

# THE SOPHIA MORRISON COLLECTION OF MANX FOLK CHARMS

**Stephen Miller**

**Abstract:** Sophia Morrison (1859–1917) was the leading light of the Manx Language Revival in the Isle of Man in the 1900s and Secretary of the Manx Language Society (founded 1899). Folklorist, folk song collector, and pioneer of recording with the phonograph, she also had a deep interest in folk medicine and amongst her surviving personal papers as part of that research are some seventy charms recorded by her both in Manx (24) and English (46). This corpus adds to an earlier collection of thirteen charms gathered by Dr John Clague (1842–1908) and published in *Incantatio* 2 (2002). This by no means exhausts the Manx material and we still await publication of a charm catalogue in full for the Isle of Man.

**Keywords:** Charm Collecting; Early Twentieth Century; English; Isle of Man; Manx Gaelic; Sophia Morrison (1859–1917).

In an undated letter Sophia Morrison wrote to Karl Roeder, a German national resident in Manchester and fellow folklorist, that “[d]uring this last month, I have collected 6 or 7 note books full of Charms & herbal remedies [...]”.<sup>1</sup> As to how on at least one occasion this material was collected she recounts elsewhere that:

I was amused this past September [1903] at the way which I was given [interlined received] a charm without weakening its effect to the giver. Whilst blaberry<sup>2</sup> picking I met on South Bar-rule, a family pulling ling, for winter firing. Manks is the man’s chengey ny mayrey (mother tongue), and so delighted was he to speak it some, that I ventured to ask him if he had any charms.<sup>3</sup>

She continues:

He at once said “yes” and gave one me. But to avoid losing any of its virtue, he asked for my note book, put it on top of the cart wheel, and wrote it in there, for writing it does not count! This

is what he wrote down—"As God said unto Moses, as thy river shall be as my river, and thy water as my water and thy blood as my blood. Why won't my blood stop also thy blood [full name] In the name of the Father, of the Son, and the Holy Ghost."<sup>4</sup>

This is copied from a letter, as one sent to Roeder similarly mentions this incident, where Morrison is seeking from him the Manx name for *Potentilla tormentilla* (septfoil as it is commonly known): "Last week, a man pulling ling, with a hook on S. Barrule told me that its Manx name was 'Cammelt-y-muc' [...]," adding, "but no other Manx speaking person to whom I have shown a specimen knows it by this name [...]."<sup>5</sup>

Morrison's collecting of folk medicine was carried out (and seemingly over) in the early 1900s, as she mentioned when sending some or all of this material to Roeder in 1906: "I send you my notes on Charms & Charmers, Manx Dye Plants & Herbal Remedies. I collected them about four years ago & have added nothing to them since. I have always intended to work them up, but from lack of time have not done so."<sup>6</sup> Fortunately these notes, with some bearing annotations by Roeder, were returned to her and so were not lost along with the bulk of Roeder's own personal papers. Morrison was aware that he was planning a publication on Manx folk medicine:

It seems a pity that so much information as you have should be lost. I will therefore with pleasure cooperate with you in the matter. [...] I should be glad to know how you intend to arrange the material—I include the plan of arrangement which I had intended to follow. Is your idea at all the same?

She also added, "I should also be very much interested to see your list of Manx plant names now that I am sending you mine"—an example here of the notion of *quid pro quo* between collectors. Roeder never came round to publishing anything further on the Island after the appearance of his collected columns from the *Isle of Man Examiner* in 1904, published as *Manx Notes and Queries*.

The nineteenth century in the Island had seen population decline with emigration overseas to America and Australia. Towards the end of that century there was a decline in the lead mining industry at Laxey and Foxdale, while the ending of the spring Irish mackerel fishing led to the fishing fleets of the port towns of Peel and Port St Mary losing their economic dominance. Only Douglas on the east coast, now the capital, was thriving due to its development as a Victorian seaside resort for the working class of the Lancashire cotton mill towns. Manx

Gaelic had lost its position as a community language to English. Native speakers were now elderly and with little generational transmission of the language.

