

HANNAH MOYLAN (1867-1902): EDUCATIONIST WHO WAS FIRST WOMAN BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN IRELAND

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Hannah Moylan was a high-achieving student who, after initial education in Galway and Limerick, attended Alexandra College in Dublin to prepare for university examinations. After obtaining her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1891, with first-class honours in mathematical science, she returned to her Alma Mater to teach and lecture. A pragmatic educationist, she was not an advocate of a university for women, nor, apparently, of granting the franchise to women. Taking a break from teaching in 1895-96 for further study, she became the first woman in Ireland to gain the right to wear the yellow silk hood of a Bachelor of Science. In 1900, she completed the Oxford University examination in the theory, history and practice of education and a year later, to the surprise of many, took up a teaching position in Egypt where she died in 1902 at the age of only 34 years.

This paper is one in a series of biographical memoirs, by the author, of little-known Irish women who have achieved eminence in their fields. The women include Ellen Hutchins (1785-1815), a botanist; Jane Stephens (1879-1959), a zoologist, and her sister Laura Stephens (1875-1958), a linguist; the philanthropist, Eileen Barnes (1876-1956), a museum artist; Mary Eily de Putron (1914-1982), a stained-glass artist; Josephine Fitzgerald Clarke (1865-1953), a novelist; and her sister Hannah Moylan, whose life and contribution to Irish education is the subject of the present paper.

INTRODUCTION

Third-level education in Ireland in the 19th century was a privilege few women enjoyed, particularly those from a Roman Catholic background. Education beyond first level was constrained by gender and by class as well as somewhat by creed for a variety of reasons. After the passing of the Intermediate Education Act of 1878, girls were allowed sit the Intermediate examinations. In the late 1870s the number of females studying Latin, Greek

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and mathematics – subjects required for university entry – increased substantially (Ó hÓgartaigh, 2009). However, even towards the end of the century only a minority of women went forward to achieve positions of scholarship and eminence in and through university education (Coolahan, 1981). Women gained access to the Royal University of Ireland in 1879, to the Queen’s Colleges in Belfast, Cork and Galway from the 1880s and to Trinity College Dublin in 1904 (Harford, 2008). Against this background, the life and educational achievements of Hannah Moylan, a middle-class girl from the west of Ireland, are outlined.

METHODOLOGY

A wide range of sources was consulted to compile a biographical picture of Hannah Moylan and her work. Because no information had previously been published on her life and work, the research methodology had to be basic but thorough in order to gain a meaningful profile of the subject. The only known starting point was that Moylan had been the first woman to gain the degree of Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Ireland. Starting with the genealogical aspects, the Moylan family pedigree was assembled as much as was feasible. This part of the research was greatly aided by the church records now available through the National Library of Ireland’s online parish-register resource (www.nli.ie/en/parish-register.aspx) and the indexes on the Family Search website (<https://familysearch.org/>) as well as from records held by the General Register Office (GRO) in Dublin and the National Archives of Ireland (1893). From this beginning it was then possible to follow the schooling and further education of Miss Moylan through various newspapers and journals. Similarly, aspects of her work in education were gleaned from literature sources including the *Alexandra College Magazine*, the in-house journal of the school where she worked as teacher/lecturer, as well as through newspapers and other periodicals. The overall research method employed was systematic in that the data gathered were logically and chronologically arranged, so that the findings could be merged together to form a reasonably comprehensive account of the life and work of Hannah Moylan.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Hannah Moylan was born on the Newcastle Road in Galway and baptised on 2 December 1867 (National Library of Ireland, 1867). Her parents Jeremiah Moylan (1823-1914) and Mary, née Fitzgerald (1831-1877), both of Cork origin, were then living at the Model School where he was headmaster and she matron (Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, 1872).

Moylan's family background is replete with high achievers. Her father became a Barrington Lecturer on Political Economy while, on her mother's side, there was a Cork teacher and mathematician, John Fitzgerald, who is listed as Professor of Mathematics among the testimonies given for a textbook on arithmetic by Paul Deighan (1809). Her uncle Edward Divers (1837-1912) was the renowned chemist who had met Margaret Theresa Fitzgerald (1843-1897), through the Moylans while in Galway studying medicine, and they married in London in 1865 when he was professor of *Materia Medica* at Queen's College, Birmingham.

