

IV. *A Letter from the late Mr. Edward Lhwyd, Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, to Dr. Tancred Robinson, F. R. S. containing several Observations in Natural History, made in his Travels thro' Wales.*

Swansey, Glamorganshire, Sept. 14. 1696.

Honoured Sir,

AT *Snowdon Hills* we met with little or nothing additional to what is in *Mr. Ray's Synopsis*; only the *little Bulb* I found plentifully in flower; and in one of the *Lakes* I gather'd a small Plant, which I suspect to be undescrib'd. I have given Orders to watch the *Subularia*; but the *Lake* where it grows is so high, that Men have seldom occasion to come near it, so that I have but slender hopes of any account of its flowering. I sent Roots of what rare Plants I met with, to the *Duke of Beaufort's*, my *Lord of London's*, and the *Physick Garden at Oxford*; and planted many of them at the *Bishop of Bangor's Garden*, which is about 7 Miles from these Mountains. I have tried several *Patterns* of most of them; as also of such Plants as our *Sea Coasts* afford, which are considerable for Number; amongst which I think I have two or three undescrib'd.

I searched diligently in these Mountains for *Figured Stones*; but met with none at all, except cubical *Marchasites*, and *Crystals*, whereof I found one about 9 Inches long, and thicker than my *Wrist*, transparent as *Glass* for the better half, but opaque towards the *Root* like *white Marble*. Some small ones I met with of the
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colour of a Topaze; and was inform'd of others purely Amethystine, found in the Valley of *Nant Phrantcon*. I find our Ancestors (for want of more precious Stones) made themselves Beads of opaque, or Marble Crystal; for I have one given me, cut like a Lottery-ball, and perforated; found not long since in *Meirionnyddshire*. I desire to know whether you are satisfy'd, that those transparent Stones figured by Dr. Plot, and by Dr. Lister [Phil. Transact. N^o. 201.] by the name of *Ombriae*, &c. are so form'd naturally. One of them was lately given me (set in Copper with a little Handle to it) by the name of *Tlās Owen Kyveiliog*, i. e. Owen of *Kyveiliog's* Jewel; so call'd, because found in an old *Crig* or *Barrow*, near the Place where he lived.

Sir *William Williams* hath several *Welsh* MSS. (tho' I think no Dictionary) that would be of use to me; but his Son tells me, he's resolv'd never to lend any. They are chiefly Modern Copies out of *Hengwrt* Study in *Meirionnyddshire*, which I am promis'd free Access to; and have this time taken a Catalogue of all the ancient MSS. it contains. There are the Works of *Taliesyn*, *Aneuryn gwawdydd*, *Myrdbyn ab Morvryn*, and *Kygodio Elaeth*, who lived in the 5th and 6th Centuries (but the small MS. containing them all seems to have been copied about 500 Years ago) as also of several others valuable in their kind. I must intreat you to direct me, if you can, how to procure the use of the *Cornish* MSS. you mention at Mr. *Anstiffe's*. I have been told one Mr *Keygwyn*, who died of late Years in *Cornwall*, left a sort of Dictionary of the Language: Perhaps Mr *Mozley*, or some other of your Acquaintance in that Country, can tell us whether it be true, or a mistake.

We have neither the *Ibex* nor *Rupicapra* in *Wales*; nor any other Goat but the Common. In our Language the Park Deer is call'd *Geiwr Danas*: The former Word signifies *Goats*, but whether the latter implies *Danish*

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(as if Deer had come from *Denmark*) or somewhat else, we know not.

The Grey Game (tho' I have not heard of the name) seems to be the Female of the Black; which we call *Gryg-ieir*, i. e. *Gallinæ ericetorum*. The Red Game we call *ieir y mynydd*, i. e. *Gallinula montana*; because in our Country they keep to the highest Hills, or Alps, [in Welsh *banneu*,] especially if heathy.

There came this last *May* into *Cardigan*shire two strange Birds (as I guess by the Description given them) of the Aquatic fissiped Tribe. They say they were almost two Yards tall, and of a whitish colour, with the Tips of their Wings dark. I took 'em to be some sort of Exotic Crane; which, whether they portend a Common-Wealth or not, I leave to their Interpretation who regard *Omens*.

This time two Years, there came a Flock of Birds [about a Hundred] to a Hemp-yard, at a place called *Lhan Dhewi Velfrey* in *Pembrokeshire*; and in one Afternoon destroyed all the Hempseed. They described the Cocks to be all over red as Scarlet; the Hens greenish above, and red underneath; about as big, or little less than Blackbirds; with Bills more stubbed and bigger than that of a Bull-finch. I suspect these to have been *Virginia* Nightingals; otherwise, I know not what to make of them.

Our Lakes (tho' they are very numerous) afford no Fish that I can hear of, besides Trout and Eel, and *Torgoch* and *Gwiniad*, i. e. *Shelley* and *Charre*. A Fisherman protested to me, that in a Lake called *Lbyn y Cwn* near *Lhan Berys*, he had several times catch'd Monocular Trouts, the Heads whereof were always somewhat distorted or contracted awry. They farther assured me, that the two highest Lakes of *Snowdon* (*Phynnon Vreëch* and *Phynnon Iâs*) afford no Fish at all; and that the Trouts of the other Lakes differ much in colour: But these

these things must, and shall (God willing) be better inquired into.

Next Summer come Twelvemonth, I intend to try the Barometer and Thermometer on the Top of *Snowdon* and *Cader Idris*, and to take their perpendicular Height, and do any thing else that you shall advise, which may be done conveniently.

There is no Brimstone or Pumice-stones on the Tops of our Mountains, nor any thing else that I suspect to have been the Effects of Vulcano's. What seemed to me most strange, were waste confus'd Stones, and (to appearance) fragments of Rocks, standing on the Surface of the Earth, not only in wide Plains, but on the Summits also of the highest Mountains.

I have never seen any Lake or Spring on the Summit of a Hill. There are indeed on the tops of some Hills, where stood anciently Castles or Forts, certain Wells called in Welsh *Pydew*; a Word of the same Signification as well as Sound with the Latin *Puteus*: But no Water runs out of these; and several of them I found quite dry. I am,

Sir,

Your most obliged humble Servant,

E. LHWYD.