"If we had not Miss Morrison at the wheel, I am afraid our ship would have foundered long ago. I only hope that she may be long spared to carry on her labour of love."<sup>7</sup> That ship was the Manx Language Revival and Sophia Morrison (1859–1917) was indeed its captain. The Manx Language Society had been founded in 1899, with a mission to revive the language and to shore up a separate Manx identity. The first Pan-Celtic Congress was held in Dublin in 1901, the Isle of Man not being alone in that wave of enthusiasm for all things Celtic which manifested itself in the closing decade of the nineteenth century and led to the Pan-Celtic movement in those countries that saw themselves so.

Morrison was variously folklorist, folksong collector, pioneer of recording with the phonograph, Secretary of the Manx Language Society, editor of *Mannin*, and founder of the Peel Language Class amongst other activities. She organised Manx Concerts on Old Christmas Day in Peel and reintroduced the *Oie'l Voirrey* into Patrick parish church. The Peel Players took their inspiration from her enthusiasm and their performances of plays by Christopher Shimmin created a Manx theatre where she even took to the stage with them.

Karl Roeder (1848–1911) on the other hand was cut from very different cloth. His letters to Morrison show him to be a difficult character to deal with and of all the figures involved with the Revival she was the only one he seemed to have time for though even there he took a self-assumed mentoring role with her. Nevertheless, as a folklorist he was able to build close relationships with individuals in the Island, especially Edward Faragher, a fisherman of Cregneash who collected for him, as well as Alfred Hudson of Ballafesson. He still remains an unknown figure and there is still much to be learnt of him.

"I include the plan of arrangement which I had intended to follow," Morrison wrote to Roeder. Neither she nor Roeder as mentioned ever published on folk medicine but this plan is amongst her personal papers now in the Manx National Heritage Library. Plainly titled "Arrangement of Article" there is more than sufficient material for her to have authored a book on the topic (as an article it would have most likely been intended for the *Proceedings of the Isle of Man Antiquarian and Natural History Society*). As seen, Morrison was not collecting only charms but also plant names and much wider than that as can be seen when her papers are worked through—basically, the whole gamut of Manx plant

lore. Her papers were deposited in the then Manx Museum Library in the 1950s (now the Manx National Heritage Library—MNHL), and the state of her papers is a familiar one, they having clearly seen loss in large part, despite being kept in family hands. Nevertheless, they have the undoubted virtue of survival.

The catalogue following is drawn from nine of her manuscripts amongst her personal papers now in the MNHL. Collected by Morrison were verbal charms dealing with, in the main, physical conditions and complaints—removing birthmarks, stopping blood from cuts and wounds especially, a common hazard with work on the land, curing cancers, relieving skin complaints such as erysipelas (popularly known as St Antony's Fire) and ringworm, curing lumbago and rheumatism, dealing with numbness in the feet, the effects of a scald, the affliction of styes, and riding oneself of warts. Charms were recorded both in Manx and English, though ones for stopping blood are in English only. Those in Manx were collected for cancer, erysipelas (St Antony's Fire), lumbago (or rheumatism), numbness, scalds, styes, and warts. Besides those dealing with medical issues, she also had gathered charms for the foretelling of a future husband and to allow the seeing of a sweetheart; and, finally, one for renouncing God and giving oneself over to the Devil.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Copy letter (fragment) from Sophia Morrison to Karl Roeder, undated, MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 5.

<sup>2</sup> Blaberries are better known of as bilberries or whortleberries.

<sup>3</sup> [Envelope labelled "Folk Medicine."] Loose sheets pinned together, no cover page or title and text now incomplete, unpaginated, undated [1903 or after], MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 6.

<sup>4</sup> [Envelope labelled "Folk Medicine."] Loose sheets pinned together, no cover page or title and text now incomplete, unpaginated, undated [1903 or after], MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 6.

<sup>5</sup> Draft letter (fragment) from Sophia Morrison to [Karl Roeder], [September/October 1903], MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 4.

<sup>6</sup> Copy letter from Sophia Morrison to Karl Roeder, undated [April? 1906], MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 4, Letter copy book (1904–07).

<sup>7</sup> Letter from J.J. Kneen to William Cubbon, 9 November 1915, MNHL, MS 09495, William Cubbon Papers, Box labelled "WC: Correspondence."

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MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 6

[Envelope labelled] "Anglo-Manx Dialect"

1 "Satires by Manxmen on their fellows | & neighbours" (undated).  
[Envelope labelled] "Folk Medicine"

2 Notebook missing cover, paginated only on side 1 as page 2 with heading "Folk Doctors and their Cures," undated [1903 or later].