Hannah was the second youngest of 10 children born to Jeremiah and Mary Moylan at the Model School residence in Galway. The eldest Michael Joseph (1854-1897) qualified BA from Queen's College Galway and Licentiate of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh. Her two other brothers, David (b. 1858) and Stephen (b. 1860), died young – the former from scarlet fever when seven years old – as did two of her sisters, Helena Ann (b. 1861) and Julia (b. 1863). The eldest girl, Mary Catherine (b. 1857), became a school governess in England and the youngest, Vida Mary (1871-1962), married William Worby Beaumont (1848-1929), the celebrated engineer, inventor and author of *Motor Vehicles and Motors* (Beaumont, 1900). Theresa (1862-1939) did not marry and also went to live in England, as did her sister Bridget Josephine (1865-1953). The latter would adopt the name Josephine Fitzgerald Moylan and marry later becoming Lady Josephine Fitzgerald Clarke. When her husband died in 1927, this lady began writing, under the *nom de plume* of Errol Fitzgerald, publishing no less than 40 romantic novels in the following two decades.

Thus, Hannah Moylan's familial background was no ordinary one but rather an exceptional setting for that time and an environment in which educational development was influenced and fostered.

EDUCATION

The family moved to Limerick in 1873 when her father Jeremiah was appointed headmaster at the Limerick Model School and where, in 1877, her mother Mary Kate died, at the age of 45, after Hannah had just turned nine.

Hannah Moylan received her primary education at the model schools in Galway and Limerick where her father taught. Reading, Spelling, Writing, Arithmetic, Grammar, Geography, Vocal Music, Algebra and Drawing were the ordinary subjects taught at the model schools, with needlework being substituted for Algebra in the case of girls! For her secondary education, Moylan firstly attended Madame De Prins College (for Young Ladies) in Limerick. In the Preparatory Grade of the Intermediate Education Board Examinations she was awarded a book prize to the value of £3 (Anon., 1881). In the Intermediate Examination (Junior Grade) of 1882 she won the silver medal in Natural Philosophy (Anon., 1882a), with an exhibition i.e., scholarship, to the value of £15 tenable for three years (Anon., 1882b). The following year in the Middle Grade examinations she was among those awarded an exhibition of £25/year tenable for two years as was Maud A.E. Joynt (Anon., 1883).¹ In the Senior Grade of the Intermediate Board Examinations, in 1884, Moylan gained a scholarship of £40 when attending the Ladies Intermediate School on Catherine Street in Limerick (Anon., 1884).

Moylan afterwards attended Alexandra College, Dublin which was then in the city on Earlsfort Terrace,² where she prepared for her matriculation. She matriculated in the summer 1887 examinations of the Royal University of Ireland (RUI), gaining honours in English, French and mathematics with an exhibition of £12 (Anon., 1887). By this time she had adopted the middle name of Alexandra – on her baptismal record she is simply Hannah Moylan (National Library of Ireland, 1867) – apparently in deference to her Alma Mater! (Lucey, 2014a). As early as 1888, while studying for her Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree, she was writing to academic journals providing solutions to mathematical problems (e.g. Moylan et al., 1888) and would continue to do so later (e.g. Moylan, 1897a). Although Trinity College Dublin did not admit women until

¹ Maud Joynt (1868–1940), the renowned Celtic scholar, would also later teach at Alexandra College.

² The college prepared students for the examinations of the University of Dublin, for the degrees of the Royal University of Ireland, and for the Middle and Senior Grades of the Intermediate Examinations. Students had to be over 15, although younger girls could attend (Janes, 1899).

1904, it had introduced special examinations for women in 1869 in response to a request from Alexandra College (Parkes & Harford, 2007). In 1890 Moylan won the *Wilkins Memorial Exhibition* in mathematics at Trinity,³ with the award of £10, taking 85% marks (Anon., 1890a), and was singled out for special mention (Anon. 1890b):

Dublin University. – The results of the examinations for women, held at Easter, have now been announced. The number of candidates this year was small – under thirty – nor was the answering at all above the average, except in the case of the candidate for Special Certificate in Mathematics and *Wilkins Memorial Prize*, which were awarded to Miss H. A. Moylan.

After completing her BA in 1891 at the RUI, with first-class honours in mathematical science, she went back to Alexandra College to teach and lecture.

