WILLIAM CASHEN

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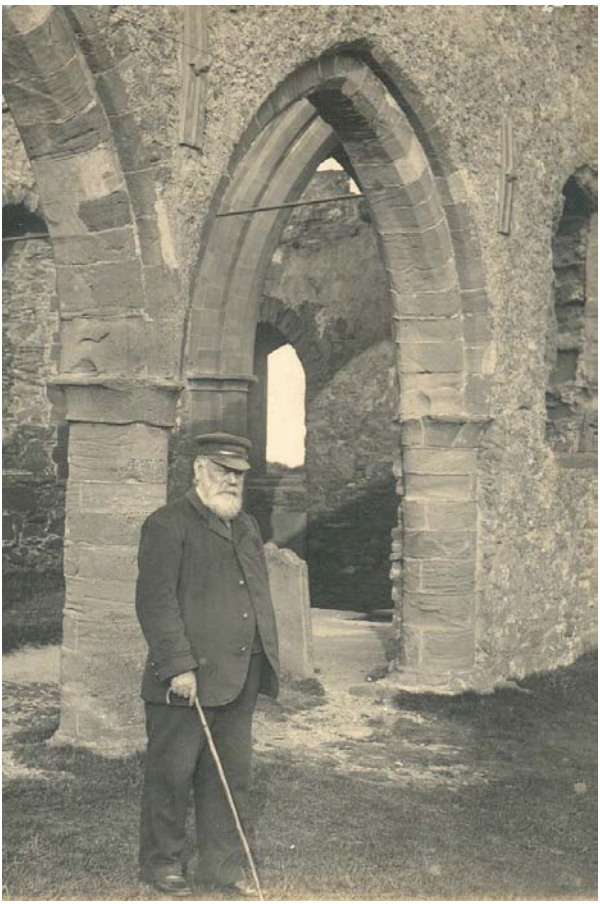

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BY

WILLIAM CASHEN

Edited
by
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INTRODUCTION

In Easter 1913, J.R. Moore, who had emigrated from Lonan to New Zealand,[1] wrote to William Cubbon:

> I get an occasional letter from my dear Friend Miss Morrison of Peel from whom I have received Mr J.J. Kneens Direct Method, Mr Faraghers Aesops Fables, Dr Clague's Reminiscences in which I[']m greatly disappointed. I expected something more raccy from the genial old Doctor. And a few days ago The [sic] folklore collection of that grand old salt Bill Cashen.[2]

"Miss Morrison of Peel" was, of course, Sophia Morrison, and it was *Cooinaghtyn Manninagh / Manx Reminiscences*,[3] by the late Dr John Clague, published in 1911, that proved to be of disappointment to him. The recent arrival of *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore*,[4] published in 1912, was much more to his taste, as he wrote to the person who had sent it to him, namely Morrison:

> I have again to thank you for sending on to me dear Old Bill Cashen's Folklore with a portrait of the grand old salt. […] To my mind his folklore is more racy reading than that of Mr Moore and is nicely spiced with Gailck.[5]

Morrison was the editor of the book, Cashen himself having died in June 1912,[6] and it was a posthumous publication as was *Cooinaghtyn Manninagh,* Clague having died in 1908.[7]

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1 J.R. Moore, "[A] Manxman's Voyage to New Zealand," *Manx Quarterly* 10 (1911).

2 J.R. Moore to William Cubbon, [21 March] 1913, Manx National Heritage Library (MNHL), MS 2355/1 C.

3 Dr John Clague, *Cooinaghtyn Manninagh: Manx Reminiscences By the Late Dr John Clague* (Castletown: M.J. Backwell, n.d. [1911]). Dr John Clague, *Cooinaghtyn Manninagh / Manx Reminiscences* (Douglas: Hospice Care, 1991). reprints the English text only, while Phil Kelly, ed., *Cooinaghtyn Manninagh*, (Privately, by the Editor, n.d. [1994]) reprints the Manx text only. An expanded edition is Dr John Clague, *Cooinaghtyn Manninagh / Manx Reminiscences*, ed. Stephen Miller (Onchan: Chiollagh Books, 2005).

4 William Cashen, *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore*, ed. Sophia Morrison (Douglas: Manx Language Society, 1912). For facsimile reprints, see William Cashen, *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore*, ed. Sophia Morrison (Norwood, PA: Norwood Editions, 1978), *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore*, ed. Sophia Morrison (Folcroft, PA: Folcroft Library Editions, 1977). William Cashen, *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore*, ed. Stephen Miller (Onchan: Chiollagh Books, 1993) is a reprint in part only.

5 J.R. Moore to Sophia Morrison, 17 March 1913, MNHL, MS 09495, Box 3.

6 "Sudden Death of the Castle Custodian," *Peel City Guardian* 8 June 1912, N.A. John, "The Old Custodian: An Appreciation," *Peel City Guardian* 8 June 1912, "Memorial Notices: William Cashin [sic], Died June 3rd, 1912," *Manx Quarterly* 11 (1912).

7 "Death of Dr Clague," *Isle of Man Examiner* 29 August 1908, "Memorial Notices: Dr John Clague, Died August 23rd, 1908," *Manx Quarterly* 5 (1908).

"Mr Moore" is A.W. Moore, author of the *Folk-lore of the Isle of Man*, which had appeared in 1891.[8] Moore's book was the catalyst for Cashen to start recording folklore, as Morrison recounted:

> He used to regret, too, the good stories, songs, and sayings of which he had heard so many: when it occurred to him, the old people had gone and so had their lore. He did, however, in 1892, soon after the publication of Mr A.W. Moore's *The Folk-lore of the Isle of Man*, write down a good deal in an old ledger, which he gave to me many years ago.[9]

This ledger survives, and it is now amongst the Sophia Morrison Papers in the Manx National Heritage Library.[10]

Cashen had passed his notes on to A.W. Moore,[11] some of which appeared in a pair of articles published in the *Mona's Herald* in 1895 and 1895:

> Dear Sir,—The following interesting notes with reference to the superstitions of Manx fishermen have been sent to me by Mr William Cashen, assistant harbour-master at Peel, for a proposed second edition of my *Folklore of the Isle of Man*. As, however, [it] is not likely to be published for some time yet, I think it desirable to publish the notes and so preserve them from any possibility of being lost. I have, therefore, obtained Mr Cashen's assent to this being done. I should like to take this opportunity of saying that I shall be very glad to obtain particulars about any Manx customs and superstitions which have not already been published.
>
> Yours truly, A.W. Moore[12]

Moore's anticipated second edition of his book never materialised,[13] and he was to use his extra or surplus material (including that supplied by Cashen) in a series of

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8 A.W. Moore, *The Folk-lore of the Isle of Man* (Douglas & London: David and Son & David Nutt, 1891).

9 Cashen, *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore*.

10 Deposited in MNHL, MS 09495, Box 6.

11 Cashen also sent smaller amounts of material to Moore. "I got the following from Cashen," Moore wrote, passing on three proverbs to G.W. Wood. A.W. Moore to G.W. Wood, 5 September 1894, MNHL, MS 1180/13 A. See G.W. Wood, "On the Classification of Proverbs and Sayings of the Isle of Man," *Folk-Lore* V (1894).

12 William Cashen, "Superstitions of the Manx Fishermen," *Mona's Herald* 25 December 1895. Known only from a dated clipping in MNHL, 18, *Frowde's Miscellaneous Cuttings Book*, the relevant issue is missing from the MNHL newspaper collection. The second article was William Cashen, "Customs of the Manx Fishermen," *Mona's Herald* 1 January 1896. This also appeared as William Cashen, "Customs of the Manx Fishermen," *Peel City Guardian* 11 January 1896.

13 In 1893 he had written to Karl Roeder, "I have just discovered that the number of copies sold by the printers is very much smaller than they had led me to suppose, &, as they have printed an enormous number & do not in any way push their sale, it is clear that a long time must elapse before a 2nd Edition is called for." A.W. Moore to Karl Roeder, 30 November 1893, Manchester Central Library (MCL), Manchester City Archives (MCA), M277/12/1–65.

articles that appeared in the pages of *The Antiquary* in 1895.[14] Cashen also contributed the words of eleven folk songs to Moore's *Manx Ballads and Music* published in 1896,[15] which were reproduced in *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore,* the texts taken from Moore's book, as they are not present in the ledger. Cashen was the major contributor of the orally supplied material to *Manx Ballads and Music.*

*

William Cashen was born in 1838 at Dalby into a fisher-crofter family. They later moved the short distance to the Niarbyl that was in those days home to a small fishing fleet. Cashen knew only Manx until he was nine years old when he began to learn English. After leaving school, he first worked on the land at Dalby, but when he was fifteen years old, he went to sea on the brig *Ada,* sailing between Dublin and Whitehaven. At nineteen, he went deep sea sailing, travelling to the Far East and visiting, amongst other places, Australia, China, and Polynesia. He was finally shipwrecked—in Peel Bay of all places, when the schooner *Western Trader* went ashore at Traie Fogog. Cashen was carried to a house nearby where he was nursed by the owner's daughter, Susanna Cowell, who he later married. They settled in Peel and Cashen turned to the herring fishing. Later on, he became the deputy harbour master at Peel; James Morrison, the harbour master, had been one of the rescuers of the crew of the *Western Trader.* Finally, for the last seventeen years of his life, Cashen was the custodian of Peel Castle, and not one to suffer fools on his tours.[16] It was at the castle that he was to die on duty in 1912.[17]

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[14] Moore had intended his material to appear in the *Folklore Journal*, "[…] I am contemplating publishing my additional material under the heading of 'Further Gleanings of Manx Folklore' in the [']Folklore Journal'." A.W. Moore to Karl Roeder, 30 November 1893, MCL, MCA, M277/12/1–65. In the end, they appeared in ten consecutive issues of *The Antiquary* xxxi (1895); for full details see the bibliography.

[15] A.W. Moore, *Manx Ballads and Music* (Douglas: G. & R. Johnson, 1896). The folk songs are: "Juan-y-Jaggad Keear!" ('John of the Grey Jacket') "Ushtey Millish sy Garee" ('Sweet Water in the Common') "Madgyn y Jiass" ('Madges of the South') "Yn Sterrym ec Port-le-Moirrey" ('The Storm at Port St Mary') "Yn Shenn Laair" ('The Old Mare') "Hi, Haw, Hum" ('Hi, Haw, Hum') "Arrane Queeyl Nieuee" ('Spinning-Wheel Song') "Yn Graihder Jouylagh" ('The Demon Lover') "My Vannaght er Shiu" ('My Blessing on You') "Mraane Kilkenny" ('The Kilkenny Woman') "Yn Eirey Cronk yn Ollee" ('The Heir of Cattle Hill'). No tunes, however, were collected from him.

[16] "What a dignified custodian he made! One worthy of the glorious traditions of the venerable pile. He permitted no silly jokes about what was so sacred in his eyes. Let the irrepressibly funny man of the party attempt it once. He never tried it a second time. Mr Cashen's dignified rejoinder soon suppressed such people." John, "The Old Custodian: An Appreciation."

[17] This sketch here is brief as fuller pieces recounting his life are collected here. See too the original introduction by Sophia Morrison to *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore*, reproduced here pp. 33–37. This is evidently drawn from her own conversations with Cashen. "Personally, I shall greatly miss our almost daily *cooish* about things Manx, and our readings

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> Standing on the borderland between the going out of the Manx and the coming in of the English I have thought it advisable to save all that is possible of the customs, legends, superstitions, and folklore of the Isle of Man, conscious of my inability to do anything except as an addition to Mr A.W. Moore's Folk-Lore Book, and with the hope that that gentleman will be induced to issue a new edition, and save all that is possible of the sayings and doings of our common forefathers. I pride myself on being a "*Manninagh Dooie voish y clean.*" I intend to confine myself as much as possible to the customs sayings, and doings which I knew and heard in my childhood. If any effort of mine should be of any avail it will be to me a sufficient reward.[18]

His intention "to confine myself as much as possible to the customs sayings, and doings which I knew and heard in my childhood," is what makes his book the more valuable. Cashen also wrote down what he knew with an economy and a precision that showed great ability and skill and it is a pity that he did not commit more pencil to ledger than he did. That he saw himself as being in the shadow of Moore is unfortunate, especially as Moore himself recognised the limitations of his own work. "I do not profess to be more than a compiler," he wrote to Karl Roeder in 1897, and further, "[w]hen you have completed your researches you should write a Folklore of the I.O.M."[19]

In the same letter to Roeder, Moore had earlier written:

> You have certainly gone to work in the right way & I can only say that it does not reflect much credit on Manxmen to have left a 'Stranger' to do it. I do not, however, know a Manxman who could do it nearly so well! As for me I have not, as you know, enough spare time to go about among the people as I could wish […]

The difference between Cashen and both Moore and Roeder was that he was one of "the people," born on the Island's isolated western seaboard, a native speaker of Manx,[20] a blue seas sailor, the survivor of a shipwreck, a herring fisherman, before ending up on land. Moreover, he was one of the few of the people who provided accounts themselves, as insiders, of Manx folklore and traditional life.[21]

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together of the Manx Bible in his cosy kitchen in long winter evenings." Cashen, *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore* xvii. *Cooish* (Manx), "a chat."

18 Preface to Cashen, *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore* vii.

19 A.W. Moore to Karl Roeder, 12 March 1897, MCL, MCA, M277/12/1–65.

20 "Although he knew no English till he was nine years old, during his long absence from the Island in after years when he heard not a word of the language, he lost much of his fluency, but he spoke and read Manx as much as possible and it all came back to him again." Cashen, *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore* xii.

21 The only other such figure is Edward Faragher of Cregneash. However, he provided essentially notes as raw material for Roeder. His only lengthy piece that has survived is a piece of reminiscence about Cregneash. "I have written a little scitch of my life," Edward Faragher to Karl Roeder, 19 January 1897, MNHL, MS 11064, Box 2. This was reproduced in

Morrison saw the book through the press and must have worked apace on it. While Cashen died in June, her introduction is dated August 1912. A letter from late June shows editorial work was then clearly underway.[22] She also solicited a poem (untitled) from "Cushag" (Josephine Kermode). The book when it appeared, price one shilling, was an excellent piece of typography, printed on cream paper, and with presswork to match.[23] As to Morrison's editorial method:

> When Cashen gave me his notebook,[24] he said that he would add to it considerably during the long winter nights and give me the MS. to complete the book. This he never did, though he has told me many interesting stories and bits of lore. He thought that, perhaps, some day, after his death, his notes might be published, but he said, too, that they would have to be re-written and polished up for the press if this were ever done. Here they are, however, as he wrote them, except that they have been grouped in chapters. It seems to me better to bring them out in their original form, though they may be a little disconnected and abrupt, than to smoothe all the individuality out of them.[25]

The phrase, "to complete the book," suggests that Morrison and Cashen had a book in mind for sometime, and the preface under Cashen's name that appeared in *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore* was written by him to that end. It was the matter of his death then that brought her round to publishing what material of Cashens that she had in her own hands, but now as a memorial to his memory. It is hard to see the material in the book as being "a little disconnected" or "abrupt" as Morrison herself thought it to be. Fortunately, she decided to leave the material to stand as it was originally written and not to do what Cashen himself felt needed doing, namely rewriting and revising his style.

The book consists of five chapters, the titles of them given by Morrison: "Home Life of the Manx," "Fairies, Bugganes, Giants and Ghosts," "Fishing," "History and Legends," "Songs, Sayings, and Riddles."

"Home Life of the Manx" opens with a description of a Manx cottage as remembered by Cashen when a child, no doubt the one he was born in at Dalby. He

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part as Edward Faragher, "A Sketch of Old Cregneash," *Skeealyn Æsop*, ed. Charles Roeder (Douglas: S.K. Broadbent, 1901). A transcript (in the hand of Edmund Goodwin) has recently come to light: "Cregneish Notes by E. Faragher." This manuscript is a composite of material by Edward Faragher. The "Sketch" can be found between pp. 11–35. First seen when in private hands. Recently acquired by the MNHL and accessioned as MS 09469/1. Faragher's originals remain unlocated.

[22] "In planning out the arrangement of ~~W~~Cashen'[s] lore […]." Letter from Sophia Morrison to S.K. Broadbent, 27 June [1912], MNHL, MS 09495, Box 4, Small Letter Copybook (1908–13).

[23] For a contemporary review, see "Wm. Cashen's Manx Folk Lore," *Manx Quarterly* 13 (1913).

[24] This refers to the ledger now deposited in MNHL, MS 09495, Box 6.

