

A Story about a Dragon

Told by Martin Mullen, (Aged 57)

Currower, Attymass, Ballina. Co. Mayo.

Told to Winnie Mullen

Currower, Attymass, Ballina. Co. Mayo.

Long ago at Enniscrone there lived a man named Cahal, with his mother. He was a great card-player. He used to be down at the sea-side gathering dilisk and cockles.

One day he was gathering dilisk, a man came in from the sea in a boat. He asked Cahal would he have a game of cards. Cahal said he would. They played the game and Cahal won it. The man asked him what did he want for his game. Cahal said he wanted a new house. He also wanted to have men killing pigs every day in the year. The man said "Alright". When he went home he saw his mother sitting on a big sofa, in a mansion, beside a big fire, and the men killing pigs.

Next day he went to then sea-side and the man came in from the sea. He asked Cahal would he play another game and Cahal said he would. Cahal won the game. He asked, Cahal what did he want for his game and Cahal said that he wanted a wife. The man said "You have come to my country for a wife". Cahal went into the boat and it was not long until he landed in that country. He brought Cahal into a toffee shop where there were a lot of beautiful girls making toffee. He told Cahal to select a wife from there. Cahal said that none of them would do, because they were too proud. He brought Cahal into another toffee shop where there were nicer girls Cahal said none of them would do. When they were coming down a street they met a girl carrying a pail of water on her head. Cahal said that he would seek her as his wife. That girl was the mans daughter. He left Cahal and his daughter at home in Enniscrone. Then they got married. His wife told him not to go down to the sea-side again or he would not be left at home, Cahal went down to the sea-side and the man came in again from the sea in a boat. He asked Cahal would he play another game Cahal said he would. They played the game and Cahal won it again. He asked Cahal what did he want for his game, Cahal said he wanted a horse. The man said "You will have to come to my country for a horse". Cahal said he would. He got into the boat and it was not long until they landed in that

country. He brought Cahal into a stable where there were a lot of horses. He let them all out to a pond to drink. Cahal said that none of them would do. A shabby little pony came from behind the door, Cahal said that little pony would do him. The man would not leave him at home. The pony told him to take his halter from behind the door. The pony said "If you are a jockey I am a horse". He jumped on the pony's back and the pony brought him home again to Enniscrone.

Next day he brought the pony out to the field to work him, but the pony began to kick and run away. He determined to sell the pony and buy a quiet pony.

Next day he went to the fair and sold the pony and bought a quiet pony. As soon as he sold the pony, the new house disappeared and his wife was brought by a dragon in the form of a man. His name was "Crochar na tháirne". When he came home from the fair he saw his mother sitting in an old hut again. She told him that his wife was brought away by the "Crochar na tháirne".

She made three oat meal cakes for Cahal. He went away to seek for his wife and he brought the three oat meal cakes with him.

He was not long walking until he met a little man breaking stones on the side of the road. The man told him that he saw his wife going that way with the "Crochar na tháirne". He took out his first cake to eat it. The man asked some of the cake of Cahal and he got it. He told that when- ever he would be in trouble to call for the man who was breaking stones on the side of the road. He went along until he met a black hound. His name was "Cú Dubh ón Sleibh". The "Cú Dubh ón Sléibh" told him that he saw Cahals wife going that way with the "Crochar na tháirne". Cahal took out a second cake to eat it. The Cú Dubh ón

Sleibh asked some of the cake of him and he got it. He told him that when ever he would be in trouble to call for the “Cú Dubh ón Sleibh”. He walked for another while until he met a “Breac Dubh”. The “Breac Dubh” told him that he saw Cahals wife going that way with the “Crochar na tháirne”. Cahal took out his last cake to eat it. The “Breac Dubh” asked a piece of the cake of him and he got it. The “BreacDubh” told him that the “Crochar na tháirne’s” house was enchanted.

When he met his wife she asked him where was he going. He said that he came for her. She told Cahal that he would be killed when the “Crochar na tháirne” would come home. She told him that the “Crochar na tháirne” could not be killed because he does not carry his soul with him. Cahal went away then. The “Crochar na tháirne” came home. Before he went fowling she asked him where was his soul. He told her that it was in a rock which was in the garden. When he went fowling she decorated the rock to show him that she loved him. When he came home he said “You foolish girl what are you doing that for?” Then he told her that it was in a duck which was in at the bottom of a big tree which was in the garden. Next day when the “Crochar na thairne” went fowling she went out and decorated the tree. Cahal came and began to cut down the tree. The first blow he struck on the tree the “Crochar na thairne” felt it and he made for home. Cahal was in trouble then and he called for the man who was breaking stones on the side of the road. He came there with a little hatchet and cut down the tree. The duck ran out and ran into a lake. The “Breac Dubh” fished her out. The “Cú Dubh ón Sléibh” killed her. The “Crochar na tháirne” was about ten yards from them but he fell dead. All around his house was no more enchanted.

The he went home with his wife. The man, whom he sold the pony to, had come back again with him because he was kicking. When the pony was brought back the house appeared again. Then he had his wife; his house; and his pony. So he lived happy for ever after.