WORK IN EDUCATION AND OTHER PURSUITS

Over the next four years Hannah Alexandra Moylan, affectionately known as Nan, devoted herself to college life, where her popularity among staff and students was unprecedented. She took a break from teaching in 1895 to study for and complete her BSc degree in Galway,⁴ which she attained with honours (Anon., 1896a). Hannah Moylan was conferred Bachelor of Science of the Royal University of Ireland in October 1896 (Queen's College Galway, 1897). During her absence, two staff members had helped to fill the void of her defection taking over her university work and the Senior Grade classes (Anon., 1896b). After her return, on Students Day 1896, Hannah 'having gained the right of wearing the yellow silk hood of a Bachelor of Science, received a perfect ovation, due as much to the delight which we all felt at having her back in College as to the satisfaction which her success caused us' (Anon., 1897). Moylan was the first woman student who had taken this degree in Ireland and the second Irish woman to gain the same distinction of Bachelor of Science was Jane Stephens in 1903, also an Alexandran (Lucey, 2014b).

While teaching in Dublin, Hannah Moylan resided at 21 Kildare Street with just a short walk to Alexandra College on Earlsfort Terrace. During the summer holidays of 1897 she went to England and stayed with her sister in

³ The *Charles Wilkins Prize*, presented for mathematics in the Examinations for Women, was introduced in 1879.

⁴ The Queen's College Galway admitted women in 1888.

Kent. While there, on 14 August, she made her will, in which she bequeathed £40 to her nephew to be spent on his education, with her friend Maud R. Taylor⁵ as one of the two witnesses.⁶



Hannah Moylan wearing Graduation Robes at Alexandra College in 1897
(Image courtesy of Alexandra College, Dublin)

⁵ Alice Maud Rowson Taylor (1869-1941) was firstly a domestic science teacher and author on home economics who was appointed MBE for her war-time services in hospitals and later became a justice of the peace.

⁶ Eric Fitzgerald Clarke (1894-1917), then three years of age, was afterwards educated at Dulwich College, where he gained the *Doughty Memorial Prize* for English literature, and at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He died of wounds received at the Somme, during the First World War, a week after his 23rd birthday (Anon., 1917).

This is the last will
 & Testament of
 Hannah A. Moylan
 Spinster of 21, Kildare
 Street Dublin.

Opening declaration of Hannah Moylan's will, dated 14 August 1897

She was actively involved in promoting women's education and was a member of the executive committee of the Central Association of Irish Schoolmistresses (CAISM) (Anon., 1899a). CAISM was set up to improve communication and standards and to promote the interests of girls regarding the Intermediate and university examinations. It was this Association that had, in 1892, a petition signed by more than 10,000 Irish women appealing for the admission of women to Trinity College. Despite further petitions, from professional men as well as a majority of the Fellows and Professors of Trinity and Medical Professors, the Board refused to take any action (Parkes & Harford, 2007).

In 1897, Hannah had read a paper before the CAISM, on the proposal for a women's university, extracts from which were published in the *Journal of Education* (Moylan, 1897b). In the paper she constructively criticises those, such as Alfred Marshall (1842-1924), then professor of political economy at Cambridge, as well as the bishops of Stepney and Durham, who regarded men and women as somehow intellectually different. Having outlined the reasons, including the fact that the 'immense majority' of women-graduates and educationists were against it, and why a university for women would be retrogressive, she concludes the paper in a prophetic and pragmatic way:

We are going through our time of probation at present. We are competing with men in the world and in the narrower arena of the

Universities, and, although we may dislike competition, and regard that it is such an important factor in modern life, we have to accept the circumstances of our environment. There is less competition at the Universities now than there was ten years ago, and there will be still less in ten years to come, but the bitterness which competition between the sexes may produce can only be increased by exhibition of feeling like that which was lately displayed at Cambridge.⁷

Thus, it would seem, Moylan favoured women attending university on equal terms with men. Previously, in April 1894, the Students' Union at Alexandra had debated the relative merits of a University for Women and a Mixed University (Anon., 1894).⁸

