr. W. J. Gruffydd, in the paper already mentioned, maintains that by *Llyfr Ofydd*, Dafydd "understood a particular book, and that book was Chrestien de Troyes's French translation called the *Commandements d' Ovide*". He gives a suggestive parallel quotation to prove his point.

Nature and the open air. Moreover, no love adventure ever seems to have so engrossed Dafydd's interest as to be incapable of suddenly undergoing a change

"into something rich and strange,"

which found exquisite expression in song. At the same time, there is no mistaking the actual, downright directness of Dafydd's courting of his various mistresses; his odes breathe, all too palpably, the ardour of keen and resolute pursuit. They who would idealise Morfudd, and make of her a phantom representative of her sex, or a Beatrice of the Welsh highways, or a symbolical figure typifying the bard's country groaning under a foreign yoke, have, in my opinion, quite missed the secret of Dafydd's love-poetry. His love-songs, to any unsophisticated reader, bear every mark of being the records of very real, and often enough very lively, episodes in the career of an exceedingly impressionable and reckless gallant. Never were more overt and sincere poetical offerings tendered at the shrine of Venus. These candid, fervid, and forthright utterances of passion are very different indeed from the highly artificial and exotic love-poems of Ovid.

It is obvious, however, that Dafydd ap Gwilym was acquainted with Latin literature written at a very much later time than Ovid's, and it is difficult to believe that he was ignorant of those Latin poems which were the direct product of that early Renaissance of which he was himself the child. No history of mediæval lyric poetry can leave out of account the Latin songs of the Wandering Students of the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries—songs which, from the very circumstances and habits of these students, found their way into every civilised European land. These songs, says the most distinguished

English student and translator of them—the late Mr. J. Addington Symonds—on the one hand, express that delight in life and physical enjoyment which was a main characteristic of the Renaissance; on the other, they proclaim the corruption of Papal Rome, which was the motive-force of the Reformation.[1] This statement might stand as a definition of the two main themes of Dafydd ap Gwilym's poetry.

The two chief collections of these Latin songs of the Wandering Students are a volume published at Stuttgart in 1847, under the title of *Carmina Burana*, and—what is better known in England—a volume, edited by Thomas Wright in 1841, of the *Latin Poems commonly attributed to Walter Mapes* (or Walter Map). Of the two, the *Carmina Burana*, as Symonds points out, "are richer in poems which form a prelude to the Renaissance". I can only touch very briefly here upon points in these Latin songs which bear resemblance to characteristic features of Dafydd ap Gwilym's poetry. First of all, Nature is sung of in terms of surprising freshness in these Latin lyrics. "As a background to their love-songs", writes Symonds, "we always find the woods and fields of May, abundant flowers and gushing rivulets, lime trees and pines and olive trees, through which soft winds are blowing" (p. 35). Again, "the quality of love expressed is far from being either platonic or chivalrous. It is love of the sensuous, impulsive, appetitive kind, to which we give the name of Pagan . . . . Meanwhile, nothing indicates the character or moral quality of either man or woman. The student and the girl are always *vis-à-vis*, fixed characters in this lyrical love-drama. He calls her Phyllis, Flora, Lydia, Glycerion, Cæcilia." Here, at any rate, is some plausible

[1] *Wine, Women and Song*, by J. A. Symonds, p. 7. (New edition in "King's Classics", Chatto and Windus, 1907.)

evidence that Morfudd and Dyddgu may have been, for Dafydd, but fancy names. Once more, Symonds notes "the particularity with which the personal charms of women are described"—"one girl has long tawny tresses, another, masses of dark hair". Witness Dafydd describing Morfudd:

"Y fun dawel wallt-felen,
Eurwyd y baich ar dy ben,"

["The gentle maiden with yellow hair—of gold is the burden on thy head."]

and

"Dyddgu a'r gwallt gloywddu, glân."
["Dyddgu, with her clean, shining black tresses."]

Had I time, I might quote several poems from Symonds' translations which bear a remarkable similarity to Dafydd ap Gwilym's odes; but I have too much ground to cover to allow me to do so.[1]

The Latin songs I have just referred to differ from the songs of the Provençal Troubadours in being far less artificial, and more true to the facts of what we might call commonplace or vulgar amours. There is yet another class of mediæval lyrics which, derived largely from the poetry of the Troubadours and inheriting something from the frank songs of the Wandering Students, show close affinities with the poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym. They are the songs of the German Minnesingers. The Minnesingers were direct inheritors of the lyrical poetry of Provence, and among them there arose one who, as I have already hinted, alone challenges Dafydd ap Gwilym's supremacy among the mediæval lyrists—Walther von der Vogelweide. It can hardly be possible that Dafydd knew anything at all of

[1] Those who care to work out the parallels further will find the necessary matter to their hand in the recent reprint of Symonds' work in the "King's Classics".

the works of his German predecessor. They both drew, unconsciously, from the same Provençal sources. But the resemblance between them, in a few poems, is very remarkable, and serves to illustrate how close were the ties that united the commonwealth of poetry in those stirring and experimenting times. Allow me to quote one or two translated extracts from Walther's poems which will at once recall familiar passages in Dafydd ap Gwilym's works:—

"Under the linden
On the heath,
There our double bed we made;
There might you find
Fair as well as
Broken flowers and grass,
In front of the forest in a valley—
Tandaradei!
Sweetly sang the nightingale.

"I wandered
To the field;
Thither was my beloved come.
There was I so taken—
Blessed Lady! that I shall evermore be happy.
Did he kiss me. O, a thousand times
Tandaradei!
See how red my mouth is!"[1]

Again, "Winter has done us all manner of harm; heather and forest have both lost their colour, but many a voice will soon sound there again. Would that I might sleep away all the hours of Winter! for, watching and waiting, I grow angry that its power should spread far and wide. God knows it must soon give place to May, and

[1] In spite of the fact that the speaker in this poem is a woman, the note struck in it is curiously similar to that of many a song of Dafydd's. The translation here quoted is from an article by Mr. Edmund Gosse (mentioned in Cowell's well-known Cymmrodorian paper on Dafydd) in the *Cornhill Magazine*, vol. xxxiii.

then we shall have flowers again where now we have frost." Listen to Dafydd's lament, "O Golli yr Hâf":—

"Weithian o'n gwlad yr aethost,
A daeth bâr hyd daear dost;
Mae pob llwyn ar dwyn a dôl
Ysdyddiau yn gystuddiol
. . . . .
"Gaeaf sy'n lladd y gwiail
A dûg o goedyd y dail;
A'i chwithig wynt yn chwythu,
A'i ruad arth, a'i rew du."

