

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Roddy can be contacted by e-mail at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk * This is Litir 258*

Tha Naochadair Chlach na Cùdainn, Iain MacIlleathain, ag innse dhuinn mu character annasach ann an eachdraidh Inbhir Nis air an robh *Ministear na Feusaig*. Bha feusag mhòr aige, ach cha robh e na mhinistear. Fhuair e am far-ainm leis nach robh dachaigh aige. Gach oidhche bhiodh e a’ fuireach ann an Àrd-eaglais a’ bhaile.

Aig an àm ud, bha an t-seann eaglais ann an droch staid. Feasgar Sàbaid a bha seo, thuit pìos far a’ mhullaich, agus cho-dhùin na h-ùghdarrasan nach biodh e sàbhailte do choitheanal a bhith na broinn. ’S e an samhradh a bh’ ann agus dh’fhàg an coitheanal Gàidhlig an eaglais acasan, a bha ri taobh na h-Àrd-eaglais, do luchd na Beurla. Fad an t-samhraidh bha na searmonan Gàidhlig air an cumail anns a’ chladh.

Nuair a thàinig an geamhradh, bhiodh searmon Gàidhlig ga chumail anns an Eaglais Ghàidhlig anns a’ mhadainn gach Sàbaid. Agus thigeadh luchd na Beurla cruinn anns an Eaglais Ghàidhlig gach feasgar Sàbaid.

Cha robh airgead gu leòr aig na h-ùghdarrasan airson an Àrd-eaglais a chàradh, agus thug e dà bhliadhna mus robh airgead gu leòr aca. Thairis air an ùine sin, rinn Ministear na Feusaig a dhachaigh am broinn na h-eaglaise.

Cha robh fios aig duine gu dè an t-ainm a bh’ air. Bha e eadar caogad is seasgad bliadhna a dh’aois, agus tha Iain MacIlleathain ag innse dhuinn nach e dìth aoigheachd am measg muinntir Inbhir Nis a bu choireach ris an t-suidheachadh anns an robh e, ach gu robh e air a chur roimhe gun a bhith a’ faighinn cadal ann an taigh-còmhnaidh no air leabaidh cheart. Nuair a chaidh e a chadal anns an eaglais cha robh aige mar leabaidh ach connlach air suidheachan faisg air a’ chùbaid.

Tha e coltach gu robh e na dhuine sèimh agus gu robh spèis aig muinntir Inbhir Nis dha. Bhiodh iad a’ faighneachd de chach a chèile, “Dè thug air a bhith mar seo? Dè thachair dha?” Ach cha robh fios aig duine. Bha cuid dhen bheachd gun do ghabh e trom ghaol air boireannach ach gun do dhiùlt i a phòsadh agus, an dèidh sin, gun do thrèig e an saoghal àbhaisteach. No an e gun do chaochail a’ bhean aige, agus iad air ùr-phòsadh? No an do rinn e rudeigin ceàrr na òige, is an robh e air a chur roimhe am peanas seo a bhith aige bhon uair sin?

Chun an là an-diugh chan eil fios aig duine dè a bu choireach. Ach eadhon air oidhcheannan fuara a’ gheamhraidh, nuair a bha sneachd air an talamh, bhiodh Ministear na Feusaig a’ dèanamh air an eaglais. Dh’fhàs a chuid aodaich luideagach agus thug am ministear – ’s e sin am ministear ceart – aodach ùr dha. Ach bha gnothaichean a’ tighinn gu ceann. Chuir muinntir na h-Eaglaise airgead gu leòr ri

chèile airson an togalach a chàradh, agus chaidh luchd-obrach ann airson an obair a dhèanamh.

Bha e follaiseach do Mhinistear na Feusaig gun robh an t-àm aige falbh. Dh'fhàg e Inbhir Nis, agus chan eil fios aig duine càite an deach e no dè dh'èirich dha. Bha Iain MacIlleathain dhen bheachd gur dòcha gun do lorg e seann eaglais eile far an dèanadh e leabaidh dha fhèin, is far an leanadh e air an dòigh-bheatha a bha e air a thaghadh – airson adhbhar air nach bi fios a-chaidh.

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Faclan na seachdainne: naochadair: *nonagenarian*; Ministear na Feusaig: [*lit.*] *Minister of the Beard*; suidheachan: *pew*; cùbaid: *pulpit*; cathrannach: *charitable*; bhuapa: *from them*; sèimh: *placid, mild-mannered*; peanas: *punishment*.

Abairtean na seachdainne: ann an droch staid: *in poor condition*; thuit pìos far a' mhullaich: *a piece fell from the roof*; bha searmonan Gàidhlig air an cumail: *Gaelic services were held*; thigeadh luchd na Beurla cruinn gach feasgar Sabaid: *the English-speakers would gather every Sunday afternoon*; airson an eaglais a chàradh: *to mend the church*; bha e eadar caogad is seasgad: *he was between 50 and 60*; nach e dìth aoigheachd a bu choireach: *it wasn't a lack of hospitality that was responsible*; gu robh e air a chur roimhe: *that he had decided/determined*; cha robh aige mar leabaidh ach connlach: *he only had straw for a bed*; gun do ghabh e trom ghaol air boireannach: *that he fell deeply in love with a woman*; gun do dhiùlt i a phòsadh: *that she refused to marry him*; gun do thrèig e: *that he abandoned*; dh'fhàs a chuid aodaich luideagach: *his clothes grew ragged*; gun robh an t-àm aige falbh: *that it was time for him to leave*; dè dh'èirich dha: *what happened to him*; far an leanadh e air an dòigh-bheatha: *where he would follow the way of life*; air nach bi fios a-chaidh: *which will never be known*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdainne: *You will see the word broinn appear twice in the text. You will probably know what it means, but can you explain its grammatical origins? It is in fact the dative singular of the feminine noun brù (belly, stomach). You will remember that feminine nouns traditionally slenderise in the dative singular (làmh becomes làimh, bò becomes boin) and this is just another example. Look firstly at its second occurrence in the Litir: rinn Ministear na Feusaig a dhachaigh am broinn na h-eaglaise (Ministear na Feusaig made his home inside the church). In this instance am broinn means literally “within the belly of” (and explains why eaglais is in the genitive). Brù becomes broinn following the preposition am (ann am). The first occurrence in the Litir is cho-dhùin na h-ùghdarrasan nach biodh e sàbhailte do choitheanal a bhith na broinn (the authorities concluded that it would not be safe for a congregation to be within it). Na broinn means “within her” (because eaglais is feminine) and na here includes the third person singular feminine possessive article. This explains why it is na broinn (unlenited). Na bhroinn (within him) would refer to a masculine object.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdainne: Dè thug air a bhith mar seo?: *what caused him to be like this?* Tha X a' toirt air Y rudeigin a dhèanamh: *X is compelling Y to do something.*

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