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Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
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Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius
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Brentano Strachwitz Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Raabe Gibbon Tschchow
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Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil
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Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke
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Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz
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Celtic Literature

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CELTIC LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

The following remarks on the study of Celtic Literature formed the substance of four lectures given by me in the chair of poetry at Oxford. They were first published in the *Cornhill Magazine*, and are now reprinted from thence. Again and again, in the course of them, I have marked the very humble scope intended; which is, not to treat any special branch of scientific Celtic studies (a task for which I am quite incompetent), but to point out the many directions in which the results of those studies offer matter of general interest, and to insist on the benefit we may all derive from knowing the Celt and things Celtic more thoroughly. It was impossible, however, to avoid touching on certain points of ethnology and philology, which can be securely handled only by those who have made these sciences the object of special study. Here the mere literary critic must owe his whole safety to his tact in choosing authorities to follow, and whatever he advances must be understood as advanced with a sense of the insecurity which, after all, attaches to such a mode of proceeding, and as put forward provisionally, by way of hypothesis rather than of confident assertion.

To mark clearly to the reader both this provisional character of much which I advance, and my own sense of it, I have inserted, as a check upon some of the positions adopted in the text, notes and comments with which Lord Strangford has kindly furnished me. Lord Strangford is hardly less distinguished for knowing ethnology and languages so scientifically than for knowing so much of them; and his interest, even from the vantage-ground of his scientific knowledge, and after making all due reserves on points of scientific detail, in my treatment, - with merely the resources and point of view of a literary critic at my command, - of such a subject as the study of Celtic Literature, is the most encouraging assurance I could

have received that my attempt is not altogether a vain one.

Both Lord Strangford and others whose opinion I respect have said that I am unjust in calling Mr. Nash, the acute and learned author of *Taliesin, or the Bards and Druids of Britain*, a 'Celt-hater.' 'He is a denouncer,' says Lord Strangford in a note on this expression, 'of Celtic extravagance, that is all; he is an anti-Philocelt, a very different thing from an anti-Celt, and quite indispensable in scientific inquiry. As Philoceltism has hitherto, - hitherto, remember, - meant nothing but uncritical acceptance and irrational admiration of the beloved object's sayings and doings, without reference to truth one way or the other, it is surely in the interest of science to support him in the main. In tracing the workings of old Celtic leaven in poems which embody the Celtic soul of all time in a mediæval form, I do not see that you come into any necessary opposition with him, for your concern is with the spirit, his with the substance only.' I entirely agree with almost all which Lord Strangford here urges, and indeed, so sincere is my respect for Mr. Nash's critical discernment and learning, and so unhesitating my recognition of the usefulness, in many respects, of the work of demolition performed by him, that in originally designating him as a Celt-hater, I hastened to add, as the reader will see by referring to the passage, {0a} words of explanation and apology for so calling him. But I thought then, and I think still, that Mr. Nash, in pursuing his work of demolition, too much puts out of sight the positive and constructive performance for which this work of demolition is to clear the ground. I thought then, and I think still, that in this Celtic controversy, as in other controversies, it is most desirable both to believe and to profess that the work of construction is the fruitful and important work, and that we are demolishing only to prepare for it. Mr. Nash's scepticism seems to me, - in the aspect in which his work, on the whole, shows it, - too absolute, too stationary, too much without a future; and this tends to make it, for the non-Celtic part of his readers, less fruitful than it otherwise would be, and for his Celtic readers, harsh and repellent. I have therefore suffered my remarks on Mr. Nash still to stand, though with a little modification; but I hope he will read them by the light of these explanations, and that he will believe my sense of esteem for his work to be a thousand times stronger than my sense of difference from it.

To lead towards solid ground, where the Celt may with legitimate satisfaction point to traces of the gifts and workings of his race, and where the Englishman may find himself induced to sympathise with that satisfaction and to feel an interest in it, is the design of all the considerations urged in the following essay. Kindly taking the will for the deed, a Welshman and an old acquaintance of mine, Mr. Hugh Owen, received my remarks with so much cordiality, that he asked me to come to the Eisteddfod last summer at Chester, and there to read a paper on some topic of Celtic literature or antiquities. In answer to this flattering proposal of Mr. Owen's, I wrote him a letter which appeared at the time in several newspapers, and of which the following extract preserves all that is of any importance

'My knowledge of Welsh matters is so utterly insignificant that it would be impertinence in me, under any circumstances, to talk about those matters to an assemblage of persons, many of whom have passed their lives in studying them.

