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## THE FOUR BRANCHES OF THE MABINOGI.

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### Chapter I.

#### **Introductory.**

Readers of the 'Mabinogion' both in the original and in translations and adaptations have again and again been charmed by their exquisite grace and delicate naiveté. The delineation of human character is often masterly in its vivid, terse and suggestive brevity, and this remarkable skill is nowhere more visible than in the charming manner in which the women of the Mabinogion are brought upon the canvas. In all the stories, belonging as they do to widely different strata of narrative, this feature is ever present. We find it in the Rhiannon and the Branwen of the 'Pedair Cainge', as well as in the Elen of Maxen Wledig, the Luned of the Lady of the Fountain and in Enid the wife of Geraint.

In the Mabinogion, too, in the Arthurian Romances as well as in the stories with which we are especially concerned here, the element of pathos enters largely. The pathetic continually appeals to the Celtic spirit. Suffering ever meets with its ready sympathy. The tragedies of life always make a vivid impression upon the highly responsive emotions of the Celt, and, if we look closely into the stories which find their place in the Pedair Cainge, we shall see that on their literary side they owe much of their charm to the pathos which they express. The heroes of the Celts have been mostly heroes whose lives have borne fruit after their death. The typical career of the Welsh legend is one similar to that of Bendigeïtfran, or else to that of Pryderi, or it may be to that of Llew Llaw Gyffes. It is this element

of tragedy in the career of Arthur that makes the nucleus of it, in spite of the manifold accretions with which it has been overgrown, seem thoroughly Celtic.

The term Celtic, however, is one which it is always important for us to examine closely. In Wales, for instance, there are considerable sections of the population whose emotional sensibilities are by no means easily aroused, and who constitute the mainspring of every movement, where progress of a genuinely practical character is made. It is not our present purpose to analyse the Welsh character, but only to call attention to the danger, lest the use of the term Celtic should lead to a misconception that the Welsh character is highly uniform.

The stories which form 'Pedair Caingc y Mabinogi' are, as we hope to shew more fully in the sequel, very closely connected with certain districts of Wales which appear to have had ethnologically a character of their own. Here, too, it may be well to warn the uninitiated reader that, in the collection of stories usually classed as Mabinogion, we find narratives of very different origin. Three of these narratives, Owain and Luned, Peredur, and Geraint and Enid are clearly adaptations from Norman-French originals corresponding respectively to Chrestien de Troyes' *Yrain*, *Perceval*, and *Erec et Enide*. Killwch and Olwen appears to be built upon Arthurian and other legends of native growth. Other legends such as Maccen Wledig, Breuddwyd Rhonabwy, and Llud and Llevelys, are of uncertain origin, while lastly we have the Four Branches of the Mabinogi, forming by themselves a distinct unity.

The Mabinogi, of which we have here the four branches, formed without very much doubt the stock-in-trade of the apprentice-bard or mabinog. Essentially, it consists of precis from various sagas very skilfully pieced together. The sagas were undoubtedly at one time far more extensive than the Pedair Caingc would lead us to suppose, and the wandering bard or minstrel doubtless used the stones of the Pedair Caingc for the purpose of building with them a highly elaborate superstructure drawn from imagination, aetiological myths and folk-lore.

The reader of the Pedair Caingc cannot be long before observing that the geographical area with which they are most intimately connected. — for they have very marked local colouring. — by no means corresponds to the Wales of the present day.

The large and important district of Powys scarcely finds a place in the narrative, and, where it enters, it does so from pure necessity in order to explain how Gwydion took his swine from Dyfed to Gwynedd. Both the latter districts, however, with their dependencies, enter fully into the story, and the significance of this fact we hope to shew later.

