Cregeen's proverbs and sayings

These Manx proverbs and sayings are assembled from Archibald Cregeen, *A Dictionary of the Manx Language...*, Douglas: Quiggin, etc., 1835. The translations are mostly from the edition revised by J. J. Kneen and others, published in 1910, reprinted by Yn Çheshaght Ghailckagh, Ilkley: Moxon Press, 1984. I have revised the capitalization and punctuation, and added cedillas (c), but otherwise left the 1835 spelling unchanged. Nearly all of Cregeen's proverbs and sayings are collected, with some others, and translated, in G. W. Wood's article mentioned in footnote 2 below. The numbers in column 3 below correspond to the numbering in Wood's article. The symbol ~ means that the form of the proverb or saying in Wood is a little different from that in Cregeen. Where the translations differ, those of Kneen et al. are generally superior, though not always. Where Wood's translations seem better, I have included them with the initials GWW. A few translations are my own, indicated with MW.

Max W. Wheeler Ramsey, January 2015

		Wood ²
Caghlaa obbyr aash.	Change of work is rest.	162
Boayl nagh vel aggle cha vel grayse.	Where there's no fear, there's no grace.	72
Ta'n aghaue veg shuyr da'n aghaue vooar.	The little hemlock is a sister to the big hemlock, as much as to say, "A small evil or sin is sister to a great one."	235
Cha row rieau cooid arrit mie.	Offered goods were never good.	~65a*
Ass shilley ass smooinaghtyn.	Out of sight, out of mind.	16
Ny jean balk jeh thalloo mie.	Don't make a baulk out of good earth. MW	198
S'banglaneagh yn phy'agh.	Prolific is the person.	
Quoi erbee s'beayn cha beayn y ç henndiaght.	Whoever is immortal, 'tis not the aged.	50
S'beayn dagh olk.	Lasting is each evil.	82
Myr sloo yn çheshaght, smoo yn ayrn.	The smaller the company, the bigger the share.	113
Ta keeayll ommidjys, ny slooid ny t'ee ec dooinney creeney dy reayll.	Wit is foolishness, unless a wise man has it to keep.	109
Ta ynsagh coamrey stoamey yn dooinney berçhagh, as t'eh berçhys y dooinney boght.	Learning is the stately clothing of the rich man, and the riches of the poor man.	39
Lesh y vioys shegin jannoo.	You must make do with the life you have. MW	~164
Boght, boght dy bragh.	Poor, poor for ever.	146
S'booiagh yn voght er yn veggan.	The poor are contented with little.	149

-

¹ A few necessary additions or corrections are included in []. <> marks elements for deletion.

² Wood, G. W., 'On the classification of proverbs and sayings of the Isle of Man,' *Folk-Lore – A Quarterly Review*, 5 (1894), 237-274. I am very grateful to Christopher Lewin for pointing this publication out to me.

