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GENERAL PANORAMA OF LLANDUDNO.

[Poulton, Lee.

LLANDUDNO AND THE EISTEDDFOD.

BY OWEN CONWAY.



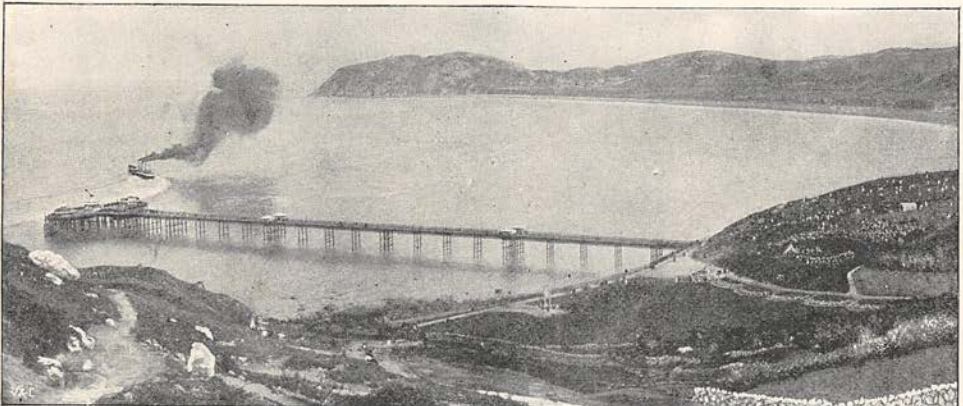
GUESS I never saw a town so thoroughly ventilated," was an American's comment on Llandudno. One can understand what he meant

when, standing on the asphalt promenade, the breezes from Orme's Bay in front meet the summer winds from Conway Bay behind.

At the beginning of the Queen's reign Llandudno was a tiny collection of cottages, with one church and two inns, situated on the shore of the Irish Sea. Now it is one of the most popular and pleasant of Welsh watering-places. And this month it will receive additional attention as the scene of the National Eisteddfod, where the musicians of the principality will foregather in their multitudes.

First, it will be appropriate to deal with Llandudno, and next to consider the great festival, the very name of which is a stumbling-block to any but Welshmen.

St. Tudno, to whom the parish church is dedicated, has given his name to the town, the *t* being changed into *d* by a process very familiar to philologists. The rise of the place was aided by its selection as one of the stations for semaphore signals between Liverpool and Holyhead, and after the rail had been made from Chester to Holyhead, its success as a seaside resort was assured. The Improvement Commissioners very soon began to shape the growth of the town, with the result that it is well planned and picturesque, although plentifully supplied with streets and houses. On your right hand when you face the sea is Little Orme's



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LLANDUDNO, LOOKING SEAWARDS.

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Head; on the left is Great Orme's Head, both landmarks on the coast. Near the latter is the Happy Valley, which Llandudno owes to Lord Mostyn, who presented the ground as a memorial of the Queen's jubilee. It is very pretty with its foliage and green lawns, and thousands during the year have reason to be grateful to its donor. Lord Mostyn succeeded to the title in 1884, and is now in his fortieth year. A fine drinking-fountain, given by Lady Augusta Mostyn, stands in the centre of the Happy Valley. This year the Gorsedd meetings will be held

down the green aisles of the dead one comes to a tiny headstone, brief as the life it commemorates. On the white marble are engraved these words:—

"In loving remembrance of Leonard Bright (son of John Bright, M.P., and Margaret Elizabeth, his wife), who died at Llandudno, November 8, 1864, aged nearly six years.

'And there shall be one fold and one shepherd.'