In February 1900, she gave an address to the CAISM on the training of secondary teachers. In her paper, she spoke of the evils arising from the best principles and methods not being systematically applied to schools and of the neglect by teachers of such subjects as Logic, Psychology and Physiology, to the disadvantage of their pupils. She made reference to the Oxford University course for the diploma in teaching and its summer course, in which lectures are given by experts on the theory, history and practice of education. She concluded her paper by speaking of the need existing in Ireland for some opportunities for the training of secondary teachers and deplored the absence of an ideal in Irish education (Anon., 1900a). Regarding her own speciality, she published an article in the *Journal of Education* on the methods of teaching mathematics – wherein she addressed aspects of instruction in Arithmetic, Algebra, Calculus and Geometry with the only branch of the science not covered being Trigonometry at which she herself also excelled (e.g., Moylan, 1897a) – and the reforms needed (Moylan, 1901). The article was prompted by a paper in *Nature*, by Irish-born Professor John Perry (1850-1920), and the response to it in correspondence to the journal, which, she believed, while of great interest to teachers, was not as great as the subject demanded. In her paper, she outlined her experience in teaching mathematics and the methods she favoured, as well as dealing with some of the criticisms levelled at the new syllabus and at the scheme of reform proposed by Perry, some of which she was in agreement with:

⁷ This is a reference to the three days' debate which the Senate of the University of Cambridge held in March 1897 in the Report of the Syndicate appointed to inquire into the question of degrees for women.

⁸ The Students' Union was founded in 1887 and in 1888 Alexandra became the first Irish women's college to have a debating society.

Prof. Perry preaches with all the enthusiasm – and occasionally with the one-sidedness – of an apostle....Such a scheme may lead to some *rapprochement* between public-school masters and the leaders of scientific thought, for in this country the mental outlook of the two classes is quite different....

As to the teaching of arithmetic, from my own experience I am almost quite in agreement with Prof. Perry. A great deal of arithmetic as at present taught is hopelessly remote from life.... In his criticism of the teaching of Algebra, I do not think that Prof. Perry quite does justice to the change in attitude of teachers during recent years. Most teachers, at quite an early stage, now introduce the tracing of graphs on ruled paper, and do not postpone it till the pupil has some knowledge of analytical Geometry or Calculus....We still undoubtedly give a great deal too much time to the solution of involved equations, and to rather intricate problems; but I think that it must be acknowledged that a great improvement has taken place in this branch of mathematics.

I wish the same could be said of the teaching of Geometry. The majority of teachers will, I think, rejoice when the tyranny of Euclid has given place to greater freedom....

I hope that, if those most interested do come together, some reform may be arrived at; for, as a teacher in mathematics in a girls' school, I have felt for a very long time that an immense amount of time was being spent with very little result.

A central message in her paper was that, while mathematics, as then taught, might be well fitted for academic purposes, it was of little use in preparing a student for any professional purpose. Having outlined her case, based on personal experience, she was essentially expressing the hope that those involved in organising the teaching of mathematics would heed each other's viewpoints and come together to achieve reform (Moylan, 1901).

During Hannah Moylan's time teaching at Alexandra, two luminaries of women's education, Alice Oldham (1850-1907) and Mary Hayden (1862-1942), were also on the staff. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, it appears, *prima facie*, that Moylan was not a supporter of votes for women and does not appear to have been part of the suffrage movement. In a debate at Alexandra College in the 1892-93 session of the Students' Union, when she was President, on the motion 'That the passing of Sir A. Rollit's Bill for

granting the Parliamentary Suffrage to Women would be beneficial',⁹ she spoke against the proposal. Moylan based her opposition partially on her belief that the time had not yet come for granting the franchise to women. She maintained that giving the franchise to women, before they were fit for it, might lead to injurious results, and cited the case of premature giving of votes to the Labour Party in Australia.¹⁰ She declared that working-women had shown their incapacity for organisation and that those women who already possessed the poor-law vote in Ireland had done nothing to improve the condition of the women and girls in the workhouses. In conclusion, she said 'that the majority of women do not demand the franchise; and till they do the granting of it would do harm rather than good' (Moylan, 1897b, p. 351). Miss Isabella Little, who had stepped in to take the place of another lecturer (Miss Robertson) unable to attend due to illness, gave reasons why she, a radical, opposed the Bill. Like Miss Moylan, she would vote against the immediate passing of the Bill, looking forward to a future when women will more highly prize the privilege, and more worthily discharge the duties of citizenship. Of the other lecturers who spoke on the motion, Miss Hayden and Miss Johnston were also against while Miss Oldham, Miss Egan and Miss Jameson supported the affirmative.¹¹ The question was then put to the vote, and decided, by a large majority, in the affirmative (Story, 1893). The minutes of the Dublin Suffrage Committee meeting, held at 5 Eustace Street on 24 October 1893, refer to the debate held at Alexandra College, describing it as very successful, the voting showing 145 for and 55 against (National Archives of Ireland, 1893). That voting outcome would appear not to vindicate Moylan's assertion that the greater number of women then did not demand the franchise! There may have been different reasons why women voted against the motion. While Alice Oldham advocated that it was a safe

⁹ Sir Albert Rollit's Bill, in favour of women's suffrage, was narrowly defeated in the House of Commons.

