

Manx Notes 274 (2017)

“STANDING ON THE BORDERLINE” (2)

“SOME OF US DO NOT UNDERSTAND
ENGLISH VERY WELL”

LETTERS TO THE PRESS ON THE MANX LANGUAGE

(1847)

THE CORRESPONDENCE (1847)

1. Pseud [signed “A Countryman”]. “Translation of the Manx Epistle.” *Mona’s Herald* 20 January 1847: [3]c. Refers to Pseud [signed “Manninagh Dooie”], “The Late Rev. Robert Brown, Parish of Braddan.—Manx Epistle,” *Mona’s Herald* 30 December 1846: [3]e.

2. Pseud [signed “A Friend to Man”]. “The Manx Language.” *Isle of Man Times* 30 January 1847: [3]f.

3. Pseud [signed “Manninagh Dhooie”]. “The Manx Language.” *Isle of Man Times* 13 February 1847: [3]a–b.

4. Pseud [signed “A Layman”]. “The Manx Clergy.” *Mona’s Herald* 17 February 1847: [3]e.

5. Pseud [signed “Manninagh Dhooie”]. “The Manx Language.” *Isle of Man Times* 13 March 1847: [1]d–e

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I. A COUNTRYMAN, “TRANSLATION OF THE MANX EPISTLE,” *MONA’S HERALD* (20 JANUARY 1847)

To the Editor of Mona’s Herald.

SIR,—Having read a Manx epistle in your paper, of the 30th ult., which the writer desired to be translated into English, and inserted in your last Wednesday’s paper, but as no translation appeared, I thought I should try my hand at translating Manx into English, for my own amusement,—and as you say that an English translation shall readily have a place, if forwarded, I send you this, which you may insert in your next *Herald*, if you have not received a better.

I am, Sir, yours &c,

A COUNTRYMAN

SIR,—I have heard, with deep regret, of the death of parson Brown, Vicar of this parish, who was a good man,—a man whose whole wish and heart’s desire was to do good to the people committed to his care, as a minister, and not them, but to all to whom he would be of service; hardly if such a parson will be given to us in his place.

I understand he was a very learned man, that he understood Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; but, because we poor Manx people were unacquainted with these strange languages—indeed, some of us do not understand English very well, and others scarcely any. When he first came to this parish, he hired a Manx clergyman *who understood Manx* to preach to us in that language; that is to say our mother tongue. He thought it unjust to be in a parish where all the people did not understand English, without the Gospel being preached to the man who understands Manx, as well as to the man who understands English. He, therefore, because the Manx clergyman could not remain long with him, undertook to learn the Manx language, and, in a short lime, by labouring night and day, he was able to read and preach that language. Although he himself was a Manxman, he never saw how necessary it was for a country clergyman in this Island to understand Manx, till he came amongst Manx people. Now that this holy man is gone to enjoy his reward at God's right hand in the heavens, many in this neighbourhood are asking "what clergyman will get this parish?" Some say one thing, and some another, but almost all agree in saying, that some strange clergyman, no one unacquainted with the Manx language will be appointed, as our rulers despise that language, and those who understand and speak it; it comes so much in their way, that they wish that the Manx language, and those who speak it, were banished from the Island altogether.

For this reason, they think if they place clergymen in the parishes who do not understand Manx, that the people will be compelled to speak English. But it would be just as reasonable for them to appoint a clergyman to each parish who did not understand English, and say, that every one who did not understand Manx, must learn it. Would not this be considered unreasonable? No doubt it would; but is it not equally so on the other hand? The poor Manx man who does not understand much English, though he is so much despised, labours just as hard all the week to pay tithes to the Bishop and to the clergyman of his parish, as the stranger who does not understand Manx. Must it not, then, be very trying to him when he goes to church on the Sabbath, after labouring hard all the week, that he cannot hear the Gospel preached plainly in that language which he best understands. And, again, when he comes to lie on a sick bed, that the man who is paid for doing so cannot show him the way in which he may be come prepared for his change. Do you suppose our great men themselves would like to be treated in this way and that they were so much despised? I think not, should not they, therefore, "do to others, as they would wish others to do to them." When we country people meet together, we sometimes talk a great deal about various things, and although we are not much thought of, yet we see and speak of the way in which many things ought to be done, which are not done.

