

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07908-2 - Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx: Volume 1

John Rhys

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## CAMBRIDGE LIBRARY COLLECTION

*Books of enduring scholarly value*

### **Anthropology**

The first use of the word ‘anthropology’ in English was recorded in 1593, but its modern use to indicate the study and science of humanity became current in the late nineteenth century. At that time a separate discipline had begun to evolve from many component strands (including history, archaeology, linguistics, biology and anatomy), and the study of so-called ‘primitive’ peoples was given impetus not only by the reports of individual explorers but also by the need of colonial powers to define and classify the unfamiliar populations which they governed. From the ethnographic writings of early explorers to the 1898 Cambridge expedition to the Torres Straits, often regarded as the first truly ‘anthropological’ field research, these books provide eye-witness information on often vanished peoples and ways of life, as well as evidence for the development of a new scientific discipline.

### **Celtic Folklore**

John Rhys (1840–1915), the son of a Welsh farmer, studied at Oxford and in Germany, and became the first professor of Celtic languages at Oxford in 1877. His research ranged across the fields of linguistics, history, archaeology, ethnology and religion, and his many publications were instrumental in establishing the field of Celtic studies. This two-volume work, published in 1901, had its beginnings in the late 1870s, when Rhys began collecting Welsh folk tales. His entertaining preface sheds light on folklore fieldwork and its difficulties, including fragmentary evidence, alteration of stories by those interviewed, and the hostility of the religious and educational establishment to ‘superstition’. Volume 1 begins with these stories; for each text, Rhys provides fascinating information about his sources, and an English translation. Later chapters present comparative material, focusing particularly on the Isle of Man, and a detailed account of Welsh legends and customs associated with wells.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07908-2 - Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx: Volume 1

John Rhys

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

Cambridge University Press has long been a pioneer in the reissuing of out-of-print titles from its own backlist, producing digital reprints of books that are still sought after by scholars and students but could not be reprinted economically using traditional technology. The Cambridge Library Collection extends this activity to a wider range of books which are still of importance to researchers and professionals, either for the source material they contain, or as landmarks in the history of their academic discipline.

Drawing from the world-renowned collections in the Cambridge University Library and other partner libraries, and guided by the advice of experts in each subject area, Cambridge University Press is using state-of-the-art scanning machines in its own Printing House to capture the content of each book selected for inclusion. The files are processed to give a consistently clear, crisp image, and the books finished to the high quality standard for which the Press is recognised around the world. The latest print-on-demand technology ensures that the books will remain available indefinitely, and that orders for single or multiple copies can quickly be supplied.

The Cambridge Library Collection brings back to life books of enduring scholarly value (including out-of-copyright works originally issued by other publishers) across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and in science and technology.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07908-2 - Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx: Volume 1

John Rhys

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

# Celtic Folklore

*Welsh and Manx*

VOLUME 1

JOHN RHYS



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07908-2 - Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx: Volume 1

John Rhys

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge, CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.  
It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of  
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108079082](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108079082)

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2015

This edition first published 1901

This digitally printed version 2015

ISBN 978-1-108-07908-2 Paperback

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect  
the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

Cambridge University Press wishes to make clear that the book, unless originally published  
by Cambridge, is not being republished by, in association or collaboration with,  
or with the endorsement or approval of, the original publisher or its successors in title.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07908-2 - Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx: Volume 1

John Rhys

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

# CELTIC FOLKLORE

J. RHŶS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07908-2 - Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx: Volume 1

John Rhys

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

HENRY FROWDE, M.A.

PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07908-2 - Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx: Volume 1

John Rhys

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

# CELTIC FOLKLORE

## WELSH AND MANX

BY

JOHN RHÏS, M.A., D.LITT.

HON. LL.D. OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

PROFESSOR OF CELTIC

.PRINCIPAL OF JESUS COLLEGE, OXFORD

VOLUME I

OXFORD

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

MDCCCCI

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07908-2 - Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx: Volume 1

John Rhys

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

**Oxford**

PRINTED AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

BY HORACE HART, M.A.

PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY



Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07908-2 - Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx: Volume 1

John Rhys

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

TO ALL THOSE  
WHO HAVE IN ANY WAY CONTRIBUTED TO  
THE PRODUCTION OF THIS WORK  
IT IS RESPECTFULLY  
DEDICATED  
IN TOKEN OF HIS GRATITUDE  
BY  
THE AUTHOR

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07908-2 - Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx: Volume 1

John Rhys

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

Our modern idioms, with all their straining after the abstract, are but primitive man's mental tools adapted to the requirements of civilized life, and they often retain traces of the form and shape which the neolithic worker's chipping and polishing gave them.