3 Disbound page spread from a School Exercise Book, paginated on side 1 as page 2 with heading "Charms & Charmers," and on side 3 as page 23, undated.

[Envelope labelled] "Manx Plant Names Lore"

4 "Manx Plant [Name] Lore." School Exercise Book, missing cover, paginated (inconsistently) by Morrison, undated.

5 "On Manx Folk-Medicine." Loose sheets fastened together with brass pin along with notebook now only in part, unpaginated and undated.

6 Loose sheets pinned together, no cover page or title and text now incomplete, unpaginated, undated [1903 or after].

7 Disbound notebook, paginated by Morrison on right-hand pages only, missing 1 and starts now on 3, undated.

#### Loose Items

8 *Antient Cymric Medicine and Lecture Memoranda, British Medical Association Meeting Swansea, 1903* [blank pages used as notebook by Morrison].

9 "Manx Folk Lore | Collected by self 1903" [Notebook].

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## MANX VERBAL FOLK CHARMS

## COLLECTED BY SOPHIA MORRISON

## EDITING CONVENTIONS

The text of the charms appear here diplomatically. As regards the appearance of [ ] they are as in the original and do not represent editorial intervention where { } are used instead. Editorial remarks are in italic

type. Quote marks used by Morrison are not always consistent and often the closing ones are omitted by her.

1

“Satires by Manxmen on their fellows | & neighbours” (undated).

## TO STOP BLOOD

1 Before the flood when water was wood, Jesus stood, and firmly stood. I pray thee stop this blood of [full name], in the name of the Father, Son, & Holy Ghost.

2 Jesus was born in Bethlehem, baptised in the river Jordan. As the water stood the child spoke. I pray thee stop this blood of [full name] in the name of Father Son, & Holy Ghost

3 In thy name I mean by thy power to stop this vein of [full name & age] In Father, Son, & Holy Ghost by thy power I stop this vein.

## FOR ERYSIPELAS (OR, ST ANTHONY’S FIRE)

4 Magh ass shoh, rose bwoirrin as rosa fyrryn! x M’ees eh shoh dy phovar Chreest Mac Yee, Dy row ee ny scughey gys crink s’ yrjey As myr yn Keayn mooar lhieeney as traie. x M’ees eh shoh = My vees eh shoh or, my she shoh (I have not seen this contraction in print)

## FOR LUMBAGO, OR RHEUMATISM

5 Ta mee skeaylley yn ghuin shoh ayns ennym yn Ayr as y Vac, as y Spyrryd Noo. My she guir ayns ennym yn Chiarn, ta mee skealley eh ass ny eill, ass ny fehyn, as ass ny craueyn.”

## FOR A SCALD

6 Ayns ennym yn Ayr, as y Vac, as a Shynd Noo, gow yn scoldey shoh [*one word erased unreadable*] ersooyl

## FOR A STYE

7 Obtain a brass-headed pin from the person who has the stye, rub the head of the pin round the stye nine times from left to right counting in Manx as follows “lheunican nane, lheunican jias, Then reverse the rubbing & counting.

8 This charm seems to be an Eng version of the last—"Obtain a yellow headed pin, with it make 13 crosses on the styne saying "from one to two, from two to three, etc; then count back again to "from one to none at all." Then the Trinity follows with a further cross for each name."

## TO REMOVE WARTS

9 Fahney veg, gab garragh, gow raad as ny trooid dy bragh y ar-  
ragh

## 2

Notebook missing cover, paginated only on side 1 as page 2 with heading "Folk Doctors and their Cures," undated [1903 or later].

## TO REMOVE A BIRTHMARK

10 Place a dead hand on the mark. This was tried near to Peel last winter & cured a baby with an ugly birthmark. When the dead hand is used for a charm, it must also be said to be done in the name of the Trinity.

## TO STOP BLOOD

11 'As God said unto Moses, as thy river shall be as my river, & thy water as my water, & thy blood as my blood. Why wont my blood stop also thy blood [full name]. In the name of the Father, of the Son, & the Holy Ghost.'

