

A
TOPOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY

OF

W A L E S,

COMPRISING THE
SEVERAL COUNTIES, CITIES, BOROUGHS, CORPORATE AND MARKET TOWNS,
PARISHES, CHAPELRIES, AND TOWNSHIPS,

WITH

HISTORICAL AND STATISTICAL DESCRIPTIONS;

ILLUSTRATED BY

MAPS OF THE DIFFERENT COUNTIES;

AND

A Map of Wales.

SHOWING

THE PRINCIPAL TOWNS, ROADS, RAILWAYS, NAVIGABLE RIVERS, AND CANALS;

AND ENDELLISHED WITH

ENGRAVINGS OF THE ARMS OF THE CITIES, BISHOPRICKS, CORPORATE TOWNS, AND BOROUGHS,
AND OF THE SEALS OF THE SEVERAL MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS.

WITH AN

A P P E N D I X,

DESCRIBING THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES OF THE SEVERAL BOROUGHS, AS DEFINED BY THE LATE ACT.

BY SAMUEL LEWIS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

L O N D O N :

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YSTRADDYVODOG, otherwise YSTRADDYVODWG, (YSTRAD-DYVODWG), a parish, divided for the maintenance of its poor into the two hamlets of Ystraddyvodog and Rhigos, in the hundred of MISKIN, county of GLAMORGAN, SOUTH WALES, 8 miles (N. W. by N.) from Llantrissant, containing 1047 inhabitants. The scenery in this neighbourhood is singularly wild and romantic: the mountains, which are very lofty, frequently rise abruptly, and almost perpendicularly, from the level ground, and present an unbroken face to the summit, so as to have obtained the designation of the "Alps of Glamorgan." The roads are very indifferent, and frequently prevent tourists from penetrating into these secluded and romantic scenes. The Dinas collieries are situated in the vicinity, whence a communication is formed by tram-roads with the Glamorganshire canal. This parish is within the jurisdiction of the court of requests held at Merthyr-Tydvil, on the second Thursday in every month, pursuant to an act passed in 1809, for the recovery of debts not exceeding £5. The living is a perpetual curacy, in the archdeaconry and diocese of Llandaf, endowed with £600 royal bounty, and £800 parliamentary grant, and in the patronage of the Vicar of Llantrissant, to whom the vicarial tithes of the parish are appropriated. The church is dedicated to St. Tyvodwg, and is situated in a valley of the same name, nearly in the centre of the parish. There is a place of worship for Baptists. The average annual expenditure of the whole parish, for the support of the poor, amounts to £383. 18., of which sum, £479. 18. are assessed upon the hamlet of Ystraddyvodog.

YSTRADDYVODOG HORNE, a hamlet in the parish of YSTRADDYVODOG, hundred of MISKIN, county of GLAMORGAN, SOUTH WALES, containing, with Clydach, 322 inhabitants.

YSTRADGUNLAIS (YSTRAD-GYNLAIS), a parish, comprising the Upper and Lower divisions, each of which separately maintains its own poor, in the hundred of DEYVNOCK, county of BRECKNOCK, SOUTH WALES, 14 miles (N. E. by E.) from SWANSEA, and containing 2078 inhabitants, of which number, 438 are in the Upper, and 1640 in the Lower, division. The name of this place, according to some authorities, is derived from the dedication of its church to St. Gunleus, a prince of "Glewisig," who, by his residence here, gave his name to the small vale in which it is situated. But others more correctly state that the church is dedicated to St. Mary; and it has been thought that the proper name of the parish is Ystrad-Gurlais, or Garwlais, signifying "the vale of the rough-sounding brook," and is derived from a stream so called, a little below the church, which separates this parish from that of Kilybehill, and also forms a boundary between the counties of Brecknock and Glamorgan. The parish is situated in the Vale of Tawe, and is bounded on the south-east by the river of that name, and on the south-west by the brook Garwlais above noticed, and is intersected by the turnpike road from Swansea to Brecknock. Its surface is adorned with several gentlemen's seats, the principal of which, Yniscedwin House, anciently the seat of the Aubreys, and now the property of the Rev. Fleming Gough, by marriage of one of his ancestors with the heiress of that ancient family, is a handsome mansion, situated

