

Coontey jeh Dunnallys as Baase Maynrey Jamys Covey

A Manx translation of

An Account of the Bravery and Happy Death of James Covey,

by Rev. John Griffin,

transcribed, edited and set alongside the English

by Christopher Lewin and Max W. Wheeler.

August 2021

We edit this Manx tract as a contribution to the project of digitizing Manx Gaelic printed texts of the Classical Period (1700-1850). The Manx print is undated, but is likely to be from the early or mid 1830s.

Some evident typos have here been corrected in **red**, and we have intervened (also marked in **red**) to make the punctuation more regular. The pagination of the original prints is marked **[thus]**.

AN
ACCOUNT OF THE BRAVERY
AND
Happy Death
OF
JAMES COVEY,
A British Seaman

[Engraving of a three-masted ship.]

LONDON:
Printed for
THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY;
AND SOLD BY J. DAVIS, AT THE DEPOSITORY,
56, PATERNOSTER-ROW; J. NISBET, 21,
BERNERS STREET, OXFORD STREET; THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION DEPÔT, 19,
PATERNOSTER ROW; AND OTHER BOOK-
SELLERS.
[1830.]¹

¹ An earlier edition of the English *James Covey* was printed in 1817 by Tilling and Hughes, Chelsea. [Any relation of the Tilling in Liverpool that published the Manx?]. The text is virtually identical

with that of 1830, but there are a couple of sentences found only in the latter which are rendered in the Manx. The Manx *Jamys Covey* has no title page.

AN
ACCOUNT

Of the Bravery and Happy Death

OF
JAMES COVEY.

[BY REV. JOHN GRIFFIN.]

COONTEY

JEH DUNNALLYS AS BAASE
MAYNREY

JAMYS COVEY.

[Engraving of a legless sailor on crutches
with a chapel in the background.]

MR. PRATT, in the second volume of his *Gleanings*,² relates an affecting anecdote of a sailor on board the Venerable, the ship in which Admiral Duncan commanded the fleet in the action against the Dutch, off Camperdown. He received the account from Dr. Duncan, Lord Duncan's chaplain and relative, who, in the action, assisted the surgeon and his mate in binding up the wounds, and amputating the limbs of the unfortunate sufferers. "A mariner," says the doctor, "of the name of Covey, was brought down to the surgery, deprived of both his legs; and it was [4] necessary, some hours after, to amputate still higher. 'I suppose,' said Covey, with an oath, 'those scissors will finish the business of the ball, master mate?' 'Indeed, my brave fellow,' cried the surgeon, 'there is some fear of it.' 'Well, never mind,' said Covey, 'I have lost my legs, to be sure, and mayhap may lose my life; but,' continued he with a dreadful oath, 'we have beat the Dutch! we have beat the Dutch! so I'll even have another cheer for it: huzza, huzza!'"

This anecdote is rendered more interesting still, by some prior and subsequent circumstances attending this poor sailor. Covey was a good seaman, and was noticed among his shipmates for his intrepidity; but he was pre-eminent in sin, as well as in courageous actions. About a fortnight before the English fell in with the Dutch fleet, he

Ayns y caggey sterree noi noidyn yn ashoon ain va shiolteyr, enmyssit Covey, erboard yn lhong Venerable, v'er choayll e ghaa chass ayns y caggey, as v'eh ymmyrchagh da'n Erlhee dy ghiarey aynr jeh e lheaystyn neesht. "Heil-lhiam³ Vainshtyr!" dooyrt Covey lesh lhoo, "dy jean y skynn shen choyr jerrey er my vioys." "Dy firrinagh, my heshey vie!" dreggyr yn Er-lhee, "ta oyr ain dy ghoaill aggle jeh shen." "Ny cur geill," dooyrt Covey, "ta mee er coayll my chassyn dy jarroo, as foddee dy gaillym my vioys, agh ta shin er gheddyn y varriaght harrish nyn noidyn," as eshyn, lesh lhoo⁴ atchimagh, "ta shin er gheddyn y varriaght harrish nyn noidyn, as shen y fa goym boggey reesht, Huzza! Huzza!"

