

Contributed Articles.

THE WELSHMAN'S UNIVERSITY.

A UNIVERSITY in the ordinary sense of the term Wales does not possess, and though it possesses three University Colleges, all founded, chartered, endowed, and supplied with a complete university apparatus, except the power of granting degrees, within the last twenty years, not one of them could be designated the University of Wales. But long before Oxford or Cambridge was founded, yea, long before Arthur ruled in Britain and Hywel the Good gave his laws, the institution which I take the liberty of calling The Welshman's University flourished. It had received its present shape some centuries before the Normans conquered the island, and it is perhaps the most ancient institution that exists now in Britain. It is called in Welsh *Eisteddfod* (pronounce *dd* like *th* in *father*, and give the vowels the continental pronunciation). The word signifies "place of sitting," and is now used to designate the assemblage of druids, bards, and other literati of the Isle of Britain. From time immemorial it has done for Wales, to a great extent, what the modern university has done for other countries; and now that the educational system of Wales is nearly complete, it is a striking fact that this ancient institution is growing in popularity, year by year; and that it is in harmony with modern ideas is proved by the fact that the latest feature added to it is an annual conference of Welsh educationists.

It is a unique institution, the product of the intelligence and mental activity which characterizes the Welsh people, from which in return the national mind has received a powerful impulse. The English press until very recently regarded the whole thing as a relic of barbarism; and if now and then its salient features were noticed, it was only done in order to ridicule the institution. "We would expect that this remnant of an ancient race, after having for so many centuries guarded bravely their language and national institutions among the mountain fastnesses to which they had been driven by the arms of the invaders, meeting in these modern times, not for any purpose of violence or sedition, but to promote the study of literature and of arts, to preserve from extinction the store of poetry and of music, which they had derived from their ancestors, and to