## P R E F A C E

TOWARDS the close of the seventies I began to collect Welsh folklore. I did so partly because others had set the example elsewhere, and partly in order to see whether Wales could boast of any story-tellers of the kind that delight the readers of Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*. I soon found what I was not wholly unprepared for, that as a rule I could not get a single story of any length from the mouths of any of my fellow countrymen, but a considerable number of bits of stories. In some instances these were so scrappy that it took me years to discover how to fit them into their proper context; but, speaking generally, I may say, that, as the materials, such as they were, accumulated, my initial difficulties disappeared. I was, however, always a little afraid of refreshing my memory with the legends of other lands lest I should read into those of my own, ideas possibly foreign to them. While one is busy collecting, it is safest probably not to be too much engaged in comparison: when the work of collecting is done that of comparing may begin. But after all I have not attempted to proceed very far in that direction, only just far enough to find elucidation here and there for the meaning of items of folklore brought under my notice. To have gone further would have involved me in excursions hopelessly beyond the limits of my undertaking, for comparative folklore has lately assumed

such dimensions, that it seems best to leave it to those who make it their special study.

It is a cause of genuine regret to me that I did not commence my inquiries earlier, when I had more opportunities of pursuing them, especially when I was a village schoolmaster in Anglesey and could have done the folklore of that island thoroughly; but my education, such as it was, had been of a nature to discourage all interest in anything that savoured of heathen lore and superstition. Nor is that all, for the schoolmasters of my early days took very little trouble to teach their pupils to keep their eyes open or take notice of what they heard around them; so I grew up without having acquired the habit of observing anything, except the Sabbath. It is to be hoped that the younger generation of schoolmasters trained under more auspicious circumstances, when the baleful influence of Robert Lowe has given way to a more enlightened system of public instruction, will do better, and succeed in fostering in their pupils habits of observation. At all events there is plenty of work still left to be done by careful observers and skilful inquirers, as will be seen from the geographical list showing approximately the provenance of the more important contributions to the Kymric folklore in this collection: the counties will be found to figure very unequally. Thus the anglicizing districts have helped me very little, while the more Welsh county of Carnarvon easily takes the lead; but I am inclined to regard the anomalous features of that list as in a great measure due to accident. In other words, some neighbourhoods have been luckier than others in having produced or attracted men who paid attention to local folklore; and if other counties were to be worked equally with Carnarvonshire, some of them would probably be found

## PREFACE

ix

not much less rich in their yield. The anglicizing counties in particular are apt to be disregarded both from the Welsh and the English points of view, in folklore just as in some other things; and in this connexion I cannot help mentioning the premature death of the Rev. Elias Owen as a loss which Welsh folklorists will not soon cease to regret.

My information has been obtained partly *viva voce*, partly by letter. In the case of the stories written down for me in Welsh, I may mention that in some instances the language is far from good; but it has not been thought expedient to alter it in any way, beyond introducing some consistency into the spelling. In the case of the longest specimen of the written stories, Mr. J. C. Hughes' *Curse of Pantannas*, it is worthy of notice in passing, that the rendering of it into English was followed by a version in blank verse by Sir Lewis Morris, who published it in his *Songs of Britain*. With regard to the work generally, my original intention was to publish the materials, obtained in the way described, with such stories already in print as might be deemed necessary by way of setting for them; and to let any theories or deductions in which I might be disposed to indulge follow later. In this way the first six chapters and portions of some of the others appeared from time to time in the publications of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion and in those of the Folk-Lore Society. This would have allowed me to divide the present work into the two well marked sections of materials and deductions. But, when the earlier part came to be edited, I found that I had a good deal of fresh material at my disposal, so that the chapters in question had in some instances to be considerably lengthened and in some others modified in other ways. Then as to the deductive half of the work, it may be mentioned that

certain portions of the folklore, though ever apt to repeat themselves, were found when closely scrutinized to show serious lacunæ, which had to be filled in the course of the reasoning suggested by the materials in hand. Thus the idea of the whole consisting of two distinctly defined sections had to be given up or else allowed to wait till I should find time to recast it. But I could no more look forward to any such time than to the eventual possibility of escaping minor inconsistencies by quietly stepping through the looking-glass and beginning my work with the index instead of resting content to make it in the old-fashioned way at the end. There was, however, a third course, which is only mentioned to be rejected, and that was to abstain from all further publication ; but what reader of books has ever known any of his authors to adopt that!

