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Further Notes on Tinkers' "Cant": Together with Some "Travellers" Tales, Customs, Beliefs and Prayers

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**FURTHER NOTES ON TINKERS' "CANT"**  
*TOGETHER WITH SOME "TRAVELLERS" TALES,  
 CUSTOMS, BELIEFS AND PRAYERS*

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SHELTA OR TINKERS' CANT

(1) MONEY

Silver money	..	g'reid lod.
Two shilling piece	..	Ód mideóg líspa.
Half-crown	..	Tál srón.
Sixpence	..	Sé niucs.
A note	..	Staméir.
Sovereign <sup>1</sup> or £1	..	Nump, numpa, inocniap of gairéad.
Half-sovereign	..	tál inocniap.
Purse	..	ruspán.

(2) HOUSEHOLD UTENSILS AND FURNITURE

Table	..	srurd.
A clean sheet	..	a nalci raiblín.
Basket	..	raspéid.
Basin	..	líspóg.

(3) ARTICLES OF CLOTHING

Waistcoat	..	srascoat.
White thread	..	graisc lod.
Black thread	..	graisc gut.
Stockings	..	múties, mútanas.
A pair of boots	..	rísipa guilimins.
A hat	..	gruta.

(4) FOOD AND DRINK

Breakfast and supper	..	brás.
Buttermilk	..	alamach grut.
Fresh milk	..	alamach ly.
A pint of porter	{	srunta lush. sinta lush.
Intoxicating drink	..	gath [th as in "lath"].
Porridge	..	lút.

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<sup>1</sup> The cant for *sovereign* and *half-sovereign* is misplaced, *Béatoideas* III, p. 178.

(5) FARM PRODUCE

A wisp of hay .. grup réib.

(6) PERSONS AND CALLINGS

Boy .. com<sup>2</sup>, súblín, sarpóg [*sarpóg* . s - sh].  
 Child .. gohera, goya, gorya.  
 Lady .. léidóg [*d* slender].  
 Soldier .. gleoch sarragy [s=sh].  
 Gentleman .. gleoch súdil.  
 People .. níjas.  
 Another person .. a níja ly.

(7) PARTS OF THE BODY

Ear .. glóróg.  
 Hair .. griorsc.

(8) TINSMITH'S TRADE

Budget .. lampóg.  
 Box<sup>3</sup> .. merigín.  
 Solder iron .. ríglum.  
 Hand stake .. máile ríglum.

(9) CHRISTIAN NAMES

Martin .. Srortan.  
 James .. Grétis.

(10) RELIGION

Protestant .. Dolsc, Pornuc.  
 Soul .. grís.

(11) TIME

A minute .. sróméid.  
 A week .. gratchúil.  
 A year .. límina.

(12) MISCELLANEOUS

Hunger .. clórus, crolusc.  
 Illness .. gritch.  
 Fear .. agratis, gita, getchell.  
 Cursing .. shorknesing.  
 A word .. lob, loba.

<sup>2</sup> The cant words for *boy* were misprinted *Béaloidéas* III, p. 181.

<sup>3</sup> *Béaloidéas* III, p. 181 *inf.* read *box* for *boy*.

MISCELLANEOUS—*contd.*

Poorhouse	.. céngup.
Poor	.. gup.
Rain	.. robicin.
Light	.. lodus.
Life	.. gradim.
A corner	.. lúrcán.
Mould for coining	.. gladar box.
Boil	.. chelp.
Burn	.. scurlum.
Call	.. séb.
Sell	.. sílc.

