



Irish Tinkers or "Travellers"

Author(s): Pádraig Mac Gréine

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IRISH TINKERS OR "TRAVELLERS"

SOME NOTES ON THEIR MANNERS AND CUSTOMS, AND THEIR SECRET LANGUAGE OR "CANT"

FOREWORD

A WORD of explanation regarding the following article may not be out of place. Towards the end of 1930, I discovered accidentally that some tinkers were very fine storytellers. This aroused my interest in them, and I proceeded to make the acquaintance of as many of them as I could. I found them always ready to tell stories, and to furnish me with the names of other storytellers, but they were not inclined, in the beginning, to talk about themselves, or to speak their secret language or "cant." When they found that I was not an emissary of the law they had little hesitation in talking freely to me. True, I am indebted to one family, who had known me and my people for years, for vouching for me to others, and for telling them what I wanted. When I speak to strangers in "cant" I am invariably addressed by name in return. I have always found them kindly disposed and friendly, and usually loth to accept money. They have never tried to beg from me on the strength of being acquainted with me, or because of having information to impart. I have tried to tell of them exactly as they are, and as they have told me of themselves. To three families, Power, Collins, and MacDonough, I am indebted for most of my information.

Most of us are familiar with those itinerants who are to be found wandering here and there through Ireland. They are composed of tinsmiths, sweeps, hawkers, dealers in asses and horses, and gypsies, the last named being rare. Generally speaking, the first four classes are styled tinkers, so we may say that our itinerants are roughly divided into two classes, tinkers and gypsies. Between tinkers and gypsies there is little or no resemblance, save in the fact that they are itinerants; but there the resemblance ceases. They do not mingle or intermarry, they speak different languages, or "cant" as it is sometimes styled; and their religions are different. Tinkers are Catholics, and, according to tinkers with whom I have spoken on the matter, some gypsies are Protestants, others have no religion, or at least they do not openly profess any.

Taking the tinkers as a body composed of the various classes already mentioned, it will be found that, although collectively

they are referred to as tinkers, they are not all alike. "Tinker" is a term rarely used by these itinerants. They refer to each other as "travellers," and they dislike the term tinker. The tinker proper, or tinsmith, looks on himself and all others of his trade as being superior to all other "travellers." Speaking of each other, I have often heard them refer to other tinsmiths as "only" having picked up the trade from someone else, or: "They aren't real tinkers. Their father was the first of them to make tins, and he learned it from so and so," remarks which go to show that although not very obvious, they have a pride in the fact that their trade is a family trade, handed down from one generation to another. The tinsmiths use a secret language which they call "minkers thawrie" or "cant," and few other itinerants, sweeps, hawkers or horse dealers, are as proficient in the use of this language as they are. It is, however, very difficult to apply any hard and fast rule to the class divisions amongst them; the tinsmith may occasionally deal in asses, and even sweep chimneys, or his wife may carry a supply of knick-knacks which she hawks from house to house with her tin ware. The hawker's wife may be a proficient speaker of "cant," being the daughter of a tinsmith, the hawker likewise, being the son of a tinsmith with, perhaps, no aptitude for his father's trade. It is only when you know them well that you can fit them into their proper class, a good guide being their knowledge of "cant."

Their method of livelihood is fairly well known to everyone. They wander about from place to place, begging, selling their wares, visiting fairs with an eye to a good bargain, and occasionally stealing when the chances are in their favour. I do not propose to take separately the various types I have mentioned, but just one—the tinsmiths; their customs and habits being much the same as those of the others, except that in the main they are more fluent speakers of "cant" and richer in their knowledge of folk tales and tradition. Those tinkers with whom I came into contact, were, the majority of them, tinsmiths, and were better sources of information than any others.

