

Manx Notes 289 (2017)

THE MANX LANGUAGE SOCIETY (8) FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT (1903)

The annual meeting of the Manx Language Society was held at the Town Hall on Thursday, the 3rd inst., Canon Savage presiding. Dr Clague, in writing expressing sympathy with the objects of the Society, said: "Whenever I have an opportunity I hold conversation with those who are able to speak Manx, as I think this is the best method of keeping people interested in it."—Miss Morrison, the hon. secretary, read her report, in which she expressed the opinion that the Manx language was by no means dead yet. She adds: "I have been more than ever convinced of this by experiences which I have had during the past summer when making walking tours in country districts. Everywhere did my travelling companion and myself find our little knowledge of the old tongue a sure key to the hearts of the people and hospitality was showered upon us. I should be ashamed to say how many times in the day we were literally forced to eat. The round table would be drawn up to the 'chollagh' and set with the household's best, and we were obliged to eat, though the people knew nothing about us—it was all done for love of our mother tongue. It was delightful to find, too, that the work of our Society has borne some little fruit, for in most unexpected quarters there was knowledge of the movement. The people seemed to have been stirred to a little sense of that national spirit and patriotism so long torpid. People are no longer ashamed of knowing their old language, as was the case a few years ago, when to know Manx was to stamp oneself illiterate. In one house I found the grandmother spinning away by the fireside and teaching her granddaughter the language. The girl, who was in her teens, spoke quite fluently. In another house I found an invalid husband teaching his wife to read it. In other places children were brought in to recite pieces in Manx for me. These experiences confirmed my conviction of the importance of the work to be done in the home by the older folk."

During the year prizes were offered to school children by the Society for recitations in Manx. The children had taken greatly to the idea, and the recitations were good and spirited. Cardboard sheets are issued for schools, containing the Lord's Prayer and Bishop Ken's morning and evening hymns in Manx. The revival of the *Oiel Verry* is commented on, and the writing and publication of Manx literature in Manx by Messrs J.J. Kneen, T. Nelson, W. Cubbon ("Manx Sun"), and S.K. Broadbent ("Examiner") is referred to in appreciative terms.

A vote of thanks was passed to Miss Morrison for her report, and officials were appointed for the ensuing year, with Dr Clague as president.

The Speaker stated that among the late Canon Clarke's MSS. were discovered eighty Manx sermons by about ten Manx clergymen, chiefly by the Revs. Crebbin and Clague. These MSS. were now in possession of Mr G.F. Clucas. Mr Moore

stated that there were also translations of a number of the Psalms by the Rev. John Clague, Vicar of Rushen. These Psalms were different (all but one) from those in the first version of the Manx Prayer Book, and about 50 had never been translated into metre before. The Speaker also said that the translation and versifying seemed to him to be remarkably good, and that, if funds permitted they ought to be published.

“Manx Language Society.” *Isle of Man Examiner* 19 December 1903: 2e.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2017