[25] Sophia Morrison, "Introduction," *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore* (Douglas: Manx Language Society, 1912) xiii.

describes the practice of rural hospitality known as the "beggar's bed." This was a passing custom by the late 1870s as evidence to the 1879 Medical Aid and Poor Relief Commission showed: "Up to very recent times there used to be a bed kept for tramps, and it was a common thing to give what was called 'the beggar's basin of meal.' The practice of keeping the 'beggar's bed' at farm houses is, however, dying out."[26] The folklore of birth and death then follows, including a recounting of a migratory legend of note.[27] Next are calendar days, together with the proverbial lore associated with them recounted in Manx. The chapter ends with a rare description of the rural alehouse, the *thie oast* (Manx), with its communal drinking mug and customs.[28] The next chapter, "Fairies, Bugganes, Giants and Ghosts," is true to its title. It deals with fairy beliefs, the shape-shifting ogre that was the *buggane*, the *lhiannan-shee*, the fairy woman, who would entrap you for life should you come too close to her, legends of giants, stories of ghosts, especially the *scaa goanlyssagh*, the malicious ghost, who could cut the clothes off a person without being seen or felt. Finally, the *arc-vuc-sonney*, the pig of plenty, who could be spotted on a moonlit night crossing one's path and thereby bringing luck to one at the fishing. The third chapter, "Fishing," is not unsurprisingly the longest one in the book, given Cashen's own life at sea and as a herring fisherman in Island waters. It covers not just fishing customs and superstitions, but it also contains a lengthy, descriptive account of the work practices of fishing itself. "History and Legends" is a thin chapter, showing that the book was incomplete, and awaited further material by Cashen to fill out at least this chapter if not to add others. It deals with St Patrick, who first made landfall at Peel. The castle, of which Cashen was custodian, stands on St Patricks Isle, by then connected by a causeway to Peel proper. The book ends with a chapter on "Songs, Sayings, and Riddles." It opens with the eleven song texts that appeared in *Manx Ballads and Music* in 1896, supplied by Cashen to Moore. A number of folk sayings follow, and finally, to end with, some riddles.

A reprint of *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore* was the first book ever published by Chiollagh Books in 1993.[29] It appears here in full as the second publication in this

[26] "The Rev. Hugh Stowell Gill's Evidence," [Malew]. Isle of Man Government, *Medical Aid and Poor Relief Commission (Isle of Man): Report and Evidence, with Appendices* (Douglas: Printed (by Authority) by James Brown & Son, 1879) 61 col. b.

[27] Dealt with in further detail in Stephen Miller, "Norwegian Dead-Child Legends in Mann (ML 4025)," *Béaloideas* 69 (2001).

[28] "In addition to the regular inns (Manx 'Thie Aaght') scattered about the countryside there were also established—better described as ale-houses (Manx 'Thie Oast')—where as old folk will tell you, so and so was 'keeping a barrel of ale.'" Neil Mathieson, "Old Inns and Coffee-Houses of the Isle of Man," *Proceedings of the Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society* vi.1 (1959): 154.

[29] Cashen, *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore*.

new series of expanded editions of classic Manx folklore titles.[30] It still remains, of course, "racy reading," and it is equally "nicely spiced with Gailck."

Stephen Miller
Vienna, 2005

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[30] The first was Clague, *Cooinaghtyn Manninagh / Manx Reminiscences.*

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“THAT GRAND OLD SALT BILL CASHEN”

(1)

CASHIN: A CHARACTER SKETCH*
(1896)

Hall Caine once told the writer that he regarded William Cashin, steward of Peel Castle, as one of the most intelligent men in the Island. He was right. Cashin to all outward appearances, is a rough, uncultured sea-faring individual; he is stout, strong, and hardy looking, with a pleasant smile and genial countenance at all times. You might pass him on Peel quay, regarding him as a good old sea dog, with no more ability than the average seaman possesses. But enter into conversation with him, learn his thoughts, his aspirations, his feelings, and your casual opinion of him will soon vanish. He has had an interesting and somewhat romantic career. He was wrecked off the coast of Peel in 1862. Prior to that time, he had been sailing for a number of years in the merchant service, having served his apprenticeship as a seaman at Whitehaven. Probably he is the only seaman at Peel who can show a Board of trade diploma, certifying to the completion of his indentures as an apprenticeship. Two years after the wreck, he settled down in Peel, married, and has been there since. He has mastered the Manx language, and is one of the few now remaining who can speak it correctly. The history and traditions of Peel Castle he has at his finger ends, and probably knows more about both than any other man living. he can recapitulate stories of old folk-lore, which have in all probability been handed down from family to family in the district for centuries. To quote his own words: "These stories I heard from my wife's grandparents, and they heard their parents and grandparents tell the same half a century before, so in this way, you see, they have been handed down from generation to generation." Cashin has carefully collected these stories, and committed them to memory, and can roll them off at pleasure. Hall Caine and he are great friends. He it was who supplied to the novelist the description of the historical demonstration of Peel fishermen at Tynwald Hill, which the novelist has so cleverly woven in the narrative of "The Manxman"; he it was who that led up the fishermen on that memorable occasion, and played the part ascribed to the hero Pete. Of course, beyond this particular feature of the character, there is no similarity between Cashin and Pete, and the author himself would probably be the first to admit this. Before attaining to his present position, he was, for nineteen years, harbour-master of Peel. He is, however, more at home in the Castle, describing its remarkable characteristics and ancient legends in nice, homely language, which have been correctly called "word-paintings" by one who has heard him.

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* "Cashin (sic): A Character Sketch," *The Manxman* 12 December 1896: 3 col. b.

(2)

WILLIAM CASHIN
DIED JUNE 3RD, 1912*

A Manxman who was probably more widely known than any of his compatriots, has passed into the Great Beyond. This was Mr William Cashin, the veteran custodian of Peel Castle, who died suddenly while on duty on June 3rd. During Monday morning, Mr Cashin, in his capacity of cicerone, had conducted over the Castle a party consisting of the Rev. W.J. Gadsby, the Rev. Mr Brindley (of British Honduras), and Mrs Brindley. He acted as guide with his customary ability and good humour, and to the party he appeared to be in the best of health and spirits. After Mr Gadsby and his friends had taken their departure, Mr Cashin retired into the hut at the toll-gate for the purposes of his noonday meal, which had been brought by his grandson. He partook of the meal, and shortly afterwards Mr William Boyd, the toll collector, who was in the hut with him, observed that he was breathing stertorously and was drooping forward in his chair. Mr Boyd at once raised Mr Cashin's head and moistened his lips with water, but without avail, and almost immediately after the seizure death took place. On Mr Boyd noticing Mr Cashin's condition, he raised an alarm, and the grandson went for assistance. Within a few minutes Dr Gell and Inspector Shimmin arrived on the scene, but by then Mr Cashin had breathed his last. Dr Gell pronounced that the cause of death was apoplexy. While returning home, Dr Gell was seized with faintness as he reached the top of the ferry steps, close to the Castle, and fell, with the result that he sustained injury in the nasal region. He was attended and treated by Dr Templeton, and subsequently was visited by Dr Pantin, of Douglas, who attributed his illness to overwork, and prescribed a few days' rest.†

William Cashin was born in 1839—over 73 years ago—at Dalby, in the parish of Kirk Patrick, within sight of the sea. Hs family had resided at Dalby for generations, and for the most part his forbears, a stalwart and hardy folk, had combined agriculture with fishing for a livelihood. The Manx Gaelic was William Cashin's mother tongue, he being ten years old before he gained a colloquial acquaintance with English. To the end he loved the Manx best, and was never so pleased as when he met some person who could converse with him in the language he learned to lisp at his mother's knee. In appearance Mr Cashin was a splendid specimen of a

* "Memorial Notices: William Cashin (sic), Died June 3rd, 1912," *Manx Quarterly* 11 (1912): 1044–49. For another somewhat similar obituary notice, see "Sudden Death of the Castle Custodian," *Peel City Guardian* 8 June 1912: [5] cols c–d.

† "Illness of Dr Gell," *Peel City Guardian* 8 June 1912: [5] col. b.

Manxman. Six feet in height, he was well-proportioned, his sinewy build and erect appearance betokening unusual strength and activity. He had a fine face, his somewhat rugged features being expressive of character, while generally his physiognomy indicated that he combined a kindly disposition with strong determination. He looked a very Viking, and undoubtedly he must have had for one of his ancestors some sailor-warrior who descended upon the Island in King Orry's days. The Norse blood in his veins had probably a good deal to do with his choice of career, for while very young he decided to go to sea. Accordingly be was apprenticed to a master-manner in Whitehaven, and learned his seamanship in the rough but thorough school which the home trade fostered over sixty years ago. Mr Cashin was wont to tell many good tales concerning the days of his apprenticeship, and among these was one illustrative of the dislike Manx boys still have and always have had of admitting lack of knowledge as to the things of everyday life. While the vessel he served in was lying in Whitehaven, he was taken to supper at his master's house. The board was plentifully laden with cold beef, bread and pickles; among the last-named being a liberal supply of pickled red cabbage, set out on a large plate. Young Cashin had been brought up in the frugal fashion which then obtained among Manx crofters and fishermen, and had never in his life before seen pickled cabbage, much less partaken of that appetising accompaniment to cold beef. He was hospitably welcomed, and after being courteously helped by his skipper's wife to the more substantial dishes, was asked by her if he liked pickled cabbage. Ashamed to confess his ignorance, he replied that he did, whereupon the good lady passed him the dish. Another difficulty then presented itself to him—he did not know what quantity he should take, or how the comestible should be eaten. He was, however, always quick to decide, and he came to the conclusion that the dishful had been put out for his sole consumption, and that the spoon in the dish was the medium for conveyance to his mouth. Accordingly he, to the amazement of his host and hostess, set to with grim determination and accounted for enough pickled cabbage to serve a gasp of navvies. The acidity of the compound was distasteful to him, but he was not the lad to hurt the feelings of his master and mistress by allowing his face to show any signs of repugnance, and with splendid heroism he finished the lot. The others gazed at him but said nothing, and it was not until some time after that he discovered the blunder he had committed. "But," he used to comment, "I had enough pickled cabbage at that supper to last me a lifetime, and somehow or other I have never been able to touch the stuff since." On completing his apprenticeship, Mr Cashin continued in the home trade for a brief period, and also made several voyages on blue water to the East Indies, China, and Australia. While a member of the crew of the schooner "Western Trader," of Whitehaven, the vessel, over half a century ago, put into Peel Bay to seek shelter from a South East gale. "While she lay to anchor in the bay the wind changed suddenly to North-West, and, the anchor dragging. The schooner eventually went ashore at Traie Fogog—the inlet now converted into an

open-air bath. So fierce was the sea that the vessel was lifted clean over the rock which stands at the entrance of the creek. The position of the crew was an exceptionally dangerous one, and the coastguards who then worked the rocket apparatus could not get within reach. Two men of Peel were, however, equal to the occasion, and they descended the brows, and at great risk reached a position which enabled them to catch and drag ashore the seamen as they jumped into the sea from the fast breaking schooner. The gallant rescuers were Mr James Morrison, now the veteran and respected harbour-master of Peel, and Mr George Gregor, a fisherman. The fine work of this pair resulted in all the crew of the "Western Trader" being saved, though some of them were got ashore in very parlous condition. Among the worst was William Cashin, who was conveyed in an unconscious state to a cottage close by, where Miss Susan Cowell, a daughter of the cottager, assiduously nursed him to recovery. When he regained consciousness he was struck with the good looks of his nurse; mutual love followed, and in due course the young sailor and Miss Cowell became man and Wife. Mrs Cashin survives her husband, but has the consolation of looking back upon a long and happy married life. They have three children—two sons and, a daughter—surviving. One of the sons is in America, and the other is in England, while the daughter is Mrs Corlett. Mr Cashin eventually abandoned the calling of a sailor for that of a fisherman, and he quickly became skilled in his new craft. Also he, by his firmness of purpose and fearless outspokenness, gained a considerable influence with his fellow-fishermen, and soon came to be regarded in the light of a leader. Accordingly when, in the early 'sixties; Governor Loch submitted to the Legislature a proposal for the levy of dues in connection with vessels making use of Manx harbours, Mr Cashin became chief mouthpiece of the fishermen, by whom the proposal was bitterly resented and fiercely opposed. Acting under his leadership, the fishermen decided to march to St. John's in a body on the 5th July, and present a remonstrance to the Governor and Legislature at the conclusion of the promulgation ceremony from Tynwald Hill. The decision somehow or other leaked out, and the Governor grow much perturbed. Fears of riot were before his eyes, and so obsessed did he become by thoughts of possible bloodshed that he did about the most likely thing to bring bloodshed about. This consisted in orders to the officer in command of the garrison at Castletown to serve out to his men ball cartridge on the occasion of their attendance at Tynwald to form the guard. Also, at his Excellency's instance, an ambulance service was improvised, and altogether the soldiers presented a very business-like appearance when they turned up at St. John's. As for the fishermen, they assembled fifteen hundred strong, and, headed by a brass band, duly marched from Peel towards St. John's. Acting under Mr Cashin's orders, the procession came to a halt at Ballaleece Bridge, and broke up, the members completing the journey to St. John's in knots of three and four, and subsequently re-assembling around Tynwald Hill. It is quite possible that had the procession been continued to the hill, an effort to prevent its

approach would have been made by the police, backed by the military, and in such care serious disturbance must have ensued, as the fishermen of those days were not exactly lambs when their blood was up. It was thus due to Mr Cashin's foresight and influence that the remonstrance was presented quietly, and that the fears of Governor Loch did not materialise in actual trouble. In the end his Excellency decided to visit Peel and inquire into the grievances of the fishermen, which, in addition to the dislike of harbour dues, were concerned with opposition, to an attempt by the boat-owners to abolish the small mesh net system. Accordingly the Governor went to Peel and heard the fishermen. He was particularly struck with the intelligence, ability and force displayed by Cashin in setting forth the fishermen's views, and, as after events proved, the impression was by no means evanescent. For the time being the harbour dues proposal was withdrawn, rumour then current having it, that the Governor was influenced to take this course by the counsel of his then secretary, the late Mr John Thomas Clucas (father of Mr J.D. Clucas, H.K.), a shrewd judge of Manx public feeling, who, so the story goes, advised his Excellency that serious consequences would ensue if harbour dues were levied. It was only under the influence of a deep sense of wrong that Mr Cashin descended to personalities—he preferred logic to mud-throwing. In connection with this agitation against harbour dues, however, he "let himself go" in his resentment of what he conceived to be the misrepresentation and unfairness contained in certain remarks by a Ramsey lawyer who was a member of the House of Keys at the time, and of certain comment regarded by him as unscrupulous and misleading, which appeared in a newspaper published in Douglas. He in his indignation made bitter allusion to the respective pedigrees of the lawyer and editor, and though his language was forceful, it had the approval of many intelligent people in the Island. A few years later it was decided to appoint an assistant harbour master at Peel. Governor Loch had not forgotten the stalwart and fearless fisherman who had stood up to him over the harbour dues question, and brought such influence to bear with the Harbour Commissioners that William Cashin was appointed to the post. He had as superior officer the same James Morrison who saved his life when the "Western Trader" was wrecked at Traie Fogog, and the two men were good and faithful comrades during the eighteen years they were associated in the control of Peel Harbour, and remained firm friends until death parted them last Monday. They had a pleasant "cooish" together on the morning of Cashin's last day on earth. The talk turned on the King's birthday celebration, in honour of which Mr Morrison had hoisted the Union Jack at the Pierhead. Mr Cashin eventually left to cross to the Castle for the purpose of running up the national flag on the flagstaff in the grounds, and soon afterwards it was observed that he was engaged in the task. Also it was noted that owing to some fault in the halyards it was impossible to get the flag to the top of the staff, and it remained in something approaching to half-mast position. And the superstitious ones are now asking themselves "Was this an omen?" Reverting to Mr Cashin's appointment as Assistant

Harbour Master, it was the irony of fate that in the course of time he had to collect the harbour dues to which he so strongly objected. Public feeling in respect to this tax upon shipping abated, and the Legislature, some few years afterwards, agreed to the imposition of dues. And the harbour masters—Mr Cashin among them—had to "lift" the impost. While actively engaged as a fisherman, Mr Cashin incidentally, filled the role of strike leader. Forty to fifty years ago a considerable proportion of members of the crews of herring luggers were employed by the boat owners during the winter months in overhauling and repairing the trains of nests. For this work—work requiring considerable skill—the men were remunerated on the princely soak of nine shillings weekly. Dissatisfaction with this rate of payment culminated in a demand for higher wages, and there was a cessation of work with a view to enforcement of the demand. Mr Cashin was one of the heads of the agitation, which in the end had a successful result, the owners conceding an advance to fourteen shillings per week. Sixteen years ago the then custodian of Peel Castle, the late Mr Goddard, died, and the post was offered to Mr Cashin, who, however, was for a time reluctant to give up his position as assistant harbour master. He was pressed to accept the office, and eventually, on the authorities agreeing to his stipulation that the salary was to be considerably increased, he did so, and held the custodianship to his death. It was in this capacity that he was so widely known—it is not too much to say that he became persona grata with many thousands of holidaymakers, who yielded to the charm of his homely yet delightfully, terse and quaint descriptions of the Castle, and his fascinating relation of the many legends associated with the ancient pile. He especially delighted in taking parties of children round, and these he held in beatific wonderment the while he told them stories concerning the giants of old days, and pointed out the stone which one of the monsters cast from Peel Hill to Lhergydhoo. To the little ones he was the reincarnation of Hams Andersen The chief recommendation of his ciceroneship lay in the simplicity of his language and the unaffected fashion of his relation. To him the stereotyped methods of professional guides never appealed, and that they did not was evidence of his shrewdness—he well knew that the people he showed over the Castle appreciated far more his artless yet pleasant descriptions, delivered conversationally, than they would have done set disquisitiors reeking of the midnight oil. The late King Edward the Seventh and Queen Alexandra were immensely struck with the fine old Manxman that time he guided them over the Castle during their memorable visit to the Island in August, 1902. So pleased was the King with Mr Cashin's explanations and yarns that his Majesty presented him with a sovereign—a coin which the recipient guarded to the end as one of the most precious of his treasures. In connection with his meeting with the King, a good story is told—a story which, if not true, is so well invented that no apology is needed for its introduction here. It is to the effect than Mr Cashin produced his autograph book for his Majesty's inspection, whereupon that kindly Monarch immediately added

immensely to its value by inscribing his royal signature on one of its pages. Mr Cashin, needless to say, rejoiced greatly that his Majesty had thus honoured him, but he was not satisfied.