## PHRASES OR SAYINGS IN CANT

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|--|--|
| 1. I am sitting on a stone for a stool.  | 1. My jeel is gusie'n on a caideóg for a lósc. [ <i>s in gusie'n=sh</i> ].     |
| 2. No person will understand our talk, only ourselves.   | 2. No níja will grani our tari'n only our gilhairt.                            |
| 3. A three-penny loaf.   | 3. Sícir niuc lobín.   |
| 4. Don't wait.   | 4. Don't be cradi'n.   |
| 5. You'll see me again.  | 5. You'll súni me ariart.  |
| 6. I'll give you a match.  | 6. I'll góti you a nucleóir. [ <i>nucle=a candle</i> ].                        |
| 7. My own daughter [or girl]   | 7. My jeelhairt lakín.   |
| 8. A big [rich] man, and plenty of money, but no good [ <i>i.e. not generous.</i> ]              | 8. Tóim gleoch and gaiste gairéad, but no burieacht. [ <i>gaiste. t=tch</i> ]. |
| 9. He is coming back in a few days.  | 9. He is tóri'n arais in a súpla tálosc.                                       |
| 10. He might not come back for a year.   | 10. His jeelhairt might not tóri arais for a límina.                           |
| 11. Maybe he is crossing the sea [ <i>scoi=water</i> ].  | 11. Maybe he's misli'n hal scoi.   |
| 12. He is talking of getting married.  | 12. He's tári'n of bog'n lospi.  |
| 13. I don't know but he'll return again to the girl [ <i>i.e. I have no doubt but, &amp;c.</i> ] | 13. I don't grani but he'll tóri arais ariart to the lakín.                    |
| 14. A fine big girl, and plenty of money.  | 14. Lásúir lakín tóim and gaiste gairéad.                                      |
| 15. She gets married to the man that followed her over the sea.                                  | 15. She bogs lospi to the gleoch that toisc'd her jeel hal scoi.               |

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|--|--|
| <p>16. Two men fighting like the devil.</p> <p>17. He is afraid he'll be arrested now.</p> <p>18. The police are looking for him.</p> <p>19. The woman is crying now.</p> <p>20. Give me the solder iron out of the fire.</p> <p>21. Give me the shears to cut the tin.</p> <p>22. A purse of money.</p> <p>23. I want to get the ass shod.</p> <p>24. I'm dead with hunger.</p> <p>25. Plenty to eat.</p> <p>26. Drink, to set you drunk.</p> <p>27. Spending your money for nothing [<i>i.e.</i> uselessly] for drink to make you mad.</p> <p>28. It is raining.</p> <p>29. Light it, or, make a light.</p> <p>30. Quench the light [put the light from me].</p> <p>31. There's my boy now.</p> <p>32. There's another fellow going up the road.</p> <p>33. Look at the girl coming back the road.</p> <p>34. Big talk and nothing doing [<i>i.e.</i> empty boasting].</p> <p>35. We'll never move our feet out of this house.</p> <p>36. Let the old man alone.</p> <p>37. I was ill for three weeks.</p> <p>38. Smoke plenty of the pipe.</p> <p>39. Boiling the pig's head.</p> <p>40. Call him in.</p> <p>41. I'll make my bed in this corner.</p> | <p>16. Ód gleoch corib'n like the mídil. [<i>Ód</i> pron. as 'ode'].<br/>         17. His jeel is' agratis he'll be māilead nurt.<br/>         18. The glócatés are suni'n for him.<br/>         19. The beóir is lúgín nurt.<br/>         20. Gotí me the ríglum out of the chera.<br/>         21. Gotí me the inoc to corib the stán.<br/>         22. A ruspan of gairéad.<br/>         23. I want to bog the currie's córas greti'd.<br/>         24. I'm corib'd with the clórus.<br/>         25. Gaiste to lush. [<i>lush</i> also means porter'.]<br/>         26. Gat to inoc you sciméis. [<i>gath</i>, pron. as 'lath.']<br/>         27. Góti'n your gairéad for ní jeesh, for gat to make you rílye.<br/>         28. It's pouring robicin.<br/>         29. Grintí the lodus.<br/>         30. { Inoc the lodus awhim.<br/>               Misli " " " "<br/>         31. Stayish my suiblín nurt.<br/>         32. There's a níja ly mislí'n isírt the tóber.<br/>         33. Stayish the lacín torí'n arais the tóber.<br/>         34. Tómán tári'n, and ní jeesh inoc gréti'n.<br/>         35. We'll never bog our córas out of this céna.<br/>         36. Gathi the crois gleoch.<br/>         37. My jeel was gritch for sícir gratchuil.<br/>         38. Inoc gaiste of the steamer.<br/>         39. Chelpi'n the múógs niuc. [<i>ch.</i> pron. as in 'cheese'].<br/>         40. Séb his jeel istúrt.<br/>         41. I'll gréti my luighe in this lúrcán.</p> |
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<sup>4</sup> See *Béaloideas* III, p. 179, No. 5.

