Das Feld mit Hagebuchen

(Irland)

Thomas Fitzpatrick war der älteste Sohn eines wohlhabenden Pächters, der zu Ballincolig in der Grafschaft Cork lebte. Thomas, ein munterer, hübscher, reinlicher Bursche, der jedermann gefiel, wer ihn ansah, hatte gerade neun und zwanzig Jahr erreicht, als er folgende Begebenheit erlebte. An einem schönen Herbsttage, es war am Tage unserer lieben Frau, der, wie jeder weiß, einer der größten Feiertage ist, streifte Thomas durch die Trift und ging an der Sonnenseite einer Hecke daher, während er bei sich bedachte, worin wohl das Unrecht liegen möchte, wenn die Leute statt müßig umher zu laufen und nichts zu tun das Heu aufschüttelten und den Hafer in Garben aufbänden, der bereits gemäht war, zumal da das Wetter wieder anfing unbeständig zu werden; als er plötzlich ein klapperndes Geräusch nicht weit von sich in der Hecke hörte.

„Ei der tausend!" sagte Thomas, „Das ist ja wunderbar, noch so spät im Jahre die Schmetze singen zu hören!" Er schlich auf den Zehen herbei, ob er die Ursache des Geräusches zu Gesicht bekommen könnte und er sich in seiner Vermutung nicht geirrt habe. Das Geklapper hörte auf, aber als Thomas scharf durch das Buschwerk sah, so erblickte er in einer Ecke des Zauns einen braunen Krug, der etwa sechs Maß Flüssigkeit halten konnte und nahe dabei ein winziges, altes Männchen mit umgekrempeltem Hut auf dem Kopf und ledernem Schürzchen, das vorne herabhing. Es schleppte einen kleinen hölzernen Stuhl herbei, stieg darauf, tauchte ein kleines Eimerchen in den Krug und zog es voll wieder heraus, stellte es neben den Stuhl und setzte sich dann bei dem Krug und fing an zu arbeiten, indem es auf einen kleinen Schuh, wie er gerade für sein Füßchen passte, einen Fleck aufschlug. „So wahr ich lebe", sprach Thomas zu sich selbst, „ich habe oft von einem Cluricaun reden hören, aber ehrlich zu gestehen, ich habe nie recht daran geglaubt, doch hier ist einer in allem Ernst. Wenn ich geschickt zu Werke gehe, so bin ich ein gemachter Mann. Wie ich gehört habe, darf man die Augen nicht von ihm abwenden, oder er weiß zu entwischen."

Thomas schlich sich jetzt herbei und richtete die Augen auf ihn, wie eine Katze auf die Maus, oder wie man liest, dass die Klapperschlange tut, wenn sie die Vögel festbannen will. So kam er ganz nahe zu ihm. „Gott segne Eure Arbeit, Nachbar!" sagte Thomas.

Der Kleine richtete den Kopf in die Höhe: „Ich danke Euch schönstens", antwortete er.

„Mich wundert, dass Ihr an dem heiligen Tage arbeitet", sagte Thomas.

„Das ist meine Sorge, nicht Eure."

„Freilich", sprach Thomas, „aber Ihr seid ja wohl so gut und sagt mir, was Ihr da in der Kanne habt?"

„Herzlich gerne", antwortete der Kleine, „es ist gutes Bier."

„Bier!" rief Thomas, „Blitz und Hagel! Wie seid Ihr dazu gekommen?"

„Wie ich dazu gekommen bin? Gebraut habe ich es. Und wovon denkt Ihr, dass ich es gemacht habe?"

„Das mag der Kuckuck wissen!" sprach Thomas, „ich denke aus Malz, woraus sonst?"

„Ihr irrt, ich mache es aus Heide."

„Aus Heide!" rief Thomas, indem er in lautes Lachen ausbrach; „Ihr denkt doch nicht, dass ich ein solcher Narr wäre, um das zu glauben?"

„Wie es Euch beliebt", antwortete er, „doch was ich Euch sage, ist wahr. Habt Ihr nie etwas von den Dänen erzählen gehört?"

„Gewisslich habe ich das", sagte Thomas, „waren das nicht die Burschen, die wir ins Gebet nahmen, als sie uns Limerick zu entreißen gedachten?"