¹⁰ The summarised version of the debate makes no mention that New Zealand was about to become the first country to grant women the franchise and women there voted for the first time in November 1893 (Oldfield, 1992). Women in South Australia, who were British subjects of 21 years and older, gained the right to vote two years later.

¹¹ Margaret Kerr Johnston MA along with Mary Story MA, had recently been enrolled as members of the examining body of the Royal University of Ireland. Mary Story was a sub-editor of the *Alexandra College Magazine*, of which Mary Alice Lyster was then editor, and wrote the summary of the debate. Story and Lyster were instrumental in setting up the Irish Ladies' Hockey Union in 1894 (Stephens, 1899) the same year Mary L. Jameson had graduated BA from the Royal University of Ireland. Isabella Little was also BA, Letitia Elizabeth Egan was BA and LLB, while Mary Whaley Robertson MA was a graduate in Chemistry and Physics.

beginning for a great change (Story, 1893), it may have been that others, such as Mary Hayden and even Hannah Moylan, thought the Bill did not go far enough: it effectively excluded married women, one of the reasons why it had been opposed by the Women's Franchise League in England (Adams, 2014).

In 1893, the lady members of the Graduates' Committee of the Royal University, Miss Johnston, Miss Lyster, Miss M'Ewen,¹² Miss Moylan and Miss Story, were all Alexandra College lecturers (Anon., 1893). In October 1895, Moylan, acting as honorary secretary, was on the committee with fellow Alexandrans Mary Hayden and Mary Story (Anon., 1895) when studying for her BSc in Galway.

Hannah Moylan's main interest outside of teaching was her social and philanthropic work. She was a founding member of the Alexandra College Guild, established in 1897, as a union between past and present students and staff which also had the objective to promote a spirit of service to the community and to undertake social and philanthropic work. The Guild set up the Alexandra College Guild Tenement Company,¹³ of which she was an active director, with the aim of improving the housing conditions of the poor in Dublin. Unlike some of the other lecturers at Alexandra, such as Mary Story and Alice Lyster, Hannah Moylan had little involvement with sporting activities in the college; her interests were, rather, those of a more artistic and philanthropic nature. She was, however, a keen walker during the 1890s and participated in hiking holidays of several days duration, e.g., walking the 12 miles to Loch Bray, then on to Roundwood, in Wicklow and back to Dublin (Hayden, 2005). Apart from her expertise as an educationist and mathematician, Moylan was a well-read and cultured person who gave lectures on other subjects. For example, on 24 February 1899, she delivered a presentation on Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the English poet and artist, who founded the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, to the assembled Students' Union. This was afterwards described as an able and interesting paper (Anon., 1899b).

In 1900 she had completed the Oxford University examination in the theory, history and practice of education (Anon., 1900b) which was a portent of things to come! On 31 March 1901, Hannah Moylan, whose occupation is listed as mathematical lecturer in the 1901 Census of England, Wales and

¹² Mary Alice Lyster and, perhaps, Catherine Mary M'Ewen graduated BA, respectively, in 1885 and 1889 (Royal University of Ireland, 1886, 1890). Alternatively, this Miss M'Ewen is Euphemia who graduated with Hannah Moylan in 1891 (Royal University of Ireland, 1892).

¹³ The Company was registered on July 4th, 1898, with a capital of £6,000 (Lawson, 1909).

