A VOCABULARY OF THE ANGLO-MANX DIALECT REVIEWED BY GEORGE FLOM (1927)

A Vocabulary of the Anglo-Manx Dialect. Compiled by A. W. Moore, C.V.O., M.A., with the coöperation of Sophia Morrison and Edmund Goodwin. Oxford University Press, 1924. Pp. xii, 206.

On September 8, 1909, Mr Moore wrote to Mr Goodwin that he had for some time been contemplating a book on the Anglo-Manx dialect, and had been compiling "a list of Anglo-Manx words and phrases in addition to those in Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary*."[1] The present book represents that list as it had developed up to the time of Moore's death in November, 1909. As indicated, the volume is intended as a supplement to the great Dialect Dictionary. There are in the volume *ca*. 3,000 words not (discovered and) recorded in Wright. Of philological commentary there is but a minimum; however, the folk-lore contained in many of the discussions of the use of words is of great interest and value. It is a fine contribution to English philology to have been made by lover of his dialect and a student of English. I am inclined to think that harvests equally rich can (if done soon) be reaped in many another peripheral dialect region of the British Isles, as The Hebrides and the islands of Western Scotland in general, Caithness and Sutherland, above all in the Orkneys, and perhaps in Wales, and Northern Ireland. Mr Moore's death cut short the work of collecting; and it unfortunately also deprived us of much additional material that the compiler had intended to prepare, and other material to be prepared by others. The plans in regard to this are most fully set out in a letter of Oct. 8, written to his collaborator Miss Morrison. There were to be chapters on the origin of Anglo-Manx; there were to be articles on certain classes of words, 'swear-words, terms of endearment, *etc*.'; the Manx Fisherman, the Farmer and the Housewife, were to be presented with their occupational vocabulary; there was to be an Anglo-Manx Phonology (by Mr Goodwin); Miss Morrison was to write a chapter on Manx Customs and Superstitions. And from the letter of June 8, 1909, we gather that there was to have been considerable attention paid to the Gaelic element in the vocabulary. We hope that some of these contributions may hereafter be supplied by other scholars.[2] As for the item of June 8, a reliable discussion of the sources of the Celtic

[1] Introduction, p. v.

[2] Miss Morrison has since died; the intended chapter on Manx customs did not appear among the papers left.

ISSN 1351-2293

element in the present vocabulary would have enhanced greatly the value of the book, and we regret its absence.[3]

Tested by phonology and peculiarities of word-usage Anglo-Manx is most closely related to the dialect of South-West Lancashire.[4] But possibly North Lancashire-West Yorkshire has contributed almost as large a share toward the character of Anglo-Manx; in his examination of his material as regards words and phrases, Moore found that Yorkshire parallels 'easily head the list.' The Isle of Man lies opposite Cumberland and North Lancashire, so that is perhaps what we should expect. But, no doubt, in recent times South Lancashire (with Liverpool) has been the main influence.

Characterizing the dialect in a few words I would say, that it would seem to show 1, an extensive Gaelic element in the vocabulary; 2, otherwise mainly native English words with Lancashire-Yorkshire affinities; 3, a moderate Norse element; 4, a small French element; 5, scattering elements of other origin; 6, numerous idioms of Gaelic origin, and prepositional constructions of the same origin; 7, many examples of archaic English usage, and inflexion; 8, many special developments in the grammar where analogy has operated to produce non-standard forms; 9, in general much word-contraction and word-reduction, as one would expect in a Celtic-colored dialect; 10, many picturesque phrases and characterizations; 11, numerous slang terms and other 'dialect' forms that are current in most parts of the United States; finally, 12, a considerable body of *noa*-words (connected with taboo practices).

I shall note briefly examples of a few of these.

at is used for 'of.' Sometimes this is OE *æt*, and a few times ON *at*. But in such a case as a house at him, maybe ten stories high' (a house of his, *etc*.), it is Manx Gaelic *ec*, 'at,' which with the vb, 'to be' denotes possession (p. 6). However, on this page, the Editor lists 13 uses of *at*, and the discussion seems to carry the idea that they are all of Gaelic source, though probably this is not the intention. However I am certain they are not, and that only those of the type of the one quoted are of Gaelic origin (hence numbers 2 and 4 only, plus type 5, quoted). Under characteristic 7 [210] above I shall note that the form *amn*, 'am not,' is quite clearly (Northern) Old English *am ne*. For children the old plural *childer* survives by the side of *childhern* ([*phonetic characters*] and ([*phonetic characters*]). Here belong also some instances of verbs whose stem ends in a dental, and that do not take *-ed*, *-et*, in the past prte. Under characteristic 3 I shall cite the word *sling*, 'to loiter,' which is evidently the ON *sløngva*, 'to sling.' Likewise here belongs the word *scowte* (now obsolete, we are

[3] Mr Goodwin supplies to the present volume a brief phonological introduction, and gives the transcriptions through the volume.

[4] Introduction, p. x.

told), 'a small boat,' which is OIcel *skúta*, a small craft,' modn. Norw. *skute*, do. Under characteristic 8 may be noted *brenth*, 'breadth,' and *winth*, 'width'; these seem to be, not nasalizations of the vowel before *dth*, but are apparently merely analogical *n*-forms, due to the word *length*, which in Anglo-Manx is pronounced *lenth*; the direction of the analogy was then due to the frequency of the couplet ' length and breadth,' the *n* being carried over into the second word (as a dittograph in scribal errors). It is possible, however, that in breadth' and 'width' the *d* has been nasalized between the vowel and the (voiceless) dental. In the word 'altogether,' a later sound has apparently been anticipated in the pronunciation [*phonetic characters*], by the side of [*phonetic characters*]. The verb 'choose' has a wk. pprtc. *chised* (tʃâist);[5] the vb. 'give (giv)' has the pprte. *gov* (change from the 5th to the 4th ablaut class), but apparently only in a special sense (*gove to fighting*, 'given to fighting'). Of word-contractions and reductions may be noted *bumbee*, 'bumblebee,' *forster*, 'forester,' and *dungle*, 'dung-hill.' Under number 12 I shall mention that the word 'dog' (regularly used on land) is not uttered at sea but instead one says *coill*, from Manx *quallian*, a 'pup'; there are many other 'sea-names.'

A very unusual phonological feature may finally be noted. One has the form *lemme*, 'let me'; but in the other persons this becomes: *lerrim*, 'let him'; *lerrer*, 'let her'; *lerrit*, 'let it,' and *lerrus*, 'let us'; because intervocalic *t*, or *tt*, or *th*, and sometimes *d* very often becomes *rr*.[6] Hence also 'Kitty' has become *Kerree*; 'out of' = *orrov*; 'about him' = *aburrim*; and 'whatever' = *wharraver*.

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[5] *à* like *a* in French *pas* (Introd., p. xii).

[6] It appears to me that in words that have sentence stress the intervocalic *t* or *tt* remains at the stage *tþ*. Thus the steps are *t(tt)* > *tþ* > *rr*.