

Manx Notes 368 (2019)

“A JOHANNESBURG MANX POET”

(1908)

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A JOHANNESBURG MANX POET

(To the Editor of “Mona’s Herald.”)

SIR—A friend has handed me the following verses for my opinion concerning them. As I am not a poet and know little or nothing about poetry, I take the liberty of forwarding them on to the Editor of “Mona’s Herald” for publication in that journal. I believe it to be a fact that Editors as a rule do not go in for poetry and do not care very much about it, so we may take it for granted its no use bothering the Editor of this journal for an expression of his opinion concerning the validity of the poem. Moreover, independent of Editors, I believe innumerable poets of varied degrees of affluency have recently appeared in Manxland, and in all probability they may be better qualified in this case to offer a critique. Whilst not accepting the responsibility of being a poet myself, if I may be allowed to venture an opinion of the poetry in question, I should like to say that the alleged poem is a very entertaining and good one in its own peculiar way. The rhythm and metre appears to be of the complex order, and the author has an excellent historical knowledge of the Isle of Man. His thoughts are pregnant with love for the homeland and its scenery, while the author’s spirit of patriotism is overflowing with eloquent verbosity. I can quite believe that if the author does not achieve to any classical standard of merit in the near future, he may reasonably be expected, provided of course he pursues his studies with indomitable pluck and perseverance to reach a high state of proficiency and merit, if not in this life, in his next incarnation. Now that the hibernating season is on in the Isle of Man, I hope the alleged poem may prove if not educational, at least interesting and amusing to many of your numerous readers. The lines are concocted by Stanley T. Gelling.

A RUMPY MAN

Johannesburg, S.A., Nov. 11, 1907.

MANX NATIVES

When you go to Ellan Vannin, often called the Isle of Man,
To enjoy its present scenery and breeze,
Let me tell you of the natives and the things that you will see,
And the charming little fairies in the trees.
When you’ve visited some farm-house and partaken of Pinjean,
Or smelt the perfume of the cushag in the glen,

You would like to get acquainted with the things that you have seen.
So to tell you of their names I will begin.

CHORUS

When you go to Ellan Vannin,
Often called the Isle of Man,
To enjoy its pleasant scenery and breeze,
Let me tell you of the places
And the things that you will see.
And the charming little fairies in the trees.

The Phynodderree of Rushen, and its mate of Lherghy Gawne,
Are two natives of this lovely Isle,
Make a point to see Peel Castle, and its famous Mauthe Dhoo,
But the fairies of West Baldwin do not rile.
Up at Tholt-e-Will you'll meet them, and again at Farran Fing,
But the Lhannan Shee you'll meet at Chybbey Rhoon;
There's the spirit of Silieuwhallen, and the ghost of Tom Alone,
And the funeral that's never seen at noon.
There's the Ben-beg-bogh of Gharraghin, with the ancient spinning wheel,
The Dhooney Ooie of Blaaba with his spade;
The Shaan Faa you'll meet at Injebreck, he has broke his Clogan Creel;
See the pretty little Glaisthan in the glade.
Go to Loughan-e-Yeigh for witches, to Poortown for Nan Wade,
The Round Table upon Cronk-yn-Irrie-Lhaa.
See the hump on Ballaterson, worth the whole of Balladoole,
As the mermaid told the fisherman, they say.
See the scabby rocks of Greeba, where the eagle made her nest, the Buggane that
broke the church at Kirk Marown.
See our dreadful Tharroo-ustha down at Bawshen in the Rheast.
And the child behind Peel Hill without a name.
Have a look at Castle Rushen, take a view from Bradda Head,
See the Thorra that came to Oatland with the whale.
Mind the teeth of Gob-e-Diggan, see Keys on Tynwald Hill,
And the Sharragh Vane you'll meet at Druidale.
See the ivy caves at Garwick, and the Oagh at Snuff-the-Wind,
See St Patrick's Well in Maughold by the shore.
There's King Orry's grave in Laxey, see his legs upon the wheel;
See the chasms near the Sound, if nothing more.
Now, I've told you of the natives you will see on Mona's Isle,
Of the things that you will see as you pass by;

From Port Cranstal to the Chickens, you will meet them every mile,
So I'll take my leave and bid you all good bye.

STANLEY T. GELLING

Pseud [signed as "A Rumpy Man"]. "[Correspondence] A Johannesburg Manx Poet." *Mona's Herald* 8 January 1908: 4g.

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"The rhythm and metre appears to be of the complex order, and the author has an excellent historical knowledge of the Isle of Man." It is left to others to consider the first point while the interest here is the "historical knowledge" (*ie*, folklore) mentioned, such as the mention of the "[G]host of Tom Alone," and what can be picked out in a number of the lines, "There's the Ben-beg-bogh of Gharraghin, with the ancient spinning wheel," "The Dhooney Ooic of Blaaba with his spade," and "The Shaan Faa you'll meet at Injebreck, he has broke his Clogan Creel." Such pieces are always found it seems by accident when working on another topic.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2019