'Your gathering acquires more interest every year. Let me venture to say that you have to avoid two dangers in order to work all the good which your friends could desire. You have to avoid the danger of giving offence to practical men by retarding the spread of the English language in the principality. I believe that to preserve and honour the Welsh language and literature is quite compatible with not thwarting or delaying for a single hour the introduction, so undeniably useful, of a knowledge of English among all classes in Wales. You have to avoid, again, the danger of alienating men of science by a blind partial, and uncritical treatment of your national antiquities. Mr. Stephens's excellent book, *The Literature of the Cymry*, shows how perfectly Welshmen can avoid this danger if they will.

'When I see the enthusiasm these Eisteddfods can awaken in your whole people, and then think of the tastes, the literature, the amusements, of our own lower and middle class, I am filled with admiration for you. It is a consoling thought, and one which history allows us to entertain, that nations disinherited of political success may yet leave their mark on the world's progress, and contribute

powerfully to the civilisation of mankind. We in England have come to that point when the continued advance and greatness of our nation is threatened by one cause, and one cause above all. Far more than by the helplessness of an aristocracy whose day is fast coming to an end, far more than by the rawness of a lower class whose day is only just beginning, we are emperilled by what I call the "Philistinism" of our middle class. On the side of beauty and taste, vulgarity; on the side of morals and feeling, coarseness; on the side of mind and spirit, unintelligence, - this is Philistinism. Now, then, is the moment for the greater delicacy and spirituality of the Celtic peoples who are blended with us, if it be but wisely directed, to make itself prized and honoured. In a certain measure the children of Taliesin and Ossian have now an opportunity for renewing the famous feat of the Greeks, and conquering their conquerors. No service England can render the Celts by giving you a share in her many good qualities, can surpass that which the Celts can at this moment render England, by communicating to us some of theirs.'

Now certainly, in that letter, written to a Welshman and on the occasion of a Welsh festival, I enlarged on the merits of the Celtic spirit and of its works, rather than on their demerits. It would have been offensive and inhuman to do otherwise. When an acquaintance asks you to write his father's epitaph, you do not generally seize that opportunity for saying that his father was blind of one eye, and had an unfortunate habit of not paying his tradesmen's bills. But the weak side of Celtism and of its Celtic glorifiers, the danger against which they have to guard, is clearly indicated in that letter; and in the remarks reprinted in this volume, - remarks which were the original cause of Mr. Owen's writing to me, and must have been fully present to his mind when he read my letter, - the shortcomings both of the Celtic race, and of the Celtic students of its literature and antiquities, are unreservedly marked, and, so far as is necessary, blamed. {0b} It was, indeed, not my purpose to make blame the chief part of what I said; for the Celts, like other people, are to be meliorated rather by developing their gifts than by chastising their defects. The wise man, says Spinoza admirably, '*de humana impotentia non nisi parce loqui curabit, at largiter de humana virtute seupotentia.*' But so far as condemnation of Celtic failure was needful towards preparing the way for the growth of Celtic virtue, I used

condemnation.

The *Times*, however, prefers a shorter and sharper method of dealing with the Celts, and in a couple of leading articles, having the Chester Eisteddfod and my letter to Mr. Hugh Owen for their text, it developed with great frankness, and in its usual forcible style, its own views for the amelioration of Wales and its people. *Cease to do evil, learn to do good*, was the upshot of its exhortations to the Welsh; by *evil*, the *Times* understanding all things Celtic, and by *good*, all things English. 'The Welsh language is the curse of Wales. Its prevalence, and the ignorance of English have excluded, and even now exclude the Welsh people from the civilisation of their English neighbours. An Eisteddfod is one of the most mischievous and selfish pieces of sentimentalism which could possibly be perpetrated. It is simply a foolish interference with the natural progress of civilisation and prosperity. If it is desirable that the Welsh should talk English, it is monstrous folly to encourage them in a loving fondness for their old language. Not only the energy and power, but the intelligence and music of Europe have come mainly from Teutonic sources, and this glorification of everything Celtic, if it were not pedantry, would be sheer ignorance. The sooner all Welsh specialities disappear from the face of the earth the better.'