Ta'n coontey shoh tooilloo tastey smoo veih ymmyrkey yn dooinney roish y tra shen as ny lurg. Va Covey shiolteyr fondagh, as mooar soit jeh mastey e heshaghyn son e ghunnallys; agh v'eh cha niartal ayns peccah as veh ayns caggey. Tra gerrid roish haink lhuingyn dagh ashoon dy cheilley, ren eh dreamal dy row

² Samuel Jackson Pratt, *Gleanings in England*, vol. II., 1801, London: Longman and Ress; Letter 31, pp. 537-557. In the remainder of the English text, the narrator is the minister of the Orange-street Chapel, Portsea, Hampshire. In the Manx it becomes a third-person narrative.

³ Heil-lhiam] An interesting variant of *hellym* 'I suppose' (Kelly), irregular present (relative future for independent future?) of *sheiltyn*.

⁴ lhoo] *text* lhee

dreamed that they were in an engagement, in which both his legs were shot off, and that he was out of his mind. The dream made this courageous seaman tremble, and sometimes attempt to pray; but, not liking to retain God in his thoughts, he endeavoured to blot out the impressions from his memory, and the [5] recollection of his sins from his conscience, by drinking and blasphemous intercourse with the ships company. His efforts, however were in vain. The thoughts of his sins, of God, and of death, harassed his mind day and night, and filled him with gloomy forebodings of what awaited him in this world and in the next, till the sight of the Dutch fleet, and their conversation with each other concerning the heroic achievements they should perform, dispelled the gloomy subject from his mind.

As the two fleets were coming into action, the noble Admiral, to save the lives of his men, ordered them to lie flat on the deck, till, being nearer the enemy, their firing might do the more execution. The Dutch ships at this time were pouring their broadsides into the Venerable as she passed down part of the Dutch fleet, in order to break their line. This stout-hearted and wicked Covey, having lost all the impressions of his former reflections, heaped, in rapid succession, the most dreadful imprecations on the eyes, and limbs, and souls, of what he called his cowardly shipmates, for lying down to avoid the balls of the Dutch. He refused to obey the order, till, fearing [6] the authority of an officer not far from him, he in part complied, by leaning over a cask which stood near, till the word of command was given to fire. At the moment of rising, a bar shot carried away one of his legs and the greater part of the other; but so instantaneous was the stroke, though he was sensible of something like a jar in his limbs, he knew not that he had lost a leg till his stump came to the deck, and he fell. When his legs were amputated higher up, and the noise of the battle had ceased, he thought of his dream; and expected, that as one part of it was fulfilled, the other would be so to. Indeed, considering the pain of amputating and dressing both legs, and the agitation of his mind from fearing the full

ad ayns caggey ayn va e ghaa chass goit ersooyl, as dy row eh ershaghryn ayns e aigney. Hug y dreamal er y shiolteyr dunnal shoh dy ve er-creau, as ny cheayrtyr dy streu dy ghoail padjer, agh neuwoiagh dy reayll Jee ayns e smooniaghtyn gow eh ayns laue dy gheddyn rea rish lheid yn ennaghtyn, as dy eiyrt ersooyll cooniaghtyn jeh e pheccaghyn liorish meshtallys as goan mollaghtagh noi Jee, agh ooilley ayns fardail. Ren smooniaghtyn er e pheccaghyn, er Jee as er baase, eh y lhieeney lesh aggle atchimagh [2] jeh treihys chammah 'sy theihll shoh, as ayns shen ta ryheet, derrey ren shillee jeh lhuingyn ny noidyn, as yn taggloo v'ec ny shiolteyryn mychione ny dunnallys⁵ yinnagh ad y hoilshaghey geiyrt ersooyll ny smooniaghtyn trimshagh shoh veih e aigney.

