

# Manx Notes 277 (2017)

THE PEEL MANX LANGUAGE SOCIETY (3)

## MISS JOUGHIN'S LECTURE TO THE PEEL WESLEY GUILD "A PLEA FOR THE REVIVAL OF THE CELTIC LANGUAGES" (1901)

"A PLEA FOR THE REVIVAL OF THE CELTIC LANGUAGES" (1901)

### REPORTS

Anon. "A Plea for the Revival of the Celtic Languages'." *Peel City Guardian* 7 December 1901: [1]d.

———. "[Peel] 'A Plea for ...'" *Isle of Man Times* 7 December 1901: 6f.

### THE TEXT OF THE LECTURE

———. "The Celtic Languages: A Plea for the Revival." *Peel City Guardian* 14 December 1901: 4a–d.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thomas Crellin. "[To the Editor] A Plea for the Revival of True Manx Brotherhood." *Peel City Guardian* 28 December 1901: [1]d.

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### REPORTS

#### I. A PLEA FOR THE REVIVAL OF THE CELTIC LANGUAGES, PEEL CITY GUARDIAN (7 DECEMBER 1901)

The above was the title of the paper read at a literary meeting of the Peel Wesley Guild on Monday evening. Miss Joughin contributed the paper, the Rev J. Duncan Percy took the chair, and the members turned up in good force. The Chairman, in introducing the essayist, alluded to the fact that the members met for the first time in the vestry since it had been transformed into the "Guild parlour." The room was not complete, but there was an indication of what might be expected. It was fitting that Miss Joughin should be connected with the opening meeting in the parlour, since it is largely to her efforts that the cleaning and beautifying of the room were due. Miss Joughin's paper was one of exceptional merit, its chaste English, its felicitous excerpts, its delightful delivery, being, as one speaker suggested, the most potent answer to her "plea." We hope to print Miss Joughin's paper *in extenso* next week. A very animated discussion followed the reading of the paper, in which the following took part: Miss Dodd and Mr C.R. Shimmin (responsible critics), Mr J. Caine, Mr T. Kelly, Mr E. Quayle (San Francisco), Mr W.J.C. Joughin, Mr T. Quirk, Mr Hoyle, Miss O. Joughin, and the Chairman. Opinion seemed fairly divided on the desirability of resuscitating the mother tongue, and the opposition aroused the Celtic fire of the essayist, who, in the course of her reply exclaimed to the (to her)

unpatriotic objectors, “Out upon you, you poltroons.”—Next Monday Mr A. Hough, of Douglas will read a paper entitled, “The influence of scepticism upon character.”

“A Plea for the Revival of the Celtic Languages’.” *Peel City Guardian* 7 December 1901: [1]d.

**2. A PLEA FOR THE REVIVAL OF THE CELTIC LANGUAGES, ISLE OF MAN TIMES (7 DECEMBER 1901)**

“A Plea for the Revival of the Celtic Languages” was the subject of an eloquent paper read by Miss Joughin at the literary meeting of the Peel Wesley Guild on Monday. The essayist was very earnest in pleading for the inculcation of Manx. An animated discussion followed, the majority of the speakers being against the general revival of Manx. Those, who took part were Mr C.R. Shimmin, Miss Dodd, Mr J. Caine, Mr T. Kelly, Mr E. Quayle, Mr T. Quirk, Mr W.C. Joughin, Mr Hoyle, Miss O. Joughin, and the Chairman (Rev. J.D. Percy).

“[Peel] ‘A Plea for...’.” *Isle of Man Times* 7 December 1901: 6f.

**MISS JOUGHIN’S LECTURE**

**3. “THE CELTIC LANGUAGES: A PLEA FOR THE REVIVAL,” PEEL CITY GUARDIAN (14 DECEMBER 1901)**

[4a] At a literary meeting of the Peel Wesley Guild held on Monday evening, December 2nd, a large number of members gathered to hear a paper by Miss Joughin bearing the attractive title “A Plea for the Revival of the Celtic Languages.” The Rev J. Duncan Percy presided.