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|--|---|
| <p>42. You'll be burned in the fire.</p> <p>43. Don't wait a minute.</p> <p>44. Put plenty of meal on the porridge.</p> <p>45. Her father sells asses.</p> <p>46. Your soul to the devil.</p> <p>47. Good luck to you.</p> <p>48. The Mother of God bless you.</p> <p>49. Tell him go out.</p> <p>50. Tell him come in.</p> <p>51. Divil a bit he'll eat in this house to-night, nor an eye he won't close in this house to-night, for he's talking to a bad girl in the poor house.</p> <p>52. John will see you home.</p> <p>53. Stop talking, the people are coming.</p> <p>54. The man is going to make money [<i>i.e.</i> to coin].</p> <p>55. That death may kill you.</p> | <p>42. You'll be scurlum'd in the chera.</p> <p>43. Don't crádí a sróméid.</p> <p>44. Mísli gaiste lúóg on the lút.</p> <p>45. Her gátera síles curries.</p> <p>46. Your grís to the mídil.</p> <p>47. Buri tálosc to your jeel.</p> <p>48. The Naderum of the Dhálún inoc you.</p> <p>49. Laisk him misli awhim.</p> <p>50. Laisk him tóri istúrt.</p> <p>51. Midil milk he'll lush in this céna achunsc, or a luirc he won't curlim in this céna achunsc, for he's tári'n to a gamí lacín in the céngup. [milk= melk.<sup>5</sup>]</p> <p>52. Gisán will lag you home.</p> <p>53. Get your tári'n, the níjas are tóri'n.</p> <p>54. The gleoch is misli 'n for a scrín.</p> <p>55. That the tásp may luber you.<sup>6</sup></p> |
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### TRAVELLERS' TALES

#### THE STRANGE ADVENTURE OF THE STORYTELLER WITH THE ENCHANTED MAN

“ Well, this is only a few words I'm goin' to tell ye about the beginnin' o' me life. When I got marrit first I was very poor; I had nayther ways or manes to go thravell, an' mesel' an' me husband went away althrough the counthry, an' we came an [on] to a place called Frinchpark in the Co. Roscommon. An' to be sure, we met a lot o' thravellers [*i.e.* tinkers]. Some o' them was my friends, an' more o' them was *his* friends. So bedad, we waited an' took a sup o' dhrink,—'t was chape them times, only tuppence a pint; an' 't was aisy gettin' a dhrink for two. So, begorras, the night was comin' an' says I: ' We have very bad ways [of travelling] ' thinkin' o' the long ways we had to go.

“ ‘ Oh, ' says they, ' we'll be all goin' now in a minnit.' ”

<sup>5</sup> See *Béaloides* III, p. 184, No. 24.

<sup>6</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 184, No. 14.

"So, begorras, they all had another dhrink, an' we all came an out, about four miles from the town to a place called Fairymount, wan side between Castlerea an' Frinchpark. They used to inhabit an oul' impty house there; so we all came, a whole family party, there that night. But the divil a wishp o' beddin we had. So I didn't know what to do; so: 'Mary, will ye come?' says I. 'Will ye *tóri* with my *jeel* for a *milk* o' *grisk*.'<sup>7</sup>

" 'I will,' she says. 'What'll ye do wit the *goya*?'<sup>8</sup>

" 'Ah I'll lave it wit yer *naderum* till I *tóri arais*.'<sup>9</sup>

"So away grey wit us tell we got out an [on] the road, an' says I: 'Where'll we go, Mary? This is my first visit here, an', be God, if I live tell mornin' it'll be me lasht'; 'for,' says I, 'it's the wildesht lookin' counthry I ever seen.' 'Well, sure we'll go down here.' 'We'll go down,' says I, 'in the name o' the Father, Son an' Holy Ghosht; we'll turn to the lift' (left).

"So down we goes, an' sure if we were goin' since, we wouldn't meet a house or a home. 'Oh God I'll go no farther,' says I, an' I stood; 'tell (until) I get the lie o' the land,' an' I seen the beautifullest white gate y'ever left an eye upon. An' I looked up, an' what did I see but a whole lot o' lights, beautiful lights. 'God,' says I, 'this must be a farmer's place. This is leck (like) a place we'd get a bed surely.'

