



A SHORT HISTORY OF LLANELLY

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A SHORT HISTORY OF LLANELLY

LLANELLY has no rival as the chief town in Carmarthenshire, and excluding some great centres in Glamorganshire it is the most considerable and important town from, commercial and other standpoints in Wales. Rapid as its progress has been from the beginning of the century, its growth during the present decade exceeds in celerity the previous swift and glorious career of what was described not so very long ago as "a small fishing village." In this memorable and joyful year of our good Queen's reign there are signs of growing strength and elastic expansion which would have been regarded as in the highest degree a fanciful and chimerical forecast five years ago. The McKinley Tariff, it was surmised, sounded the death knell of the Tinplate Trade in this country. As this is our staple industry, it was gloomily predicted that we had reached the summit of prosperity, and the light of Llanelly would now begin to wane. The Americans have succeeded to an alarming extent in the manufacture of tinplates, and it is stated that they make sufficient already to supply their own needs. Thanks to the enterprise and sagacity of the home manufacturers, things are nevertheless not in a hopeless condition in Llanelly. New markets have been found to take the place in a measure of the lost ones, and the opening out of other countries for the reception of plates is capable of development beyond our wildest dreams, so that the trade in our own district is not in much danger of languishing. To restrict the production and to adapt themselves to the circumstances of the time, tinplate manufacturers have converted a part of their works for the purposes of galvanizing, and other fresh ideas have been conceived which, if acted upon, will minimise to vanishing point the evils of the American competition. Day by day the fact is brought nearer home to us that we are getting less and less dependent upon the staple industry of the town, and we are increasing the number of strings to our bow with the lapse of every month on the calendar. Extensive Steel Works have been built and the merry clang of its modern machinery will be heard before many days are over. The Tin Stamping Works, which is of recent growth, has prospered in our midst, and the enterprising Company which directs its affairs has acquired the Lead Works, which will at no distant date present a scene of activity in the manufacture of Enamelled and Japanned Goods. Steps have been taken to erect Blast Furnaces on a large scale in Llanelly, and other new industries are contemplated. With these and the present manufactories, which include copperworks, steel, lead, iron, silver, chemical, brick, patent fuel works, shipbuilding yards, both iron and wood, timber yards, anchor smithies, ropewalks, potteries, etc., the town at large must continue to grow- and to flourish. We place the trade prospects of the town first because these are breath to the nostrils of an industrial community. Only the fringe of the vista of prosperity has been touched, for not a word has been said about the rich seams of coal that lie embedded in the earth in and around the town. The chiefest hope of Llanelly is centred on this carboniferous strata, and when the capital has been raised to bring it to the surface, the yield will be something fabulous. The geographical position of the town is eminently favourable to its rapid advance. Situated on the Burry inlet, it is the natural port from whence the vast resources of the Gwendraeth Valley can be shipped for export. An obstacle lies in the way of the realisation of the benefits that will some day be ours through this circumstance, but the authorities of the port have already taken the hatchet in hand to hew it down. The Great Mountain Colliery and others have been calling loudly for adequate dock accommodation, and the Harbour Commissioners have resolved to construct a new and extensive docks, the plans of which have been prepared, and the work of construction will be shortly commenced. Increased shipping facilities, accompanied by a deeper and more direct channel to the sea, such as is becoming more and more a reality