Eto, fe ddaw'r Haf i
"roi dail a gwiail ar goed,
A'th degwch i berth dew-goed
A doldir yn llawn deildai,
A thrydar mân adar Mai."

["At length (O Summer), thou has left our land, and sorely afflicted lies the earth; every holt on hill and dale hath for days lain forlorn. Winter is killing the boughs, and robbing the trees of their leaves; its cross winds are blowing, with their bear-like roar and their black frost." But, Summer will once more return "to give back to the woodland its foliage and its boughs, and to the thick-leaved bushes their beauty, when the meadow-land shall be covered with leafy mansions, and the little birds of May shall be chirping."]

But, after full account is taken of these and other resemblances between them, Walther is a poet of a more serious order than Dafydd—though whether he gains thereby is a question which depends on the "taste and fancy" of the critic.[1]

It is high time, however, that I should come to my main theme—Dafydd's relation to the Troubadours. Dafydd ap

[1] Had I space, I could quote many more parallels between the poems of Walther and those of Dafydd. The curious student of such things will find excellent translations of Walther's poems in a volume of *Selected Poems of W. v. d. Vogelwaide*, by W. Alison Phillips (Smith, Elder and Co.); and in *The Minnesingers* (vol. i), by J. Bithell (Longmans, 1909). The latter work is of great interest in its bearing upon the development of mediæval lyric poetry.

Gwilym, we read in *The Welsh People*,[1] "may be regarded as a Welsh troubadour, whose lyric muse was devoted to singing what the French called the *amour courtois*". "But what", your patriotic Welsh critic may ask, "could this 'wild Welshman', who wandered about the Principality in search of indiscriminate amours, know of Provence, or of the courtly singers who paid their tribute of high-flown verse to the *grandes dames* of the Midi? Dafydd lived in regions too remote, and was withal too spontaneous and original a poet, to be affected by or to copy the elaborate effusions of the Provençals."

But the fact is that neither Wales in the Middle Ages was so far removed from Continental culture, nor Dafydd himself so destitute of linguistic knowledge or of literary curiosity as to make it impossible for the poetry of the Troubadours to have influenced him. Welshmen, long before Dafydd's time, had taken part in the Crusades. In his own day they swelled the ranks of Edward III's armies in France. Throughout the Middle Ages there was an unbroken intercourse between Wales and Rome. Knights-errant and travelling scholars, mendicant friars and vagrant minstrels, kept up a constant social and intellectual commerce between Wales and the Continent. Moreover, there is ample evidence that during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries several famous Troubadours were brought into close association with the English Court, and that some of them even visited Britain. The marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine with Henry II, in 1152, brought a large part of southern France under the dominion of the English crown, while in the next century, the marriage of another Eleanor, the daughter of a count of Provence, with Henry III, actually drew a crowd of Provençals to the

[1] First ed., p. 505.

court of the English king. The celebrated Troubadour, Bernart of Ventadorn—whose songs, as we shall see, bear many points of resemblance to those of Dafydd ap Gwilym—was a *protégé* of Eleanor of Aquitaine's, and almost certainly visited England in her train. Another well-known Troubadour, Bertram of Born, was closely connected with Henry II's court, while Peire Vidal and Arnaut Daniel—both celebrated names in the history of Provençal poetry—were for a time in the entourage of the Troubadour king, Richard I.

For two centuries the Troubadours were the master-singers of Europe. The poet-princes and the other high-born bards of Wales must have been well aware of their repute and of the themes upon which they sang. The great host of German Minnesingers drew their inspiration, and took their models, from the courtly poetry of Provence. Through various channels, and most of all through wandering minstrels of every grade and kind, the influence of Provençal poetry gradually pervaded all Western Europe, until, as Hallam says, "the songs of Provence became the source from which poetry for many centuries derived a great portion of its habitual language". Thus Dante and Petrarch, Chaucer and François Villon, Walther von der Vogelweide and Dafydd ap Gwilym, were, in their several ways and countries, direct inheritors of the art of the Troubadours.[1]

Dafydd ap Gwilym can hardly have had any very close acquaintance with the language and the actual poems of the Troubadours. But the resemblances that exist

[1] "Chaucer's well drew from the Arno, and the Arno rose in Provence. Another line of inheritance gave us even more; French was for centuries the upper-class language of England, and it was a French leavened with Troubadour poetry."—Smith's *The Troubadours at Home*, vol. ii, p. 376.

between many of his odes and Provençal songs are too remarkable to let us believe that the Troubadours, no less than the particular kinds of poetry which they cultivated, were not well known to him by report. He knew enough Latin and, probably, enough French to acquire a distant acquaintance, at least, with the most potent international factor in the development of the poetic art of his time.[1] Thus, while it would be rash to claim Dafydd as a direct, or conscious, imitator of the Troubadours, no critical treatment of his poetry can well leave out of account those features in it which, explain them as we may, reflect the very impress of "Provençal song" and of the "sunburnt mirth" of the South.

The late Professor Cowell,[2] of Cambridge, was the first to suggest the possible indebtedness of Dafydd to the poets of Provence. "The resemblance between Ap Gwilym's

[1] After the Norman Conquest there was established a close connection between the Norman Lords and South Wales. "Robert, earl of Gloucester, acquired, early in the twelfth century, the lordship of Glamorgan by marriage with Mabel, daughter of Robert Fitzhamon, conqueror of Glamorgan. Robert, like his father, was a liberal and a diplomatic patron of letters. It was to him that William of Malmesbury, the greatest historian of his time, dedicated his *History*. . . . . On his estates at Torigni was born Robert de Monte, abbot of Mont St. Michel, a chronicler of renown, and a lover and student of Breton legends. Above all, it was under his immediate patronage that Geoffrey of Monmouth compiled his romantic *History of the Kings of Britain*." [I have ventured, here, to quote from a chapter of my own on "The Arthurian Legend" in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. i.] The literary traditions of Glamorgan, thus fostered by the Normans, are too well-known to need any comment. What is certain is that during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, if not later, there must have been constant intercourse at the courts of the great lords of South Wales between Norman-French *trouvères* and Welsh bards, and that these bards, out of the very necessity of their position in their lords' courts, must have had a knowledge of the French then spoken by the nobility and sung by the poets.