Looking straight at the King, and then jerking his head in the direction of the Queen, he bluntly remarked, "And won't the missus sign too?" The Manx officials who accompanied their Majesties were horrified at the unconventional character of the request; not so the King, who laughed heartily, as did the Queen, and without the slightest demur "the missus" signed too. Mr Cashin had a neat way of turning the laugh against foolish folk who endeavoured to ridicule him while he was describing the Castle to parties of visitors. On one occasion a couple of young Scotsmen rendered themselves particularly objectionable to other members of the party by the inanity of their comments, comments which they fondly but vainly imagined were humorous in the extreme. Mr Cashin took not the slightest notice, but pursued the even tenour of his discourse to the end. In the course of his descriptions he had enlarged considerably upon the many acts of folly which people, connected with the Island had perpetrated in days gone by, and at the close of his narration one of the interrupting Scots inquired whether at the present time there were any such silly folk on the Island. "Well," responded the custodian, "you see, we shipped them all off to Scotland many years ago, but now and again a few of their descendants come over and bother us with their foolishness. I rather think there are two of them here to-day." The Caledonians did not join in the laugh which followed. A very methodical man was Mr Cashin, and gifted with a singularly logical mind. An illustration of this is furnished by his retort to some people who attempted to chaff him it, regard to his teetotal principles. By way of explanation, it should be premised that he was not always a total abstainer from intoxicants, but in the prime of his manhood he decided that the better course was to give up the cup that cheers, likewise inebriates. Soon afterwards he was in company of certain friends who were not averse to looking upon the wine when it was red in the cup, and was invited to partake of a drop of rum. Ere he could refuse, one of the party remarked, "But there is no use in asking you; you are a miserable teetotaller." "My friend," quickly replied Cashin, "you have just stated two things, one of which is true and one of which is not true. It is true that I am a teetotaller, but the misery I left with you when I became one." Mr Cashin was perhaps the finest speaker of the Manx Gaelic in the Island, and though the deficiencies of his early education operated against him to doing much in the direction of preserving the language in its written form, he gave many valuable hints to the late Mr Arthur W. Moore and others who set themselves to perpetuate such literary fragments in Manx as have come down. He knew by heart many old Manx ballads and carols, and sang them with considerable taste—like most Manx people he had a good ear for music. He was, too, a rich mine of Manx folklore, which he was ever ready to impart. Many of the tales and proverbs which be learned traditionally have, as a consequence of his willingness to relate them, been

reduced to writing, and will remain as a treasure to future generations. His proficiency as a speaker of Manx gained for him the honour of reading from Tynwald Hill, last year and the year before, the Manx translations of the summaries of Acts of Tynwald passed during the year. Mr Cashin was a regular attendant at Peel Church, and was one of the senior members of the Peel Tent of Rechabites. Respected by all classes in the Island, he was greatly esteemed by a large circle of friends as a man of sterling independence and honesty of character; an ardent Manx patriot, and in the truest sense of the term a gentleman. He feared no man, yet he never gave unreasonable offence to any man. Kindly of disposition and charitable of thought, he was indulgent to the failings of others, and was keenly alive to and rather enjoyed his own. He so lived that the end, which came to him suddenly, did not find him unprepared, and the great probability is that he died as he would have wished to die—in the full vigour of a kindly old age.

The funeral of the late Mr W. Cashin, custodian of Peel Castle, took place on Wednesday, June 5th, and was conducted by the Rev W.A. Lewis, M.A. (vicar of German) and the Rev J. Wilson (curate). The hymn, "My God, my Father," was sung at the door, after which the cortege proceeded to the Parish Church, where the first portion of the service was read, concluding with the "Dead March," played by Mr P.C. Moore, organist. After the committal portion of the service at the graveside in Peel Cemetery, the Rechabite ode was sung, the deceased having been a member of the Star of Mona Tent for 43 years. Among those present at the funeral were Mr B.E. Sargeaunt (Government Secretary), Mr R. McLaughlin (custodian of Castle Rushen), and representatives of the Star of Mona Tent. The chief mourners were Mr J.C. Cashin (son), Mrs J. Corlett (daughter), Mr J. Corlett (son-in-law), Messrs H. and W. Corlett and Miss C. Corlett (grandchildren), and Messrs J. and Caesar Cashin. The pall-bearers were Messrs Thos. Harrison, W. Cashin, W. Cashin, and Thos. Meyrick. Wreaths were sent by Mr B.E. Sargeaunt, Mr Eglinton and family, Miss Morrison, Misses Joynson and Keegan, Mr and Mrs J. Corlett, and Mr H. and Miss C. Corlett.

(3)

THE OLD CUSTODIAN: AN APPRECIATION* (1912)

It is now about twelve years since my first visit to Peel. I remember well the day on which we decided to "do" the Castle, more from a sense of duty before leaving the place than in expectation of any pleasure to be obtained therefrom. It was a glorious morning in August. The historic ruins lay basking in the sun, the high tide lapping close against the grey promontory on which they stand. It was indeed an ideal morning for our visit! We were received just inside the gate by Mr Cashen. He took us under his wing in his paternal way, and I remember how we were all struck by the same thing, namely, his love for the old Castle. It betrayed itself in his tones, his looks and even his stride betokened a pride in his work. What a dignified custodian he made! One worthy of the glorious traditions of the venerable pile. He permitted no silly jokes about what was so sacred in his eyes. Let the irrepressibly funny man of the party attempt it once. He never tried it a second time. Mr Cashen's dignified rejoinder soon suppressed such people. For years past, I have made an annual pilgrimage to Peel Castle, always accompanied by friends who had neither seen the Castle nor the custodian, and I am bound to state that the impression made by the custodian equalled, if it did not excel that made by the Castle. On Saturday evening last we visited the Castle—a party of five, two of whom were foreigners, and with them the feeling was the same. [Y]esterday, on receiving the sad news of Mr Cashen's sudden call, I could not help thinking that if it had to come, death found him where he would have chosen to be found, at his post, and among the beloved ruins which were at once his joy and his pride.

Peel, June 4th, 1912.

* N.A. John, "The Old Custodian: An Appreciation," *Peel City Guardian* 8 June 1912: [3] col. c.

“LOYALTY TO PEEL”

(4)

"MADGEYN Y GLIASS"
("MADGES OF THE SOUTH")

(1)

The curious Madgeyn y Gliass, "Madges of the South," is a satire by the Peel fishermen on their fellows of Port Erin and Port St. Mary. They designate them as Madges, i.e., as effeminate creatures, and they declare that they are shiftless and impecunious, and quite under the dominion of their wives. I am told by Mr Cashen that the Port St. Mary and Port Erin men had also their satire on the men of Peel, but I have been unable to procure it.

(2)

The above mentioned Madgeyn y Jiass is one of Cashen's songs & will come in under Chapter V—"Songs, sayings & riddles[.]" Cashen gave me the satire which loyalty to Peel forebade him giving to Mr A.W. Moore—it is to the effect that the gallows were washed off Hango Hill once by a heavy sea & that they came round west & were washed up on the Niarbyl beach. When the southside fishermen heard this they made a satire on the westside men—that when the very gallows itself went round west to hang them—it shewed plainly what a lawless lot they we[re]. Some of the lines ran:

The gallows went round to west one day
To h[a]ng the men of Dalby.

(3)

FLOUTYN ER VOOINJER GHELBY

(The gallows were once swept off Hango Hill by the sea and, and washed up on the Niarbyl shore, after which Southside men returned the taunts of their fellows in the West by saying that when the very gallows went round West to hang them it showed how bad they were.)

Hie yn chriy mygeayrt sheear un laa,
As haink eh stiagh er Niarbyl traie
Dy chroghey mooinjer Ghelby,
Dy chroghey mooinjer Ghelby.

Va eirey mooar ayns Rhaby mooar,
As eirey mooar ayns Ballelby,
Ny sodjey sheear ny smessey sthill,
Pyht, pyht, pyht, er vooinjer Ghelby.

(When this was sung, the thumbs were snapped at "Pyht." A Peel man would say it in the same circumstances as an Irishman would invite one "to stand on his coat." It was a challenge to a fight, and the finger-snapping expressed derision. It was sung to a dance tune.)

Source: (1) A.W. Moore, *Manx Ballads and Music* (Douglas: G. & R. Johnson, 1896), xxvii. (2) Sheet (missing top-half) in the hand of Sophia Morrison, undated, Manx National Heritage Library, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 5 (unlisted). (3) Anon. [but Sophia Morrison], "Manx Scraps," *Peel City Guardian* 29 July 1905, 8 col. a. [Extract]

(5)

SOPHIA MORRISON TO S.K. BROADBENT*
(1912)

June 27.

Dear Mr Broadbent,

In planning out the arrangement of ~~W~~Cashen'[s] lore, it has occurred to me that as a last little chapter some personal reminiscences of Cashen would interest many people—I should put in his account of King Edward's visit. Can you remember any other stories that he used to tell of <u>himself</u>? I am sure such a chapter would attract many people.

S.M.

* Letter from Sophia Morrison to S.K. Broadbent, 27 June [1912], MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 4, Small Letter Copybook (1908–13).

(6)

WM. CASHEN'S MANX FOLK LORE*

The late Thomas Edward Brown would surely have wept tears of joy could he have been permitted a perusal of the posthumously published volume of Manx Folk Lore, by the late William Cashen, sometime custodian of Peel Castle. Simply deliciously—the old man tells his story, and in telling it makes fine use of the Manx idiom which Brown revelled in. Yet is the idiom never obtrusive—there is just sufficient of it to flavour acceptably the homely though beautiful English in which the folk lore, garnered from the abundant stores of a magnificent memory is couched. There is internal evidence that the book was written a considerable time before Mr Cashen's death—indeed the preface indicates that it was ready for the printers before the death of Mr Arthur W. Moore, late Speaker of the House of Keys. As this preface concisely sets out the author's intention, and affords a fair illustration of his style, it is perhaps, as well to quote it here:—

> Standing on the borderland between the going out of the Manx and the coming in of the English I have thought it advisable to save all that is possible of the customs, legends, superstitions, and folklore of the Isle of Man, conscious of my inability to do anything except as an addition to Mr. A.W. Moore's Folk-Lore Book, and with the hope that that gentleman will be induced to issue a new edition, and save all that is possible of the sayings and doings of our common forefathers. I pride myself on being a Manninagh Dooie voish y clean. I intend to confine myself as much as possible to the customs, sayings, and doings which I knew and heard in my childhood. If any effort of mine should be of any avail it will be to me a sufficient reward.
>
> W. Cashen

Following the preface are certain verses concerning William Cashen, by "Cushag," in that gifted authoress's best style. Then comes an introduction from the pen of Miss S. Morrison, of Peel, whose friendship with Cashen was long and close. The introduction is in the nature of an interesting memoir of the fine old Manxman, and it materially enhances the interest of the book. Cashen's first chapter, dealing with Manx home life, mainly consists of delightful legend delightfully imparted, and records of quaint customs long since either obsolete or forgotten except by the few. It is evident from this chapter and from the others of the book, that firm hold as the Reformation took in the Isle of Man, traces of the Old Faith long lingered among the Manx people. The "crush cairn," the invocations of St. Patrick, and the belief which actually prevailed up to sixty years ago that only a Roman Catholic priest

* "Wm. Cashen's Manx Folk Lore," *Manx Quarterly* 13 (1913): 1159.

could effectually exorcise, are sufficient proof of this, while Cashen has frequent references to customs undoubtedly of pre-Reformation origin that were observed within lining memory. The author delighted in stories concerning fairies, bugganes, giants, and ghosts—had the opportunity been afforded him he would have rivalled Andersen or Grimm. His second chapter teems with yarns of the " little folk," the "Lhiannan Shee," bugganes, giants, and ghostly manifestations. Some of these mythical folk were decidedly agreeable; others the reverse, but always Cashen discourses of them and their doings charmingly. The best chapter of the book is undoubtedly that which concerns the customs and superstitions of Manx fishermen. A practical sailor and fisherman himself, Cashen appears to have gone to considerable trouble to compile the traditions which were abundant among the sturdy and somewhat turbulent folk who gathered the harvest of the sea in his youth, and the result, as contained in the third chapter, is both interesting; and refreshing. Like their ancestors the Vikings, the Manx fishermen of the mid-nineteenth century were mighty in their potations, and tee-totaler though Cashen was during his prime of life and closing years, he would appear to regard the more temperate habits of modern fishermen in the light of degeneracy. The fourth chapter is given over to legendary and traditional history of the Isle of Man, and is particularly concerned with St. Patrick's connection with the Island. By way of conclusion several pages are filled with songs, sayings, and riddles in Manx and English, many of them published for the first time, and all of them interesting. A fine portrait of the author forms an appropriate frontispiece. The book is admirably printed on good paper, and the beautiful typography worthily maintains the great reputation of the old-standing firm of Johnson.

* "Wm. Cashen's Manx Folk Lore." G. and L Johnson, Douglas, 1/-.

CUSTOMS AND SUPERSTITIONS OF THE MANX FISHERMEN

(7)

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE MANX FISHERMEN*
(1895)

Dear Sir,—The following interesting notes with reference to the superstitions of Manx fishermen have been sent to me by Mr William Cashen, assistant harbour-master at Peel, for a proposed second edition of my *Folklore of the Isle of Man*. As, however, [it] is not likely to be published for some time yet, I think it desirable to publish the notes and so preserve them from any possibility of being lost. I have, therefore, obtained Mr Cashen's assent to this being done. I should like to take this opportunity of saying that I shall be very glad to obtain particulars about any Manx customs and superstitions which have not already been published.

Yours truly, A.W. Moore

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Superstitious as were the Manxmen whose occupations were on land, they were surpassed by the Manxmen whose occupation was on the sea. Proof of this is afforded by the following account of the superstitions of Manx fishermen:

On May Eve, the *crosh cuirn* (rowan cross) would be put into every boat. They would travel for miles into the country to get this, and would then deposit it in some secret place in the boat, and it had to remain there until the following May Eve.

In making a start for the fishing for the first time, care must be taken (1) not to go out on Friday; (2) to turn the boat with the sun, as to turn against the sun would be unlucky; (3) to have salt in the boat. If by any chance the boat had to turn back, it was considered very unlucky, especially on the first day of going out.

No person was allowed to whistle on board the boat, as it would attract the attention of the *dooinney marrey* (merman), who would be sure to send more wind than was required. No person was allowed to speak of dogs, cats, rabbits, horses or mice. A horseshoe was nailed in some place in every boat, that of a stallion being

* William Cashen, "Customs of the Manx Fishermen," *Mona's Herald* 25 December 1895: [?]. Known only from a dated clipping in MNHL, L8, *Frowde's Miscellaneous Cuttings Book*, the relevant issue is missing from the MNHL newspaper collection. This text later appeared as the opening pages (pp. 27–30) of Chapter iii, "Fishing," of *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore*, with a slight alteration to the final sentence. ("The place was pointed out to me when a child, more than forty years ago, by old men who were then about seventy, with the warning that I was never to fish on Sunday night"). I am grateful to Pat Griffiths of the MNHL for this information.

considered the best. It was lucky to dream of a ripe cornfield, and of a high tide with an abundance of seaweed on the shore. If a man dreamed of his wife it was sure to bring fine weather; but if he dreamed of strange women the weather would be bad. If a pair of ravens were seen to fly across the bay, creek, or harbour, it was a sign that there would be plenty of herrings caught.

If the boat was becalmed, the surest way to bring the wind in a very short time was for a man to stick a knife in the mainmast. If it blew a gale when the fishing boats were at sea, it was no unusual thing for fishermen's wives to throw handful of salt in the fire. They believed that would stop the wind from blowing so hard. This practice was common fifty years ago.

If a boat was unlucky, recourse was had to the herb-doctor. Many a good handful of herbs have I seen carried on board. The herbs had to be boiled in a pot, and the liquor, when mixed with rum, was divided among the crew, except a portion which was thrown upon the nets. Occasionally some of the herbs would be put in the tail buoy, and disposed of in various ways as ordered by the doctor. The whole ceremony was to be kept a secret from other people. This ritual was believed in, not only by the most ignorant, but by the most intelligent among the fishermen; class leaders and local preachers, and many of that sort believe in it to this day.

When a fisherman was leaving home to go to fish on Monday, his wife threw an old she after him. If it stopped mouth up with the point of the shoe pointing the way he was going, it was very lucky; but if the point showed back towards the house, he might as well go back himself, as it would be a poor week's fishing. This throwing of the shoe was also a sure indication whenever a person had any venture such as a law-suit, going to sell a cow or horse at a fair, or getting married.

If a fisherman lost the first fish as he was hauling his line in, or if the first fish was caught by the sternmost man in the boat, it was considered unlucky. If the first herring caught in the boat for the season had a roe, it was lucky; if it was milt herring it was unlucky. To go out third board on the first day of the season, especially, but also at any time, was unlucky. To leave home on Monday morning with the stockings, drawers, singlet, or any of the undergarments put on by mistake wrong side out, was lucky; but they had to be left that was during the whole of the week.