under the able supervision of Mr. C. P. Fowler, will be congenial to the growth of Llanelly. What we lack in is railway conveniences. We have a station on the main line of the Great Western and have connection with the London and North Western, and we have the Llanelly and Mynydd Mawr and other local lines, which do not however carry passengers. A Bill promoted by the Fishguard Railway Company promises us all that we require even in this direction. One of the essential conditions of industrial development is a plentiful water supply, and it is very pleasing to note that the Llanelly Urban Council is preparing for coming generations by providing an additional storage reservoir above the present one at Cwmlledi. Llanelly possesses one of the finest Market Places in Wales, and the volume of business done within it is constantly enlarging, and not until a Corn and Hay Exchange is established and the Market becomes the centre for the county for the sale of agricultural produce will our more-spirited public men be satisfied. The new Town Hall is the most handsome and commodious building of its kind in the Principality, and the arrangements for the location of the offices of the Clerk, Surveyor and Collector, and the Registrar of the county Court, together with the Council Chamber and the large Hall for Police, County Court, and some day not far off, Assize business, are about as complete and convenient as they possibly can be. Structures which can lay claim to some architectural beauty have made their appearance during the last few years. The town has in fact been making strides in every direction and the only matter of regret is that the movement to establish a Free Library has not yet ripened into fruit; that the town has not been running with quick footsteps towards Incorporation; and that a Public Hall commensurate with the importance of the town has not been built. The sun of public opinion is bearing upon the the Library question and making it ripe; the pace towards the much-needed Charter, though still slow, is quickening; whilst the Public Hall will surely come with the prosperity of trade. We could enlarge on all the points we have raised; we could dwell with delight on the progress of education in this vicinity but that is not necessary in a work of this kind. We have given the actual facts with reference to the: - commercial life of Llanelly; veneering and hyperbole have been studiously avoided. We have seen a town of sturdy growth which has become important. Suppose we now take a glance backward and learn something of the early history of Llanelly. For this purpose we cannot do better than re-produce the "Retrospect" prepared by Mr. Arthur Mee, formerly Editor of the South Wales Press, who has done more than any living man to investigate and preserve the past history of the town. In our Almanack for 1887 Mr. Mee writes:

"To understand the rise and growth of commercial and manufacturing Llanelly, its geological position must be borne in mind. To this we shall now direct our attention. Llanelly and its immediate neighbourhood are on the carboniferous formation forming part of the great basin or coalfield of South Wales. The coalfield consists of a great thickness of sandstones, shales and clay, containing numerous seams or veins of coal, many of which are too thin to be profitably worked. Locally an enormous trough (synclinal axis) runs nearly east and west through the centre of the town: a line drawn from Whitford Lighthouse through the Old Castle and Cae, and carried eastward so as to cut the channel about three-quarters of a mile north of Loughor Bridge, nearly defines the position of this axis. All the veins, and the strata containing them, rise gently northward, more steeply to the south from this line, and the coal seams consequently reach the surface or "crop out" nearly parallel to it. On the north rise are the Box, St. David's, Bryngwyn, Pencoed, and all the anthracite collieries of the Gwendraeth Valley, &c.; on the south slope St. George, Bigyn, Glynea and others. Cutting right through the coal basin, and extending into the formations which surround it, are numerous dykes or "faults" running about north and south. The Stradey Fault lies midway between Pwll and Old Castle; Box big fault is a little to the left of the Cae on the map; Brynsherfel fault takes its name from a farm so called near the Bryn, which it passes through; and an immense fault is cut where the G.W.R. spans the Loughor river. The coal veins which are or have been most largely worked are

(beginning nearest the surface), the Great Vein, 6ft.; the Four Foot; the Rosey, 2ft 4in.; Fiery, 3ft. 6in.; and the Golden and Bushey, about two feet each in thickness. Numerous fossil ferns and conifers appear in the shale or fire-clay underlying the coal, and of this shale a variety of fire-brick is made. The Cae pit is 1000 feet deep. Surrounding the Coal Basin and immediately underlying it comes a narrow belt of mill stone grit or silica, the farewell rock of the miner, from which the best fire-bricks are made; next is a stratum of limestone, and below that the old red sandstone. A submerged forest may be seen at low water at St. Ishmael's and westward. The local formations do not yield a thoroughly good stone for making or repairing roads.

As a place of commerce and manufacture Llanelly and the Nineteenth Century may be said to have sprung into existence together. Indeed the Author of a "Tour in Wales," writing so late as 1803, could only speak of the "poor small town of Llanelly, inhabited principally by fishermen and colliers." There can be no doubt that in writing thus Mr. Evans depreciated the town, so we must be devoutly grateful for his condescension when he adds, "This, though a small place, has a tolerable harbour." But note the change. Only fifteen years later Aikin in his "England Described" gives the world his impressions of Llanelly. And what a contrast! The town has now started on its upward course, and the progress made is strikingly rapid. "Llanelly," says Aikin, introducing the town to the reader, "is one of the most thriving places in South Wales in proportion to its extent, flourishes by means of coal of the best quality, and iron ore, which abound in the neighbouring county. This has caused the establishment in it of large iron works, and others in which metallic processes are going on; and its communication with its interior has been facilitated by several railroads"

But if we desire to learn more from records still earlier we must prepare to look upon our town as a scanty and insignificant village—a few small dwellings in the neighbourhood of the Church. Nay, we may in imagination go back even further to a period when Llanelly by that name is unknown to the "noble savage" who "wild in woods" rejoices as the Ancient Briton—the original possessor of the realm.