[2] In an article in *Y Cymmrodor*, vol. ii (1878).

poems and the chansons of the Troubadours," he writes, "will strike anyone who compares the two. Ap Gwilym is a greater poet than any troubadour, and his lyre has some deeper notes than theirs; but the essence of their music is the same. . . . . A portion of his odes are so like Provençal chansons in their subject and matter, that one might almost believe they were direct imitations. These are the somewhat wearisome semi-metaphysical disquisitions on the nature and lineage of love, the golden hair of Morfydd, 'Yr Hiraeth' (The Longing), etc. These are the staple of Provençal poetry; but in Ap Gwilym they are only a very small portion." "In Dante and Petrarch", Cowell continues, "we have the very apotheosis of the Provençal idea. The poetry of Provence, at its best, was feeble and artificial; it was a delicate hot-house plant nursed by court patronage and shielded from all the rough winds of real life, and striking its roots into a soil of fancy and sentiment, so that its shoots always betray the original weakness of the stock,

Invalidique patrum referunt jejunia nati.

But in Italy the transplanted shoot found a more fertile soil, and struck its roots down deep into the very heart of human nature and reality; and though Dante's 'Beatrice' and Petrarch's 'Laura' were originally the reflections of Provençal poetry, the genius of Dante and Petrarch have created them anew and made them symbols of beauty for all time. And so Ab Gwilym seems to me to have similarly borrowed the Provençal idea, and then reproduced it as a new creation by his own genius. We can thus trace in him a new line of Provençal influence, derived, I suppose, through France or Italy."

"Lord-service, lady-service, and God-service were the

three great offices of the troubadour."[1] In two of these offices, at least, Dafydd ap Gwilym was pre-eminent, and, if we accept as authentic certain pious poems alleged to have been composed during his declining years, he made a belated attempt to qualify himself in the third. His odes in praise of his patron, Ivor the Generous, will bear comparison with the best Welsh examples of bardic "lord-service", and those who are familiar with the history of Welsh poetry up to his time will know that Dafydd had no need to turn to Provence for instruction in the art of courtly panegyric. It is in the poems dedicated to the service of ladies that he appears most of all to borrow the gay singing-robes of a Provençal troubadour. The entire series of odes addressed to Morfudd are based upon a relationship which finds its nearest analogue in the *amour courtois* which evoked from the Troubadours their service of song. But Dafydd's passion for Morfudd, if she really existed, had little of the chivalric courtliness, or of the idealism which usually characterised the homage paid to the great dames of the courts of Provence by their minstrel lovers. The Welsh bard's fashion of making love to Morfudd, as to his other mistresses, is marked above everything by a frank admiration of her person and by open

[1] *The Troubadours at Home*, by Justin H. Smith, vol. i, p. 76. This charming work contains by far the best account of the Troubadours and their poetry available in English, and I have made copious use of it in this paper. Another English work which gives much biographical and other information concerning them, together with brief translated specimens of their poetry, is Miss Ida Farnell's *Lives of the Troubadours* (Nutt, 1896). A French treatise which furnishes an exhaustive account of the origins and of the influence of their poetry is Jeanroy's *Les Origines de la Poésie Lyrique en France au Moyen Age* (2nd ed., Paris, 1904). The best known and most accessible repertoires of Provençal poetry are Bartsch's *Chrestomathie Provençale* (6th Ed. revised by Koschwitz; Marburg, 1904), and Appel's *Provenzalische Chrestomathie* (Leipzig, 1895).

confession of a desire to have her as his own. His affinity with the Troubadours, however, appears less in the general character of the Morfudd episode than in the various types of love-song which he adopted, and in frequent resemblances of phrase and sentiment. Nor is it his love-poetry alone that reminds us of the Troubadours. His satirical tirades against priests and his verse-bouts with bardic rivals are in the direct line of literary tradition from the *sirventes* and the *tensos* of the Provençals.

Of the many types of poems[1] common among the Troubadours, four, in particular, might almost have served as models for a large proportion of the odes of Dafydd ap Gwilym. They are the *canson*, the *sirventes*, the *tenso*, and the *alba*.[2] The *canson*, or *chanson*, was the name given to the more elaborate form of love-song in which the poet usually either hymned his lady's praises, or complained of her obduracy, or of other obstacles which left him a prey to the unrequited pains of love. The *sirventes*, or service-

[1] For a full account of the various kinds of Provençal poems see Smith, *Troubadours at Home*, vol. ii, pp. 449-451. In the elaboration of verse-forms the Welsh bards, their "twenty-four measures" notwithstanding, were altogether outstripped by the Troubadours. "The 'Law of Love'"—the treatise on poetical writing compiled in the thirteenth century by the College of The Gay Science at Toulouse —"describes thirty-four different ways of rhyming, each with a name of its own, and seventy-two kinds of stanzas, all of them labelled in a similar way."—Smith, *Troubadours at Home*, ii, p. 286.

[2] These four, it should be noted, are not the only Provençal types with which one can find parallels among Dafydd's poems. Several of *cywyddau* recall, for example, the *pastorela*, or *pastourelle*, in which a gallant of high degree makes love to a maiden of inferior rank, and where the maid's fear of her father and mother is a stock convention. Again, there is the *chanson de femme mal mariée*, in which the poet declares his love for a woman married to an old man. Akin to this type are the lampoons on husbands, where the husbands are always pourtrayed as grotesque and ill-favoured. Compare with these Dafydd's *cywyddau tuchan* against "Eiddig" and the "Bwa Bach".

poem, took mainly the form of a war-song or an eulogy of a great lord's prowess and personal virtue; but the title also covered elegies *(planh)*, and even satires. The *tenso* was a debate between two poets, and the *alba* (Fr. *aube*, *aubade*) a dialogue between two lovers at the break of day. Every reader of Dafydd will at once recognise how closely related these Provençal forms are to a large number of his poems.