At the present day, when the study of folk-lore and of prehistoric archaeology is prosecuted with great ardour, if not always with much certainty and definiteness of result, it may be well to consider of what service the Four Branches of the Mabinogi may be to the student of these subjects in their relation to Wales. Especially can they be of value in our attempt to discover what the chief ethnological strata are, of which the present Welsh people is composed. This is a highly complicated question and the most extreme care is needed lest our conclusions upon it should be too hastily formed. Exceedingly difficult, too, is it to estimate the value of these stories in so far as they throw light upon the religious conceptions of the early inhabitants of Wales. This question as well as most of the questions here raised will be discussed in separate chapters. It is important, however, to note here that it is becoming more and more evident that, in the formation of early religious beliefs more factors have entered than the upholders of the Sun-myth theory and even of the animistic theory have supposed. Supremely necessary is it to consider the subjective and psychological elements in a people's character, which cause it to view certain objective phenomena, such as those of the powers of Nature, in particular ways. That this psychological factor is of marked importance in the study of the early Celtic religion, we hope to shew in the chapter upon the mythological aspect of the stories under consideration.

No less important are the four branches of the Mabinogi for the study of social and political life in the geographical areas covered by them. These aspects, too, will be discussed in separate chapters and one feature will be brought into special prominence, namely, the marked similarity of the social and political institutions here described to those of Ireland. This will be one portion of the mass of cumulative evidence which shews that these stories emanated from districts of Wales in which there was a strongly Goidelic element in the population.

This view will be borne out by the character of the sagas as well as the general style of the narratives. In style, the *Mabinogi* represents the oldest narrative prose which we possess, though in its modern form it has doubtless undergone some linguistic as well as other modifications. Especially interesting from the linguistic point of view is the syntax, which presents characteristic forms of construction that have by this time been supplanted by forms more in keeping with the syntactical ideas of the Indo-European languages generally. The question at once faces us in regard to Welsh syntax, and that of Irish also, as to the influence upon it of the syntax of the non-Aryan languages of neolithic times. In the chapter on the language of the *Pedair Caingc*, we hope to illustrate the striking resemblance in syntactical conception between the constructions of Welsh and such non-Aryan languages as those of the Semitic group, notably in the prominence of the Noun-idea in the syntax. The points in which the syntax of the Celtic languages varies in the several languages as well as those in which it is based apparently on different conceptions from those which govern Sanskrit, for example or Greek, will certainly repay study both for the philologist and the ethnologist.

It has already been stated that the Four Branches of the *Mabinogi* seem to consist of fragments from various sagas more or less skilfully combined into a unity. In this preliminary sketch it will be perhaps well to indicate the formation of the story, reserving a more detailed consideration of its composition until later. The story which seems to form the main trunk upon which the Four Branches hang, is the life of *Pryderi*, the hero of *Dyfed*. The first of the Four Branches bears upon his life, firstly, by pointing out whence arose the friendship of *Pwyll*, the father of *Pryderi*, with the king of *Hades*. *Arawn*, from whom *Pryderi* received his gift of swine, and secondly, by narrating how *Pwyll* first came to meet *Rhiannon*, *Pryderi*'s mother. Further, the *Mabinogi* of *Pwyll* introduces us to the cause of the spell laid upon *Dyfed*, resulting in the imprisonment of *Pryderi* as told in the story of *Manawyddan* son of *Llyr*. Thus, the first part of *Pwyll* prepares us for the 'fourth branch', viz. the story of *Math* son of *Mathonwy*, while the second part prepares us for the 'third branch', that is to say, the narrative called *Manawyddan* son of *Llyr*.

It would seem as if originally the story of Pryderi were divided into three sections: a) His birth and disappearance, b) His imprisonment when the spell was laid upon Dyfed, c) His death at the hands of Gwydion, the hero of Gwynedd. With this central story of the life of Pryderi there were combined two other sagas, the story of the family of Llyr, Bendigeitfran, Branwen and Manawyddan, and also the story of the family of Don, with which the story of Beli is connected. The 'Four Branches of the Mabinogi', consequently, consist of the stories of Pryderi and the Llyr family on the one hand, in contrast to the story of the Don family and Beli on the other, while these stories have each an appropriate local setting; moreover, the relations between the sagas indicate important ethnological points.

The story of the death of Pryderi in North Wales is at least as old as the Black Book of Carmarthen; for we there find in *Englynion y Beddau* a reference to the grave of Pryderi in Abergwenoli. There appears to be no such name in North Wales at the present day, unless it is to be identified with that of Abergynolwyn near Towyn, Merionethshire. The *Mabinogi* of *Math fab Mathonwy*, however, locates the death of Pryderi in 'Maen tryya6c', without doubt a mistake for *Maentryya6c*, i. e. the modern Maentwrog near Ffestiniog.