To crown these indiscretions I have to confess that even when most of what I may call the raw material had been brought together, I had no clear idea what I was going to do with it ; but I had a hazy notion, that, as in the case of an inveterate talker whose stream of words is only made the more boisterous by obstruction, once I sat down to write I should find reasons and arguments flowing in. It may seem as though I had been secretly conjuring with Vergil's words *viresque adquirit eundo*. Nothing so deliberate: the world in which I live swarms with busybodies dying to organize everybody and everything, and my instinctive opposition to all that order of tyranny makes me inclined to cherish a somewhat wild sort of free will. Still the cursory reader would be wrong to take for granted that there is no method in my madness: should he take the trouble to look for it, he would find that it has a certain unity of purpose, which has been worked out in the later chapters ; but to spare him that trouble

## PREFACE

xi

I venture to become my own expositor and to append the following summary:—

The materials crowded into the earlier chapters mark out the stories connected with the fairies, whether of the lakes or of the dry land, as the richest lode to be exploited in the mine of Celtic folklore. That work is attempted in the later chapters; and the analysis of what may briefly be described as the fairy lore given in the earlier ones carries with it the means of forcing the conviction, that the complex group of ideas identified with the little people is of more origins than one; in other words, that it is drawn partly from history and fact, and partly from the world of imagination and myth. The latter element proves on examination to be inseparably connected with certain ancient beliefs in divinities and demons associated, for instance, with lakes, rivers, and floods. Accordingly, this aspect of fairy lore has been dealt with in chapters vi and vii: the former is devoted largely to the materials themselves, while the latter brings the argument to a conclusion as to the intimate connexion of the fairies with the water-world. Then comes the turn of the other kind of origin to be discussed, namely, that which postulates the historical existence of the fairies as a real race on which have been lavishly superinduced various impossible attributes. This opens up a considerable vista into the early ethnology of these islands, and it involves a variety of questions bearing on the fortunes here of other races. In the series which suggests itself the fairies come first as the oldest and lowest people: then comes that which I venture to call Pictish, possessed of a higher civilization and of warlike instincts. Next come the earlier Celts of the Goidelic branch, the traces, linguistic and other, of whose presence in Wales have demanded repeated notice; and last of all come the other Celts, the linguistic

ancestors of the Welsh and all the other speakers of Brythonic. The development of these theses, as far as folklore supplies materials, occupies practically the remaining five chapters. Among the subsidiary questions raised may be instanced those of magic and the origin of druidism; not to mention a neglected aspect of the Arthurian legend, the intimate association of the Arthur of Welsh folklore and tradition with Snowdon, and Arthur's attitude towards the Goidelic population in his time.

Lastly, I have the pleasant duty of thanking all those who have helped me, whether by word of mouth or by letter, whether by reference to already printed materials or by assistance in any other way: the names of many of them will be found recorded in their proper places. As a rule my inquiries met with prompt replies, and I am not aware that any difficulties were purposely thrown in my way. Nevertheless I have had difficulties in abundance to encounter, such as the natural shyness of some of those whom I wished to examine on the subject of their recollections, and above all the unavoidable difficulty of cross-questioning those whose information reached me by post. For the precise value of any evidence bearing on Celtic folklore is almost impossible to ascertain, unless it can be made the subject of cross-examination. This arises from the fact that we Celts have a knack of thinking ourselves in complete accord with what we fancy to be in the inquirer's mind, so that we are quite capable of misleading him in perfect good faith. A most apposite instance, deserving of being placed on record, came under my notice many years ago. In the summer of 1868 I spent several months in Paris, where I met the historian Henri Martin more than once. On being introduced to him he reminded me that he had



## PREFACE

xiii

visited South Wales not long before, and that he had been delighted to find the peasantry there still believing in the transmigration of souls. I expressed my surprise, and remarked that he must be joking. Nothing of the kind, he assured me, as he had questioned them himself: the fact admitted of no doubt. I expressed further surprise, but as I perceived that he was proud of the result of his friendly encounters with my countrymen I never ventured to return to the subject, though I always wondered what in the world it could mean. A few years ago, however, I happened to converse with one of the most charming and accomplished of Welsh ladies, when she chanced to mention Henri Martin's advent: it turned out that he had visited Dr. Charles Williams, then the Principal of Jesus College, and that Dr. Williams introduced him to his friends in South Wales. So M. Martin arrived among the hospitable friends of the lady talking to me, who had in fact to act as his interpreter: I never understood that he could talk much English or any Welsh. Now I have no doubt that M. Martin, with his fixed ideas about the druids and their teaching, propounded palpably leading questions for the Welsh people whom he wished to examine. His fascinating interpreter put them into terse Welsh, and the whole thing was done. I could almost venture to write out the dialogue, which gave back to the great Frenchman his own exact notions from the lips of simple peasants in that subtle non-Aryan syntax, which no Welsh barrister has ever been able to explain to the satisfaction of a bewildered English judge trying to administer justice among a people whom he cannot wholly comprehend.