Myr v'an caggey ghoail toshiaght hug yn Admiral sarey da e gheiney dy huittym sheese er y deck, myr saase dy hauail nyn mioys, choud as veagh ad tayrn ny sniessey da'n noid dy voddagh ad eisht craagh smoo y yannoo ny mast'oc. Ren Covey va nish er choayl dy chooilley smooniaght as ennaghtyn crauee ren roie goail greme er e aigney gueeaghyn 'syn agh s'atchimee da sooilyn, da oltyn, as da anmeenyn e heshaghyn faasechreeagh myr denmys eh ad son lhie sheese dy voddagh ad shaghney bulladdyn ny noidyn. Dob eh dy chur biallys da'n sarey, derrey trooid aggle roish Offisher va ergerrey da, chroym eh harrish saagh va shassoo liorish, derrey va sarey er ny choiyrt dy ghoail toshiaght er y chaggey. Choud's v'ad girree, gow shot ersooyll e ghaa chass, agh va'n builley cha jeean ga dy ren eh gennaghtyn dy row eh guint nagh row fys echey dy row eh er choayll e oltyn derrey huitt eh er y deck. Tra va e chassyn giaryt jeh, as sheean y chaggey er scuirr chooinee eh er e ghreamal, as v'eh jerkal myr va un ayn jeh cooilleenyt dy beagh yn jeh elley cooilleenyit myrgheddin. Dy jarroo t'eh jeeaghyn dy ve faggys mirril nagh chaill eh e cheayll as e chooinaghtyn liorish y pian, as yn aggle v'eh fo dy row e ghreamal dy ve dy slane cooilleenit; agh

⁵ ny dunnallys] *sic. l.* ny dunnallyssyn ?

accomplishment of his dream, it appears next to a miracle that he retained his reason in the most perfect state : but this was to be explained to him at a future period. Some time after, he came out of Haslar Hospital, capable of walking by means of two wooden legs and two crutches; but his spirits were sorely dejected, from fearing that as his sins had brought upon him the judgment of God in the loss of his limbs, they would bring upon him the [9]⁶ loss of his reason, and the loss of his soul.

Having heard of Orange-street Chapel, Portsea, he came on the first Sabbath evening after his leaving the hospital. The text that evening was Mark v. 15, "And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind." The minister represented this demoniac as a fit emblem of sinners in general; but especially of those who live without rule and order; drunkards, blasphemers, and injurious to themselves, and others; but his sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind, as an engaging representation of the sinner converted to God by the Gospel, made sensible of the evil of sin, the value of his soul, and the necessity of salvation through a crucified Redeemer; enjoying peace of mind, having fellowship with Christ and his people, submitting to the authority of the Scriptures, and receiving instructions from Christ, the friend of sinners.

Covey listened with attention and surprise; wondered how the minister should know him among so many hundred people; or who could have told him his character and state of [10] mind. His astonishment was still more increased when he found him describe, as he thought, the whole of his life, and even his secret sins. He could not account for it, why a minister should make a sermon all about him, a poor, wooden-legged sailor. His sins being brought afresh to his mind, filled him with horrors tenfold more gloomy than before. Despair, for some minutes took a firm hold on his spirits; and he thought he

va baght dy ve er ny choyrt da jeh shoh ny lurg shen. Lurg tammylt dy hra haink eh magh veih'n Hospital shooyl er daa chass fuygh, as daa chammag; agh va e annym lane dy hrimshey goaill aggle myr va e pheccaghyn er hayrn briwnys Yee er ayns coayll e oltyn, dy jinnagh ad tayrn er coayll e resoon as e annym.

Myr v'eh er clashtyn jeh cabbal v'ayns y valley raad v'eh, haink eh gys shen er y chied fastyr doonaght lurg da fagail yn Hospital. Va'n text yn fastyr shen Mark v. 15, "As haink ad gys Yeesey, as honnick ad eshyn va'n droghspyrtyd as y legion er ny ve ayn, ny hoie, as e eaddagh er, as dy mie ayns e cheeayl, as ghow ad aggle." Ren y Shirveishagh soiaghey magh yn dooinney shoh va droghspyrtyd ayn myr cowrey cooie jeh peccee, agh er l'eh jeusyn ta beaghey fegooish reill as smaght, ny meshtallee, ny looddeyryn, as adsyn ta jannoo skielley [3] daue hene as da feallagh elley; agh hoilshee eh yn stayd echey tra v'eh ny hoie ec chassyn Yeesey lesh e eaddagh er, as dy mie ayns e cheeayl myr dy cooie soiaghey magh yn peccagh chyndait gys Jee liorish y Tushtal, gennaghtyn olkys peccah, feuid e annym, as feme jeh saualty's trooid Ferkionnee er ny crossey, goaill soylley jeh shee aigney, freayll commeey's marish Chreest as e phobble, biallagh gys ny Scriptyryn, as gynsaghey voish Yeesey carrey deiney peccoil.

