

Manx Notes 660 (2024)

EDWARD CALLOW
THE PHYNODDERREE, AND OTHER
LEGENDS OF THE ISLE OF MAN
([1882])

(1)

THE BOOKSELLER (6 OCTOBER 1882)

From Messrs. J. Dean and Son:

[898a] The Phynodderree, and other Legends of the Isle of Man. By Edward Callow.—Fortunately for the juveniles, the realm of fairyland has not yet been explored to drying-up point. Sham fairy tales and the base inventions of yesterday we take no account of, but genuine traditions of such fairies as those who, until lately, inhabited the Isle of Man should be welcomed with all honours. There can be no doubt of the reality of these Manx fairies, for a worthy farmer, now living, says that, though he has not actually seen them, he has certainly smelt them. Mr Callow has rescued four charming [898b] tales from oblivion, and, by aid of the first-rate engravings and elegant get-up of his book, he has earned the thanks of all the learned in fairyland lore.

“[Short Notices] From Messrs. J. Dean and Son: [...]” *The Bookseller* 6 October 1882: 898.

(2)

PREFACE

THE PHYNODDERREE, AND OTHER LEGENDS OF THE ISLE OF MAN

[vii] In no part of the British Islands has the belief in the existence of Fairies retained a stronger hold upon the people than in the Isle of Man. In spite of the tendency of this matter-of-fact age to destroy what little of poetry, romance, and chivalry Nineteenth Century education has left to us, there lurks still in many countries, and especially in mountainous districts, a half credulity in the supernatural.

Many legends of good and evil Fairies are still related by the country people of Mona’s Isle; and those who care to inquire into the habits and customs of the Manx cottagers will see and hear much that will reward their curiosity. It is not the mere excursionist, visiting the Island for a summer holiday and keeping on the beaten track of sightseers, who will ever learn or see anything of these customs, but he who branches off the high road into the recesses of the mountain districts.

When gathering materials for the tale of the Communion Cup of Kirk Malew, I visited the Vicarage to ascertain, if possible, the date of the disappearance of the Fairy Silver Goblet, which Waldron in his “History” speaks of as being then in existence

and in safe keeping in the Church. In the course of conversation on the lingering belief in Fairies, the Vicar [viii] informed me that one of his own parishioners a regular attendant at Church, and a well-to-do farmer had lately expressed his implicit conviction that such people as fairies *did* frequent the Glen in which he lived; and in reply to the Parson's question, "Have you ever, in your life, seen a fairy?" he replied, "No! I can't exactly say I ever saw one; but I've smelt them often enough."

Sir Walter Scott, in his "Peveril of the Peak," gives an outline of the legend of the "Mough-dy-Dhoo," the Phantom Black Dog of Peel Castle; and in his notes he refers to others. Waldron, in his quaint "History of the Isle of Man," alludes to several legends, and relates a good deal that is interesting on the superstitions of the Manx people and their belief in Elves and Fairies.

To rescue from oblivion some of the legends that delighted my early years, and present them in an entertaining shape before the reader, has long been my wish; and if, by reading them, an interest in, and a desire to visit, the beautiful Isle of Man is created in any who now only know of its existence as an island somewhere in the Irish Sea, I shall not have written in vain.

I am indebted to the late JAMES BURMAN, Esq., F.R.A.S., Secretary to the Lieut-Governor and the Council of the Island, to the late PAUL BRIDSON, Esq., Honorary Secretary to the Manx Society, and others, for many of the materials of these tales.

In the event of these tales being favourably received I shall be encouraged to repeat this experiment, as there are many more Legends of the Isle of Man that I am inclined to hope will be found both interesting and entertaining.

EDWARD CALLOW.

HIGHGATE, *July*, 1882.

Edward Callow, "Preface." *The Phynodderree, and Other Legends of the Isle of Man*. London: J. Dean and Son, n.d. (but 1882). vii–viii.

Stephen Miller RBV

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