Miss Joughin’s paper was as follows:

There seems to exist a misconception in the minds of many people of what is really meant by the Celtic language movement. Like all new movements, it is viewed by the great majority with varied feelings of indifference, suspicion, and even ridicule. But these feelings may be broken down by patient instruction if only a few will lend an inquiring mind. And it is to these few I would address my paper this evening, in the hope that if I can only succeed in convincing them, there will go from this class a leavening influence which will slowly spread, and bring about the revival which is so much desired.

Though I shall have of necessity to appeal more to the sentiments than to the reason in this paper, I shall yet try to be as concrete and practical as my subject will allow. For, to my mind, apart from patriotic motives, there are many reasons why one should earnestly wish for the Celtic languages to be again studied and spoken. One of the mistaken notions, which should at the very outset be dispelled, is that we are to give up altogether the use of English in favour of the mother tongue. No such idea has ever been thought of, even by the wildest dreamer of the Gaelic League. The

more languages we know the better, and to relinquish English, even if we could, would be altogether impracticable. What is most ardently wished is that we should become a bi-lingual nation, that is, a nation speaking two languages, like the Welsh, Swiss, Belgians, Bretons, and others; that English should be used for, say, scientific and commercial purposes, and our native tongue in social intercourse and literature, and politics would probably be bi-lingual.

This knowledge and use of two languages would in itself be a great step towards general culture. Those who have even a slight acquaintance with a foreign language know what a gain it is in every way. Think how it enriches one's vocabulary, and gives flexibility of expression! The great art in speaking and writing is, we know, to use the word which will exactly express the shade of our meaning, and convey the truest impression. As the artist selects his colours, so does the educated man his words, and nothing helps us more to cultivate a strong facile style, or to get the fullest meaning of a classic, than the power which comes from studying other vocabularies than our own. If there is anyone in the room this evening who reads his or her Bible in Manx as well as English, they will feel, I think, the force of what I say.

Then we know that next to actual intercourse with other nations, nothing enlarges our mental vision like reading its literature. We islanders, who are separated from other countries by that greatest of all barriers—the sea, are in danger of becoming hide-bound, and forming wrong values of life and conduct. By continually looking at truth from one point of view, we lose sight of its proportions. So it behoves us to read as much as we can the best writings of other peoples, to get right inside their hearts as it were—to feel that though they are vastly different from us in speech and temperament and habit, yet at the bottom their pulse beats as true as ours, their motive is as pure, and their longings and strivings quite as sincere. This will beget a love and tolerance which will not only fill us with hope for others, but re-act in our judgments of those about us. Let me give a thought of our own Tom Brown in support of this:

"To me the learning of any blessed thing is a matter of little moment. Greek is not learned by nineteen-twentieths of our public schoolboys. But it is a baptism into a cult, a faith not more irrational than other faiths or cults, the baptism of a regeneration which releases us from I know not what original sin. And if a man does not see that, he is a fool—such a fool that I shouldn't wonder if he gravely asked me to explain what I mean by original sin in such a connection."

If all this is true of the study of a classic or a foreign language, how much more does it apply to the study of our own? The Celtic languages to begin with are infinitely richer in colloquial words than English, French, Italian, and many other Continental languages. For instance, I have been told that for one word to express the affections in English, there are ten in Manx, and this is true of its general expressiveness. Mr Dillon, in a Parliamentary speech on the Irish language question last year, said that a German professor of Irish who recently spent a few weeks in the