This will serve to illustrate one of the difficulties with which the collector of folklore in Wales has

to cope. I have done my best to reduce the possible extent of the error to which it might give rise; and it is only fair to say that those whom I plagued with my questionings bore the tedium of it with patience, and that to them my thanks are due in a special degree. Neither they, however, nor I, could reasonably complain, if we found other folklorists examining other witnesses on points which had already occupied us; for in such matters one may say with confidence, that *in the multitude of counsellors there is safety*.

JOHN RHÛS.

JESUS COLLEGE, OXFORD,  
*Christmas, 1900.*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07908-2 - Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx: Volume 1

John Rhys

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## CONTENTS

GOEGRAPHICAL LIST OF AUTHORITIES . . . . .	PAGE xxv
LIST OF BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES . . . . .	xxxi

## CHAPTER I

UNDINE'S KYMRIC SISTERS . . . . .	I
I. The legend of ILyn y Fan Fach . . . . .	2
II. The legend of ILyn y Forwyn . . . . .	23
III. Some Snowdon lake legends . . . . .	30
IV. The heir of Ystrad . . . . .	38
V. ILandegai and ILantftechid . . . . .	50
VI. Mapes' story of ILyn Syfadon . . . . .	70

## CHAPTER II

THE FAIRIES' REVENGE . . . . .	75
I. Beđgelert and its environs . . . . .	75
II. The Pennant Valley . . . . .	107
III. Glasynys' yarns . . . . .	109
IV. An apple story . . . . .	125
V. The Conwy afanc . . . . .	130
VI. The Berwyn and Aran Fawđwy . . . . .	135
VII. The hinterland of Aberdovey . . . . .	141
VIII. Some more Merioneth stories . . . . .	146
IX. The Children of Rhys Đwfn . . . . .	151
X. Southey and the Green Isles of the Sea . . . . .	169
XI. The curse of Pantannas . . . . .	173
XII. More fairy displeasure . . . . .	192

## CHAPTER III

	PAGE
FAIRY WAYS AND WORDS . . . . .	197
I. The folklore of Nant Conwy . . . . .	197
II. Scenes of the Mabinogi of Math . . . . .	207
III. Celynnog Fawr and Llanaelhaearn . . . . .	214
IV. The blind man's folklore . . . . .	219
V. The old saddler's recollections . . . . .	222
VI. Traces of Tom Tit Tot . . . . .	226
VII. March and his horse's ears . . . . .	231
VIII. The story of the Marchlyn Mawr . . . . .	234
IX. The fairy ring of Cae Lleidr Dyfrydog . . . . .	238
X. A Cambrian kelpie . . . . .	242
XI. Sundry traits of fairy character . . . . .	244
XII. Ynys Geinon and its fairy treasures . . . . .	251
XIII. The aged infant . . . . .	257
XIV. Fairy speech . . . . .	269

## CHAPTER IV

MANX FOLKLORE . . . . .	284
The fenodyree or Manx brownie . . . . .	286
The sleih beggey or little people . . . . .	289
The butches or witches and the hare . . . . .	293
Charmers and their methods . . . . .	296
Comparisons from the Channel Islands . . . . .	301
Magic and ancient modes of thought . . . . .	302
The efficacy of fire to detect the witch . . . . .	304
Burnt sacrifices . . . . .	305
Laa Boaldyn or May-day . . . . .	308
Laa Lhunys or the beginning of harvest . . . . .	312
Laa Houney or Hollantide beginning the year . . . . .	315
Sundry prognostications and the time for them . . . . .	317

## CONTENTS

xvii

## CHAPTER V

	PAGE
THE FENODYREE AND HIS FRIENDS . . . . .	323
Lincolnshire parallels . . . . .	323
The brownie of Blednoch and Bwca'r Trwyn . . .	325
Prognostication parallels from Lincolnshire and Herefordshire . . . . .	327
The traffic in wind and the Gallizenæ . . . . .	330
Wells with rags and pins . . . . .	332
St. Catherine's hen plucked at Colby . . . . .	335
The qualtagh or the first-foot and the question of race	336
Sundry instances of things unlucky . . . . .	342
Manx reserve and the belief in the Enemy of Souls .	346
The witch of Endor's influence and the respecta- bility of the charmer's vocation . . . . .	349
Public penance enforced pretty recently . . . . .	350

