

THE FAAIE CLADDAGH
OF BALLAKINNAG IN DISPUTE

(1872) *



COMMON LAW COURT, MAY 14, 1872.—*John Thos. Horne v. Thomas Craine*.—Mr Sherwood for plaintiff. This was a suit to recover one-third part of the Faie Claddy, part of Ballakinnag, Ballaugh. The land had in 1850 been conveyed to Margaret Craine, who left by her will one-third part to Janetta [*sic*] Craine, in 1849. In 1851 Janetta Craine emigrated to America, and remained there several years, during the whole of which time, indeed up to the time of her death in 1857, the rent was remitted to her. After the death of John Craine, who had been receiving the rent for her and her heirs, the defendant took possession and claimed the land as his own, thus necessitating an action at Common Law, and the obtaining of evidence by commission in Canada of marriage of Janetta Craine, and birth of her son, the plaintiff.—Mr Sherwood said that he never had to deal with a more excusable case than this. The land was only about £100 in value, and the defendant had put the plaintiff to £30 or £40 expense to prove his title and pedigree in the most expensive way, though he had not a shadow of pretence of claim to the property. He asked the jury to give costs.—The Deemster in addressing the jury said that the cost of litigation which had been caused by the defendant without any ground whatever, ought to be paid by him.—Verdict for plaintiff with costs.

“[Ramsey and the North] Common Law Court, May 14, 1872.” *Isle of Man Times* 18 May 1872: 5e.

One of the features of life in the nineteenth century in the Island was the steady stream of emigrants to the New World, as here with Jametta Craine (her first name is the feminine form of James). In the 1851 census, she was 15 years old and living along with her nephew, John Thomas Craine (21), a grocer, with her unmarried uncle, John Craine (58) and his married sister, Catherine Craine (45), both enumerated as landed proprietors, at the Dollagh Beg in Ballaugh. That year, as seen, she left for America and then moved on to Canada where she died young, at the age of just 21 years. Her death in 1857 was noticed in the *Manx Sun* where she was living in Kingston, Canada, and married to a Captain Thomas A. Horne. John Craine died in 1867, and that was the occasion for the action taken by Thomas Craine, to take over

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Jametta Craine's third of the Faaie Claddagh as his own. Earlier in 1847, Richard Craine, her guardian, had to sue Robert Quilliam and his wife, the executors of the will of John Craine, for a legacy due her under his will. Quilliam's objection was overruled by the Ecclesiastical Court and Jametta was given her legacy. And now there was further legal action in 1872, pursued by her son, John Thomas Horne. Thomas Craine must have calculated that distance and the cost of an action against the value of the land and its income would work in his favour. It did not—Horne was willing to go to law and Craine ended up not just losing the action, but paying the horrendous costs of the case. The land had little value in monetary terms it was conceded but Horne saw the Faaie Claddagh not in those terms, but as a link with his mother and through it with her roots in the Island.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2017

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The 1847 court case is mentioned in "Ecclesiastical Court, Douglas, Friday, Nov. 19 (Before the Worshipful Vicar-General Corlett)," *Mona's Herald* 24 November 1847: 3e. For Jametta Craine in the 1851 census, see *Census Enumerators' Book* for Ballaugh 1851, HO 107/2523, fol. 371, sch. 43. The notice of her death is in "Deaths," *Manx Sun* 28 November 1857: 5e.

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