Ta fys ec dy chooilley ghooinney	Every man knows where the shoe	38
c'raad ta'n vraag gortagh eh.	hurts him.	
Eshyn nagh gow rish briw erbee t'eh	He who acknowledges no judge	175
deyrey eh hene.	condemns himself.	
Easht lesh dagh cleaysh, eisht jean	Listen with each ear, then make	8
briwnys.	judgment	
Ta aile meeley jannoo bry millish.	A slow fire makes sweet malt.	61
Ta'n vry erskyn y churnaght.	The malt is above the wheat.	193
T'ad beaghey bwoailley er keyt as	They are living striking on a cat and	~208*
bwoilley er moddey.	striking on a dog, i.e. living a cat-and-	
	dog life.	
T'ou er y varney veayl.	Thou art on the bald gap.	
Cha vel eh laccal gerjagh ta goaill	He lacks not comfort who enjoys a	86
soylley jeh aigney booiagh.	contented mind.	
Ayns brishey jeh'n eayst ta mee er	In the breaking of the moon, I have	191
vakin moghrey grou cur lesh fastyr	seen a gloomy morning bringing a	
aalin.	fine evening.	
Soddag chamm, bolg jeeragh.	Crooked bannock, straight belly.	14
Ta fuill ny s'çhee na ushtey.	Blood is thicker than water.	5
Bwoaill choud as ta'n yiarn çheh.	Strike while the iron is hot.	194
Brishys accyrys trooid boallaghyn	Hunger will break through stone	47
cloaie.	walls.	.,
Cha jarg oo dty choayl y chreck.	You cannot sell your loss.	117
Mannagh vow cliaghtey cliaghtey,	If custom be not indulged with	56
nee cliaghtey coe.	custom, custom will weep.	
Commee obbyr, commee bee.	Partner in work, partner in food.	33
Coontey ny heïn roish ta ny hoohyn	Counting the chickens before the eggs	222
guirt.	are hatched.	
Cha dooar rieau drogh veaynee	A bad reaper never got a good sickle.	199
corran mie.	Ti bud reaper never got a good stekie.	1,7,7
T'ad craa nyn moyrn er y ch[ei]lley.	They are shaking their pride on each	100
T da craa nyn moyrn er y en[er]ney.	other.	100
Cre yiow jeh'n chayt agh y	What will you get of the cat but the	209
chrackan?	skin?	20)
Faggys ta my lheiney, agh ny	Near is my shirt, but nearer is my	1
sniessey ta my thethey, agn ny	skin.	1
Share cragh ve sy cheer, na mee ny	Destruction in the country is better	158
mannan çheet stiagh meein.	than the month of the kids (March)	130
mantan çneet stagn meetn.	coming in fair.	
Eshyn yiow skeilley, yiow eh craid.	He who receives harm shall receive	95
Estiya yiow skettiey, yiow en crata.	mockery (be mocked).	
Ta craplag smoo ayns dty hoyn nish	There is a bigger wrinkle in your	2
na va ro'ee.	breech than there was before.	
Myr sniessey da'n chraue s'miljey yn	The nearer the bone, the sweeter the	28
eill.	flesh.	
	A kind heart is better than a crafty	7
Ta cree dooie ny share na kione	A KING DEAD IS DEDECTION A COMM	

Meeyl chreen: Dy beagh ee er e bolg	[Ringworm:] if it were on its belly as	45
myr t'ee er e dreeym,	it is on its back, many a son of man	
Shimmey mac dooinney yinnagh ee	would it do over the stile.	
harrish y cheym.		
Ta dooinney creeney mennick jannoo	A wise man often makes a friend of	108
carrey jeh e noid.	his enemy.	
Myr smoo siyr smoo cumrail.	More haste, more hindrance. MW	105
Ta airh er cushagyn ayns shen.	There is gold on cushags there.	145
Myr s'doo yn feeagh, yiow eh	As black as the raven is, he'll find a	134
sheshey.	mate.	
Hig daill gys eeck.	Credit will come to payment.	118
Cha stamp rieau yn dow doo er e	The black ox never trod on his foot.	210
chass.		
Moyll y droghad myr heu harrish.	Praise the bridge as you go over it.	205
Daa ghrogh eeck t'ayn: geeck	There are two bad pays: paying	120
rolaue, as dyn geeck edyr.	beforehand, and not paying at all.	
Cha vel fer erbee cha bouyr as eshyn	None is so deaf as he who will not	17
nagh jean clashtyn.	hear.	
Un eam gys bee, as jees gys obbyr.	One call to food and two to work.	25
Eddyr daa stoyl ta toyn er laare.	Betwixt two stools the breech is on	23
	the floor.	
Ta bee eeit jarroodit.	Eaten food is forgotten.	26
Ta'n yeean myr e ghooie my vel	The chick is like his kind before there	139
clooie er e chione.	are feathers on his head.	
Geeck cabbyl marroo.	Paying a dead horse.	121
Cha nee yn wooa smoo eieys smoo	It is not the cow that calls most that	204
vlieaunys.	gives the most milk.	
Cha n'eig yn choo ta caaee ny hoyn.	The greyhound is not sluggish which	213
	has seeds in its posterior. G.W. Wood	
Cha dennee rieau yn soogh y shang.	The well-fed never felt like the ill-fed.	48
Roshee daill y dorrys.	Credit will reach the door.	119
Ny three geayghyn s'feayrey dennee	The three coldest winds that Finn	186
Fion Mc Cooil: geay henneu, as geay	McCooil felt: thaw wind, wind	
huill, as geay fo ny shiauill.	through holes, and wind under the	
	sails.	
Cur meer da'n feeagh as hig eh	Give a piece to the raven and he'll	151
reeisht.	come again.	
Faaid mooar moaney son oie'l	A big sod of turf for St Thomas's eve.	208
fingan.		
Foddee yn moddey s'jerree tayrtyn y	The last dog may catch the hare. MW	62
mwaagh.		
Siyn folmey smoo sheean nee.	Empty vessels make the most sound.	124
Ta fooillagh naareydagh ny smelley	Shameful leaving is worse than	27
na ee scammyltagh.	disgraceful eating.	
Cha bee breagerey credit, ga dy	A liar will not be believed, though he	89
ninsh eh y n'irriney.	speak the truth.	
Surree eh yn flout, my yiow eh yn	He'll suffer the taunt if he gets the	96
glout.	lump.	

