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INTRODUCTION

The description of the Devil portraying him with horns, wings, cloven hoofs and forked tail appeared in medieval times and this was how he was shown in Wales.

Before Greek or Roman mythology the Devil was supposed to have been a snake. This was probably why the temptor in the allegory of the Garden of Eden was a snake. In Welsh mythology Satan has never appeared in the form of a snake but he was supposed to possess hundreds of flying adders called in Welsh "*gwiberod*", which he let loose in various parts of Wales particularly, in Clwyd, North Wales to cause fear and hindrance to Christian people. The medieval Devil has been partly modelled on one of the most ancient gods Pan and the satyrs with their cloven hoofs, horns and part of a man's or animal's body.

There was a time in Wales when the Devil was never referred to as the 'Devil' or 'Satan' if this could be avoided. He was usually called 'The Bad Man', 'Evil One', 'The Old One' and in Victorian times 'The Old Nick' was very much favoured.

Whatever he was called he roused fear in most hearts and no one was keen to offend him. The only ones in Wales who did not fear him were the clergy, the exorcists and possibly the white witches or white wizards. The black witches and black wizards were thought to be Satan's servants and if they carried out his commands faithfully, they had no need to be afraid.

During Victorian times many eminent researchers in Wales argued about Celtic folklore relating to Wales. They wrote books and contributed to endless magazines on the subject. One school of thought maintained there was a Devil in sole charge of evil, others, that he was split up into many demons all equal. While yet another theory was there were several grades of demons ranging down in rank from the Devil's chief demon. The comparison was The Holy Trinity and the Angels with St. Michael, St. Peter and the lesser saints.

It was eternally the struggle between the powers of goodness and of evil, light and darkness. Strangely in Welsh folklore, there are very few stories of Angels appearing to anyone, while tales abound of demons, and the Faery folk. No one in the field of

THE UNBORN

research has been able to state why this is so. With very little fear of contradiction, it can be said that Wales in proportion to its size has more folklore than any country in the world.

At the door of Methodism can be laid the blame for the loss of many folk tales. In the 1800, Methodists were forbidden to listen to tales of the Faery Folk, not so much as listening was a great sin but it was the minor sin of wasting time, when the Bible and saintly books should have been read instead. The writer of this book can remember her mother telling her of how her own mother used to love going to what was termed as a "Penny Reading" in the little village hall at Llanrug near Caernarfon. Bards from all over Wales used to read their poetry and tell folk tales and it cost a penny to listen to them. Many preachers throughout Wales were bards and the hostility from a section of the clergy towards the readings caused a lot of ill feeling. The visits ceased for some years but seemed to start again about nineteen hundred and four and around nineteen hundred and ten a projector, nick-named a magic lantern, was added to the readings, which had progressed from poems to love stories based on folklore.

The only folk tales approved of by the Methodists were those relating to the evil. The stipulation was that in those tales, the Devil had to be bested, made to look stupid and never be shown as having gained a soul, no matter what kind of bargain he made with anyone.

There was one Devil in Wales that was rampant during the nineteenth century and stayed well into the twentieth. That was the *Cythraul Canu* (The Singing Devil). The Welsh are renowned for singing and there was always plenty of jealous rivalry between choirs and individual singers at Eisteddfodau, not to mention between conductors and things could get quite nasty at times. So perhaps as long as Wales is a Land of Song there will always be a Devil around.

In this day and age let us hope nothing in this book will scare any reader but will cause some amusement and wonderment at the very fertile imagination of the Welsh of long, long ago.

Virtually every county in Wales has a different version of the same folk tale and often another location.

Jane Pugh, March 1988

There is a long strip of beach at Llanddulas, near Old Colwyn, North Wales, which was once the site of a very macabre tale.

Four centuries ago the Devil was said to have made a cave on Pen y Cefn mountain on the main road side of Llanddulas opposite the beach. The local inhabitants of the village knew when Satan was in residence by the hissing and bubbling noise that came from the cave; a noxious smell of sulphur would fill the air at the mouth of the cave. The Arch Fiend would appear in all his Satanic majesty in front of pregnant women, thus causing them to miscarry.

One lovely sunny morning in the summer a young married woman was walking near the cave when the sky seemed to darken and she could hear the sound of a great flapping noise above her head. When she looked up she saw something with big black wings and a scaly body with a horrific face, small horns protruded from each side of its head and its small pig-like eyes glared at her.

The young woman was too frightened to pray or even cry out for help. The apparition spoke in a deep growling voice.

"Do you wish to bear a live child, woman?"

She could only nod her head in answer.

"You shall if you promise to dedicate its soul to me. Do you promise?" Satan asked.

The young woman regained her senses and power of speech.

"Foul fiend," she cried, "you shall never have the soul of my baby, I would rather God took it before it was born," and she fell upon her knees praying out aloud.

For answer, the Devil caused flames to envelope him and screamed:

"Foolish woman, now your child will never be born into this world."

