

Manx Notes 100 (2007)

“WHO IS IS MONA DOUGLAS?” (1)

MONA DOUGLAS IN PRAISE OF THE EASTER UPRISING

THE AWAKENING.

Easter, 1916.

Dark the east with war and woe;
Red clouds glow and spread afar—
What is that to us but pain
For men slain in England’s war?

England cannot reach our heart;
Far apart from her we stand,
While we give as gave the dead
Blood to shed at her command.

But across the sea at last
Comes a blast that thrills and stirs,
Waking dreams in prisoned lands,
Breaking bands and barriers.

We have heard a cry, a cry;
In or sky had dawned a light;
Land has cried to land in chains—
Through our pains comes strength and sight.

From the west there shines a light
In our night of darkest need:
Through the darkness answering gleams
Leap as dreams from souls that bleed.

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Kinsmen of the shining west!
Your unrest wild hearts have shared:
Soon from our land, too, shall rise,
Through wild skies, a singing bird.

Source: Mona Douglas, *A Dhooragh* (Douglas: Printed by Clucas & Faragher, 1919)



A Dhooragh (1919) was the second volume of poems published by Mona Douglas, the first, *Manx-Song and Maiden-Song*, appeared in 1915. Here, its opening poem is reproduced above where she makes it more than plain her open sympathy for the Easter Uprising of 1916. That same year, her poem “The Manx Call to Arms: And the Answer”¹ had been issued in single sheet format, “Specially composed for Lady Raglan’s Tea: Villa Marina, 19th August, 1916.”² There Douglas had written in the second verse:

“Ellan Vannin calls! Though England
 Rule us, we are yet half-free;
 Holding scathless through the ages
 Laws and liberty.
 Gorry’s Tynwald! still it stands—
 Guarded now by alien hands,
 Yet held steadfast ’mid the lands.”

The third (and final) verse continues:

“Freedom calls! and we are ready
 Each his summons to obey:
 Mann sends forth her sons with gladness
 To the watch, the fray.
 Ere our Freedom can be won
 There is fighting to be done—
 And wherever rings a war-cry
 We arise and follow on!”

With the publication of *A Dhooragh*, Douglas was clearer about which freedom was specifically calling, and, more importantly, where its summons was coming from.

STEPHEN MILLER
 VIENNA, 2007



¹ A copy can be found at Manx National Heritage Library, J8/DOU.

² Raglan was the Lieutenant Governor of Man from 1902–18. His governorship was one of autocracy, consistently blocking all attempts at social reform by the House of Keys.