And I need hardly say, that I myself, as so often happens to me at the hands of my own countrymen, was cruelly judged by the *Times*, and most severely treated. What I said to Mr. Owen about the spread of the English language in Wales being quite compatible with preserving and honouring the Welsh language and literature, was tersely set down as 'arrant nonsense,' and I was characterised as 'a sentimentalist who talks nonsense about the children of Taliesin and Ossian, and whose dainty taste requires something more flimsy than the strong sense and sturdy morality of his fellow Englishmen.'

As I said before, I am unhappily inured to having these harsh interpretations put by my fellow Englishmen upon what I write, and I no longer cry out about it. And then, too, I have made a study of the Corinthian or leading article style, and know its exigencies, and that they are no more to be quarrelled with than the law of gravitation.

So, for my part, when I read these asperities of the *Times*, my mind did not dwell very much on my own concern in them; but what I said to myself, as I put the newspaper down, was this: '*Behold England's difficulty in governing Ireland!*'

I pass by the dauntless assumption that the agricultural peasant whom we in England, without Eisteddfods, succeed in developing, is so much finer a product of civilisation than the Welsh peasant, retarded by these 'pieces of sentimentalism.' I will be content to suppose that our 'strong sense and sturdy morality' are as admirable and as universal as the *Times* pleases. But even supposing this, I will ask did any one ever hear of strong sense and sturdy morality being thrust down other people's throats in this fashion? Might not these divine English gifts, and the English language in which they are preached, have a better chance of making their way among the poor Celtic heathen, if the English apostle delivered his message a little more agreeably? There is nothing like love and admiration for bringing people to a likeness with what they love and admire; but the Englishman seems never to dream of employing these influences upon a race he wants to fuse with himself. He employs simply material interests for his work of fusion; and, beyond these, nothing except scorn and rebuke. Accordingly there is no vital union between him and the races he has annexed; and while France can truly boast of her 'magnificent unity,' a unity of spirit no less than of name between all the people who compose her, in England the Englishman proper is in union of spirit with no one except other Englishmen proper like himself. His Welsh and Irish fellow-citizens are hardly more amalgamated with him now than they were when Wales and Ireland were first conquered, and the true unity of even these small islands has yet to be achieved. When these papers of mine on the Celtic genius and literature first appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*, they brought me, as was natural, many communications from Welshmen and Irishmen having an interest in the subject; and one could not but be painfully struck, in reading these communications, to see how profound a feeling of aversion and severance from the English they in general manifested. Who can be surprised at it, when he observes the strain of the *Times* in the articles just quoted, and remembers that this is the characteristic strain of the Englishman in commenting on whatsoever is not himself?

And then, with our boundless faith in machinery, we English expect the Welshman as a matter of course to grow attached to us, because we invite him to do business with us, and let him hold any number of public meetings and publish all the newspapers he likes! When shall we learn, that what attaches people to us is the spirit we are of, and not the machinery we employ?

Last year there was a project of holding a Breton Eisteddfod at Quimper in Brittany, and the French Home Secretary, whether wishing to protect the magnificent unity of France from inroads of Bretonism, or fearing lest the design should be used in furtherance of Legitimist intrigues, or from whatever motive, issued an order which prohibited the meeting. If Mr. Walpole had issued an order prohibiting the Chester Eisteddfod, all the Englishmen from Cornwall to John o' Groat's House would have rushed to the rescue; and our strong sense and sturdy morality would never have stopped gnashing their teeth and rending their garments till the prohibition was rescinded. What a pity our strong sense and sturdy morality fail to perceive that words like those of the *Times* create a far keener sense of estrangement and dislike than acts like those of the French Minister! Acts like those of the French Minister are attributed to reasons of State, and the Government is held blameable for them, not the French people. Articles like those of the *Times* are attributed to the want of sympathy and of sweetness of disposition in the English nature, and the whole English people gets the blame of them. And deservedly; for from some such ground of want of sympathy and sweetness in the English nature, do articles like those of the *Times* come, and to some such ground do they make appeal. The sympathetic and social virtues of the French nature, on the other hand, actually repair the breaches made by oppressive deeds of the Government, and create, among populations joined with France as the Welsh and Irish are joined with England, a sense of liking and attachment towards the French people. The French Government may discourage the German language in Alsace and prohibit Eisteddfods in Brittany; but the *Journal des Dibats* never treats German music and poetry as mischievous lumber, nor tells the Bretons that the sooner all Breton specialities disappear from the face of the earth the better. Accordingly, the Bretons and Alsatians have come to feel themselves a part of France, and to feel pride in bearing the French

name; while the Welsh and Irish obstinately refuse to amalgamate with us, and will not admire the Englishman as he admires himself, however much the *Times* may scold them and rate them, and assure them there is nobody on earth so admirable.