To this spot, whither many feet have since turned, the great statesman used to ascend from beautiful Llandudno. Here, on the edge of the graveyard, under the



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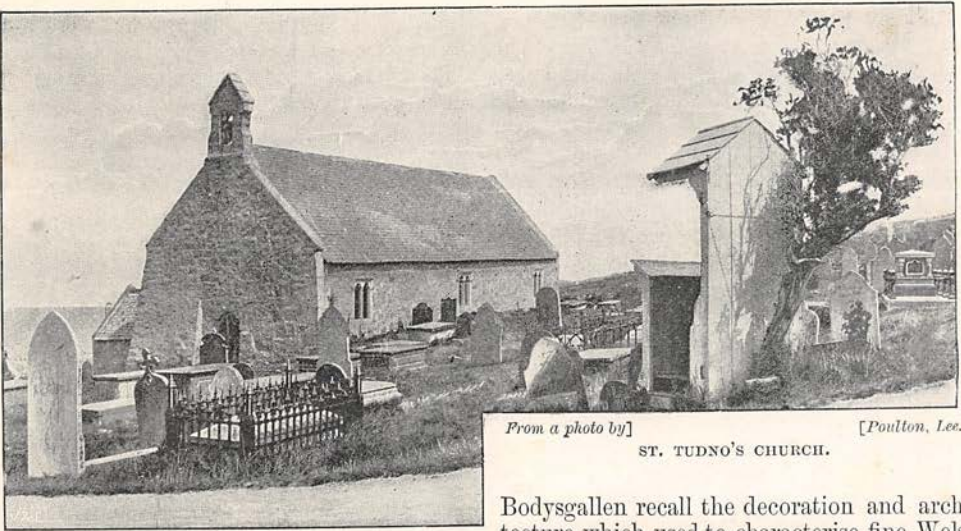
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THE HAPPY VALLEY.
(Lord Mostyn's gift to Llandudno.)

in this charming spot each morning during the four days of the Eisteddfod.

Two miles from the town you find on the brow of the Great Orme's Head the old parish church of Llandudno. The first edifice on this spot dates back to the seventh century. The present church is oblong in form—a quaint building, bearing on its walls the marks of past battles of the breeze. The churchyard used to be the only burial place in the parish and was enlarged in 1872. Along "the white road, slow winding," which skirts the cliffs of Great Orme's Head, pilgrims from Llandudno often wend their way to a little grave made famous by the memory of John Bright. Walking

shadow of old St. Tudno's church, John Bright would muse in peaceful solitude. To him "the magic and the mystery of the sea," where the stately ships sail on to their haven under the hill, did not there appeal with the same pathos as did the resting place of his little son. Graves have often proved the white stones marking crises in a man's career. It was after the stunning blow occasioned by the death of his young wife that John Bright was roused by Richard Cobden to the great enterprise of his life. And is it unreasonable to trace to this quiet God's acre, overlooking the blue waves, some of the finest inspirations of his noble oratory? Gazing at the modest tomb,



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ST. TUDNO'S CHURCH.

so touching in its white simplicity, one's last thought is of John Bright cherishing the unfading memory of his child.

It is most probable that Great Orme's Head was formerly an island. It is at present connected with the mainland by some low marshes. At the base of the headland some copper is extracted from two mines. Along the beautiful Marine Drive you pass various curious caverns designated by such names as "The Dutchman's Cave," and "The Hiding Cave"; the latter is supplied with seats and a stone table, making a pleasant resting-place by the way. In the caverns one sees many sea-birds, such as cormorants, gulls and herons, whose wings fluttering in the sunlight as they fly out to sea add to the wild beauty of the scene.

Little Orme's Head possesses fewer attractions than its rival. There are three caves and an old farmhouse rich in traditions. About a mile from it stands St. Trillo's chapel, containing a well whose water is supposed to have powers so varied as to heal a wound or find a lost umbrella!

Gloddaeth and Bodysgallen are other places which the sightseer usually seeks. The shady woods of Gloddaeth are especially welcome after the bright sunshine of Llandudno. Both Gloddaeth and

Bodysgallen recall the decoration and architecture which used to characterise fine Welsh residences four or five centuries ago.

