

# Manx Notes 527 (2021)

## “THE UNMANXING OF DOUGLAS”

(1882)

A writer in the *Daily News* says Douglas, in the Isle of Man, is losing every Manx characteristic. Six years ago the waves gently swished against the back of quaint old Strand-street, the narrow thoroughfares had a continental look reminding one of the bouldered bye-streets of Antwerp, and the still more ancient ways of Bruges; the lodgings were humble, but clean and cheap, and it was entertaining to have a landlady named “Quark” or “Corkish,” and to listen wonderingly as she addressed you in the Celtic tongue. Since then Douglas has undergone a metamorphosis as great as that experienced by Cinderella. It is a city by the sea, and its chief highway, the Loch Parade, is as thronged with vehicles and pedestrians as Market-street, in Manchester, and Lord-Street, in Liverpool. The capital of the island has bidden adieu to frugality and simplicity. It is a place of vast hotels and stuccoed boarding-houses, and tramways, and boisterous discomfort. A splendid town for business; a miserable dwelling-place for those who are seeking what the doctors call “recreative repose.” Cinderella is clad in finer raiment, but she is not so loveable as in her older guise.

“The Unmanxing of Douglas.” *Isle of Man Weekly Advertising Circular* 5 September 1882: [3]d.

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Whether Douglas in the 1870s did look like Bruges or Antwerp remains an open question, but here we see change, or as the writer puts it, “Unmanxing,” expressed with the familiar markers of Manxness, namely distinctive surnames, as well as the “Celtic tongue.”

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