Of all the Troubadours Dafydd's nearest poetical kinsman is, unquestionably, Bernart of Ventadorn *(flor.* 1148-1195). "Full of life himself and of a temper essentially happy", writes Smith,[1] "it was the blithe and hearty side of creation that appealed to Bernart. 'All that is', he cried—'All that is gives itself up to joy, and chants and sings aloud, fields and parks and gardens, valley, plain, and wood.' Sadness he often felt and could express with vivid figures—the withering foliage, the cold and stormy days, the ship tossing in the waves, the fish struggling on the hook, the victim consumed by flames; but his songs of joy and exultation were more spontaneous and more original, and in this mood his thoughts dwelt lovingly on the gentle spring-time, the clear, bright weather, the soft green of the fields, the tender verdure of the boughs, the swelling buds, the blossoms opening behind the leaves, the many-coloured flowers, and the gay little birds—long silent—that began to sing again in the trees. But all this was only the background, and upon it he painted the feelings and the thoughts of the lover in hues the truest, the freshest, the most varied that a poet has ever used. Here, transmuted into thought and sentiment, we find again the colour and perfume of the rose, the music of the nightingale, and the genial splendour of the May-day sky."

[1] *The Troubadours at Home*, vol. ii, p. 179.

This is how Bernart sings to Bel Vezer, viscountess of Ventadorn :—

"Whene'er green leaves and grass appear,
And budding flowers from branches spring,
And nightingales do strong and clear
Uplift their voice and 'gin to sing—
Joy do they bring me, joy the flowers' sweet grace,
Joy my own heart, but most my lady's face;
And I am girt with joy on every side,
But she is joy who doth all else o'er-ride.

"It marvels me that I can be,
And ne'er my love to her reveal,
For when my lady's eyes I see,
Their beauty all my senses steal;
Almost to her from very love I run,
And, but for fear, already were it done;
Ne'er was one seen of form and hue so fair,
Thus slow her faithful vassal's love to share.

"To find her all alone, what bliss!
Asleep, or else but seeming so,
Then would I steal of her a kiss,
Since ne'er could ask it one so low;
Betwixt us few the deeds of love, pardy!
Time speedeth onwards, all our best days flee;
By secret signs could we sweet converse hold,
And cunning use, instead of action bold."[1]

To the same Bel Vezer, Bernart addresses another chanson, which opens with the striking stanza :—

"Whene'er the lark's glad wings I see
Beat sunward 'gainst the radiant sky
Till, lost in joy so sweet and free,
She drops, forgetful how to fly—
Ah, when I view such happiness
My bosom feels so deep an ache,
Meseems for pain and sore distress
My longing heart will straightway break."[2]

This reminds us of Dafydd ap Gwilym's frequent

[1] Farnell, *Lives of the Troubadours*, p. 29.
[2] *The Troubadours at Home*, ii, p. 162.

allusions to the sky-lark—"the bird of restless voice, that soars unto sheer breathlessness with an ode to the heights of heaven".[1] Like Dafydd, Bernart loves the birds; and to him, as to the Welsh poet, the nightingale is the master love-singer among them. "The nightingale rejoices by flower and bough", sings Bernart, "and such a longing seizes me that I can but sing; yet I know not of what or of whom [to sing], for I am in love neither with myself nor with another." "The sweet song of the nightingale awakes me at night when I sleep—I awake overwhelmed with joy but made thoughtful and anxious by love."[2] The nightingale, like so many other birds, serves Dafydd ap Gwilym as a love-messenger, and though no Troubadour is so intimately familiar with the birds as he, more than one of them anticipate him in invoking birds to convey messages of love to their mistresses. Thus, Pierre of Auvergne, who flourished about 1150-1200, sends the nightingale to his mistress with an affectionate greeting, and bids him bring back what message he can :—

"Now unto my lady's dwelling
Hie thee, nightingale, away,
Tidings of her lover telling,
Waiting what herself will say;
Make thee 'ware
How she doth fare;
Then, her shelter spurning,
Do not be
On any plea
Let from thy returning."[3]

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[1] "Yr ehedydd, aflonydd ei lais,
Yn myned mewn lludded llwyr
A chywydd i entrych awyr."

[2] These extracts are taken from Smith, *The Troubadours at Home*, vol. ii, p. 415.

[3] *The Troubadours at Home*, i, p. 315. Another Troubadour, Marcabrun, sends the sparrow with a message to his lady-love. During the twelfth and fourteenth centuries "there was", says Jeanroy,

Another Troubadour whose love-songs closely resemble Dafydd ap Gwilym's in sentiment and expression is Arnaut of Marvoil, or Maruehl. Arnaut sings to his mistress, the Lady Alazais:—

"Fair to me is April, bearing
Winds that o'er me softly blow,
Nightingales their music airing
While the stars serenely glow;
All the birds, as they have power,
While the dews of morning wait,
Sing of joy in sky or bower,
Each consorting with his mate.

"And as all the world is wearing
New delight while new leaves grow,
'Twould be vain to try forswearing
Love which makes my joys o'erflow;
Both by habit and by dower
Gladness is my rightful state,
And when clouds no longer lower
Quick my heart throws off its weight.

"Helen were not worth comparing,
Gardens no such beauty show:
Teeth of pearl—the truth declaring,
Blooming cheeks—a neck of snow,
Tresses like a golden shower,
Courtly charms, for baseness hate—
God, who bade her thus o'ertower
All the rest, her way make straight!

"an entire series of poems which formed a sort of 'cycle of birds'. It is well known that a bird is charged to convey messages of love in many pieces, both ancient and modern" See Jeanroy, *Les origines de la poésie lyrique en France au moyen âge*, p. 133. Cf. "The nightingale, indeed, plays a conspicuous part in all this (mediæval love) poetry. His song is the symbol of amorous passion, and he himself is appealed to as the confidant and adviser of lovers, the go-between who bears messages from heart to heart." (E. K. Chambers, *Early English Lyrics*, 1907, p. 270.) This little volume, in addition to others already mentioned, contains much that is suggestive on the history of the mediaeval lyric.

