

Manx Notes 484 (2020)

“MISADVENTURE OF A YOUNG SPARK”

(1880)

A young man, well known by the fair sex, and prominent on our Promenade each evening, met with an accident which, although not attended with any serious consequences, might have resulted fatally. Being of rather a mild disposition, he was induced by a few sharper juveniles to accompany them to the residence of a young lady, on the eve of her wedding, in order to assist in “horning”—an old but disagreeable custom. In order that the crowd might carry on their torturous game without being discovered, they located themselves in a yard behind the house they were besieging. Things went roaringly for a time, until two policemen appeared upon the scene. Instantly the discordant notes ceased, and the crowd made off, all apparently escaping detection except one, who was observed making a daring leap over a wall, beyond which was a brow sloping down to the sea beach. The young and energetic “toff,” however, miscalculated his agility, and having exerted himself above his usual power, found himself (instead of gaining a footing on the top of the brow, close to the wall) rolling down to the roaring billows. He appeared not to have lost his presence of mind, for we are informed when he was found in his perilous condition, he held firmly in his hand the stump of a cigar which he had been smoking. After a little care being bestowed upon him, he was seen returning home, and appeared little the worse for the exploit.

“[Ramsey and the North] Misadventure of a Young Spark.” *Mona’s Herald*
15 December 1880: 5c.

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For further on this custom, see Stephen Miller, “The Exuberant Boys of Ballaugh (1913),” *Ballaugh Heritage Trust Newsletter* 16 (2018), 21–26.

STEPHEN MILLER RBV