## CHAPTER VI

THE FOLKLORE OF THE WELLS . . . . .	354
Rag wells in Wales . . . . .	354
The question of distinguishing between offerings and vehicles of disease . . . . .	358
Mr. Hartland's decision . . . . .	359
The author's view revised and illustrated . . . . .	360
T. E. Morris' account of the pin well of <i>ILanfaglan</i> .	362
Other wishing and divining wells . . . . .	364
The sacred fish of <i>ILanberis</i> and <i>ILangybi</i> . . . . .	366
Ffynnon Grassi producing the Glasfryn lake . . . . .	367
The Morgan of that lake and his name . . . . .	372
Ffynnon Gywer producing Bala Lake . . . . .	376
Bala and other towns doomed to submersion . . . . .	377

RHYS

b

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07908-2 - Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx: Volume 1

John Rhys

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xviii

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
The legend of <i>l</i> Lyn <i>l</i> Lech Owen . . . . .	379
The parallels of Lough Neagh and Lough Ree . . . . .	381
Seithennin's realm overwhelmed by the sea . . . . .	382
Seithennin's name and its congeners . . . . .	385
Prof. Dawkins on the Lost Lands of Wales . . . . .	388
Certain Irish wells not visited with impunity . . . . .	389
The Lough Sheelin legend compared with that of Seithennin . . . . .	393
The priesthood of the wells of St. Elian and St. Teilo . . . . .	395

## CHAPTER VII

TRIUMPHS OF THE WATER-WORLD . . . . .	401
The sea encroaching on the coast of Glamorgan . . . . .	402
The Kenfig tale of crime and vengeance . . . . .	403
The Crymlyn story and its touch of fascination . . . . .	404
Nennius' description of Oper Linn Liguau compared . . . . .	406
The vengeance legend of Bala Lake . . . . .	408
Legends about the <i>l</i> Lynclys Pool . . . . .	410
The fate of Tyno Helig . . . . .	414
The belief in cities submerged intact . . . . .	415
The phantom city and the bells of Aberdovey . . . . .	418
The ethics of the foregoing legends discussed . . . . .	419
The limits of the delay of punishment . . . . .	420
Why the fairies delay their vengeance . . . . .	423
Non-ethical legends of the eruption of water . . . . .	425
Cutting the green sward a probable violation of ancient tabu avenged by water divinities . . . . .	427
The lake <i>afanc</i> 's rôle in this connexion . . . . .	428
The pigmies of the water-world . . . . .	432
The Conwy <i>afanc</i> and the Highland water-horse . . . . .	433
The equine features of March and Labraid Lorc . . . . .	435
Mider and the Mac Óc's well horses . . . . .	436
The Gilla Decair's horse and Du March Moro . . . . .	437
March ab Meirchion associated with Mona . . . . .	439

## CONTENTS

xix

	PAGE
The Welsh deluge Triads . . . . .	440
Names of the Dee and other rivers in North Wales . . . . .	441
The Lydney god Nudons, Nuada, and <i>ILuð</i> . . . . .	445
The fairies associated in various ways with water . . . . .	449
The cyhiraeth and the Welsh banshee . . . . .	452
Ancestress rather than ancestor . . . . .	454

## CHAPTER VIII

WELSH CAVE LEGENDS . . . . .	456
The question of classification . . . . .	456
The fairy cave of the <i>Arennig Fawr</i> . . . . .	456
The cave of <i>Mynyð y Cnwc</i> . . . . .	457
Waring's version of Iolo's legend of <i>Craig y Dinas</i> . . . . .	458
Craigfryn Hughes' Monmouthshire tale . . . . .	462
The story of the cave occupied by Owen Lawgoch . . . . .	464
How London Bridge came to figure in that story . . . . .	466
Owen Lawgoch in <i>Ogo'r Dinas</i> . . . . .	467
<i>Dinas Emrys</i> with the treasure hidden by Merlin . . . . .	469
Snowdonian treasure reserved for the Goidel . . . . .	470
Arthur's death on the side of Snowdon . . . . .	473
The graves of Arthur and Rhita . . . . .	474
Elis o'r Nant's story of <i>ILanciau Eryri's</i> cave . . . . .	476
The top of Snowdon named after Rhita . . . . .	477
Drystan's cairn . . . . .	480
The hairy man's cave . . . . .	481
Returning heroes for comparison with Arthur and Owen Lawgoch . . . . .	481
The <i>baledwyr's</i> Owen to return as Henry the Ninth . . . . .	484
Owen a historical man = Froissart's <i>Yvain de Gales</i> . . . . .	487
Froissart's account of him and the questions it raises . . . . .	488
Owen ousting Arthur as a cave-dweller . . . . .	493
Arthur previously supplanting a divinity of the class of the sleeping Cronus of Demetrius . . . . .	493
Arthur's original sojourn located in Faery . . . . .	495