Deeply interesting would it be could we stand upon the site of modern Llanelly as it existed, say at the period when Caesar made his first acquaintance with our shores. The general landmarks—we need scarcely doubt—would be the same. Gower would be there—more peaceful and beautiful than ever; and on our own side of the estuary, marsh and meadow, and most of all perhaps, woodland, would doubtless strike the eye. Silence reigns supreme! Unbroken by a single one of myriad noises and commotions born of trade and civilisation. Now and again the Aboriginal Britons may be seen, pursuing the chase, or perhaps engaged in quarrels of no interest to us two thousand years removed. There can be no doubt that the Britons had hereabout a species of centre, for there is still between the Park and Old Castle Works a *tumulus*, or mound of burial—solitary monument of a primitive existence.

But a day arrives when the uneventful routine of those ancestral tribes—the "Llanellyites" of twenty centuries ago—is broken by strange rumours and unaccustomed sights. With awe and wonder they behold the advent of the Roman legionaries—stern warriors before whom the continent had bowed.

The cohorts drew up at Loughor—they tried to imitate the sound and called it in their Latin tongue, Leucarum. There they founded a settlement, and spanning the river with a wooden bridge, they pushed on to what is now Llanelly. As likely as not they had a sharp encounter with the aborigines ere they established the plain, square camp, the last traces of which have only just been demolished, to make way for a modern dwelling. That solitary Roman outpost—the furthest in this particular direction—gave the name Pencastell to its immediate neighbourhood, and the appellative will remain, though the Roman

camp has disappeared. After a similar fashion, "Stradey " reminds the antiquarian of the *strata* or Roman road—perhaps a branch of the *Via Julia Maritima*, which ran from Leucarum (Loughor), via Llandilo-Talybont, to Maridunum (Carmarthen), and thence into the unknown regions of Pembroke. "Spitty," too, recalls the old conquerors to mind, for there was placed the *hospicium*, or hospital, for the garrison at Leucarum. So much for Llanelly under the Britons and Romans. We are not aware that there have been found in this immediate neighbourhood any of the pottery and bricks, the lamps and coins and golden torques which have been unearthed in other portions of Carmarthenshire to form deeply interesting relics of the dim and distant past. At Loughor such antiquities have been discovered; but we are not writing of Loughor in especial, and must therefore pass from the subject—not without an expression of hope that the loving labours of Mr. Benjamin Jones, as chronicler of the ancient borough, may yet be enshrined in a thoroughly permanent form.

Our next acquaintance with Llanelly is in more Christian times, though we have not yet emerged from the bounds of uncertainty and conjecture. The name "Llanelly" is understood to mean the church of Ellyw or Eliw. According to Jones' "Breconshire" this saint was a grand-daughter of Brychan, and presumably was patron also of that other Llanelly in the neighbourhood of Crickhowell. Her "wake" is held on the Sunday next before the 1st of August (O.S.) There is a probability that Eliw is only an abbreviation of Elined, and if so she would be the Almedha of Giraldus Cambrensis. Of this saint the Church-historian Cressy says:—"This devout virgin, rejecting the proposal of an earthly prince, who sought her in marriage, and espousing herself to the Eternal King, consummated her life by a triumphant martyrdom." She suffered on a hill near Brecon in the fifth century. It is considered probable that the Church of Llanelly was founded soon after; but of course all trace of the original building has long since disappeared: here again the *name* has proved our only permanent legacy.

It is said that about the time of which we are now speaking, a monastery was founded on Machynis. This place in ancient times (as indeed its name suggests) was actually an island: it so appears on Camden's map of "Carmardenshire" (1586) and even as late as in the Stepney Estate plan of 1761. The monastery, so it was said, was founded by St. Piero, who established himself as the first abbot, and was followed by Samson, a disciple of St. Illtyd. Machynis is a corruption of a term meaning "Monk's island," and, together with some ruins built into the present house, remains to tell of the old monastery which flourished until Henry VIII. broke up these religious houses throughout the kingdom.

