

Manx Notes 352 (2018)

“VERY OFTEN HE WAS A CANTANKEROUS CHARACTER”
(1879) *

[5c] Mr E.C. FARRANT said that in former years it was the duty of the parish clerk to lead the psalmody; but there were very few churches in which they now did this; and, in fact, very often he was a cantankerous character who obstructed the proper performance of divine worship. He (Mr Farrant) knew cases in which this had been done by parish clerks who were not friendly to the vicar, or in which they had been replaced by a regular choir.

“[Insular Legislature] House of Keys: Thursday, November 20, 1879.” *Isle of Man Times* 22 November 1879: 5b–d.

This was the view of E.C. Farrant and it is difficult to know how wider this feeling was shared, but we see here the change in musical practices in the parish church, the replacement of psalm singing wherein all sang led by the parish clerk himself by a choir when one sang along with them, a distinction now in place in the congregation between those in the choir and those not.

For background reading, see Vic Gammon, “‘Babylonian Performances,’ The Rise and Suppression of Popular Church Music in England, 1660–1870,” *Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590–1914: Explorations in the History of Labour and Leisure*, Eds. Eileen Yeo and Stephen Yeo. (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1981) 62–88. See too, Harry Woodhouse, “‘Face the Music!’ Church and Chapel Bands in Cornwall,” *Cornish Studies* (New Series) 1, 46–61.

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* Originally published as Stephen Miller, “‘Very often he was a cantankerous character’ (1879),” *Kiaull Manninagh Jiu* October (2018), [14].