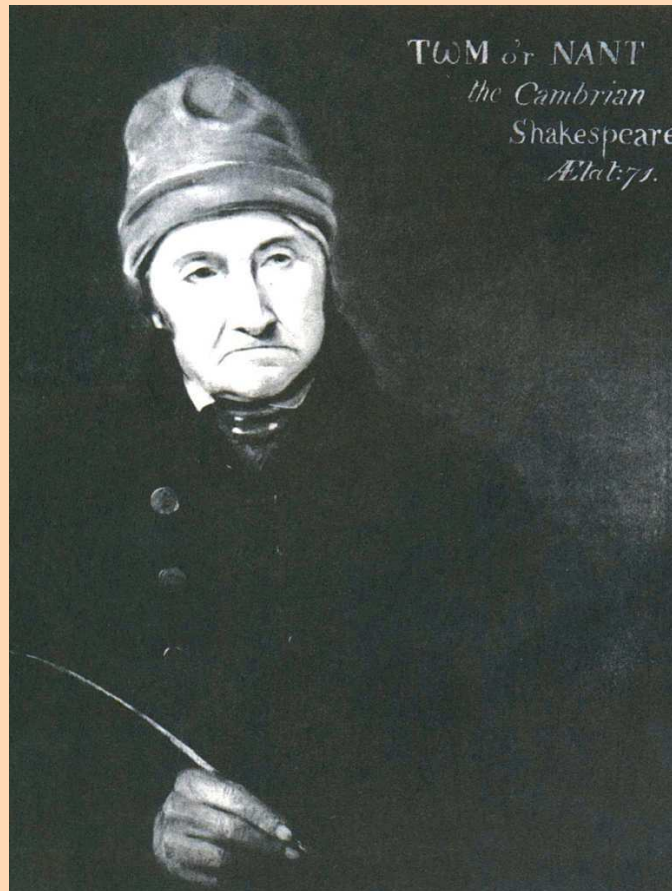


## BARD



(13M, 3F, many small parts)

(Ninety-minute radio version also available in ms)

**By Dedwydd Jones**

Commissioned as opening play for Sherman Theatre, Cardiff

Published Cokaygne Press. Out of print.

Dragon's Teeth Press Award, USA

Translated, broadcast on Swiss radio, and on stage

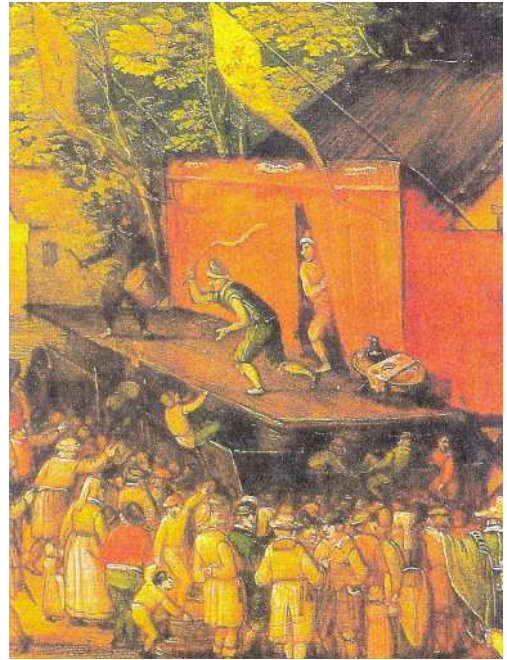
Published in French, Lausanne, Switzerland, Editions du Silence

Published AuthorHouse. Available in Vol 1: *4 Plays from Wales* on [Amazon](#) website

**Based on the life and times of Twm O'r Nant, 'the Welsh Shakespeare.'** Twm, the troubadour, the people's champion, satirizes a corrupt and vicious establishment. The poet is helped by Yr Arglwydd Angau, the Lord Death. All in the 18th century. The first play to present Wales's greatest satirist in English. Twm wrote only in Welsh, bless him.

## Author's comments

“I wrote this after a nasty stint in a theatre in Wales, one of the most nauseous and corroding experiences I have ever had in my short life. I chose to write up the story of Twm because in his work he exactly mirrors that same fly-blown corruption of today, but two hundred years before. After interviews in the press, called ‘whistle blowing,’ I believe, I went to live in a Swiss canton, where it turned out to be just as corrupt, but far better hidden, and the whole populace, including teachers, receive a far fairer share of the spoils. I was even able to buy myself and family a house after only a few years of work, a near bleeding miracle.”



## EXCERPT I

This was the dream of Twm which came out in words:

‘Palaces and mansions  
Like stables and sties,  
Can still be the haunt  
Of asses and flies.’

You bet!

## EXCERPT II: THE HAG OF POVERTY'S SPEECH

*(TWM, our hero, with the villagers gathered round, points off at a hideous figure)*

TWM: Ah! Now who is this blaring Hag,  
Like a bat with a gaping beak?  
Surely some devil's bag  
From the slag of some hellish creek!

*(Enter the HAG OF POVERTY, in tattered rages, grimy, wailing. HAG claws at audience like a spitting cat. TWM, CROWD recoil, SQUIRE, PARSON, LAWYER, MISER-BAILIFF look on from side stage)*

TWM: You made me jump!