Returning from the monastery to the church we find that in olden times there were several chapels of ease connected with Llanelly. Definite particulars remain from which we may glean something of the position of affairs ecclesiastical in our neighbourhood three hundred years ago. In the year 1552, King Edward VI. appointed commissioners to make an inventory of church goods; and these are their notes in regard to our present town:—

Llanellye	}	In p'mis, ij chalyces
cu' capell'		It'm, iiij belles great and small.
		It'm, a chalyce in the hands of H'oll Harry Nicholas which he bought upon his own costs & charges, to s've the chapele of Saynt John annexed to the sayd p'ishe
		It'm, in the chapele of Saynt Diddgye. one chalyce.
		It'm, in the chapele of Saynt D'D, a chalyce.
		Itm, a chalyce in the chapele of Saynt Gwnlei.
		It'm, a bell there.

One of the "chalyces" mentioned above as being in possession of Llanelly Church, is, we understand, still in existence. Of the chapels of ease, Saint John's was in Glynmawr; Saint David's at Llwynhendy; St. Diddgye in Hengoed Manor.

"Saynt Gwnlei" is or was on Capel Issa farm. The ruins have now practically disappeared; but it is not very long since a portion of the tower was standing. Near Trebeddod (more properly " Trebeddrod ") was another Church—the ruins were visible to the end of last century. At that place was a graveyard, and in a field called Caegroes on the way thither was once a stone of cruciform shape, where, perhaps, the remains were allowed to rest as they journeyed to the quiet "God's acre" beyond.

The Tower of Llanelly Church is a very commanding object. It had originally a companion turret, reared about half way along the roof. The church with a double tower was quite a curiosity, and figures in most old encyclopaedias, as well as some which pretend to be up-to-date. There is a representation of the church in the Stepney Estate Book of 1761. Within the memory of old inhabitants, the lesser tower was demolished—why, we know not, but is the sadder to think of when we reflect that the masons had the very greatest difficulty to perform their task, so solid was the masonry, and no profit was made by the contract for this act of vandalism. Only the tower and chancel now remain of the original church—the rest is restoration work; but we are informed that the tower as it stands is without doubt the original one, and the piscina to the south of the altar is good Perpendicular (15th century). The edifice contains many interesting monuments - those relating to the Stepney family are referred to at length in Mr. Harrison's "Notices," which may be consulted in the Mechanics' Institution. Mention of the Church naturally suggests the endowments, and we find that the tithes of Llanelly were appropriated by John of Gaunt to the collegiate church of St. Mary's. Leicester; and that the vicarage was worth ,£6 6s. 8d. in the time of Henry VIII., and £27 6s. 8d. in the time of Queen Anne. The tithes are now in the possession of Mr. R. Goring Thomas, to whose ancestors they were sold by the Marquis of Granby.

Having said a word about the history of our Church, we have no course open to us but to veer from the beaten path of chronology to devote a paragraph to the story of the first Nonconformist causes that were planted in the place. The earliest Independent church appears to have been no closer than Llanedy, and existed quite 200 years ago. The Baptist cause at Felinfoel was established a little later, and Felinfoel, too, is famous as the place where Christmas Evans gave the first clear and unmistakeable evidence of his marvellous oratorical powers. The Independent cause at Capel Als and the Wesleyan cause in Oxen Street were established last century, and early in the present century a Baptist meeting house occupied the site of Hansard's Aerated Water Works. Old inhabitants recollect the good folks at this place much troubled by the floods from the river, when they were comforted by Christmas Evans, who said encouragingly: "*O, fe ddaw i yn well na hyn eto*" (" It will get better than this again.")

Leaving our religious institutions we come to the question of corporate Llanelly. It will surprise some, no doubt, to be told that Llanelly was granted a charter by one of the early Plantagenet kings. What actual grounds there may be for this assertion we know not; but we think we are tolerably safe in saying that it rests on more than mere wild supposition. The charter most unhappily is lost, but investigation might perhaps throw some light upon its history.

Giraldus Cambrensis passed by or close to Llanelly in his journey through Wales just 700 years ago. He makes no mention of the place: still his remark on the locality is curious enough to merit notice. "Thence we proceeded towards the river Lochor, through the plains in which Howel, son of Meredyth, son of Brecheinoc, after the decease of King Henry I., gained a signal victory over the English. Having first crossed the river Lochor and afterwards the water called Wendraeth, we arrived at the castle of Cydweli."

