

Manx Notes 382 (2019)

WILLIAM PEACOCK *

William Peacock was the author of a number of guidebooks to the Island, in fact a set of three that appeared in 1863, namely *The Beauties of Port Erin*,¹ *Everybody's New Guide [...] to the Isle of Man*,² and *The Manx Table-Book & Keepsake*.³ In the *New Guide*, he mentioned that he was “a constant visitor to the Isle of Man during the last twelve years [...]”.⁴ The books contain a small number of folk charms, besides other folklore material scattered throughout. Of interest here is *The Manx Table-Book*, where Peacock writes:

As a specimen of the nervousness and strength of the Manx tongue the following verses [*ie*, “Ny Kirree fo-Niaughtey”] are submitted to my readers. This antique lyric is an extreme favourite with the poorer class, and I have heard it sung in isolated country places where the advent of an Englishman was not an every-day occurrence.⁵

Whether Peacock took it down himself or not is unclear; he certainly had no Manx, as “[m]y friend, Mr Mosley [...] has favoured me with a literal translation, which I have (as old writers say) ‘done into rhyme.’ I trust it has not lost none of its point by being versified.”⁶ *The Manx Table-Book* was the last in the series, but:

I intend to produce a fourth, the subject of which shall possess nothing in common with its predecessors. In it I propose to introduce other original ballads, gleaned from the honest agricultural Manx scattered over comparatively untrodden portions of the Isle,—regions whose scenery is alike impressive and beautiful, but remote from the “busy hum of men.” I have long cherished the idea of undertaking and describing a thoroughly adventurous ramble through the *unknown* parts of Mona; and the result of wanderings will be given to the public under the title of

“WILD MAN.”⁷

This proposed book never appeared; if any collecting did take place, then the collection is now lost.

* Originally published as Stephen Miller, “William Peacock,” *Kiaull Manninagh Jiu* July (2019), [19]. Reproduced here with sources.

1 William F. Peacock, *The Beauties of Port Erin* (Manchester: John Heywood, n.d. [but 1863]).

2 William F. Peacock, *Everybody's New Guide [...] to the Isle of Man* (Manchester: John Heywood, n.d. [but 1863]).

3 William F. Peacock, *The Manx Table-Book & Keepsake* (Manchester: John Heywood, n.d. [but 1863]).

4 Peacock, *Everybody's New Guide [...] to the Isle of Man* i.

5 Peacock, *The Manx Table-Book & Keepsake* 64.

6 Peacock, *The Manx Table-Book & Keepsake* 64.

7 Peacock, *The Manx Table-Book & Keepsake* 65.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2019

REFERENCES

- Peacock, William F. *The Beauties of Port Erin*. Manchester: John Heywood, n.d. [but 1863].
- . *Everybody's New Guide [...] to the Isle of Man*. Manchester: John Heywood, n.d. [but 1863].
- . *The Manx Table-Book & Keepsake*. Manchester: John Heywood, n.d. [but 1863].