There was an old law against fishing on Sunday; but, quite apart from the law, the Manx fishermen have a strongly-rooted superstition against fishing on that day. As a reason for this the following story is related:—There is a tradition that the fishing fleet out of Port Masooyl, now called The Niarbyl, once shot their nets on Sunday night, and, being overtaken by a storm from the South-East, they were obliged to anchor in under the foot of Cronk-yn-Irree-Laa, when part of the steep cliff slid down, and the surf which was caused by the rocks falling into the water swamped them all. Ever after that no boat would fish on Sunday night. There was a *bardoon* (lament) made for them, in which it related that they anxiously looked up for the break of day to *Cronk-yn-Irree-Laa*, Hill of the Rising Day, this hill being so called

by the fishermen because they saw the sun rising over it. They say there was only one fisherman left alive in Dalby village after the storm, and that he lived on the farm called Ballelby. Dalby, where they also farmed, was at that time the chief place for fishermen in the Island, and the Niarbyl, close by, was their headquarters for the fishing. The place where the cliff slid down is called the *Garroo Clagh*, (The Rugged Stone). The place was pointed out to Mr Cashen when a child, more than forty years ago, by old men who were then above seventy, with the warning that he was never to fish on a Sunday night.

(8)

CUSTOMS OF THE MANX FISHERMEN*
(1896)

The following account of the Customs of the Manx Fishermen, which has been written by Mr William Cashen, assistant Peel harbour Master, refers more particularly to those in vogue forty years ago. It was sent by him to Mr A.W. Moore for insertion in his Folklore:

At the Spring Equinox the fishermen made their first preparations by getting their boats launched off the banks where they had lain all the winter, the crews helping each other in doing so. On these occasions a jar of rum was provided and served out among them, and they all shouted together *"Lesh ee! lesh ee! lesh ee!"*—"With her, with her, with her"—they forcing them into the water by main strength. The nets used by the Manx fishermen were made by hand into *jeebins*. Each jeebin was fifty-two meshes deep, and seventeen yards long. Sixteen of them formed a net, i.e., four in length and four in depth. The nets were made of flax or hemp, which was spun at home during the long winter nights. Mr Cashen remembers that when he was a child he had to make so many yards of jeebin after school hours, and that he was punished if he failed in his task. The sixteen jeebins that formed the net were joined together in much the same fashion as canvas in a sail. If one jeebin got worn out, or failed, it was taken out and another put in its place. If the mesh shrank or became too small it was condemned. If an English shilling passed freely between knot and knot the mesh was considered sufficient. When the crew had made a start wth the fishing they chose some particular public-house where they started the "shot," i.e., the drink they got on credit, which was continued during the season. Every one of the crew, or their wives was at liberty to go in there and have their pint of *jough*[1] or glass of rum at any time whenever they felt thirsty. The whole account was settled at the latter end of the season, when the boats were safely moored for the winter. When they had got clear of the harbour all hands, on signal from the skipper, took their hats off and offered up a silent prayer. When the land was fairly opened out, so that they could see the Calf and other headlands, a bottle of rum was hauled out and served to all hands in a horn measure that had been handed down from father to son for generations. As the

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* William Cashen, "Customs of the Manx Fishermen," *Peel City Guardian* 11 January 1896: [3] cols b–c. (Footnotes are as in the original.) Appeared earlier as "Customs of the Manx Fishermen," *Mona's Herald* 1 January 1896: 4 cols. d–e. [The *Peel City Guardian* microfilm is of better quality and so the text from that issue appears here.] This material also appears as part of Chapter iii, "Fishing," pp. 27–43, of *William Cashen's Manx Folk-Lore*, but rewritten and rearranged in the process.

1 Literally "drink," but usually applied to inferior beer.

fleet stood out for the fishing-ground, every man was looking out for signs of the presence of herrings, such as the *perkin*, or porpoise, gannets, gulls, herrings playing on the surface, and oily water. As soon as it became so dark that they could not see the Admiral's[2] flag or the sun,[3] they held out their arms out at full length, and when they could not see the black in their thumb nails, they commenced to shoot their nets. This being done and everything made snug for the night their first duty was to say their prayers, when every person on board the boat went on their knees. If there was any man on board that was considered more pious than the rest, he offered up prayer, or if there were two or three with a reputation for piety, they offered up prayer in turn. If there was no one with such a reputation on board, then each one offered up a silent prayer. If it was a short summer's night, one man was placed on watch, and the rest turned in until the day broke over top of Cronk-ny-Iree-Lhaa ("The Hill of the Rising Day"), when they commenced to haul in their nets. But if the season was far advanced, they sometimes hauled before sunrise. When the nights were long, they occasionally sailed to find the fish; and when it came to be so dark that the phosphorus could be seen in the water, they sailed over ground where they thought there was fish, and, at intervals they caused a sharp concussion by striking the deck with the anchor. If there were fish there the water turned a milky white. When they had been shot for an hour or two, they would try the net to see if it was "creeping," as they expressed it. If there were any fish in it, they carefully counted what they pulled out of a "pair," a pair being so much of the net as extended from one float to another.[4] If other boats were sailing on the same *briaght* or "search," their crews would hail with the words "Row prowal ayns shen, bhoy?" ("Were you proving there, boy?") The answer to this would be to state how many "warps"[5] they had taken out of the pair. They counted all their herrings in "warps." If a boat was taking a good haul of herrings, its crew was bound to blow their horn for the purpose of informing the others of it; and any skipper who heard the blowing of the horn was bound to go to their assistance and offer to help them, either by taking part of their nets from them or by aiding them in getting the nets on board their boat. When they hauled in their nets they would be able to realise pretty nearly how many fish they had caught. As they neared the port, the "bumming yawls," or buyers, boarded them, and after they had made their bargain, they handed the fishermen a shilling or other coin, called the *eearlys* or "earnest," and passed round a bottle of rum, to which every man on board helped himself out of a horn measure. The bargain was them completed. The fish would be run fresh to the English market in smacks which were lying ready in the bay or harbour. Each buyer who intended to buy had his flag flying on his smack.

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2 The fisherman in command of the fleet so called.

3 Shooting the nets before sunset was forbidden by law.

4 There were five "pairs" to each net.

5 A lot of three herrings.

They sold their herrings by the mease of five hundred, there being six score and four fish to the hundred. In the early part of the last century herrings were sold by the "cran,"[6] but so much imposition was practised that it had to be discontinued. They counted the herrings as follows: Two men got a basket between them, when they commenced with *unnane, jees, three,* i.e., one, two, three, warp, and so on alternately to *daeed*, or forty, when there was added another warp and a single herring, which was called "tally," thus making 124 fish. The skipper carefully marked each tally by making a notch with his knife on a stick. Every fifth notch crossed the other four, and this made a mease. And so they fished day after day for five days of the week. On Saturday they made for the harbour, and on no account would any one attempt to go out on Saturday or Sunday night; no matter how poor they might be they would not break the Sabbath. Their train of nets was so joined together that each net could be easily separated, so that every Saturday each man undid his net, carried it on his back to the nearest grass, where he laid it to dry. This was the old practice. If they had earned any money during the week they went to their usual public-house to settle, or to divide the money in the following proportion: The boat got 2½ shares, and each man one share, and each separate net also got half a share. During the last fifty years the provisions were paid out of the gross earnings, but before that time each man provided his own provisions. If it happened that there were any odd shillings, which there very often were, they were reserved for the poor. They called this money that was undivided "God's Portion," and they believed that their luck depended upon it being given to the poor. It would have amused anyone to listen to a company of fishermen on Saturday night. Each one had his own yarn to tell, and they all spoke together; they were, in fact, all speakers, and no listeners. If anyone was particularly anxious to be heard, he struck the table with his fist, so as to draw the attention of the rest to him. If he wished to provoke a quarrel he struck the table in the middle, as some other might dispute his right to do so, but he might strike it on his own side without fear of raising opposition. Mr Cashen says that forty years ago he has seen as many as ten fights going on on Peel quay at once. But that is changed now, owing to the efforts of the temperance party. Thus week after week passed away until the end of the season. If one fisherman asked another, when the season had ended, how he had done, he would say, if he had done well or fairly well, that he hoped to keep the Devil and the Coroner from the door, i.e., that he would not be in such a position from want that he would be tempted to commit a crime or be compelled to have his goods sold to pay his debts. When the boats were put on the banks and their contents packed away, the final settlement was made, that is to say, the nets' share, which had hitherto been undivided, was distributed among the men. At this time, too the crews were probably engaged for the following season. The way that the skipper of each vessel hired his crew was by passing a shilling to the

[6] By Act of Tynwald in 1871 (see *Statutes*, vol. i, pp. 397–98) the cran contained 42 gallons.

man he considered the best, at the same time naming the conditions. This man passed it on to the next, and so it went the round of the crew. The last man to receive it put the shilling into a quart measure, tossed it up, and turned the measure mouth under. If the shilling turned up heads it was considered lucky. This man then handed the shilling back to the skipper, and made a short speech, in which he reminded him that the crew expected him to conduct himself honestly and properly towards them and their owner. This is a striking proof of the independent character of the Manx fishermen. The hiring and these proceedings usually took place at the boat's supper (*Shibbyr Baatey*). This was held about Christmas time, very often on old St Stephen's night (January 7th), or old New Year's night (January 13th). On this occasion there was provided an abundance of pies and puddings, and plenty of rum and jough. Each member of the crew could bring his wife or sweetheart, and so largely did they indulge that these suppers have been known to cost from five to ten pounds. Many fishermen at the present day lament that this practice has not been kept up, as they say that there has been no luck since the custom was abandoned.

In the early part of this century, the rig of the Manx herring herring boats was what they called "squaresail." They carried one mast, on which was carried a sail of a square shape that reached from the top to the bottom of the mast. They also had the "wherry rig," with two masts with fore-and-aft sails. About sixty years ago they changed the rig to the "dandy" or what is now called the "yawl" rig. All these fishing boats, which went by the general name of smack, were also, till about forty years ago, called "dagons." About 1850 a number of Cornish fishermen came to the Peel with their boats, and, as Nicholas, or Nickey, was a common name among them, it was applied to their rig, which was then very generally adopted by the Manx boats, which also took the name of "nickeys." The "nickey," or "lug" rig, is the commonest rig in the Isle of Man at the present day. Boats undoubtedly sail faster under it than under the old rigs, and it has been found especially useful for boats conveying the delicate and quickly-spoiled mackerel.

In the earlier part of the century large quantities of herrings were cured for export. Numbers of barrels were sent to the West Indies for the plantations; but, after the slaves were freed, that trade in a great measure ceased.

At a time when there were no clocks or timetables to guide the fishermen in their calling, the breaking of the day over the hills, or the passing of a particular star over a certain point, told them the time; and, in the absence of tidetables, the ebb and flow on the rocks told him whether there was water in the habour or not; while the noise of the surf on certain points of the coasts, and other well-known signs told them of the state of the weather. But it was to guide them in these things, according to the general belief that the official called the "Admiral" already referred to, was appointed. His duties were especially to guide them as to time for shouting and hauling their nets. The usual fishing ground of the Peel men was what was called the "Big Bay," which lay between the Niarbyl and the Calf, and, as the dawn broke over the top of

Cronk-ny-Iree-Lhaa, the Admiral blew his horn to let them know it was time to haul their nets in. When they heard this they took up the cry, *"Haul! T'an lhaa brishey kairis y cronk"* ("Haul!—the day breaks over the hill"), which resounded from one to another.

WILLIAM CASHEN
(1839–1912)

WILLIAM CASHEN'S MANX FOLK-LORE

Illiam y Cashen ta my ennym,
Manninagh Dooie va mee voish y clean,
Ayns my aegid va mee faillit
Son shiolteyr dy hiauill y keayn.

PREFACE

Standing on the borderland between the going out of the Manx and the coming in of the English I have thought it advisable to save all that is possible of the customs, legends, superstitions, and folklore of the Isle of Man, conscious of my inability to do anything except as an addition to Mr A.W. Moore's Folk-Lore Book, and with the hope that that gentleman will be induced to issue a new edition, and save all that is possible of the sayings and doings of our common forefathers. I pride myself on being a "*Manninagh Dooie voish y clean*." I intend to confine myself as much as possible to the customs sayings, and doings which I knew and heard in my childhood. If any effort of mine should be of any avail it will be to me a sufficient reward.

W. Cashen

The old man ceased, and in the pause,
We watched the smoke against the hill,
As in a dream he told his tale,
As in a dream we listened still.
His sea-blue eyes though dimmed by years
Saw far beyond our time and space,
And child-like faith in unseen things
Had smoothed the furrows in his face.
His simple creed—to do his best
As guardian of that treasured pile,
Whose ancient towers and ruined choirs
Stand crowned about Peel's holy Isle.
And leaning on his staff he sat
Beside us in the sunny nook,
Embrasured by cathedral walls
Whose stones were all his sacred book.

Cushag

INTRODUCTION

William Cashen was born seventy-four years ago at Dalby, then the chief fishing place on the Island. His father was half-fisherman, half-farmer, as were many Manxmen in those days. When William was still a little boy his father moved to the Niarbyl cottage, and there he and his nine brothers and sisters were brought up. He used to say that he and his brothers slept in the cock loft with their noses nearly touching the *scraas*, that not a window in the cottage opened, and not a doctor darkened the door! The Niarbyl beach was his playground as soon as he could walk. There the "childher" ran about while the mother worked in the house. Hard indeed she must have worked, and a fine woman she was. When he was an old man William would often say how he remembered hearing his mother sing "Yn Graihder," "The Demon Lover," as she rocked the baby to sleep, and to him it was the sweetest song in the world. Sometimes he would go to old Paaie Cooil, a weaver in Dalby, and though she could not read, she would recite *Pargys Cailt*, *Paradise Lost*, to him in Manx, while he filled the *cuir*, or bobbins, for her. The child thought it was fine to hear, and it is indeed a beautiful version of the poem.

William went to school at Dalby to Mr Dubois, a Galway Irishman. After school hours he worked at *jeebin* making,[1] selling fish, herding, and running messages. He was always the *boy-drid*, or trotting boy of the family, he said. His first place away from home was with a farmer in Dalby, and his wages were material for fustian breeches, and hide for a pair of shoes! At fifteen he went to sea, and served his time on a brig called "Ada," trading between Dublin and Whitehaven. He used to go to night school when the brig was in port, and he took lessons in navigation and other subjects. I have often heard him lament that he had not the opportunities of good and free education that the youngsters of today have, then he might have been something greater than he was. "But," he would add, "the sun is going west with me." After four years he "went foreign." He sailed to Australia, China, the Pacific Islands, and Newfoundland, and fifty years afterwards he could vividly picture the great rivers he had navigated, and the ports where the ship had touched—Seville, for instance, where he once lay five weeks in port, and, he said, acquired enough of their lingo to do marketing. In lreland and Scotland his native tongue helped him, he speaking Manx to their Scotch Gaelic or Erse. After "sailing foreign" for many year, he was shipwrecked in Peel Bay, when the schooner "Western Trader," of Whitehaven, went ashore at Traie Fogog. Cashen was carried in a state of unconsciousness to a house close by, where he was nursed back to health by Susanna Cowell, the master's daughter, whom he afterwards married. They were a devoted couple to the end of his life. He now settled down in Peel and went to the herring

[1] "A deeping of nets," Cregeen's Manx Dictionary.

fishing, first as one of a crew, and afterwards as skipper of the "Fleetwing." The house in which he and his wife always lived, after some eighteen years of marriage, was built by his wife's grandfather, an old Cumberland "statesman" (farmer), who married a Manx girl. After some years at the fishing he became assistant harbour-master at Peel, a post which he held for nineteen years. For the last seventeen years of his life he was custodian of Peel Castle, where he was evidently the right man in the right place. None of the many thousands of visitors who have been taken round the Castle by him will forget his genial talk, and his thorough knowledge of what he had to tell. He was a real student, and was always adding to his information on the subject of the history, archaeology, and legends of Peel, and of the Castle especially. He was, for instance, very anxious to vindicate the memory of good Bishop Wilson. He would ask what authority writers had for saying that the Bishop stripped the lead of the roof of Peel Cathedral to roof the church at Patrick. He compared writers who thus wrote to "sheep going through a gap, following one after the other." He had read that there was a new roll of lead in the Castle, which was used.

Cashen was concerned in a public event which will be long remembered in the Island. He was the leader of the fishermen when, in 1874, they rose in protest against the levying of harbour dues by Governor Lock. It was he who organized their march, fifteen hundred strong, to the Tynwald, and who so conducted the affair that all ended peaceably: the Governor visited Peel to discuss the questions in point, and finally withdrew the dues. He also at another time headed a strike of fishermen who demanded higher pay than 9/- a week for overhauling and repairing the trains of nets during the winter.

Cashen died on June 3rd, 1912 whilst on duty at the Castle,—his end was sudden and peaceful, and such, one thinks, as he would have chosen.