12 When the water was the word, Jesus stood & firmly stood. I command the blood of [man's | woman's full name] to stop in the name of the Father Son & Holy Ghost. (corrupted version) correct further on

13 In Thy Name I mean, & by thy power to stop the vein of [full name & age] In Father, Son, & Holy Ghost by Thy power I stop this vein.

14 Before the flood, when water was wood, Jesus stood & firmly stood. I pray Thee stop this blood of [name] in the name of the Father, Son & Holy Ghost

15 Jesus was born in Bethlehem, baptized in the River Jordan. As the water stood the child spoke, "I pray thee stop this blood [of [name]] in the name of Father, Son & Holy Ghost.



## FOR CANCER

16 For internal cancer a decoction of hemlock, “emloge” is much used. “Emloye,’ the common hemlock, is believed to cure to all who are [less] sound in body & to be poisonous to those who are well.

“Oh! Emloge ec, O! Emloge ee/eech = cure) When I am well you make me sick When I am sick you make me well Oh! emloge ec, O! emloge ee.”

## FOR ERYSIPELAS (OR, ST ANTHONY’S FIRE)

17 Magh ass shoh, rose bwoirrin as rose fyrryn; My vees eh shoh dty phooar Chreest Mac Yee, dy row ee ny seughey gys crink s’ yrjey as myr yn keayn mooar lheiney as traie.

“Charm for erysipelas, literal translation of Manx above”

Cut of this, she erysipelas, she erysipelas. May be this by thy power Christ, Son of God, [that] might it be shifted to the highest hills, & like the deep sea ebbing & flowing.

## TO REMOVE WARTS

18 Fahney veg, gob garragh, gow raad as ny trooid dy bragh y aragh [= Little wart, crooked mouth go away & never come anymore]

## FOR A SCALD

19 Place your hand on the scald, & then remove it saying, “I do this praying it wont blister,’ then blow on the scald once after each of the following names, as you say them, “In the name of the Father, & of the Son, & Holy Ghost. {*Scored through with annotation in left margin corrupted version* = “Then came two angels out of the North, the one brought fire, & the other brought frost, Go out fire (blow on scald) & come in frost (blow again) & heal the scald of [name], (blow). In the name etc;}

20 There was three angels came from the North one to serve fire & one to serve frost, one to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. Out fire, enter frost, in the name of our Saviour Christ The Lord [keep blowing on the scald when you say this charm but don’t blow when you say ‘out fire’]

## TO REMOVE A STYE

21 Obtain a brass pin from the person who has the stye, rub the head of the pin roud the stye 9 times, form left to right couting as you do like this nane lheunican, jees lheunican up to nuy lheunican, then



reverse the rubbing & counting & say 'Ayns enmyn yn Ayr, as y Vac, as y Spyrryd Noo.' English version Obtain a yellow headed pin. With it make 9 crosses over the stye saying "from 1 to 2, from 2 to 3, from 3 to 4 etc, then count back again 'from 9 to 8, from 8 to 7 etc, to 1 to none [at all]." Then a cross over & above for each name in the following sentence 'In the name of Father, Son, & Holy Ghost. [Given as "English version."

22 A funeral is one of the requisites of this charm. Take a straw out of the bed, ~~round~~<sup>ub</sup> it round the stye, then run after the funeral & throw the straw at the coffin saying "take my stye away with your own," (this is believed to be now obsolete, though it has been used here within the last 20 years).

### 3

Disbound page spread from a School Exercise Book, paginated on side 1 as page 2 with heading "Charms & Charmers," and on side 3 as page 23, undated.

## FOR WITCHCRAFT

23 "You must go church on a Sunday that then is sacrament. Pretend to eat the holy bread, but carry it home with you. At night go to a river [*interlined stand*] where there is [*two characters overwritten*] a bridge, undress & stand in the water under the bridge, then throw the bread away & say "so I cast away God." Then dip under the water & say, "as I wash clean in this water, so do I clean myself from all works of God & his church & give myself to the Devil."

### 4

"Manx Plant [Name] Lore." School Exercise Book, missing cover, paginated (inconsistently) by Morrison, undated.

