

Manx Notes 559 (2021)

BLANCHE NELSON
“STORIES OF MANXLAND”
(1901)

(1)

In the Howe Wesleyan Chapel on Thursday evening, a service of song, entitled “Stories of Manxland,” including the “Red Ree Gorree,” was given in connection with the Howe Boys’ Anchor Union, under the leadership of Mrs Nelson.

“[Rushen] In the Howe” *Isle of Man Examiner* 1 January 1898: [5]c.

(2)

A very interesting and somewhat unique “Service of Song” entitled “Stories of Manxland”, was given at The Howe, about a mile from Port St Mary, in connection with The Howe Boys Anchor Union, and Y.M.C.A. About 100 persons, including invited guests as well as members of the Boy’s Anchor Union, and associates of the Howe Girls’ Association, sat down to tea. On the doors being opened a large crowd of people filled the chapel, and the service of song began by Mr John Gorry, of Ballina, Howe, playing the harmonium, and a full choir singing “Light in the Darkness”: after which Mr Joseph McArd, T.C., of Port Erin, read a most graphic and almost picture-like account of the rescue of the French boat the Jean Charles off the Thousla. Then was sung “The Manx Fishermen’s Evening Hymn”; and “The Red Ree Goree: or The Landing of King Orry,” was read by Mrs Nelson, who had herself, with the help of Mr Teddie Raisbeck Collister and some of the young men “associates,” arranged the service of song, the story part having been selected from a collection of tales and legends of Manx life and history collected by Mrs Nelson from the old Manx people, who still delight to talk of the days of long ago. The closing piece of the evening was “The Flowering of the Myrrh,” a most exquisitely touching little story on the mysterious “coming up” of this little flower at old Christmas time. Mrs Nelson, the foundress and central secretary of The Howe Boys’ Anchor Union and Y.M.C.A., as well as to The Girls Bible Association, and Mr Teddie Raisbeck Collister, the honorary treasurer of both Societies, wish to return thanks through this paper to the friends who gave so generously to the collection at the close of the service towards the expenses of the work.

“[Rushen] Stories of Manxland.” *Isle of Man Times* 8 January 1898: 5c.

(3)

The service of song, entitled “Stories of Manxland,” which was given on Thursday evening, December 30th, in the Howe Wesleyan Chapel, in connection with the Howe Boys’ Anchor Union, went off remarkably well. About 100 members of the Anchor Union and the Howe Girls’ Bible Association, and a few invited friends, partook of tea, cake, etc., supplied by Mr Wm. Skillicorn, of Port St. Mary, and the Fishermen’s Supply Association. The doors were thrown open to the public after tea, and a large crowd filled the chapel. Prayer was offered up by Mr Trafford Collister. The opening hymn, “Light in the darkness” was sung by a very good choir, Mrs John Gorry, Balnahowe, presiding at the harmonium. Mr Jos. McArd, of Port Erin, was chairman, and he read the first piece, “The rescue of the French boat ‘Jeune Charles’ off the Thusla,” and scarcely ever has been heard a more telling account of the wreck and rescue, while the mention of the aged Prince Lucien Bonaparte’s admiration and knowledge of the Manx tongue gave much pleasure to the Manx speaking people. After this was sung “The Manx fishermen’s evening hymn,” and then “The Red Ree Gorree” was told by Mrs Nelson. The last piece of the evening was “The flowering of the myrrh.” Mr and Mrs Bowles, the Primitive Methodist evangelists, were present. It may not be out of place to add that this Manx-story “service of song” was arranged for the Howe Boys’ Anchor Union by Mrs Nelson, Mrs John Gorry, Mr Teddie Raisbeck Collister, and a few of the young men associates. The reading parts were culled from a most interesting manuscript collection of tales and legends, gathered from the old Manx people. The arduous duties of the tea tables devolved on Miss Jennie Collister, Miss Bella Crebbin, Miss Kate Kegg, and Miss Northey, with the help of Messrs Jammie Watterson, Dick Nelson, Robert Quine, and others. A collection was made at the close.

“[Rushen] Service of Song.” *Isle of Man Examiner* 15 January 1898: [5]b.

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“The reading parts were culled from a most interesting manuscript collection of tales and legends, gathered from the old Manx people.” The person doing the culling was Helen Blanche Nelson *née* Wallace (died 1909), a religious evangelist, of Glen Chass. As regard the “manuscript collection,” keen-eyed readers of W.W. Gill’s *Manx Scrapbooks* will have noticed references to it. Fortunately, the manuscript survives, and is now deposited in the MNHL as MS 432/1–3.

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