

Manx Notes 268 (2017)

THE REVIVAL OF THE MANX LANGUAGE (10)

“TOM AND THE REVIVAL”

(1905)

“Well, what do you think of it, Tom?” I said.

“Tink of what?” says Tom.

“The revival,” I said.

“What have ye got?” says he; “Evan Roberts, is it, ye mane? Aw, he’ll do; he’ll do. He’s got the real thing, boy: more of his sort we’re wantin’.”

“Not him; not him at all,” I replied. “The Peel fellows I was meanin’. Aren’t they startin’ the Manx again, and night schools; and grammars; and dictionaries; and all as it is.”

“God bless me!” says Tom, “is that what thou’re callin’ a revival to. A queer kind of revival to be callin’ that. Things was differin’ greatly when I was schooled; net that I had much of that neither. Revivals was Revivals them days, boh! Gran’ times we had, I can tell ye. And preachers! Augh, achree, the lek isn’ in now at all. Why, Chalse-e-Killey himself, man, if its short he was: to hear that man pray was betthar than a sarmon. Claver dhredful he was, though! I mind one time, when we were youngsters, and father and mother was from home; and who should step in the back-kitchen but Chalse himself. He’d often be comin’ to our place with his stick and his little bag; and stoppin’ the night. And, somehow or another, there was a fight between two of my brothers, and got to be a reglar set to though. And what did me boul Chalse do but on to his knees with him straight, and ‘Lhig dooin padjeer y ghoail,’ lek for us to pray, says Chalse; and started off: and for their anger to be set aside; and for brotherly love to continue, and that grace might be given when it was so bad wanted! ’Deed he was beautiful! And Billy that’s me ouldest brother, was laughin’ awful, but the rest of us was scar’d of him, for he was thought to have been tuk lek when he was young. ’Deed, its makin; me queer yet to think of it. Aw! he was very fitty, thought with his words, was Chalse. I’ve heard hard them sayin’ he was callin’ Gawne’s brewery ‘Yn edd y jouyl ayns y jiass!’ Yiss, the divil’s nes’ in the South; ’deed he was—aw! very fitty, the craythur!”

“’Deed, its like,” I said; “but about this Manx, Tom?”

“What do I think of it?” says he.

“Yes,” says I.

“Well, well, well man! I think mortal indifferent to it,” he says.

“What for, then?” I said.

“Aaht! man! They cannot do it,” he says; “and what’s all this about grammars, and dictionaries, anyway? ’Deed, all our ones had plenty of Manx, and nothin’ of the sort at them, uncepin’, of coorse, the Bible, we hed; and Wesley’s hymns; and one or two poems of Tom Dipper’s. And, any way at all, isn’ Archie Cregeen there, and bellyfuls more Manx arrim than the one of the can put their tongue to it? Capers, I call it! and who’s goin’ to larn them anyway? Unless its the Phonograph or Canon Keowley.

And they tell me thou can hardly hear a word that spoke into it at then, unless its sung; and then sweekin' and grantin' like a sick lamb, it might be. Lord bless us, the things that's in too! People is going off it, surely. What's the Scripture sayin' about new wine in oul' bottles, young Kinnish, eh? There's thruth at me too, what? I'm pleasin' thee am I? Well, I'm thinkin' these fellars that's learnin' the Manx now 'll be talkin' the Manx like the Manx fellars was used to be talkin' the English; and if their grandfathers was only above groun' to hear them they would have the best skoff of laughin' ever they had. There was Harry Pether, now, when he was a boy, and he hadn' any English mostly, and, one time when his father had the toothache bad and Harry went over to the aunt's, do ye understan' me? and the aunt askin' him about how was the father. 'Aw, he's very bad with the Brutes,' says Harry, and, of coorse, 'Beishtyn,' the Manx was callin' the toothache: but its not doin' in the English at all, do ye undhersan'? No, no! no, no! 'Deed it's not; no, no! And oul' Gorry too, when the gels would be askin' him where was the masher. 'Dy jarroo, me not know where is he now, but me seen it directly.' That's what they would be gettin' from Gorry: 'deed aye! And wasn' Gorry's daughter much the same? I've heard my father tell of one time he was in Cloocash's for a servant; and it was tay they wor: and the misthress was wishin' for a secon' cup, and toul Jinny to pour it out. And, 'deed though, Jinny was pourin' and pourin', and "that'll do," says the misthress. But Jinny took no heed of her, but poured on. 'That'll do," says the misthress again, and Jinny pourin' still. "Nee shen, jannoo," says the misthress at last, and the cup about runnin' over. "Didn" I tell ye that'll do?" says she then. "I know what 'do' was," says Jinny, "but I do not know what 'that'll' at all." 'Deed now, that thru enough, for it's my own father that was tellin' it. and they'll be the same, it's my belief, young Kinnish, the one that larnin' the Manx now. And any way at all, if you come to that, what's the Manx for a thrain? "Cabbly yiarn," says you, and that would be a kind of relation, I expect, to the one that was sent agin Troy afore now. Mind ye I'm well up, boy. The vicar himself was allowin' that. However or not, what's the use if talkin', They'll get lave, young Kinnish, they'll get lave."

"You don't think too well of the Manx, Tom, then," I said.

"Aw, well enough well enough of the Manx, if ye undherstan' me," says he; "and a prayer in Manx is worth two in English any day. There's body in it, man: far more substantialler. However or not, its very nigh gone, man, and they're mosely all gone now that it was fittin'. It'll be like the garments of the dead, I'm thinkin', best lapped up careful and put to one side, and right enogh for the childher to handle respectful, and to be thinkin' of him that was then: but not to be thryin' on and makin' believe, like it might be playacthorin' the oul' man when he's gone. Aw, no, boy, bes' dhrop it, bes' dhrop it, d'ye understan' me?"

"Tom and the Revival." *Isle of Man Weekly Times* 6 May 1905: 7f.