"So up we goes an' we came into the yard; there was a light in every winda, an' we didn't know what dure (door) to go to. 'Ah,' says I, 'we'll go to this wan wit the knocker an (on) it.' [I was always a little bit forward.] I went to the dure, an' I knocked it, an' the vice says inside: 'Come in.'

"Says I: 'God save all here!'

" 'God hear yer prayer,' says she.

"An', says I 'I came up, missus, to see if ye could oblige me wit a wisp to make a bed to-night.'

" 'Wait tell the boss come in,' she says, 'an' he'll get it for ye.'

" 'Thanks.'

" 'Sit down,' she says.

"We sat down, an' we were there for tin minnits, an' there was a big pot o' piates (potatoes) in the corner, an' they steamin'. 'Oh *Dhalín*,' says the *lacin*, 'if I could get a few o' them *cullions* I'm *corib'd* wit' the *clorusc*.'<sup>10</sup>

" 'Oh,' says I, '*ni jeesh*, if ye *salc* any o' them we'll be *corib'd*.'<sup>11</sup> 'If yer caught,' says I, 'we'll *bog* no *grisk*.'<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> "Will you come with me for a bit of straw?"

<sup>8</sup> *Goya*=child.

<sup>9</sup> *naderum*=mother; *tóri arais*=come back.

<sup>10</sup> "Oh God!" says the girl, "I'm dead with the hunger," *Cullions*=potatoes.

<sup>11</sup> "No, if you steal any of them, we'll be killed."

<sup>12</sup> "We'll get no straw."

“ So, begorras, ’twas all right now ; the door got a knock, an’ in comes a fine big man, as big as to-day an’ to-morra, an’ he says ‘ Good night, women.’ [Storyteller here imitates a big man’s voice.]

“ ‘ Oh, missus, ye have visitors.’

“ ‘ Oh, I have,’ says she, ‘ two poor women that came up for a bed.’ So, begorras, *a war* [*dá bhárr ?*] ‘ Mollie,’ says he, ‘ did ye gie them anthin’ t’ate ’ ?

“ ‘ No sir,’ she says, ‘ not tell you’d come in.’

“ ‘ Well,’ he says, ‘ gie them out the spuds.’

“ So, begor, the big pot was brought over to him, an’ she left down the basket, an’ he threwn out about two stone o’ spuds. Poor Mary, God help her, thought she’d never get enough o’ the spuds ! So he stood lookin’ at us, an’, says Mary : ‘ Oh, this is a *quare céna*, we’ll be *corib’d* to-night.’

“ ‘ Oh, *ni jeesh*,’ says I, ‘ but don’t *tári*, the *gleoch* has a *gami* appearance.’<sup>13</sup>

“ ‘ Wait now,’ he says, ‘ tell I get yez some *kitchen*.’

“ So, begorras, he got a big knife an’ lepped an (on) top o’ the table. An’ I looked up, an’ what did I see but a big dog, an’ he hangin’ down out o’ the top o’ the house. So here he pulls down a cork [out of the dog] an’ lets down the full o’ a plate o’ lard, an’ stuck up the cork again. ’Twas only the hide o’ the dog was there, an’ it full o’ lard. So when I used t’ate a *piate* (potato) I used to let the lard fall an (on) me lap, but Mary ate the whole lot. I was a bit cliverer than Mary.

“ ‘ Oh Mary,’ says I, ‘ this is a *céna ly*.’<sup>14</sup> So she was laughin’— ‘ *Don’t tári*,’ says I, ‘ or we’re *corib’d*.’ I was thryin’ to keep her from laughin’, but the devil wouldn’t keep her from it.

“ So at any rate, now when we had enough et, I said : ‘ We have enough et now, God bless ye.’

“ ‘ Well,’ he says, ‘ eat enough now, an’ give the house a good name. Wait tell I get ye a good dhrink o’ buttermilk.’

