

A Welsh Sunset.

CHARACTERS.

JENNY JONES	A girl in weak health, betrothed to Griffith David.
GRIFFITH DAVID	A young Welshman who has gone to Bala to sing in order to try and win a prize so that he may marry Jenny.
MRS. JONES	Jenny's Mother.
MARY FEWLASS } NANCY RAINE } GWENNY DAVIS }	Village Girls.
OWEN RHYS } JOHN LLOYD } MORGAN LLEWELLYN }	Companions of David, who have been with him to Bala.

SCENE.

Outside Mrs. Jones' Cottage on a Welsh hillside.
Chair or two, and a deal table. JENNY comes slowly
out of cottage, R, and leaning against porch, sings:

Libretto.

Jenny comes out of cottage wearily and listens.

JENNY (Solo). Come my love, for I am crying,
 Wearily I wait.
 Sunset fires slowly dying
 Tell me you are late.
 Like some wild bird hear me calling
 Lonely for its mate,
 Autumn leaves around me falling
 Whisper me my fate.
 Come my love, to hope I'm clinging,
 Your dear face to see;
 Though my soul away be winging,
 Love remains with thee.

Mrs. JONES (*Coming out of cottage R.*) Child, child, you ought not
to be out here. It's growing late, and the night air
is bad for you.

JENNY I must wait till I hear if Griffith has won the prize.
 You do think he'll win, mother, don't you?

Mrs. JONES If they judge rightly he will. There's not another voice the equal of his hereabouts.

JENNY We shall hear him directly. Don't you remember, he said he would start singing as he came over the hill?

Mrs. JONES Sure he did; but you can listen for him indoors. I'll set the window open.

JENNY No! No! Mother. Let me stay. It's such a lovely evening. It can't hurt me. (*Sits down, and Mrs. Jones puts shawl round her.*)

(*Enter Mary Fewless, Nancy Raine, and Gwenny Davis, R.U.E.*)

MARY Haven't they come back yet?

Mrs. JONES No; but they'll not be long, and I'll be getting out a bit of bread and cheese. They'll be ready for something, it's likely, after the tramp. (*Exit into cottage.*)

MARY We couldn't wait at home. The other lads are sure to come straight here with Griffith.

JENNY They're so proud of him.

NANCY Oh, it's all right for you, but think what it is for us poor girls. Your man will come straight to you, for sure, but our lads won't be thinking of us. Heigho! It's running after them we are.

JENNY It isn't that they're not fond of you. They know you'll be meeting them.

MARY Maybe they're as fond as lads nowadays know how to be. They let you love them — as a favour. Come on girls. We'll go to the cross-path any way. (*Exit L. U.E.*)

Mrs. Jones comes out of cottage with food and plates.

JENNY When I see the sun go down I feel as though someone were dying, and I am afraid. Do you ever feel as though the sun might go down into its grave, and the world be left cold?

Mrs. JONES T'chut, child! You're just full of fancies. The sun's got a lot of good work left in him yet. Don't you be fretting about David. He'll be here anon laughing at you. Think; if he gets the prize, it's a hundred pounds! My man and I hadn't a hundred shillings when we married, and that went the first day. It's a rich bride you'll be. So stop fretting. It's ill fretting.

JENNY I know, but my heart is cold, and I grudge these days that he is away. I wouldn't tell him so. He was so happy in thinking that he might win this prize and spend the money on me. It was a great chance for him though, mother, wasn't it?

Mrs. JONES And a great chance for you whatever. It's a fine man Griffith will be one of these days, and proud you'll be of him – and I of you both if the Lord spares me. It's singing myself I could be for the joy of it, if I weren't feared of frightening David away.

JENNY Yes, I shall be proud of him, but I love him so much, mother, that every minute he is away I want to cry because a part of my life has gone. Listen ! (*She starts up.*)

Mrs. JONES 'Tis only the clock ticking, dear.

JENNY (*Wearily, and sinking back disappointed*) I never heard it out here before. How quiet it must be.

Mrs. JONES There's never a sound as the sun goes down, so they say.

JENNY There ! What was that?

Mrs. JONES It's just a curlew calling its mate.

JENNY Poor little curlew! I wonder whether it will get an answer. (*Pause.*)

(Singing off starts softly.)

There! I knew. He is coming! He is coming!