Aran Islands, off the coast of Galway, had recorded that he took down 4,000 Irish words used by the peasantry in their every-day life. He ventured to say that the vocabulary of the peasantry of Kent or Somerset did not exceed 500 words. Again, there are present day writers who feel that English as a literary language is being played out. Some months ago I read in the *Pall Mall Magazine* an interview with George Moore—the English Zola, as he has been called. His frank opinion was that English has been so battered by millions of newspapers, and over-worn by numberless journalists, that it was hopeless to form a pure academic style. Since then he has gone back to Ireland, his native country, for the express purpose of learning Irish and writing in a language which still retains its virile simplicity and has a literature cleaner than any in Europe. One of the objections raised against the revival of Manx is that it has no literature. Beyond a fragment of an epic poem of merit, and some ballads, we have not yet produced much more, the probable reason for which I shall discuss later on. But we must remember that if there is a leanness of Manx literature, the whole field of Celtic literature is most prolific, and of great interest and value.

At the recent Pan-Celtic Congress, Professor Kuno Meyer, of the Liverpool University, stated: “It may be said that the public at large is at last beginning to realise that there is such a thing as a large and ancient and important literature in Irish and Welsh, of which a mere fraction only has been published; that there is here a vast field of research waiting for workers; that for the history of mediæval literature, for the history of these islands, for the history of early Western Christianity—that literature is of the utmost value and importance; that indeed such histories cannot be written until all the matter that this literature furnishes are before them in critical editions.” At the same Congress, Professor Zimmer, perhaps the first Celtologist in the world, said: “There is in modern times no literature more beautiful than the modern Celtic literature; taut there must, be something done to make known this literature to the Celt himself, and to make the people on the Continent aware of its existence.” The greatest living folk-lorist, too, Alfred Nutt, in a letter to the *Dublin Express* of March, 1899, writes: “The Irish parent may make himself perfectly easy. His children stand far less chance of injury to their morals in studying Irish than in studying any other language.” But what is most characteristic in the literature of Ireland is her legends. Everyone knows they are the most beautiful in the world; they have a delicateness and spirituality surpassing any other. Perhaps we are scarcely conscious of what the Celtic literature of Ireland alone has done for the literature of other countries. For when the Saxon tongue was yet in barbarism, Ireland had a vigorous school of learning, which quickened and permeated the best literature in Europe. Dr Sigerson and other writers consider this early literature to be the “Mother of literatures.” Matthew Arnold, the first modern English critic, holds that it gave to English literature its three distinctive gifts—“its turn for style, its turn for melancholy, and its turn for natural magic.” Professor Morley admits that the study

of English literature "begins with the Gael," and adds that but for the influence of early Irish literature, England would not have produced a Shakespeare. And this influence has been felt right down to our own days, for was not Tennyson inspired by the old Celtic legends to reproduce them in his "Idylls of the King?"

The value of Celtic study to the philologist, to the professor of languages need scarcely be [4b] more than touched on here. So strongly are, the younger scholars impressed with its usefulness that numbers in Germany, Scandinavia, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, United States, etc., are devoting attention to it, and the number—both native and foreign—is constantly increasing.

Its antiquity, and pure, uncorrupted form makes it of equal value with Sanscrit in tracing the beginnings and developments of the great languages of the world. Is it not a matter of reproach that the Germans are so alive to its importance that they have just lately established a Celtic chair at Berlin University, while amongst all the Celtic nations there is not yet one! So that our own fellow-countryman, Mr E.C. Quiggin, recently made a fellow of his college at Cambridge, and who has had the degree of Doctor of Languages conferred upon him, has been obliged to go to a foreign country to further the study of his own hereditary tongue!

Dr St Clair Boyd, of Belfast, in a statement laid before the Intermediate Education Commission, said that "Apart from its philological and literary value, Irish possesses an educational value superior to that of either French or German, and for this reason alone it should receive more recognition than either of these tongues. The construction of Irish and its modes of thought are so entirely dissimilar to those of English, that the exercise of thinking and writing in both languages is a mental training of the highest character."

