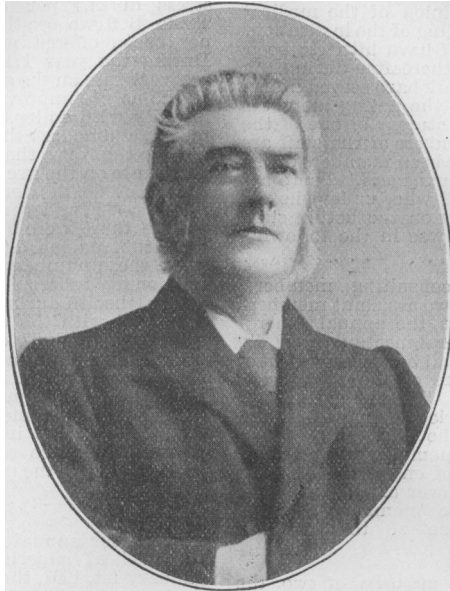


# Manx Notes 122 (2010)

## OBITUARY.

JOHN CLAGUE, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,

CASTLETOWN, ISLE OF MAN.



[777a] The death of Dr. John Clague, which occurred suddenly at his residence at Castletown, Isle of Man, on August 23rd, has deprived the medical profession in the Isle of Man of one who for many years had been the leading practitioner. About seven years ago a severe attack of influenza—after nearly thirty years of unremitting work of a large practice, conducted without partner, assistant, and never varied by holidays—left Dr. Clague with a cardiac affection, which precluded him from following the active practice of his profession. He was, however, able to see and prescribe for numbers of his old patients at his house, and would occasionally see cases in consultation with his fellow-practitioners, who highly valued his advice.

Dr. Clague was born on October 10th, 1842, being the son of the late Mr. Henry Clague, who farmed the estate of Ballanorris in Kirk Arbory, Isle of Man. He received his education at King William's College, and after leaving school worked for some years on his father's farm. He was as a youth greatly interested in medical botany and veterinary surgery, and eventually entered on a medical course at Guy's

Hospital, where in 1870 he was First Prizeman and Exhibitioner. He obtained the L.S.A. in 1872 and M.R.C.S. and L.R.C.P. in 1873.

On returning to the Isle of Man he commenced to build up a practice at Ballanorris. In the following year, when Dr. Wise of Castletown left the island, Dr. Clague removed to Castletown and received most of Dr. Wise's public appointments, becoming Medical Attendant to King William's College, Surgeon to the Isle of Man Gaol and to the Castletown military garrison, and Surgeon to a number of friendly societies in the south of the island. On the death of the late Dr. Nelson, he was appointed Surgeon to [777b] the Household of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, and retained this appointment from 1888 to 1901.

By his ready skill and kindly and cheerful manner, Dr. Clague's name soon became a household word in the south of the island, while his services as a consultant were in constant demand throughout the island from Spanish Head to the Point of Ayre.

Despite the constant professional calls on his time, Dr. Clague found time to devote to his various hobbies. An accomplished musician, he collaborated with Mr. W. H. Gill and the late Deemster Gill in the compilation and publication of the Manx National Song Book. Amongst hymn tunes which he composed, "Crofton" and "Erin Port" are in constant use in the chapels of the island. An erudite Manx scholar, he took great interest in the Manx Language Society, and during the last few years was busily engaged in taking gramophone records of Manx speech and song. A few days before his death, he and his friend Mr. Thomas Moore of Rushen had completed the manuscript of a work in Manx and English, dealing with Manx medical folklore and legends.

Dr. Clague was a member of the British Medical Association, and had the Isle of Man Division been organized, the members would have unanimously desired him to be its chairman.

The funeral took place at Kirk Arbory on Wednesday, August 26th. It was attended by a remarkable concourse of people from all parts of the island. In Castletown there were unmistakable manifestations of sorrow and regret, and the great majority of the places of business in the town were closed. In accordance with the old Manx custom, hymns were sung as the procession wended its way to Kirk Arbory. Here the burial service was conducted by the Archdeacon of Man and Canon Kewley, both, old friends and patients of the deceased.

Dr. Clague married in 1873 the only daughter of the late Mr. H.J. Watterson of Arbory, Captain of the Parish and member of the House of Keys. There were no children of the marriage.

**Source:** Anon. [but Rev. John Kewley]. "[Obituary] John Clague, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., Castletown, Isle of Man." *The British Medical Journal* 12 September 1908: 777.



Whilst this obituary is unsigned, it is in the hand of the Rev. John Kewley as the material here is later to be seen in his introduction to the posthumously published *Cooïnaghtyn Manninagh: Manx Reminiscences By the Late Dr John Clague* (1911).<sup>1</sup> There are two points of interest here. Firstly, the likeness of Clague reproduced is new, and shows a much healthy Clague than the later portrait in *Cooïnaghtyn Manninagh* (though we lack a dare for this photograph). Also, his involvement in the sound recording of Manx: “during the last few years [he] was busily engaged in taking gramophone records of Manx speech and song.” These recordings are at present lost.

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. John Kewley, “Introduction,” *Cooïnaghtyn Manninagh: Manx Reminiscences By the Late Dr John Clague* (Castletown: M.J. Backwell, n.d. [but 1911]).