

Manx Notes 480 (2020)

WILLIAM KENNISH
THE SHAMRAK VEG SOUREY *
(1845)

The English may boast of their damask red rose,
And the Irish of shamrock so green;
But give me the *shamrock veg sourey*, that blows
So sweetly in Mannin veg veen!

Its blithe, *gennal* † aspect restores to my mind
Those happy young days that are fled;
And many blithe faces, who 're long since consign'd
To the cold narrow house o' the dead.

In long gone-by years, in childhood's fond dreams,
I've viewed the sweet *shamrak veg's* blush,
Round the edge of the fountain, or mossy-bank streams,
Or smile to the sun 'neath the bush.

And now, as towards the lone glen I repair,
To learn from creation the truth,
I oft can the *shamrak veg's* tincture compare
To smiles from the friend of my youth.

Tho', *shamark veg villish*, thou com'st but to bloom
A few rising suns, and then dies,
Thy species, unaltered, again cheers the gloom,
When spring bids thy parent-stem rise.

'Tis not so with the friends of my youth, who've fled
Like doves to their cot in the skies,
And left not a symbol to greet in their stead,
These faded and tear-blighted eyes.

But, *shamrak veg wee*, ‡ while journeying below,
I'll hail thine appearance each spring,
With that heart-felt emotion and soul-stiring glow.
Thou 'rt wont to my bosom to bring!

And when I have finished my earthly career,
And shall cease to be troubled this breast,
Let *shamrakyn sourey* be planted each year,
To mark out the poor pilgrim's rest.

October 17, 1845.

WILLIAM KENNISH

* The summer shamrock, or primrose. † Happy. ‡ Yellow.

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It was not to be the primrose that was to become a national flower for the Isle of Man, that would fall to the *cushag*, though for some it was to be the fushia.

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