Formerly when the clergyman of a parish died, or was removed to another parish, the minister next to him in age succeeded him; but now young men who can neither read nor speak Manx, are appointed to the parishes, if they happen to be related to any one of our rulers; and then they are compelled to get some of our poor Manx

clergymen who understand Manx, and who are much older than themselves, to help them. Thus, those who can perform their duty are servants to them who are not competent to do that for which they get their living. You would suppose the twenty-four Keys would look into these things, and get justice for everyone, the poor as well as the rich. Hardly if the four and twenty Keys who wore *karranes*,* would have allowed of these things. There are now so many strangers in the House of Keys “that the Manxmen who are amongst them have not much to say;” so the strangers get all their own way, because they think themselves wiser than the poor Manxmen. Do you think our great men will tell any of these things to our new Bishop? They ought to be told to him. It is said “that the Manx are not wise till the day after the fair.” I hope it won’t be so now, but that the people of this parish will immediately petition our Governor to request our most Gracious Queen to appoint a clergyman to this parish who can point out the way of salvation to the Manxman who cannot speak English, as well as to those who understand it.

I shall be very thankful to you for putting this in some corner of your paper next week, should you think it worth; and also, that yourself or some other would translate it into English for the paper of the following week. Perhaps you will hear from me again in a short time.

I remain, your obdt. servant,

A TRUE MANXMAN

Parish of Braddan, the 10th day of the last month of the year 1846.

* A sandal, a cover for the sole and sides of the foot made of raw hide salted, dried, and laced with thongs of the same on the top of the foot.

2. A FRIEND TO MAN, “THE MANX LANGUAGE,” ISLE OF MAN TIMES (30 JANUARY 1847)

SIR,—I am fully aware of what vast importance it is in Ireland, as well as in many parts of Wales, but particularly in the former, that those to whom the religious instruction of the people is confided, should have a perfect knowledge of the language which they speak and understand. But to look for this, in our days, in the Isle of Man, wherein, I may say, even the lowest classes, both speak and read English sufficiently well for all common and useful purposes—indeed, it is taught in every school in the island—is only an attempt to perpetuate ignorance and barbarism. I do not hesitate to say, that this has been the chief cause of dissent of such vast numbers of the Manx people from the Established Church, and who really know not the position in which they stand.

We, no doubt, should avoid general and indiscriminate reflections upon communities, and their religious professions. They are injurious; they tend to make, and keep the parties, what they are generally supposed to be. They are unjust, as well in politics as in religion; for there are always many exceptions. And they are ungenerous; for the more temptations, or self-interests men have to resist, the mere

evils they have to subdue, the more difficulties they have to struggle with—the more deserving and commendable is the individual that is successful.

Yet, I must beg leave—having an important object in view—to ask the parochial Clergy of the Island, if it is necessary to have the Morning Service in their respective Churches, four Sundays in each month of the year, in Manx? Is it necessary (unless when it pleases their own good pleasure to have it in English on the previous or following Sabbath) that the all-important Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, should be only administered by them to their Parish congregations twice a year, and that in Manx?—What useful books—besides the Old and New Testaments, and the Book of Common Prayer, according to the Church of England,—are written and printed in the Manx tongue?—If all the Manx Clergy were to be shut up separately, so as to prevent them from having communication with each other, and be required to translate from English into Manx, even a single Chapter of any History, how many of them could do it decently?—We may venture to say, that the result would show the real value of their acquired knowledge of a tongue they are so anxious to have kept up, as indispensable in a Manx Clergyman. Many would, however, like to know in what manner their collective wisdom and learning could reply to these simple questions; and particularly at this moment, when another Englishman, wholly y unacquainted with the Manx language, has been appointed their Bishop; and who ought, in time, to be informed that, there are not probably, three out of the whole of the Manx Clergy of the Established Church, (and this is so like how Latin stood among the priests of the Romish Church in the dark ages,) who understand, or can write, even tolerably, the Manx tongue—much less preach their own sermons in it, so as to be properly, or at all understood by their hearers. If Bishop Shirley were aware of all this, he would at once see why this useless language is here so zealously pretended to be up held, as necessary in a Manx Clergyman—that is, it is so upheld with a view to exclude well educated strangers from the insular Church; and yet what vast improvements have a few of these strangers occasioned in it, within the last fifteen years although they have not been able to arrest the progress of dissent?