“ So he went over to the dhresser, an’ he pulled the cork out o’ a bottle, an’ there was nothin’ in it ; he pulled the cork out o’ another wan, an’ th re was nothin’ in it ; he pulled the cork out o’ another wan, an the milk ran up out o’ it, it was so sour. So he filled an oul’ noggin o’ buttermilk an’ handed it to Mary, an’ Mary took a good dhrink out o’ it. So he filled it an’ handed it to me, an’ I pretended to dhrink it, an’ let it run down an me apron. I was afraid to dhrink it, for I knew he was an enchanted man. So he took it, an’ it was half impty. ‘ Did ye dhrink it ? ’ he says. ‘ I did,’ says I. So he threw the milk into me face. ‘ If ye havn’t it inside, ye’ll have it outside,’ he says. He knew well I didn’t

<sup>13</sup> “ No,” said I, “ but don’t talk, the man has a bad (or queer) appearance.”

<sup>14</sup> *céna ly* = queer house.

dhrink it, an' he knew well Mary did. So I took up me ould apron an' wiped mesel' the best way I could, an' he says to me :

" ' Are ye long marrit ? ' "

" ' I'm about a year an' a half, sir,' says I.

" ' Did y' ever ride a horse ? ' says he.

" ' 'Deed I did not, sir,' says I, ' I wish to God I had a horse.'

" ' Or an ass ? ' "

" ' I have nayther wan or th' other, sir,' says I. ' An' what have ye ? ' "

" ' The high road an' me chances.'

" ' Well,' he says, ' you'll come out an' ride my grey mare now.'

" ' Now,' says I, ' the *gleoch* 'll *corib* my *jeel*; his not *tári'n* to your *jeel* at all.' <sup>15</sup>

" So it was all right now. He brought me out, an' he called the little white mare out: ' Come an (on) out.' So she come out.

" ' Get up there,' he says.

" ' Ah no, sir,' says I.

" ' Be this an' be that,' he says, ' if ye don't get up there, ye'll be no more alive, an' ye'll never see a sight o' yer husband again ! ' "

" I got up an the horse anyways, an' he brought me through the whole fields, till he came to where there was a dhraim, an didn't the horse fall ! So the horse fell, but I didn't fall off. ' Oh that God Almighty may bless us an save us,' says I, ' *gur a mo chaistin* (?).

" So the little grey horse turned round an' he says: ' That's a good word ye said. In the beginnin', an' ye comin', ye started in the name o' the Father, Son, an' Holy Ghosht, an' that's what saved ye.'

" So he got up, an' he let me down, an' back we went to the house where we were, an' there was Mary an' the two bundles o' sthraw.

" ' *Orra Dhátún seek sudil*, where were ye, an' where'd the *gleoch misli* ' <sup>16</sup>

' Oh, don't *tári*, says I.

" So we started, an' we were no length goin' back.

" ' Begor yez weren't long away,' says they. Sure I thought twas a long time.

" ' Did the child quit cryin' ? ' says I.

" ' She never wakened since ye went,' says she.

" So we divided the sthraw wit three or four other thravellers, an' went to bed, an' when we got up in the mornin' there wasn't a bit o' sthraw undher any o' us.

" But I forgot what the little horse said. ' Ye were in an enchanted house,' says he, ' An' that man was the King o' the Fairies.' ' An' any time ' he says, ' that ever ye go asthraw, think an (on) me,'

<sup>15</sup> " The man will kill me, he's not talking to you at all."

<sup>16</sup> " Good God Almighty, where were you and where'd the man go ? "

he says, 'an' say: 'God be wit the time I was an the little grey horse! an' ye'll be all right. An' anytime yer in need of anthin', I'll give y'a gift, to call an me an' ye'll get it. 'An' now,' he says, 'God be wit ye.'

"An' I come home, an' we divided the sthraw, an' in the mornin' we hadn't a wishp undher us. So, says I, '*Musha Sréni*,' says I, '*tóiri* down the *tóbera*, tell we *súni* the big *céna* we were in last night.'<sup>17</sup>

So down we went.

"'Arra *midil céna* there *bcóir*,' says she.<sup>18</sup>

"'Oh, *Dhálún!*' says I.

"'Oh, come an,' says Mary, 'he was a *gleoch ly*.'<sup>19</sup>

"So from that day me an' Mary has the story to tell about wan an' th' other; only I went through it, for when I was an the horse she was gettin' the sthraw.