„Geht", sagte der Kleine mit geringschätziger Miene, „ist das alles, was Ihr davon wisst?"

„Nun, was ist denn mit den Dänen?" fragte Thomas.

„Die Sache ist diese: als sie hier waren, so lehrten sie uns Bier aus Heide machen und das Geheimnis ist seitdem immer in meiner Familie geblieben."

„Gebt Ihr einem zu versuchen von eurem Bier?" sprach Thomas.

„Ich will Euch etwas sagen, junger Mann. Es würde Euch besser ziemen, Eueres Vaters Haushalt zu besorgen, als bescheidene und ruhige Leute mit Eueren dummen Fragen zu quälen. Eben jetzt, während Ihr Eure Zeit in Müßiggang zubringt, sind die Kühe in den Hafer geraten und haben die Frucht ganz niedergetreten."

Thomas erschrak über diese Nachricht so sehr, dass er eben im Begriff war, sich umzuwenden, als er sich noch besann. Und da er befürchtete, es könnte ihm abermals begegnen, so grapschte er nach dem Kleinen und packte ihn mit der Hand; doch in der Hast warf er die Kanne um und verschüttete all das Bier, so dass er es nicht versuchen und nicht sagen konnte, von welcher Art es gewesen sei. Er schwor dem Kleinen zu, dass er ihm kein Leid zufügen wollte, wenn er ihm zeigte, wo sein Geld wäre. Thomas sah so bös und blutdürstig aus, dass der Cluricaun sich gewaltig fürchtete. „Kommt mit mir", sprach er, „über ein paar Felder, so will ich Euch einen ganzen Topf voll Gold zeigen."

Sie gingen fort, und Thomas hielt den Kleinen fest in der Hand und wendete die Augen nicht von ihm weg. Sie mussten über Zaun und Graben, denn der Cluricaun schien aus bloßer Schadenfreude den härtesten und beschwerlichsten Weg auszusuchen, bis sie endlich auf ein Feld kamen, das ganz mit Hagebuchen angefüllt war und der Cluricaun ging auf einen dicken Stamm zu und sprach: „Grabt nur unter diesem Hagebuchenbaum, Ihr werdet einen ganzen Topf voll Goldstücke finden."

Thomas hatte in der Hast nicht daran gedacht, einen Spaten mitzunehmen; er wollte nach Hause laufen und einen holen, und um die Stelle desto besser wiederzufinden, nahm er eins von seinen roten Strumpfbändern, das er um den Hagebuchenbaum knüpfte.

„Ich denke, Ihr bedürft mein nicht weiter", sagte der Cluricaun mit Höflichkeit.

„Nein", antwortete Thomas, „Ihr könnt Eurer Wege gehen, wenn es Euch beliebt. Gott geleite Euch und gutes Glück folge Eueren Schritten."

"Lasst es Euch wohl ergehen, Thomas Fitzpatrick", sagte der Cluricaun, „und möge Euch alles zum Glück ausschlagen!"

Thomas rannte wie besessen nach Hause und holte einen Spaten und lief ebenso schnell, was er nur konnte, wieder nach dem Felde zurück. Aber wie er ankam, siehe da! Kein Hagebuchenbaum auf dem Felde, um den er nicht ein rotes Strumpfband gefunden hätte, dem seinigen völlig ähnlich, und es wäre ein unsinniger Gedanke gewesen, das ganze Feld umzugraben, denn es enthielt mehr als vierzig Acker Land.

Thomas ging also mit seinem Spaten auf der Schulter nach Hause, ein wenig kühler, als er gekommen war und verwünschte den Cluricaun, so oft er an den sauberen Streich dachte, den er ihm gespielt hatte.