About the year 1540, Leland, the celebrated antiquary, passed this way, like Giraldus Cambrensis, though with a different object in view. In his rare and valuable "Itinerary" he has a passing reference to our town, which, as it is the

earliest of its kind, we gladly reproduce:

At Llanethli, a village of Kidwelli lordship, six miles from Kidwelli the inhabitants dig coles, els scant in Kidwelli land—there be ii maner of these coles; ring coles for smith be blowed and watered: stone coles be sometime watered but never blowed, for blowing extinguisheth them—So that Vendraeth Vawr coles be stone coles, Llanethli coles ring coles.

The earliest topographical representation of this neighbourhood occurs in the maps affixed to Camden's "Britannia" (1586). Here Llanelly is spelt as at present: then we have "Penbray," "Loghor or Lucarum," and "Llagennech." Burry estuary is "Ost. Barry or Burra." Speed's maps were published later (1610). Here our town is referred to as "Llanellye," the county being spelt "Caermardenshire."

Drayton in his "Polyolbion" describes very quaintly the rivers of Carmarthenshire: his reference to Machynis must also be noted:

Next, *Loghor* leads the way, who with a lustie crue
(Her wild cud wandring steps that ceaslesie pursue)
Still forward is inforc't: as, *Amond* thrusts her on, And
Morlas (as a mayd shee much relies upon) Intreats
her pres'nt speed: assuring her withall,
Her best loved Ile, *Bachannis*, for her fall,
Stands specially prepar'd, of everything suppli'd.
When *Gwendra* with such grace deliberately doth glide
As *Towy* doth entice; who setteth out prepar'd
At all points like a Prince, attended with a guard.

How permanent after all are these place names. Time seems to alter them but little, though it defaces and obliterates more material monuments.

We learn that in ancient times the fisheries at Llanelly possessed an importance and value which no longer attach to them.

In 1623 James I. granted to Walter Vaughan, Llanelly House—the reader will note the antiquity of this residence—the fishing and keelage of the rivers Dafen, Dulais, Loughor, and Lliedi, at an annual rent of 6s. 8d., and under the powers of this grant the successors of the said Vaughan have received the sum of 4d. as keelage for every vessel frequenting the port. The present owner is Sir Arthur Stepney.

Our next introduction to Llanelly is during the Civil War. Tenby is besieged by the Parliamentarians, and falls at last. Amongst the attempts at relief was one which has for us peculiar interest. "Some ammunition," writes John Vaughan, of Trawscoed, under date March 12, 1644, "Some ammunition that came from Bristol, and ventured to relieve the town, was chased by a frigate of Swanley's, and hardly escaped, putting into a creek at Llanelly, and is safe." In the year 1648 an engagement in which the Royalists suffered defeat is stated to have taken place in this neighbourhood; but nothing definite can be gleaned from the fullest record we have been able to consult—Phillips' "Civil War in War in Wales and the Marches." Of such a fight, if at all sanguinary, there must be relics still remaining—in the shape of bones and bullets, and it would be interesting to learn if such have been discovered—at present we have no information. It may be noted ere we leave the Civil War, that Vanxhall—a very old residence—was once in the possession of a descendant of the Royalist Commander—General Langhorne.

In 1653 Llanelly was visited by a scourge more dreaded than, a Royalist or Roundhead troops—the plague: it was, we believe, the last visit of this terror of our ancestors. The country-people brought food-supplies for the devoted inhabitants, but set sentinels so that the latter might not approach too near and communicate the dreaded infection. The place where sentinels were stationed—near the present Capel Newydd, bore afterwards the expressive name of Caewatch.

Not many years after this there began what we may fairly call an official chronicle of local events, for in the oldest of the registers preserved at the parish church we read:—

This booke was bought by Mr. Edmund Meyricke, price
£03 00s. 00d., paid for by Rawleigh; Mansell Esqr Hugh
Jones gent churchwardens for the p'ish of Llanelly, in
the year 1684.

