

Stories in the Doric from the Monastery of Fable

By *Sanners Gow*

Henny Harper.

I heard this story fin I wiz but a bairn. The man that tellt it tae ma lies restin in the kirkyard as he's deen for mair norr fifty years passed.

Henny Harper wiz a buck (tramp) that eesed tae range the country roon as the fancy teen him. Tae earn a crust he'd sharpen knives, shears an ither kinds o ficherins. Henny wisna his Christian name, nae a sowel kent that? The reason he wiz caad Henny he'd a wee roon heed that darted aboot as he haaf focused on the warld aboot him jist like a henny lookin for a morsel. He'd amber coloured een on him and this added tae the likeness o hen. It wiz said that he'd been trainin as a meenister o the cloth in his youth an wiz as bricht as a braiss button. Ae time he'd come hame tae Udny an helpit his aal faither hyowin the neeps. They'd been at the hyowin aa the day fin he'd collapsed in the park. The doctor wiz called an said he'd teen the sunstroke. Henny wiz nivver the same aifter that day and ended traippsin the country roon mair or less haaf aware an the tither haaf wi nae a clue o the warld aroon him. But a fine man wiz he neentheless ayee welcome tae the hearthsteen o mony a crafty, fairmtoon an bothy. Weel on in years Henny found it getting harder tae wun on cairryin his goods an chattles upon his back as he'd deen in the past. His salvation wid come in the shape o Henderson the baker in New Deer faa gave tae him an aal baker's barra. It hid three widden spoked wheels wi iron rims. Twa big yins and a wee een at the back used for steerin it .

The box that made up the body o the cairt hid a huge drawer that pulled oot so the gyan aboot baker could pull oot an show aff his goods tae the customers. Noo this suited Henny doon tae a tee an wi some help fae the vricht at Slacktackit he made the drawer big eneuch tae fit himsel liein inside. In effect the cairt wiz like a big coffin wi a drawer. The reef wiz convex in shape tae allow the water tae rin aff and wiz covered in waterproof tarry paper. Noo Henny wiz fair trickit wi this cairtie. It wiz fine an licht for him tae push the country roon providin he keepit tae the laicher grun. The wee wheel at the back could be steered richt easy by turnin the hannlebars like that o a pushbike and that made for easy steerin.

Durin the day the big drawer held aa the tools o his trade an mair forbyes whiles at nicht he'd pit them ontae a wee rack he'd fashioned fae some reens an happit them wi a lump o canvas tae keep them dry. Henny wid pull oot the big drawer, climm inside an slide himsel intae the main cairt by pullin on twa haanles in the intimmers.. This wye Henny wiz oot o the weather an fine an cosy tae boot. Mighty but Henny

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wiz the main man about the Buchan wi his cairtie. Fowk wid wait tae hear the clatter o the iron rimmed wheelies gyan by an rin oot wi knives or sic like for him tae sharpen. Mony's the keckle an torment he'd get fae the country or fisher deemies.

Some o the quines wid tease him aboot getting a wife for tae keep himsel warm in the lang winter nichts? But Henny ayee came back wi "Na na quinie fit wid I dee wi aa the bairns fin they came along?" This ayee got peals o laachter fae the deemies. A character wiz Henny an fowk aboot here were affa gweed tae him so he nivver wanted for a hamemade scone or a bit kyboch o fine cheesed. Mair than nae if he wiz roon by at dennertime or supper he'd get a bowlie o fitivver wiz gyan at the hearthsteen wi the faimily. Naebody wid cause hairm tae Henny for fowk said that he'd been given the straick o the ruchtum waan by the 'Gweed Fowk' faa hid seen fit tae tak the sense fae him in the days o his youth. They'd left him though wi the gift o makkin laachter an bringin gweed fortune tae the likes o them that showed him kindness. Some ithers said he'd been struck wi the faerie dart while hyowin the neeps but yet ithers argued that bein struck by the faerie dart wiz always fatal but a straick o the ruchtum waan left a body in this warld but nae o it? Fitivver the cause peer Henny caad awa deein as best he could.

A fyowe years along the line Henny wiz campit intae an aal quarry aboot the Crichie wye. He'd jist feenished his supper o a corter o breid an a lump o kyboch he'd gotten fae a cottar deemie earlier on and richt fine it wiz ana. Pitten oot his wee fire wi the dregs o his tay he wint intae his cairtie for the nicht. Even though it wiz the month o Mey there wiz still a caal bite tae the air but Henny inside his big drawer wiz weel oot o the chill nicht air. Wi a couple o cwites an his plydie wuppit aboot him he wiz as warm as a pie.

That very nicht three fairm chiels were makkin their wye hame aifter bein on the randan doon at Mintlaw. Fyachin hame the wye staggerin aboot wi the amount o ardent spirits teen they were lookin for highjinks and fin they come across the wee quarry faar Henny wiz in. They decided tae hae reels at his expense. They creepit inaboot an jammed the drawer shut afore rinnin awa laachin like a puckle geets. It wiz aboot twar three days aifterhins that a millert loon waakin past heard a feeble shoutin an thumpin comin fae the quarry. He saw the cairtie and in nae time hid Henny oot o't. The peer aal man wiz in an affa stae sayin his drawer hid stuckin for some reason? He jist couldna wun oot ava. The millert loon keepit weel clear though near boakin wi the smell o shite an stoore that waffted an dreepit aff o peer aal Henny Harper. Ae me sic a sotter!