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in a delightful part of the Vale of Tawe, environed by some richly varied scenery, and in the centre of a highly improvable and extensive domain. In the upper division of the parish, which belongs almost exclusively to Walter Prior, Esq., of Glynllŷch Uchaf, stands the ancient seat of Glynllŷch Isaf, the property of — Powel, Esq. The entire district abounds with mineral wealth, and in the parish are valuable mines of iron-ore, stone coal, and limestone, which, combining with other local advantages, have led to the establishment of very extensive works at this place. The iron-works belonging to the Yniscedwin Iron Company are considered as among the oldest of the kind now in operation in the kingdom; and the opinion of their antiquity has been confirmed by the discovery of an old pig of iron, found in a cinder bank in 1795, on which was the date 1612. These extensive works comprise two blast furnaces for smelting the ore, six furnaces and cupolas for converting the pig iron into castings, with fineries for making the refined metal used by the tin-manufacturers. The furnaces are blown by a powerful machine, erected in 1828, from designs by Mr. Brunton, of London, and worked by a water-wheel of large diameter. The iron-ore and limestone used in the works are procured in the parish; but the stone coal being unfit for the purpose of smelting iron, a supply of other coal is obtained from mines in some of the adjoining parishes. The works, when in full operation, afford employment to five or six hundred men, exclusively of whom, about two hundred and sixty men are constantly employed in the collieries in this parish: the stone coal and culm raised in these is chiefly used in drying malt and burning lime. Great quantities of limestone are quarried at the Cribarth rock, and are purchased by farmers and others along the line of the Swansea canal, to burn for manure and other purposes. On the limestone to the north of this rock is found an abundance of *tripoli*, or *lepis cariosa*, of a very pure quality, much of which is collected and conveyed by the canal to Swansea, and thence shipped to different parts of England, to be used in the burnishing of metals. The Swansea canal, a branch of which extends to the Yniscedwin works, terminates at a place called Hên Noyadd, in this parish, two miles above the church; and to it converge numerous tram-roads from the works, for the conveyance of their produce. A tram-road was laid down, in 1825, by John Christie, Esq., of London, extending from the Gwain Clawdd, over the forest of Devynock, to Rhŷd y briw, in the Vale of Usk, by means of which a communication is established between this mineral district and the heart of Brecknockshire. It is also in contemplation to construct a branch road, six miles in length, from Pen-wyll to the head of the Swansea canal, forming a junction with the main road, which is at present the property of — Clayton, Esq., banker, of Boston, in Lincolnshire.

The living is a rectory, in the archdeaconry of Brecknock, and diocese of St. David's, rated in the king's books at £9. 10. 7½, and in the patronage of the Rev. Fleming Gough, as proprietor of the Yniscedwin estate. The church is a small neat fabric, consisting simply of a nave and chancel, with a belfry at the west end. The chapel of Coelbren, situated in the upper division of the parish, and formerly a chapel

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of ease to the mother church, has been endowed, and the living is now a perpetual curacy, the advowson of which was granted in perpetuity to the College of St. David's, at Lampeter, by the Rev. Fleming Gough, at the period of the foundation of that institution. The chapel was rebuilt in 1799, almost entirely at the expense of Walter Price, Esq., of Glynllŷch, who owns five of the seven tenements of which the hamlet of Coelbren consists. There are places of worship for Baptists and Independents: that for the latter is a remarkably neat building at Ty'n Coed, in the upper division of the parish, erected by voluntary contributions, in 1831: that for the Baptists is situated at Nant y ffin. Sunday schools are supported by the members of the established church and those of the different dissenting congregations. Morgan Aubrey, of Yniscedwin, Esq., bequeathed a rent-charge of £5, payable out of a farm called Twyn y Ceiliog, in the parish of Devynock, for the benefit of the poor of this parish. A Roman road, now called the Sarn Lleon, or Sarn Helen, is still visible in this parish, passing along a high ridge of rock which separates it from the parish of Ystradveitly, and from that of Cadoxton in the county of Glamorgan, and hence declining southward towards the Roman station Nidam (Neath). On this ridge, between Coelbren and Cevn hir vynydd, there was formerly an erect stone, supposed to have been a Roman miliary, with an inscription, of which only the letters *IMP C* were in later times legible, but it has been removed or destroyed. Upon the hills towards Llyswel, and bordering on Carmarthenshire, are several *carneddau*, and the remains of three ancient British encampments, but nothing has been recorded of their original formation. Near the chapel of Coelbren there is an encampment, which, from its quadrilateral form, and its contiguity to the Sarn Helen, is thought to be of Roman origin; and at a short distance from this place there is a kind of natural wall, formed by the side of the limestone rocks, in which is a small cavern, called Cradock's Church, or Hermitage, which, according to Mr. Jones, the historian of Brecknockshire, is erroneously so called, as he supposes it to have been the cell in which Gunleus died in the arms of his son Cartweg, who gave his name to this cavern, as his father had in like manner given his to the vale. About three-quarters of a mile to the east of Coelbren chapel is the most remarkable waterfall in this part of the county, called "Sgwd yr hên rhyd": it is formed by the Llŷch, or Llŷchog, a small mountain stream, which, for a considerable distance from its source, flows over a rocky bed, in a part of its course entirely destitute of vegetation, and without any feature of beauty, except where in some places it expands into a considerable river: it afterwards crosses the road from Ystradveitly to Coelbren, when it is lost in a deep wooded glen, on its emerging from which the whole river, in one unbroken sheet, descends from a perpendicular height of more than a hundred feet; being interrupted in its fall by a projecting ledge of rocks, about ten or twelve feet below the summit, it dashes into foam, and, after its descent for the remaining ninety feet, without further impediment, it disappears in the thick foliage of the woods which clothe its precipitous banks, and pursues a winding course to the river Tawe. Though this fall is of much greater height than that of Eiro Hepstê, the water in its de-