Hug Covey tastey geyre, as gow eh yindys kys oddagh yn Shirveishagh cur enney ersyn fud chaglym wheesh dy leih, ny quoi oddagh v'er n'insh da cre va'n ymmyrkey echey er ve, as cre va stayd e annym. Gow eh foast yindys smoo tra cheayll eh; soiaghey magh myr dy beagh eh yn slane bea echey as eer e pheccaghyn follit. Cha noddagh eh toiggal cre'n fa yinnagh Shirveishagh sharmane y phreachail ooilley mychione shiolteyr boght croobagh. Myr va e pheccaghyn er nyn dayrn gys e cooniaghtyn v'eh l'hieent lesh atchim jeih-filley smoo na v'echey

⁶ Page 7 has the engraving of the stern of a ship with a sea battle in the distance. Page 8 is blank.

was now going out of his mind, should die, and be lost; till the minister declared Jesus Christ was as willing to save the vilest of sinners, as he was to relieve this poor creature possessed of the devil; and that a man was restored to his right mind when he believed in him. He now began to understand the true interpretation of his dream. He thought he had been out of his mind all his life, and that to love and serve Jesus Christ would be a restoration to his right senses again. He was now almost over whelmed with pleasure. While hearing of the astonishing love of Jesus Christ to sinners, hope took the place of despair, and joy of grief and horror! Those eyes which had never shed a tear when he lost his legs, nor when the shattered parts of his limbs were [11] amputated, now wept in copious streams flowing from strong sensations of mingled joy and sorrow!

Some weeks after this, he called and related to me the whole of his history and experience. He was surprised to find that I had never received any information about him at the time the sermon was preached, which so exactly met his case. Something more than twelve months after this time, he was received a member of our church, having given satisfactory evidences of being a genuine and consistent Christian. A few weeks since, hearing he was ill, I went to visit him. When I entered his room, he said, "Come in, thou man of God! I have been longing to see you and tell you the happy state of my mind. I believe I shall soon die; but death has now no terrors in it. The sting of death is sin, but thanks be to God, he has given me the victory through Jesus Christ. I am going to heaven! O! what has Jesus done for me, one of the vilest sinners of the human race!"

—A little before he died, when he thought himself within a few hours of dissolution, he

roie. Gow meehreishteil son tammylt greme er e aigney, as smooinee eh dy row eh roi⁷ baase y gheddyn, as roi ve cailt son dy bragh; derrey ren y preachoor fockley magh dy row Yeesey Chreest cha aggindagh dy hauail ny peccee streih, as v'eh dy hauail yn dooinney shoh va seaghnit lesh y drogh-spyrryd; as dy row dooinney er ny choyrt lesh gys e cheeayl erreish da v'er chredjal ayn. Va shilley echey nish jeh bun as bree e ghreamal. Smooinee eh dy row eh er ve ershaghryn ayns e aigney ooilley laghyn e vea, as liorish ve graihagh er as shirveish Yeesey Chreest dy jinnagh eh cosney reesht e cheeayl as e chooniaghtyn. V'eh nish lhieent lesh boggey. Choud's v'eh clashtyn jeh graih yindyssagh Yeesey Chreest gys peccee, ren e vee-hreishteil as e aggle chea ersooyl; ren ny sooillyn shen nagh ren shilley un jeir tra chaill eh e chassyn, ny tra va ny aynryn brisht jeh e oltyn dy yiarey jeh, keayne dy sharroo **veih** ennaghtyn dowin dy voggey as dy hrimshey.