HAG: I make all humans jump! There's no curse in history as black as mine. I am the universal curse! I am Hag of Poverty! *(She claws at VILLAGERS)*

Come closer! Come closer, so I can squeeze you all as one.

Yes! I squeeze babies in their cots;

I make old woman crawl like tots;

I make rich men squeak like rats;

I make Landlords flit like bats,

I make strong men quiver;

Bailiffs shiver

Taxmen quail,

Judges pale,

I turn all virtues bad,

And all good reason – mad!

Whatever pox or pestilence there is,

Whatever agony or debt,

There is no other crime

Like this huge hungry curse of mine

Poverty *(Claws)* Poverty *(Claws)* POVERTY!

TWM: Have pity, Hag, the have to fight for work.

HAG: Only through fear of me – the hungry Hag of Poverty!

Come on Humanity!

Show me more Vanity!

Show me more pride.

So we can walk together,

Side by Hungry Side!

*(Points at villagers)* You are all so much mine! Mr Sluggard there, Dai Scurvy-Chops, Will Grow-Cold, and Master Shorn. And you, Madam Rancid there, Doll Flea-bitten, Sal Fly-Bown, and Mistress Drains! Dear are your tattered ways to me! And, O, sweet Virgin Double-Ruff and Maiden Dainty there, you will all feel my claw! Turnip soup for breakfast, cabbage soup for tea, that's all the comfort, you'll ever get from me!

TWM: But what of the pillars of the community over there, Hag? Their people rot, but their dogs are fat.

HAG: You there, you Pillars, look at me! Come on! No, you see, Twm, it's been the same through all of history – even the innocent babe that dies looks at me out of the corner of its eyes.

TWM: But those Pillars do well, Hag.

HAG: They do their best and their best is good for Poverty!

SQUIRE: By God, I'll have her arrested!

HAG: Only good government can arrest me! You, you Squires Self-Esteem, and you, you Reverent Right-Prices with the pig's collar, and you, you vampire Lawyers and Miser-Bailiffs, all, all tremble when you look on me.

TWM: But what can the people do, Hag? They're more afraid of the lawyers and bailiffs than of losing their own souls.

HAG: Because they're caught between the devil *(points at SQUIRE)* and *(points at MISER-BAILIFF)* the devil's tail. But these are men of straw when I strike!

Let bankruptcy flourish!

Let debtors increase!

Let industry perish!

Let labouring cease!

Let your government ever and ever be worse

So the whole of humanity  
Writhes on the barbs of my curse –  
Poverty! Poverty! POVERTY!

TWM: Alright, you babbling old harpy, dry up. You're repeating yourself anyway.

### EXCERPT III: THE PARSON VISITS ONE OF HIS SICK PARISHIONERS

*(MISER-BAILIFF in bed, ill, moaning. PARSON, tipsy, leans over him. Sips from flask)*

MISER-BAILIFF: My time's not come yet, Parson, I can feel it. Say a prayer.

PARSON: Here. Drink your medicine.

MISER-BAILIFF: Tastes awful.

PARSON: Doctor's orders.

MISER-BAILIFF: More like 'disorders.'

PARSON: He'll charge you double for that. Feel groggy myself. More medicine for me. *(Sips from flask)* Goodbye.

MISER-BAILIFF: A few words of comfort?

PARSON: I've told you, 'goodbye.'

MISER-BAILIFF: I'll leave all my estate to the poor!

PARSON: No! Wait. Yes, I'll stay. Jesus did, didn't he? First before you go, you must honour Mother Church, my son.

MISER-BAILIFF: Stay awhile. You know where the brandy is.

PARSON *(Swigging from brandy bottle)*: Did you never think of God!?

MISER BAILIFF: In the dark sometimes. Or when I needed money.

PARSON: Release this wicked soul, O Lord, or let him suffer more!

MISER-BAILIFF: And my wife...

PARSON: ...no help or succour there...

MISER-BAILIFF: ...slept with her all my life and never heard a single prayer from her.

PARSON: Blessed herself often enough, as I recall.

MISER-BAILIFF: But nobody else! O, such pain! Perhaps after all, my time has come. Save me, Parson. I repent, I swear.

PARSON: What's become of your little old gold watch here on the table last time I called?

MISER-BAILIFF: Stolen.

PARSON: And the rings?

MISER-BAILIFF: Thieves in the night.

PARSON (*Aside*): She's scoffed the lot! Got to take my hat off to her. Cheers. (*Glugs from Brandy bottle*) Buried in the garden no doubt! (*Looks around*) Christ, the cupboard is bare. No point hanging about here. (*Cackling of geese off stage*)

MISER-BAILIFF: Hey, hear that?

PARSON: What?

MISER-BAILIFF: They're after the geese now.

PARSON: Who?

MISER-BAILIFF: The servants.

PARSON: Hang them!

MISER-BAILIFF: Last time it was the hens.

PARSON: That was your wife.

MISER-BAILIFF: O God, save my gold, I pray.

PARSON: In the name of the Father...(*Glugs from brandy bottle*)

## EXCERPT IV: TWM'S FAREWELL

TWM:

My dream is done, my agony spent,  
 Sir Tom Tell Truth for you was meant.  
 So take Twm's part, Truth has no end,  
 And learn the ways of the heart.



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