To consult these old memorials is not an occupation of interest only, but of great pleasure, thanks to the careful and effective measures taken by the Vicar (Rev. Canon Williams) for their preservation—in which he has set a bright example to the parties, too numerous by far, who by carelessness and negligence hand over documents of perhaps inestimable value to decay and oblivion.

Towards the close of the Seventeenth Century commenced the connection, scarcely severed since, between our town and the old and honorable house of Stepney. By marriage with Margaret Vaughan, Sir Thomas Stepney, the fifth Baronet and grandson of Vandyck, became possessor of Llanelly; and his namesake, the seventh Baronet, may fairly be styled the pioneer of our industrial progress. Sir Thomas "largely developed the mineral wealth that lay beneath his land, encouraged the coal trade and the transport of the mineral by water. He also made improvements in the fisheries of his neighbourhood, and had a new sort of vessel constructed, called by his correspondents 'busses,' which were used in conveying the product of the fishery." A Mr. Cole, writing to Sir Thomas from London in 1750, says: "Mr. Gibson and his friend Captain Biggin talk of coming down to see you and view your coal-works. This Master Biggin is master of a great deal of ready cash and the greatest dealer in coals in Europe. He says if he likes your coals and you can load large ships, he'll undertake to vend you fifty or sixty thousand chaldrons a year. He at the same time very much likes the last account you sent of your harbour." As a matter of fact Sir Thomas Stepney carried on a flourishing foreign trade, and there exists a record of a vessel taking out to Lisbon a cargo of coal and bringing back an equivalent of salt.

So much for Sir Thomas Stepney as a man of commerce. The following entry in the diary of the good and great John Wesley casts on the Baronet imperishable radiance:—1774, August 18, "I went to Llanelly. But what a change was there! Sir Thomas Stepney, the father of the poor was dead! Cut down in the strength of his years! "Then as now, kindness of heart was the ruling characteristic of the house of Stepney.

About the middle of last century others commenced in the neighbourhood to win the dusty diamonds—Bowen at Penyfan, Gwyn at Llwynhendy, Rees at Pwll, Smith at Halfway. Chauncy Townshend, too, a London merchant, leased the minerals under the Stepney and Stradey Estates, and pushed on mining.

What Llanelly was at this time may to some extent be gleaned from the plans in the Stepney Estate Book for the year 1761. Water Street, King's Square, and neighbourhood were much as now, excepting, of course, that the houses were mere thatched cots. The dwellings in Church street ran without interruption from Union Square down to Vauxhall. The present break where Hall Street enters Athenæum Square was not then in existence. There were also numerous cottages in Wind Street, and a few along the course of the Lliedi. The ground now occupied by Stepney Street, Vaughan Street and the Market was then chiefly taken up by the gardens and grounds of the mansion—Llanelly House, which, built originally by the celebrated Inigo Jones, is now a mere congeries of shops and offices—the shadow of its former self. On the site of the present Bank and Messrs Thomas' establishment was the "great garden," and lower down towards the present Bradbury Hall, the "new garden." On the site of premises on the west side of Market Street was the orchard, whilst a fine avenue ran from the Lliedi (near the present Vaughan Street Bridge) right across to where now stands Park Congregational Church. Much of the beauty of these grounds, known colloquially as "the Park," remained until recent years, and when they were

destroyed to make way for houses and market sheds, the people of the place might well exclaim,. "Ichabod! Ichabod! the glory has departed."

The exigencies of space compel us to take an extremely rapid survey of the subsequent history of our town. About 1795 Mr. Alexander Raby came to Llanelly, and pushed on metalliferous operations after a fashion quite unknown before. Mr. Raby was a London merchant, and is justly spoken of by Dr. Smiles as "one of the best authorities in the iron trade of last century." Mr. Raby sank a number of pits—on the tip of one the National School is erected. He also built the Furnace which gives its name to one of the "suburbs," and the ruins of which remind one of a Norman stronghold. When Mr. J. Beavan Phillips was making some excavations at his residence. the Myrtle, he unearthed (as he tells us) some of the tram rails laid down by Mr. Raby near a hundred years ago. The rails were found in position, supported on each side by stone sleepers, to which they were fastened by nails remarkable for their length and strength. As a matter of fact Mr. Raby converted the Llanelly of that day into a scene of almost modern activity and bustle: for one thing he contracted for the Government, and in the *Cambrian*, for 1805, the Llanelly furnaces are spoken of as working "day and night" for the administration of that period. Mr. Raby, we are told, supplied the shot for the Napoleonic struggle then in progress, and so this locality reaped the sole benefit accruing from the globular exponents of "peace on earth and goodwill towards men."