A little piece of low cunning, easily to be seen through—on whose part attempted to be practised, I leave the Island to judge—given in the *Mona's Herald*, of Wednesday week, in the shape of a translation of “A TRUE MANXMAN'S” letter,—has called for this from,

No Tractarian, nor Puseyite, but

Jan. 30, 1847.

A FRIEND TO MAN

3. MANNINAGH DHOOIE, “THE MANX LANGUAGE,” ISLE OF MAN TIMES (13 FEBRUARY 1847)

[3a] SIR,—I was sorry to read in the second number of your very promising new Journal—*The Isle of Man Times*—the rigmarole carplings of an apparently

disappointed place-hunting bigot,—probably a “stranger,”—under the glowing signature of—“No Tractarian, nor Puseyite, but A FRIEND TO MAN”—in “lhosthey lhoam” style, against the Manx language, clergy, and dissenters; contending that not a knowledge of the said language was unnecessary, as a qualification in a Manx clergyman, but that it [3b] tended to perpetuate ignorance, barbarism, and dissent from the established church! Now, how the knowledge of any Language (much less he Manx) can be taxed with such awful consequences, I am at a loss to divine; nor does he, unfortunately, inform us. He acknowledges the “vast importance of those entrusted with religious instruction, in Ireland and Wales, having a perfect knowledge of the language spoken by the people;” but he cannot see the utility of such in the Isle of Man! An old Manx proverb says “mie Maanin, mie Nierin,”—good in the Isle of Man, good in Ireland;—but perhaps he has discovered in his peregrinations that what is good in Ireland may be the reverse in my unfortunate country:—(help us!)—if so, I beg he will take out a patent for the discovery, as it may turn out to be more useful to him than to us.

But, Mr Editor, I say advisedly that dissent has not sprung from the cultivation of the Manx, but from the neglect evinced towards it by those who ought to be the foremost to encourage its cultivation; and if the Manx clergy wish to cultivate the good faith of the people, then must be the last to abandon their mother-tongue: for look at Ireland—how successfully has the Roman Catholic religion been cultivated there, while the benighted people had not the words of truth and life afforded them in their own dear native tongue. The language was not to blame, but the want of the true light made it dark, but not impenetrable; for the Bible Society made the light to shine in that language as clearly as in any ever spoken—and (thanks to Dr Johnson, so did it shine in Scotland, where, strange to say, they had the same contracted notion that our friend has) that light could not shine in the Gaelic till Dr Johnson shamed them out of it—for the gospel must find its way to every nation, kindred, and tongue. Truth is the same in all languages—so is error.

Our “FRIEND TO MAN” next tells the dissenters that they know not the position in which they stand. (How deplorable!) At the same time he says, “we ought to avoid all general and indiscriminate reflections upon communities and their religious professions. They are injurious: they tend to make and keep the parties (what a nice man for a small party he!) what they are generally supposed to be,” and other such nonsensical palliatives, which the curious among dissenters, so called, must read for themselves in the original.