It seems impossible to think of the Castle without him,—the real old Manxman, with his fine form and kindly, rugged face, was such a fitting guardian of the ancient Manx fortress. The chief interest in his life was his country,—her history, language and folk-lore, in all of which he was well versed. He could quote the English translation of the Chronicles of Man,—in fact, so well did he know these books that I think that if they had been lost he could have re-written them. He had a well-stocked library of books relating to Manx History and Folk-lore, many being presentation copies from the authors. He had also a goodly collection of books in Manx Gaelic. He many a time regretted that he had spent so many of his earlier years off the Island. Although he knew no English till he was nine years old, during his long absence from the Island in later years when he heard not a word of the language, he lost much of his fluency, but he spoke and read Manx as much as possible and it all came back to him again. He used to regret, too, the good stories, songs, and sayings of which he had heard so many: when it occurred to him, the old people had gone and so had their lore. He did, however, in 1892, soon after the publication of Mr A.W. Moore's *The Folk-lore of the Isle of Man*, write down a good

deal in an old ledger, which he gave to me many years ago. Some of his notes have been used by the late Mr A.W. Moore in his "Further Notes on Manx Folklore," which ran through *The Antiquary*; also his songs in *Manx Ballads and Music*. Mr Moore renders him a handsome tribute of thanks in his preface to the former, referring to "William Cashen […] who has a thorough knowledge of his countrymen": so likewise does Sir John Rhŷs in his preface to the *Outlines of the Phonology of Manx Gaelic*. Our great poet T.E. Brown thought highly of him. In one of his letters he says: "C., the assistant harbour-master,—a magnificent old salt, […] acute, sensible, and sincere. He made an absolutely perfect speech […] That kind, sagacious, equitable old C!" When Cashen gave me his notebook, he said that he would add to it considerably during the long winter nights and give me the MS. to complete the book. This he never did, though he has told me many interesting stories and bits of lore. He thought that, perhaps, some day, after his death, his notes might be published, but he said, too, that they would have to be re-written and polished up for the press if this were ever done. Here they are, however, as he wrote them, except that they have been grouped in chapters. It seems to me better to bring them out in their original form, though they may be a little disconnected and abrupt, than to smoothe all the individuality out of them.

He was one of the best speakers of Manx in the Island and it will be remembered how, on the occasion of the visit of King Edward and Queen Alexandra to the Castle in 1902, His Majesty asked him to give him a specimen of his mother tongue. The following is Cashen's own account of the visit:

"The Royal party were in the Castle and sent to me to come to explain to them the epitaph on Bishop Rutter's tomb in the Cathedral.[2] I read the epitaph, which is said to have been written by the Bishop himself, and reads:

> In hac domo quam a vermiculis accepi (confratribus meis) spe resurrectionis ad vitam jaceo, Sam. permissione divina Episcopus hujus insulae.
>
> Siste ector—vide et ride palatium episcopi.
>
> In this house which I have received from the little worms (my brethren) in the hope of resurrection to life, I lie, Sam., by divine permission Bishop of the Island.
>
> Stop reader—look and laugh at the palace of a bishop.

While there I told the Royal party the story of Bishop Rutter's skull, which is, that about thirty years ago the Cambrian Association paid a visit to Peel Castle,[3] would have Peel Castle cleared up, and discovered this tomb of Bishop Rutter. They had the tombstone lifted, and they discovered the remains of Bishop Rutter, and part of the coffin in which he had been buried; and one fine gentleman called Dr Oliver, takes up Bishop Rutter's skull and puts it under his coat and carries it away with

[2] Died 30 May 1662.
[3] August 1865.

him. He hadn't it long till he sickened and died and to make a long story short it got into the possession of nearly a dozen of the leading families of the Isle of Man, and each family, that it got Bishop Rutter's skull, went to death and misery. At last it got into the possession of the High Bailiff of Peel, and he took sick and was at death's door, and given up by most of the leading physicians of the Island. When a lady friend of his wife's came in, in the evening, and enquired—'Have you got Bishop Rutter's skull?' she said, 'Yes.' Her friend said, 'Send and bury it at once, it never brought anything but death and misery.' The skull was sent over and buried that night in Peel Castle. The following day there was an improvement in the High Bailiff, and he continued from that day to get well, and here he is to-day, your Majesty, the picture of health. His Majesty said:

'It is a very interesting story.'

Lunch being ready in the meantime the Royal party went to it. When it was over the King lit his cigar, and came down to me at the gate where I was in charge, and he said:

'I understand that you can speak the Manx language.'

I said, 'Yes, your Majesty.'

He said, 'I never heard it. Will you say something to me in Manx.'

I said, 'Dy bannee Jee nyn Ree as yn Ven-Rein dy-palchey, treishteil dy bee shin son ymmodee bleeantyn spaarit dy reill harrish shin.'

The King said, 'Thank you, it is a very nice soft language. What is the meaning of what you said.'

I said, 'May God bless our King and Queen abundantly, hoping that they may be spared for many years to rule over us.' Then I told him how sorry we were for the death of her late gracious Majesty, that she had been Queen before I was born, and that we had loved her as our Mother for her many gracious acts to the Manx people. I said too that I took it to be a great privilege that I had the opportunity of assuring his Majesty, on behalf of Manx people like myself, that there was not a Manxman at home or abroad—and there were numbers abroad—who would not die for England's King and Queen, their honour and their glory. He thanked me very kindly. I told him also that we had a terrible time of suspense here, while he was ill, but thanked God that he looked very well now, and I hoped he would live for many years to be our King. Just then a gentleman came behind my back and suggested that I should ask the King for his autograph. His Majesty said, 'I will write it.' Then I expressed a wish to get the Queen's autograph, when he handed the pencil to the Queen, and said, 'Here Alexandra, write your name here.' Her Majesty then wrote her autograph. I have these autographs framed, with the blacklead pencil with which they were written. One of the lords in waiting came up and laughingly pressed a sovereign into my hand with the request that I should keep it in memory of their Majesties' visit. I may say that the autographs and sovereign are not for sale, as there is no person rich enough to buy them. The Royal party being then ready to depart,

his Majesty shook hands with me, and said, 'Good-bye,' and I said, 'May God bless your Majesty,' and thus ended the Royal visit to Peel Castle."

Cashen afterwards had a brass plate put into the wall at the entrance of the Castle. The inscription runs thus:

> THE KING EDWARD VII, AND QUEEN ALEXANDRA, AND H.R.H. PRINCESS VICTORIA, VISITED THIS CASTLE, AUGUST 25TH, 1902, AND SIGNED THEIR AUTOGRAPHS ON THIS STONE, FOR WILLIAM CASHEN, THE CUSTODIAN.

He paid for it out of his own pocket, and it is the only public memorial in Peel of the visit of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra.

He acted as one of the judges of Manx at the Music Guild many years ago: he has read a lesson in Manx at the Oie'l Voirrey Services in Peel Church and in Kirk Patrick Church: he has also read at Manx Language Society's entertainments. Lastly, the greatest ambition of his life was fulfilled,—he twice read the laws in Manx on Tynwald Hill. Those who heard him will never forget how sweetly and sonorously our old language rolled from his lips.

He was very proud of the little museum of interesting Manx relics which he had collected or borrowed and which were housed in a watch-house at the Castle. He had a great love for the Castle and the Cathedral on St Patrick's Isle. To us who have known and loved him it seems that his spirit must linger there still.

Personally, I shall greatly miss our almost daily cooish about things Manx, and our readings together of the Manx while in his cosy kitchen of long winter evenings. He could see at a glance the inner meaning of a line in Manx, so that to read with him was a revelation of the beauty of the language. I am indeed indebted to him for his teaching.

S. Morrison
Peel, August, 1912.

CHAPTER I

HOME LIFE OF THE MANX

About fifty years ago the people were housed in cottages, most of them built of stone, and a few built of clay mixed with straw. They were divided into two rooms on the ground floor, with a loft one end, and sometimes a loft on both ends. The floor in most instances was made of hardened clay. The walls would be well coated inside and outside with limewash, and had a very pretty appearance. The rooms would be divided with a *choolley* of straw mattress, and every care was taken that the sexes would be separated and all the forms of decency observed. I well remember the cottage where I was born, with its thatched roof, lime-washed walls, and floor of hardened clay, the open *chiollagh* with its whitened hearthstone and wide chimney where the stars peeped through the turf fire glinting on the shining lustre ware of the dresser. The better class houses of the farmers would be longer and covered with slates. I take it that the cottages would be warmer in the winter and colder in the summer than the slate houses would be. When I compare the dwellings of the Manx fishermen or labourers with the dwellings of the fishermen or labourers of the present day, in any place I have been to in the out-districts of Ireland or Scotland, there is a good deal to be said in favour of the Manx dwellings. For either health, convenience, or decency, the dwelling of the Manx is much superior in every way. Fifty years ago if you went into one of the country cottages you would find everything shining with cleanliness; there would be the neat dresser with everything on it shining and in order. When you would see the washing out, it would have done credit to any laundry. In the rivalry between the farmers' wives as to who should have the best bleached linen, they used to burn a sort of fern for the purpose of getting the ashes for bleaching. Very few of the houses had a lock to any door, or any fastening except a latch, and the washing could be left out all night without being molested by anyone. The *crosh cuirn*, a cross made of mountain ash, was always behind the door, and would be renewed every May Day Eve. No evil thing could pass in where the crosh cuirn was.

We have a great deal of the outward form of religion now, more than we had then, but somehow or other we don't seem to be any more neighbourly or honest. It may be that as the wheat grows up, the tares grow also. No stranger or wayfarer was allowed to go out of the house without being offered food, and a bed was always prepared for the poor, that had to be kept ready for use. In some cases, it was left on the family in the will of the master that a bed was to be provided for the poor and for the wayfarer. When a child was born and the usual offices done to it, care had to be taken to preserve it from the fairies. The father's trousers put across the child was considered a good preservative. If a child was weakly it was of the utmost importance

that the parson should be sent for and the child baptized, as in case the child should die unbaptized it would not attain to the same joy and felicity in heaven that a baptized child would. Dying unbaptized, the infant would be doomed to carry in its hands a perpetual light resembling a candle. There is a story which shows the truth of this belief:

It is said that an heiress of Eary Cushlin had the misfortune to be a mother without being married, and to hide her shame the child was done away with, without being baptized. And every night as the fishermen would be out fishing they would hear the crying and wailing of a child on the shore. One night a fisherman shouted what for it was crying, when he received the answer: *"She lhiannoo beg dyn ennym mee"*—I am a little child without a name. Then the man shouted back: *"My she inneen oo ta mee enmys oo Joney, as my she guilley oo ta mee enmys oo Juan"*—If thou art a girl I name thee Joney, and if thou art a boy I name thee John.

After that the crying ceased and the child was no more heard.

Day by day when the infant was getting washed, its head had to be washed in rum. The mother took a mouthful of rum an poured it on to the child's head, but it was a puzzle to me to know whether all the rum that the mother took into her mouth was put on the child's head or not. The rum was put on the head for the purpose of hardening its head, and judging from the men of that day I should say that it answered very well. Another practice the nurse had: when the child was fed and washed, the nurse gathered its clothes round its feet, and grasping if firm by the two heels she passed it across her lap four or five times head downwards. This practice was continued now and then until the child would be about three months old. When asked why they did so, they said that it preserved the child from being griped. It is not right for a child to eat a kidney, or any part of one, before it can pronounce its own name distinctly. It was very unlucky for a child to be born at low water spring tide, he or she would not prosper. If he was an heir to land, or any property, he would be sure to destroy it in his day. The old people firmly believed in that, and they gave instances where it occurred. At whatever state of the tide the child was born, whether low or high, flowing or ebbing, that is the way it would be when that child came to die.

Many were of the signs that foretold a death. Among the rest, the crying or the howling of the dogs; children walking along the road singing or psalming; a hen crowing; a cock crowing in the night-time; a winding sheet upon the candle, etc. It is said that a man having died, when the hour for the funeral came there was no clerk to put out the hymn, or rather, psalm. There happened to be a wag of a fellow present, who seeing that it would never do to lift the coffin without singing a verse, undertook the job, and made one extempore, and this is the verse that he gave out:

Fer lurg fer ta talkal roue,
As dobberan mmoar ny-yei;

Ny laghyn ta ain dy ceau ayns shoh,
Mysh three feed blein as jeih.

Cha wooar y foays ren oo rieau,
Cha ren oo rieau monney skielley;
Feer aashagh hie oo trooid y theihll,
Cretoor myr hie sleih elley.

One after one keeps toddling on,
Great lamentations follow;
The days that we have to spend here,
About three score years and ten.

Thou never did very much good,
Nor yet very much harm,
Through the world thou easy did go
Much as other people went.

The coffin was then lifted and carried along.

When the time came round for ploughing the land, and the first day for ploughing commenced, the sumner, or clerk of the parish, was bough to attend on the field, if requested, and sing a verse of any one of the Psalms before he was entitled to the *groat shesheragh*, the fourpence plough-money, which every one ploughing with a pair of horses was bound to pay. I may say that the word shesheragh refers to a pair of horses ploughing in company, and not to one single horse ploughing alone. It took two to go with a pair of horses when ploughing—one to lead the horses and one to steady the plough. All cans and pails were made at home. All repairs to saddlery were made on the farm, and an osier garden was on every farm to supply hoops and so on.

The holidays of those old days are interesting:

December the twenty-first, *Oie'l Thomase Doo*, or the Eve of Black Thomas' Feast, was reckoned the first night of the Christmas Holidays. The spinning wheel had to be removed from the floor; the making of jeebins had to cease, and no labour of that nature was allowed to be done between St Thomas' Eve and *Shenn Laa Chibbyrt Ushtey*, Old Feast Day of the Water Well; that was the Christmas holidays, on which no work had to be done except such as could not be avoided. Any woman who would be bold enough to spin on the Christmas would be sure to repent of it; and as for making jeebin, it was not to be thought of, that rule must not be broken on any

condition. The Christmas holidays are sufficiently well described already on to Shenn Laa Chibbyrt Ushtey.[1]

January 5th, Shenn Laa Chibbyrt Ushtey, was kept holy in memory of the first miracle that our Saviour wrought in Cana of Galilee. The water was, on a certain time, wine that day, while the cock was crowing. In old times it was kept very holy. Now we come to February 1, *Laa Breeshey Bane*, White Bride's Day.

Three kegeeshyn dy kegeeshyn slane
Voish Laa Thomase Doo dys Laa Breeshey bane.
Three fortnights and none beside
From Black St Thomas to White St Bride.

St Thomas' Day was called black on account of the rainy weather about that time. The snow had not set in then, and the snow having set in by St Bride's, it was called white St Bride.

Laa'l Breeshey Bane,
Dy chooilley yeeig lane,
Dy ghoo ny dy vane.
Bride's day white, every ditch full of black or of white.

Every ditch had to be full of rain or snow on St Bridget's day, so that the old *caillag*, or witch, could not gather the *brasnags*, or faggots for firing. If she could lay in a stock of firing on that day there would be bad weather in the spring, but if she could not gather the brasnags then there would be fine weather. Another saying was:

Eddyr yn Oie'l Thomase as yn Oie'l Breeshey,
Daa-ayrn jeh dorrin ny bleeaney.
Between Thomas' feast-day and Bride's feast-day,
Two parts of the tempest of the year.

Two-thirds of the bad weather was expected between St Thomas and St Bride.

My nee yn ushag gherrym er laa Breeshey, nee ee
keayney roish laa Parick.
If the bird crow on Bride's day,
she will cry before St Patrick's Day.

On Candlemas Day it was said:

Laa Moirrey ny gianle,
Lieh foddyr as lieh aile.

On Christmas Day, half of the fodder and half of the firing, would be a fair amount to have in unconsumed stock before the new turf and the new fodder would come in.

Laa'l Parick arree yn dow gys e staik dooinney gys e lhiabbee.

[1] See A.W. Moore, *The Folk-lore of the Isle of Man* (Douglas & London: David and Son & David Nutt, 1891).

On St Patrick's Day the ox was supposed to be tied to the stake, and the man to his bed at dark. No light was expected to be lighted after St Patrick's Day. It was supper at dark, and then to bed, both man and beast.

The following prayer, *"Jeeagh Parick orrin!"*—Patrick look upon us!' I have heard said hundreds of times, it has probably been handed down to us from pre-reformation times. Lights were a rather scarce commodity in those days, and care had to be taken that they would not be wasted. The poorer class had their houses lighted by fish oil, which they used to burn in broken basins, or roagan shells, with peeled rushes for wicks. The farmers, and better class people, would have candles made of tallow, either moulded or dipped.

One custom they had when perambulating the parish boundaries. When they got to one angle, or to any place which there might be a dispute about, they used to lay hold of a young lad and wring his ears most unmerciful, so that in after years when he would get to be an old man he would be able to remember the wringing that he got when a child, and his wits would be sharpened so that he would remember the parish boundary. At the *Oie'l Columb Killey*, the Feast of St Columba, the fishermen always expected bad weather, they called them, *Gaalyn yn Oie'l Columb Killey*, Gales of St Columba's Eve. All sheep found on the common lands unshorn on the 21 June, the foster, or forester, had the right to shear and keep the fleece; he also had the right to mark the sheep with a mark that was peculiarly his own. It was called "The Foster's mark."

At the Launys they also looked for gales of wind, which they called *Gaalyn yn Launys*. Between the two Lammas days, that is the lst and 12th August, was considered the right time to cure herrings for the winter stock. The herring would be at their best then.