When Mr. Raby commenced smelting operations, Llanelly numbered 500 people: by 1801 the population had reached 2000—a rate of progress never since surpassed. Shortly afterwards Mr. Raby was overwhelmed by the prevalent depression, and he was compelled to suspend his works; but he will ever be gratefully remembered as one who did yeoman's service towards the progress of Llanelly.

About this time we hear a good deal of the old Carmarthenshire tramroad, which was at length abandoned because it did not pay, the site being now occupied by the Llanelly and Mynydd Mawr Railway. An unsuccessful attempt was made to provide a canal between Llanelly and Llandovery via Llandilo, and later still a canal or tramroad to Llandebie. The idea enshrined in these projects afterwards took more tangible shape in the railway which now runs from Llanelly to Llandilo, and thence northwards, forming the local connection with the London and North Western system. Captain John Wedge now comes on the scene, and by his exertions the estuary was surveyed and buoyed, after great opposition from the natives, who siezed the buoys and otherwise foolishly retarded the work. Docks were then pushed on, and what were at first mere open quays became the floating docks to which we are accustomed. New Dock was the first of the kind in Wales.

In 1805 the Penrhos Copperworks was built and started. The firm comprised Messrs Daniell, Savill, Guest and Nevill. This last familiar name was borne by the grandfather of our much respected Mr. C. W. Nevill [since deceased]: and to borrow a phrase from one well qualified to judge—"It was he who *made* the Copperworks, and the Copperworks made Llanelly."

We have left ourselves no space to enlarge on the enterprise of General Ward, and of the Pembertons, who occupied a residence on the site of the present Athenæum. In 1811 General Ward loaded no less than 51 vessels with coal at Llanelly. Musing over the exertions of such pioneers as those of whom we have been speaking, it may with truth be asserted that "there were giants in those days."

A Volume might with ease be devoted to the burgesses of Llanelly and their history with the transference of their influence and estate to the Local Board; and the various Acts of Parliament relating to the Harbour. We might describe the various works which sprang into existence, with canals and tramways, like that from the Box to the Carmarthenshire line long since gone to decay: we might speak of Llanelly as it was in 1813, when Howell constructed his map of the town; we might crystallise the memories old inhabitants, who can recollect when

not a soul in the place spoke English, except the upper class, and and when the Welsh hat was the head gear of the females with scarcely an exception. We might dwell on the primitive methods of inter-communication—the stage coach and the pony-post, in the days when Mr. John Morgan (grandfather of Mr. J. B. Morgan, architect, New Road) was post-master (and edged-tool manufacturer combined !) and the Post Office for many years in Church Street, next door to the Mansel's Arms. We might speak of the change wrought by the South Wales Railway and its bearing upon the prosperity of the place. But these must be left—perhaps to be enlarged upon next year. For the present we take leave of our subject, and trust in all earnestness that the study of our town, and of the noble county whose commercial capital it is, and of their history, may be taken up by those who are at present indifferent to such matters: with that object in view have we compiled this retrospect—to have achieved that object will enhance the pleasure that has attended a most agreeable and deeply-interesting task." It would be a pleasure for us to take up the thread of the fascinating story which has risen so graphically told by Mr. Mee, and to connect it with an admirable account which the late Mr. John Jennings gave us relating to the municipal and educational progress of Llanelly. The foregoing has however spread beyond the bounds of what is required in a Trade Directory, and it must be left for the present, though we can hardly refrain from referring in a few brief sentences to the sterling worth of our late Town Clerk. Mr. Jennings passed away in the sleep of death early this year. He began to serve the town in its infancy in varied capacities, and he saw it grow to manhood, and he laboured for it to the end with uprightness, zeal, and devotion. He stood above his fellows in the prodigiousness of his labours, and he has raised monuments of work which will make his name live in the local annals for centuries to come. The multiplicity of appointments which he left vacant have been filled by several men, and the public life of the town has altered, and is still strange without him. May his successors in every department be inspired with the high sense of duty which distinguished Mr. Jennings, and may the town continue to prosper during their service.