"Kindness may she do me, sparing
Courtship long and favor slow,
Give a kiss to cheer my daring—
More, if more I earn, bestow;
Then the path where pleasures flower
We shall tread nor slow nor late—
Ah, such hopes my heart o'erpower
When her charms I contemplate."[1]

These verses are pitched in the very key of the Welsh bard's invocations to Morfudd, as are also the following lines addressed by Arnaut to the Countess of Burlatz:—

"Ah! sweetest lady, might it chance,
Whate'er the hour or circumstance,
That, once in life thy faithful slave
That rapture know, he long does crave,
Of clasping thee within his arms,
And gazing on thy peerless charms,
Kissing thine eyes, thy red lips sweet,
That mine in one long kiss should meet,
Till that I swoon with great delight—
Too much I've spoke, yet, such my plight,
Once, only once I needs must say,
What long upon my heart does weigh.
And speaking thus all speech I leave,
With drowsy lids one sigh I heave,
And sighing sink into repose.
Then wandering my spirit goes,
Makes, Lady, eager search for thee,
With whom it ever fain would be;
Quick finds the joy, for which I yearn,
When day and night for thee I burn,
And freely thy dear love possesses,
And freely thy dear self caresses.
Ah! might I ever sleep like this,
No kindly lot were such rare bliss.
'Tis better thus sleep life away
Than waking grieve the live-long day;
And Rodocesta, nor Biblis,
Blancaflor, nor Semiramis,

[1] *The Troubadours at Home*, i, p. 169.

Tibes, nor Seida, nor Elena,
Antigone, nor else Ismena,
Nor Isold, with the hair of gold,
Did never know such joy untold,
When with their lovers they have been,
As mine is then with thee I ween.
Whereon my lips a sigh does part,
And I do waken with a start,
Open my eyes and gaze around,
To see if thou perchance be found
Hard by; but, Lady, woe is me!
For nowhere thy loved form I see."[1]

A favourite form of love-song with the Troubadours, and one which is akin to the class of poems called *tensos* or "disputations", is the love-dialogue,[2] and several of these Provençal debates between lovers are very similar to what we find in Dafydd.[3] Here is one by Aimeric of Peguillan (1205-1270):—

"Lady, for thee I dwell in grievous pain.
'Sir, thou'et unwise, small thanks from me thou'llt gain.'
Lady, pardy, let me not love in vain.
'Sir, all thy prayers unheeded will remain.'
Good lady, mine is love that cannot wane.
'Sir, more than all men else I thee disdain.'
Lady, for this, grief o'er my heart doth reign.
'I, sir, am merry nor from joy refrain.'

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[1] Farnell, *Lives of the Troubadours*, p. 72.

[2] Love-dialogues are, of course, very ancient in their origin. Cp. the well-known *Oaristus* (Idyll xxvii) of Theocritus.

[3] "There are several very celebrated Provençal poems of this kind, as, for instance, the dialogue between Raimbaut d'Orange and his mistress Beatrix, Countess of Die; and that between Peyrols and Love, who reproaches him for having deserted his service; and that between Raimbaut de Vaqueisas and a Genoese lady, who remains obdurate to his flatteries. Ab Gwilym has several dialogues of this kind. I need only mention here the dialogue with a maiden (No. clxxx), that under a maiden's window (No. clii), the wonderful dialogue between the bard and his shadow (No. clxxi), and that with the cuckoo (No. ccx), as well as that with the same bird (No. lxx), when it tells him that Morfudd is married."—Cowell, *Y Cymmrodor*, vol. ii, p. 106.

"Lady sans mercy, I must go my way.
'Sir, prithee go, it boots not to delay.'
Lady, not I, Love holds me 'neath his sway.
'Against my will, good sir, he bids thee stay.'
Lady, cruel answers my fond words repay.
'Sir, worse than all I hate thee, by my fay.'
Then, lady, wilt thou ne'er my grief allay?
'Sir, verily 'twill be as thou dost say.'"[1]

Dafydd's love-dialogues are of a sprightlier, and often, it must be confessed, of a grosser quality than this specimen, but they are identical with it in their form. Compare, for example, the following translation of one of his best-known dialogues:—

Bard. Now, tell me, maiden, an thou be not dumb!
Maid. Do I not tell thee? What more would'st thou? Come!
B. Is there of loving thee, fair maid, no gain?
M. No, none at all, thou fool! Thou lov'st in vain.
B. Shall I then only have what I have had?
M. That, only! To ask more would prove thee mad.
B. But tell me—one word does it, yea or nay—
Am I, or am I not, to have thee, pray?
M. Marry, so I retain my senses, no!
I'll swear not what might happen, should they go.
B. Why question thus, and wedlock's joys delay?
M. Tempt me no further, hateful one! Away!
B. I'll seize thee, willy nilly, Olwen fair!
M. Marry, I'll shriek for rescue, an thou dare!
B. Come—let us straight a priest's due sanction crave!
M. Vain is thy thought to cozen me, thou knave!
B. But what at last am I to hope for? Say!
M. An assignation on a summer's day.
B. Alas! unfeeling maid, I'll wive the while.
M. And I a husband, friend, will to me wile![2]

From the love-dialogue one naturally passes to the *tenso*, or dispute, in which two poets engage in what often

[1] Farnell, *Lives of the Troubadours*, p. 215.