## TO FORETELL A FUTURE HUSBAND [USING ASH-LEAVES]

24 Even Ash-leaf That is the same number of fonds—leaves on each side. Girls search for one on the tree & put it in their breasts as a charm repeating this rhyme: "Even ash I do thee pluck And in my bosom I thee put The first young man that I do meet I'll cross his name & that

will be it.” (The meaning is that she’ll cross (mark) his name, as it will be the name of her future husband)

25 Another way of foretelling futurity with the “even ash” is to count the pinnates alphabetically. whichever letter they ended upon was the initial letter of one’s future husband’s Christian name.

## TO FORETELL A FUTURE HUSBAND [USING YARROW LEAVES]

26 The yarrow is cut too with some Charm rhyme “Yarrow, yarrow, I cut thee yarrow Tell me tell me before to morrow Who my sweetheart is to be.”

27 “Yarrow, yarrow thee [and] I do pluck This time tomorrow tell me who my true love will be”

## TO REMOVE WARTS

28 The way to cure a wart [stye] o[*overwritten* i]n the eyelid is to point[*bar not completed but intended*] a goose berry thorn through a ring at it nine times saying “Lheunican beg gow royd As trooid thie ny arragh”—(Little stye go away & come back no more) the ninth thorn is thrown over the left shoulder

## 5

“On Manx Folk-Medicine.” Loose sheets fastened together with brass pin along with notebook now only in part, unpaginated and undated.

## FOR CANCER

29 For internal use a decoction of emloge “hemlock” is much used. Emloye, “the common hemlock,” is believed to cure all who are unsound in body & to be poisonous to those who are well ‘O! Emloge eeck, o! emloge eeck, When I am well you make me sick, When I am sick you make me well, O! Emloge eeck, o! emloge eeck.

## 6

Loose sheets pinned together, no cover page or title and text now incomplete, unpaginated, undated [1903 or after].

## TO STOP BLOOD

30 I was amused this past September (1903) ~~in~~ *[interlined at]* the way which I was given *[interlined received]* a charm without weakening its effect to the giver. *[interlined Whilst blaberry picking]* I met on South Barrule, a ~~woman~~ *[interlined family]* pulling ling, for winter firing. Manks is the man's changey ny mayrey, *[interlined mother tongue]* & so delighted was he *[interlined to]* speak it *[interlined some]*, that I ventured to ask him if he had any charms. He at once said 'yes' & gave it *[one intended to replace it]* to me. But to avoid losing any of its virtue ~~himself~~, he asked for my note book, placed *[put intended to replace placed]* it on top of the cart wheel, & wrote it in there, for writing it ~~seems~~ does not count. *! [amended from .]* This is what he wrote down—'As God said unto Moses, as thy river shall be as my river, & thy water as my water & thy blood as my blood. Why wont my blood stop also thy blood [full name] In the name of the Father, of the Son, & the Holy Ghost.

31 Before the flood, when water was wood Jesus stood & firmly stood. I pray Thee stop this blood of [name] In the name of the Father, Son & Holy Ghost.

32 Jesus was born in Bethlehem, baptized in the river Jordan. As the water stood the child spoke I pray Thee stop this blood of [name] in the name of Father, Son & Holy Ghost

33 In Thy name I mean, & by Thy power to stop the the vein of [name & age] In Father Son & Holy Ghost by Thy power I stop this vein.

## FOR ERYSIPELAS (OR, ST ANTHONY'S FIRE)

34 Magh ass shoh, rose bwoirrin as rose fyrynyn M'ees eh shoh dy phooar Chreest Mac Yee, dy row ec ny scughey gys crink s'yrgey as myryn Keayn mooar lhieeney as traie = "Out of this she erysipelas & he erysipelas! If it be thy will by the power of Christ the Son of God, may it be shifted to hills the highest, or as the deep sea ebbing & flowing.

## FOR A SCALD

35 There was three angels came from the North one to serve fire, & one to serve frost, & one to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. Out fire, enter frost, In the name of our Saviour Christ the Lord, (Blow on the scald when saying this charm, but not when 'fire' is said].

36 The hand is to be placed lightly on the scald, then removed, saying "I do this praying it wont blister In the name of the Fa-

ther, & of the Son, & Holy Ghost.” Blow once on the scald after each name in the Trinity

37 Ayns ennym yn Ayr, as y Vac, as a Spyrrd Noo, gow yn scoldey shoh erysool = In the name of Father Son & Holy Ghost take this scald away. If not too painful place your hand on scald whilst saying this, removing it three times where the names of the Trinity are said to blow out

## FOR A STYE

38 Obtain a brass headed pin from the person who has the stye, rub the head of the pin round the stye 9 times, from left to right, counting in Manx like this lheimican nane, lheimican jees, etc, up to lheimican nuy. Then reverse the rubbing & counting & say “Ayns ennym yn Ayr, as y Vac, as y Spyrryd Noo.”

