

Manx Notes 453 (2020)

THE MANX NATIONAL ANTHEM

“TO THE EDITOR”
PEEL CITY GUARDIAN
(6 APRIL 1907)

(1)

DEAR SIR,—One of the chief points of interest in the recent Guild Music Competitions was the production of a Manx National Anthem, composed by the justly honoured Mr W.H. Gill, of Abingdon, author of *Manx [National] Songs*. May I ask, sir, what is the particular quality in a poem or song which makes it “national?” And what authority makes it “national?”! I may say I am not asking this in a disparaging spirit, but only out of curiosity. Would not any person be entitled to write a patriotic and loyal song and call it national? I notice that Lady Raglan, the estimable wife of our Lieut.-Governor, has extended her patronage to Mr Gill’s anthem, but I am not aware that any national authority has as yet recognised it as such. Certainly with its own inherent merits and the great weight of Mrs Laughton’s influence it stands a very high chance of popularity, and of eventual adoption by the Manx people. If it is, however, to have the approbation of the Manx public, some authority should say that it possesses all the essentials necessary to justify it being styled “a national anthem”; that it tends to inculcate a love of loyalty, liberty, country, and home. Our new national anthem is declared by Mr Gill to be suggested from Mylecharane, and of course anyone listening to the tune is made fully aware of this. But why should Mylecharane be selected as the basis of a new national anthem? The sentiment of the original Mylecharane was weak, if not silly, and the music pitifully weird and mournful. A national anthem should be inspiring, stately, rousing. In my opinion the proper procedure to follow, in providing a national anthem for our little country, would have been to have offered a prize for the best national song fulfilling requirements set out by the Guild Committee, and the best sent in adopted.

Probably many a writer in the past has been trying his hand at composing a national anthem, and in the course of my reading the other day I discovered that in the *Rising Sun*, published December 7, 1824, there appeared a very able national song by an author writing under the nom de plume of “Philemona”—a Manxman, born in Douglas, and whose forefathers flourished in the Island, and it is possible that this letter of mine may come to the notice of some descendant of his. It is not known whether “Philemona’s” composition was ever adopted by the populace.

In offering these few stray comments I in no way wish to detract from the undoubted merit of Mr Gill’s praiseworthy anthem, but simply wish to give

expression to what many others in the Island are thinking on the subject.—I am,
yours truly,

T. KELLY.

I append.

Rejoice, sons of Mona, rejoice,
Glad anthems of gratitude raise,
To Him whose omnipotent voice
A boundless creation obeys;

For our's is a fortunate Isle,
Prosperity circles our coasts,
Our mountains like Lebanon smile,
Our defence is "the Lord God of Hosts!"

While war's gory crest has been rear'd.
And treason's dark banner display'd;
While in neigho'ring nations appear a,
Rebellion, with havoc array'd;

O'er Mona, fair Liberty's home,
The standard of Peace has been waving;
As a rock 'mid the billowy foam,
She stood while the whirlwind was raving.

And O, may the storms of ambition
Ne'er desolate Mona with ills;
Nor pestilent fires of sedition
Devastate her nourishing hills!

But still from her altars with joy,
May flames of devotion arise;
May no fell invader destroy
Those comforts which Manxmen should prize!

Here Freedom asserts her blest sway,
Here taxes diminish no stores,
And the Sun of Religion, with ray
Of glory, illumines our shores.

O Thou by whose potent decree,
Kings govern, and counsellors guide,
Vouchsafe, that, directed by Thee,
Our rulers with justice preside!

With blessings our Sovereign crown;
In righteousness 'stablish his throne;
With favour, Jehovah! look down,
And never fair Mona disown!

Then though Babylon, opulent nation,
And Tyre from their summits were hurl'd,
Still Mona shall hold her high station,
The moral, the praise of the world!

T Kelly, “[Letter to the Editor] To the Editor,” *Peel City Guardian* 6 April 1907, [5]b.

(2)

DEAR SIR,—Passing through the Brewery-road the other day my olfactory nerves were saluted with a smell (this is a mild description of it) which almost knocked me over. It reminded me of one of the lines of the new National Anthem, “O Island so strong,” *etc.* May I ask where are the sanitary authorities of German?—Yours, *etc.*,
OLAFFUB.

Pseud [signed as “Olaffub”], “[Letter to the Editor] To the Editor,” *Peel City Guardian* 6 April 1907, [5]b.

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STEPHEN MILLER, RBV