Tra ta'n gheay sy villey yiow shiu magh yn ghlass-ghuilley.	When the wind is in the tree you will get the lockman.	173
Freayl y craue glass.	Keeping the bone green.	3
Gien nonney gortey.	Either a feast or a famine.	29
S'giare y jough na yn skeeal.	Shorter is the drink than the story.	31
Cha daink lesh y gheay, nagh ragh	Nothing came with the wind but what	177
lesh yn ushtey.	would go with the water.	-,,
Eshyn nagh bee mie rish e gharran,	He who will not be good to his pony	99
shegin da'n phollan y chur lesh er e	must bring the saddle cloth on his	
vuin.	back.	
Gow coyrl bleb son keayrt.	Take a fool's advice for once.	110
Gowee bleb rish e voylley as cha	A fool will acknowledge his praise,	~111
gow dooinney creeney rish e	and a wise man will not [sic]	
phlaiynt.	acknowledge his complaint.	
Cha jagh moylley ghooinney hene	A man's praise for himself never went	103*
rieau foddey voish e ghorrys.	far from his door.	
Cha jean un ghollan-geayee sourey,	One swallow will not make summer,	188
ny un chellagh keylley geurey.	nor one woodcock winter.	
Ta greme ayns traa cooie sauail nuy.	A stitch in time saves nine.	163
My ta'n ghrian jiarg tra girree	If the sun is red when it rises, you	178
<t>eh, foddee shiu jerkal rish</t>	may expect rain.	
fliaghey.		
Cha vel sonnys gonnys.	Store is no sore.	142
Haghyr eh ny share na hiollee eh.	It happened better than it might have	~78
	been.	
Oie-innyd bee dty volg lane;	On Shrove Tuesday (the eve of the	37
My jig laa Caisht yiow traast son	fast) thy belly shall be full; before	
shen.	Easter day comes thou shalt fast for	
	that.	
Nagh insh dou cre va mee, agh insh	Do not tell me what I was, but tell me	73
dou cre ta mee.	what I am.	
Eshyn lhieys marish moddee, irrys eh	He who lies with dogs will rise with	67
marish jarganyn.	fleas.	
Lhig da'n innagh lhie er y chione	Let the woof lie at the last end.	192
s'jerree.		
Ta eayst Harn sy Vayrnt dy liooar	A Saturday's moon in March is	179
ayns shiaght bleeaney.	enough for seven years.	
Jean traagh choud as ta'n ghrian	Make hay while the sun shines.	201
soilshean.	-	
Keeayl chionnit yn cheeayl share,	Bought wit is the best wit, if it be not	107
mannagh vel ee kionnit ro gheyr.	bought too dear.	
Kione mooar er y veggan cheilley, as	A big head on the little (of wits), and	21
kione beg gyn veg edyr. Towse	a little head with none at all. Measure	
cheilley rish.	sense with it.	
Ec kione nyn geiley.	At their wits end.	
Cha boght as lugh killagh.	As poor as a church mouse	147
Clagh ny killagh ayns kione dty hie	A stone of the church be in thy big	127
wooar.	house, i.e., the kitchen.	