39 English version. Obtain a yellow headed pin, with it make 13 crosses over the stye saying from 1 to 2 from 2 to 3, from 3 to 4 etc, then count back again from 13 to 12, from 12 to 11, etc to ‘from 1 to none to all.’ Then the Trinity follows with further crosses for each name.

40 A funeral is one of the requisites of this charm. Take a straw out of the bed, rub it round the stye then run after a funeral, & throw the straw at the coffin saying “Take my stye away with your own.” This charm I think is now obsolete, but the informant told me she had used it about 40 years ago.

41 Point through a ring nine gooseberry thorns, pulled off the bush, at the offending stye, then throw each one over the left shoulder. Do this for nine successive mornings, & at the end of the nine days the stye will be gone. It is said that this cure is equally efficacious for warts, if accompanied with a simple charm in Manx. The informant knew the charm at one time, but now could only remember that it was some words ringing the changes on a ring & a wart = “fainney as fahney.”

42 The way to cure a wart [sty] in the eyelid is to point a gooseberry thorn through a ring at it nine times saying “Lheimican beg gow rody As trooid thie ny arragh.” (Little stye go away & come back no more) the ninth thorn is thrown over the left shoulder

## TO REMOVE WARTS

43 You must tell nothing to anybody about what you intend to do, but when the people are in church on Sunday, get a snail & stick it on a thorn bush. Go to the ush every morning, & take the snail & rub it over the warts, when doing this it must be said to be done in the name of the Trinity. When the snail is dead the warts are gone.

44 Fahney veg, gob garragh gow raad as ny trooid dy bragh y arragh = Little wart, crooked mouth, & never come ever the more.

45 Place a dead hand on the mark. This was tried near to Peel last winter & cured a baby with an ugly birthmark. Warts may also, it is said, be cured by contact with the dead. When the dead hand is used as a charm, it must be done in the name of the Trinity.

7

Disbound notebook, paginated by Morrison on right-hand pages only, missing 1 and starts now on 3, undated.

### FOR A BIRTHMARK

46 Place a dead hand on the mark. A man's hand for a girl, a woman's for a boy. Say it is done in the name of the Trinity.

### TO STOP BLOOD

47 Before the flood when water was wood, Jesus stood and firmly stood. I pray thee stop this blood of [full name] In the name of the Father, Son & H.g.

48 Jesus was born in Bethelhem, baptized in the river Jordan, as the water stood the child spoke I pray thee stop this blood of [full name] in the name of Father, Son & Holy Ghost.

49 In thy name I mean, & by thy power to stop this vein of [full name & age]. In Father, Son & H. G. by thy power I stop this vein.

### FOR ERYSIPELAS (OR, ST ANTHONY'S FIRE)

50 Magh ass show rose bwoirrin as rose fyryn. M'ess\* eh shoh dy phooar Chreest Mac Yee dy row ec ny scughey gys crink s'yrjey as mar yn cheapen molar lhieeney as traie. \* My vees

51 [Charm—the butter is divided into three *repeated* three] times. Whilst doing this the Charmer says that it is divided into three in the name of the Trinity for [full name] ill with S. Anthony's fire, & he prays that the butter may have virtue to heal by the power of the Trinity.

## FOR LUMBAGO, RHEUMATISM ETC.

52 Ta mee skeaylley yn ghuin shoh ayns ennym yn Ayr, as y Vac, as y Spyrryd Noo. My she grin ayns ennym yn Chiarn, ta mee skealley eh ass yn eill, ass ny fehyn, as ass ny crauenyn

## FOR NUMBNESS IN THE FEET

53 Numbness or 'sleep' in feet "Ping, ping, trash, cur yn cadley jiargan ass my chass" Kelly's Dict, (heard today in Peel = Bing, Bing, wass {cur yn collan jiargan ass my chass.} cadley-jiargan = the prickling sensation in a limb known as "pins and needles" [preceded by the article yn]. Known here as Collan bing, or jiargan; also cadley keirn.

