

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

www.traditionalmusic.co.uk

Get Welshmen to Break the Stone

Get Welshmen to Break the Stone
(Dafydd Jones)

Os bydd eisiau cael swyddogion,
Danfon ffwrdd a wneir yn union,
Un ai Gwyddel, Sais neu Scotsman,
Sydd mewn swyddau braidd ymhobman.

Mewn gweithfeydd sydd yma'n Nghymru,
Gwelir Saeson yn busnesu;
Rhaid cael Cymry i dorri'r garreg,
Nid yw'r graig yn deall Saesneg.

(If officials are needed,
They are at once sent for from afar,
Either Irishmen, English or Scots,
Are in jobs almost everywhere.

In works here in Wales,
Englishmen can be seen interfering;
You must get Welshmen to break the stone,
For the rock does not understand English.

The verses are found in a collection in the British Museum called "Welsh Songs,
etc., 1767 -

1870," No. 69. I have the reference in an excellent book on the labor union of
the slate workers in

North Wales, written by R. Merfyn Jones, called "The North Wales Quarrymen 1874
- 1922"

(Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1982).

The song reflects not so much resentment at doing the actual labor of quarrying
-- there was

immense pride taken in the skills required for prizing the stone from the
quarries and then

dressing and splitting the slate into shingles, etc. -- but rather at the
ineptitude and arrogance of

the English owners and managers who had little or no understanding of the
complexities of

quarrying slate. Jones makes clear that there was an earnest belief on the part
of some people

that only the Welsh -- and indeed only Welsh speakers -- could properly run a
quarry.

This particular David Jones is the famous balladmonger from Llanybydder, Carmarthen, Dafydd

Jones (1803-1868), also known as 'Dewi Medi' and 'Dewi Dywyll'. He was blinded by lime

blowing into his eyes when he was a child, and became one of the most productive composers

of 19th century ballads, which he also sang and sold. In the verse quoted by Wolfgang, he his

complaining that the captains of industry in Wales tend to be English - the Welsh are required

to undertake menial tasks like breaking stones. It is a bit of sarcasm not often found on this

subject in the ballads of that period. I am not able to check the relevant ballad at the moment but

could do so some other time. Tegwyn

MV

oct00