

Manx Notes 162 (2013)

“I RECEIVED YOUR WELCOME NOTE AND THE BOOKS”
EDAWRAD FARAGHER WRITES TO KARL ROEDER (1896)

Cregnaish | Near Port st Mary June 8th 96

Dear Sir

I received your welcome note and the books you have so kindly sent me for which I am much obliged the fairy tales are very good and very amusing I am glad to hear you got a fine passage to Liverpool and hope you are enjoying the blessing of good health as we are all at present except myself but I must live in hope my daughter sends you her kind regards The artist you mentioned that was painting at the sound was seeing me on Thursday and said he would call again and shew us the pictures he said he new you very well I have no perticular news to inform you at present So I remain sincerely yours

E Farquhar //

I have been thinking of some tales I have often heard about fairies I have heard it said that there have been persons walking late in the night in lonely places and getting into some curious smell and mentioned it at the time to any of the company he could never smell anything again I have seen some of the persons myself who had no smell one man in perticular I have heard him telling it many atime

I was sailing with one man for elveven years and have often heard him telling what happened to him once himself and three others went to the fishing one day in the winter from fleshwick but the wind encreasing // to a gale they could not get back to fleshwick and had to go to Dalby point where they left the Boat and had to walk home in the night but when they got to cronk-yn-eiry-laa they saw a small light going along between themselves and the mountain and they got into that horrid sufficating smell and the young man whose mame was Quayle put a big curse on the smell but one of the others told him not to mind it and he said no man could pass through it without minding but they did not take away his sense of smelling the four of them lived in Ballakilperic and all got to their homes without any accident. Quayle lived with his Mother an old woman in an old tached colltage and she was in bed when he came the house had a loft an the parlour end and the // parlour end and his Mother slept below in the parlour and himself on the loft above so the loft was very old and had some of the floor broken there was a small window on the gable and a chest beside it after he had something to eat he went to bed and the moment the light was extinguished he heard the window opened an a great deal of whispering he could hear some things jumping of the chest on the floor in scores so they at last surrounded his bed and held him that he was unable to move and they were lifting up the bedclothes and blowing wind on every part of his body colder than ice until

he was near frozen to death and was almost despairing of life but at last he made one great effort and tumbled out of the bed on the side where the floor was broken and slipped down through the hole in the loft and got in bed with his Mother so he got clear of them nor did they molest him anymore I have heard him tell it many Times when at sea

EF

Source: Letter from Edward Faragher to Karl Roeder, 8 June 1896, MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 5.



Letters from Edward Faragher of Cregneash to Karl Roeder continue to surface, this time amongst the unsorted papers of Sophia Morrison. Lost, sadly, are those sent by Roeder to Faragher, not a single one survives that is known. We have, however, numerous letters from Faragher to Roeder, though again, the majority are now lost. This is a remarkable exchange and is unparalleled in this period, no other correspondence between “collector” and “informant” being extant. We need to move away in this case from a model of collector/informant and recast the letters between the pair as being one of a developed friendship, one that involves no exploitative element. The letter here has a composite structure with a formal letter between the pair, Faragher never addressing Roeder by his given name, though a convention of the period, then followed by Faragher providing items of Manx folklore for Roeder’s collection. In this letter, it is evident that Roeder had recently been in the Island (“a fine passage to Liverpool”) and that he had send a present to Faragher (“the books you have so kindly sent me”). Quite who the painter mentioned in the letter is remains unknown. Faragher, through Roeder, was a well-known figure to visitors to the Island and sought out on a visit to the village, much to the annoyance of the others who lived there. As his son recalled: “Dad had a wonderful memory for Folklore and he gave his knowledge willingly, but made more enemies in his native village than friends’ by doing so. Of course people who took umbrage at it were very ignorant & narrow in their views.”¹

STEPHEN MILLER
VIENNA, 2013

¹ Letter from W.A. Faragher to Sophia Morrison, 15 October 1910, MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 5.