## FOR RINGWORM

54 Ringworm red, ringworm ~~white~~ [red], do not spring do not spread. (This must be said three times while rubbing round the ringworm sunrise).

## FOR A SCALD

55 There were three angels came from the North, one to serve fire, one to serve frost, one to serve our Lord Christ. Out fire, enter frost, In the name [of] our Saviour Christ the Lord. (Blow on the scald when saying this charm, but not when "out fire" is said.

56 Place the hand lightly on the scald, then remove it saying "I do this praying it wont blister. In the name of the Father etc Blow on the scald after each name in the Trinity

57 Ayns ennym yn Ayr, as y Vac, as y Spyrrd Noo, how yn scoldey shoh ersooyl, (If not too painful the hand must be placed on the scald whilst saying this charm removing it three times to blow on the scald when the names of the Trinity are said].

## FOR A STYE

58 Obtain a brass headed pin from the person who has the stye, rub the head of the pin round the stye nine times from left to right, counting in Manx as follows "lheumican nane, lheumican jees, etc. up to lheumican nuy. Then reverse the rubbing & counting.

59 This charm seems to be an English version of the last. Obtain a yellow headed pin with it make thirteen crosses over the stye saying

"from one to two, from two to three etc; then count back again. "From 13 to 12 etc; to 'from one to none at all." Then the Trinity follows with a further cross for each name

60 A funeral was one of the requisites of the following charm. Take a straw out of the bed, rub it round the styne, then run after a funeral throw the straw at the coffin & say "Take my styne away with your own."

## TO REMOVE WARTS

61 "You must' tell nothing to nobody about what you are going' to do, but when the people are in church on Sunday, get a snap, rub it over the warts & then stick it on a snail, rub it over the warts. When doing this it must be said to be done in the name of the Trinity.[F. S. & H.S.] When the snail is dead the warts are gone."

62 Fahney veg gob garragh, now raad as ny biooid dy brags y ar-  
ragh.

## TO SEE ONE'S SWEETHEART

63 To see one's sweetheart—say the Lord's Prayer backwards three times. "I knew a girl that did this once—Mary Lewin—& she saw her sweetheart right enough, but she was plagued for long enough after it, for as soon as it was afther sunset, no matter when she would [be] stones and clods of turf & sticks would be flung at her & no one could find out who did it.

## 8

*Antient Cymric Medicine and Lecture Memoranda, British Medical Association Meeting Swansea, 1903* [blank pages used as notebook by Morrison].

## TO STOP BLOOD

64 When the water was the wood. Jesus stood & firmly stood. I command the blood of [man's | woman's full name] to stop, in the name of the Father, & of the Son, & Holy Ghost.



## FOR A SCALD

65 Place your hand on Scald then remove it & blow on the scald & say “I do this praying it wont blister,” In the name of the Father, Sons & Holy Ghost. {*entered on line under Father ... (blow) (blow)*}

## FOR A STYE

66 Obtain a pin from the person who has the stye. With it make thirteen crosses over stye, saying “Nane (1) er y lheunican, Jees (2) er y etc; up to 13. Then a cross for each name in the following sentence—In the name of the Father, & of the Son, & Holy Ghost.

## 9

“Manx Folk Lore | Collected by self 1903” [Notebook].

## TO STOP BLOOD

67 “When the water was the word, Jesus stood & firmly stood. I command the blood of [man’s | woman’s full name] to stop in the name of the Father, & of the Son, & of the Holy Ghost.”

## FOR A SCALD

68 Place your hand on the scald, then remove it saying “I do this praying it wont blister.” Then blow on the scald after each of the following names. “In the name of the Father, & of the Son, & of the Holy Ghost.”

## FOR A STYE

69 Obtain a [brass headed] pin from the person who has the stye. With it make thirteen crosses over the stye, saying ‘Nane (1) er y lheunican, jees (2) er y lheunican,” etc up to thirteen. Then a cross over & above for each name in the following sentence “Ayns ennym yn Ayr, as yn Vac, as y Spyrryd Noo.”

