

SOPHIA MORRISON'S OBITUARY FOR A.W. MOORE (1910)

On the first day of the old Celtic year, November 12, there passed away a truly representative Manx gentleman. Speaker Arthur William Moore had devoted all the energies of his many-sided life and character to the island of his birth, and the reality of the grief which his loss has called forth among all classes of his countrymen shows their sense of the fact that he was no ordinary man. In him the Celtic versatility expressed itself in action, the Celtic gifts of sympathy and tactfulness were combined with a spirit of justice and sincerity, and to the seeing eye was added "the infinite for taking pains." Those who saw most of him know best how unfailingly genial and courteous he was, though failing health must latterly have tried him much-but he had that high courage which rises above circumstances, and he fulfilled his many duties to the last. It was only a month before his death that he was present at a sitting of the House of Keys.

Mr Arthur Moore came of a well-known Manx family, being the son of Mr William Fine Moore, J.P., Cronkbourne, the able owner and controller of the Tromode Sail-cloth Mills and a member of the self-elected House of Keys. Mr Moore was educated at Rugby under Dr Temple, and at Trinity, Cambridge, where he was bracketed first in the History Tripos and got his "Rugger Blue." The rest of his career was given to Manx, and his activities seem to have put him in touch with every phase of the island life.

He succeeded his father as head of the sail-cloth firm, which he managed with great success until the competition of the steamship destroyed the business. In 1881 he was elected member of the House of Keys for Middle Sheading, and in 1898 he became Speaker of the House of Keys, which position he held until his death. It is seldom that one man has filled so many offices, treating none as a sinecure and disinterestedly giving the best of his energies to each. He was a member of the Council of Education for the Isle of Man, a member of the Harbour Board, Deputy Receiver-General, leading meteorologist of the island, an admirable magistrate, and, as director of public companies, he also did much for his country; besides actively concerning himself this way he was a founder of the Manx Language Society in 1899, and its first president, and was also one of its judges for Manx music; he will be remembered too as a vice-president of the Celtic Association; all this in addition to his literary work, by which he will perhaps be best remembered, at least by the world at large. At the Eisteddfod held at Cardiff in 1899 the degree of Druid was conferred upon him in recognition of his splendid services to Manx literature.

Though official translator of the Acts of Tynwald, into Manx at the time of his death, he did not learn the Manx language until in his early manhood and at a time when it was despised by his class. He himself, in his introduction to *Manx Ballads and Music* (1896), writes of “the entire indifference, generally speaking, of educated Manx people to their native tongue and national legends ... as regards this century a matter of common notoriety.” What he has done for the language by his writings and his personal influence it is impossible to estimate; a glance at a list of his works (see Appendix) will give some idea of it. The aim of his work is also well expressed in his above-mentioned preface to the *Manx Ballads and Music*. “This publication,” he says, “as of that of the Manx Carols, is to collect in one volume a curious literature, the greater part of which was threatened with almost certain loss. For less than one half of the ballads and songs given here have been hitherto published... and they could only have been accessible to very few. The others have been collected from various sources, some oral, some written, which in a few years would have yielded much smaller results, because the old and elderly people who alone remember them must soon pass away and because of the risk of the MSS. being lost.” His *Folklore of the Isle of Man*, “Further Notes on Manx Folklore,” *Manx Ballads and Music*, Manx Carols, and the *Manx Notebook*, which he edited, contain the result of his labours for the conservation of the music, lore, and tradition of the island. He also edited, assisted by Professor Rhys, *The Book of Common Prayer in Manx Gaelic*, the earliest and longest MS. in the language, by the publication of which the Manx Society, in the words of Professor Rhys, “laid Celtic scholars under a lasting obligation.” Mr Moore’s part in the work was that of transcribing the MS. for the Press, and collating the printed copy with the original. Amongst his many other publications is his important History of the Isle of Man, which is, of course, the one authoritative book on the subject. His last published article appeared in the October number of the *Celtic Review*, and dealt with the connection of Ireland with the Isle of Man. His last paper in the *Manx Quarterly* (May 1909) was on “The November–May Year in Man.” At the time of his death he was contemplating the publication of a book on Anglo-Manx dialect. The book was to consist of a vocabulary which was to form an appendix to be divided under four headings:

1. Words of English origin found both in the Isle of Man and elsewhere.
2. Words of English origin whose use seems to be peculiar to the Isle of Man.
3. Words of English origin whose spelling appears to be peculiar to the Isle of Man.
4. Manx Gaelic words.

Mr Moore had almost completed the appendix in which the words are illustrated by quotations from T. E. Brown or from other dialect writers or else from colloquial speech. The text of the book was to have comprehended chapters on the origins of Anglo-Manx, Manx characteristics as illustrated by their words and phrases, an

account of the verb and adverb, *etc.* But of this part of the book nothing seems to have been written. The pen of the writer was stayed by the Master's hand.

An old Manxman, on hearing of the death of the Speaker, said, "The band is off the sheaf," and this is in every sense true of things Manx. The words of his great fellow-countryman might most fittingly have been put into his mouth:

"Of ancient heritage—
Of manners, speech, of humours, polity,
The limited horizon of our stage—
Old love, hope, fear,
All this I fain would fix upon the page,
That so the coming age,
Lost in the empire's mass,
Yet haply longing for their fathers, here
May see, as in a glass,
What they held dear—"

S. M.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

- 1885–87. *The Manx Notebook.*
- 1889. *The Climate of the Isle of Man.*
- 1890. *The Surnames and Place-names of the Isle of Man.*
- 1891. *Folklore of the Isle of Man.*
- 1891. *Carvalyn Gailckagh* (Manx Carols).
- 1893. *Book of Common Prayer in Manx Gaelic.* (2 vols.)
- 1893. *Account of the Diocese of Sodor and Man.*
- 1895. "Further Notes on Manx Folklore."
- 1896. *Manx Ballads and Music.*
- 1898. *Letters of Lieutenant Edward Christian.*
- 1900. *A History of the Isle of Man.* (2 vols.)
- 1901. *Manx Worthies.*
- 1902. *Story of the Isle of Man.*
- 1903. *Letters of Bishop Hildesley.*
- 1904. *Douglas a Hundred Years Ago.*
- 1904. *Historical Account of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company.*
- 1905. *Notes and Documents from the Records of the Isle of Man.*
- 1906. *Extracts from the Journals of the Self-Elected House of Keys.*

He also sent frequent contributions to *Yn Lioar Manninagh*, *Manx Quarterly*, *Scottish Historical Review*, *The Antiquary*, *Folklore*, *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society*, and other periodicals.

Sophia Morrison [signed as “S.M.”]. “Mr A.W. Moore, M.A., C.V.O.”
The Celtic Review 6.23 (1910): 283–87.

STEPHEN MILLER RBV

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