First I shall deal with their camping places. They sleep in tents, pitched on the roadside. By preference they choose a sheltered bye-road with a wide grassy margin, where they are unlikely to be disturbed, and where a plentiful supply of firewood is convenient. Their tents are covered with canvas, some of the more affluent families having a tarpaulin or waterproof cart cover for the purpose. The tent is semi-circular in cross-section, and usually from nine to twelve feet in length, and about four in breadth. The framework of the tent is of wood. A ridgeboard about three inches wide and an inch in thickness runs the whole length of the tent. In this ridgeboard, beginning at either end, holes about an inch in diameter are bored in pairs, each pair being about three

feet from the next. A series of strong hazel rods on either side, one end of the rod being stuck in the ground, and the other in a hole in the ridgeboard, complete the framework. The rods are bent inwards before being stuck into the ground so as to give the roof a circular shape. The tent cover is usually long enough to form a lap at each end and so make the tent draught-proof. Along the sides of the tent there is generally a foot or two of the cover to spare, which is weighted down with stones or sods. The tents are snug and warm even in the coldest weather. I have been told by tinkers that at times they are too warm, even in winter. This is probably due to overcrowding. The floor of the tent is covered with a deep bed of hay or straw on which the family sleep, covered by blankets, shawls, their every day wearing apparel, or any other form of covering that may be convenient. Some tinkers possess a mattress or feather bed on which they sleep.

In the evening, when the family have pitched their tent, a fire of sticks is lighted in front of the tent, and they set about preparing the evening meal. The woman sits in the tent opening, tending the fire, over which hangs a kettle or a blackened and battered tin can containing water for the tea. The children sit around and talk and play, while the father reclines in the tent or against the roadside fence, smoking his pipe. Round the fire are scattered various articles: tin pannikins, and perhaps a knife and spoon; the result of the days foraging, comprising bread, potatoes, a head or two of cabbage, bottles of milk, and maybe a few eggs. The meal finished, the fire is replenished and the children retire to sleep, to be soon followed by their elders, for they usually retire early. The sun is their guide, and I have seen them drop off to sleep by the fire as early as eight o'clock in the evening. In the morning, especially in the winter time, is a scene of activity, getting a new fire lighted. Over a faint blaze bends the man, adding fresh dry fuel. Children in various stages of undress, sometimes stark naked, peep out of the tent and oftentimes run about the road, in frost and snow. Cold seems to affect them but little.

From day to day their work does not change. The man sits on the roadside making tinware; tin cans, porringers, and pannikins or small porringers. Putting new bottoms in cans and kettles, soldering leaking vessels, and stitching wooden dishes and platters are all part of his trade. When he has made sufficient new tinware, he and his family travel around the neighbourhood from house to house, trying to dispose of their wares to the best advantage. They supplement this by begging for food, old clothes, and boots, or anything else to which they take a fancy. They sometimes even ask for a dog or a cat. They are very persistent, and present such a doleful appearance that country people usually give them something to get rid of them. With regard to the things they receive as a result of their begging, if these do not conform to their

particular requirements, they do not hesitate to discard them, generally a short distance from the house at which they received them. In the evening they return to their camp with the results of their day's labour, and sometimes it is woe betide the unfortunate who has failed to sell all his wares, or who failed to get a good price for those which were sold!

When a district is covered the tents are struck and packed on a cart, and the family start for a fresh district. As they go, the women and children beg from house to house until they reach their new camping ground. Should the main party change from the arranged route during the day, they throw a few handfuls of grass or flour on the road to guide those following to the camping ground. These camping grounds are constant and are used by all "travellers" in turn. You can easily find dozens of them in a day's travel. The blackened circle by the roadside, where the fire had been, the charred sticks, the clippings of tin, the discarded rags thrown in the bushes, all tell their story. From these the "traveller" can judge as to the length of time that has elapsed since his predecessors were there.

Do tinkers travel extensively through Ireland, or do they remain within certain bounds? In some cases, families do not intrude into certain areas owing to a feud of some sort or other, or, perhaps, on account of trouble with the forces of the law. Certain family names predominate within more or less definite boundaries, but now and then one or more of these families may make a trek to some distant place, to a fair, perhaps, or to a funeral, to return again to their home district after a short absence. I have met tinkers from Wexford in North Longford and tinkers from Tipperary near Moate in Co. Westmeath. In Longford and Westmeath, a wayside camp may belong to a Cauley, Gavin, Collins, Donohue, O'Leary, Joyce or MacDonough, yet on occasion you may find one of these families in Ballinasloe or Galway. An old tinker woman of seventy years gave me the following list of tinkers whom she knew and her ideas of their place of origin. I cannot vouch for its accuracy, but perhaps some reader can correct or enlarge it.

