

An Litir Bheag

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 630 (which corresponds to Litir 934). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was speaking about slavery and how men from the Highlands married black women in the West Indies. Some of them were slaves. Scotland has a good history and a bad history with regard to slavery. Some Scots lobbied against slavery.

But Scots were among the most brutal landlords who had slaves in Jamaica. A third of slaves in Jamaica were on estates owned by Scots. Even the man who wrote 'A Man's a Man for A' That' – a famous song about equality – was considering going to work on a sugar plantation in Jamaica where there were slaves. I mean Robert Burns.

In 1843, a new church was born in Scotland – The Free Church. It was in a difficult situation. Many landlords were deeply against it. It was short of money and messengers went to America to raise money for it. Money came from some people who still owned slaves in the southern states.

The Free Church was in the middle of a controversy about the

Bha mi a' bruidhinn mu dheidhinn tràilleachd agus mar a phòs fir às a' Ghàidhealtachd boireannaich dhubha anns na h-Innseachan an Iar. Bha cuid dhiubh nan tràillean. Tha deagh eachdraidh agus droch eachdraidh aig Alba ann an co-cheangal ri tràilleachd. Rinn cuid de dh'Albannaich coiteachadh an aghaidh tràilleachd.

Ach bha Albannaich am measg nan uachdaran a bu bhrùideile aig an robh tràillean ann an Iameuga. Bha an treas cuid de thràillean ann an Iameuga air oighreachdan a bha le Albannaich. Bha eadhon am fear a sgrìobh 'A Man's a Man for A' That' – òran ainmeil mu cho-ionannachd – a' beachdachadh air a dhol a dh'obair air tuathanas-siùcair ann an Iameuga far an robh tràillean. Tha mi a' ciallachadh Raibeart Burns.

Ann an ochd ceud deug, ceathrad 's a trì (1843), rugadh eaglais ùr ann an Alba – An Eaglais Shaor. Bha i ann an suidheachadh duilich. Bha mòran uachdaran fada na h-aghaidh. Bha i gann de dh'airgead agus chaidh teachdairean a dh'Ameireagaidh airson airgead a thogail dhi. Thàinig airgead bho fheadhainn a bha fhathast a' cumail thràillean anns na stàitean sa cheann a deas.

Bha an Eaglais Shaor ann am meadhan connspaid mun airgead a fhuair i.

money it got. In 1846, a famous slave came on a tour of Scotland. Frederick Douglass spent two years in Britain and Ireland, giving lectures about slavery.

Douglass was happy in Scotland. People weren't showing him disrespect because of the colour of his skin. But he spoke out strongly about the money the Free Church was getting. People at his meetings were shouting 'Send the Money Back!'

Representatives of the Free Church were saying that if people wanted to shun money from slavery that they shouldn't wear cotton clothes, eat rice or smoke tobacco. Those things were all made by slaves. They didn't return the money. One good thing came out of the debate, however. Frederick Douglass got a lot of help for his campaign against slavery. Cheerio just now.

Ann an ochd ceud deug, ceathrad 's a sia (1846) thàinig tràill ainmeil air turas a dh'Alba. Chuir Frederick Douglass seachad dà bhliadhna ann am Breatainn is Èirinn, a' toirt òraidean mu thràilleachd.

Bha Douglass air a dhòigh ann an Alba. Cha robh daoine a' dèanamh dì-meas air air sàillibh dath a chraicinn. Ach bhruidhinn e a-mach gu làidir mun airgead a bha an Eaglais Shaor a' faighinn. Bha daoine aig na coinneamhan aige ag èigheachd 'Cuiribh an t-Airgead Air Ais!'

Bha riochdairean na h-Eaglaise Saoire ag ràdh, nam biodh daoine airson a bhith a' seachnadh airgead à tràilleachd, nach cuireadh iad aodach cotain orra, nach itheadh iad rus 's nach smocadh iad tombaca. Bha na rudan sin uile air an dèanamh le tràillean. Cha tug iad an t-airgead air ais. Thàinig aon rud math às an deasbad, ge-tà. Fhuair Frederick Douglass tòrr taice airson iomairt an aghaidh tràilleachd. Mar sin leibh an-dràsta.