

are the opening of the "gorsedd" or congress of bards, and the chairing of the chief bard of the year. An Eisteddvod is to be duly proclaimed a year and a day before hand, on the spot where it is to be held, where a huge stone is placed called the logan stone—an unhewn piece of stone—bearing the inscription in gilt letters:—

"Maen gorseu beirdd Ynys Prydain,"

which means the "Stone of the throne of the Bards of the Isle of Britain." The long interval of time between the proclamation and holding of the Eisteddvod shows that the Welsh people do not regard it as a light undertaking. In times when news was not flashed across the earth by electric wires or published by daily press, it took a long time to announce the holding of an Eisteddvod to all the Cymry. This was done by the bards, who, with voice and harp, roused the enthusiasm of the people by the tale of radiant deeds of old, and taught them the laws of God and of the land in chanting triads, in which lay hidden the wisdom of the time. A circle of smaller stones is formed around the "gorsedd" stone, inside which, on the opening of the Eisteddvod, all the bards congregate "in the face of the sun and the eye of light." The trumpet having sounded, and the people having gathered around the Druidic Circle, one of the chief bards who, as a rule is also a minister of the gospel, ascends the logan stone, and amid breathless silence offers the gorsedd prayer, which is translated as follows:—

"Grant, O God! Thy protection,
And in protection, strength;
And in strength, understanding;
And in understanding, knowledge;
And in knowledge, knowledge of the just;
And in the knowledge of the just, the love of it;
And in that love, the love of all existences;
And in the love of all existences, the love of God.
God and all goodness."

The Archdruid then, unsheathing a sword, asks in stentorian tones, "A oes heddwch?" (Is there peace?) A hearty and unanimous response being given, the Eisteddvod is declared open. The use of the sword on this occasion reminds one of the time when the Eisteddvod was fostered and protected by the kingly power. After this conference of the bards is adjourned, the people gather together in the large pavilion where the real work of the Eisteddvod is commenced.

The chairing of the bard is also an imposing ceremony. The