And at what a moment does it assure them of this, good heavens! At a moment when the ice is breaking up in England, and we are all beginning at last to see how much real confusion and insufficiency it covered; when, whatever may be the merits, - and they are great, - of the Englishman and of his strong sense and sturdy morality, it is growing more and more evident that, if he is to endure and advance, he must transform himself, must add something to his strong sense and sturdy morality, or at least must give to these excellent gifts of his a new development. My friend Mr. Goldwin Smith says, in his eloquent way, that England is the favourite of Heaven. Far be it from me to say that England is not the favourite of Heaven; but at this moment she reminds me more of what the prophet Isaiah calls, 'a bull in a net.' She has satisfied herself in all departments with clap-trap and routine so long, and she is now so astounded at finding they will not serve her turn any longer! And this is the moment, when Englishism pure and simple, which with all its fine qualities managed always to make itself singularly unattractive, is losing that imperturbable faith in its untransformed self which at any rate made it imposing, - this is the moment when our great organ tells the Celts that everything of theirs not English is 'simply a foolish interference with the natural progress of civilisation and prosperity;' and poor Talhaiarn, venturing to remonstrate, is commanded 'to drop his outlandish title, and to refuse even to talk Welsh in Wales!'

But let us leave the dead to bury their dead, and let us who are alive go on unto perfection. Let the Celtic members of this empire consider that they too have to transform themselves; and though the summons to transform themselves he often conveyed harshly and brutally, and with the cry to root up their wheat as well as their tares, yet that is no reason why the summons should not be followed so far as their tares are concerned. Let them consider that they are inextricably bound up with us, and that, if the suggestions in the following pages have any truth, we English, alien and uncongenial to our Celtic partners as we may have hitherto shown our-

selves, have notwithstanding, beyond perhaps any other nation, a thousand latent springs of possible sympathy with them. Let them consider that new ideas and forces are stirring in England, that day by day these new ideas and forces gain in power, and that almost every one of them is the friend of the Celt and not his enemy. And, whether our Celtic partners will consider this or no, at any rate let us ourselves, all of us who are proud of being the ministers of these new ideas, work incessantly to procure for them a wider and more fruitful application; and to remove the main ground of the Celt's alienation from the Englishman, by substituting, in place of that type of Englishman with whom alone the Celt has too long been familiar, a new type, more intelligent, more gracious, and more humane.

THE STUDY OF CELTIC LITERATURE

'They went forth to the war, but they always fell.'

OSSIAN

Some time ago I spent some weeks at Llandudno, on the Welsh coast. The best lodging-houses at Llandudno look eastward, towards Liverpool; and from that Saxon hive swarms are incessantly issuing, crossing the bay, and taking possession of the beach and the lodging-houses. Guarded by the Great and Little Orme's Head, and alive with the Saxon invaders from Liverpool, the eastern bay is an attractive point of interest, and many visitors to Llandudno never contemplate anything else. But, putting aside the charm of the Liverpool steamboats, perhaps the view, on this side, a little dissatisfies one after a while; the horizon wants mystery, the sea wants beauty, the coast wants verdure, and has a too bare austereness and aridity. At last one turns round and looks westward. Everything is changed. Over the mouth of the Conway and its sands is the eternal softness and mild light of the west; the low line of the mystic Anglesey, and the precipitous Penmaenmawr, and the great group of Carnedd Llewelyn and Carnedd David and their brethren fading away, hill behind hill, in an akrial haze, make the horizon; between the foot of Penmaenmawr and the bending coast of Anglesey, the sea, a silver stream, disappears one knows not whither. On this side, Wales, - Wales, where the past still lives, where every place has its tradition, every name its poetry, and where the people, the genuine people, still knows this past, this tradition, this poetry, and lives with it, and clings to it; while, alas, the prosperous Saxon on the other side, the invader from Liverpool and Birkenhead, has long ago forgotten his. And the promontory where Llandudno stands is the very centre of this tradition; it is Creuddyn, *the bloody city*, where every stone has its story; there, opposite its decaying rival, Conway Castle, is Diganwy, not decaying but long since utterly decayed, some crumbling foundations on a crag top and nothing more; Diganwy, where Mael-gwyn shut up Elphin, and where Taliesin came to free him. Below, in a fold of the hill, is Llan-rhos, the church of the marsh, where the same Mael-gwyn, a British prince of real history, a bold