Ward	} [also a family of Derry Wards.] } Connaught.
Burke	
Joyce	
McDonough	
Mongan	
Laurence	
Quinn	
Cauley	
Collins	
Maughan	
Heany	
Brennan	

Coily Flynn Carthy	} King's Co.
Cash Donovan Handragan Doyle	} Wexford [always pron. Waxford by tinkers.]
Delaney Connor	} Kilkenny.
Power O'Leary	} Waterford.
Twohy Flynn Hutchinson Dundon Nerney Reilly	} Tipperary. [known as "The Bould boy Reillys."]
Sherlock	... Clare.
Power O'Leary Donohue Collins Joyce McDonough Cauley Keenan Gavin	} Longford and Westmeath.
McCann	... Cavan
The Gillie Smiths [Gypsies]	... Ulster.
Coffey	... Kerry.

I have not as yet been able to find that tinkers have any clear tradition as to their origin. Some of them say that tinkers were "metal runners" before tin came into use. One old tinker woman was quite definite about this. She instanced two families at present living in Co. Longford, who follow the trade of "metal runners," or manufacturers of castings for ploughs, whose ancestors were tinkers. One of these families is to the present day referred to as the Tinker C — s.

There are among the tinkers many fine storytellers. I have met with two or three, and heard of many more with whom I have been unable to come into touch. These stories were handed down from generation to generation, and storytelling, while now a dying art with them, was a favourite pastime forty or fifty years ago. The family sat around the camp fire listening to the elders telling stories. The good storyteller was a person of note and his fame widespread. In the telling of certain stories he was without equal, and for years after his death his name was spoken of with respect and regret. Most tinkers are illiterate and possess wonderful memories. I know one young fellow of twenty-four, an army reservist, who can repeat by rote every instruction he ever received from a drill instructor. He proudly claims that the illiterate "travellers," of whom there were many in the army, were always better at answering questions than those who could read and write.

Tinkers disclaim all relationship with gypsies. They are very definite on this point. They will tell you that gypsies are "neither right or lucky," and will stress the chief difference by adding: "They aren't Catholics, sir, and we never mix with them!" Tinkers refer to them as gypsies, Romanies, gillies, and gillie-goolies.

Religion does not seem to give the tinkers much thought. They are all Catholics, however, being baptised in the church nearest to where they are born. Their children are taught their prayers at an early age, and receive, as opportunity offers, a smattering of religious instruction, preparatory to receiving the sacraments of Penance, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist. They attend Mass every Sunday and approach the sacraments at least once a year. Individually, most of them have a favourite priest to whom they prefer to go to Confession. This is also the case when they wish to get married. I have been told on numerous occasions of one priest who is said to have married more "travellers" than any other priest in Ireland.

Among tinkers, the standard of sex morals is very high, although many people think to the contrary. Early marriages are the rule, and parents do not tolerate long courtships; in fact I might say they do not tolerate courtships at all. If a young fellow is found to be paying attentions to a girl, he is bluntly asked if he intends to marry her; if he does not, he is told to keep away from her and not spoil her chances of getting a husband. Families are large, and four or five generations may be found living at the same time. Here is an instance I was given. In Athlone in 1927 there was living an old tinker named Davy Joyce. At the same time were living his daughter, Pollie MacDonough, her daughter, Mary Power, her daughter, Mary Handragan, and her daughter of three years, also Mary. Enquiry might bring to light many

other cases like this. A girl who gives birth to an illegitimate child will find no suitors for her hand. She will be ostracised and left to make a living for herself. Such cases are almost unknown.

Married women are not allowed to make any freedom with men other than close blood relations of their own or their husband. Should a husband find that his wife was seen drinking with another man, or being friendly with him, he will undoubtedly give her a good thrashing. Husbands are undoubtedly very jealous of their wives and will not deny the fact. To cast aspersions on the morals of a woman is looked upon as a grave offence and is visited with very serious results. It is usually followed by what is called a "proving match." If the person who is said to have made the charge, denies having made it, the person to whom the charge was made has to be produced. A prayer book is produced and both parties have to swear on it, "to tell the truth or damn their souls." This is an oath on which no tinker will dare to lie, for with them, Hell is a very real thing. The charge having being proved or disproved to the satisfaction of those concerned, the matter usually ends in a free fight. The defeated faction must leave the vicinity. Sticks are usually the weapons employed in these fights, but sometimes razors and knives are used with very serious results. Boys are taught, from an early age, to fight with sticks, and some attain considerable skill in this art. I was once offered a stick by a young fellow who was describing this art to me, and invited to try and strike him where I wished and as hard as I wished. I declined, fearing that I might accidentally hurt him, but judging by an exhibition given by him and his brother, I would have failed.