The three moons in the fall of the year would be called, *Re-Hollys Mooar yn Ouyr*, The Harvest Moon to ripen corn. *Re-Hollys mooar ny Cabbil*, The Horse Great Moonshine, after which the horses would have to be housed at night. *Re-Hollys mooar cooil y cleigh*, The Great Moonshine that hove no shadow behind the hedge. Whichever way the weather was on the first of these moons it would be expected to be the same all three.

It is said that when two farmers were desirous of making a boundary fence where none existed before, they set poles a distance apart on what they considered the line of boundary, and they took a ball of straw rope and tossed it from one pole towards the other, and the way that the rope lay on the ground they built their boundary fence. That would account for the crooked fences. In the earlier part of the last century the Island was studded all over with ale-houses and drinking booths, and it is said that said that two different parties would have a licence to sell under one roof. The Big Man of the district would have the seat of honour, and if there was more than one leading man in the district the honour would be divided between them. They would often boast how Big So-and-So could drink so many *kishens* of ale. A

kishen contained eight quarts, and I am afraid that not a few of the farms of the Island were mortgaged for the love of Manx *jough*. The drink was served in a quart measure and handed round the house, and each one drank in turn. It was considered an offence against good behaviour to refuse. The last man that emptied the quart was entitled to the first drink when it was filled. Ale would be the chief drink among a company, a good deal of rum was drunk also, but spirits would be drunk by individuals, and not in company, nor handed round. There was no whiskey allowed to be sold in the Isle of Man before the year 1852. I have heard my father say that he and his crew put into the Niarbyl one day, and they went to Betty Hal's house for jough. She was very slow about bringing it in, so he went out to hurry her. He found her in the back-kitchen pouring a bucket of water into the ale which she had ran off into a tub so as to be able to serve it out quicker.

"Och, Betty," says he, "Is that the thing you are going to give us?"

"'Deed, an' it'll not put reaching on you all this way itself," says Betty, quite unconcerned.

To show you how nearly every person has a nickname in Mann, a story is told of a Peel coroner who summoned four men in court as jurymen, by the following names, to which the men answered: *"Mac y Teare ny mollag, scollag mac y Cleary, guilley bwee glion mooar, glastin mooar mac Killey, hass shiu stiagh dy ghoaill y loo ayns daa ghooinney jeig"*—(Son of Tear, the mollag, young man, son of Clarke, yellow boy of Glen Mooar, big bulky lad, son of Killey, stand in to take the oath as jurymen).

CHAPTER II

FAIRIES, BUGGANES, GIANTS AND GHOSTS

The Manx people believed that the fairies were the fallen angels, and that they were driven out of heaven by Satan. They called them

"Cloan ny moyrn"

The Children of the pride (or ambition).

They also believed that when they were driven out of heaven they fell in equal proportions on the earth and the sea and the air, and that they are to remain there until the Judgement. They also said that they fell as thick as a shower of hail, and that they continued to fall for the space of three days and three nights. Whether they took their idea from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or whether Milton himself took his idea from the Manx people, certain it is that the Manx people believed that before *Paradise Lost* was translated into Manx. The prayer they used when walking in the night-time was:

"Saue Jee mee voish Cloan ny moyrn,"

God save me from the Children of the pride.

They believed that the fairies had no power to hurt anyone who was on an errand of mercy or charity. It is related that one of the early Manx Wesleyan preachers, having occasion to cross the mountain one moonlight night, was met by a fairy who asked who should be saved. When the preacher answered and said that none would be saved, but such as had flesh and blood, then he went away wailing and saying:

"Cha vel ayrn erbee ayms ayns Chreest,"

I have no share in Christ.

There are many fishermen here to this day that declare that they have seen the fairy herring fleet lying before their nets, with their lights upon the water, and the buoys or floats of their nets, and full expected that when the day broke they would see number of boats around them, but when the day appeared there were none there, to their very great surprise. There was sure to be a shoal of herrings where the fairy fleet was seen, and the boats that shot their nets there were certain to have a good fishing. The Manx fishermen believed that the fairies, besides fishing on their own account, and barrels, and cured the herrings they caught. A cave on the sea-coast under Cronk-yn-Iree Laa is called *Ooig-ny-Seyir*, Cave of the Carpenter, where the fishermen have heard them, times without number, making barrels. They were always sure to have a good fishing in the Big Bay when they heard the fairies making barrels. That season always turned out well.

The fairies differed from the *buggane*s and other evil things in that the fairies might be in any place, and at any time, and would not covet a full-grown person, but only infants and children, whereas the buggane, *lhiannan-shee* and so on, kept to

well-defined places beyond which they were not to travel, and bugganes appeared in quite different forms,—some as tall men without a head, others lying in the road like a heifer, apparently without head or tail, others like a large collie dog with a white collar on his neck. Besides, they did not care at all about children or young people. All fairies, bugganes, and ghosts and spirits of every sort would vanish at the cock crowing,—particularly bugganes and ghosts. Sometimes the fairies stole women. There is a tale about a Ballaleece woman who was captured by the fairies; and, soon afterwards, her husband took a new wife, thinking the first one gone for ever. But not long after the marriage, one night the first wife appeared to her former husband and said to him, and the second wife overheard her: "You'll sweep the barn clean, and mind there is not one straw left on the floor. Then stand by the door, and a company of people on horseback will ride in, and you lay hold of the horse I am on, and don't let it go." He followed the directions carefully, but was unable to hold the horse; the second wife had put some straws on the barn floor under a bushel.

The *Lhiannan-Shee* was a Spirit-Friend. It was believed that if she got near enough to a man to breathe his breath or to lay her hand on him he would be in her power until death. I have heard a man relate that he once saw the lhiannan-shee. He was in the mountain pulling ling when he saw coming towards him a beautiful woman clad in golden-yellow silk. The man jumped into his cart, whipped his horse and fled for his life. He turned his head to see if she was following him, but she was standing stock-still in the ling wringing her hands.

There were giants too. Peel people used to say that it was a woman who carried in her brat the stones from Creg Malin to build Peel Castle: while she was carrying one of the largest stones her apron-string broke. This stone, they said, lies where it fell in Peel harbour. When I was a lad a great storm bared a large stone which was pointed out to me by my old skipper as the stone. I saw the marks of keels of boats cut into it; there were a lot of other red sandstones about it which were said to be part of the woman's bratful of stones.

I have heard a somewhat similar story of a giant who was engaged in making a footpath to Scotland. He went from Glenaspet with a creel on his back. The bottom fell out of the creel, and the earth which was let loose formed Cronk Lannag at Ballalough. There is another story of a giant who flung a boulder from Peel Castle after his fleeing wife. The stone with the Giant's finger-marks still lies poised on the Vaish Hill. The long mounds outside the wall of Peel Castle are supposed to be the graves of giants.

The Manx people firmly believed in ghosts. They believed that if the ghost was troubled in any way he would come back to where he had lived. If the person when living had hidden money or any other thing, or if he or she had died through foul play, he would come back. Care had to be taken in making the shroud that no knot was put upon the thread in the making of it, as, if it was, someone would have the unpleasant work of unloosing it. Many are the stories of men having taken a ghost

and put it to rest. A Peel fishing-boat was lost off the Calf about fifty years ago, and a certain man, being anxious to know how it had happened, and where the souls of the departed had gone to, expressed a wish to meet the ghost of one of the men that were drowned. One day he felt an unusual fear come over him, and, looking round, he saw the ghost of his friend close beside him. His fear increased so much that he had not the power to question the ghost, but he signified a desire that he should come to him in the night-time, when he was in bed, believing that he would be stronger when he would have the company of his wife. That night, as the clock struck twelve, he heard a noise, and immediately the ghost of his friend stood beside the bed. His wife had fallen asleep in the meantime, and he found it impossible to waken her. However, he had to make the best of the situation, and while speaking to the ghost he found that it was not alone, but that there were two at least, if not three, in company with the one he was speaking to. After they went away he was able to waken his wife quite easily, but what he heard and what he was told he never let any person know. This same man was known in the neighourhood (Peel); he was considered a truthful man, and a man above reproach.

At a place near Peel, about sixty years ago, there was a young man came by his death, as many thought, through foul play. A certain house and people were so troubled with his ghost that they had to get a Roman Catholic priest to lay the ghost; for the Manx people believed that a priest of that faith had more power over a spirit than any other minister. Many persons yet alive remember the priest being brought there, and how, walking backward, and reading out of a book, he put the ghost to rest and consigned him to the Red Sea, after which they got rest.

Many other stories can be told of a like nature. The priests could send the ghost to the Red Sea, from whence it was supposed there was no return. They could also consign it to got between the bark and the tree, but that would only last for seven years, at the end of which time it was liable to come back again. No ghost could cross a newly-ploughed field; neither could a ghost cross a line drawn with iron or steel. You could not injure a ghost with a knife by shoving it from you; you had to cut backwards to do so. Any man on a road where he was afraid of ghosts always carried a knife with the blade pointing behind. The spirit of a person would sometimes come home to his or her family while the person was alive or recently dead. This might perhaps happen when a man was in great distress at sea. If his spirit appeared wet, he was drowned; if dry, he was only in danger. It might be that a man, without being in any danger, but only anxious about his house, would be seen about the house or crossing a field, or entering a house. It appears that the man in such a a case was ot usually conscious that his spirit had departed from him for a time, though sometimes it might happen in times of great anxiety that he would be conscious of something unusual having taken place.

The *Scaa Goanlyssagh*, the Malicious Ghost, was the revengeful spirit of a living person that had an ill-feeling against some other person or persons, whom it would

haunt in the night, when they were in bed. It would torment, nip and pinch them, and give them no rest. But if the tormented person knew who tormented him he could get relief by calling out his or her name. Sometimes the tormentor was a disappointed lover, sometimes merely a spiteful person, and sometimes people were tormented in this way without any apparent reason.

A Scaa Goanlyssagh could cut the clothes off a person, just as if they were cut with a pair of scissors, and without the operation being seen or felt. It could also cut clothes even through they were locked in a drawer. If differed from a witch in so far that it had no power to do real injury to the person it tormented. I knew a girl that stayed sometimes in the neighbourhood where I lived. I remember that all the farm lads and men living in the neighbourhood used to go to the house at night with dogs and sticks. When stones would be thrown down the chimney and through the door they would all run out with dogs and sticks and hunt all around, but find nobody, neither could they account for the disturbance. They tied the girl's hands and placed a watch over her, but still the disturbance continued the same. And when she left the neighbourhood the house got to be as quiet as before she came to it.

The *Arc-Vuc-Sonney*, the Pig of Plenty, was an apparition that was sometimes seen to cross a man's path on a fine moonlight night in the form of a young pig. As long as a person could keep it in sight and follow it, it led him to good luck, but the moment he took his eye off it, it vanished. It was considered fortunate to see it. But if the man who saw it was lucky enough to catch it, his fortune was made. If a fisherman saw one in the beginning of the fishing season he was sure to be lucky.

CHAPTER III

FISHING

Superstitious as were the Manxmen whose occupations were on land, they were surpassed by the Manxmen whose occupation was on the sea. Proof of this is afforded by the following account of the superstitions of Manx fishermen:

On May Eve, the *crosh cuirn* (rowan cross) would be put into every boat. They would travel for miles into the country to get this, and would then deposit it in some secret place in the boat, and it had to remain there until the following May Eve.

In making a start for the fishing for the first time, care must be taken (1) not to go out on Friday; (2) to turn the boat with the sun, as to turn against the sun would be unlucky; (3) to have salt in the boat. If by any chance the boat had to turn back, it was considered very unlucky, especially on the first day of going out.

No person was allowed to whistle on board the boat, as it would attract the attention of the *dooinney marrey* (merman), who would be sure to send more wind than was required. No person was allowed to speak of dogs, cats, rabbits, horses or mice. A horseshoe was nailed in some place in every boat, that of a stallion being considered the best. It was lucky to dream of a ripe cornfield, and of a high tide with an abundance of seaweed on the shore. If a man dreamed of his wife it was sure to bring fine weather; but if he dreamed of strange women the weather would be bad. If a pair of ravens were seen to fly across the bay, creek, or harbour, it was a sign that there would be plenty of herrings caught.

If the boat was becalmed, the surest way to bring the wind in a very short time was for a man to stick a knife in the mainmast. If it blew a gale when the fishing boats were at sea, it was no unusual thing for fishermen's wives to throw handful of salt in the fire. They believed that would stop the wind from blowing so hard. This practice was common fifty years ago.

If a boat was unlucky, recourse was had to the herb-doctor. Many a good handful of herbs have I seen carried on board. The herbs had to be boiled in a pot, and the liquor, when mixed with rum, was divided among the crew, except a portion which was thrown upon the nets. Occasionally some of the herbs would be put in the tail buoy, and disposed of in various ways as ordered by the doctor. The whole ceremony was to be kept a secret from other people. This ritual was believed in, not only by the most ignorant, but by the most intelligent among the fishermen; class leaders and local preachers, and many of that sort believe in it to this day.

When a fisherman was leaving home to go to fish on Monday, his wife threw an old she after him. If it stopped mouth up with the point of the shoe pointing the way he was going, it was very lucky; but if the point showed back towards the house, he might as well go back himself, as it would be a poor week's fishing. This throwing of

the shoe was also a sure indication whenever a person had any venture such as a law-suit, going to sell a cow or horse at a fair, or getting married.

If a fisherman lost the first fish as he was hauling his line in, or if the first fish was caught by the sternmost man in the boat, it was considered unlucky. If the first herring caught in the boat for the season had a roe, it was lucky; if it was milt herring it was unlucky. To go out third board on the first day of the season, especially, but also at any time, was unlucky. To leave home on Monday morning with the stockings, drawers, singlet, or any of the undergarments put on by mistake wrong side out, was lucky; but they had to be left that was during the whole of the week.

There was an old law against fishing on Sunday; but, quite apart from the law, the Manx fishermen have a strongly-rooted superstition against fishing on that day. As a reason for this the following story is related:—There is a tradition that the fishing fleet out of Port Masooyl, now called The Niarbyl, once shot their nets on Sunday night, and, being overtaken by a storm from the South-East, they were obliged to anchor in under the foot of Cronk-yn-Irree-Laa, when part of the steep cliff slid down, and the surf which was caused by the rocks falling into the water swamped them all. Ever after that no boat would fish on Sunday night. There was a *bardoon* (lament) made for them, in which it related that they anxiously looked up for the break of day to *Cronk-yn-Irree-Laa*, Hill of the Rising Day, this hill being so called by the fishermen because they saw the sun rising over it. They say there was only one fisherman left alive in Dalby village after the storm, and that he lived on the farm called Ballelby. Dalby, where they also farmed, was at that time the chief place for fishermen in the Island, and the Niarbyl, close by, was their headquarters for the fishing. The place where the cliff slid down is called the *Garroo Clagh*, (The Rugged Stone). The place was pointed out to me when a child, more than forty years ago, by old men who were then about seventy, with the warning that I was never to fish on Sunday night.

The mermen, or *dooinney-marrey*, man of the sea, as he is called, was feared by the fishermen. No one on board a boat dared to whistle lest he should send more wind than was convenient, and the following shows the need there was of getting on the right side of him: There was a tradition that there was a herring fishing-boat that was manned by a crew of seven single young men; she was called *"Baatey ny Guillyn,"* The Boys' Boat. Every place that they shot their nets they got herring. They were in the habit every morning when they were hauling their nets of throwing a *jystful* (dishful) of herring overboard to the dooinney-maarrey, with the result that good luck followed them wherever they went. The admiral (the fisherman in charge of the fleet) saw that they had more herring than any of the others, and, not knowing how it came to be so, he had them summoned to appear on a certain day on Port Erin shore to be sworn that they would undertake to show the rest of the fleet where they were fishing. They swore that they always fished to the South of the Calf, with the result that all the fleet started for that ground. After the fleet had shot their nets some

time, the night being fine and calm, the men on "Baatey ny Guillyn" heard the dooinney-marrey saying *"Te kiune as aalin nish agh bee sterrym çheet dy gerrid,"* It is calm and fine now, but a storm is coming shortly, with the result that they at once put their nets on board and gained the harbour. No sooner had they arrived there than a sudden storm arose and destroyed the fleet. Only two men—brothers—were saved, and they, trying to save their father on the rugged rocks at the Calf, nearly lost their lives, but succeeded in bringing their father's corpse to land. It was given for law ever after that no crew should consist entirely of all single men. They had to be at least one married man on board. And no man was bound in his hiring to fish in the South Sea, which was called the Bloody Sea* ever after.

They used to say that mermaids were very found of crabs. Once when a Dalby man, down on the Niarbyl at low water fishing for crabs among the rocks, had got a good string of crabs, up comes a mermaid to him, and says she to him in Manx:

"Give us a crab, Joe Clinton, an' I'll tell your fortune."

Joe gave her one, and she made off with it, chiming out as she dived into the sea:

"Choud as vees oo bio er y thalloo, cha bee oo dy bragh baiht er y cheayn."

So long as you live on the land, you will never be drowned in the sea.