"So there's th' oul' story now, an' its a good story, *for not wan word o' that happened but's the thruth*, for I went through it.

"So put down the kittle an' make tay, an' if they weren't happy that we may!"

#### THE HAUNTED HOUSE

"When I was afther gettin' marrit, mesel an' me husband was down in Co. Mayo. We always used to stop in this house. There was the man an' his two sons in it, an' his [first] wife was dead, an' there was another wife in it. The second woman wouldn't come in because she had a child of her own, and he wouldn't let her (the child) in. So, whin we wint there, he axed me to make a cake, that she was comin' over. I med the cake—I was always a topper at a soda cake—an' he axed me to come at her an' coax her to stop.

"So she came over a Sunday, an' he'd whisper to me: 'Tell her to stop!' But she wouldn't stop. So she wint, an' wouldn't stop, an' he was lookin' terrible wild. God bless us! I can see the big wild eyes of him yet; an' the next mornin' says I to Pat [her husband]: 'The *gleóch* is *rilye*; we'll *misli* out o' here.'<sup>20</sup> So we went.

"We were back in about a month's time, an' when we got to the house, there it was, an' not a stick or stone of it stanin', only the gable. There was a (*i.e.* his) brether's house just beside it, an' only a car way between them, an' we wint in there. There was no wan in this house only the man an' two little girls. We axed him what happened his brether, an' he said he was dead. So we stopped for the night, an' whin we wint to bed, Pat fell asleep, but

<sup>17</sup> "Come down the road till we see the big house."

<sup>18</sup> "Devil a house there, woman!"

<sup>19</sup> *Gleoch ly*=a queer fellow.

<sup>20</sup> The man is mad; we'll go from here.

I couldn't. So, begorras, afther a while, about twelve o'clock, didn't I feel a great weight an (on) me chest. I couldn't waken Pat, so I nudged him for all I was worth, but it was no use. So didn't the clothes get wan chuck an' I shouted: 'Get up an' do somethin' for yer dead! Light the lamp an' God have mercy an (on) the dead!' There was th'awfulest noise y'ever heard goin' an outside. Ye'd think twas big ould horses dhraggin' chains an' bangin' fit to knock th'ind wall down. The noise kep' an tell mornin', an' whin we got up I axed what happened the man next door. 'He hung himself an a Sunday,' says he, 'an' the day before he tould the two sons that if anthin' happened him not to knock down the gable o' the house.' 'Twas th' ould boy tied the knot an (on) the rope for him, an' the priest said not to pray for him for he was in Hell.

"The two gosoons ran away, for the land was no good, only ould *corrigeen*, an' they wint away an the free emigration.

"So we wint away that day, an' the two little girls in th' other house died shortly afther wit fret. That happened, an' if I was down in Mayo agin, I could show ye the very spot."

#### THE CLOTHING OF THE DEAD

"A long time ago I was thravellin' wan time up near S—— B——. I was out wan day sellin' gallons, an' me daughter, Sarah, was along wit me. She was only small at the time. So I wint to this house anyways, an' the woman had no money to buy a gallon, an' she gev me a bran' new suit for Sarah, [in exchange] for a gallon, hat, jacket, dhress an' all. So Sarah put them an an' we wint into F——. that evenin', an' we all got dhrunk.

"We left the town an' wint out to camp at B—— B——'s Bog, an' I was too dhrunk to put up the tent, so I threw the cover over the cart an' got in undher it, an' I put the childhre in wit Bidna Joyce that was along wit me. So I sat down undher the cart, an' didn't I forget to feed the childhre, an' here didn't the little girl come up, an' she all dhressed up; an' didn't I think it was Sarah. I axed her what she wanted, but she wouldn't answer me, only make faces at me. 'Why don't y' answer me?' says I. 'I'll make y' answer,' says I; an' off she wint. I got up an' wint over to th' other tent where Sarah was, an' she was inside, fast asleep. Well I nearly died!

"Well we wint to T—— from that, an' I had to go in to the hospital, an' didn't I tell the priest about the girl.

"'Did she give ye the clothes for nothing?'

"'No,' says I, 'I gev her a can an' four saucepans for them.'

