

Manx Notes 461 (2020)

THE BUGGANE

(I)

“A BUGGANE IN PEEL”

(1873)

[2d] For some some past Peel has become the favourite resort of supposed supernatural beings from the invisible world; and notwithstanding the fact that there is now a compulsory Education Act, many of the inhabitants still persist in believing in the existence of such beings, and consider that they have and do exercise a power over mortals for good or evil. That some persons believe that these creatures to a very great extent control the destinies of human beings will be obvious when we state that some time since, when a house which was said to be haunted by some doleful creature, greatly to the annoyance of the occupiers, two powerful and enlightened men determined to solve the mystery. Before entering on their arduous task, they took the precaution of aiming themselves with weapons, which were pointed with silver, as these beings are considered to be invulnerable to any other metal. These two heroic adventurers fearing lest they should be disappointed [2e] in not seeing the ghost through being late, took care to be at their post a long time before the apparition generally made its appearance. For some time nothing occurred to disturb their vigil, until about midnight, when a slight noise, resembling the crying of a child, was heard in room overhead. These two adventurous heroes (not been quite as courageous as when they entered the house) after several unnecessary delays, ventured upstairs, and after a great deal of fumbling, they contrived to open the chamber door, when to their unutterable terror and dismay an invisible body brushed past them. Being now convinced that they had encountered the ghost, they were thrown into a temporary stupor, from which fortunately they were aroused by a repetition of the noise at the bottom of the stairs. They again mustered sufficient courage to resume the search, and on arriving at the street door they were surprised to find only a domesticated animal of the feline species, which kept up an incessant clamour until it was permitted to depart in peace. Nothing has been seen or heard of this ghost since.

The excitement caused by this ghost has scarcely passed away, until we have been visited by another emissary from his Satanic Majesty. This buggane, however, differs very materially from the one described. Not confining itself to a single house, it rambles throughout the whole town at midnight—between the hours of twelve and two o'clock, terrifying the inhabitants by its unearthly yells. On the night of Thursday, the 2nd inst., it commenced its nocturnal campaign close to the neighbourhood chosen by its predecessor (a locality adjoining the sea). About midnight most mysterious sounds were heard in this quarter. At this hour numbers had retired to rest, and being unable to account for this unusual disturbance, some

more inquisitive than others instantly rose and rushed into the street without paying particular attention to their costume. After listening quietly for some time, the mysterious noises were again heard, but this time in a different quarter of the town. The people at once hastened to the place from whence the strange sounds proceeded, but on their way they were frightened almost to death by hearing the strange noises (as they imagined) in their very midst. The effect produced by this singular circumstance was appalling. Some strong-minded persons instantly swooned, while others, whose previous devotions had been seldom and short, assumed a praying attitude, and in broken accents and with quivering lips addressed some invisible being, whilst the cries of those who still retained possession of their senses were heart-rending in the extreme. The buggane, unheeding their cries, continued its march until it arrived near Athol-place. Here again it gave some most terrific shouts, when one individual, regardless of the remonstrances of his loving spouse, immediately arose, and proceeded to examine the cause of this mystery. He had not, however, proceeded far before the unnatural noise was again heard. This so startled him, that he immediately turned back, and it was with considerable difficulty he regained his own home, where he arrived in such a state that it was a long time before he could give any account of his wanderings. Up to this time the buggane had remained invisible, but it was now pleased to show itself to a respectable mechanic in Douglas-street. This gentleman had been detained up to this late hour in making a coffin, and was returning home, when he beheld some hideous looking object in the street before him. To him it appeared to have two heads, and its four fierce eyes shone like balls of fire, and altogether it was a black, ill-shapen, horrid looking monster. Before he had time to proceed any further with his observations, the Phynnodderee uttered another dreadful roar which echoed throughout the town. The effect was instantaneous. When the coffin-maker again returned to consciousness he was seated in his own house, but how he managed to get there still remains a mystery, even to himself. The Phynnodderee, regardless of the mischief it had already committed, still resumed its march, and continued to parade the town until about two o'clock, a.m., causing the greatest terror and consternation along its route.

On the following day the greatest excitement prevailed throughout the town, the only topic of conversation being the singular events of the preceding night. We understand that a certain person is about taking legal proceedings against some individuals for tying a young Newfoundland dog to a large white goat, and then driving them through the streets on this particular night.

“A Buggane in Peel,” *Mona’s Herald* 11 October 1873, 2d–e.

(2)

“STRANGE, BUT HARDLY TRUE”

(1874)

[5e] A young man, who went on to Peel hill one day last week, states that when he was near Corrin’s Tower he saw an extraordinary creature, about a hundred yards below him, coming up what is known as the “ladder” from the shore. He describes the animal as having the head, ears, and neck of a donkey, the body like that of a sheep, and that it was as big as a two-year old heifer. The youth states that the creature came to the top of the hill, and having followed him a short distance along the top, returned by way of the ladder. The young lad can state nothing further about this buggane, but his story is firmly believed by many in the West.

“[Peel and the West] Strange, but hardly true,” *Isle of Man Times* 2 July 1874, 5c.

(3)

PATRICK SCHOOL CHILDREN AND THE “BOGGANE”

(1895)

[2b] A correspondent in Patrick, whose letter we have not space to give in full, draws attention, for the second time, to the hardships imposed on parents in Patrick, by the enforcement of attendance of children at school. It seems that the two schools of the parish are very inconveniently situated for the bulk of the children. This is a great pity, but there does not seem to be any very practical remedy for it—at any rate, our correspondent does not suggest any. He pleads that in the winter time children who have a long distance to go should be allowed to leave school half-an-hour earlier, as they are afraid of “bogganes,” going home in the dark. This plea deserves sympathy, and, no doubt, if the matter was reported to the schoolmaster, he might be able to do something. Perhaps, however, he sees his little pupils from a distance so seldom that he is loth to part with them. Our correspondent does not put his ideas forward in a very shipshape form. If he has any genuine grievance, he had better lay it before the School Committee, or get someone to do it for him.

“A correspondent in ...,” *Isle of Man Times* 24 December 1895, 2b.

(4)

“REVIVAL OF THE MANX BUGGANES”

(1898)

[5e] We are supposed to live in an enlightened age, but it is not free from silly superstition, and people are yet to be found who have a belief in the existence of fairies, ghosts, bugganes, or witches. Judging from the rumours, founded on fear and imagination, which have been circulated in town this week of the mysterious exploits

of some madcap, one would think that the bugganes had come again. But the stories of the capering of a man, or lunatic in different parts of the town are mythical. Truly, a vagrant named John McDonald has been soliciting help from people on the roads, and he had a way of looking at people in a very stupid manner. However, he has gone to gaol for a fortnight.

“Revival of the Manx Bugganes.” *Ramsey Weekly News* 8 October 1898: [5]e.

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