and licentious chief, the original, it is said, of Arthur's Lancelot, shut himself up in the church to avoid the Yellow Plague, and peeped out through a hole in the door, and saw the monster and died. Behind among the woods, is Gloddaeth, *the place of feasting*, where the bards were entertained; and farther away, up the valley of the Conway towards Llanrwst, is the Lake of Ceirio-nydd and Taliesin's grave. Or, again, looking seawards and Anglesey-wards you have Pen-mon, Seiriol's isle and priory, where Mael-gwyn lies buried; you have the *Sands of Lamentation* and Llys Helig, *Heilig's Mansion*, a mansion under the waves, a sea-buried palace and realm. *Hac ibat Simois; hic est Sigeia tellus.*

As I walked up and down, looking at the waves as they washed this Sigeian land which has never had its Homer, and listening with curiosity to the strange, unfamiliar speech of its old possessors' obscure descendants, - bathing people, vegetable-sellers, and donkey-boys, who were all about me, suddenly I heard, through the stream of unknown Welsh, words, not English, indeed, but still familiar. They came from a French nursery-maid, with some children. Profoundly ignorant of her relationship, this Gaulish Celt moved among her British cousins, speaking her polite neo-Latin tongue, and full of compassionate contempt, probably, for the Welsh barbarians and their jargon. What a revolution was here! How had the star of this daughter of Gomer waxed, while the star of these Cymry, his sons, had waned! What a difference of fortune in the two, since the days when, speaking the same language, they left their common dwelling-place in the heart of Asia; since the Cimmerians of the Euxine came in upon their western kinsmen, the sons of the giant Galates; since the sisters, Gaul and Britain, cut the mistletoe in their forests, and saw the coming of Cfsar! *Blanc, rouge, rocher champ, iglise, seigneur*, - these words, by which the Gallo-Roman Celt now names white, and red, and rock, and field, and church, and lord, are no part of the speech of his true ancestors, they are words he has learnt; but since he learned them they have had a worldwide success, and we all teach them to our children, and armies speaking them have domineered in every city of that Germany by which the British Celt was broken, and in the train of these armies, Saxon auxiliaries, a humbled contingent, have been fain to follow; the poor Welshman still says, in the genuine tongue of his

ancestors, {4}gwyn, goch, craig, maes, llan, arglwydd; but his land is a province, and his history petty, and his Saxon subduers scout his speech as an obstacle to civilisation; and the echo of all its kindred in other lands is growing every day fainter and more feeble; gone in Cornwall, going in Brittany and the Scotch Highlands, going, too, in Ireland; and there, above all, the badge of the beaten race, the property of the vanquished.

But the Celtic genius was just then preparing, in Llandudno, to have its hour of revival. Workmen were busy in putting up a large tent-like wooden building, which attracted the eye of every newcomer, and which my little boys believed (their wish, no doubt, being father to their belief,) to be a circus. It turned out, however, to be no circus for Castor and Pollux, but a temple for Apollo and the Muses. It was the place where the Eisteddfod, or Bardic Congress of Wales, was about to be held; a meeting which has for its object (I quote the words of its promoters) 'the diffusion of useful knowledge, the eliciting of native talent, and the cherishing of love of home and honourable fame by the cultivation of poetry, music, and art.' My little boys were disappointed; but I, whose circus days are over, I, who have a professional interest in poetry, and who, also, hating all one-sidedness and oppression, wish nothing better than that the Celtic genius should be able to show itself to the world and to make its voice heard, was delighted. I took my ticket, and waited impatiently for the day of opening. The day came, an unfortunate one; storms of wind, clouds of dust, an angry, dirty sea. The Saxons who arrived by the Liverpool steamers looked miserable; even the Welsh who arrived by land, - whether they were discomposed by the bad morning, or by the monstrous and crushing tax which the London and North-Western Railway Company levies on all whom it transports across those four miles of marshy peninsula between Conway and Llandudno, - did not look happy. First we went to the Gorsedd, or preliminary congress for conferring the degree of bard. The Gorsedd was held in the open air, at the windy corner of a street, and the morning was not favourable to open-air solemnities. The Welsh, too, share, it seems to me, with their Saxon invaders, an inaptitude for show and spectacle. Show and spectacle are better managed by the Latin race and those whom it has moulded; the Welsh, like us, are a little awkward and resourceless in the organisation of a festi-