Now here is an unprovoked attack, on an unprovoking class of the community; which proves the author, not only what *I* called him—a bigot—but a big goat. He next asks the parochial clergy “is it necessary to have the morning service, four Sundays in each month in the year, in Manx?” It would appear from this, that we have five or six weeks to the month in the Isle of Man, which, I confess to my shame, Manxman that I am, I was not before aware of; for most certainly we have English

one or two Sundays in each month in the year, in all the parish churches in the Island: and if he can prove the fact, it will go far to establish the fame of the Isle of Man for long months, and, I hope, longevity—a greater inducement than was ever before held to strangers to visit us. Do not, Mr Editor, forget this in your next year’s almanack; it will enhance its value by a *very* long chalk. He asks “what useful book, besides the Old and New Testament and Book of Common of Prayer, are there written and printed in the *Manx tongue*?” May I ask him what better books are there printed in the English tongue? and urge upon him the necessity of studying them more seriously? they will teach him to respect the Manx language, clergy, and dissenters, by giving him a true knowledge of that ignorance which induced him to judge of others so uncharitably; and that the value of a language does not consist in the number of such books as he seeks for in the Manx—viz., “Tom Thumb,” “Jack the Giant Killer,” “Goody Two Shoes,” and such like—but in that which he should know, ere he should attempt to ask Manx clergymen such impudent questions, as “how many of them could translate a chapter of history, out of English, into Manx?” Now, if *he* cannot translate Manx into English, I pity his ignorance, and would advise him to learn it ere he give so free an opinion of the abilities of the Manx clergy or the beautiful Manx language. I say, I pity him, if he be one of the “well educated strangers” he speaks of; for I hope he is not a native—if he be my bowels yearn for him—for “t’ey usshag broghe ta milliey yn edd echey hene.” He must unfortunately have eaten of that direful plant (in this season of potato substitutes) which causes the eater thereof to forget his country and his friends! I must repeat, I hope he is not a Manxman, to say, “Bishop Shirley should be informed that there are probably not more than three of the Manx clergy who understand, or can write, even tolerably, or preach their sermon, so as to be at all understood, in the Manx tongue; and that he would see at once that this useless language was pretended to be up held with a view to exclude well educated strangers from the insular church, and yet,” he says, “what vast improvements have some of these strangers occasioned in it.”

Now I beg to inform him that many of the Welsh clergy (though they have received a classical education) cannot converse well in English; that there is not one man in England can make himself usefully understood in every county of his “own native land” (so much for the utility of the English); that we have above 200 local preachers, who, though unlettered *some*, can *all* speak Manx more frequently, and be better understood; and that above a score of our clergy can write and speak more correctly and elegantly in Manx, than he can in English (if his poddhash ffisheragh—raad Killione dhy Ghoolhish—epistle warrant me in giving such an opinion); and further, I say that a very great majority of our parish, and many of our town, population would much rather have the Gospel preached to them in “chengey ny mayrey Ellan Vannin” than in English;—the Manx being incomparably more simple and natural, more forcible and expressive, than that cumbersome, artificial, ever changing modern confusion of tongues—the English—the most, difficult to

foreigners to learn, and not generally understood, or spoken in its purity at home. But not so the Manx, the most illiterate can speak it as correctly as the most learned. Bishop Shirley should know this, and take care (as the only method of curing dissent) that all who offer themselves for the Manx church should have a thorough knowledge of that venerable language—the Manx—and set about that which has been neglected by his predecessors since the time of Bishop Hildesley, who only wished to live to see the Scriptures printed in Manx; and, die when he would, he would then die happy: and so he did—he lived to see his last and greatest earthly desire accomplished, and went to his great reward next day. Bishop Shirley, I humbly submit, seeing the necessity I have pointed out of having those entrusted with the spiritual welfare of the people of Mona thoroughly acquainted with Manx language, should lose no time in establishing a PROFESSORSHIP OF MANX in King William's College—thereby restoring the Barrow fund to its original legitimate purpose—the education of *Manxmen for the Manx church*. Moreover, I conceive that while we have natives qualified for the Manx church, we have no occasion to cross the water for “well educated strangers” to fill the office. Charity should begin at home, and though “well educated strangers” have done much good—no doubt they have—in the insular church, within the last fifteen years; and though we have had more calls on our charity since that period, and are likely soon to have many calls for mendicity institutions, and recently had a call for a reenforcement of the vagrant act; might not the “well educated strangers,” he wishes Bishop Shirley to take by the hand, be more usefully and profitably employed at home, as Home Missionaries, and let the knowledge that is within them be employed in the expulsion of the provincial barbarisms of the English language?

