

Manx Notes 475 (2020)

“A RARITY IN THESE DAYS OF ANGLICISATION” (1907) *

“A rarity in these days of Anglicisation is a singer who can favour an audience with good Manx,” so reported the *Peel City Guardian* in 1907.¹ It continued, “Miss Craine, of Sulby, gave ‘Kirree fo Niaghtey,’ to the unbounded delight of her hearers.” She was singing to “a jolly party of half-a-hundred Manx-Americans and their relations and friends belonging to the Island,” who had gathered in the grounds of Peel Castle for a 4th of July “Manx-American Pic-Nic.” The Manx Americans present avoided the *cliché* of everyone from America living in Ohio—Mr C.C. Clucas resided in Chicago; Rev J. and Mrs Craine and daughter, Ognawka, Illinois; Mrs Davenport, Albany, N.Y.; Mr and Mrs J.L. DeRenzy and son, Tacoma, Washington; Mr John Gawne, Chicago; Mr David Kaighin and Miss Minnie Kaighin, Oak Park, Chicago; Mr J.E. and Mrs Kelly, Wymore, Nebraska; Mr W.J. Kelly, Galva, Illinois; Mr and Miss Lizzie Quayle, Chicago; Mr J. Radcliffe, Illinois; Miss Sayle, Chicago; Mr and Mrs J.C. Shimmin and daughter, Monmouth, Illinois, U.S.A.; Mrs Skillicorn, Albany, N.Y.; Mr and Mrs Wise, Chicago.² She was not the only one to sing in Manx on the day as the Rev. J.R. Craine (no relation) after his speech “added that he was going to sing a little Manx air his grandmother had taught him.” Just as it was a rarity to find someone to sing in Manx, so too now was it equally rare to find an audience who could understand the language, “[t]hough the majority present could not follow Manx, this vocal effort in the mother tongue by Mr Craine was much esteemed.” There were other songs sung at the picnic, Walter Clucas “obliged with the rousing ‘Ramsey Town,’” and Miss J. Kelly “with a verse of the beautiful ‘Hush, Little Darling’ from the Manx National Songs.” All joined in with singing “Ellan Vannin,” which “was sung with evident feeling,” as too was the Manx Fishermen’s Evening Hymn. And to round the picnic and the singing off, “Miss Katie Clucas, a young lady with an excellent voice, rendered what proved two new songs to many of the party ‘I’m a native of Peel’ and ‘The Manx Wedding.’” These songs were chosen with care, not just to entertain, but also to create a sense of Manxness on the day, the use of song to bond the party together as Manx folk.

Returning to “Miss Craine, of Sulby,” she is properly Elizabeth Craine of Cooilbane, Sulby and Sophia Morrison was to visit her the next month as she wrote to W.H. Gill in a letter dated 13 August 1907:

I think more scraps of music might still be gained. I heard some bits the other day in Sulby Glen at the house of Mrs Craine, but when Mrs Craine & her daughter

* Originally published as Stephen Miller, “‘A rarity in these days of Anglicisation’ (1907),” *Kiaull Manninagh Jiu* August (2020), [17]. Reproduced here with sources.

¹ “Manx-American Pic-Nic in Peel Castle,” *Peel City Guardian* 6 July 1907: [5]c. All further quotes are from this article.

² For a brief report of their arrival, “25 Manx-Americans ...,” *Peel City Guardian* 6 July 1907.

told me that they had often sung to you, I felt assured that you had collected all they have to give.³

In the 1901 census, Elizabeth C. Craine, was 28 years old, unmarried, and working as a dressmaker. Her mother, Elizabeth C. Craine, aged 59, was born in Jurby, and her husband was Daniel J. Craine, born in Lezayre as was his daughter, also aged 59, and working as a roadman.⁴ All three spoke Manx and English. With Gill having already visited and collected from mother and daughter, Morrison passed on the opportunity. W.H. Gill's personal papers are lost and so there is nothing now to draw on as regards his collecting from the pair.

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REFERENCES

- Anon. "25 Manx-Americans" *Peel City Guardian* 6 July 1907: [5]a.
 ——. "Manx-American Pic-Nic in Peel Castle." *Peel City Guardian* 6 July 1907: [5]c–d.
 Miller, Stephen. "Her daughter told me that they had often sung to you.' W.H. Gill and the Craines of Cooilbane." *Manx Notes* 19 (2004): 1–3.



³ Letter from Sophia Morrison to W.H. Gill, 13 August [1907], MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 4, Letter copy book (1904–07). The letter given in full in Stephen Miller, "Her daughter told me that they had often sung to you.' W.H. Gill and the Craines of Cooilbane," *Manx Notes* 19 (2004).

⁴ *Census Enumerators' Book* for Lezayre, 1901, RG 13/5300, fol. 63, sch. 3.