

Manx Notes 254 (2017)

THE PEEL MANX-AMERICAN PICNIC

(1907) *

The 4 July 1907 was '[f]avoured with perfect weather' according to the *Peel City Guardian*, and on that day, 'a jolly party of half-a-hundred Manx-Americans and their relations and friends belonging to the Island foregathered in the picturesque grounds of the Castle to pic-nic together, and have a national re-union'.¹ That day was American Independence Day, the clear reason for the choice of a Thursday to hold the gathering. The *Guardian* went to mention that '[o]ne of the most pleasing features of an ever to be remembered gathering was the impromptu concert which followed in the shade of the Cathedral walls.' Sung first and by all of those present was 'Ellan Vannin', followed by 'The Manx Fishermen's Evening Hymn'. Next came solo performers, the first one being Walter Clucas, 'with the rousing "Ramsey Town,"' followed by Miss J. Kelly 'with a verse of the beautiful "Hush, Little Darling" from the Manx National Songs'. Then came Elizabeth Craine, '[a] rarity in these days of Anglicisation is a singer who can favour an audience with good Manx. Miss Craine, of Sulby, gave "Kirree fo Niaghtey," to the unbounded delight of her hearers'. Craine was a singer who together with her mother, also Elizabeth, was collected from by W.H. Gill and who was also known to Sophia Morrison. To finish came 'God Save the King' followed by the American national anthem sung in part. Then came 'three hearty cheers in turn' for the Stars and Stripes, the Union Jack, and the Three Legs, 'and the three blended together'. This was not the end of the musical proceedings. The Rev. J.C. Craine after giving a response to T. Kelly's speech also joined in. '[M]r Craine added that he was going to sing a little Manx air his grandmother had taught him'. The title is not recorded unfortunately, but '[t]hough the majority present could not follow Manx, this vocal effort in the mother tongue by Mr Craine was much esteemed'. Then came Katie Clucas, 'a young lady with an excellent voice, rendered what proved two new songs to many of the party', namely, 'I'm a native of Peel' and 'The Manx Wedding'. The next day of course was Tynwald Day, and the following piece covered that event where '[t]he service differed from previous services in that the new Manx National Anthem was sung for the first time at a Government function, and it had an excellent reception'.² Here we see 'Manxness' being presented and negotiated through song at both informal and formal occasions.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2017

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1 {Anon, 1907 #256}

2 {Anon, 1907 #395}

REFERENCES

- “Manx-American Pic-Nic in Peel Castle,” *Peel City Guardian* 6 July 1907: [5]c–d.
“Tynwald Day: Only One Act Promulgated,” ——— 6 July 1907: [5]d–e.