"'Well,' says he, 'she should have gev them for the good of her soul.'

“So whin I came out, I tould another woman, an’ we berrit (buried) the clothes.

“So a while afther, I was back agin at S—— B——, an’ didn’t a neighbour tell me about the little girl dyin’ o’ the chincough. So I wint up to the house, an I axed the woman why she didn’t give the clothes for the good o’ her daughter’s soul. She was sarry, an’ she paid me money for the tins ; an’ she says, ‘ I give the clothes for God’s sake, an’ for the good of her soul.’

“So I never forgot that, for it nearly kilt me.

“Whenever you’re givin’ clothes away, always say : ‘ I’m givin’ those in th’ honour o’ God an’ for the good o’ the soul that wore them ! ’ ”

### THE UNCHARITABLE WOMAN

There was a servant girl wan time, an’ she used to work for a rich, hard hearted woman, who never gev charity to anyone. The girl used to give milk to a poor widda wit’ six childhre, an’ she used to keep a bit of her own dinner for them too. Th’ oul’ misthress found this out, an’ she sacked (*i.e.* dismissed) the girl. So the next mornin’ there was a rat in every milk crock. They gev the milk to the pigs instead o’ buryin’ it, an’ all the pigs went mad. The next mornin’ there was another rat in every milk crock, an’ they gev the milk to the calves ; an’ all the calves went mad. The next day the same thing happened, an’ she put the milk in the tay ; an’ them all went mad at the table.

So she went to the priest, an’ she tould him all, an’ he axed her did she ever give any charity

“No,” she says.

‘Haven’t ye a servant girl?’ he says.

“She’s gone,” says she.

“Why?” says the priest to her.

“Oh, she used to be givin’ things away behind me back,” says she.

So the priest went to the girl an’ he axed her what used she give away behind her misthress’ back.

“I never gev anthin’,” says she, “only a sup o’ milk to the widda woman’s childhre, an’ a bit o’ me own dinner.” “An’,” says she, “the misthress wouldn’t allow it if she knew it.”

So he axed her if she’d go back, an’ she said she wouldn’t ; the misthress was so uncharitable. He coaxed her to go anyway, an’ mind th’oul’ misthress, for she was mad now ; an’ the place ’d be hers, when she’d die. [“The rayson she was so uncharitable was because she had no childhre of her own, don’t ye know.<sup>21</sup>”] So she went back an’ twasn’t long tell th’ oul’ wan died. So the girl had all for her charity.

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<sup>21</sup> A remark of the storyteller.

So when she (the misthress) was dead, she used to come back every night. The girl went an' tould the priest, an' he tould her to sell the place. So she sould the place an' left; an' she gev money to the priest for the good o' the first owners, an' she gev money to the poor widda woman to rear her orphans, an' only kep' her own due for herself.

### PRAYERS

#### (1) WHEN ENTERING A CHURCH

In this chapel I enter in,  
 Outside this door I leave my sin,  
 Begging and beseeching to the Redeemer of all men,  
 Never to be guilty of any more sin.  
 As I kneel down at the blessed and holy altar,  
 Before the Father Almighty I make my moans,  
 Who, being standing by, pierced with crown of thorns,  
 Grant me the benefit of this Mass and holy water!  
 Amen.

#### (2) PRAYER WHEN LEAVING A CHURCH

O God, be with you, Cross!  
 I humble to you, Jesus,  
 God may keep my soul from sin and shame,  
 Until I enter into this house of God again!  
 Amen.

#### (3) ANOTHER PRAYER

Being on Good Friday,—God bless Good Friday!—  
 The day our Saviour was crucified.  
 The wicked Jews, being passing by,  
 They pierced him from the heart to the hand.  
 His Sacred Mother, being standing by,  
 With a sorrowful face and a mournful cry.  
 Those that say these prayers three times by day, three times by  
 night,  
 From death or danger or deadly sin,  
 The gates of Hell will never enter in.  
 Amen.

### SUPERSTITIONS AND BELIEFS

1. It is not lucky for a weasel to cross your path, but if she comes towards you and crosses to your right, you will have a lucky year. "Travellers" always say, when they see a weasel "*Beanín lán, beanín lán, Purty (pretty) lady, purty lady!*" to put her in good humour.