Into the tissue of the narrative many aetiological myths have been worked, connected with various parts of Wales. Anglesey, Arfon, Ardudwy, Dunodig enter into it, together with Dyfed and its dependencies in South Wales. The overlordship of Wales is, however, vested in the king of Britain or 'Ynys y kedyrn', whose capital is London. The narrative treats the isle of Britain as still in British hands, and this complete ignoring of the Saxon invasion raises some difficulty as to the determination of the date of the formation of the *Mabinogi*. In determining this, the antiquity of the geography implied in the narrative will especially have to be taken into consideration.

No less important for the study of these writings is it to note the titles which are here employed. These, it will be seen, are used with care and discrimination, and will reveal in no small degree the political conceptions upon which the *Pedair Cainge turn*. It is clear too, from the evident atmosphere in which the stories appear, that they were composed and recited in the higher circles of Welsh life, and it was this fact that

doubtless secured their preservation. Indeed, the author appears to have described a life similar to his own, when Gwydion is represented as a bard at the house of Pryderi, and as reciting there a 'kyvarwydyt'. The 'kyvarwydyt' was a narrative probably similar to those of which the Pedair Cainge are composed.

The narratives more especially of Anglesey and Arfon appear to have been thus collected on bardic journeys to North Wales, and it is significant that the author was not always familiar with the correct names of places in this district. For instance, as Professor Rhŷs in his 'Celtic Heathendom' has pointed out, Nantlle, which clearly was Nant Llen, is interpreted as 'Nant y llef'. It is noticeable, too, that there is far more evil-doing attributed to the characters of Gwynedd than to those of Dyved, a further index to the Dimetian origin of the stories.

So far then for this preliminary sketch, which will be followed by chapters dealing in greater detail with the topics here mentioned. In the next chapter an analysis will be given of the composition of the narrative, with the sources, as far as they are known, of the various legends.

## Chapter II.

### The structure of the Mabinogi.

In order to discover the trunk as it were, from which the branches of the Mabinogi radiate, it is necessary to turn to the story of Math son of Mathonwy. This Mabinogi, as will be shown later, is pieced together from various local legends connected with Gwynedd and Arddwy, into which the personality of Gwydion ab Don largely enters. The story which is the nucleus of the Mabinogion is that of the death of Pryderi, the hero of Dyved, in single combat with Gwydion, the hero of Gwynedd. The following is an outline of the story. Gwydion and Giluaethwy, the nephews of the somewhat shadowy Math ab Mathonwy, in order that Giluaethwy may obtain Goewin, daughter of Pebin, Math's foot-holder, determine (though the connection between the two stories is not very clear) to go as bards to the court of Pryderi to procure swine. At that time, swine were to be found only in Dyfed, whither, according to the story, they had been sent as a present to Pryderi son of Pwyll from Hades.

The two nephews of Math, together with ten others, go in the guise of bards to Ceredigion to a place called 'Rudlan Teini', where Pryderi's court was situated. The pretended bards receive a cordial welcome, and Gwydion is put to sit next to Pryderi. As was usual with itinerant bards, Gwydion was asked for a 'kyvarôdyt' or story. Through his skill in narration, he produces a most favourable impression upon Pryderi and his court, so that they are ready to grant whatever request he may make. Gwydion thereupon explains that he has come to ask for swine, and Pryderi expresses his own readiness to grant the request, had he not made an agreement with his people not to allow any of them to leave the country until they had bred twice their number. From this obligation Gwydion then states that he can free his host by giving him an adequate equivalent. Next day, through his skill in sorcery, he produces twelve stallions and twelve white-breasted black greyhounds, together with twelve collars and twelve leashes upon them, such that no one who saw them could tell but that they were gold. Moreover, he produces twelve saddles upon the horses, and every part of the harness, which was ordinarily of iron, was here entirely of gold, while the bridles were of gold also. These presents for Pryderi Gwydion had produced out of fungus. They are accepted, and the swine are given in return. Without delay, Gwydion and his comrades leave Dyfed for Gwynedd, since these enchanted objects could only last from one meal to the other. The Mabinogi now proceeds to trace the course of the swine to Gwynedd, and this it does by means of place-names into which the word 'moch' enters. These are: 'Mochdref' in Ceredigion, 'Mochtref' between Ceri and Arwystli, 'Mochnant' a 'cwmwd' in Powys, and then 'Mochtref' in 'Cantref Rhos'. The next course taken is towards 'Kedernit Gwyned', where the highest 'tref' in Arllechwedd is reached. Here a sty (*creu*) is made for the swine, whence the name 'Creuwyrion'. Having thus disposed of the swine, Gwydion and Giltuaethwy go to Math, son of Mathonwy. On their arrival at his court in Caerdatyl, the troops are being called out, as it appears, to withstand the men of the South, who having discovered the trick played upon them, are in pursuit of their swine and their captors. The armies of the North and the South meet at a spot exactly half-way between 'Maenawr Pennard' and 'Maenawr coet alun'. A battle was fought, and many were