But after all, these are but the "dry bones" of my argument. Before I can clothe it with flesh and breathe into it a living spirit, I feel I must appeal not only to your head but to your heart: to those pure sentiments which lie at the bottom of us, and make our pulses beat to high resolve and noble action.

Every nation from the beginning of time has been sensible how essential it is to generate and foster, especially in the youth of its country,

#### THE SPIRIT OF PATRIOTISM

—that spirit which knits them together for the common weal. Without it a nation is not a nation, but a mere collection of individuals, each working for its own ends. To lose the spirit of patriotism is to drift slowly but surely into disintegration and absorption. A nation must be welded together by "a common tradition, a common history, a common language, a common literature, common institutions. common sorrows, common joys, common hopes, and common aspirations." To preserve these elements should be the first care of a nation. How careful our forefathers were to instruct their youth in the history and traditions of their country! Through the tongue, the saga, the epic, they infused their hearts and minds with an ardour and passionate admiration of the heroic deeds of their ancestors. Set on fire by hearing

and reading them, reformers, statesmen, soldiers arose in turn to achieve great things for their generation. It is important, too, to remember that literature breeds literature, and that the highest man, the poet, the idealist, is begotten by contemplation of the best thoughts of the past.

Tom Brown thought that one of the reasons for the paucity of song writing in our Island was the want of a Bardic Class, “and the loyal or feudal traditions which could foster such a class. Hence,” he says, “the total lack of that stimulus which had so much to do with the literature of the Border Ballads, the football position of the Island, kicked about from Celt to Norseman, from English to Scot ... must have affected the language as well as the temper and spirit of the people.”

It follows, then, that if we cut our youth adrift from past history and literature, and if we substitute a foreign tongue for their native shibboleth, we dam the flood gates of inspiration and blight the love of the fatherland. May not these facts have something to do with the lack of a high spirit of patriotism amongst us? Why is the average Manx man so proud of being thought English? Why is he so apathetic at elections? Why so pitifully jealous of the advancement of his neighbour? Partly, perhaps, because of his temperament, but largely, I imagine, because his roots are not deep enough in the past.

Further, philologists are now recognising that the language of a people is the surest key to the understanding of them. Words are the thoughts of men crystalised—put into bodily shape, as it were. They are framed and moulded by environment, by custom, by religious belief, etc. So that the construction of them, and the way they used them, put us more than anything else in possession of the caste of mind and habits of thought of our forbears. A language, then, is the “original soul” of a nation, the sum total of the manner of thinking for centuries. Only by it can we be brought into living touch with the spirits of our fathers, only by it can we express the highest and best in us. Nothing is a surer sign of bondage than to lose the mother tongue, and speak the language of an alien. The Dutch have a proverb—“no language, no nation.” A nation robbed of its language may succeed in manufactures and commerce, but the dry rot has set in, and eventually it will lose its individuality.

To a nation its individuality is of the first importance, and should be preserved both for its own sake and for the sake of its influence on other nations. There is no lesson we have learnt more painfully from the past than the uselessness of trying to run human nature into a mould. We cannot hand down our convictions and experiences ready made from one individual to another. Like the air we breathe and the food we eat, they must be assimilated and cast into new forms before they become bone and muscle to the character, and life-giving power to all around. As with an individual, so with a nation. No one nation was ever meant to force its own peculiar creed or custom or language on another, and exact slavish obedience. History has shown us that the results of this are disastrous. “The Spectator” published this year an article on the proposal to ostracize some of the minor

languages, and showed clearly that no good end is served by such action, no national desire crushed, and quoted Ireland as an instance of the folly of such proceedings. I know there are people who think that one particular nation—say England or America—shall gradually subjugate all other nations, and eventually remain mistress of the world to the end of time. But to my mind this is contrary to all established fact. It is a safe rule in reasoning to proceed from the known to the unknown, and from our reading of the past, nations have risen and fallen in succeeding sequence, each having its turn, so to speak, in shaping the world's destiny. And what has been, in the highest probability shall be. If we think a little we shall see that this arrangement of nature is most wise. As I have said before, Truth, to be seen in its full beauty and proportion, must have a variety of lights thrown on it, and no one nation, however great, has the power to shed all. One nation is pre-eminently contemplative, another hard-headed and practical, a third imaginative and artistic, and so on. Each views Truth through the spectacles of its own temperament, and illumines all over whom it has power. Hence it appears absolutely necessary in the economy of things that every nation should have full play, if a true balance is to be preserved in the human race.

