

WILLIAM KENNISH, MOURNING OVER THE MOTHER TONGUE OF MAN (CIRCA 1840S)

DOBBERAN CHENGEY-NY-MAYREY ELLAN VANNIN

Myr va mee my-lomarcán troaylt harrish Sniaul,
Tra va yn coleayrtys y hayrn;
E coamrey harrish cheu Vannin jeh'n theihll,
As dooghys cur biallys d'an Chiarn;

Dy choodaghey 'n seihll lesh cloagey yn oie,
As aish y chur-lesh gys sheelnaue,
Veih boiraghyn seihltagh as laboraght creoi,
Son ooilley cretooryn e laue.

Myr shoh va mee faagit dou hene er y clieau,
Fegooish nhee dy heshiaght erbee,
Dy ghobberan harrish dagh voirey as streeu,
Ta seaghney Mannin-my-chree;

Tra honnick mee ben voght ayns coamrey glass,
Cheet my-whail ny mastey yn freoagh,
Lesh ooilley mygeayrt-y-mooie frytlagh as rasst,
Roie myr dy beagh ee er-keoiagh!

Va my chree er ny ghleayshaghey ayns my cheu-shtie,
Tra honnick mee stayd yn cretoor;
Son ec y chield hylley jee honnick mee mie,
Dy row ee er dhuittym veih poar.

Tra haink ee ny sniessey dou, cheayl mee ee gra:
"Ogh! ogh! ta my heaghyn dy tromme,
Myr shoh dy ve scart veih sheelnaue son dy braa.
Gys diunid shenn Traa dy gholl roym!"

Va yn ushag veg ruy goll ro-ee gys yn crouw;
Va ny gheayin gys nyn moiraghyn roie;
Va yn oie er yn 'aarkey, lesh cochaslys grou,
Dy gastey cheet veih yn niar-hwoaie;

Va fainagh ny ghrianey er n'eiyrt harrish oirr,
Ny farkiaghyn dowin yn sheear-ass;
Va yn eayst ayns yn shiar er n'irree ayns gloyr;
Va ya sheear ayns y coamrey glass.

Tra hoie shin sheese cooidjagh er lhuss glass ny faaie,
As dooyrt ee rhym, "Vanninagh, eaisht,
As neem dhyt ass ny scriunyn shoh lhaih
My hrimshey fo soilshey yn eayst."

Eisht ren ee goaill toshiaght, as lhaih ee myr shoh:
"Ayns laghyn ta er ny gholl shaghey,
Cha row mee rieu laccal my coamrey noa
Dy reayll mee veih feiraght as fliaghey.

Son mish, bee fys ayd er, ta scaan y chenn ghlare,
Ec cloan Vannin er my hreguil;
Agh s' beg fys ta ocsyn dy beagh eh ny share
Daue mish dy ve harroo dy reill.

MOURNING OVER THE MOTHER TONGUE OF MAN

As I was walking o'er Snaefell alone,
When the twilight was drawing on;
Its cloak was o'er the Manx side of the world,
And nature obeying the Lord;

Covering the world with the night's mantle,
And giving rest unto mankind,
From worldly troubles and from hard labor,
For all the creatures of his hand.

Thus to myself was I left on the hill,
Without any comrade at all,
To lament o'er each struggle and strife,
That troubles Mannin of my heart;

When I saw a woman in a grey dress,
To meet me coming 'midst the ling,
Having all her garments tattered and torn,
And running as if she were mad!

My heart it was then moved within me,
When I beheld the creature's state;
For, at the first glance, I clearly perceived,
That she'd fallen from high estate.

When she came near to me, I heard her say:
"Oh! oh! my troubles are heavy,
Thus divided from mankind for aye,
To old Time's depths to mend my way."

The little red bird going to the bush;
The lambs running to their mothers;
The night was on the sea, with a dark frown,
It came quickly from the north-east;

The sun's chariot had gone o'er the edge,
Waiting below in the south-west;
The moon in the east had ris'n in glory;
The west was in its robe of green.

When we sat on the green grass together,
She said to me, "Manxman, listen,
And I will from out of these writings read
To thee my woe 'neath the moon's light."

Then she began, and in this manner read:
"In the days that have passed away,
I never had need of my new garments
To keep me from the cold and wet.

For know, I am the old language's ghost,
The children of Mannin have left me;
How little they know that it would be best
For me to bear rule over them.

Son mish ta er reayll yn fer joarree ersooyl
Son keeadyn dy vleintyn dy hraa;
As va mee er reill veih yn traie gys Barool,
Da Manninee dooie son dy braa.

