

However much the Welsh nation has gained in learning and civilizing influences over recent centuries, they have also lost some of the most glorious features of their national character, namely – the human independence that stood with confident pride and looked everyone and everything straight in the eye without guilt – the nobility of soul that scorned any interference with rights or impairment of honour.

The fact of the matter is that certain circumstances have driven from the Welsh nation – from the great mass of the nation – the vital passion for justice and honour, and that esteemed spirit of independence that was rooted in our ancestors' souls. That spirit has deserted the land except for a few embers hidden in the corners of the eyes of the occasional youth sufficiently courageous to venture his fate among foreigners rather than endure contempt and oppression in his own land.

True, there are few state laws in the present age that fetter the Welshman; the time for those has passed, and in their stead social laws woven around him that fetter his actions far more effectively than the former. No, there is now no law that prohibits the speaking of Welsh, only that law that requires better English in order to gain the slightest preferment; there is no law that prevents any among the Welsh from owning land other than the law of 12s or 15s a week; there is no force in the law that used to obstruct the Welsh from getting married, but there is force in the fact that it is only English fops or Anglicised social climbers who are appropriate and acceptable to the coquettish daughters of our traders. In a word, the nets of circumstance that have been cast over the Welsh nation are now a greater hindrance in their activities than any strict law or oppressive statute ever made by an Edward or a Henry.

Does the reader never remember observing an honest old Welshman digging a ditch by the main road, his stooped back declaring that this is his fate in life, and if a young fellow-me-lad in black clothes, speaking broken Welsh, should come by and strike the old man with a stick and shout "Get on with it", is there under heaven's free firmament such a being as the old Welshman, who would endure it without taking umbrage, but doff his hat, and holding it in his hand, and fixing his eyes on it, his very knees trembling, mumbling that he was indeed getting on with it "good little Master"? – Further. Though they are the most industrious and honest of workers, yet this pusillanimity prevails on them to work long and hard, for the lowest prices in the market. They will endure arrogance and injustice which if offered to a Scot or an Englishman would be thrown back with the contempt it deserved.

We confidently assert that Wales's small traders are the most servile class in Great Britain. How many times, reader, have you been disgusted at seeing a trader making faces while selling a small quantity of cloth or tea or drugs to a woman in a bit of a carriage at his shop door? Have you some knowledge of the tricks-of-the-trade used to gain the favour of So-and-So, or did you hear the delight that Mrs So-and-So had been at the shop to buy three-yards of ribbon? If things like this are unfamiliar to the reader, even he will not have failed to recognise through observation and hearing the behaviour of this class at election time. This one here sells his principle because So-and-So is one of his customers, and the other sells it in the hope that These-and-These will buy from him, while the next one keeps his principle in his pocket in case nothing comes from that direction.

Wales is a country that was conquered by the English, and the conquerors have gradually been flowing into it, supported in this by the country's rulers, for ages, so that by now, their language has the upper hand in the country. The country's aristocracy are clubby Englishmen and the owners of the country's works are wealthy Englishmen. These two influential classes conduct their affairs entirely in English – their overseers and their deputies, their servants, their tradesmen and their tenants, wherever possible the English get preferment in all things and in all places.

This state of affairs in society, necessarily, produces the second thing we have noted, namely the lowly status of the Welsh in that society. When the great ones of the land fill all elevated positions, and favour all things Anglicised, there is no longer anything for the Welsh to do but to fill the occasional niche too lowly for the Englishman's ambition, or alternatively to pervert themselves into the English form in all things and to beg for jobs.

Our glorious ancient language is now like a limbless cripple, but when we regain the priceless sentiments of independence and honour, we *will* give it potency, - we will endow it with arms, - and we shall then become a vital and able "civic body".

As already noted, the lowly status of the great mass of the nation necessitates this. The English are a nation of tradesmen, the French a nation of pleasure-seekers, but the Welsh are a nation of workers. This is not a reason for *shame*, but it is to be *deplored*. Why should they submit to hard labour, while another nation next door gathers the cream in ease.

Everything is on such a small scale that the country's trade is in truth pitiful. This is not altogether their fault. The cause lies in large measure in the *fact* that the rich English who live in the country are dismissive of these small traders, and procure their goods from England or purchase them from some Englishman who has established himself in the neighbourhood, which causes the support for Welsh traders to be limited. They in order to cope with these disadvantages are obliged to live crabbed and miserly lives, and often act obsequiously to seek the favour of the wealthy English.

Whatever the respectable class of religion may say we confidently assert that the godly Welshman – who experienced the "powerful comfort" of the gospel through the medium of the powerful old words of his teacher's language – and who was raised in the sound of his mother's and sisters' hymns – can never derive the same delight and pleasure from them in a foreign tongue; and on the other hand, if he transform himself from being a Welshman, most examples prove that the conversion will be highly dangerous to religion – that this is a terrible crisis for the tender feelings of our genially humble gospel as, in most cases, pride is the motive for the conversion. To prove this true, we point our finger to those Welsh people in the English towns who have deserted their nation's language: they are, as a rule, either conceited and superficial, or have sunk into the lowest depths of depravity.