

HUGHES, JOHN WILLIAM (1817 - 1849), who called himself ' Edeyrn ap Nudd ', afterwards ' Edeyrn o Fôn '; a literary tramp

Name: John William Hughes
Pseudonym: Edeyrn ap Nudd, Edeyrn O Fôn
Date of birth: 1817
Date of death: 1849
Gender: Male
Occupation: a literary tramp
Area of activity: Literature and Writing
Author: Thomas Richards

He was born at Bodedern, Anglesey, into deep poverty, son of a stonemason; a humpbacked cripple; apprenticed to a tailor. He neglected his education but took to verse; in 1840 he got his *Cell Awen* published at Mold; it contains a long poem praising his patrons (pp. 33-69); in 1842 he published the *Lloffyn* at Aberystwyth, to which many hands contributed. Some of the Anglesey clergy were very kind to him, and by 1844 he was at Bangor trying to perfect his education so as to qualify for Anglican orders. Unfortunately he came across the ruffianly **Isaac Harries**, editor of *Figaro the Second*, with whom he had a riotous quarrel at the local Cymreigyddion Society; the upshot was that **Harris** inserted in the *Figaro* an ugly cartoon of ' Edeyrn,' and the latter threatened to bring out an *Anti-Figaro* as a counterblast to the *Figaro*. Education did not proceed very effectively under such conditions; for all that, he published a pamphlet at Bala in 1844 (with Saunderson as printer) which contained a sharp answer to some Baptist who had attacked the Church of England, and in 1845 there appeared from the Llanrwst press *Gwinllan Galar*, a series of elegies in memory of clergymen who had given him patronage from time to time. In the last months of 1845 he was at Llanerfyl, Montgomeryshire, and by the summer of 1847 in London, the recipient of charity from ' Aled o Vôn ' [Owen Rowlands], playing at humorous *englynion* with ' Sam o Fôn,' giving lessons in Welsh to the daughter of **Gwrgant**, and himself getting lessons in English from more than one teacher. He was an unsuccessful competitor at the Abergavenny eisteddfod of 1848; for months in 1848 and early in 1849 he stayed with literary friends at Pontypridd, Abergavenny, and Merthyr Tyfil. It is said that he had some idea of competing at the Aberffraw eisteddfod in the summer of 1849; what is certain is that he proposed publishing a small book under the title of *Llusern Eglwysig*, and was busy collecting the names of subscribers. He had reached North Pembrokeshire when he died (April 1849) at an inn between Mathry and Newton, and was buried at Llanhowell. A great controversy broke out in the *Haul* and the *Bangor Cymro* about the circumstances of his death, some adducing examples of great kindness towards him, others speaking of indifference and neglect.

Author

Thomas Richards, (1878 - 1962)

Sources

Cymru (O.M.E.), xii, 129-31

Journal of the Welsh Bibliographical Society, v, 227-9

Y Cymro (Bangor) for 1849, numbers 41, 42, 43, 45, 48, 51

Yr Haul, 1849, 265, 329, 396, and 1850, 35, 58

John Williams, *Notes and Narratives of Thirty Years Missionary and Ministerial Labours in England and Wales* (Machynlleth 1885), 75

Carnarvon and Denbigh herald, and North and South Wales independent, 18 December 1847 (a cywydd in praise of Gwrgant and his family)

Additional Links

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Published date: 1959

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