In the early part of the century the rig of the Manx herring fishing-boat was what they called "squaresail," i.e., one mast with square-shaped sail which reached from top to bottom of the mast. The luggers at this time were nothing more than large open yawls without cabins and the "clout," or small square sail, was the only sail which the lugger carried. Later there was a larger class of smack built at Peel which was named Dagon after the great god of the Philistines. They also had the "wherry" rig, i.e., two masts with fore-and-aft sails. About sixty years ago, they changed the rig to the "dandy," or what is now usually called the "yawl" rig. When the mackerel fishing had got fairly started their attention was drawn to the want of a fast sailing class of boat to carry the fish to market, and the "nickey" or "lug" rig which had been first introduced about 1850 was adopted and has continued ever since. About 1850, a number of Cornish fishermen, whose boats were rigged in this way, came to the Island, and, since Nicholas or Nickey was a common name among them, it was applied to the rig of their boats. In their turn the Arklow boats which used to fish in Manx waters were called "Tommy Artlars"—a Tommy from Arklow, so called because many of the Irishmen were named Tommy. To-day there are "nobbies" from Nobby, and "dougals," from the Scotch name—a smaller class of fishing boat.

The nets used in times past by the Manx fishermen were made by hand and made into jeebins. Each jeebin was fifty-two meshes deep and eighteen yards long. Four jeebins went to a piece, and four pieces to a net; thus sixteen jeebins formed a net,—four in depth and four in length. The jeebins were joined together for the net with needle and thread, much after the fashion of sailcloth, so that if one jeebin

* Poyllvaish—The Pool of Death.

became worn out, or torn, it could be easily and quickly taken out and another one put in its place. There were five floats to a net, a pair was that distance that extended from one float to another, thus each separate net of sixteen jeebins had five floats and five pairs. The jeebin mesh was made square by two rows of network. It was of no exact measurement, but would be made of such a size that a man's three finger tops could easily be inserted through it; if a shilling passed freely between knot and knot, the mesh was considered to be sufficiently large, if smaller than this the net would be condemned. Fifty-six years ago, the Inspector who came round to gage the nets ordered some that had knots closer than the width of the shilling, to be burnt on Close Chiarn. The mesh was made on a gage about four inches long: it was generally rounded on one side and running to an edge—knife-blade fashion—the rounded side being held towards the netmaker. There was no standard gage, the gages would be made after different patterns, according to the locality in which they were used, though all would be about the same girth. The Dalby people liked a short gage and held one end out between the finger and the thumb; in the Southside the gage was used longer, and it had a short shaped handle which came out between the thumb and other the back of the hand, and it had two sharp edges, the greatest thickness in the centre, egg-shaped. Each person in the household had his allotted task in this home net-making: none were idle. The thread of which the jeebin was made, was from the hemp grown on the homestead. The hemp being put on the *quiggal* (distaff) and spun by the women into thread: the old men and women threaded the needles or shuttles: the men with the needles netted the thread into jeebins. A smart man could make a jeebin of net in the day, and the slowest worker could average from three to four yards of an evening. I well remember when a child going to school, having to make so many yards of jeebin after schoolhours, and woe be to me if I failed in my task; my ears would probably be pulled out of all proportion. The jeebin needles were generally made of *trammon* (elder) wood toughened and stained rust-red by being soaked for about a fortnight in the grape of the cowhouse: sometimes these needles would be made of apple-wood or bone. Bone needles being smoothest were thought to be best, and many an effort would be made by the workers to secure them. Herders, two little pieces of wood with wires attached, were used to weigh down the last mesh on each side, so as to keep the work from curling up over the fingers. When the new net was finished it would be stretched out bit after bit over a table, or some boards, and well rubbed with a brush dipped into a mixture of Stockholm tar and oil. It would then be spread out on a field to dry. Care would have to be taken that the drying process was done when the sky was overcast, for bright sunshine would burn the net. Many a time has a net been hurriedly gathered off the field, and plunged into the sea, when the sun came out too strongly: sometimes too, lads would be kept to sprinkle the nets on the field with salt water now and then for fear that they might burn. Second-hand nets would be barked. At the Spring equinox the fishermen made their first preparation by getting their boats

launched off the bank where they had stowed during the winter from the storms. The crews would gather and each help the other in launching their boats when the tide would not be sufficiently high to float them. A jar of rum would be provided and served out among them, and they all shouted together as they pushed the boat:

"Lesh ee, lesh ee, lesh ee,"

With her, with her, with her,

they launched the boat by main strength and stupidness, and fortunate it was if no one was hurt.

When the crew had got fairly to work and a start made, they chose some particular public-house to start the shot, that is, the drink they got was got on credit. Everyone of the crew or his wife was at liberty to go in there and have his pint of jough or glass of rum whenever he felt thirsty: the whole thing would be settled at the latter end of the season when the boat would be safely moored for the winter. In putting out to sea, once clear of the harbour, all hands on board the boat, at an intimation from the skipper, took their hats off and had silent prayer. One of their prayers was as follows:

"Dy bannee Parick Noo shin as nyn maatey,"

May St Patrick bless us and our boat;

or

"Parick Noo bannee yn Ellan ain, dy bannee eh shin
as yn baatey, goll magh dy mie, çheet stiagh ny share
lesh bio as marroo 'sy vaatey,"

St Patrick, who blessed our Island, may he bless
us and our boat, going out well, coming in better with
living and dead in the boat.

When shooting the nets the following was said:

"Gow magh dy lhome, trooid thie dy mollagh,"

Go out bare, come home rough (or coarse).

When the land would be fairly opened out so that they could see the Calf and other headlands, a bottle of rum would be hauled out and served round on all hands in a horn measure that had probably been handed down from father to son for generations. As the fleet stood out for the fishing-ground, every man was looking out for signs of herring,—perkins, gannets, gulls, fish playing on the oily surface of the water, and such like. The sun being set—which was always strictly adhered to—they were satisfied that the time had come for shooting their nets. If the evening was dark, so that they could not see the admiral's flag or the sun, the skipper held his arm out at full length and when it got so dark that he could not see the black under his thumb-nail, he ordered the crew to shoot the nets. The nets being shot and everything made snug for the night, the first thing that they did was to say their prayers. Every living person on board went on his knees. If there was a man on board that was considered better than the rest, he offered up a prayer, or there might be two or three of that sort, when each one offered up prayer in turn; if there was none

of that kind on board then each one prayed a silent prayer for himself. Strange as it may appear, those rough men that would drink ale and rum out of all reason and fight when on shore like demons, would not on any account, blow high or low, attempt to turn in without acknowledging the Creator. If the night was short summer's night, a man would be placed on watch and the rest turned in until the day broke over the mountain top, when they commenced to pull in their nets; but if the season was far advanced they hauled sooner. When the nights were long they sailed to find the fish; the way they did was when it came to be so dark that the phosphorus could be seen in the water, they sailed over ground where they had suspicion there was fish, and, at intervals, they caused a sharp concussion by striking the deck with the anchor. If they were in fish it shewed by turning a milky-white, when the look-out shouted: *"Hoy eh, bhoy!"*—Here he is, boy! After they had thus proved the ground and found fish, they shot their nets; after an hour or two they would prove to see if the nets were creeping, as they expressed it. If there were any herrings they carefully counted what they pulled out of the pair. Other boats also might be sailing on the briaght (quest), when the crews would hail with the word "R'ou prowal ayns shen, bhoy?"— Were you proving there, boy? The answer had to be a truthful one, and they would be told how many warps had been taken out of the pair. When they had hauled in their nets they would be able to realize, pretty near, how many herrings they had. Here is an account of how crews hailed each other when I was going to sea: A boat lying to, waiting for the sun to go down so as to shoot her nets—foresail hauled down, leaving only the mizzen up to keep her head to the wind, would be hailed by a boat sailing on the briaght: "Have you seen the *perkin*?" (herring-hog—a sign of herring). "Have you los' one?" would be often the taunting reply. If the nets were shot the passing boat would hail:

"Hoi, the driver!" (a boat drifting or driving before the nets).

"Hello!"

"Were you proving?"

"Aye."

"What d'ye see?"

"Ushty." *Ushtey*, or water with a great word with them, or sometimes the reply was, "Lieen doo," a black net. These words meant that they had found no fish in the pair. If they had only a trifle of fish in the nets, they replied:

"Ten warpyn—luck-y-pot," that is a potful of herrings—sufficient for breakfast, but not enough to market—poor luck.

Often the hailing would be all in Manx:

"R'ou prowal?" Where you proving?

"Va!" I was.

"Quoid oo er y piyr?" How much had you in the pair?

"Pohnnar." A child.

"Cre'n eash dy pohnnar?" What's the age of the child?

"Dussan ny queig-yeig." Twelve to fifteen, i.e., mease—a fairish fishing
"R'ou prowal ny smoo na keayrt?" Were you proving more than once?
"Va!" I was
"Vel eh snaue, bhoy?" Is he creeping, boy?
"Ta, t'eh snaue ooilley yn traa." Aye, he's creeping all the time. When the train was hauled on board at dawn the hail would be:
"Cre'n sthoyr, bhoy?" What's the store, boy?
"Sthoyr bauk." A full boat, would be the reply after a good fishing. If a boat was taking on board a great haul of herrings the skipper was bound to blow his horn for the purpose of informing other of the fact. Any skipper who heard the horn was bound to go and offer his help, either in relieving him by taking a part of his nets. or in assisting him to get the nets on board his own boat. When they neared the port the bumming yawls or buyers would board them and he who would give the highest price was the buyer. The earnest would be passed,—a shilling, which they called "a shilling for the bottle"; the bottle would be a bottleful of rum which would be totted round in a horn measure to every one on board. Each buyer would have his flag flying if he was buying,— the flag would be the sign of the buyer. The fish would be run fresh to the English market in smacks which would be lying in the bay or harbour; each smack would have on board a small cask of rum, of which the fishermen would be entitled to a bottleful now and then; even when he had no fish he would be scarcely ever denied. Herrings are counted in warps and sold by the mease, that is five hundred fish,—six score and four fish to the hundred. In the early part of the last century herrings were sold by the cran, but so much imposition was practised that it had to be discontinued. Now, the herrings are counted into baskets, and it always takes two men to count a basket; they commenced with *"nane, jees, three, kiare, queig,"* and so on, alternately, to *"daa-eed"* or forty warps; then one man would cast in another warp and a herring over, saying "Warp, tally." The basket is then finished. The skipper would carefully mark each tally by making a notch with his knife on a stick, every fifth notch crossed the other four, and that was a mease. And so it continued day after day, five days of the week; on Saturday, they made for the harbour and on no account would anyone attempt to go out to sea on Saturday or Sunday night; no matter how poor he might be, no person could persuade him to break the Sabbath.

Their train of nets were so joined that each net could be easily separated, and each man would undo his net, carry it home on his back, and dry it every Saturday. This was the old practice. If they had earned any money during the week they went to their usual public-house to settle or divide the money in shares. The boat would be entitled to two and a half shares, each full man to a share, and each separate net to a half-share. Within the last fifty years the provisions are paid out of the whole gross earnings; before that time each man provided his own. If it should happen that there were any odd shillings—which there often was—the money would be reserved for

the poor, the aged, the widow or the fatherless. They believed that their luck depended upon remembering the poor. They called the odd money "God's Portion," and it had to used accordingly. It would have amused anyone to listen to a crowd of fishermen on Saturday night, each one had his own yarn and all would be speaking together,—they would be all speakers, and no listeners. If anyone was anxious to be heard, he struck the table with his fist, when the attention of the rest would be drawn to him; he would be a bold man who dared to strike the table in the middle, as some other man might dispute his right, but he might strike it on his own side without fear. And so week after week passed away till the end of the season. Sixty years ago there were three public houses on the Niarbyl for the accommodation of fishermen. Forty years ago I have myself seen as many as ten fights going on at once on Peel quay. All that is changed now; the temperance party, so far as the men are concerned, has done that. If one fisherman asked another, when the season was ended, how he had done, if he had done well or fairly well, his answer would be that he would be able to keep the devil and the coroner from the door, that is, poverty and crime, the two enemies which he most dreaded. When the boats were put on the bank and all sided for that season, the final settlement would be made, that is, the nets' shares which had been left in the principal owner's hands until the season had ended would be divided among the crew as each was entitled; and at the final settlement the crew would probably be engaged for the following season. The skipper hired his crew as follows: he passed a shilling to his best man, naming the conditions, and he passed it on to the next and so it went the round of the crew; the last man put the shilling in a quart measure which he tossed and turned mouth under; if the shilling turned up heads it was considered lucky. The man handed the shilling back to the skipper, when he reminded him that he was the skipper, and that the crew expected him to conduct himself in an honest and proper manner as became a skipper towards the owners and the crew, which to my mind is a proof that in those days there was nothing low or cringing in the Manx fishermen. It would be decided on the hiring night when to have the *Shibbyr Baatey* or *Scoltey*, the Boat Supper; it would be held some night in the Christmas, very often on old St Stephen's night or old New Year's night. There would be provided an abundance of pies and puddings, and plenty of rum and jough, what you might call a square feed. All the crew would be present, and each man could bring his wife or sweetheart and have an abundance for one night; that one night's spree has been known to cost from £5 to £10. There are many yet who lament that the practice has not been kept up, as they say that there is no luck since the custom was abandoned.

In the early part of this century, large quantities of herrings were cured for export, and numbers of barrels were sent to the West Indies for the plantations, but after the slaves were freed that trade in a great measure ceased. The late Mr Holmes, who died in 1852, used to cure for the Royal Navy and Mercantile navy. He had curing-houses in Douglas to the year of his death: large quantities also were smoked and salted in

Derbyhaven. A hogshead of rum was always kept in his store, and a bottleful of his rum was part of the conditions of sale.

At a time when there were no timetables, clocks, or watches to guide the fisherman in his calling, the breaking of the day over the hills, the passing of a particular star over a certain point, told him the time; the ebb and flow on the rocks told him whether there was water in the habour; the noise of the surf on certain points of the coasts, and so on, told him of the probable state of the tide. Children of nature they were, and to nature and nature's God they looked for guidance. It is true that civilization gives a good deal to us, but it robs us also of something that we do not find in our day, and the old Manx fishermen, in their stubborn and honest independence, had something that might, in my opinion, be copied by the present generation.

CHAPTER IV

HISTORY AND LEGEND

Mannin[1] Beg mac y Leagher was the first ruler of Man. He was a mild ruler; the tribute that he extracted from his followers was a bart of *leagher glass*, green sedge. Most writers have confounded the leagher with the rush, but there is quite a difference; they are not the same plant. The word leagher is in the Manx dictionary for a person deserving reward, to reward. Mannin acquired the name on account of being a person who deserved to be rewarded, also the sedge for the reason that it was the reward has maintained until this day the name of leagher. Mannin protected the Island by a mist. If, however, his enemies succeeded in approaching the Manx coast in spite of it, he threw chips into the water, which became ships. His stronghold was Peel Castle, on the battlements of which he was able to make one man appear a thousand. So he defended the Island and routed his enemies. He was called *Yn Dooinney Troor Cassagh*, the Three-Legged Man, and all his people, who were likewise three-legged, travelled about like a wheel, turning round and round. Another tradition speaks of him as *yn Manninagh*, the Manxman who was the first man in Mann.

When *Parick Noo*, St Patrick, first came to the Isle of Man, he came across on horseback. The Island was under a dense mist, and all the powers of darkness were arrayed against him, and, being hard pressed by a sea-monster of great size that was following to devour him, he put the horse up the steepest place in Peel Hill, and where the horse stood still on the top on firm ground, a beautiful spring of pure water sprang out of the ground, whereby the saint and the horse were both refreshed. The well is called the Holy Well unto this day. And looking down the cliff he saw the monster that had followed him. The saint cursed the monster, and there and then he was turned into a solid rock. The monster can be seen there now with his great big fin upon his back, a warning to all evil-doers that they shall not prevail against the good. Before St Patrick landed he heard the shrill shout of the curlew and the bleating of a goat whose kid had fallen down the rocks, and he blessed them both. No man was ever to find the curlew's nest, nor to see the goat bring forth its young. The print of the horse's feet is in the cliffs, they say, still, and can be seen still by anyone venture-some enough to go there to see it.

The Holy Well is said to be the first well, or water, where the first Christian was baptized in the Island, and was for ages resorted to as a healing well, and latterly it

[1] "Mannin" is the spelling of the word in Cashen's Notes, and he always pronounced the word thus, and not Manannan.

was called the Silver Well on account of the small silver coins that were left there by persons seeking to be cured of some disease.

There used to be another Holy Well at the top of Peel Harbour, near the railway station. It was closed about forty years ago; Mrs. Caley's house now stands over it. *Chibbyr Parick*, Patrick's Well, was better known as the Big Well. Before the days of the waterworks company, it was this well which supplied the fishing fleet with water. Place names form a valuable record, for, even when the name of Chibbyr Parick will soon be forgotten, the Well-brow, the old place-name of the hill which led down to it would have perpetuated its situation; unfortunately, some years ago, this hill was renamed Station Road, thus losing another link with the old history of Peel.

On Dalby mountain the old Manx people used to put their ears to the earth at *Sheean ny Feaynid*, the Sounds of Infinity, to hear sounds which were like murmurs. They thought these sounds came from beings in space; for in their belief all space is filled with invisible beings.

CHAPTER V

SONGS, SAYINGS, AND RIDDLES

*

SONGS

JUAN-Y-JAGGARD KEEAR

Lhig eh bullad veih yn sheear,
As woaill eh Juan y jaggad keear;
Ren eh howlley goll-rish creear;
As Juan y Quirk va keayney.
As Juan y Quirk va keayney.
As Juan y Quirk va keayney.
Ren eh howlley goll-rish creear;
As Juan y Quirk va keayney.