slain on both sides, until at last the men of the South were routed. They fled to Nant Call, and were pursued up to that spot, where a great slaughter took place. Thence they retreated to Dol penn maen, where the two armies tried to come to terms. Hostages were then taken, and Pryderi's army was allowed to betake itself in peace to the 'Traeth Mawr'. Just as they reached the 'Felenrhyt' however, the infantry on both sides could not be restrained from shooting. At Pryderi's request, the matter is left to be decided by single combat between Gwydion and himself. In this single combat, Pryderi is slain, as the Mabinogi with its Dimetian bias takes care to relate, not through Gwydion's superior prowess, but through his sorcery, and is buried at 'Maen tyuyauc uch y uelenryt'. 'Maen tyuyauc' is doubtless a mistake in the MS. for 'Maen tyryauc', the modern 'Maentwrog'. The grave of Pryderi is said to have been there at the time of the composition of the Mabinogi.

By studying the narratives connected with the principal factors in this story, we can easily see upon what lines the Mabinogi has been put together. The three factors are 1. Pryderi, 2. Gwydion, 3. The swine.

If we read the portions of the 'Four Branches' dealing with Pryderi, it will at once be seen that his history throughout is one of misfortune, culminating in the narrative of his death in the service of his people. Here we have an indication of that strain of pathos which produces in these simple stories of the old heroes and heroines of Wales their most characteristic literary effect. The popular imagination of Dyfed apparently fastened itself upon the life of Pryderi and developed the narrative of his disasters from various sources mythical and historical, while even in Ardudwy the story of his life or at least of his death was not unknown.

In 'Englynion y Beddau' in the Black Book of Carmarthen we have the following lines:

En aber gwenoli y mae  
Bet pryderi yny terw tonnev tir,  
Yg karrauc bet gwallauc hir.

The nearest modern place-name to that of Abergwenoli is Abergynolwyn near Towyn in Merionethshire, but this place is scarcely near enough to the sea to answer the description given in the

'Englyn'. Hitherto no place in the neighbourhood of Maentwrog has been identified with Abergwenoli.

The misfortune of Pryderi's life previous to his death are a) those connected with his birth, b) those connected with the Head of Bendigeitfran which Pryderi with six others carried to London, c) those connected with the spell which was laid upon Dyved.

Since we have commenced with an account of the death of Pryderi, we may take the misfortunes enumerated in their reverse order. Beginning then with c) it is to be noted first of all that in this story we have a point of contact for the story of Pryderi with that of the children of Llyr. This alliance between the two families, the significance of which will be seen later, is illustrated in the marriage of Manawydan with Rhiannon the widow of Pwyll. The introduction of Rhiannon into this narrative, i. e. the Mabinogi of Manawydan son of Llyr, is necessary, in order to connect the misfortune which here befalls Pryderi with the story of Rhiannon, a story forming originally, as one may well conjecture, an independent saga. The spell laid upon Dyved is represented as part of the vengeance of Gwawl fab Clut, the disappointed suitor of Rhiannon. The family of Llyr appears to have been distinctly Goidelic, for we have the corresponding name 'Ler' in Irish legend, and Manawyddan fab Llyr of Welsh legend is Manannán mac Lir in Irish. In Welsh hagiology, too, we find the following Welsh saints represented as descendants of Bran Fendigaid son of Llyr Llediaith: Cyllin or Cmillin Sant, Lleurwg, Gwerydd, Iestin, Cadfrawd, Eigan Santes, Cadgyfarch, Gwrmael, Eldad, Tudwal Befr, Ifor ab Tudwal, while Dyfan Sant is represented as the great-grandson of Manawyddan. Doubtless the connection of the saints of various localities with these names tended to preserve an interest in their legends.