val. The presiding genius of the mystic circle, in our hideous nineteenth-century costume, relieved only by a green scarf, the wind drowning his voice and the dust powdering his whiskers, looked thoroughly wretched; so did the aspirants for bardic honours; and I believe, after about an hour of it, we all of us, as we stood shivering round the sacred stones, began half to wish for the Druid's sacrificial knife to end our sufferings. But the Druid's knife is gone from his hands; so we sought the shelter of the Eisteddfod building.

The sight inside was not lively. The president and his supporters mustered strong on the platform. On the floor the one or two front benches were pretty well filled, but their occupants were for the most part Saxons, who came there from curiosity, not from enthusiasm; and all the middle and back benches, where should have been the true enthusiasts, - the Welsh people, were nearly empty. The president, I am sure, showed a national spirit which was admirable. He addressed us Saxons in our own language, and called us 'the English branch of the descendants of the ancient Britons.' We received the compliment with the impassive dulness which is the characteristic of our nature; and the lively Celtic nature, which should have made up for the dulness of ours, was absent. A lady who sat by me, and who was the wife, I found, of a distinguished bard on the platform, told me, with emotion in her look and voice, how dear were these solemnities to the heart of her people, how deep was the interest which is aroused by them. I believe her, but still the whole performance, on that particular morning, was incurably lifeless. The recitation of the prize compositions began: pieces of verse and prose in the Welsh language, an essay on punctuality being, if I remember right, one of them; a poem on the march of Havelock, another. This went on for some time. Then Dr. Vaughan, - the well-known Nonconformist minister, a Welshman, and a good patriot, - addressed us in English. His speech was a powerful one, and he succeeded, I confess, in sending a faint thrill through our front benches; but it was the old familiar thrill which we have all of us felt a thousand times in Saxon chapels and meeting-halls, and had nothing bardic about it. I stepped out, and in the street I came across an acquaintance fresh from London and the parliamentary session. In a moment the spell of the Celtic genius was forgotten, the Philistinism of our Saxon nature made itself felt; and my friend and

I walked up and down by the roaring waves, talking not of ovides and bards, and triads and englyns, but of the sewage question, and the glories of our local self-government, and the mysterious perfections of the Metropolitan Board of Works.

I believe it is admitted, even by the admirers of Eisteddfods in general, that this particular Eisteddfod was not a success. Llandudno, it is said, was not the right place for it. Held in Conway Castle, as a few years ago it was, and its spectators, - an enthusiastic multitude, - filling the grand old ruin, I can imagine it a most impressive and interesting sight, even to a stranger labouring under the terrible disadvantage of being ignorant of the Welsh language. But even seen as I saw it at Llandudno, it had the power to set one thinking. An Eisteddfod is, no doubt, a kind of Olympic meeting; and that the common people of Wales should care for such a thing, shows something Greek in them, something spiritual, something humane, something (I am afraid one must add) which in the English common people is not to be found. This line of reflection has been followed by the accomplished Bishop of St. David's, and by the *Saturday Review*, it is just, it is fruitful, and those who pursued it merit our best thanks. But, from peculiar circumstances, the Llandudno meeting was, as I have said, such as not at all to suggest ideas of Olympia, and of a multitude touched by the divine flame, and hanging on the lips of Pindar. It rather suggested the triumph of the prosaic, practical Saxon, and the approaching extinction of an enthusiasm which he derides as factitious, a literature which he disdains as trash, a language which he detests as a nuisance.