Now mark me, Mr Editor, I do not say this to the disparagement of the non-natives that are amongst us (I would rather not say *strangers*, for we are all one people, but where we may be most usefully employed is another question). That we are indebted to them for improvements too numerous to mention, and respect and value them accordingly. I need not trespass farther on your valuable space to prove; but when we are located in Rome we are expected to do as “Rome does;” and if strangers will enter the Manx church, let them be qualified for it.

I am sorry to draw so much upon your kindness, Mr Editor, but I doubt not the importance of the question *will* be a passport to this claim on your generosity by Sir, yours respectfully, and well wishing,

No bigot, but a

MANNINAGH DHOUIE

February 12, 1847.

4. A LAYMAN, “THE MANX CLERGY,” MONA'S HERALD (17 FEBRUARY 1847)

SIR,—In a Saturday's paper of January 30th ult., a letter appeared signed “A FRIEND TO MAN,” in which the writer makes a bold and unprovoked attack upon the

character of the clergy, for their endeavouring, as he asserts, to uphold the Manx language, (which he calls “useless,”) with a view to exclude well-educated strangers from the Insular church. Certainly this individual must be entirely unacquainted with the Manx people, and the Manx clergy, or he would not have come forward publicly to prejudice (as his intention appears to be) our newly appointed Bishop towards them. Those strangers who have resided for any time in this Island, must confess that the Manx people, both the clergy and the laity, are anything but unfriendly to them; indeed they generally respect strangers more than their own countrymen, whatever office they may fill; “for a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country.” The writer of the letter alluded to must be very much mistaken, and misinformed, when he wishes to make it appear that, “even the lowest classes in the Island both speak and read English sufficiently well for all common purposes,” and that to uphold the Manx language is only an attempt to perpetuate ignorance and barbarism. This is far from being true, for there are still thousands of persons in the Island who speak and understand the Manx better than the English. There are many who can speak little or no English, yet they are not so ignorant and barbarous as this individual would have us to believe them to be. Whilst therefore, the Manx language is thus spoken, and better understood by many of the people, it is the *duty* of the church to provide *efficient clergymen* who can perform its services in both languages.

As a friend to man, having (as he says) an important object in view, puts several questions to the parochial clergy of the Island, which are too impertinent to be answered; I shall not gratify his curiosity by answering them, except the last, which is too glaring to be left unnoticed, which is as follows:—If all the Manx clergy were to be shut up separately, so as to prevent them from having communication with each other, and be required to translate from English into Manx, even a single chapter of any history, how many of them could do it decently? We may venture to say, that the result would show the real value of their acquired knowledge of a tongue they are so anxious to have kept up as indispensable in a Manx clergyman. “Many would, however, like to know in what manner their collective wisdom and learning could reply to these simple questions: and particularly at this moment, when another Englishman, wholly unacquainted with the Manx language, has been appointed their Bishop; and who ought in time to be informed that there are not, probably, *three out of the whole of the Manx clergy of the Established Church* (and this is so like how Latin stood among the priests of the Romish Church in the dark ages) *who understand, or can write, even tolerably the Manx tongue, much less preach their own sermons in it, so as to be properly understood by their hearers.*” How grossly untrue. Most of the parochial clergy of this Island understand, read, speak, and write the Manx language well. The Manx public can bear testimony to this. I have heard several of them preach, and I have not heard one who I did not perfectly understand. “A FRIEND TO MAN,” being, as I presume, a stranger, is entirely unacquainted with the brevity, purity, beauty,

and force of the Manx language. He is, therefore, no judge of it, nor of those who speak it. It is not like the modern English, a compound of about a score of other languages. "A FRIEND TO MAN" wishes the public to believe that scarcely three of the Manx clergy can compose or translate their Manx sermons. I would ask him, where do they procure them? I trust our new Bishop will not be led to think less of the Manx clergy through the insinuations of this writer.