b 2

## CHAPTER IX

	PAGE
PLACE-NAME STORIES . . . . .	498
The Triad of the Swineherds of the Isle of Prydain . . . . .	499
The former importance of swine's flesh as food . . . . .	501
The Triad clause about Coll's straying sow . . . . .	503
Coll's wanderings arranged to explain place-names . . . . .	508
The Kulhwch account of Arthur's hunt of Twrch	
Trwyth in Ireland . . . . .	509
A parley with the boars . . . . .	511
The hunt resumed in Pembrokeshire . . . . .	512
The boars reaching the Loughor Valley . . . . .	514
Their separation . . . . .	515
One killed by the Men of Ilydaw in Ystrad Yw . . . . .	516
Ystrad Yw defined and its name explained . . . . .	516
Twrch Trwyth escaping to Cornwall after an en-	
counter in the estuary of the Severn . . . . .	519
The comb, razor, and shears of Twrch Trwyth . . . . .	519
The name Twrch Trwyth . . . . .	521
Some of the names evidence of Goidelic speech . . . . .	523
The story about Gwydion and his swine compared . . . . .	525
Place-name explanations blurred or effaced . . . . .	526
Enumeration of Arthur's losses in the hunt . . . . .	529
The Men of Ilydaw's identity and their Syfaðon home . . . . .	531
Further traces of Goidelic names . . . . .	536
A Twrch Trwyth incident mentioned by Nennius . . . . .	537
The place-name Carn Cabal discussed . . . . .	538
Duplicate names with the Goidelic form preferred in	
Wales . . . . .	541
The same phenomenon in the Mabinogion . . . . .	543
The relation between the families of Ilyr, Dôn, and	
Pwyff . . . . .	548
The elemental associations of Ilyr and Lir . . . . .	549
Matthew Arnold's idea of Medieval Welsh story . . . . .	551
Brân, the Tricephal, and the Letto-Slavic Triglaus . . . . .	552
Summary remarks as to the Goidels in Wales . . . . .	553



Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07908-2 - Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx: Volume 1

John Rhys

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## CONTENTS

xxi

## CHAPTER X

	PAGE
DIFFICULTIES OF THE FOLKLORIST . . . . .	556
The terrors of superstition and magic . . . . .	557
The folklorist's activity no fostering of superstition . . . . .	558
Folklore a portion of history . . . . .	558
The difficulty of separating story and history . . . . .	559
Arthur and the Snowdon Goidels as an illustration . . . . .	559
Rhita Gawr and the mad kings Nynio and Peibio . . . . .	560
Malory's version and the name Rhita, Ritho, Ryons . . . . .	562
Snowdon stories about Owen Ymhacsen and Cai . . . . .	564
Goidelic topography in Gwyned . . . . .	566
The Goidels becoming Compatriots or Kymry . . . . .	569
The obscurity of certain superstitions a difficulty . . . . .	571
Difficulties arising from their apparent absurdity illustrated by the March and Labraid stories . . . . .	571
Difficulties from careless record illustrated by Howells' Ychen Bannog . . . . .	575
Possible survival of traditions about the urus . . . . .	579
A brief review of the lake legends and the iron tabu . . . . .	581
The scrappiness of the Welsh Tom Tit Tot stories . . . . .	583
The story of the widow of Kittlerumpit compared . . . . .	585
Items to explain the names Sili Ffrit and Sili go Dwt . . . . .	590
Bwca'r Trwyn both brownie and bogie in one . . . . .	593
That bwca a fairy in service, like the Pennant nurse . . . . .	597
The question of fairies concealing their names . . . . .	597
Magic identifying the name with the person . . . . .	598
Modryb Mari regarding cheese-baking as disastrous to the flock . . . . .	599
Her story about the reaper's little black soul . . . . .	601
Gwenogvryn Evans' lizard version . . . . .	603
Diseases regarded as also material entities . . . . .	604
The difficulty of realizing primitive modes of thought . . . . .	605