Still surrounded by fire he spread his black wings and rose into the air, vanishing above the Cefn mountains.

The woman ran to the Vicarage and stammered out her account of her meeting with Satan. The priest said,

"Do not fear, my child, you have saved your baby, it will be born a child of God because of your defiance of the Evil one."

That night the woman went into premature labour but the child was born a perfect boy who survived to the great joy of his parents.

As Satan had become such an object of terror to women, the residents called a meeting and begged the Vicar to exorcise the Devil. He agreed and shortly after led a procession to the mouth of the Devil's cave carrying a simple wooden cross and a Bible from which he read aloud from the Book of James; the passages used for the exorcism of Devils. Behind the Vicar walked a man carrying a large church candle, while another rang a hand bell.

Soon the procession reached the cave and the Service of Exorcism began. Half way through, something hurtled out of the cave in a great rush of wind.

This unseen object caused a huge splash in a muddy pool nearby. This is why the ancients said the Devil appeared to be pitch black whenever he confronted anyone after this incident at Llanddulas.

THE BLACKEST GOAT

Cadwaladr, who farmed a tiny holding in the mountains of Snowdonia about four hundred years ago, kept a nanny goat named Jenny. She was an unusual goat to say the least, behaving more like a dog than a goat as she tried to follow her owner wherever he went.

He drew the line at allowing her to follow him to market and he would lock her up securely before starting off for Caernarfon or Beddgelert markets. She seemed to sense when it was market day and refused to be caught, dancing around just out of reach often delaying Cadwaladr. At any other time when he called, "Jenny Fach, come here," she ran to him bleating happily.

His wife, Mari, used to say, "There is something very strange about this goat, her eyes seem to change colour when she stares at me, this frightens me." Cadwaladr's reply would be, "Fear a poor innocent young goat; do not be silly woman, she would never hurt you."

Mari insisted, "Do you not recall that the Devil assumes the shape of a goat at times?", only to be told by her husband "Well, Jenny is no devil," but as he said this one day he thought that he saw a strange gleam in Jenny's eyes which in a human could be called sardonic. He laughed off the thought as stupid. To tease Mari one day when he was due to go to market he said that he was locking up the 'Devil'.

"Do not mock me, I am uneasy over that animal" she said. For answer, her husband called, "Jenny, Jenny, come to me." The goat gave him a stare, then ran off, bleating. The man gave chase, the faster he ran, the faster the goat ran up the mountain-side with Cadwaladr getting very annoyed.

Before long it was too late to set off for the market, and he cursed the goat soundly, using good Welsh oaths. At last he was very close to her as she stood still on the edge of a precipice; and he thought "she is laughing at me." Enraged, he threw a large rock at her and his aim was true without meaning it to be. It hit her on her side and with a horrible cry she fell over the edge of the precipice.

Cadwaladr was beside himself with grief and at great risk to

himself he climbed down the side of the precipice as fast as he could to reach the injured goat.

He could see the goat was dying and put his arms around her to comfort her, crying "Oh Jenny Fach do not leave me I did not mean to hurt you." At this instant she changed into a lovely young girl. Cadwaladr was not sure whether he was dreaming or not until she held out her hand to him but on grasping it he discovered it felt hard and bony and seemed to have no fingers; almost like a hoof.

He looked down at her hand, but it looked lily white and graceful. Cadwaladr decided he was imagining her hand was hoof-like and assisted the young girl back up the side of the precipice. On reaching safety, the couple walked off up the mountain side happily, Mari completely forgotten.

Up and up the mountain they went, the air becoming colder and colder. "Why are we climbing the mountain? Why don't we go home?" asked Cadwaladr. All the answer he received was a tinkling, musical laugh.

It was getting dark and soon the moon came out from behind a cloud and the howling of the wolves could be heard in the distance. Cadwaladr also thought he could hear the bleating of many goats.

The moon now shone with a greenish glow, and he saw hundreds of goats lining the mountain side. He looked at his companion and he was overcome by fear for he saw that the lower half of her body was goat, while the upper half was a woman's. Her eyes gleamed red, and she looked evil.

He heard an extra loud bleating and found himself unable to release the hand of what he now knew to be a demon. The bleating became louder as she drew him towards a gigantic black figure which had the legs of a goat and the body of a demon with goats horns protruding from its head. The eyes were blood red and evil.

Jenny spoke to Cadwaladr, "Look at my Master, Cadwaladr, he is going to throw you over the mountainside and when you are dead he will take your soul." She released his hand and at that moment, the great demon whom Cadwaladr now knew was Satan, lowered his head and charged.

The last thing Cadwaladr remembered was the impact and his body hurtling over the side of the mountain. There had been no time to pray as he fell down and down.

Next day they found his broken body lying on a crag, just above his little farmhouse. His corpse was black as if he had been burnt to death, and on his face was an indescribable look of terror.

All his wife could tell her family and neighbours was that Cadwaladr had chased his goat up the mountain and that was the last time she had seen him alive.