Three kegeeshyn dy chegeeshyn	Three fortnights of fortnights whole;	240
slane, Ta voish laa'l Thomys sy Nollick gys laa'l Breeshey bane.	these are from St. Thomas' Day in Christmas to White St. Bridget's Day.	
My ta keim sy laair, bee keim sy [l]hiy.	If there is an amble in the mare, there will be an amble in the colt.	138
Kiangle myr noid, as yiow myr carrey.	Bind as an enemy, and you will have as a friend.	123
Sheeu kishan dy yoan Mayrnt maaill bleeaney Vannin.	A peck of March dust is worth a year's rent of Man.	180
Yn chiuney smoo erbee geay jiass sniessey j'ee.	The greatest calm of all, the South wind nearest to it; i.e. The greater the calm the nearer the South wind.	176
Tra hig y laa hig eh choyrle lesh.	When the day comes its counsel will come with it.	239
Laa'l Breeshey bane, Dy choolley yeeig lane, Dy ghoo ny dy vane.	White St. Bridget's Day; every ditch full of black or of white	181
Choud as hig y scell greinney stiagh laa'l Breeshey, hig y sniaghtey my jig laa Boayldyn.	As long as the sunshine appears on St. Bridget's Day, the snow will come before May Day.	182
Laa'l Moirrey ny gianle, lieh foddyr as lieh aile.	Mary's Feast Day of the candle, i.e., Candlemas, half fodder and half fire.	154
Laa'l Parick arree yn dow gys e staik as y dooinney gys e lhiabbee.	St. Patrick's Day in Spring the ox to his stake and the man to his bed.	203
Laa'l Paul ghorrinagh gheayee, Ghenney er y theihll as baase-mooar sleih; Laa'l Paul aalin as glen, Palçhey er y theihll dy arroo as meinn.	St. Paul's Day stormy and windy, famine in the world and great mortality among people; St. Paul's Day fair and clean, plenty in the world of corn and meal.	184
Tra ta fer laccal ben, cha vel eh laccal agh ben, Agh tra ta ben echey, t'eh laccal ymmodee glen.	When a man wants a wife, he wants nothing but a wife; but when he has a wife, he wants many (things) clean. [a great deal. GWW]	131
Ta lane eddyr raa as jannoo.	There is much between saying and doing.	79
Ta lane caillit eddyr y laue as y veeal.	There is much lost between the hand and the mouth.	15
Ta rouyr çhebbyn mie leodaghey mitçhoor.	Too many good offers degrade a rogue.	90
Lhiat myr hoil oo.	(Be it) to thee as thou deservest.	17a*
Cha daink rieau yn baase gyn leshtal.	Death never came without an excuse.	40
Ta booa vie ny gha[a] as drogh lheiy ec.	Many a good cow has a bad calf.	137
Ta dty lhiasagh dty ghoarn.	Thy recompense is thy fist.	22
Share goll dy lhie fegooish shibber na girree ayns lhiastynys.	Better to go to bed supperless than to rise in debt.	30

Yiow moyrn lhieggey.	Pride will have a fall.	~101
Leah appee leah lhoau.	Soon ripe soon rotten.	64
Cronk ghlass foddey voym,	A green hill far from me, Bare, bare,	87
Loam loam tra roshym eh.	when I reach it.	
Yn loam leigh, yn loam chair; though	The bare law, the bare right (or	174
some will have it to be, yn loam	wrong).	
aggair.		
S'loam ta laare y valley vargee.	Bare is the ground of the market town.	155
Lhiannoo ny louyran.	A child or a castling.	
Litçheragh goll dy lhie, litçheragh dy	Lazy going to bed (lie), lazy rising,	97
irree, as litçheragh dy gholl dys y	and lazy to go to church on Sunday.	
cheeill Jedoonee.		
Ta'n Vayrnt çhionney as yn nah vee	March tightens and the next month	187
fanney.	flays.	
Laa er-meshtey as laa er ushtey.	A day drunk and a day on (i.e.	34
	drinking) water.	
S'mie ve daaney agh s'olk ve ro	'Tis good to be bold, but bad to be too	71
ghaaney.	bold.	
Share soie son veg, na roie son veg.	Better to sit for little than run for little.	77
Cha row rieau bare-lhiam jeant	'I would rather' was never satisfied.	75
magh.		
Millish dy ghoaill agh sharroo dy	Sweet to take, but bitter to pay.	65
eeck.		
Ceau craue ayns beeal drogh	Throwing a bone in a bad dog's	59
voddey.	mouth	
Baase y derrey voddey grayse y	The death of the one dog is the grace	43
voddey elley.	of the other.	
Ta ny moddee er chur nyn gione sy	The dogs have put their heads in the	128
phot.	pot.	
Rouyr moddee as beggan craueyn.	Too many dogs and few bones.	212
Cadle[e] ny moddee tra ta ny	The dogs sleep when the women sift.	161
mraane creearey.		
Foddee fastyr grianagh ve ec	A sunny evening may follow a cloudy	183
moghrey bodjalagh.	morning. GWW	
My yial dyn moll.	My promise without deceit.	~92
Mollee yn molteyr oo my oddys eh.	The rogue will deceive you if he can.	88
Moyll y laa mie fastyr.	Praise a good day in the evening.	
Cha vel eh çheet jesh da moyrn dy	It does not become pride to do	102
yannoo red erbee ta laccal leshtal.	anything which needs an excuse.	
Cha dennee rieau yn voyrn	Pride never felt the cold.	103
feayraght.		
Lhig dy chooilley vuck reuyrey jee	Let every pig dig for herself.	216
hene.	710.0	- 3
Furree yn mwaagh rish e heshey.	The hare will wait for his mate.	49