This "FRIEND TO MAN" seems not only to have a quarrel with the Manx clergy and language, but with Dissent also; for he boldly asserts, that he does not hesitate to say, that the upholding of the Manx language has been the chief cause of Dissent of such vast numbers of the Manx people from the Established Church, and who really know not the position in which they stand. This is perfectly erroneous, for though the Manx people occasionally attend the ministry of Dissenting ministers, and many of them united with Dissenting bodies, are, notwithstanding, warmly attached to the Established Church, and are not ignorant of the position in which they stand. The writer in the paper referred to, has forgotten that Dissenters preach in English as well as in Manx, and that England, where the Manx language is not spoken at all, is the chief seat of Dissent. And it is well for this Island that the Methodists (if they ought to be called Dissenters) ever landed on these shores, and aroused the people from their spiritual lethargy; and so long as the Manx local preachers of those bodies go from parish to parish, week after week, preaching the Gospel as they do at present, the Manx service in the Established Church can be better dispensed with.

Should "A FRIEND TO MAN" be a clergyman, either stranger or native, but unacquainted with the Manx language, (for several of the young native clergy are ignorant of it) and be appointed to a country living in this Island, as it appears he is anxious to be, these indefatigable labourers in the Lord's vineyard, the Manx local preachers will be ready at any time to supply his lack of service in the Manx language.

Yours, &c,

Braddan, Feb. 15, 1847.

A LAYMAN

5. MANNINAGH DHOOIE, "THE MANX LANGUAGE," ISLE OF MAN TIMES (13 MARCH 1847)

[Id] DEAR SIR,—I was *pleased*, and yet I was *sad*, to read in your last (what appears to me) the last "dying speech and confession" of our worthy and learned FRIEND TO MAN—that great *ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak*,* who lately pounced down upon the Manx language, roaring like a *na-na-mu-kee*, to frighten the clergy and dissenters out of their propriety, just at that very important nick of time that our worthy new Lord Bishop was about receiving his *keead mille foltugh* from *Manninee dhooie*:—*pleased* to find he had become so extremely *polite*, all at once, as to own he had been *inconsiderate* (why not say indiscreet?) in some parts of his attack upon the Manx

language—evidently the *sad* effects of a *sad* attack of that *sad* complaint—*Pyro-pneumato-hydro-pyrosis*, *dhaah thre geayeeagh ushliagh-ailiagh*, or *windy-watery-fiery waterbrish!*—*sad* to think that the few innocent *morceaux* of Manx, I, in the goodness of my heart, presented him with, (as specimens of that lovely, neglected, and abused Language,) should have had the *sad* effect above stated on his morbid *cachectic cacoths-scribendi* constitution;—*sadder* still to think they should have driven him to the *sad* expediency of despatching his two favourite aides-de-camp, *Quash-qua-me* and *Pa-she-pa-ho*, all the way to *mammy antichrist* (the Italian) and *nurse-mammy antichrist* (the French) for *poudre* and ball, to fight a poor ignorant barbarian Manxman, for daring to defend his mother-tongue from the knife of a little *inconsiderate*, who was silly enough to think the old lady had no further use for her tongue!—strange if she had not! But the *poudre* was too stale and damp to have effect; for, so to say, it only went “puff” in the pan, and flew back in his face, and on what a figure it made of him! And as for the *ball*, it was not made to shoot straight—it was crookedly fashioned in an ill shapen *crackit* Italian mould,—it was so light and foggy, it would only fly back in the sportsman’s teeth—it would not cut the wind—there was “no go” against that power, against which he intended to fire it. I would hint too that Signor Quash-qua-me misdirected the missile, or blind ball, or puff ball, or Lyeoperdon Italicum—I mean his orthography was not the best in the world—the fault of a faulty pen perhaps, or may be the effect of the dust on his eyes—for puff ball particularly is a sad Italian thing to fire against the wind—I wonder he could see to write at all after such a catastrophe. A similar objection must be urged against the wonderful caps he attempted to fit on to Manxmen’s heads: they would not fit, and why?—because they were fabricated after the same blockhead fashion—they would only fit the manufacturer; for which reason the Editor very judiciously withheld them. Right, Mr Editor;—I augured from the beginning, and am now persuaded, that the *Isle of Man Times* was instituted for a higher, more ennobling and useful purpose than the aiding and abetting of angry discussions on “matters of faith,” where eve y man is privileged, and, I hope, *determined*, to exercise the right of judging for himself, untrammelled by any *ensor* but his own good conscience: and, so long as he injures not his brother, may he ever lie blest with the same. But discussions on faith too often only tend to widen the gap that divides the *disunited*, which can only be closed by the brotherly love and charity of one for the other. Let our friend study those things only that in life are worth living for, and he will be of the opinion here expressed—he will not attempt to ride roughshod over that which every Manxman worthy the name, holds dear—the Manx Language—holding the clergy and dissenters equally in contempt. I would advise him not to hazard the like again, for there are brambles in that dangerous way; and I never knew one who made the same silly attempt but got as scratched as he; and if he persist, he will get stuck on the horn of such a dilemma, as the blowing of his French horn, or his Italian whistle, will not get him off. But to my text.—The Manx language, I