Few towns make such continual efforts to entertain their visitors as Llandudno. There is therefore every reason to expect an unusual success when the Eisteddfod meets this month. There is plenty of music at Llandudno all the year round, but during the four days devoted to the competitions enormous addition will be made. Concerts, at which some of our most famous vocalists will sing, are to be held during each day. It is impossible to describe the enthusiasm which animates the Welsh at the Eisteddfodau—it is something unique in its wild fervour. For months before, the choirs all over the



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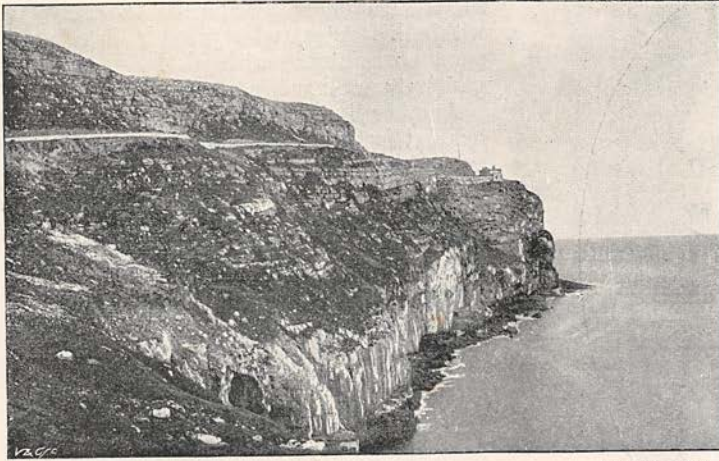
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LLANDUDNO PIER.

principality have been training to achieve success, and the keenest rivalry exists among them. When the day comes for competi-

ing speech, containing not only appreciation of the Welsh singers, but advice that they should exercise a wider choice of pieces to render. The eminent conductor's sudden death in the spring was felt as a personal loss by hosts of those who had heard and seen him at the last Eisteddfod.

Of all the curiously interesting ceremonies observed at these national gatherings special reference must be made to the Gorsedd, a Druidic rite of great antiquity, without which no Eisteddfod could possibly pass muster. The Gorsedd assembles each morning at nine o'clock at some spot suitable for an outdoor



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THE CLIFFS OF ORME'S HEAD.

[Poulton, Lee.

tion, hundreds and thousands flock to the Eisteddfod, many in national costume, all looking their brightest. The judges have a very difficult task before them in discriminating between choirs whose musical excellence is so nearly alike. At last the verdict is given, and the victors are acclaimed amid the disappointment of the rest of the competitors. Sometimes Madame Patti, whose home is in Wales, has sung to the delight of thousands, or a well-known speaker, such as Sir Theodore Martin or Sir Lewis Morris, delivers an address full of eulogy of "gallant little Wales." At Bangor the Queen of Roumania ("Carmen Sylva") was present, and was much impressed by the proceedings. Two years ago the Eisteddfod was honoured by the presence of the Prince and Princess of Wales. Many will remember that last year one of the judges was Sir Joseph Barnby, who delivered more than one interest-

gathering. The chief bard, accompanied by a number of bards of lesser degree, proceeds bareheaded to a large, roughly hewn stone, which forms an open-air altar, surrounded by a circle of twelve other stones, each representing a bard. At his approach a blast is blown from a trumpet, whereupon he ascends to the top of the altar and, standing in the face of the Sun, the eye of Light, he unsheaths his sword and calls out three times in succession, "Is there peace?" At each inquiry the response rolls from the



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THE MARINE DRIVE ROUND GREAT ORME'S HEAD.

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assembled spectators, "Peace." The motto of the Eisteddfod, the Gorsedd prayer, and further trumpet blasts complete the cere-



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[Stater, Llandudno.

HWFA MÔN, THE ARCH-DRUID.

mony of opening the Gorsedd. The various distinguished personages who are to be created bards or Druids are then conducted to the mystic circle of stones and duly invested with a green or a white ribbon, according to the particular degree of the honour to be conferred upon them. Each in turn mounts the altar and delivers a speech befitting the occasion.