The Mabinogi of Manawyddan son of Llyr appears from a reference at the end of the story to have been also called 'Mabinogi Mymweir a Mynord'. The explanation of this name is given as follows:

'Pa ry6 wassanaeth y bu pryderi a riannon ynda6 heb ef. Pryderi a uydei ac yrd porth uy llys i am y uyn6gyl, a riannon a uydei a m6eireu yr essyn wedy bydynt yn kywein g6eir am y myn6gyl lithen, ac nelly y bu eu carchar. Ac o acha6s y karchar h6nn6 y gelwit y kyfar6ydyt h6nn6 mabinogi mymweir

a mynord.' It is probable, however, that there was a variant upon this name, for in the Book of Taliessin (Skene, p. 156), we have the following line:

'Bum mynaŕc mynweir'.

The reference is a mere allusion, and no light is thrown upon it, but it serves to suggest that the narrative was a favourite and a familiar one.

The Mabinogi of Manawyddan son of Llyr is too well known to all readers of the Mabinogion to need repetition here, but it may be well to quote the following passage, illustrating as it does the close connection between this story and that of the second part of Pwyll, prince of Dyfed:

'Mini yŕ llŕyt uab kil coet, a mi a dodeis yr hut ar seith cantref dyuet, ac y dial gŕawl uab clut o gedymdeithas ac ef y dodeis i yr hut, ac ar pryderi y dieleis i gŕare broch yg cot a gŕaŕl uab clut pan y gŕunaeth pŕyll penn annŕn.'

In connection with this portion of the Mabinogi, there has been developed the story contained in one of the triads of Manawyddan as one of 'Tri Eurgyrdd Ynys Prydain'. The Triad (Myv. Arch. p. 393) is as follows:

'Tri Eurgyrd Ynys Prydein Casswallawn mab Beli pan aeth y geisiaw Fflur hyt yn Rhufein, a Manawydan mab Llyr, pan fu hyt ar Ddyfet, a Llew llaw gyffes pan fu ef a Gwdyon yn ceissaw henw ac arfen y gan Riarot y fam.' Other references to Manawydan in Welsh literature are: 1. Black Book of Carmarthen (Skene, p. 51):

Manawidan ab llyr  
Oet duis y cwsil  
Neustue manauid  
Eis tull a trywruid.

2. Book of Taliessin (Skene, p. 155):

Ys kyweir vvg kadeir ygkaer sidi  
Nys plaŕl neb heint a heneint a uo yndi,  
Ys gŕyr manaŕyt a phryderi.

3. Manawyddan is mentioned in Trioedd Gwys Prydein as one of the 'Tri lleddf unben'.

It is not with Manawyddan alone of the children of Llyr that Pryderi is associated in the Mabinogion. Some of the most striking stories, from a literary point of view, here interwoven into the tissue of the Mabinogi, are the stories of Bendigeitfran,

son of Llyr, and of Branwen his sister. These stories hang by a very slender thread to the central narrative of Pryderi. Originally, too, it is probable that the stories of Bendigeitvrán and of Branwen formed separate sagas, which have here been interwoven with some skill. The story of Bendigeitvrán, like that of Pryderi, is largely a story of suffering, culminating in the narrative of his death, and it will be noticed that in these legends the better characters are constantly represented as undergoing suffering. The story of Bendigeitvrán owes its interest largely in Welsh legend to the manner in which the fortunes of the Llyr family and its adherents are told. It is possible too that the explanation of the name Penfro = Pembroke was in some way connected with this legend. In the Black Book of Carmarthen Bran is referred to as follows:

— Bran vab llir lledieith,  
Ruit ý elod includav anreith,

while his expedition into Ireland is referred to in the Book of Taliessin as follows:

Bum y gan vran yn iwerdon  
Gweleis pan ladóyt mordóyt tyllon  
Kiglen gyfarfot am gerdolyon  
A góydyf diéfyl diferogyon  
O penren óleth hýt lúch reon.