[Anmerkungen: Hagebuche ist hier nach Gutdünken gewählt, weil mit diesem oft strauchartigen Baum unfruchtbare und wüste Flecken pflegen bepflanzt zu werden. Im Original steht boliaun, das Wort findet sich nicht in Nemnichs Catholicon, geschweige in einem Wörterbuch. Geborne Irländer, die ein Freund befragt hat, versichern, dass boliaun ein Stab oder Knüttel sei, doch dem Zusammenhang nach muss es notwendig eine Pflanze bedeuten, wird auch durch ein beigesetztes ragweed erklärt, das zwar gleichfalls kein englisches Wort ist, worunter man aber nach Versicherung der Irländer ein Unkraut versteht, das buschartig und ellenhoch auf wüsten Plätzen wächst und gelbe übelriechende Blumen trägt. Es ist eine in Irland allgemein verbreitete Überlieferung, dass die Dänen eine Art berauschendes Bier aus Heide zu brauen wüssten.]

[Quelle: Thomas Crofton Croker, Fairy tales and traditions of the South of Ireland, London 1825;in der Übertragung der Brüder Grimm, Irische Elfenmärchen, Jakob und Wilhelm Grimm, Leipzig 1826]

The Field of Boliauns

Tom Fitzpatrick was the eldest son of a comfortable farmer who lived at Ballincollig. Tom was just turned of nine-and-twenty, when he met the following adventure, and was as clever, clean, tight, good-looking a boy as any in the whole county Cork. One fine day in harvest - it was indeed Lady-day in harvest, that every body knows to be one of the greatest holidays in the year - Tom was taking a ramble through the ground, and went sauntering along the sunny side of a hedge, thinking in himself, where would be the great harm if people, instead of idling and going about doing nothing at all, were to shake out the hay, and bind and stook the oats that was lying on the ledge, especially as the weather had been rather broken of late, he all of a sudden heard a clacking sort of noise a little before him, in the hedge. " Dear me," said Tom," but isn't it surprising to hear the stonechatters singing so late in the season?" So Tom stole on, going on the tops of his toes to try if he could get a sight of what was making the noise, to see if he was right in his guess. The noise stopped; but as Tom looked sharply through the bushes, what should he see in a nook of the hedge but a brown pitcher that might hold about a gallon and a half of liquor; and by and by a little wee diny dony bit of an old man, with a little motty of a cocked hat stuck upon the top of his head, and a deeshy daushy leather apron hanging before him, pulled out a little wooden stool, and stood up upon it and dipped a little piggin into the pitcher, and took out the full of it, and put it beside the stool, and then sat down under the pitcher, and began to work at putting a heel-piece on a bit of a brogue just fitting for himself. " Well, by the powers !" said Tom to himself, " I often heard tell of the Cluricaune; and, to tell God's truth, I never rightly believed in them - but here's one of them in real earnest. If I go knowingly to work, I 'm a made man. They say a body must never take their eyes off them, or they'll escape."

Tom now stole on a little farther, with his eye fixed on the little man just as a cat does with a mouse, or, as we read in hooks, the rattle-snake does with the birds he wants to enchant. So when he got up quite close to him, "God bless your work, neighbour," said Tom.

The little man raised up his head, and "Thank you kindly," said he.

"I wonder you'd be working on the holy-day ?" said Tom.

"That's my own business, not yours," was the reply.

"Well, may be you 'd be civil enough to tell us what you 've got in the pitcher there?" said Tom.

"That I will, with pleasure," said he : "it 's good beer."

"Beer !" said Tom: " Thunder and fire ! where did you get it ?"'

"Where did I get it, is it? Why, I made it, And what do you think I made it of ?"

"Devil a one of me knows," said Tom, but of malt, I suppose; what else?"

"There you 're out. I made it of heath."

"Of heath !" said Tom, bursting out laughing: " sure you don't think me to be such a fool as to believe that?"

"Do as you please," said he, "but what I tell you is the truth. Did you never hear tell of the Danes ?"

"And that I did," said Tom: "weren't them the fellows we gave such a licking when they thought to take Limerick from us ?"

"Hem !" said the little man drily -" is that all you know about the matter?"

"Well, but about them Danes?" said Tom.

"Why, all the about them there is, is that when they were here they taught us to make beer out of the heath, and the secret 's in my family ever since."

"Will you give a body a taste of your beer?" said Tom.

"I 'II tell you what it is, young man - it would be fitter for you to be looking after your father's property than to be bothering decent, quiet people with your foolish questions. There now, while you 're idling away your time here, there 's the cows have broke into the oats, and are knocking the corn all about."

