

Manx Notes 584 (2022)

THE DEATH OF JOHN KELLY

(1809)

Sunday the 12th instant, at Copford, near Colchester, the Rev. John Kelly, LL.D. rector of that parish, and one of his Justices the Peace for the county of Essex. Dr Kelly was a native the Isle of Man, upon which he reflected no ordinary degree of honour, by his abilities, his acquirements, and his truly exemplary conduct as a divine and a scholar. He prosecuted his classical studies under that able master, and highly respectable character, the late Rev. Philip Moore, of Douglas; whose indefatigable coadjutor he afterwards became, in the important work of revising, correcting, transcribing, and preparing for the press, the (Manuscript) Translation of the Holy Scriptures into the *Manks* Language; the impression of which (comprising all the books of the Old and New Testaments, with two of the Apocryphal Books) he also superintended at Whitehaven, in the capacity of corrector; to which, on the recommendation the last mentioned gentleman, he was appointed the *Society for promoting Christian Knowledge*; the Patrons of that impression, as of every subsequent religious work connected with it.—Dr Kelly also superintended the printing of an edition of the Book of Common Prayer, and Bishop Wilson’s Treatise on the Sacrament, all in the Manks Language; and in the course of his “labours in” this “vineyard,” he had transcribed all the Books of the Old Testament *three* several times, before he had attained his twenty-second year! On the completion of this charitable work, begun by Bishop Wilson, (who, like his piety and virtue, acquired the appellation of Venerable); and promoted by the active zeal his successor, Bishop Hildesley, Mr Kelly was ordained, upon a title from the Episcopal Congregation at Air, where he resided (respected by all who knew him), until the Duke Gordon engaged him to Tutor to his son, the Marquis of Huntley, whose studies he superintended at Eton and Cambridge; and afterwards he accompanied that young Noblemen on the Tour of the Continent. Soon after his return, Mr Kelly graduated at Cambridge; and again visited the Continent, with two others of his pupils. In the course of a few months after his return, he was presented to the Rectory of Ardle, in Essex; and afterwards to that of Copford, in the same county; the former of which he resigned some years since. From the time that he entered into the Ministry, it might truly be said, that “*He made, the garment of holiness honourable.*” Dr Kelly (we believe) died in the 58th year of his age. “*A good life hath but a few days, but a good name endureth for ever.*” He has left a monument of his erudition in that branch of the *Celtic*, in his *Manks Grammar*, which was expected to followed by a much larger work, a *Manks Vocabulary*; some months ago announced as being nearly ready for the press. A large edition (the 4th) of the Book of Common Prayer, printed under the patronage, and by the munificence of the Society, (at the earnest solicitation of Bishop Crigan,) from the corrected copy of Dr Kelly, was finished at Whitehaven,

and sent to the Isle Mann, only about six weeks ago. Of *twenty seven* Clergymen, concerned in the translation of the *Manks Scriptures*, since the year 1760, *three* only are now living. These are the Translators of the book of Judges and Ruth, Ecclesiastes, and the Minor Prophets, from Joel to the end.

“Sunday the 12th [...]” *Norfolk Chronicle* 25 November 1809: 3b.

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