As I have said before, all tinkers are Catholics. God does not enter into their plan of things as an all powerful, all merciful Being, to such an extent as does the Devil as a being to be dreaded, and Hell as a place to be avoided. They have a tradition of a clock in Hell which ticks "for ever," "for ever" without ceasing. The fear of Hell, through the medium of this story, is instilled into their children at an early age. I once heard a child of four years questioned as to what the clock in Hell said and she answered without hesitation: "For ever!" "For ever!" At the same time, the tinkers have the Devil at a disadvantage. They say that a tinker once blinded the Devil, and on this account a tinker will never go to Hell!

One peculiarity about tinkers is that they are not superstitious. I have talked to them about ghosts, but they have no belief in such things, or if they have they do not admit it. They say that it is unlucky to kill a swan, or a crane, because they are old men and women. One old tinker said to me: "I always tould my childhre never to peg stones at a crane or an ould grey horse, for it might be at their own grandfather or great-grandfather they were peggin'." Things lucky or unlucky do not seem to exist

for them, save, as was aptly put by one of them : " There's no day unlucky only the day you don't get enough to eat ! "

People in general look on tinkers as being a dishonest class. Eggs disappear in a mysterious fashion when they are around, potatoes from the barn or potato pit, hay and straw from the haggard, clothes from the clothes line. Some of them are dishonest ; many of them are not. I am inclined to the view that they do not steal from those who give to them ; or from people in a district which they frequently visit. At all events, their depredations are not very heavy. They look on this light fingered work as a good joke rather than a crime. If the police catch them, well and good ; they do not complain. Jail is no disgrace, and there is no harm in relieving someone of something or other which the tinker possesses not, and of which the other has a superfluity. The tinker says that there is one day in the year on which he can steal without sinning. Some say that Good Friday is the day, others are not sure. They say that a tinker stole one of the four nails that were forged to crucify Christ and thus they have this privilege. Some tinkers say that it was a red haired tinker who made the nails with which Christ was crucified, and that on this account tinkers must be wanderers forever. This latter is an interesting tradition as it is the theme of a tale called " The fourth nail," mentioned in " The story of the Gypsies " ¹ ; as coming from some Macedonian gypsies.

It is mostly in the selling of asses and horses that tinkers resort to trickery. The manner in which they transform aged and decrepit animals into seemingly young and spirited ones, is marvellous. They usually work on the system of exchanging a young (?) animal with some trusting countryman for an old one plus a few shillings. Often as not they may make several exchanges in the course of a few weeks with the same man, bringing him on each occasion a better (?) animal in exchange for the one they had already given him, but they never exchange without receiving some money. Usually the countryman is considerably out of pocket in the end, and may find himself possessor of a useless animal. Whatever money he makes, the tinker spends lavishly. Saving does not interest him. He is hail fellow well met with his confrères, and as long as he can enjoy himself in a public-house he is happy. You rarely find a tinker who is a non-drinker.

Taking them all in all, they ought not to be judged too harshly. They have a hard life, yet they are happy and care-free. To those people who would seek to " civilize " them, who refer to them as " a national problem " ; " a nuisance to farmers " ; and so on, I would say : Leave us our wandering tinkers. House them and they pine ; they have no outlet for their restlessness. Why cage a bird ? Why civilize a tinker ?

¹ The Story of the Gypsies. Konrad Bercovici, London, 1930.

SHELTA OR TINKER'S CANT

NOTE

The proper pronunciation of the following examples of tinker "Cant" or Shelta may be obtained by reading the words as if reading Irish. I have followed Irish phonetics as closely as possible except in a few cases, where the pronunciation of the word as written is obvious.