[2] Ode clxxx. Although it is hopeless, in my opinion, to attempt to put Dafydd into English verse, I have here ventured an experiment in rhyme.

becomes a fierce and vituperative debate. The original model of the *tenso* is the pastoral singing-match of classical poetry, in which two rival poets, in the guise of shepherds,

et cantare pares, et respondere parati,

endeavoured to out-do each other in clever banter or in praising their several mistresses. The Provençal *tenso*, however, became something much more elaborate than the conventional singing-match as we find it in Theocritus or Virgil. A closer parallel to the pastoral singing-match is what was known to the Troubadours as the *joc partit* or *partimen*. "In the *tenso* the poets spoke their real sentiments and ideas, and very likely each wrote a whole poem. The *partimen* was to the *tenso* like the tournament to the battle. One poet proposed a debatable question, and allowed the other disputant to choose his side; they then composed stanzas in turn."[1] Dafydd ap Gwilym's poetical debates, or *cywyddau ymryson*, with Gruffydd Gryg are quite in the style of the Provençal *tensos*. The bard probably engaged in many such bouts during his lifetime, and in one of his odes,[2] in reply to Gruffydd Gryg, he tells us that he once exercised his powers of bardic repartee upon one Rhys Meigen, with such effect that his rival died of the shock. The poem that did the execution is included in the printed editions of his works.[3]

Yet another type of Provençal poem which has its counterpart in several odes of Dafydd is the *sirventes*. "The direct antithesis of the *canson* was the *sirvente*, a poem of praise or censure; public or private; personal, moral, or religious, or political; entirely free as regards

[1] *The Troubadours at Home*, ii, p. 449. Some of the best known Provençal *tensos* are those which passed between Bernart de Ventadorn and Peirol, and between Bertram de Born and Amfos II, the poet-king of Arragon.

[2] No. cxxv.

[3] No. ccxxx.

form."[1] *Sirventes* was thus a term of wide application, and would cover both panegyrics and elegies, satires and devotional poems. But the particular species of *sirventes* to which some of Dafydd's poems bear most resemblance was the satire, or poetical tirade, directed especially against priests. A Troubadour who indulged in some signally scathing denunciation of priests and friars was Peire Cardinal (*flor.* 1210-1230). One of his poems starts with the following vehement diatribe :—

"Vultures fierce and kites, I ween,
Scent not rotting flesh so well
As the priests and friars keen
Scent the rich where'er they dwell ;
Soon the rich man's love they gain,
Then if sickness, grief or pain
Fall on him, great gifts they win,
Robbing thus his kith and kin.

"Priests and Frenchmen ever seek
All ill to praise for love of gold ;
By usurers and traitors eke
Is this world of ours controll'd ;
Lies and fraud to men they've taught,
And confusion 'mongst them brought ;
Order none can be discerned
That this lesson has not learned."[2]

"The priests", he complains in another poem, "call

[1] Smith, *The Troubadours at Home*, ii, p. 449. "In replying to a sirvente, a poet was bound to use the same form. Special forms of the sirvente were the Lament (Planh), which was original with the Troubadours, and the crusading-song. A piece specially composed for a joglar might be called *sirventes joglaresc*. The sirvente was originally composed, it is now held, by a sirvent, *i.e.*, a paid soldier of adventure, as the joglar was a paid entertainer. This is probably the correct explanation of the name, a point much debated. As Jeanroy says, about every event of importance to the Midi from 1150 until almost 1300 left its mark in the sirventes of the time." Smith, it will be seen, coins an English word " sirvente " from the original *sirventes*.

[2] Farnell, *Lives of the Troubadours*, p. 218.

themselves shepherds, but are in truth murderers; by their clothing they have the semblance of holiness, yet therein they mind me of Sir Isengrim, who upon a day would enter into a sheepfold, but for fear of the dogs put on sheep's clothing, wherewith he beguiled the sheep, and thereon swallowed up all such as pleased him." Passages such as these breathe the fervour of a genuine moral indignation, and Cardinal, the greatest satirist among the Troubadours, was a reformer who waged deliberate war against the religious and social abuses of his day. Dafydd ap Gwilym had little, if any, of the moral passion which inspired Cardinal, or Langland, to denounce the black sheep of the Church. His was more the temper of Boccaccio and Chaucer, and monks and friars were to him objects of good-humoured contempt rather than of any profound moral antipathy. His amours brought him into constant conflict with envious priests, and it is in frank defence of his own "natural religion" that he taunts them with their hypocrisies and lies. The maid who is exhorted to leave her nunnery and to "win a soul" by making him happy in the dingle "does nothing worse than what they do at Rome or at St. James's (of Compostella)".[1] There is "a religion of the greenwood and of the cuckoo" as well as "the religion of the monks of Rome".[2] "God is not so cruel as old men affirm: it is the priests, reading their mouldy sheepskins, who tell us lies."[3] So he bids the priests do their worst. Let them curse him with bell, book, and candle, if they will; he will take his chance of salvation with the best of them. "God will never damn a good man's soul for love of wife or maid. Three things there be loved all the world over—woman and sunshine and health. Yea, in heaven the fairest flower found, save God himself, is woman."[4] There could be no truce

[1] Ode x. [2] *Ibid.* [3] Ode cxlix. [4] *Ibid.*

between priests and one who gave free utterance to such bold heresies as these.[1]

There remains to be noticed one other, and not the least remarkable, point of resemblance between Dafydd and the Troubadours. Two of his best-known odes[2] are clear imitations of the Provençal *alba*, or morning-song. The *alba* was a song turning entirely upon the leave-taking of

[1] It is worth noting, in connection with the "sirvente", that Professor Cowell (*Y Cymmrodor*, ii, p. 107) discovers in a Provençal poem that would come under this name some lines which furnish what he calls "a curious parallel" to a passage in one of Dafydd's odes. "It may be", says Cowell, "accidental in itself, but I mention it because it so singularly illustrates the comparison which I have tried to institute between them. In Poem xcix Ab Gwilym describes Bwa-bach as sailing to France with a detachment of three hundred men, under the command of Rhys Gwgan, to join the army of Edward III, and he utters his wishes that he may be drowned on his voyage or killed by a French archer. I quote the lines in Mr. Arthur J. Johnes's translation :—

'Soon shalt thou pay the debt I owe
To jealousy, the poet's foe.
Like bird of ocean he shall whirl
From wave to wave and shoal to shoal,
As the wild surges fiercely curl
Around the shores, O sordid soul!
May Hwynyn, demon of the sea,
Thy headsman on the voyage be!
And thou, cross-bowman, true and good,
Thou shooter with the faultless wood,
Send me an arrow through his brain,
(Who of his fate will e'er complain?)—
Haste with thy stirrup-fashioned bow,
And lay the hideous varlet low!'"