There are sane people who hold that England has had its day in the governing of the world. However useful her practical go-ahead nature and clear dogmatic mind have been to reduce the chaos of the world into order, and stimulate her neighbours into healthy activity, she is said to be in danger of falling a prey to her spirit of worldliness and greed. This is, of course, a matter of controversy, but whether it is so or not, I for one have a strong instinctive feeling that the time for the

#### SUPREMACY OF THE CELT

is approaching. I believe seriously that in the air there are signs of a spiritual regeneration which shall stir the nations to their depths, and bring them back to first principles in religion and conduct.

Lloyd Jones once said, in the introduction to a lecture I heard him give on Oliver Cromwell, that our reformers had come from the Celtic fringe round our islands. However far he was right, it is certainly true the Celt is an idealist and a religious. His quick, full imagination, allied with a dreamy nature, makes him turn his thoughts inward on the spirit world rather than outward on the material world. Sympathetic and artistic in his perceptions, he revolts instinctively at things which the less sensitive mind of the Teuton would lead him to do. The Celtic race produces the best soldier and sailor, the great marines, many of the generals, leaders, administrators, [4c] and diplomatists. Here then we have a people of naturally great spirituality and capacity, who, if they would but realise their responsibility, and cultivate their powers, might rise to the highest dignity as a nation, and become the very salt of the earth.

Some may smile at the thought of a people so small and unimportant exercising so potent an influence on the world, but does not history show us that the "greatest

spiritual treasures have come from the smallest peoples?" The Hebrews were little better than a race of rude shepherds, surrounded by nations more highly civilized in every way than they, and yet they have handed down to us truths which have reformed the world. The very names of Greece, Rome, Switzerland, Holland, and Japan, remind us of what a nation, small but united and determined, can effect.

If the points of my paper contain any truth—that is to say, if the cultivation of the Celtic languages means intellectual breadth, the reading of beautiful literature, the formation of a pure style; if it fosters the patriotic spirit, inspires the thinker, breeds new literature; if it means the true understanding of our ancestors and hence the better recognition of our own dormant faculties; if it nourishes the lifeblood of national character, and gives it backbone and distinctiveness, then I call on all Manxmen and Manxwomen here to rouse themselves and preserve their language, and be prepared for what the future may require of them. Only those who are ready can nature use in the great struggle of the world towards perfection. Already there is a stirring of the waters. The five Celtic countries—Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Brittany, and the Isle of Man—are uniting themselves for mutual help and consolidation, and a wave of Celtic learning is slowly spreading over them.

Gallant little Wales! Well would it be if we could follow her energetic example. Less than a century ago the speaking of Welsh was so discouraged that it was the custom to make any boy who spoke the Welsh language in a day school carry a billet of wood on his back as a token of disgrace. And barely thirty years ago the upper classes looked on the learning of Welsh as most unfashionable. But the people rose in determined resistance to save their dying language, and to-day all that is changed. Now, the upper classes take the greatest care in having their children taught the language. And it is not only taught in the schools, but made a grant-earning subject. They have a magnificent literature in Welsh, and upwards of 300 newspapers in their native tongue. "And," as Lord Castletown said at the Congress, "though in Wales every modern attribute exists, the newsboy at Holyhead speaks to his fellow newsboy in his native tongue while he sells you the *Sporting Times* in Saxon."