contend, should be cultivated; and not only should the Manx clergy and preaching dissenters be qualified therein, but lawyers and judges; for it is a shame for any such in this country to call for interpretation of their own native *living* language; and our country should see that those who have the “*cure* of souls,” and the disposing of life and liberty entrusted to them, be thoroughly qualified to execute their important trusts, with credit to themselves, and satisfaction and safety to the people; for there are thousands on this Island who could better give evidence in a court of justice, and receive more benefit from a sermon in Manx, than in English. But I regret to state that their necessities and wishes have met with little consideration of late from those whose duty it is to attend to them; and Manxmen have tolerated the neglect, and more, they have allowed the views and aims of the privately interested to undermine and tumble down the privileges and interests of the community. Year after year have we been dallying with, and losing our best privileges, and *laa lurg laa yn varyee* discovered our error; and if things be allowed to go on as they are our interests and privileges (as a country) will soon find a common grave; and if we neglect those high birth-right privileges, and thus allow all that entitles us to the name of our country to be trampled on, or crumble into dust from neglect, the punishment is inevitably and deservedly ours. And what, may be asked, entitles a man to the name of his country? First, a knowledge of the language, manners, [Ie] necessities, peculiarities, etc., of his country. Secondly, acting his part, to the best of his ability, to promote and maintain the welfare, honour, and glory of his native land. And, lastly, bearing the share of the citizenship of the world that falls to his station in life. None else are worthy the name. And if we neglect our language and other interests inseparably connected therewith, let us not wonder at strangers holding them and us in contempt.

I have thus far called the attention of my countrymen to the deathly lethargy they are thoughtlessly dozing in, while the cutworm is fretting at the root of their best and dearest interests; and if they do not awake and put on their armour, the enemy, already in camp, will take them away without a struggle or a groan. If our country be worthy the name, let that which gives it that name—the language—be cultivated: if not worthy, let them both die the death that awaits them, and Manxmen give up all right and title to (what they now but in part enjoy) the name, privileges, and freedom of this country. Unable to do the present important question the justice I feel it demands, in so short a compass, and having already gone beyond the limit I intended trespassing on your columns, I will, Mr Editor, with your kind permission, take it up again, and endeavour to prove the necessity of cultivating the Manx, and shew its utility as an auxiliary to the acquisition of other languages—our friend’s French and Italian for instance;—likewise the claims that language has on nationality; and the bearing of nationality on the welfare of countries. And now, with my kind and dutiful regards to our mutual “FRIEND TO MAN,”

Dear Sir, Slane ayd.

Twoaie Baroole, Feb. 24. 1847.

MANNINAGH DHOOIE

* If our friend cannot construe the above into French, Italian, and English, he ought to get the *sac*.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2017

