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IRISH FOLK-TALES

From County Clare

Belief in Fairies

Bleve in um, throth, I have rason to bleve in um! My mother's father had a brother, that was my gran'uncle at the mother's side—God be good to um all! Well, when he was about three or four monts ould, his mother was in bed and asleep, 'twould be about 12 o'clock at night, when she woke wud a start and just had time to grasp the child round the body, for there, long side the bed, was a little man, having the child be the arm. " 'Twas well you woke," says he, "but we have part of him." Sur enuf, the arm that was caught never grew a bit bigger than 'twas that night; although he grew to be a man, he was never right in himself. I have that from my mother—God rest her soul!—and I wouldn't tell a lie of her soul.—*Told by Mrs. Curtin, Tullycrine, near Kilrush.*

The Runaway Road, and How It Got the Name

I'm seventy years or over id now, well, I don't remember id, but I often heard my father—God rest his sowl—talking about id.

That was a good strait road at the time from you lave Shra till you come to within a mile of Doonbeg. Well, sir, 'twas about Christmas time, and the night was very stormy, but thank God there was no harm done to anybody. But when me father got up in the mornin', and opened the door, and looked out, "The Lord save us," says he, "where is the road gone to?" There was the house, that was on the road-side, in the middle of a field, and all the other cabins the same way. "The Lord

betune us and harm," says he to me mother, "the road is gone away." And sure, there was the road, about two fields away and twishted like a live eel, and facing twords Kilrush. Well, to get to the road agin they had to put a wooden bridge across that river below, and there it stopped from that day to this, and that's why 'tis called the Runaway Road.—*Told by James Whelan, Shra, between Doonbeg and Kilrush.*

A Fight with a Ghost

'Tis up to fourscore years now since id happened. There was two great men at every game: hurlin', runnin', jumpin', and boxin', trowin' waits, and they could not bate one another. One was Patcheen Vasey and th' other was Thomas Magner. Well, they were at all the sport in the country, but they were still no better than one another.

Well, 'twas the will of God that Vasey got sick, and Magner cum to see him. "How are you, Pat?" says Magner. "I think my sportin' days are over, Tom," says Pat. Well, they spoke of all the jumpin' and wrastling they ever had, and says Pat, "Tom, we will meet agin." "I hope so," says Tom, "in a better world, with God's help."

They wished good-bye to one another, and, God rest his sowl! that night poor Vasey died. But accordin' to what I'm goin' to tell you, his poor sowl wasn't aisey, for he was seen at the corner by a good many, a few nights after. Well, Magner was comin' from Carrigaholt fair one night, about three weeks after Vasey died, when, comin' near the cross, his hair stood

of an ind, for who was standin' there but Vasey. "The Lord preserve us!" says Magner. "Is that you, Pat?" "'Tis, Tom," says Pat, "and you must fight me." "Fight a ghost!" says Tom. "Yes," says the ghost, squarin' before him. Tom, nothin' daunted, squared up too, an' meela murder! the fight began. Well, to make a long story short, Tom was found in the mornin', black and blue, beside the road, and he would be dead, only the ghost had to lave when the cock crew, as Tom tould before he died, for he never overed the bating, but lingered for about three monts, when he died; and that corner is to this day called the Ghost's Corner, and a lonesome place it is of a night. God rest both of them now, that they may be in peace!—*Told by James Kelly, Tullaro, County Clare.*

The Piggin

I often heard me mother tellin' about id, 'twas in the bad times, an' the poor people were starvin'. There was a family, the father, mother, an' daughter, a young slip ov about twelve. The father and mother both died in one week from faver, God bless us. The night the mother was buried, an ole woman called at the house and remained till mornin'. When she was goin', she called the little orphan, and gave her a wooden piggin, an' says she, "Take this, and go to Listowel fair, this day week, and offer it for sale, an' I wish you luck," says she.

None of the neighbours ever see her before, or after. Some said she was mad, an' others advised her to do what the ole woman tould her. Well, to make it short, she wint, and there was a great lot of people in the fair field, and she stood in one spot, and people gethered round her, when they heard her callin' out, "Buy me piggin, buy me piggin." All at wans, there was great confusion, as two horses cam gallopin' twors the crowd, and tryin' to make way. The little girl was knocked down. The two men that was on the horses turned back, an' asked who was hurted, and they see the girl on the ground; they asked her if she was hurted, and she said, "No sir. Will you buy me piggin?"

"How much?" says one, "I will give you a ginnee for it." Says the other, "I'll give her two." Says th' other, "I'll give her five." "I'll give her ten," an' they went on risin', and risin', till it wint to hunders upon hunders. At last one of um says, "Let us give er ten hundred apiece." The parish priest was sint for, and he got the money to keep for the girl until she came of age.

She got married at eteen, and a grand match she got, and some of her grandchilder are livin, and not far from this place, and for a long time they were called "The Piggins." But they did not care, they were rich. That oul woman must be one of the good people.—*Told by P. Cronin, Ballylongford.*