

A story from Wales

In North Wales, high among the Snowdonian hills, the late Bertrand Russell found stillness and tranquillity for the work of his later years. The villagers of nearby Penrhyndeudraeth knew him well, particularly, for the respect with which he employed their services whenever these were needed. Along with the local merchants, the tradesmen and Dr. Pritchard who attended him to the end, was one, David Jones, the carpenter. Dai, as he is known to the villagers, is somewhat short of stature, stocky, sturdy and strong as the wood with which he works, but possessing a humanity of soul compassionate and tender. He comes from a family of craftsmen, reticent regarding their ability, but justly proud of their trade. Before regulations made certain academic requirements necessary, Dai Jones had served as the woodworking teacher in the local school. His weekly visits were a highlight to all. Many a villager to this day acknowledges his ability with the hammer and saw to the time "when Mr. Jones was our woodwork teacher".

When sorrow comes to the village and burial preparation is required, it is Dai Jones who carries out the necessary undertaking duties, causing no needless commotion but quietly attending to details and ever ready to go the "second mile". All have learned to depend on Dai Jones, the carpenter, Dai Jones, the undertaker, and Dai Jones, the friend.

On the evening of the late Lord Russell's death, Lady Russell had passed on to Dr. Pritchard her husband's request that all precaution be exercised to prevent the publicity which, undoubtedly, would have been forthcoming from London and from other parts of the world. Dai Jones and Dr. Pritchard were entrusted with all arrangements. Never was confidence placed in more capable or trustworthy hands.

Very early, in the wee small hours of that February morn in 1970, the age old heights of Snowdon looked upon another page of history. Cavalcades they had seen, but never one like this. Dai Jones, with the body of the late Lord Russell, was on his way to the Crematorium at Colwyn. A unique procession indeed. What his thoughts were as he drove through the winter darkness, we know not. They were his, and his alone.

Later in the day, Lady Russell with other family members drove over those same roads to where Dai Jones was waiting. Amid the stillness of the hills and within the sound of the sea, the committal was completed. Lord Russell's request had been carried out. London and the world could now be told.

"Some are born great, some achieve greatness
and some have greatness thrust upon them."