## CHAPTER XI

	PAGE
FOLKLORE PHILOSOPHY . . . . .	607
The soul as a pigmy or a lizard, and the word enaid . . . . .	607
A different notion in the Mabinogi of Math . . . . .	608
The belief in the persistence of the body through changes . . . . .	610
Shape-shifting and rebirth in Gwion's transformations . . . . .	612
Tuan mac Cairill, Amaigen, and Taliessin . . . . .	615
D'Arbois de Jubainville's view of Erigena's teaching . . . . .	617
The druid master of his own transformations . . . . .	620
Death not a matter of course so much as of magic . . . . .	620
This incipient philosophy as Gaulish druidism . . . . .	622
The Gauls not all of one and the same beliefs . . . . .	623
The name and the man . . . . .	624
Enw, 'name,' and the idea of breathing . . . . .	625
The exact nature of the association still obscure . . . . .	627
The Celts not distinguishing between names and things . . . . .	628
A Celt's name on him, not by him or with him . . . . .	629
The druid's method of name-giving non-Aryan . . . . .	631
Magic requiring metrical formulæ . . . . .	632
The professional man's curse producing blisters . . . . .	632
A natural phenomenon arguing a thin-skinned race . . . . .	633
Cursing of no avail without the victim's name . . . . .	635
Magic and kingship linked in the female line . . . . .	636

## CHAPTER XII

RACE IN FOLKLORE AND MYTH . . . . .	639
Glottology and comparative mythology . . . . .	640
The question of the feminine in Welsh syntax . . . . .	642
The Irish goddess Danu and the Welsh Dôn . . . . .	644
Tynghed or destiny in the Kulhwch story . . . . .	646
Traces of a Welsh confarreatio in the same context . . . . .	649
Þokk in the Balder story compared with tynghed . . . . .	650
Questions of mythology all the harder owing to race mixture . . . . .	652

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07908-2 - Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx: Volume 1

John Rhys

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## CONTENTS

xxiii

	PAGE
Whether the picture of Cúchulainn in a rage be Aryan or not . . . . .	653
Cúchulainn exempt from the Ultonian couvade . . . .	654
Cúchulainn racially a Celt in a society reckoning descent by birth . . . . .	656
Cúchulainn as a rebirth of Lug paralleled in Lapland .	657
Doubtful origin of certain legends about Lug . . . .	658
The historical element in fairy stories and lake legends	659
The notion of the fairies being all women . . . . .	661
An illustration from Central Australia . . . . .	662
Fairy counting by fives evidence of a non-Celtic race .	663
The Basque numerals as an illustration . . . . .	665
Prof. Sayce on Irishmen and Berbers . . . . .	665
Dark-complexioned people and fairy changelings . . .	666
The blond fairies of the Pennant district exceptional .	668
A summary of fairy life from previous chapters . . .	668
Sir John Wynne's instance of men taken for fairies .	670
Some of the Brythonic names for fairies . . . . .	671
Dwarfs attached to the fortunes of their masters . . .	672
The question of fairy cannibalism . . . . .	673
The fairy Corannians and the historical Coritani . . .	674
St. Guthlac at Croyland in the Fens . . . . .	676
The Irish síd, síde, and the Welsh Caer Sidi . . . . .	677
The mound dwellings of Pechts and Irish fairies . . .	679
Prof. J. Morris Jones explaining the non-Aryan syntax of neo-Celtic by means of Egyptian and Berber . . . .	681
The Picts probably the race that introduced it . . . .	682
The first pre-Celtic people here . . . . .	683
Probably of the same race as the neolithic dwarfs of the Continent . . . . .	683
The other pre-Celtic race, the Picts and the people of the Mabinogion . . . . .	684
A word or two by way of epilogue. . . . .	686
 ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS . . . . .	 689
 INDEX . . . . .	 695

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07908-2 - Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx: Volume 1

John Rhys

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

WE are too hasty when we set down our ancestors in the gross for fools, for the monstrous inconsistencies (as they seem to us) involved in their creed of witchcraft. In the relations of this visible world we find them to have been as rational, and shrewd to detect an historic anomaly, as ourselves. But when once the invisible world was supposed to be opened, and the lawless agency of bad spirits assumed, what measures of probability, of decency, of fitness, or proportion—of that which distinguishes the likely from the palpable absurd—could they have to guide them in the rejection or admission of any particular testimony? That maidens pined away, wasting inwardly as their waxen images consumed before a fire—that corn was lodged, and cattle lamed—that whirlwinds uptore in diabolic revelry the oaks of the forest—or that spits and kettles only danced a fearful-innocent vagary about some rustic's kitchen when no wind was stirring—were all equally probable where no law of agency was understood. . . . There is no law to judge of the lawless, or canon by which a dream may be criticised.

CHARLES LAMB'S *Essays of Elia*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-07908-2 - Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx: Volume 1

John Rhys

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

A GEOGRAPHICAL LIST OF  
AUTHORITIES AND SOURCES OF THE  
MORE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS  
TO THE WELSH FOLKLORE

ANGLESEY.