The story of his head is given in the following triad (Myv. Arch. p. 391), a triad to which reference is made in the Mabinog itself:

Tri chudd a thri datcudd Y. Pr. Un o naddynt pen Bendigeit Fran fab Llyr a gladdwyt yn y Gwynfryn yn Llundain, a hýt tra fu yn yr ansawdd honno ni ddoe ormes ir ynys honn fyth. (Arthur a ddatguddiodd benn Bendigeid Fran or Gwynfryn yn Llundain. Can ny oedd ofer ganthaw cadw yr ynys o Gadernid neb namyn yr eiddaw e hun.)

Further we have reference to Bendigeitvrán in the Triad of Tri Sanctaidd Linus Y. P. Llinus Bran ab Llyr, a Llinus Cunedda Wledig, a Llinus Brychan Brycheiniawe, while in the 'Historia Regum Britanniae' a Bran<sup>1)</sup> is represented as in opposition to Beli.<sup>2)</sup> The opposition of these two families, representing it may be Goidelic and Brythonic Celts, is everywhere implied

<sup>1)</sup> Brennus in the original Latin.

<sup>2)</sup> Belinus in the original Latin.

in the Four Branches of the Mabinogi. Here it may be noted that the local connection of Bran in the Mabinogion appears to be with Anglesey, Ireland, and the country round Cardigan Bay, with Harlech as its centre.

In the story of Branwen, daughter of Llyr, we are introduced to the undeserved suffering of women, which enters so largely into Welsh legend. The Mabinogi of Branwen appears to have been a favourite one in Wales and reference is made to the story in a Triad, as follows:

'Tri anfat palfawt Y. P. Palfawt Matholwch Wyddel ar Vranwen merch Llyr, a phalfawt Arthur ar Fedrawt, a phalfawt Gwenhwyfar ar Gwenhwyfach.' In the Mabinogi itself there is no reference to this triad.

The story of Branwen, like most of the other stories of the Mabinogion, appears to have been developed in connection with a particular locality. The main centre of her legend seems to have been Anglesey, where her grave was shown at Glan alaw. Indeed, we may almost look upon Branwen as standing in the same relation to Anglesey as Pryderi to Dyfed or Gwydion to Gwynedd. In her history the fortunes of her island are, as it were, to be summed up. It is from the fact that this legend is so closely connected with Anglesey that Ireland enters so naturally into the story. This tendency to take note of neighbouring districts in local stories will often help us to determine more precisely the areas from which the legends originally emanated. The closer import of the story of Branwen upon Welsh ethnology will be developed in a later article.

Reverting now to the disasters of Pryderi, the string upon which the narrative turns, we come to the story of his disappearance soon after his birth. This story is woven into the story of Rhiannon, the story which forms the second part of Pwyll, Prince of Dyfed. Judging from the local allusions, it would seem that this is a story developed on that side of Dyfed which was nearest to Gwent-is-coed. It is Teyrnon Twrf Vliant that first discovers Pryderi and nurses him as his own child, until he grows to man's estate. What the significance of this relation between Pryderi and Teyrnon may be, we hope to enquire later. It is somewhat curious, however, that the names Rhiannon and Teyrnon seem to form a pair, Rhiannon being 'Rigantona' and 'Teyrnon' = Tigernonos, and it may be that the legend of Pryderi

current in the district of Dyfed nearest to Gwent treated him as the son of Teyrnion and Rhiannon, whereas the Arberth legend looked upon him as the son of Pwyll. The connection of Pryderi, too with Pendaran Dyfed his foster-father is somewhat difficult of explanation. In the Triads, a circumstance is referred to which does not enter into the Mabinogi. In Myv. Arch. p. 390 in the Triad of 'Tri gwrddfeichiad Y. P.' we have the following statement: 'A Phryderi mab Pwyll annwfn (wrongly spelt amwyn) a getwis moch Pen Daran Dyfet yn Glyn Cuwch yn Emlyn'. It is probable that this spot in Dyfed was the centre of many local legends now entirely lost.