JOHNNY OF THE GREY JACKET

He sent a bullet from the west,
And it struck Johnny of the grey jacket;
Like a sieve it bored him through;
Johnny Quirk was mourning.
Johnny Quirk was mourning.
Johnny Quirk was mourning.
Like a sieve it bored him through;
And Johnny Quirk was mourning.

HI, HAW, HUM

Hi, Haw, Hum;
Ta my ven olk rhym.
Baillym dy beagh ee creckit,
As yn feeagh eck aym ayns lune;
Son woailley orrym riyr,
As woailley orrym jiu,
As va shen yn builley boght.
Hi, Haw, Hum

HI, HAW, HUM

Hi, Haw, Hum;
My wife is bad to me.
I would that she were sold,
And I had her value in ale;
For she struck me yesterday,
And she struck me to-day,
And that was a poor blow.
Hi, Haw, Hum.

ARRANE QUEEYL-NIEUEE

Snieu, wheeyl, snieu;
Dy chooilley vangan er y villey
Snieu er-my-skyn.
Lesh y ree yn ollan,
As lesh my-hene y snaih;
Son shenn Trit Trot cha vou
[ish dy braa.

SPINNING-WHEEL SONG

Spin, wheel, spin;
May every branch on the tree
Spin overhead.
With the king the wool,
And with myself the thread;
For old Trit Trot she never will get.

NY MRAANE KILKENNY

Ny mraane Kilkenny hie ad dy
[Ghoolish,
Hie ad dy Ghoolish lesh y
[vainney-geyre;
Agh cre-er-bee aggle haink er y cabbyl,

Va jeeyl mooar jeant er y vainney-geyre.

Ren ny mucyn chaglym as ren ad
[scryssey,
Mygeayrt y dubbey ren ad chloie Tig,
Cha jinnagh 'nane iu jeh yn vainney,
Agh daa vuc starvet lesh Kinleigh Beg.

THE KILKENNY WOMEN

The Kilkenny women went to Douglas,

They went to Douglas with the buttermilk;

But what e'er the fear that came on the
[horse,
There was great waste of the buttermilk.

The pigs they gathered there and scratched
[about,
All around the pool they played at Tig,
But none of them would drink of the milk,
Except two starved pigs of Kinley Beg's.

MY VANNAGHT ER SHIU

My vannaght er shiu paitchyn veggey,
Honnick shiu daunsin jiu;
Trooid uss er my glioon, Kirree,
As veryms daunsin diu.

Shooyl uss voyms, Kirree veg,
As ghauns er-mooin y laare;
As trooid uss hyms, Jennie veg,
Oo-hene y lhianno share.

MY BLESSING ON YOU

My blessing on you, little children,
I saw you dance to-day;
Come on my knee, little Katie,
And I'll give you a dance.

Walk out from me, little Katie,
And dance upon the floor;
Come to me, little Jennie,
Thou art the better child.

YN SHENN LAAIR

Va couple beaghey ayns skeeyll
[Andrase,
V'ad cheau nyn draa ayns corree,
Va yn ennym echeysyn
["Tayrn dy Rea,"
As vee ish "Mary Willy."

Cha row ec y "Tayrn" braag ny carrane,
Dy cur er baare y coshey;
Tra ve cheet thie dys Mary vie;
Va eh yeealley ee myr moddey.

THE OLD MARE

A couple lived in Andreas parish,

They spent their time in anger,
The nickname he had was
["Draw Smoothly,"
And she was "Mary Willy."

"Draw" had not either shoe or carrane
His foot's top to put upon;
When he came home to good Mary,
Like a dog he her chastised.

Va "Tayrn" ny lhie 'sy lhiabbee dhunt,
As Mary ayns y cuillee;
Robin y Christeen shooyl mygeayrt,
Booishal dy geddyn maree.

Hie ben y "Tayrn" dys y vargey-beg,
Er y chied laa jeh'n tourey;
Raad chionnee shenn laair, as v'ee
[geddyn daill,
Dys Laa Andrase 'sy geurey

V'ee tayrn dy rea as bliass y-vea,
Derrey v'ee er ny villey;
V'ee fit dy violaght ben erbee,
Tra heeagh ee yn chied shilley.

V'ee cretoor bogh, v'ee cretoor
[annoon,
V'ee cretoor meen as imlee;
Gow Mary ee dys vargey Calmane,
Agh fail ee ec Cronk Sharree.

V'ee gleck dy piantagh noi dagh
[broogh,
Cheet niar er slyst ny marrey;
Dy chooilley peiagh v'ad meeiteil
Gra, nagh yinnagh ad phurt ny valley,

Moghrey Laa Andrase va "Tayrn"
[troiddey
Mysh argid y shenn laair-a,
Gra, "row nearey ort dy chionnagh
[lheid
Y trustyr breinn as donney."

In the folded bed "Draw" was lying,
And Mary in the bedroom;
Robin Christian was walking about,
Desiring to get with her.

"Draw's" wife unto the fair did go
On the first day of the summer;
Where she bought an old mare,
[getting credit,
Till Andrew's day in winter.

She drew as smoothly as could be,
Until she had been spoiled;
She was fit to tempt any woman,
When she saw her the first time.

She was a poor and feeble creature,

A creature meek and humble;
Mary took her to Columb's fair,
But she failed at Cronk Sharree.

Painfully she struggled 'gainst each hill,

Coming east on the sea coast;
Every person they encountered said
That they'd not make port or home.

Andrew's day morn, "Draw" was scolding

'Bout the price of the old mare,
Saying "art not ashamed to buy

Such a foul, foolish creature."

MADGYN Y JIASS

My sailliu geaistagh
Gys my arrane,
Singyms diu dy meeley:
Va mraane y Jiass,
Bunnys roit ass,
As cha der ad bee da ny deiney.

Moghrey Jyluain,
Va'd cheet veih y thie,
My saillish daue cheet voish Ronnag,

As wheesh my goarn
Jeh arran oarn,
Ayns derrey corneil jeh'n wallad.

Moghrey Jymayrt,
Tra va'd ayns phurt,
Dy vroie un warp jeh skeddan;
Va Madge boght roie,
Choud's va'n phot cloie,
As chionnee feeagh ping dy arran.

T'eh feer drogh chliaght
Ta ec "Weedyn" y Jiass
Barrail yn cosney'n season;
Ny feedjyn jeh
Ta adsyn coyrt
Son turnipyn as cakyn.

Ny keayrtyn yoghe shiu voue
Jyst veg phraase,
Keayrtyn elley peesh dy hoddag;
Agh ny 'smennick foddey
Yiow shiu eh voue,
Lesh maidjey'n phot 'sy vollag.

Yn blein shoh cheet,
My vees y chirrym as fit,
Un peesh vees ayns nyn phoggad;
Bee'n wallad liauyr

MADGES OF THE SOUTH

If you will listen
Unto my song,
Softly I'll sing to you:
The Southern wives,
They were run out,
And would give no meat to the men.

On Monday morning,
They were leaving home,
Should it please them to come from
[Ronnag,
My fistful of
Barley bread
In each corner of the wallet.

On Tuesday morning,
When they were in port,
To boil one warp of herring;
A poor Madge ran,
While the pot boiled,
And bought a pennyworth of bread.

'Tis a bad custom
Of the Southern "Weeds"
To spend the season's profits;
The scores of it
They were giving
For turnips and for cakes.

Sometimes you'dst get from them
A small dish of praties,
At others a piece of bannock;
But far oftener
You'll get it from them
With the pot stick upon the head.

This coming year,
If 'tis dry and fit,
There'll be one piece in their pocket;
There'll be the long

Ocsyn nyn gour
Dy chur lesh thie ny aanyn gobbag.

Ec yn 'Eaill-Vaayl,
Bee ad cheet dys Pheel,
Gra "Vel baatyn eu dy hoiagh?"
As my ver shiu
Ny baatyn daue,
Cha yiow shiu ping son juys ny darrag

Wallet for them
To bring home the gobbags livers.

On Michael's Feast Eve,
They will come to Peel,
Saying "Have you boats to hire out?"
And if you give
The boats to them,
You'll not get paid for fir or oak.

YN STERRYM EC PORT LE MOIRREY

O! my guillyn vie,
Ta shin nish ec y thie,
Cha jig mayd dys yn 'aarkey ny sodjey;
Cha jean mayd jarrood
Yn sterrym haink shin trooid,
Ec aker ayns y vaie Port-le-Moirrey.

Dooyrt Neddy Hom Ruy,
"T'eh sheidey feer creoi,
As dy baare dhooin ny caableyn y
[yiarey."
"Cha jean," dooyrt Chalse Beg,
"Bee mayd stiagh er y creg,
As caillit ayns tonnyn ny marrey."

Yn "Good lntent"
Va baatey vie jeant,
Vie plankit voish toshiaght dys jerrey.
She sheshaght feer voal
Va er y "Midsummer Doal,"
Agh Neddy Hom Feg va yn fer
['smessey.

THE STORM AT PORT ST MARY

Oh! my good boys,
Now that we are at home,
We'll not go to the sea any longer;
We will not forget
The storm we went through,
Anchored in the bay of Port St. Mary.

Said Neddy Tom the Red
"'Tis blowing very hard,
And 'tis better to cut the two cables."

"Don't," said Little Charles,
"We'll be in on the rock
And lost in the waves of the ocean."

The "Good lntent"
Was a well-built boat,
From the stem to the stern well planked.
A very poor crew
Had the "Blind Midsummer,"
But Neddy Tom Peg was the worst of
[them.

YN EIREY CRONK YN OLLEE

Ta mish eirey Cronk Yn Ollee Beg,
She shoh t'ad ooilley gra;
As ver Bella lane yn caart dou,
Dy chooilley traa t'ayms paagh.

THE HEIR OF CATTLE HILL

I am the heir of the Cattle Hill,
That is what they all say;
And Bella will fill the quart for me,
Whenever I am thirsty.

YN GRAIHDER JOUYLAGH

Trooid marym nish, trooid marym nish,
Trooid marym, graih my chree,
As inshyns dhyts cre haink orrym,
Er bankyn Italy.

T'an lhong ayms nish lhie ayns y phurt,
Lughtit lesh airh ta buigh,
Shen ooilley neem's bestowal ort:
Trooid marym, graih my chree.

Neem's coamrey oo lesh sheeidey bwaagh,
Sheeidey bwaagh foddee eh ve,
My hig uss marym, graih my chree,
Dys bankyn Italy.

As braagyn berchagh veryms dhyts,
Braagyn jeh airh ta buigh,
My hig uss marym, graih my chree,
Dys bankyn Italy.

Myr v'ee ny-hoie sheese er y deck,
Geaistagh rish yn chiaulleeaght v'ayn,
Huitt ee er cheayney as dobberan
Er son y lhiannoo Juan.

"My lhiannoo Juan t'eh faagit noght,
Gyn ayr ny moir erbee;
T'eh faagit noght gyn kemmyrk, boght,
Faagit fo myghin Jee."

"O soie uss rish my lhiattee nish,
Soie liorym, graih my chree,
As inshyms dhyts cre hig orrin
Er bankyn Italy."

THE DEMON LOVER

Come with me now, come with me now,

Come with me, my heart's love,
And I'll tell thee what came on me,
On the banks of Italy

My ship now lies within the port,
Loaded with yellow gold,
All this I will bestow on thee:
Come with me, my heart's love.

I will clothe thee with beauteous silk,

Silk beauteous as can be,
If thou'll come with me, my heart's love,
To the banks of Italy.

And costly shoes I'll give to thee?
Shoes made of yellow gold,
If thou'll come with me, my heart's love,
To the banks of Italy.

As she was sitting on the deck?
List'ning to their sweet melody,
She was weeping and lamenting
For the infant Juan.

"My infant Juan is left tonight,
Without father or mother;
He's left to-night helpless, poor thing,
Left under God's mercy."

"O sit thee now close by my side,
Sit with me, my heart's love,
And I'll tell thee what came on us,
On the banks of Italy."

SAYINGS

"Ny smoo vees er y tailley, ny strimmey vees yn eeck."

The more on the tally, the heavier the payment; that is, the worse the crime the heavier the punishment.

*

"Veryms y banjagh dhyt."

I will give thee the fallow or commonland; this is said when a worthless n'er-do-well is in the house:—"If thy behaviour is not better, I'll make thee go out to do for thyself.'' All young cattle, when able to do for themselves, were sent to the common or fallowland to pick up for themselves:—"Thou wilt have to root for thyself.''

*

"Astan er e amman. Yernagh er e ockle."

An eel by his tail, as an Irishman by his word; slippery, very.

*

"Baase mraane as bishagey kirree."

Death of women and increase of sheep: a farmer who could marry two or three wives, each one having a fortune, and his sheep multiplying, would be supposed to do well.

*

"Cre'n aght oddys sack follym shassoo."

An empty sack cannot stand.

*

"Eshyn ta litcheragh ayns yn arragh, t'eh mooaragh ayns yn ouyr."

He who is lazy in spring begrudges in harvest.

*

"Neear as neear-ass, dy vishagey yn eeast-glass."

West and Sou'-West to increase the grey-fish or herring: alluding to the wind wished for at Christmas by fishermen.

*

"Chiu yn chenn vroit."

"Warming the old broth": this is said when two sweethearts who have quarrelled make it up.

*

"Stroie yn foddyr er yn grunt."

Spend the fodder on the ground: that is, spend what you have where you live; do not save for others.

*

"Cha lane as mollag."

As full as a mollag: this is said of one who is as full of ale as a mollag (sheepskin buoy is full of wind.

*

"T'eh er gheddyn famman scryss."

He has got his tail or end net pared off: this is a fisherman's saying which means that so-and-so has met with loss or disappointment.

*

"Ta'n arroo 'syn uhllin as ooilley dy-kiart,
Cha nel oo enn ayn yn furriman shaghey yn gart."
The corn is in the haggard and all made right,
You will not know which reaper was first or last.

*

"Gow magh dy lhome as trooid thie dy mollagh,
Lesh yn eayn-bwoirrin as yn coamrey sonney;
My heeys oo moddey croym dty chione,
My heeys oo maarliagh roie er-e-hon."

Go out bare and come home rough,
With the she-lamb and the plentiful covering;
If you see a dog stoop your head,
If you see a thief run for it.

This was a charm said at sheep sheering.

*

"Innyd dyn eayst ayn—Innyd doo-cheeiragh,
Oie feailley noght as laa obbyr mairagh."
An Easter without a moon—an Easter very dark,
A holiday night and work day morrow.

*

*

"Clagh ny killagh ayns corneil dty hie."

The stone of the church in the corner of thy house. This is said to be the bitterest curse in our language. The houses usually contained one room, a corner was partitioned off by a choolley of straw, and in this the sick were kept. If a sick person was dying, the priest gave him the last sacrament: the vessels used were placed on the altar, or church-stone,—a flat stone marked with a cross which he brought with him. So when a person said "Clagh ny killagh ayns corneil dty hie," he wished that the priest might soon be in your house to administer extreme unction.

*

"Ooir ny three cagleeyn."

Earth of three boundaries; that is, earth from a spot where three proprietors' lands meet, was sprinkled on a person afflicted with the evil eye. It was considered one of the best remedies. The earth from cross-four-ways or from any spot where numbers of people were passing was also considered very good. I saw a spot at Dalby where three boundaries meet, where so much earth had been taken out that a small pit had been made.

No person could practice the Black Art or any necromancy on any person who had in his possession a four-leaf clover.

RIDDLES

"Guess c'red t'ort as ny ennee oo ort, cha nee craue nyn grauayn, ny renaig nyn olt."
Ennym dooinney.

Guess what is upon thee, and thou dost not feel it on thee, it isn't thy bones, it isn't thy hair, and it isn't thy locks.

The man's name.

*

"Kione ny bio ayns beeal ny varroo,
Three cassyn erskyn ny kione,
As daa chass dys y thalloo."
Dooinney lesh phot er e gione.

The head of the living in the mouth of the dead,
Three feet overhead,
And two feet on the ground.
Man with (three-legged) pot on his head.

*

"Kiare roie, kiare ny hoie,
Jees yeeaghyn, jees geaishtagh,
Jees yeealley yn moddey
As yn moddey geamey."
Booa.

Four running, four sitting,
Two looking, two listening,
Two striking the dog
And the dog crying.
A cow.

*

"Myr yeeagh mee harrish boalley chashtal my ayrey honnick mee yn marroo curlesh ny bioee ersooyl."
Lhong.

As I looked over my father's castle wall I saw the dead carrying the living away.
A ship.

*

"Va boght doal dy row va shooyl ny dhieyn, as va braar ec yn boght shoh as hie eh dys yn cheayn as v'eh baiht. Cha row braar ec yn baraar shen. Cre mooinjerey va'n boght va shooyl ny dhieyn da'n dooinney baiht?"
Shuyr.

There was a blind beggar who walked the houses, and this beggar had a brother who went to sea and was drowned. That brother had not a brother. What relation was the beggar who was walking the houses to the man who was drowned?
A sister.

*

"Quoid duirn as uiljyn ta er mummig dty vummig, ben dty shan'er, as dty warree?"
Cha row urree agh daa uillin as daa ghoarn.

How many fists and elbows have your mother's mother, your grandfather's wife, and your grandmother?
Two elbows and two fists.

YN JERREY