Laa'l Mian carragh skaa yn arroo sy	St. Matthew's Day scurvy sheds the	
n'ouyr, as marroo ny eayin sy	corn in the Autumn, and kills the	
n'arragh.	lambs in the Spring. (The feast of St.	
	Matthias is held on the 25th of	
	February, and that of St. Matthew on	
	the 21st of September.)	
Eshyn smoo hayrys, smoo vees echey.	He who catches most shall have most.	143
Mie Mannin, mie Nherin.	Good for Mann, good for Ireland.	242
Ollick vog, rhullic vea.	A soft Christmas, a fat churchyard.	168
Obbyr dyn oardagh, obbyr dyn	Work without order is work without	~165
booise.	thanks.	
Tra t'ou jannoo yn trie jean yn oarlagh.	When thou art making the foot, make the inch.	17a*
Obbyr laa yn ghuilley buigh (or	The day work of the yellow boy	166
buee), obbyr laue.	(gold) is hand (manual) work.	
Yn oghe gyllagh 'toyn losht' da'n	The oven calling 'burnt breech' to the	195
aiee.	kiln. (s.v. oghe)	
	The oven calling 'burnt bottom' to the kiln (s.v. <i>gyllagh</i>)	
Oie mooie, as oie elley sthie,	A night outside and another night	217
Olk son cabbil, agh son kirree mie.	inside, bad for horses but good for sheep.	
Myr s'olk ayn, smessey ass.	The more evil in it, the worse out of it.	85
Lhig dy chooilley ushag guirr e hoohyn hene.	Let every bird hatch its own eggs.	223
Cha nee tra ta'n cheyrrey gee yn ouw te çheet r'ee.	It is not when the sheep eats the marsh pennywort that it comes to her, <i>i.e.</i> , the evil effects do not appear till after.	214
Ta daa Pharick jannoo un ghimmagh.	Two small lobsters make a large one.	225
Laa'l Parlane, daa honn goll sy nane.	St. Bartholomew's Day, two waves going in one. ['two masses' GWW]	169
Boayl ta gioee ta keck, as boayl ta	Where there are geese there is dirt,	160
mraane ta pleat.	and where there are women there is prattle.	100
Tasht prug[h]ag as ee lughag.	Store miser and eat mouse.	144