The story of Pryderi would not have been complete without the story of the meeting of his father Pwyll and his mother Rhiannon. This narrative would appear to have been developed in connection with 'Gorsedd Arberth', and it forms part of the legend of the vengeance of Gwawl. The story of Rhiannon's marriage is exceedingly similar in motive to those Irish stories in which a fairy chooses a man as husband in preference to one of her own race.

Leaving now the story of Pryderi, the mythological bearings of which are left to later discussion, we may proceed to the story of the swine. The reference to these in the Mabinogi is found in Math ab Mathonwy, where Gwydion says to Math: 'Arglŷd heb y gwydyon mi a giglen dynot yr deheu y ry6 prynet ny doeth yr yny's honn einyoet. P6y y hen6 h6y heb ef. Hoben arglŷd. Pa ry6 anueileit y6 y rei hymny. anueileit bychein g6ell en kie no chic eidon. bychein yut 6ynteu ac y maent yn symuda6 en6en. Moch y gelbir weithon. P6y hie6yn-th6y. Pryderi mab p6yll yd annonet ida6 o ann6n, y gan ara6n vrenhin ann6n, ac ettwa yd ys yn kad6 or enw . . . h6m6. hanner h6ch. hanner hob.' The first part of the story of Pwyll Prince of Dyfed, which has no immediate connection with the story of Rhiannon, is merely an introduction to the story of the swine and the part which they play in the history of Pryderi's death. Doubtless there were many legends both in North and South Wales concerning the introduction of swine, and the story which we have here is probably but one out of many. This factor in the narrative need not however detain us any longer here, and we may proceed to the remaining factor, namely, the stories connected with the name of Gwydion.

These stories are all found in the Mabinogi of Math ab Mathonwy, but we at once see that this Mabinogi is somewhat loosely pieced together out of various sagas, the common element of which is a reference to Gwydion. These sagas, or rather portions of legend, appear to have been connected with various local areas in Gwynedd and Ardudwy. The stories relating to Math ab Mathonwy seem to centre around Caer dâthyl in Arvon: those about Gwydion and Pryderi belong to the district around the grave of Pryderi near Maentwrog. Further we have a cluster of stories around 'Kaer aranrot', a place which cannot now be identified: In addition to these are stories connected with Dinlle = Din llen, the Fortress of Llen, the true name of Llew Llaw Gyffes, and Nantlle = Nant llen, while further, the Mabinogi ends with stories explaining the name of 'Llyn y Morwynion'.

Math ab Mathonwy in the story which bears his name is a somewhat nebulous personage famous apparently in Welsh legend more for witch-craft than for any other characteristic. There is a reference to his magic wand in the poem called *Daronwy* in the *Book of Taliessin* (Skene, p. 147):

Hutlath vathon6y  
Ygkoet pan tyf6y

and also (Skene, p. 142) we have the line:

'Am s6yn6ys i vath'.

The story of the love of Gilvaethwy for Goewin, the maid from Dol pebin who held Math ab Mathonwy's feet in her lap, would appear to have been originally a complete story in itself, perfectly independent of the story of the death of Pryderi, with which it is now somewhat clumsily combined. It is not at all improbable that the story of Math owed its main interest in the commencement to the fact that it was connected with the birth of Dylan eil Ton, to whom there are several references in the *Book of Taliessin*: e. g. (Skene, p. 142):

Nen bum yn yscor  
Gan dylan eil mor  
Ygkylchet ymperued  
R6g denlin teyrned.

Again (Skene, p. 145), in the poem called 'Mab Gyfreu Taliessin', we have the lines:

Pan y6 gofaran  
T6r6f ionneu 6rth lan  
Yn dial dylan,

and also (Skene, p. 157):

Tohit gwance tra gro  
Tir dylan dirbo.

In the Book of Taliessin, poem XLIII, there is a 'Mar6nat Dylan eil Ton', the first five lines of which are as follows:

Un du6 uchaf dewin doethaf m6yha6 aued (?)  
Py delis maes p6y ae soynas yn lla6 trahael.  
Neu gynt noe et. p6y un tagnef ar redyf gefel.  
G6rthrif g6astra6t g6en6yn a wnaeth g6eith g6ythloned.  
G6ann dylan. ad6ythic lann. treis yn lityruer.

