

Manx Notes 520 (2021)

“NEW COME-OVERS”

(1853)

(1)

A few days ago the master of one of our coal boats conveyed an Irish pauper to this port from Whitehaven. On applying for assistance, the chief-constable brought her before the High Bailiff, who ordered the master of the vessel to support her whilst here and to convey her to the port whence he took her. If the act under which the officers of the law acted in the above case were more attended to, there would not be seen so many Irish vagrants all over this Island as at present.

“[Local News] Warning to Masters of Vessels.” *Manx Sun* 7 May 1853: 4c.

(2)

Sir,—I observed in your last number a paragraph headed as above, relating to an Irish pauper who arrived by one of our coal boats.

Now, Sir, I have seen a proclamation adverting to the above subject, and doubt not for a moment but that it would be enforced with its full rigour on such, if our police force were more vigilant in their exertions.

Sir, as a Manxman myself, I have a regard for my country as well as to suppress Pauperism; but if things are allowed to go on as they are, this Island will be soon swarming with vagrants. I have no doubt when the authorities have established the proposed lunatic asylum here, that for every Manxman or woman admitted, there will be four Irish.

As I have gone along the streets in this town, which I do almost daily, I have observed numbers of such as are termed “new come-overs,” in almost every street that I go into; and a most disgraceful fact has come under my own knowledge, showing the manner in which these people live. An Irishwoman with her daughter had taken her abode in a room in one of the back slums, and not having enough company sent for her relations, and accordingly ten men and one woman came by way of Peel, and they all slept in the one room.

I remain, Yours, I Douglas, May 12, 1853.

A SUBSCRIBER.

Pseud [signed as “A Subscriber”]. “[Letter to the Editor] ‘Warning to Masters of Vessels.’” *Manx Sun* 14 May 1853: 4d.

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Leaving aside the attitude on display to the Irish, in this period the victims of the Great Hunger (1845–52), note the use of “come-over” in this context, the earliest use of the word so far known in the Island.

STEPHEN MILLER RBV