Ollick ghennal erriu as bleïn feer vie,	A merry Christmas on ye, and a very	
Seihll as slaynt da'n slane lught thie;	good year,	
Bea as gennallys eu bio ry-cheilley,	Long life and health to the whole	
Shee as graih eddyr mraane as	household;	
deiney;	Your life and mirth living together,	
Cooid as cowryn, stock as stoyr.	Peace and love between women and	
Palchey phuddase, as skaddan dy-	men;	
liooar;	Goods and wealth, stock and store,	
Arran as caashey, eeym as roayrt;	Plenty potatoes and enough herring;	
Baase, myr lugh, ayns uhllin ny	Bread and cheese, butter and beef,	
soalt;	Death, like a mouse, in the stackyard	
Cadley sauchey tra vees shiu ny lhie,	of the barn;	
As feeackle y jargan, nagh bee dy	Sleeping safely when you lie,	
mie.	and the flea's tooth, may it not be	
	well.	
Tra sreaie yn chloie, share faagail	When the play is merriest, 'tis best to	153
jeh.	leave off.	
Ta'n red ta goit dy mie ny share na'n	The thing that is taken well is better	74
red ta jeant dy mie.	than the thing that is done well.	
Cha nee eshyn ta red beg echey ta	It is not he who has little that is poor,	148
boght, agh eshyn ta geearree	but he who desires much.	
mooarane.		
Lurg roayrt hig contraie.	After spring tide comes neap tide.	63
Slaa sahll er toyn muck roauyr.	Smearing grease on a fat pig's breech.	215
Ta un cheyr[r]ey screbbagh	One scabby sheep inflects the whole	68
doghaney yn clane shioltane.	flock.	
Tra scuirrys y laue dy choyrt,	When the hand ceases to give, the	12
scuirrys yn veeal dy voylley.	mouth ceases to praise.	
Shaghyn dagh olk.	Shun each evil.	83
Sheayn dty hie as dty aaght; ta'n fer	Peace to thy house and thy lodging,	~129
driaght ec dty ghorrys.	the chainer is at the door. (Or,	
	preferably, Peace on thy house and	
	lodging, the officer of justice is at thy	
	door.)	
Shegin goaill ny eairkyn marish y	'Tis necessary taking the horns with	196
çheh.	the hide.	
Ta sheshey chammah as ayrn.	A companion is as good as a share.	114
Myr sloo yn çheshaght share yn	The smaller the company the better	113,
ayrn; myr smoo yn çheshaght s'reaie	the share; the bigger the company the	115
yn chloie.	merrier the play.	
Giare sheear, liauyr shiar.	Short west, long east.	185
Goll thie yn ghoayr dy hirrey ollan.	Going to the goat's house to seek	211
	wool.	
Myr sniessey da'n oie, slhee	The nearer the night, the more rogues.	~93
mitçhoor.		
Guilley smuggagh dooinney glen,	A snotty boy, a clean man. A snotty	11
Inneen smuggagh sluht dy ven.	girl, a slut of a woman.	
Cha smooinee rieau er yn olk nagh	One never thinks of the evil one did	84
Cha shibblinee rieda er yn bik hagh	One never uninks of the evir one did	0-

Dy chooilley ghooinney er e hon hene, as Jee son ooilley.	Every man for himself and God for all.	51
Ta'n breagerey molley yn sonderey.	The liar deceives the greedy person. [the miser. GWW]	91
Sooree ghiare, yn tooree share.	Short courting the best courting.	132
Ta'n chied sponnag lowit.	The first trick is allowed. [The first error is overlooked. GWW]	76
Stiark keayrt ta dooinney siyragh <an> [gyn] seaghyn. [ass seaghyn. GWW]</an>	A hasty man is seldom without trouble.	106
Dy ve aashagh syn oie, monney shibber nagh ee; Er nonney n'oo plaiynt, ec laccal dty laynt.	To be easy in the night, much supper don't eat, or else you will complain at wanting your health.	35
Shibber eddrym, lhiabbee ghlen.	A light supper, a clean bed.	36
Skeiy sy doarlish.	A bundle of faggots in a gap.	
Cha vow laue ny haaue veg.	An idle hand will receive nothing.	20
Eshyn ghuirrys sheilley hayrrys skeilley.	He who hatches harm catches harm.	
Raad ta jees ta reih, As raad ta troor ta teiy.	Where there are two there is choice, and where there are three there is pick.	116
Ta drogh hammag ny share na magher foshlit.	A bad bush is better than an open field.	206
Stroshey yn theay na yn Çhiarn.	The people are stronger than the lord.	112
Ta çhengey ny host ny share na olk y ghra.	A silent tongue is better than evil speaking.	4
Tra ta thie dty naboo er aile, gow cairail jeh dty hie hene.	When thy neighbour's house is on fire take care of thy own house.	125
T'ou towse e arroo liorish dty hubbag hene.	You are measuring his corn with your own bushel.	200
Sniessey yn uillin na yn doarn.	Nearer is the elbow than the fist.	6
Ta ushag ayns laue chammah as jees sy thammag.	A bird is the hand is as good as two in the bush.	207
Woish y laue gys y veeal	From hand to mouth.	13
Share yn olk shione dooin, na yn olk nagh nhione dooin.	Better the evil that we know than the evil which we know not.	81