(1) MONEY

Money	.. gairéad.
Halfpenny	.. tá-niuc.
Penny	.. niuc.
Shilling	.. mideóg (<i>d</i> slender).
Sixpence	.. aspra, sprazie.
Half-crown	.. táirsúin.
Half-sovereign	.. nump, numpa.
Sovereign	.. tául innockniap.

(2) THE HOUSE

House	.. céna
Door	.. rodus, jigger.
Window	.. grínóg, glazier.
Key	.. srochar, suchar [s=sh].
Floor	.. loda. [Loda is usually applied to the earth or ground].
Stones	.. caideógs.
Chimney	.. lub.
An outhouse	.. scibollín.

(3) HOUSEHOLD UTENSILS AND FURNITURE

Stool	.. crípín, losc, lácún.
Dresser	.. misúir.
Bed	.. luighe
Blanket	.. lampéid.
Sheet	.. raiblín.
Saucer	.. gráser.
Spoon	.. múscóg, núspóg.
Knife	.. cealrach, talróg, chadlach, charloc; [' <i>ch</i> ,' as in 'cheese.']
Plate	.. sláta.
Jug	.. srug.
Porringer	.. guiseach.

HOUSEHOLD UTENSILS—*contd.*

Tin can	.. n'geacca.
Basin (delph)	.. srish, sraskin.
Basin (tin)	.. stán srish.
Dish	.. sraskín, líspa.
Cup	.. grupán.
Kettle	.. srittle.
Pot	.. guppa, glóróg.
Tongs	.. mongas, nongas.
Bottle	.. shudéil, dreeper.

(4) ARTICLES OF CLOTHING

Coat	.. gruffan.
Trousers	.. ríspa, strides.
Shirt	.. míltog.
Cap	.. rabéid, céidi, hálór.
Stockings	.. mútógs.
Boots	.. guilimíns.
Shawl	.. mírsrún, tug.
Skirt	.. griffin.
Petticoat	.. griffin binny.

(5) FOOD AND DRINK

Bread	.. dora, peck.
A loaf	.. a lúbín of dora.
A cake	.. a srách of dora.
Milk	.. alamach, yórum.
Butter	.. ide.
Water	.. scoi, pawnie.
Tea	.. { weed, gré. scoi-tchelpi.
Sugar	.. grúcera, grúj, innoc libis.
Salt	.. lascan.
Soda	.. gróda.
Meal	.. lúóg.
Oat-meal	.. lúóg bravan, grunim.
Flour	.. lúrp, whitening.
Meat	.. féha, carnish; [c=k in carnish].
Bacon	.. múóg's féha.
Beef	.. blánóg's féha.
Mutton	.. bleaters féha.
Egg	.. rúmóg.
Herring	.. luscán.
Dinner	.. gríchéir.
Whiskey	.. scoi-hóp.
Porter	.. lush.

(6) THE FARM AND FARM PRODUCE

Field	..	sark.
Garden	..	rágí.
Orchard	..	{ muggle rágí. muggle n'addis.
Apple	..	muggle.
Straw	..	strumble, grísk.
Hay	..	réib.
Oats	..	bravan [usually any kind of grain]
Potatoes	..	cullens.
Turnips	{	.. innockniab, also
Mangolds		.. innockníps.
Cabbage	..	cáb.
Onions	..	grutans, gritúns, [the <i>t</i> in latter is slender].
Gate	..	srat.

(7) BIRDS AND ANIMALS

Hen	..	croudóg, cródóg [the <i>d</i> in latter slender].
Duck	..	lapróg, wobbler.
Goose	..	maisín.
Cow	..	blánóg, bráíñóg; [ñ=ng].
Calf	..	bini blánóg; [bini=small].
Horse	..	tóm curry [tóm=big].
Ass	..	curry.
Sheep	..	bleater.
Goat	..	waddler.
Pig	..	múóg.
Hare	..	pánie.
Dog	..	comera
Cat	..	cutcher, crípatch.

(8) THE FAMILY, PERSONS AND CALLINGS

Father	..	gátera.
Mother	..	naderun.
Son	..	cam.
Sister	..	siskár, sicdíir [s in the first word is slender and broad in the second word].
Brother	..	sicár [s broad].
Grandfather	..	lásún gátera.
Grandmother	..	lásún naderun.
Man	..	gleoch, gleoich, feen, gleoinse.
Woman	..	beóir, mull.