Tammylt lurg shoh ta'n Shirveishagh ren srieu yn coontey shoh gra, haink eh dy yeeaghyn mee as hug eh dou coontey jeh e vea as jeh obbyr Yee er e annym. Gow eh yindys tra cheayll eh nagh row veg er ve inshit dou mychione echaysyn roish va'n sharmane er ny phreachail va er dy chooilley aght cha cooie da'n stayd [4] echaysyn. Mysh blein lurg shoh v'eh goit stiagh myr olt jeh'n Agglish ain lurg da v'er choyrt prowallyn fondagh dy row eh ny Chreestee firrinagh. Tammylt er dy hienney tra cheayll mee dy row eh ching hie mee dy yeeaghyn eh. Tra haink mee stiagh raad v'eh ny lhie dooyrt eh, "Tar stiagh uss ghooinee dy Yee! Ta mee er ve ghoail foddeaght dy akin shiu, as dy insh diu stayd mayrnrey my annym. Ta mee chredjal dy voym dy Leah baase, agh cha vel nish atchim erbee ayns baase dooys. Gah yn vaish she peccah eh, agh booise dy row gys Jee t'er choyrt dooys yn varriaght trooid Yeesey Chreest nyn Jiarn. Ta mee goll gys niau. Oh! cre ta Yeesey er n'yannoo er my hon's, fer jeh ny peccee s'treih va rieu er ny ruggey."

Tra gerryd roish hooar eh baase, tra smooinee eh dy row eh roi partail dooyrt

⁷ roi] Cregeen **roï**, variant of *ry-hoï*, *ry-oï*.

said, “I have often thought it was a hard thing to die, but now I find it a very easy thing [12] to die. The presence of Christ makes it easy.⁸ The joy I feel from a sense of the love of God to sinners, from the thought of being with the Saviour, of being free from a sinful heart, and enjoying the presence of God for ever, is more than I can express! O, how different my thoughts of God, and of myself, and of another world, from what they were when I lost my precious limbs on board the Venerable! It was a precious loss to me! If I had not lost my legs, I should perhaps have lost my soul!”

With elevated and clasped hands, and with eyes glistening with earnestness, through the tears which flowed down his face, he said, “O, my dear minister, I pray you, when I am dead, to preach a funeral sermon for a poor sailor; and tell others, especially sailors, who are as ignorant and wicked as I was, that poor blaspheming Covey found mercy with God, through faith, in the blood of Christ! Tell them, that since I have found mercy, none that seek it need to despair. You know better than I do what to say to them! But, oh, be in earnest with them; and may the Lord grant that my wicked neighbours and fellow-sailors may find mercy, as well as Covey!” [13] He said much more; but his last words were, “Hallelujah! Hallelujah!”

[J.G.]⁹

[Both English editions end with two poems:
The Alarm, and God reconciled in Christ.]

eh, “Va mee cliaghtey smooniaghtyn dy row eh red dooillee dy gheddyn baase, agh nish ta mee feddyn eh feer aashagh. Ta’n boggey ta mee gennaghtyn veih graih Yee gys peccee, veih’n treishteil jeh ve marish my Haualtagh, jeh ve feayslit veih cree peccoil, as jeh goaill soylye jeh fenish Yee son dy bragh, ny smoo na oddym’s fockley magh. Oh! cren caghlaa t’ayns my smooniaghtyn mychione Jee, mychione stayd my annym, as mychione yn seihll ta ry heet, veih ny smooniaghtyn v’ayms tra chaill mee my oltyn deyr erboard y lhong. Smaynrey yn coayll va shen dooys! Mannagh bee’n er choayll my chassyn oddin ve er choayll my annym.”

—Lesh laueyn troggit seose as lesh sooillyn lane dy yeir dooyrt eh ny sodjey, “O my charrey ennoil! ta mee guee erriu, tra vee’m ersooyll, dy phreachail sharmane ec oanluckey shiolteyr boght, as dy insh da feallagh elley, er-lheh da shiolteyryn ta cha meehushtagh as cha peccoil as va mee hene, dy dooar Covey, lurg ooilley e hreihys as e ard-loghtinys, myghin veih Jee trooid chredjue ayns fuill Chreest. Inshjee daue myr hooar lheid y droghyantagh myghin cha lhiass da fer erbee ta shirrey er y hon ve meehreishteilagh. Ta fys eu hene, ny share na oddym’s ginsh diu, cre’d dy ghra; agh oh! gueejee orroo dy jeean, as dy giall y Chiarn dy vod my naboonyen peccoil, as my heshaghyn shiolteyr, feddyn myghin myr hooar Covey myghin.” —Loayr eh foddey smoo, agh ny focklyn s’terree loayr eh va’d “Hallelujah! Hallelujah!”

*Printed by R. Tilling, Circus-street,
Liverpool.*

⁸ This sentence not rendered in the Manx.

⁹ 1817.