

diffuse among the people generally a love for these pursuits, would have inspired some feelings of interest in the bosom of every man of liberal taste and generous sympathy." So spoke the late Henry Richard, whom Mr. Gladstone was wont to address as "my honorable friend the Member for Wales." Southey, Thierry, Chevalier Bunsen, and Bishop Thirlwall, the historian of Greece, showed their high appreciation of the Eisteddfod. The late Mr. Matthew Arnold said: "The Eisteddfod no doubt is a kind of Olympic meeting, and that the common people of Wales should care for such things shows something Greek in them, something spiritual, something human, something (I am afraid one must add) which with the English common people is not to be found."

It is true that many of the bardic forms and symbols now practised at the Eisteddfod are anachronisms; but the answer of Gower to Pistol, who flouted another Welsh custom, is applicable to this case:—"Will you mock at an ancient tradition began upon an honorable respect and worn as the memorable trophy of pre-deceased genius?" The English papers dwell almost exclusively upon these anachronisms, and judge the whole institution by some of its appendages. Englishmen do not understand nor care to understand the significance of the Eisteddfod. They pretend to look with suspicious eyes on these time-honored customs, and circulate some dark hints that "Taffy" is growing intractable. John Bull always clamours about suppressing small nationalities, but who has suppressed so many as he? How he frowns if any of his adopted children show some vigor and independence? The object of the Eisteddfod is not to foment the feeling of nationality in the political sense at all, nor even to perpetuate the Welsh language and customs. The best security for the duration of the Welsh language is the passionate attachment of the people to it as the vehicle of religious worship and instruction. They like the Eisteddfod, not only because they revere old customs and traditions merely, but also because of the genuine delight which they take in such intellectual excitement which the exercise of oratory and composition, poetry and music, afford them, just as the common people of England take delight in horse-racing, fox-hunting, and pugilism. "It is a most remarkable feature," says Bishop Thirlwall, "in the history of any people, and such as could not be said of any other than the Welsh, that they have centred their national recreation in literature and musical composition."