Scotland, was staying in Crosby near Liverpool with the family of her friend Maud Taylor. She was in England during the Easter break and it was probably then that she attended for interview for a teaching post overseas. On the first day of the last term back at college, she announced she was leaving Alexandra. When Moylan announced that she had accepted a position at a training school in Cairo, it was greeted with shock, sadness and a sense of great loss (Anon., 1901):

Miss Moylan has gone! College has been convulsed by many shocks this year, but the severest and worst of all was the announcement on the first day of term that Miss Moylan had accepted an appointment in a Government school in Cairo. She was the mainspring of so much of our College life that it is difficult to see how it can go on without her. We were proud of her attainments as a mathematician, as she was the only woman B.Sc. of the R.U.I. Her classes were among the best in College; her pupils found in her a delightful and inspiring teacher, and one to whom they were most deeply attached. She was a thorough educationalist, and she had latterly devoted much time and thought to the study of the science of education. Outside her classes it mattered not whether it was the social work of the Guild that needed assistance, or an article for the magazine that was wanted, or the College that required decoration for a function, Miss Moylan was ever ready with efficient help. Among her fellow-workers, her wide culture and her many-sidedness gained for her their warm affection and admiration. Her place will, indeed, be difficult, if not impossible, to fill, as we feel there is only one Miss Moylan. We wish her all happiness and success in her new work, but we grudge her sorely to it, and we would fain have kept her here.

It is difficult to fathom why such an accomplished lady would wish to go to teach in an undeveloped country with inherent risks, and the only plausible explanation is that it was in keeping with her philanthropic nature, although there may also have been personal reasons for her decision.

DEATH IN CAIRO

Moylan left for Egypt around the start of the next term in October 1901. On a stopover *en route* to Cairo she had written to Mary Story saying ‘that she was sitting out on a terrace and looking at the blue Mediterranean’ (Hayden, 2006, p. 2182). Following her arrival in Cairo, she went to work at

the Saniah Girls School with the title of 2nd Mistress. Egypt at that time was under British colonial occupation (1882-1922) when there were specific ideas on education, some of which clashed with the views of nationalists, with the ultimate objective of creating a literate Egyptian class. The curriculum for the Saniah School at that time included subjects such as English, Science, Accounting and Physical Education, as well as Home Economics, where the girls were trained to embroider, cook, wash and iron (Pollard, 2005).

Hannah Moylan contracted typhoid fever in June 1902, but it was supposed to be a mild type from which she would have been expected to recover quickly. She wrote letters to her friends at Alexandra College, saying she was resuming work and planning eagerly to meet Miss White¹⁴ in London early in the summer holidays (Anon. 1902a). However, she suffered a relapse and died at the British Nursing Home in the Ismailia Quarter of Cairo on 15 June 1902, age 34 years. Two days later, her death notice appeared in the *Irish Times* as follows (Anon., 1902b):

MOYLAN — June 15, in Cairo, Miss Hannah A. (Nan) Moylan, B.A., B.Sc., late of Alexandra College Dublin of dysentery, after typhoid fever.

In the same newspaper, an appreciation, compiled by friends at Alexandra College, was published three days after her death in which the description of her personal qualities included ‘fair face’ and ‘gracious ways’ (Anon., 1902a). However, we get a fuller picture of Hannah Moylan’s nature and character, as well as a possible indication that there was a special person in her life, from the loving appreciation that appeared in the *Alexandra College Magazine* after her death (Anon., 1902c):

The pathos of her death seems almost tragic in its sadness. But to those who loved her, even the sadness of her death must yield to the remembrance of the beauty of her life – ‘that rare interfusion of sweetness and strength’ that has woven itself into all she did and was. By many she must be remembered as a devoted teacher, but few can understand how much of herself she put into her teaching, or how real was her interest in every student in her classes – an interest that made her look beyond the actual work of the day, or its result in an examination. Everything connected with Alexandra College seems poorer by her death, for in social and philanthropic interests, no less than in class-rooms, we must mourn her loss. Perhaps it is as a friend

¹⁴ Henrietta White (1856–1936) was principal of Alexandra College from 1889 to 1931.

that each of us is most truly known, and, to the few who penetrated her natural reserve and shyness, Hannah Moylan was an ideal friend – her broad-minded outlook and ready sense of humour, her store of knowledge, her love for all that was beautiful in literature, nature and art made her companionship a constant joy. She gave that rare sympathy that can identify itself with the joy and sorrow of others, that made one forget the scholar in the woman. To only one friend did she give her fullest confidence and affection; no words can tell the loneliness her death has caused.

Hannah Moylan was buried in the old cemetery in Cairo with a simple white marble cross. At the time of her death, she was still the only woman BSc of the Royal University, with the zoologist Jane Stephens becoming the second a year later (Lucey, 2014b).

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