2. If you see a magpie in a flock of crows you'll meet "travellers" that day.

3. If you hear magpies fighting you'll be in a row soon.

4. If a crane flies near you, or towards you, you will meet friends.

5. Oney Power (a "traveller"-woman, age 71) disputed with her son John on the question of one magpie being unlucky. He holds that whenever he goes fishing and sees one magpie he might as well turn back, as his day will surely be a blank. She held that one magpie was always her lucky bird; that she never yet saw one magpie in the morning but she was sure to receive either silver or a letter that day. She quoted several instances in proof of her assertion.

6. The scald-crows are said to be old tinker wives. The tinker women were so fond of fighting that they went neither to Hell or Heaven. You can see the grey Galway shawl on the scald-crow's back. They are old friends, and always bring good luck.

7. When tinkers die, they turn into grey horses and carry Orangemen and parsons to Hell!

8. Whatever way the first lamb you see in the year faces you should go in that direction for the year. Every Connacht "traveller" used to do this.

9. If you get an egg with two yolks, someone in your family will give birth to twins, or you will have two weddings in your family.

10. On the Twelfth Night, a "cake" of cow-dung and ashes was made and twelve rushlights stuck in it. Each rushlight was named after a member of the family, and the first to burn out would be the first to die.<sup>22</sup>

11. If the *taidhbhse* puts you astray at night, turn your coat and you will know where you are.

12. A lone bush is shelter for a soul.

13. The *bean sidhe*<sup>23</sup> cries for a family when some member is about to die: "*Och, och, ochón*"! When she has cried the third time she ceases. She always cries for the Mc Donoughs, Joyces, and Wards.<sup>24</sup> She carries a comb and is always combing her long hair. A traveller will never lift a comb from the road. John Power says he knew a "traveller" who lifted a comb, which he saw on the road. That night, the *bean sidhe* came to his fire, and he handed the comb to her with a tongs. If he had taken it in his hand to give to her, she would have taken his hand from him.

14. When a person has been buried, their relations should cross

<sup>22</sup> I have noted this custom in a collection of folk customs and beliefs which I recorded from Patrick Duffy (74), of Drumhalry, nr. Arva, Co. Longford.—EDITOR.

<sup>23</sup> *cp.* Germ. *Klagefrau*.—EDITOR.

<sup>24</sup> Well-known "traveller" families.

the grave three times. If they do, no other member of that family will die that year.

15. Never shake holy water while a dog or cat is about.

16. Never put on your cap while the [Angelus] bell is ringing.

17. A mother cannot attend the burial of her first baby.

18. A still born baby should be buried in a corner of a field where no one might walk on it's grave ; otherwise there will be a " stray " in the field.

#### NOTE

The above collection of cant, stories and beliefs I collected from Oney Power (71) during April and May 1932, with the exception of the cant phrases Nos. 53 and 54, which I got from Tom Cauley and Pat Joyce respectively. The prayers Mrs. Power learned more than sixty years ago from her step-sister Julia Reilly, who was illiterate.

I have followed Irish phonetics as closely as possible in the writing of cant.

PÁDRAIG MAC GRÉINE, O.S.

BEAL ÁTHA NA LAOGH,  
Co. LONGPHUIRT.

#### EDITORIAL NOTE

We are indebted to Dr. D. Ó Mathghamhna, Glasnevin, Dublin, for a collection of words in *Béarlagar na Saor*, the secret " language " formerly used by tradesmen. This collection will be published in the next number of *Béaloidéas*. We should be grateful for similar collections of " cant " from other members of the Society.



#### THE BORROWING DAYS

I heard when I was young that an old cow rejoiced when March was out, threw up her heels and said : " March is gone now and I'll be all right ! " March heard what the old cow said and borrowed three days from April and killed the old cow.

These three days are still called in my district " The Borrowin' Days."<sup>1</sup>

*Patrick Duffy (74), Drumhalry, Co. Longford.  
Recorded from him in Dublin, 8 Dec., 1930.*

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<sup>1</sup> These three days are called in Irish *Laetheanta na Riáihe (Riabhche)*, i.e. The Days of the Mottled Cow.—EDITOR.