THE FAMILY—*contd.*

Boy	.. sam, siblín, sarpóg.
Girl	.. lakín.
Police	.. glócotes, shades.
Magistrate	.. gistremán
Doctor	.. sicdúir.
Priest	.. cúinne.
Smith	.. guthanna.
Sweep	.. fícir.
Tinker	.. nacer.
Beggar	.. géger.
Lunatic	.. a rílye gleoch.
A Fool	.. a mongadán, a mong.
A Traveller	.. a misleór.
Bastard	.. losport.
Whore	.. rípoich.

(9) PARTS OF THE BODY

Hand	.. máile.
Foot	.. córa.
Head	.. niuc.
Hair	.. gréid, fleece.
Eye	.. lúrc.
Nose	.. mearig.
Mouth	.. pí.
Finger	.. chairpín; [<i>ch</i> as in cheese].
Face	.. gréidín.
Breast	.. miscín.

(10) THE CAMP

Tent	.. lubán, bini céna.
Tent cover	.. lomí.
Camping place	.. addis; [<i>d</i> as in add].
Fire	.. chera; [<i>ch</i> as in cheese].
Turf (peat)	.. nobera.
Sticks	.. chimmas; [<i>ch</i> as in cheese].
Ashes	.. { glodach of the chera. glodach=dirt, refuse.
Road	.. tóber.

(11) TINSMITH'S TRADE

Budget	.. grusca.
Boy	.. merigín.
Solder	.. grádar.
Tin	.. stán.

TINSMITHS' TRADE—*contd.*

Wire	..	gut, bulscur.
Hammer	..	mosúir.
Shears	..	sharcúrs.
Hoop	..	grunsa.

(12) CHRISTIAN NAMES

Patrick	..	Stoffirt.
John	..	Gisán.
Thomas	..	Mútás.
Michael	..	Srikel.
Martin	..	Sartin
Brigid	..	Ríbín.
Winnifred	..	Grútín; [<i>t</i> slender].
Mary	..	Sraní.
Catherine	..	Sraterine.

(13) NUMERALS

1	..	niuc.
2	..	ód [as ode].
3	..	sícer.
4	..	seácer.
5	..	súcer.
6	..	sé.

(14) RELIGION

Church	..	grépéil.
God	..	Dhálúin.
Blessed Virgin Mary	..	naderum of the Dhálúin[mother of God].
Devil	..	mídil.

(15) MISCELLANEOUS

Drunk	..	scimeís.
Laughing	..	raglín [<i>a</i> as in bag].
Crying	..	lúgín.
Married	..	lospí
Pin	..	nimpín.
Ring	..	gráinne.
Gun	..	nuggus.
Jail	..	ríspún.
Cart	..	lorc.
Cart wheel	..	lorc surrier.
Town	..	oura, helm, grag.

MISCELLANEOUS—*contd.*

Shop	.. opagró, shovie, gruppa.
Lodging	.. stall, nadas.
Tobacco	.. fórgarí, spunch [<i>ch</i> as in lunch] spoc.
Day	.. tálosc.
Night	.. dolimi, dorahóig.
Morning	.. hawrum.
To-night	.. a chunk.
Good	.. buri.
Bad	.. gami [<i>a</i> as in ham].
Big	.. tóm.
Small	.. bini.