Tom was taken so by surprise with this, that he was just on the very point of turning round when he recollected himself; so, afraid that the like might happen again, he made a grab * [grasp] at the Cluricaune, and caught him up in his hand; but in his hurry he overset the pitcher, and spilt all the beer, so that he could not get a taste of it to tell what sort it was. He then swore what he would not do to him if he did not show him where his money was. Tom looked so wicked and so bloody-minded, that the little man was quite frightened; so, says he, " Come along with me a couple of fields off, and I'll show you a crock of gold." So they went, and Tom held the Cluricaune fast in his hand, and never took his eyes from off him, though they had to cross hedges, and ditches, and a crooked bit of bog (for the Cluricaune seemed, out of pure mischief, to pick out the hardest and most contrary way), till at last they came to a great field all full of boliaun buies (ragweed), and the Cluricaune pointed to a big boliaun, and, says he, "Dig under that boliaun, and you'll get the great crock all full of guineas."

Tom in his hurry had never minded the bringing a spade with him, so he thought to run home and fetch one; and that he might know the place again, he took off one of his red garters, and tied it round the boliaun.

"I suppose," said the Cluricaune, very civilly, " you've no farther occasion for me ?"

"No," says Tom "you may go away now, if you please, and God speed you, and may good luck attend you wherever you go."

"Well, goodbye to you, Tom Fitzpatrick," said the Cluricaune, "and much good may do you, with what you'll get."

So Tom ran, for the dear life, till he came home, and got a spade, and then away with him, as hard as he could go, back to the field of boliauns; but when he got there, lo, and behold ! not a boliaun in the field but had a red garter, the very identical model of his own, tied about it; and as to digging up the whole field, that was all nonsense, for there was more than forty good Irish acres in it. So Tom came home again with his spade on his shoulder, a little cooler than

he went; and many's the hearty curse he gave the Cluricaune every time he thought of the neat turn he had served him.

"It would he extremely difficult," says her lady ship;" to class this supernatural agent, who holds a distinguished place in the Irish fairies.' His appearance, however, is supposed to he that of a shrivelled little old man, whose presence marks a spot where hidden treasures lie concealed, which were buried there in ' the troubles.' He is therefore generally seen in lone and dismal places, out of the common haunts of man and though the night wanderer may endeavour to mark the place where he beheld the guardian of the treasures perched, yet when he returns in the morning with proper implements to turn up the earth, the thistle, stone, or branch he had placed as a mark is so multiplied, that it is no longer a distinction and the disappointments occasioned by the malignity of the little Leprechan render him a very unpopular fairy: his name is never applied but as a term of contempt."

On this extract it should be remarked, that the word Prechan, used in the story of the young piper and explained in the note as a contraction of Leprechan, may signify a raven, and is metaphorically applied to any nonsensical chatterer; - this word is correctly written, Prèacha'n, or Priàchan.

The ancients imagined that treasures buried in the earth were guarded by spirits called Incubones, and that if you seized their cap, you compelled them to deliver this wealth. See Pomponius Sabinus, line 507. Georgics 2.

"Sed ut dicunt ego nihil scio, sed audivi, quomodo Incuboni pileum rapuisset et thesaurum invenit," are the words of Petronius, an author of whom Lady Morgan is of course ignorant.

The English reader will perhaps he surprised to see the term boy applied to a young man of nine-and-twenty; but in Ireland this word is commonly used as equivalent to young man, much as the word P L V "; was employed by the Greeks, and puer, still more abusively, by the Romans; as, for example, in the first Eclogue of Virgil: Tityrus, who represents Augustus as replying to his application for protection from the soldiery - " Pascite ut ante boves pueri," is immediately addressed by the other shepherd - " Fortunate senex." Spenser also employs It in the same sense for he calls Prince Arthur's squire Timias a lusty boy; and Spenser, except in his finals, is good authority. Mr. Wordsworth, too, whose logical correctness in the use of words is notorious, does not scruple, among the employments which his "Old Adam" assumed on coming to London, to mention that of an " errand boy." It may, perhaps, he safely asserted, that our shoals of continental travellers do not always find the garcon at a French hotel or caffe to he an imberbis puer. It is treading on tender ground to presume to censure Miss Edgeworth, but it might possibly be queried whether in her tale of "Ormond" she has not o'erstepped the modesty of nature when she makes King Corny qualify the tough ploughman with the title of boy, though, indeed, this is a point that may admit of doubt; for the devil himself; who, all agree, is no chicken, is very commonly styled the " Old boy."