- ABERFFRAW: E. S. Roberts (after Hugh Francis), 240, 241.  
 ILANDYFRYDOG: E. S. Roberts (after Robert Roberts), 239, 240.  
 LYN YR WYTH EIDION: (no particulars), 429.  
 MŶNYÐ Y CNWC: A writer in the *Brython* for 1859, 457, 458.  
 MŶNYÐ MECHEIL: Morris Evans (from his grandmother), 203, 204.  
 TOWYN TREWERN: John Roberts, 36-8.  
 ? : Lewis Morris, in the *Gwyliedyð*, 450-2.

BRECKNOCKSHIRE.

- CWM TAWC: Rd. L. Davies, 256, 257.  
 " : " " (after J. Davies), 251-6.  
 LANGORSE: Giraldus, in his *Itinerarium Cambriæ*, 72.  
 ? : Walter Mapes, in his book *De Nugis*, 70-2.  
 ? : The *Brython* for 1863, 73, 74.  
 LYN CWM ILWCH NEIGHBOURHOOD: Ivor James, 21, 430, 445.  
 ? : Ed. Davies, in his *Mythology and Rites*, 20, 21.

CARDIGANSHIRE.

- ATPAR: John Rhys (from Joseph Powell), 648, 649.  
 BRONNANT: D. IL. Davies, 248, 249.  
 CADABOWEN: J. Gwenogvryn Evans, 603, 604.  
 ILANWENOG: " " 648.  
 LYN EIÐWEN: J. E. Rogers of Abermeurig, 578.  
 MOEÐIN: Howells, in his *Cambrian Superstitions*, 245.  
 " : D. Silvan Evans, in his *Ystên Sioned*, 271-3.  
 PONTERWYD: John Rhys, 294, 338, 378, 391, 392.  
 " : Mary Lewis (Modryb Mari), 601, 602.  
 SWYÐ FFYNNON: D. IL. Davies, 246, 247, 250.

## AUTHORITIES AND SOURCES

CARDIGANSHIRE (*continued*).

- TREGARON AND NEIGHBOURHOOD : John Rhys (from John Jones and others), 577-9.  
 TROED YR AUR } : Benjamin Williams (Gwynionydd), 166-8.  
 AND } : Gwynionydd, in the *Brython* for 1858 and 1860,  
 VERWIG ? } 151-5, 158-60, 163, 164, 464-6.  
 YSTRAD MEURIG : Isaac Davies, 245.  
 " " : A farmer, 601.  
 ? : A writer in the *Brython* for 1861, 690.

## CARMARTHENSHIRE.

- CENARTH : B. Davies, in the *Brython*, 1858, 161, 162.  
 ILANDEILO : D. Ilufer Thomas, in *Y Geninen* for 1896, 469.  
 " : Mr. Stepney-Gulston, in the *Arch. Camb.* for 1893, 468.  
 ILANDYBIE : John Fisher, 379, 380.  
 " : Howells, in his *Cambrian Superstitions*, 381.  
 " : John Fisher and J. P. Owen, 468.  
 MYDFAI : Wm. Rees of Tonn, in the *Physicians of Mydvaï*, 2-15.  
 " : The Bishop of St. Asaph, 15, 16.  
 " : John Rhys, 16.  
 ? : Joseph Joseph of Brecon, 16.  
 ? : Wirt Sikes, in his *British Goblins*, 17, 18.  
 MYNYD Y BANWEN : Ilywarch Reynolds, 18, 19, 428-30.  
 ? : I. Craigfryn Hughes, 487.

## CARNARVONSHIRE.

- ABER SOCH : Margaret Edwards, 231.  
 " : A blacksmith in the neighbourhood, 232.  
 ? : Edward Ilywyd : see the *Brython* for 1860, 233, 234.  
 ? : MS. 134 in the Peniarth Collection, 572, 573.  
 ABERDARON : Mrs. Williams and another, 228.  
 ? : Evan Williams of Rhos Hirwaen, 230.  
 BEDGELEERT : Wm. Jones, 49, 80, 81, 94-7, 99, 100-5.  
 " : " in the *Brython* for 1861-2, 86-9, 98-9.  
 " : The *Brython* for 1861, 470, 473, 474.  
 BETHESDA : David Evan Davies (Dewi Glan Ffrydglas), 60-4, 66.  
 BETTWS Y COED : Edward Ilywyd : see the *Cambrian Journal* for 1859, 130-3.  
 CRICCIETH NEIGHBOURHOOD : Edward Ilewelyn, 219-21.  
 ? : Edward Ilywyd : see the *Camb. Journal* for 1859, 201, 202.  
 DINORWIG : E. Lloyd Jones, 234-7.  
 DOLBENMAEN : W. Evans Jones, 107-9.  
 DOLWYDELAN : see BEDGELEERT.  
 " : see GWYBRNANT.