The most important personage at the Gorsedd is the Arch-Druid, whose office one might be pardoned for supposing dates back to the age of groves of sacred oak and mistletoe, when the long-bearded, white-robed priest chanted his own compositions, as, sickle in hand, he led on the younger bards to some high rite. Facts are sometimes cruelly prosaic however, and in this case they do everything in their power to sweep away such illusions. The Arch-Druid dates back no farther than the year 1888—a modern institution indeed! Neither a flowing beard nor a white robe seems to be an essential qualification for this much coveted position (which, by the way, is a life appointment), but the Arch-Druid sets an example in the matter of long hair which his brother bards religiously strive to emulate.

The present Arch-Druid, Hwfa Môn, has fairly substantiated his title to the dignity of chief bard. He has won three "chairs"

(the highest prize offered by the literary section being an oak chair and forty pounds), and is an orator of exceptional ability. His eloquence impresses his countrymen to a remarkable degree, while to the stranger within his gates, who possibly has but a scant acquaintance with his language, it is positively awe-inspiring.

Another important section of the Eisteddfod is the Cymmrodorion, or the social science section, which was established by the late Sir Hugh Owen in 1866. This body, which may be called a national literary association, arranges for meetings to be held, at which papers are read by well-known men and women on many and varied subjects, appealing particularly to the national interests of the Welsh. Strangely enough the headquarters of this society, and also of the National Eisteddfod Association, are in London. The honorary secretary of the Association, Mr. T. Marchant-Williams, is a most energetic and indefatigable worker on behalf of his fellow-countrymen, and the very soul of courtesy in the matter of supplying information concerning Eisteddfodau past and present.



From a photo by]

[Barrauds.

MISS MAGGIE DAVIES.

To many who have never been present at one of these characteristic Welsh gatherings an Eisteddfod is merely a musical festival and little more. This is a most erroneous idea however. True, music is an important feature in the proceedings, but the sister arts of literature and painting are also well to the fore, and with them many practical industries. For instance, in addition to the vocal and instrumental competitions, valuable prizes are given in the literary department for poems, essays and translations; while the "Arts and Industries" section offer monetary prizes from twenty-five pounds downwards for oil and water-colour drawings and other art studies. Architecture, sculpture, photography, botany, geology, art needlework and plain sewing, have special prizes allotted to them, and even plumbers, joiners, smiths, painters, and such like useful members of society have opportunities given them for distinguishing themselves, each in his particular craft. Altogether prizes to the extent of fifteen hundred pounds will be distributed among the successful competitors at the present Eisteddfod.

This year the following artistes have been

engaged to sing at the Eisteddfod: Miss Margaret Macintyre is Scotch and Madame Belle Cole is American, but Miss Maggie Davies, Madame Hannah Jones, and Miss Gertrude Hughes are undeniably Welsh. So are Mr. Ben Davies, Mr. Ffrancon Davies, Mr. Hirwen Jones, Mr. David Hughes, and Mr. Lloyd Chandos. We give the portraits of two of the younger vocalists. Miss Maggie Davies, a singer who has quickly come into public notice, is a native of Dowlais, and received her musical training at the Royal College of Music, where she studied for six years. She made a success in Professor Villiers Stanford's "Shamus O'Brien," in which she sang for several weeks.

The other is Mr. Lloyd Chandos, who has made rapid progress as a tenor since his *début* at the Royal Choral Society's performance of the "Messiah" on Good Friday, 1895, in the Albert Hall. His surname was originally Lloyd, but for obvious reasons he has preferred to be known as Lloyd Chandos. He was born in London of Welsh parents, and received his chief musical education under Sir Joseph Barnby at the Guildhall School of Music.



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MR. LLOYD CHANDOS.

[Russell.



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LITTLE ORME'S HEAD

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