PHRASES OR SAYINGS IN CANT

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Give me the pot hooks.
[<i>Bog, guri, and nauþ</i> have the same meaning. <i>Inoc</i> is used here, and in nearly all cases, for want of a better word. It means, a thing or an article].</p> | <p>1. { Bog me the inoc for the
guppa.
Guri.
Naup.</p> |
| <p>2. Take the latch of the door in your hand.</p> | <p>2. Salc the inoc of the rodus in your máile.</p> |
| <p>3. Take the key and shut the door.</p> | <p>3. Salc the srothar and grúti the rodus.</p> |
| <p>4. Open the door.</p> | <p>4. Scóp the rodus.</p> |
| <p>5. Go in. [<i>Misli</i>=going, travelling; also wanting].</p> | <p>5. Misli isturt [t=th].</p> |
| <p>6. A cat for the house to kill mice.</p> | <p>6. A crípach for the céna to corib the inocs.</p> |
| <p>7. Eat your dinner.</p> | <p>7. Lush your grichéir.</p> |
| <p>8. Nice bread and good butter.</p> | <p>8. Lásúir dora and buri ide.</p> |
| <p>9. A stool to sit on.</p> | <p>9. A losc to gushie ishírt.</p> |
| <p>10. Do you want much money?
[<i>Tómán</i>=<i>tóm</i> = big, much].</p> | <p>10. Do you grani tóman garéid?</p> |
| <p>11. The sweep is pulling down soot. [<i>Lodach</i>=<i>mud, dirt, etc.</i>]</p> | <p>11. The fíicir of lubs is saklin inshírt lodach.</p> |
| <p>12. This district is thickly populated. [<i>Muincera</i> = country or district].</p> | <p>12. The cénas is tóm in this muincera.</p> |

PHRASES—*contd.*

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| 13. Good God Almighty. | 13. Dhálúm seek súdil ! |
| 14. The curse of God on him ! | 14. Tásp gut may lúber him ! |
| 15. Bad luck to you ! | 15. The tásp may lúb you ! |
| 16. That the devil may take you,
you dirty old woman ! | 16. That the mídil may tásp
you, you glodach crois
ould beoir ! |
| 17. Fine talk, but poor ! [Empty
vessels make most sound]. | 17. Buri tárim but gami ! |
| 18. The woman of the house is
the man, i.e., boss. | 18. The beoir of the céna is the
gleoch. |
| 19. The woman of the house
wears the trousers. | 19. The beoir of the céna
bucéads the ríspa. |
| 20. The traveller knows the road
to-night. | 20. The mislóer granies the tober
achunsc. |
| 21. A man is no man unless he
has a good comrade. | 21. A gleoch is no burieacht
unless he granies a buri
gleóch ? |
| 22. Look at the dirty woman !
[<i>Stayish</i> , and <i>súni</i> =look.
<i>Stayish</i> also means yes]. | 22. { Stayish an glodach beoir !
Súni. |
| 23. By the Holy God, I'll kill
you tonight ! [Your <i>jeel</i>
=you: <i>gilhairt</i> , also used]. | 23. By the Holy Dhálún, I'll
corib your jeel achunsc ! |
| 24. Give me a piece of meat. | 24. Góti mílse a melk of féha. |
| 25. Tell me and I'll tell you. | 25. Laisk my jeel and my jeel
will laisk your gilhairt. |
| 26. (a) and (b) Follow me. | 26. (a) Tolsc my jeel. (b) Tóri
my jeel. |
| 27. Fine day. | 27. Láisiúil talosc. |
| 28. How are you ? | 28. Stayish an buri gleoch |
| 29. Look at the old man ! | 29. Súni the crois gleoch ! |
| 30. What'll I ask for the article? | 30. What'll I bog for the inoc ? |
| 31. Anything you like. | 31. Any inoc you bucáade. |
| 32. Cut my hair. | 32. { Searc my inoc.
Searc my gréid.
Gréti my fleece. |
| 33. Break the sticks ! | 33. Cheisp the chimmas ! [ch
soft] |
| 34. Take the sticks and prepare
a good fire ! | 34. Salc the chimmas and gréti
a buri cherra ! |
| 35. I am perished with the cold. | 35. Mílse is corrib'd with the
goop. |
| 36. I'm looking for my lodging
and God knows where I'll
get it. | 36. I'm súni-ing for my nadas,
and Dhálún where I'll
bog it. |