While in 'Englynion y Beddan' (Black Book of Carmarthen) we are told:

ynydyua ton tolo  
Bet dilan llan beyno.

Of the single combat between Gwydion and Pryderi enough has already been said in reference to the place which it occupies in the structure of the Mabinogi. The remaining story of which this branch of the Mabinogi is made up occupies on the whole the most prominent place within it, the story of Llew llaw gyffes, son of Aranrot.

Llew (or rather Llew) Llaw Gyffes appears to have entered largely into Welsh legend, but his character was not a high one. In 'Englynion y Beddan' we have the following stanza:

Bet llew llangyfes y dan achles  
Mor nny bu y gywnes  
Gur oet hynav guir y neb ny rotes.

In poem XXXV of the Black Book of Carmarthen reference is made to 'Caerley a gwidion' in the following words:

Ban denaw o gaer seon  
O imlat ac itewon  
Itaw caer ley a gwidion.

The fact however that Gwydion figures in the legends of all the districts of Gwynedd here mentioned, makes it clear that he was the central figure of the Gwynedd legend, much as Pryderi was the central figure of that of Dyfed. It is noticeable, however, that behind them we find in considerable prominence the per-

sonalities of their respective mothers, Don in the case of Gwynedd and Rhiannon in the case of Pryderi. Further, the Don family appears to have been closely connected with that of Beli fab Mynogan. Certainly Aranrot, the daughter of Don, is represented also as the daughter of Beli. Thus the Four Branches may be represented as the story of the struggle in Wales between the families connected with Llyr on the one hand and those connected with Beli on the other.

It is to be observed that in the Llen story the hero meets his death by treachery. This is thoroughly in keeping with the trend of Welsh legend, where the writer is in sympathy with the characters described. It is possible that in this narrative of the death of Llen and his consequent resurrection by Gwydion, we have a reminiscence of the struggles of Arduwly against the encroachments of Penllyn, for Arduwly must ever have been debateable ground.

So far then it seems clear that in point of structure the Four Branches of the Mabinogi are composed of a number of local legends collected together, probably by some travelling bard or bards, from various places in Dyfed, Gwynedd and Mon. These stories have been pieced together with more or less skill, but the local colouring is constantly visible. In the stories of Dyfed we seem to have

- a) Stories developed on the side of Dyfed next to Gwent.
- b) Stories developed around Grisedd Arberth.
- c) Stories developed around Glyn Cuch.
- d) Stories around the coast of Pembroke and the Island of Gwales.

In the stories of Anglesey we find

- a) Stories around Aberffraw into which the relations between Anglesey and Arduwly (including Lleyn?) enter.
- b) Stories around the grave of Branwen at Glan alaw.
- c) Stories around Talebolion.

In the stories of Gwynedd and Arduwly we find

- a) Stories around Harlech.
- b) Stories around the grave of Pryderi at Maentwrog.
- c) Stories around Llyn y Morwynion.
- d) Stories around Dinlle and Nantlle.
- e) Stories around 'Kaer aranrot'.
- f) Stories around Caer dathyl.

To these may be added those stories which implicate Britain outside Wales, connected for the most part with the history of the struggle of the families of Beli and Bran for the supremacy of Britain. These form a kind of background as it were to the whole Mabinogi. It is significant that in these stories there is no mention whatsoever of Arthur, a fact which seems to make it clear that in the legends of Gwynedd and Dyfed he had no place whatever. Still more significant, perhaps, is the fact that we find here no stories from a district lying between Ardudwy and Dyfed. In this district, which lies on the South side of the Estuary of the Dyfi, the Taliessin legend was developed. The name of Taliessin is found in the Mabinogi as one of those who carried the head of Bendigeitfran, but he plays no real part in the legend. For some reason or other it was never brought into relation either with the story of Pryderi or with that of Gwydion. The same too is the case with the important district of Powys. In a later article we hope to point out the significance of these omissions.

Aberystwyth.

E. ANWYL.