scend has less grandeur and breadth, when both rivers are equally full. At an inn, known by the sign of the "Lamb and Flag," in this parish, the outlawed criminal Hatfield, who, under the assumed name of the Hon. Colonel Hope, seduced into marriage the beautiful and artless Mary of Buttermere, was arrested: he was committed by the magistrates to the goal at Brecknock, and thence conveyed to Carlisle, where he was tried and executed. The average annual expenditure for the maintenance of the poor of the entire parish amounts to £279. 15., of which sum, £141. 2. are defrayed by the Upper, and £138. 13. by the Lower, division.

YSTRAD-MEURIC, county of CARDIGAN, SOUTH WALES.—See YSPYTTY YSTRAD MEURIC.

YSTRAD-OWEN, or YSTRAD-OWAIN, a parish in the hundred of COWBRIDGE, county of GLAMORGAN, SOUTH WALES, 3 miles (N. E.) from Cowbridge, containing 433 inhabitants. Ithel, surnamed Dô, or "the Black," Prince of Glamorgan in the tenth century, occasionally resided here; and this place is distinguished in the historical annals of the principality as the scene of a desperate battle between the invading Saxons and the ancient Britons under Conan ab Sytryll, in the year 1031, in which that chieftain and all his sons were slain. It derives its name from Owain ab Collwyn, who resided here in a palace, of which the site is marked by a large tumulus near the church, now covered with a thriving plantation. The parish comprises a moderate extent of good arable and pasture land, and a portion of common, affording pasturage for sheep and young cattle. The surrounding scenery is pleasingly diversified, and enlivened with some interesting features. Ash Hall, late the residence of Colonel Aubrey, and now the property and residence of William Wood, Esq., is a handsome modernized mansion, pleasantly situated on an eminence above the church, commanding a fine view of the whole vale of Glamorgan, from the house to the sea, with the town of Cowbridge in the foreground, and the high lands of Somersetshire in the distance. The living is a perpetual curacy, in the archdeaconry and diocese of Llandaf, endowed with £1200 royal bounty, and £900 parliamentary grant, and in the patronage of the Chancellor of Llandaf. The church, dedicated to St. Owain, is a very small ancient edifice, not remarkable for any architectural details. On a tablet is an inscription recording that Sir L. Jenkins, Bart., gave to the churches and parishes of Ystrad Owen and Llanblithian the tenor bell; and that Evan Jenkins, his brother, gave thirteen acres of land, to repair the said bells, directing the surplus to be appropriated in apprenticing poor children of both parishes, in equal shares. On a hill to the south of the church there are some inconsiderable remains of the ancient castle of Tâl y vaen, or Talavan, one of the twelve fortresses erected by the followers of Fitz-Hamon, by whom this portion of the conquered territory was granted to Sir Richard de Seward, in whose family it continued for many generations: it formed part of the dowry of the widow of Hugh le Despencer, when affianced to Guy de Brien, and was subsequently conveyed by marriage to the Dukes of Lancaster, and still forms part of the duchy. In a field near the village were two large monumental stones, rudely ornamented, which were supposed to have been placed at the head of the graves of Owain ab Ithel and his