

Manx Notes 317 (2018)

“STANDING ON THE BORDERLINE” (5)

“OUR NATIVE LANGUAGE IS RIDICULED”

LETTER FROM “A MANXMAN”

(1824)

SIR,—No man blames national prejudices more than I do, and yet there is not one who ardently cherishes a love of country and admires it in others. Your Englishman, for instances, despite his acknowledged goodness of character, has his faults and follies, his failings and weaknesses,—but just hint to him that any one of them are national, and *John Bull's* ire is soon drawn upon you; your Scotchman is well known to spurn at and resent every insult offered to his country or countrymen, and to bind close to every northern brother,—an insult offered to him or any of them, sinks deep, and rankles long before it is smothered or forgotten; your red-hot off-hand son of Hibernia, is all fire and tow the moment he hears his country reflected upon, in the slightest degree, or a general odium thrown upon it, or its buoyant natives. I am a Manxman, and we Manxmen are often doomed to hear with patience the worst epithets bestowed upon us, without daring to resent the insult in any way. I attended a Law Court the other day as a witness, and however it may gall my fellow-natives, I must say that I heard proclaimed in that Court that the Manx people cared no more for going to the Book (viz. swearing on the Holy Evangelists) than of kissing a piece of brown paper. I pitied the passionate cholera of those who said it, and advise them never to go so far astray again. Had any one even hinted a reflection decree, I am very sure some persons would have taken the matter up in a very serious manner: what I have not the opportunity nor taste for resenting in such way, I must content myself with naming as a fact, I hope the good sense of these impassioned people will teach them their error. We are blown up and bullied on all sides for want of knowledge and information, and our native language is ridiculed by those who cannot comprehend or understand it; and yet I think before we are stigmatized and abused in this way, we ought to be *taught* the language they wish us to speak, whether English, Scotch, or Irish, and not kicked or cuffed into obedience like spaniel dogs such ruling and such doctrines may be tolerated amongst the Hottentots, or practised in Turkey, or Algiers, but it will not do here.—Yours &c.

A MANXMAN.

Kirk Santan, June 19th, 1824.

Pseud [signed as “A Manxman”]. “To the Editors of the Manx Patriot.”
Manx Patriot 8 July 1824: [3]d.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2018