I must say I quite share the opinion of my brother Saxons as to the practical inconvenience of perpetuating the speaking of Welsh. It may cause a moment's distress to one's imagination when one hears that the last Cornish peasant who spoke the old tongue of Cornwall is dead; but, no doubt, Cornwall is the better for adopting English, for becoming more thoroughly one with the rest of the country. The fusion of all the inhabitants of these islands into one homogeneous, English-speaking whole, the breaking down of barriers between us, the swallowing up of separate provincial nationalities, is a consummation to which the natural course of things irresistibly tends; it is a necessity of what is called modern civilisation, and modern

civilisation is a real, legitimate force; the change must come, and its accomplishment is a mere affair of time. The sooner the Welsh language disappears as an instrument of the practical, political, social life of Wales, the better; the better for England, the better for Wales itself. Traders and tourists do excellent service by pushing the English wedge farther and farther into the heart of the principality; Ministers of Education, by hammering it harder and harder into the elementary schools. Nor, perhaps, can one have much sympathy with the literary cultivation of Welsh as an instrument of living literature; and in this respect Eisteddfods encourage, I think, a fantastic and mischief-working delusion.

For all serious purposes in modern literature (and trifling purposes in it who would care to encourage?) the language of a Welshman is and must be English; if an Eisteddfod author has anything to say about punctuality or about the march of Havelock, he had much better say it in English; or rather, perhaps, what he has to say on these subjects may as well be said in Welsh, but the moment he has anything of real importance to say, anything the world will the least care to hear, he must speak English. Dilettanteism might possibly do much harm here, might mislead and waste and bring to nought a genuine talent. For all modern purposes, I repeat, let us all as soon as possible be one people; let the Welshman speak English, and, if he is an author, let him write English.

So far, I go along with the stream of my brother Saxons; but here, I imagine, I part company with them. They will have nothing to do with the Welsh language and literature on any terms; they would gladly make a clean sweep of it from the face of the earth. I, on certain terms, wish to make a great deal more of it than is made now; and I regard the Welsh literature, - or rather, dropping the distinction between Welsh and Irish, Gaels and Cymris, let me say Celtic literature, - as an object of very great interest. My brother Saxons have, as is well known, a terrible way with them of wanting to improve everything but themselves off the face of the earth; I have no such passion for finding nothing but myself everywhere; I like variety to exist and to show itself to me, and I would not for the world have the lineaments of the Celtic genius lost. But I know my brother Saxons, I know their strength, and I know that the Celtic genius will

make nothing of trying to set up barriers against them in the world of fact and brute force, of trying to hold its own against them as a political and social counter-power, as the soul of a hostile nationality. To me there is something mournful (and at this moment, when one sees what is going on in Ireland, how well may one say so!) in hearing a Welshman or an Irishman make pretensions, - natural pretensions, I admit, but how hopelessly vain! - to such a rival self-establishment; there is something mournful in hearing an Englishman scout them. Strength! alas, it is not strength, strength in the material world, which is wanting to us Saxons; we have plenty of strength for swallowing up and absorbing as much as we choose; there is nothing to hinder us from effacing the last poor material remains of that Celtic power which once was everywhere, but has long since, in the race of civilisation, fallen out of sight. We may threaten them with extinction if we will, and may almost say in so threatening them, like Cfsar in threatening with death the tribune Metellus who closed the treasury doors against him: 'And when I threaten this, young man, to threaten it is more trouble to me than to do it.' It is not in the outward and visible world of material life, that the Celtic genius of Wales or Ireland can at this day hope to count for much; it is in the inward world of thought and science. What it *has* been, what it *has* done, let it ask us to attend to that, as a matter of science and history; not to what it will be or will do, as a matter of modern politics. It cannot count appreciably now as a material power; but, perhaps, if it can get itself thoroughly known as an object of science, it may count for a good deal, - far more than we Saxons, most of us, imagine, - as a spiritual power.

The bent of our time is towards science, towards knowing things as they are; so the Celt's claims towards having his genius and its works fairly treated, as objects of scientific investigation, the Saxon can hardly reject, when these claims are urged simply on their own merits, and are not mixed up with extraneous pretensions which jeopardise them. What the French call the *science des origines*, the science of origins, - a science which is at the bottom of all real knowledge of the actual world, and which is every day growing in interest and importance - is very incomplete without a thorough critical account of the Celts, and their genius, language, and literature. This science has still great progress to make, but its progress,