PHRASES—*contd.*

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| <p>37. You'd never know who'd be listening.</p> <p>38. Robbing the country.</p> <p>39. Shut your mouth!</p> <p>40. I'll sleep here.</p> <p>41. A sup of tea and a pinch of sugar. [<i>Libis</i>=sweet].</p> <p>42. Another one.</p> <p>43. A pregnant woman.</p> <p>44. The woman is giving suck to the child.</p> <p>45. You'll see me again.</p> <p>46. I'll see you soon again. [<i>Stoffie</i>=quickly].</p> <p>47. There's two brothers gone down the road.</p> <p>48. No.</p> <p>49. Yes, I know them better than you do.</p> <p>50. She gets married to the man.</p> <p>51. She goes to bed in the room.</p> <p>52. Speak your own language and the man won't understand!</p> <p>53. Do the police go this road?</p> <p>54. Ask a drink from the woman!</p> | <p>37. You'd never grani who'd be glorín.</p> <p>38. Srúmalín the muincera.</p> <p>39. Crádi your pí.</p> <p>40. Curlim a náisin.</p> <p>41. A tríp of scoitchelpi, and a nork of inoc libis.</p> <p>42. An inoc li.</p> <p>43. Beóir mederín.</p> <p>44. The beóir is gotín the goya the miscín.</p> <p>45. Nurch [ch soft] will súni mílse.</p> <p>46. I'll súni your jeel stoffie.</p> <p>47. There's óde sícdar gone 'shírt the tóber.</p> <p>48. Ní jeesh.</p> <p>49. Stayish, I graní their jeel burier than your jeel.</p> <p>50. She bogs lospí'd to the gleoch.</p> <p>51. She misli's to the luighe in the nomroom.</p> <p>52. Tári in your own tárin an' the gleoch won't grani.</p> <p>53. Do the glócotes misli this tober?</p> <p>54. Géig a lush from the beóir.</p> |
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PÁDRAIG MAC GRÉINE, O.S.

BALLINALEE, CO. LONGFORD.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Readers of *Béaloides* will be grateful to our contributor for his interesting and informative article. This paper of his is, to our mind, one of the most important contributions made to this journal during the five years of its existence. In congratulating Mr. Mac Gréine on his work in an almost untilled field we hope that he will continue his researches, and that others may be encouraged to follow his example, and by their study of the "traveller-folk," their manners and customs, language and traditions, provide material to folklorists and others interested in the study of Irish popular traditions. These "travellers," the *bacaigh* of an earlier

time, the poor scholars—the Irish *scolares vagantes*—have been the medium for the spread of folk tales and all manner of traditions. That none of these has been the subject of serious investigation and study causes no surprise to those who know something of the real Ireland, where the lore of the commonplace has little or no attraction, and where deeds are few, and fine words are many.

Students interested in the subject of the foregoing paper will find references to the scanty literature of the subject in Dr. R. I. Best's *Bibliography of Irish Philology and Irish Printed Literature*, pp. 50–51. To these add:

- (1) E. Fitzgerald: On Ancient Mason-Marks at Youghal and elsewhere, and the Secret Language of the Craftsmen of the Middle-ages in Ireland. *Journ. Kilkenny Arch. Soc.*, 1858–9=*Journ. Roy. Soc. Antiq. Ireland*, V, pp. 67, 384.

The following folktales, recorded from itinerants in Co. Longford by Pádraig Mac Gréine, were published weekly in *The Longford Leader*, a local newspaper, during the period 21 March–30 May, 1931:

- (1) The Wonderful Sword.
- (2) Horse, Hound, and Hawk.
- (3) Jack the Cobbler, the Widow's Son from Ireland.
- (4) The Wild Sow of the Forest.
- (5) The Fiery Dragon.
- (6) Johnnie and Tommie.
- (7) Jack the Ghost.
- (8) Jack, the Highway Robber.
- (9) Jack from Tubberclare.
- (10) The Fresh Loaf.
- (11) The Omadhawn Thais.

In the same newspaper our contributor published the following tales, obtained locally, but not from "travellers":—The Sale of the Three Cows (28 Feb., 1931); The Hag with the Long Tooth (7 Mar., 1931); Jack the Ball Player (6 June, 1931). Copies of the issues of *The Longford Leader* containing all the tales here mentioned are in the Irish Folklore Institute, to which they were presented by Pádraig Mac Gréine.



SGÉAL AR AN GCIRC

Deireann na sean-daoine gur chuir ár Slánathóir an-phian ar a' gcirc nuair a bhíonn sí a' breith na huibhe mar gur sgríob sí an chre amach do'n ua' a raibh a' Slánathóir curth' ann.

Mícheál O Tiarna (71),

Luach, Dubhlinn, Co. an Chláir, 24 Noll, 1930.