In face of opposition Ireland, too, is steadily advancing in the revival of her native language and literature. Well-known leaders like Dillon, T.P. O'Connor, and others are fighting the bi-lingual question in Parliament. Classes are being held up and down the country. Celtic newspapers are being circulated, and native airs are finding their way into the concert room. The possibilities of the theatre as a medium of awakening and educating the people have been tried. In October of this year two plays were successfully staged at the Gaiety in Dublin by the Irish Literary Society—one in English by George Moore and W.B. Yeates, based on Celtic legends; the other in Irish, by Dr Hyde.

In the highlands of Scotland the people are taking up the movement with energy and earnestness. Moreover, it is being smiled on by the great, even it is said by Royalty itself. Brittany, too, is not behind the other countries in the revival of her

native tongue. And we on the Island are not lacking in earnest workers. Our patriotic spirit is being touched by men like the Deemster Gill and his brother, and Dr Clague, who have put our national airs in the mouth of the boy in the street. And that most untiring of individuals, Mr A.W. Moore, who has collected our ballads and folk-lore, brought our "worthies" to public notice, written an accurate history of our country, and just lately prepared a school reader which will probably do more to breed a love of the fatherland in the children than anything that has been written within the present century.

All credit is due to the *Isle of Man Examiner*, which devotes a weekly column to the language. The Manx language, too, is officially recognised by the law of the Island, for we all know an Act of Tynwald cannot become law until it has been proclaimed in Manx on Tynwald Hill.

About three years ago a Manx Language Society was formed to help to keep the language alive, and to encourage the study of it, especially amongst the young. Here is an extract from the last annual report: "Manx belongs to the Goidelic family of the Celtic languages; and Manx fishermen, on hearing Erse and Scotch Gaelic spoken when they are away 'following the herrings,' are able to understand what is said with little difficulty. The use of the language amongst the people has declined grievously of late years, and this has come about from a combination of causes. The elementary schools have ignored it, and children have grown up with a notion that it is old-fashioned, and quite unsuited to the present age. Moreover, at this time, when every branch of knowledge has its fixed money value; when teachers and parents are tempted to encourage most what will pay the best, the native tongue of Man has come to be neglected because 'there is no money in it.' Other forms of learning are courted for the pecuniary advantages that they can offer; the Manx language must be courted, if at all, from pure, disinterested love. It is easy to understand, therefore, that those who have kept up their knowledge of Manx are enthusiastic in their love, for that love is quite free from any sordid motives." And further. "There can be no doubt that Manx people are beginning to take more interest than formerly in all matters connected with their Island. For instance, Manx music is heard far more often now than used to be the case; and we may reasonably expect to find at the next census a larger proportion of the people able to speak Manx."

Although there is a distinct note of hope in the foregoing quotations, yet our indifference is still extreme. The classes held in the various towns have had the barest show of interest taken in them. Certainly this has been largely due to the want of a suitable textbook, though this obstacle has not kept back the earnest spirits amongst us. I know of two persons at least in Peel who have gained considerable headway in writing and speaking Manx, and further, by their perseverance have helped to publish an admirable text-book, written by our own townsman, Mr Goodwin. I take it as a favourable circumstance that as I am reading this paper the book has arrived fresh from the publisher's hands.

It may be argued that my appeal has been directed more to the sentiment than the reason but, after all, true reform begins at the heart. I am no visionary, yet I foresee several practical results which might reasonably follow a serious revival of our mother tongue. The rising generation, drinking in an atmosphere of Celtic lore, with the stream of thought set free from the restrictions of a foreign tongue, and allowed to run in the natural channels of this temperament, might break forth in song and story, as has been the case in other countries. This will evolve the political reformer who with, heart and brain aglow with love for the fatherland, will press the needs and claims of his countrymen.

