

EVANS, JOHN ('Y Bardd Cocos '; 1827? - 1888), eccentric and poetaster

Name: John Evans
Pseudonym: Y Bardd Cocos
Date of birth: 1827?
Date of death: 1888
Gender: Male
Occupation: eccentric and poetaster
Area of activity: Poetry
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Lived at Menai Bridge, chiefly by selling cockles - hence his sobriquet 'the cockle-bard'; the name, in its generalized form *cocosfardd*, has long been applied in common parlance in Welsh to similar versifiers elsewhere. Quotation is inadmissible here, but the essence of the term is that the 'poet' should be barely literate, and that his effusions should have neither reason nor even rhyme, let alone scansion [William McGonagall will supply a parallel from Scotland]. Evans is included in the present work as perhaps the sublimest example of his class. He was, indeed, hardly quite sane, and the wags of his neighbourhood had great sport with him; they enthroned him as 'Princely Arch-cockle-bard', in regalia consisting of a long thick overcoat and a hat encircled with coloured beads; in this guise he would turn up punctually at national eisteddfod meetings. They also conducted a fabricated correspondence between him and queen Victoria, to whom he proposed marriage. His 'poems' have probably been augmented by tradition. Benefactors would get them printed in leaflet form and the bard would hawk them around the fairs. A selection, with a good introduction by Thomas Roberts (Alaw Ceris), was published at Menai Bridge in 1923.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

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