(Sounds of singing are heard gradually swelling louder. It is Griffith David, the other men and the girls who have gone to meet them.)

DAVID (*solo accompanied by chorus.*)

Heart of my soul, my sweet, my sweet,
What joy in lovers meeting.
I cast my honours at your feet
And this my greeting.
Hasten on. Hasten on,
My sweet to greet.
Life and death may hang upon
The hours we cheat.

JENNY That's Griffith's voice. They're coming round the tarn. Can't you hear how happy he is by the way he's singing? Oh, he has been successful, I know he has!

Mrs. JONES That's Griffith, sure enough, and the others are coming with him, so they'll tell us all about it.

JENNY (*Getting up excitedly*) Oh! Why don't they hurry?
(*Sinks back in her chair.*)

Mrs. JONES What the matter, child!

JENNY Nothing; it's only joy, and I'm so weak.

(Singing goes on through this getting louder)

DAVID.

Joy of my heart, rejoice, rejoice,
For you I come a thirsting.
Joy in my heart, and in my voice
Love notes are bursting.
Hasten on, hasten on,
My sweet to greet;
Life and death may hang upon
The hours we cheat.

(At the conclusion of this, David and the others burst on to the stage L.U.E. David rushes to Jenny. The men and the girls cluster at the buck where they talk to Mrs. Jones.)

DAVID Jenny!

JENNY Griffith! *(She gets up and sways towards him. He catches her in his arms and makes her sit down again in the chair, and kneels beside her.)*

DAVID Did you hear me singing? That was to let you know I was coming. We have tramped all the way from Llanferbechan; we were too excited to wait for the train.

JENNY I heard you directly you came down the mountain by the tarn.

DAVID That was just where we began. We had hurried so we hadn't a note in us until then.

MARY Jenny's been thinking she heard you the whole day. If a curlew whistled or a dog yelped, "That's Griffith," she was saying.

RHYS Well, it's about as tuneful as a crow I'm feeling after tramping twenty miles.

NANCY Did you think we'd be here to meet you?

LLOYD Ay. *(Catching her round the waist)* because you've been 'mazingly dull without us, and you knew we'd see Griffith on his way and stop to drink his health in a mug of Mother Jones' cider.

Mrs. JONES Sure it's the cider I was forgetting. *(Exit into cottage.)*

MARY *(To Nancy)* They're the men, aren't they? It's the girls can always wait while they're drinking.

NANCY If it wasn't curious we were to hear Griffith's news we'd be down to the valley, and not wait for you.

LLOYD Well then, away with you.

MARY It's to please ourselves, not you, we're staying, and it's a poor look-in you'd be having if Griffith there had eyes for anyone but Jenny.

(Mrs. Jones comes out with a jug of cider, and the Men
drink and pledge the girls.)

DAVID (To Jenny) So you heard me a mile away.

JENNY I think I should hear you singing if I were in my grave,
and I should lie there so quietly and peacefully and
say, "That is my Griffith singing me to sleep."

DAVID Grave! Don't talk of graves! Don't you want to hear
my news? Guess!

JENNY (Laughing proudly up at him) Guess! As if I didn't
know! Your voice told me long before your face,
and now do you think I want words? Oh, Griffith,
you will be such a great man, and you'll sing up
in London instead of to the mountains and me.

RHYS Sing in London! That he will, at Covent Garden, and
we'll **all** be there to hear him.

(Griffith sits contentedly at Jenny's feet, while Mrs. Jones
stands behind)

TRIO (and chorus).

OWEN RHYS, JOHN LLOYD, and MORGAN LLEWELLYN.

RHYS In London he will be all the rage,
The king of the Covent Garden stage;
He must call himself Signor Taffitite
And charge a thousand guineas a night.
Then Prince, Princess, the Queen and King
Will come to hear Signor David sing.
Italians and Germans will sing small beer
When once his wonderful voice they hear.
Earls will besiege the early door,
And Dukes pay a guinea to sit on the floor.
While Prince, Princesses, the Queen and King
Will leave their dinner to hear him sing.

II.

LLOYD Ladies will note what he'll eat and wear
And rave about his raven hair.
While wild alarm o'er the land will spread
Should he chance to catch a cold in the head.
While Prince, Princesses, the King and Queen
Will rush for the latest bulletin.
He shall live like a Prince the whole day long,
And possibly go in for *em-bong-pong*.
While to save his voice from wear and tear
He must only appear about twice a year.
But King and Queen and the whole Court staff
Will beg on their knees for his autograph.