If all were knit together by the language of the soil, the common weal would become a united thought; our native industries would be more encouraged and expanded. We have one at least which is peculiar to our Island. Our native serges and homespuns are as distinctive and beautiful as the famous Harris Tweed, which of late years has brought prosperity to whole districts of Scotland. What is to prevent our doing the same with our woollen manufactures? We are learning again and again how the proper encouragement of one industry is literally transforming a country. I feel strongly that if they were more enterprisingly pushed and assisted by Government we would make as great a name for ourselves and bring as much money to our shores as Denmark, say, has by the development of its butter making.

Would that I could this evening excite a band of men and women, however small, to earnest, devoted study of the language of their fathers, and to the building up of national life and character amongst us! We are perhaps in more, danger of becoming absorbed by the Sassenach than any of our Celtic neighbours. [4d] We have arrived at a critical period in our history. Those who speak the language and hold it as a precious possession are dying out, and a generation who knows it not are taking their place. In all probability the next dozen years will decide whether we continue a distinctive people or become as an English county. Truly English we never can be.

#### THE CELT CAN NEVER BECOME A SAXON

The roots of his character, as we have seen, are widely different. A hundred things in him forbid it. Shall the young men and young women of our free little Island be content to grow into a nondescript, colourless hybrid, a mere imitator of English ways and manners, a thing without soul or marrow, scorned even by those who master and absorb us? Shall we tamely allow the Sassenach to spoil the peace of our Sabbaths, corrupt the simplicity of our habits, and make our sacred little Isle a huge bear-garden? God forbid!

Let the last words of my paper be from the mouth of one of Mona's greatest sons and patriots. Lecturing on Manx proverbs years ago, Tom Brown said "he loved and respected his language.... though now neglected and almost forgotten, he would boldly assert that it was a fine old language, rich and musical, full of meaning and expression.... Manxmen, therefore, might be justly proud of it.... They should remember that in this old language their forefathers had prayed and preached, traded

and bargained, bought and sold; in this old language they had rejoiced and mourned; in this old language the young people had made love under the trammon tree, while the old people sat chatting in the same old language by the cosy fireside. Manxmen ought, therefore to take a deep interest in this their native language, rendered doubly dear to them by so many happy associations; and none could help regretting that a language so strong and forcible, so rife with living power, should now be so far dead and gone that if it was uttered in a congregation of our townsmen it would, to a majority of them, be an unintelligent jargon, an unmeaning conglomeration of sounds."

Miss Joughin's reading was excellent, and she caught and retained to the finish the interest of her hearers. An animated discussion followed the paper, the speakers being about evenly divided in opinion on the desirability of reviving the speech of their forefathers. Those taking part were Miss Dodd, Miss O. Joughin, Messrs C. R. Shimmin, J. Caine, T. Kelly, E. Quayle (San Francisco), W.J.C. Joughin, T. Quirk, J.E. Hoyle, and the chairman.

"The Celtic Languages: A Plea for the Revival." *Peel City Guardian* 14 December 1901: 4a-d.

#### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

4. THOMAS CRELLIN, [LETTER TO THE EDITOR] "A PLEA FOR THE REVIVAL OF TRUE MANX BROTHERHOOD," PEEL CITY GUARDIAN (28 DECEMBER 1901)

DEAR SIR,—Allow me to congratulate Miss Joughin on her exceedingly able and patriotic essay, "A plea for the revival of the Celtic languages." May this gifted lady be long spared to advance that side of truth which she has so cleverly espoused. I regret that as a Manxman I cannot discourse or write upon the merits of the Celtic language. I attribute my ignorance largely to a lack of perception, and an overabundance of sensitiveness—afraid to imitate others who spoke the mother tongue, owing to a dread of being laughed at for making blunders. Yet, making mistakes must be a part, ere we reach proficiency. I think had I lived in your midst now, seeing there are so many more facilities for learners than in my early days, I would have made up some of these deficiencies. There are many beautiful ideas interwoven in her paper, which contains the germ of subjects which would be worth the while of some of our leading countrymen to lay to heart—to propound—and for all true Manxmen to carry into practical effect. How strikingly true are her words—"We islanders who are separated from other countries by the greatest of all barriers—the sea—are in danger of becoming hide-bound and forming a wrong value of life and conduct. By continually looking at truth from one point of view we lose sight of its proportions." The question is also asked, "Why is the average Manxman so pitifully jealous of the advancement of his neighbour?" What a train of thoughts are conjured as we apply these truths to our own loved Island Home. This pitiful