## TO REMOVE WARTS

70 (Very powerful) “You must tell nothing to nobody about what you are going to do, but when the people are in church of a Sunday, get hold

of a snail & stitch it on a thorn bush. Go your ways every morning to the bush, take the snail & rub it over your warts. You say when you do this, that you do it in the name of the Father, & of the Son, & H.G. As the snail slowly dies on the thorn, so will the warts at you go away, & when the snail is dead, there wont be a wart left.”

\*

## INDEX

### MEDICAL COMPLAINTS AND ISSUES (IN MANX\*)

To remove a birthmark, [10], [46].

To stop bleeding, [1], [2], [3], [11], [12], [13], [14], [15], [30], [31], [32], [33], [47], [48], [49], [64], [67].

To cure cancer, [16],\* [29].\*

To remove erysipelas (St Antony’s Fire), [4],\* [17],\* [34],\* [50],\* [51].

To cure lumbago (or rheumatism), [5],\* [52].\*

To remove numbness in the feet, [53].\*

To remove ringworm, [54].

For a scald, [6],\* [19], [20], [35], [36], [37],\* [55], [56], [57],\* [65], [68].

To remove a sty, [7],\* [8], [21],\* [22], [38], [39], [40], [41],\* [42],\* [58],\* [59], [60], [66],\* [69].\*

To remove warts, [9],\* [18],\* [28],\* [43], [44],\* [45], [61], [62],\* [70].

### DIVINATION AND FORETELLING

To foretell one’s future husband, [24], [25], [26], [27].

To see one’s sweetheart, [63].

### OTHER

Witchcraft, [23].

### CHARMS IN MANX

Cancer, [16], [29].

Erysipelas (St Antony’s Fire), [4], [17], [34], [50].

Lumbago (or Rheumatism), [5], [52].

Numbness, [53].

Scald, [6], [37], [57].

Stye, [7], [21], [41], [42], [58], [66], [69].

Warts, [9], [18], [28], [43], [62].

\*

I wish to thank the editors of *Incanatatio* and the peer reviewers who were kind enough to point out in the absence of a desired commentary some pointers to charm-types for which I am grateful: #2, #15, #32, and #48 is “Flum Jordan”; #20, #35, and #55, “Out Fire in Frost”; and #24, “Even, even ash.”

\*

## APPENDIX

### SOPHIA MORRISON WRITES TO ALEXANDER CARMICHAEL (1910)

Sept 1

Dear Dr Carmichael

I am myself very much interested in Charms & have collected a good deal of material on the subject. The belief in Charms is still as deeply rooted as ever in the minds of ~~the~~ *[interlined Manx]* people—nearly every household in Peel can give you a story of a cure by a charm, & many persons have the power of stopping blood at a distance. 1 man has 3 C.<sup>1</sup> for s. b,<sup>2</sup> The 1st stops the flow instantly, the 2nd, in about 3 or 4 m.<sup>3</sup> the 3rd in 6 or 7. He seldom uses the 1st, as he finds that it is apt to do harm by such a sudden stoppage, the 3rd is the 1 he generally uses. We know nothing whatever about moles—so have no Charms for that special affliction. It is believed that all charms to stop blood can be used successfully without the Charmer seeing the patient—I have heard of one Charmer who requires to take hold some article of clothing belonging to the patient—a handker.<sup>4</sup> for instance—but this may be regarded as exceptional. An

important factor in M. Ch.<sup>5</sup> is the insistence on the full name of the patient, & it must be given as at baptism, otherwise the charm will be of no good. Whether used alone or with a herbal remedy the virtue of a Charm may be destroyed in four ways.

I have myself collected many Charms & can testify to their use at the present day. Some require contact of the hand dead or alive, others (stys) are most efficacious by contact with metal, others again, as scalds, by the breath. It is a most interesting subject.

Yours etc | S.M.

Notes: <sup>1</sup> *Charms* <sup>2</sup> *stopping blood* <sup>3</sup> *minutes* <sup>4</sup> *handkerchief* <sup>5</sup> *Manx Charms*  
Source: Copy letter of Sophia Morrison to [Alexander] Carmichael, 1 September [1910], MNHL, MS 09495, Sophia Morrison Papers, Box 4, Letter Copybook (1908–13). I am grateful to Dr Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart of the Carmichael Watson Project at the University of Edinburgh for confirming that the recipient of the letter was indeed Alexander Carmichael.

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## BIO

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