III.

LLEWELLYN Their wedding shall be a Royal affair,
We'll hire St. George's, Hanover Square,

And the whole of the London Daily Press
Will describe the presents and wedding dress.
While Prince, Princesses, the Queen and King
Will cry, ah me, if we could sing!
Archbishops and lawyers, the House of Peers,
Socialists, actors, and engineers,
Sweepers of crossings and millionaires
Will find his singing drown their cares.
Oh, Queens and Kings if they had the choice
Would swap their crowns for a tenor voice.

(Dance in which all join but Griffith and Jenny. At the conclusion the girls are about to go.)

NANCY *(To the men.)* Come down to the village when you've done drinking.

LLEWELLYN Oh wait a bit, and we'll be along with you.

(Girls and men group up stage, talking.)

JENNY Oh, Griffith, and to think that all this will happen to you.

DAVID And you'll be a great lady, and wear diamonds or pearls - which would you rather have?

JENNY *(Laughing)* I don't know: just a bit of ribbon if you gave it me would do as well as either. It frightens me though, to think of you being as important as all that.

DAVID Pooh! You'll soon get used to it. You're only nervous because you're tired. It might frighten me if you weren't going to be there with me, but wherever I sing I shall just feel you there and sing to you. The others can listen if they like - I shan't be singing to them.

Mrs. JONES But maybe you won't be making much money just at present.

DAVID Money? *(Pulls out a purse of gold)* I got all that for singing yesterday, and I can make any amount more whenever I like, just by opening my mouth.

RHYS Ah, it's a wonderful thing the singing, and yet I know a man from England who doesn't care for it whatever. He just walks away at the first note. They say there's many such in England.

JENNY Poor fellow. *(To Griffith)* Fancy, if you had been like that. What did you sing them, dear?

DAVID I sang the intermezzo and the barcarolle and the dream-land romance. It was the last that they liked best.

JENNY I wish I could have been there to hear it. Did they all cheer you?

RHYS Ay, that they did;

LLEWELLYN They did some;

RHYS Roared the roof off.

LLEWELLYN Stamped till I guess the flooring's wore away.

JENNY Couldn't you sing to me, Griffith - just to me, without any of the applause or cheering? Perhaps I may never have another chance, and I should like to think you sang your favourite song to me just for love, with only the mountains and me to hear.

Mrs. JONES It's cold and tired you're getting, child. You'd best be in now. Griffith will be round to-morrow, and he'll sing to you then.

JENNY I want to hear it to-day. To-morrow's such a long way off. I feel to-night as though to-morrow wouldn't come for years and years.

(Mrs. Jones puts a shawl round her.) The others go into the Cottage.

(To Griffith) But perhaps you're tired.

DAVID Tired! I'm too happy to be tired. I'll sing to you to-day, to-morrow and every day; but I don't sing to you - I sing you. It's you in my heart that makes me sing.

DAVID (Solo).

Hush't lies the land-
O'er the drowsy valleys
The low sun dallies
In a crimson sea.
Sleep my beloved
My ward I'm keeping,
Yet while you're sleeping
Dream only of me.
No thought of another
Come into your fancies;
In your dreamland romances
Walk only with me.
'Wake lies the land,
These eyes have beholden
The East turns golden,
Night's shadows flee.
Wake my beloved,
The birds are singing,
The bees a-wing-ing,
And I wait for thee.
Let not life or death
Rend our paths asunder.
In this world of wonder
Come wander with me.

(Griffith turns to Jenny for approval, but Mrs. Jones holds up a warning hand.)

DAVID Asleep?

Mrs. JONES Yes. It's tired out the child is.

DAVID (*Bending over Jenny*) Asleep? She couldn't go to sleep now! (*takes her hand and it drops lifeless.*) Oh! I'm too late - too late! What's the good of fame and money now? It was for her and now I can give her nothing! Jenny! Jenny! Jenny! (*falls on his knees by her and buries his face in her lap while Mrs. Jones crying bends over the chair.*)

UNACCOMPANIED CHORUS

(The villagers are heard singing as they proceed to their homes.)

Westward where the sunlight dies,
Take we now our homeward way,
Death is but a golden sunset,
Life tomorrow dawns always.

SLOW CURTAIN.