jealousy, how many forms it takes! One form sadly too prevalent is that which is a lasting reproach—what Manxmen call, “taking the law of you,” rushing into law-courts, neighbour pitted against neighbour; this, too, very often over the most trifling disputes. Going to law is much like going to war (apart from the bloodshed), not only does it mean great loss of time and money, but enmities are created that abide in families for generations. One surrounded and brought up with this state of things becomes familiarised, so that his moral susceptibilities are blunted. True even in this, we want to see ourselves as others see us. If we look in the mirror of comparison it sometimes does us good. Remembering that we are but a small people—or nation, so styled—the entire population not being that of a sixth rate town of England, yet lawyers are six to one in proportion to numbers as compared to other portions of the United Kingdom. Lawyers in their turn are but the effects of a cause—a supply created by a demand—and that demand largely arising out of ail that which belongs to our lower nature—jealousy, enmity and strife. What will the harvest be? “As ye sow, ye reap,” is true of more than one thing. Judging from my own days spent in the Isle of Man I think that part of these defects in our national life is owing to undue stress being placed upon one side of truth, while another—the practical side—is too often neglected. Salvation by Faith has been sounded throughout the Island as perhaps in no other part of His Majesty’s dominions, but Reformation by works and practical deeds is too seldom touched upon; yet one should be the outcome of the other. How necessary that we should be taught over and over again that unless we love our fellows we can never truly love our Maker. Reformation and progress in doing good must, if the faith be genuine, supplement, but not supersede, faith. If men, instead of going to law or consulting lawyers, were to meet each other in a frank and manly way and talk over their differences quite one half of the lawsuits might be avoided. In case of not getting satisfaction by this elementary stage, if they agreed to call in some friends in whom they both had confidence I think that by these methods quite four-fifths of all disputes could be amicably arranged. Some people may say they knew all this before, but alas for many of us we fail to remember, and require to have our memories often refreshed; or if not, why need we have so many ministers and preachers? The greater part of these good men’s vocation is to repeat over and over again that which we already know. Only my own experience tells me there has been a lack of enforcing the practical side of Christianity—“Man’s duty to his fellow.” Just here an extract from Miss Joughin’s paper fits in very nicely, “Words are the thought of man crystalised, put into bodily shape as it were. They are framed and nourished by environment, by custom, by religious belief, etc.” The press, ministers, preachers, and school teachers are of all others those who have most influence in forming and shaping our destinies by their crystalised thought, giving us either a true or false conception of life. To these and all who love our native land I appeal—that we must be reminded over and over again of the necessity of enforcing that new yet old commandment, “That we love one

another"—the sequel of which is, in honour preferring one another, which is the exact opposite of pitiful jealousy, if I have in any way hurt the susceptibilities of any of your readers, I ask their pardon. Whatever motives may be assigned to me for what I have written, I plead no other excuse than love for my fatherland. That it may prosper, that Mannin's sons and daughters may be true to one another; that they may be bound and knit together by the bonds of truest patriotism and may a holier tie than even patriotism encircle her sons and daughters in our dear old Ellan Vannin and in the islands beyond the seas. May we once more catch the true meaning of that which most of us were taught at our mother's knees—"Our Father," which in its turn must mean, "And all we are brethren." Let us act accordingly.

Yours truly,

THOS. CRELLIN,  
Harrington,  
December 10th.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2017