It is a generally received tradition in the south of lreland, that the Dane's manufactured a kind of intoxicating beer from the heath. Dr. Smith, in his History of Kerry (p. 173), informs us that " the country people" of the southern part of the barony of Corckaguiny " are possessed with an opinion that most of the old fences in these wild mountains were the work of the ancient Danes, and that they made a kind of beer of the heath which grows there; but these enclosures are more modern than the time when that northern nation inhabited Ireland. Many of them," continues the doctor, "were made to secure cattle from wolves, which animals were not entirely extirpated until about the year 1710; as I find by the presentments for raising

money for destroying them in some old grand jury books; and the more ancient enclosures were made about corn fields, which were more numerous before the importation of potatoes into Ireland than at present."

Dr. Smith may be right in his conjectures respecting the fences which he has described, though these will by no means apply to the low stone lines which are to he seen on many of the mountains in Muskerry, in the county Cork, and which were obviously never intended for enclosures, but for mere boundaries, or marks of property the stones are placed in regular lines, and are certainly not the remains of walls, as they consist of only one layer of atones. It is also to be remarked, that the enclosures are too small and too numerous to indicate a division of land for ordinary purposes; and their use can only be explained by supposing (as we have every reason to do) that they were intended to mark out the bounds within which each man cut his portion of heath.

Gwrách is the Welsh name for a hag or witch, and Gwrách y Rhibyn signifies the hag of the dribble, a personage, according to Cambrian tradition, who caused the many dribbles of stones seen on the slopes of the mountains. This phrase happily expresses the boundaries just described. The legend of Gwrách y Rhibyn states, that in her journeys over the hills, she was wont to carry her apron full of stones; and by chance, when the string of her apron broke, a dribble was formed.

Tom Fitspatrick, the hero of the tale, does not seem to have been a very profound antiquary; and a case of similar ignorance in a respectable farmer may he quoted. This farmer lived within less than fifty miles of Londonderry ; and yet, to a question addressed to him by a gentleman about the Danes, he replied in the very words of Tom, only substituting Derry for Limerick, In justice to the writer's countrymen, it must he, however, declared, that such ignorance is by no means common among them. They well know who the Danes were, and will tell you very gravely that a father in Denmark, when bestowing hia daughter in marriage, always assigns with her, as a portion, some of the lands which his ancestors had possessed in Ireland. It would be rather curious to ascertain whether the Northumbrians and the peasants of the East Riding retain so distinct an idea of these northern invaders.

"Dear me," and to tell God's truth," says Tom and the narrator says Tom ran for the " dear life :" these are odd expressions will say, perhaps, the reader, Not at all, Dear is almost exactly the Homeric f i l o V and is a strong expression of the possessive pronoun, and is frequently so employed by Spenser and the elder writers; and, by God's truth, an Irish man means the truth, pure and unmixed as it is in the Divinity, " the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," or the truth as it should be uttered in the presence of the Divinity.

The three original diminutives are tiny, dony, and the Scottish wee, By variously combining the elements of these, the Irish make a variety of others, Thus, from the first and third they form weeny, and by the use of the termination shy, they make deeshy, doshhy, and weeshey.

A piggin is a wooden vessel of a cylindrical form, made of staves hooped together, with one of the staves of double the length of the others, which serves for a handle. They are of various sizes, containing from a pint to two gallons, according to the uses for which they are intended. In Leinster there is a distinction made between those of a larger, and those of a smaller, size. The former are called piggins, the latter noggins. In the same province, the pewter measure answering to the English gill is called a naggin. Vide Gough's Arithmetic (Dublin, 1810) In the southern counties, the terms naggin and noggin are used indifferently, as before mentioned.

[Quelle: Thomas Crofton Croker, Fairy tales and traditions of the South of Ireland, London 1825;]