Guillaum Adhémar has a similar poem, in which he implores Alphonse IX, the king of Léon (who died in 1230), to start on a crusade. "If king Alphonse, the best count in Christendom, would but raise an army against the Saracens, and carry with him the jealous husband who keeps my lady a close prisoner, there is no sin of which he should not get the pardon!"

[2] Nos. lix and xcvii.

two lovers warned of the approach of dawn. Sometimes it was a friend—the Watcher—who gave the warning; sometimes it was the rising sun—sometimes the skylark, "the world's morning sentinel", as Dafydd calls him.[1] The *Tagelieder*, or day-songs, of the German Minnesingers are modelled on the Provençal *alba*,[1] while "in the dialogue between Romeo and Juliet beginning:

> 'Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day;
> It was the nightingale and not the lark,'

we find the old lovers' dialogues of the *albas* in its most ideal form."[2] A striking parallel to these two lines from *Romeo and Juliet* is quoted by Jeanroy from an old French *aube*:

> *Il n'est mie jors, saverouze au eors gent,*
> *Si m'aït amors, l'aloette nos mant.*

"It is not yet near day, my sweet one; love be my help, the lark lies."[3] The entire dialogue in the beginning of

[1] "The 'Tagelied' is really an old national form of verse, but in Minnesong it shows the influence of Romance models very markedly. Thus the figure of the Warder, who plays so important a part in nearly all the later songs of this class, appears first in the Provençal 'alba', from which it was probably introduced into German Minnesong by Wolfram von Eschenbach." Nicholson, *Old German Love-Songs* (Fisher Unwin, 1907), p. xliii. Translated specimens of German *tagelieder* will be found in Bithell's *The Minnesingers*, vol. i (cf. pp. 16, 195, and 196), a work already referred to. In his Appendix (p. 203) Mr. Bithell has an excellent note on the *Tagelied*.

[2] Farnell, *Lives of the Troubadours*, p. 77.

[3] See Jeanroy, *Les origines de la poésie lyrique*, etc., p. 68. In one of his notes (p. 70) on the *aube* Jeanroy quotes from a Chinese poem, dating back beyond the seventh century of our era, a curious parallel to these medieval morning-songs. The extract, given in a Latin translation, is a dialogue between a king and his queen at break of day. The queen hears the cock crow, and the king replies that "it was not the cock, but the hum of flies". "In the east the dawn appears", the queen rejoins, "and there is already the stir of men in royal halls." "Nay", says the king, "it is not the dawn, but the light of the rising moon." "But the hum of flies on the wing grows

Act III, Sc. 5, of *Romeo and Juliet*, reproduces the conventional features of the primitive *alba*. Romeo, after protesting that—

> "It *was* the lark, the herald of the morn,
> No nightingale,"

points out how—

> "Jocund day
> Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops."

Juliet rejoins—

> "Yond light is not day-light, I know it, I;
> It is some meteor that the sun exhales,"

and Romeo is "content, so she will have it so":—

> "I'll say yon grey is not the morning's eye,
> 'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow."

In one of his odes[1] Dafydd ap Gwilym tells how Morfudd and he were together at break of day, and how the fear of the husband—Eiddig, "the jealous one"—fell upon him as he watched the light increasing. Morfudd seeks to quiet him with the assurance that, were day near, they would have heard the cock crow. "But I see the daylight", the bard cries, "peeping under the door." "That", Morfudd rejoins, "is the newly-risen moon, and the stars that shoot their beams between the pillars." "Nay rather, my fair one, 'tis the sun in his splendour—pardee, 'tis a good hour of the day!" "How fickle are thy ways! Take thy choice, and depart!" In another poem[2] the mistress it is who first becomes restive and points to the advancing

louder", the queen protests, and insists that her consort should rise lest he should "incur the reproach of others on her account." Compare with this Ode lix in Dafydd's poems. The *alba*, it should be said, was by no means indigenous to Provence, but was a popular form of song common to many countries, and hence not very extensively cultivated by the Troubadours. See Smith, *Troubadours at Home*, vol. ii, p. 451.

[1] Ode xcvii. [2] Ode lix.

morning light, and it is the bard's turn to pretend that what they see is "the moon and its attendant stars". "We should rest well", the lady replies, "were that the truth; but why croaks the crow up above?" The bard's further protestations are cut short by a peremptory command to "cease from his shifts", and to make good his escape before some spy should waylay him. These dialogues, like that in *Romeo and Juliet*, are but variations on the theme of the Provençal *alba*, and reproduce the stock devices of the dawning light, the warning bird, and the nearness of the jealous husband. Compare the following lines from the famous morning-song of Giraut de Borneil:—"Fair comrade, whether you sleep or wake, sleep no more; sleep no more, sweetly wake, for in the east I see the star waxed that brings the day, for well have I marked it; and soon will come the dawn." "Fair comrade, in singing I call you; sleep no more, for I hear sing the bird that goes looking for day through the copse, and I fear lest the jealous one assail you; and soon will come the dawn." "Fair comrade, come to the window and behold the stars of the sky; you will perceive whether I am a faithful messenger to you. If you do it not, yours will be the harm from it, and soon will come the dawn."[1]

These parallels between Dafydd ap Gwilym and the Troubadours,[2] interesting though they may be to the student of comparative literature and of poetical "origins", only serve to show, when all is told, how much greater a poet the Welsh bard is than any Troubadour.

In genuine lyric rapture, in brilliant flashes of fancy,

[1] *The Troubadours at Home*, vol. ii, p. 443.

