

Manx Notes 626 (2023)

“THE SLEEPY LITTLE VILLAGE OF CREGNEESH”

(1887)

Coming down from Spanish Head there stands, even now, the sleepy little village of Cregneesh [*sic*], where the houses are still thatched with straw, and where until very recently only Manx was spoken. This southernmost village of the island stands amid the Mull Hills, scarcely awakened even yet to the busy life which floods the land every summer. But it is slowly rising from its long slumber. Here we found the traces of the famous Armada. There was a funeral in the village, and the men and women had gathered round the thatched cottage where the Angel of Death had paused. A young man of twenty summers had passed away, dying of consumption, and now the neighbours had come to sorrow with his loved ones and follow his body to the grave. The children of the Sunday school had arrived in straggling procession, and their black dresses brought out a strange aspect observable in their faces. The black eyes and aquiline noses were not those of our northern lands, while the bright red shawls and coloured scarves of the women who lingered at the doorways told of tastes which had their birth in climes beyond the sea. We captured one dark-eyed boy and asked him his name. Had he replied “Pedro, senior,” or “Guillermo” or “Carlos,” it would have sounded quite natural, but he said his name was William, and his Manx accent, with his peculiar mouth, told that it was a long time since the fortunes of war had brought an alien race to share the hospitality of the poor dwellers in Cregneesh. But even though the traditions of that time have well nigh passed away and the rocks and the sea bear no testimony to the shipwreck and disaster which came to the Spanish invaders on that wild coast, yet the dark eyes of the children and the southern skins of many of the villagers, with the name of the towering headland, still preserve impressions of a famous period in the history of our nation.

R. M.

Pseud [initialled as “R. M.”]. “Manx Mementoes.” *Liverpool Mercury* 25
April 1887 5g. [Extract]

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