

**THE WESTERN MAIL
CARDIFF, GLAMORGAN, WALES
24 APRIL 1958
(page 6)**

Dylan Thomas—The Other Man

**THE FALLEN ANGEL WITH
A TUMBLEDOWN TONGUE**

"When we came to Llanstephan village at the top of the hill," Dylan wrote in "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog" "[my grandfather] left the cart by the 'Edwinsford Arms' . . . We went to look at the churchyard and the sea, and sat in the wood called the Sticks, and stood on the concert platform in the middle of the wood where visitors sang on summer nights . . ."

I had spent my holidays since childhood in the Llanstephan area, very largely because my father's family had come from the next parish of Llanybri. Dylan, when I first knew him, stayed at Claencwm, a cluster of houses just off the Carmarthen—Llanstephan road, where his uncle, a retired minister, I believe, had a cottage.

Not far off is the "Fern Hill" of the famous poem which is also perhaps the "Gorsehill" of "The Peaches" and the unnamed farm in "A Winter's Tale," and "Prospect of the Sea." And a few miles from Llanstephan, across the estuary of the Taf, is Laugharne.

FIRST VISIT?

The first time we visited the ancient township together we walked from Llanstephan over Parc yr Arglwydd and came down on to the picturesque and deserted flats at the River Taf's mouth where wild life abounded.

A small empty stone house with a bell in its roof stood near the river and anyone wishing to cross over to Laugharne on the opposite bank was expected to ring the bell and thus bring the ferryman over in his boat. I cannot remember if this was Dylan's first visit to Laugharne. It was certainly his first for many years.

As Mr. Jack Roberts, the boatman, later to be Dylan's next-door neighbour, rowed us across the estuary, we could see above us on the red cliff that "patchwork art," that "seashaken

house on a breakneck of rocks," the Boat House, where Dylan lived off and on for 15 or 16 years.

We landed, explored the township and had tea at Browns, surely his first visit to an hotel he has since make known on both sides of the Atlantic. We went through the graveyard and into the parish church of St. Martin's. It is in that graveyard that Dylan now lies buried.

DEMONISM

Perhaps it was from people like Victor Neuburg, once the associate of Aleister Crowley, that Dylan had got his ideas of demonism. Anyway, in the dim old church he wanted me to say that I could feel an atmosphere of evil around us, that I was able to sense the wickedness of the thousands who had worshipped in it, especially of those Satanic rectors who, while pretending to worship Christ, celebrated the Black Mass.

I did not believe a word of this and neither did Dylan. He might be interested in strange ideas like "Crowlianity," and strange behaviour like that of Doctor Price, for the purpose of his stories, but there was very little of the crank or eccentric about him, himself.

I always associate with this visit to Laugharne the word "huddled." I used the word in ordinary conversation with Dylan that afternoon. He stopped and started repeating the word over to himself remarking on its strangeness, savouring it as though it was as outlandish as Chimborazo or Cotopaxi and not an ordinary English vocable in common use.

HIS OBSESSION

Dylan was not just interested in words. He was obsessed by them. "In the beginning was the word" was a favorite quotation of his and . . .