Agh nish ta yn voyrn oc er chur lesh yn Vaarle,
Eer seose yn glione mooar Tolt-y-Will,
As mastey ny reastyn er lhiattee Wooar Cardle,
As creggyn yn Creg-Willy-Sill.

Myr ta'n croaghan 'sy tourey yn maase cur er-ouyl,
Ta'n voyrn er ny chur orroo roie
Lesh y ghah, veih kione heear yn Niarbyl gys Groudle,
As veih Colloo as ny Ein gys y twoaie;

Dy-lhiattee veih raaidyn nyn ayraghyn dooie,
Nagh ren rieu myr shoh m'y hregeil;
Son va'n aigney oc gyn y Ellan dy stroie,
Ny chur ayns y joarree treishteil.

O! dy jinnagh adsyn ta sthll er y cheu
My Ellan veg nish chaglym cooidjagh,
Dy chloh veih my hraieyn lesh siyr yn toyrtmow,
Ta megeayrt-y-moom nish er 'noaill toshiaght;

As chyndaa nyn gleayshyn veih ooilley yn chiaull,
Ta jeant mygeayrt Mannin Veg Veen,
Lesh deiney ta gys dy chooilley nhee doal,
Er-lhimmey son berchys daue hene!

Agh quoi ta ad hene ta geamagh myr shoh,
Agh adsyn ta laccal pooar dy reill
Harrish Manninee dooie, lesh lorg-reill noa,
My yiow ad sleih doue dy chur-geill?

O! gow shiu my choyrle shiuish sthll ta er-mayrn
Jeh cummaltee dooie Vannin voght;
As ny chur shiu geill da nyn raaidyn shenn vraane
Mygeayrt-y-mysh lhiggar as jough.

O! dy jinnagh cummaltee Vannin cordail
Ny shenn leighyn oc keillit dy reayll,
As gyn sodjey nyn draa dy stroie ayns fardail,
Dy eaishtagh rish deiney gyn keeayl!

Agh son aym pene, neem chelleeragh goll roym,
Dy ollagh mee hene ayns y joan,"
Dooyrt yn red trimshagh, lesh osney dy trome,
"Son jeeagh cre cha lheeah ta my chione."

For 'tis I who've kept the stranger away
For some hundreds of years of time;
I would have ruled from the shore to Barool,
Over native Manxmen for aye.

Now their pride has brought over the English
Up the big glen of ThoIt-e-Will,
And to the waste spots beside Cardle Vooar,
And the rocks of Creg-Willy-Sill.

As the horsefly in summer the cattle
Maddens, their pride has made them run,
With the sting, from the Niarbyl to Groudle,
From Calf and Chickens to the north;

Leaving the ways of our good forefathers,
Who ne'er in this way forsook me;
For their mind was not to harm the Island,
Nor to put trust in the stranger.

Oh! would that they who are still on the side
Of my little Island would gather,
To drive from my shores quickly the ruin,
That about me has now begun;

And turn their ears from all the disturbance,
That's going on about Mannin Veen,
Among men that are blind to everything,
Except to riches for themselves!

But who are those that cry out thus, but those
Who are seeking power to rule
O'er native Manxmen, with a new sceptre
If people would pay heed to them?

Oh! list to my advice you that remain
Of the natives of poor Mannin;
And do not give heed to old women's ways
Concerning spirits and beer too.

Oh that the dwellers in Man would agree
Their old forgotten laws to keep
And no longer spend all their time in vain,
Listening to men without wisdom!

But for myself, I will soon go my way
To conceal myself in the dust,"
Said the poor creature, with an heavy sigh,
"For behold how gray my head is."

Text and translation taken from A.W. Moore, *Manx Ballads and Music* (Douglas: G. & R. Johnson, 1896). Said to have been originally published in the *Mona's Herald* in the 1840s but the relevant issue cannot be found; however the Manx Museum Library's run of copies for that decade is not complete. By this date the decline of Manx was apparently evident for it to be felt, at least by Kennish, to be the topic for a poetic elegy. In a letter to the German folklorist Charles Roeder in 1897, Edward Faragher of Cregneash recalled reading the poem when first published—"I read a poem in manx in a manx paper I sopose about fifty years ago the poet was comparing the manx and english languages to too sister the english was geting on well but the manx said her garments was getting ragged and torn and no one gave her entertainment but at the deep vallies of Ballure and the creggans of creg woaille scill | And I think it will be along time before her rags will be mended up again.'

Stephen Miller