

Manx Notes 690 (2024)

“THE INSANE OF MONA” (1856)

[3b] Well, the Manx must move and jump with the rest of creation, or lose their senses; but they have no manufactories—no trade—no employment for half their time: what wonder is it, then, that the mind should prey upon itself in seasons of idleness and *ennui*; and for want of the vivifying elements which rouse enterprise, evoke genius and invention—ay, that inspire *labour* of body and mind, they should become hypochondriac, demented, and lunatic? Idleness first clothes the family in rags—the coroner sells the pig, the bed, and the chairs—the children cry for bread, and there is none to give. What remains but that the poor heart-broken mother should run mad; and the father, if he stops at the pot-house for a few weeks, is still on the highway to the same direful catastrophe. Then as to others, not thus withered by poverty and starvation, the very loneliness of some of the dark defiles and mountain passes, where humanity is excluded from intercourse with an active world, is greatly calculated to set the mind a-brooding over fairiology, hobgoblinism, and the wizard tricks of Phynodderree and the Big Bogane; and the dividing line between these and insanity is but of a hair’s breadth. For the health of the machine working in the cranium the mind requires the constant aliment of knowledge, as do the fingers, the hands, and the arms constant employment, to work out the problems originated by invention.

“The Insane of Mona.” *Mona’s Herald* 19 November 1856: [3]a–b.

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