[2] Further parallels between Dafydd and the Troubadours and Minnesingers will be found in Stern's learned and exhaustive study of the Welsh bard's work printed in the *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* (vii Band, 1 Heft, 1909), in the section entitled "Romanische Einflüsse", p. 238.

and, above all, in the profuse wealth of their imagery, his love-songs far surpass anything to be found in Provençal poetry, while his poems of Nature evince a quickness of perception, a power of vivid description, and a passionate delight in the wild life of the fields and the woods which are altogether foreign to the songs of the Troubadours. Not one of them has sung of Nature in strains which suggest even the barest lines of a serious comparison with the songs of Dafydd.[1] He had, in the words of the old Welsh Triad, "an eye to see Nature, a heart to feel Nature, and the daring to follow Nature". Provençal poetry was altogether too artificial and exotic a product to conform to this precept. Much of the poetry of the Kymry is no less artificial and conventional and monotonous than that of the Troubadours; and Dafydd stands in striking contrast even to his Welsh predecessors and contemporaries as a poet of Nature. But "what worlds away" he is from the Troubadours when he sings of Nature, as he saw and felt her in his careless rambles along the vales and the hills of his native country! For the Provençal poets, "the natural world", writes Smith, "had not yet opened its unending vistas of significance: and while the Troubadours were not without a keen sense of the beauties of nature, they were too much a part of nature themselves to study and enjoy her deeply, and their eyes, like their minds, lacked the generations of experience and culture absolutely needed to make them see the natural world artistically."[2] Dafydd ap Gwilym had no more "experience and culture" than they, but he did "see", and sing of, "the natural

[1] "It is noteworthy that while the Troubadours use more or less frequently a nature-picture as an introduction to a piece, only three—B. de Ventadorn, G. de Borneil, and P. Vidal—refer to nature in the body of a song; and these references are slight."—Smith, *Troubadours at Home*, vol. i, p. 446.

[2] *The Troubadours at Home*, vol. i, p. 194.

world artistically", simply because he followed Nature implicitly and trusted to her unaided tutorship for the measure and the quality of his art. Later poets have turned to Nature for a "message", a "religion", a "philosophy". Dafydd, as we have seen, knew of "a religion of the greenwood", and formed a most original conception of its rites and its creed. But his paramount distinction and charm as a poet of Nature consists in his absolutely unclouded vision, and in his direct expression of what he himself saw and heard, thought and felt. "I cannot keep silence", he cries in one poem, "any more than the nightingale on the tree, even though my song be unrequited."[1] All true poetry of Nature obeys the same irresistible impulse; the poet

> "sings because he must,
> And pipes but as the linnets sing."

This brief survey of features common to the ancient poetry of Provence and of Wales would be incomplete without a passing reference to the literary fellowship which, quite unconsciously on either side, prevails between the two countries even to-day. Just as in Wales the best living bards continue to work in the tradition of Dafydd ap Gwilym, so in Provence are there "modern Troubadours"[2] who were first inspired by the illustrious Mistral, who seek to revive the glories of their poetic prime. The *Felibrige*,[3] or "League of the Poets", of

[1] "Ni thawaf, od af heb dâl
Mwy nag eos mewn gwial."

[2] See a most interesting article on "The Modern Troubadours" in the *Quarterly Review* for October, 1901.

[3] "The designation 'Felibre', equivalent, in common parlance, to Troubadour, minstrel, poet, but originally signifying rather a bard in the Celtic sense, a singer and poet, but also a priest and a doctor of the divine law and the history of men, was found by Mistral in an

modern Provence, is an institution curiously resembling the Welsh Eisteddfod, and the *felibres* are as sedulous in cultivating the poetical forms of the medieval Troubadours and the language in which they sang as are the Eisteddfodic bards and the scholars of modern Wales in emulating and studying the works of the older Welsh poets. "When, in our day, Teodor Aubanéu (Aubanel) sings his famous 'Quan canto soun mau, encanto'—'Who sings his own sorrow, enchants'—he is but saying, out of the same Provençal heart, in the same Provençal tongue (a tongue of many dialects, but a single language, as a trailing wild-rose has many blooms), and in the same Provençal land, what Duke Guihem the Crusader sang in 1100, 'A song I'll fashion from my grief'; and it might be either Gaucelm Faidit of Malemort, the twelfth-century Joglar, or Théodore Aubanel of Avignon, the nineteenth-century Catullus of Provence, who writes—

'L'amour es la vido,
La vido es l'amour;
L'amour nous convido
A cuiè la flour.'

"Both groups of poets, old and new—the Rudels and Marcabrus, the Arnauts de Maruelh and Bernarts de

old Provençal canticle. . . . . Neither he nor other philologists, however, have yet definitely settled its derivation, though, among other specialists, Mistral himself thinks it possible, and Gaston Paris and d'Arbois de Jubainville are convinced, that the word is one of the many Celtic survivals in the Provençal language, composed of the ancient Erse *filea* and *ber*, and equivalent to chief-singer or arch-poet. As for the contemporary meaning of the word and its derivatives, *Felibre* is a poet who is a native of Provence, and composes in Provençal—a recognised term certainly preferable to the outworn 'troubadour' or 'trouvere'; *Felibrée*, a bardic gathering, the *Eisteddfod* or *Môd* of the Provençals. . The *Felibrige* is the organised fellowship of the Felibres."—"The Modern Troubadours" (*Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1901).

Ventadorn, the Gaucelms and Guihems of to-day, and the Jasmins and Roumanilles, the Mistrals and Aubanels of that dim, remote, golden age of song—to reverse the mere accident of nomenclature,—have a common inspiration, a manner in common, a heart and soul alike. 'La cigalo di piboulo, La bouscarlo di bouisson, Lou grihet di ferigoulo, Tout canto sa cansoun'—'The tree-locust in the poplar, the thrush in the wayside bush, the grasshopper in the wild thyme, each sings its own song'"[1] Even so, in Wales, the bards who to-day achieve the highest artistic excellence in their compositions are those who have best learnt the great language and caught the clear accents of Dafydd ap Gwilym and his contemporaries. They cannot, indeed, well emulate Dafydd's franker type of love-song; but they have no better teacher to turn to for inspiration in "daring to follow Nature", or for instruction in diction and style. For to himself, of all the poets of his time, are justly applicable the words which he generously used of another,[2] "the law-book of the right language"—

"Llyfr cyfraith y iaith iawn."

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[1] "The Modern Troubadours" (*Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1901).

[2] Gruffydd Gryg. Although Dafydd composed *tensos* against Gruffydd, their rivalry did not prevent him from recognising that bard's signal poetic gifts. See Dafydd's elegy on G. Gryg (Ode cxxviii).