

THE TALL TALES OF JEMMY KINNEY

AS RECALLED BY ROBERT TURNER, DAVID BAKER AND OTHERS.

CROP STORIES:

He had corn in the Lough Field and it was an extraordinary crop. He cut it with a scythe. The crop was very heavy. After about ten minutes he had to go and dip the scythe blade in the flaxhole as it had become red-hot and he was afraid he would set the corn on fire.

He said, he was in the field stooking his corn. It was a gargantuan task as there never was such a crop of corn it was so heavy and extraordinarily tall. It was near dinner time but with the height of the stooks he could see nothing and couldn't get his bearings for home. Luckily one of his sisters, Mary, shouted at him that the dinner was ready and he followed the sound of her voice and got home, otherwise he said he would still have been in the field.

One year he grew potatoes in the meadow down near the Lough. There never were potatoes like them, they grew so big. They were that big that they couldn't be got into the bags he had brought to the field. He had to put ropes round them and tow them home with a horse.

He said that one day he was eating one of these big potatoes at his dinner when he noticed it moving. He got up off the chair and walked round to the other side where he discovered that Aggie was eating the same potato from the other side.

His wee field at the top of the glen was very steep. He employed Ernest Alexander to plough it for him with a Fordson tractor. Ernest chewed tobacco and Jemmy said that every time Ernest turned the tractor at the head-rig, he had to shift the plug of tobacco to his other jaw to keep the tractor from coupling.

He said that one year he grew potatoes in the wee field but that it was so steep that he had to stand on a slating ladder when he was gathering them.

DOG STORIES:

He said he once had a wee bitch called Spot that was extraordinarily intelligent. There never was a dog like Spot in the country. However, one time the wee bitch went missing and couldn't be found. Jemmy searched high and low without success. He said, "I doubt Spot's gone!" But one evening, just at the edge of dark, Jemmy was sitting at the fire when who should come in through the open door but me bould Spot. "Ah!" said Jemmy. "You've come home! And where have you been this fortnight?" and Spot sat up and with her paw she wrote in the ashes, "Warrenpoint!"

It would have been around harvest time one year and James started to build a stack of corn in the haggard contiguous to the dwelling house. The sisters called James in for his supper and he left the stack and hoping for a dry night, he didn't bother to put the tarpaulin over it. He went to bed. In the middle of the night, one of the sisters woke him as it had started to rain. He got up and went outside. To his amazement, he found the dog had got up the ladder, pulled the tarpaulin over the corn stack and was sitting on top of it to keep it from blowing off in the wind. He was lucky to possess a dog with such an excellent IQ!

FEATS OF STRENGTH ETC:

"It was eatin' time and all were seated at the table when a strange sound was heard from outside. One of the sisters went out to see what it was. She said, "such a flock of ducks, Jemmy, and they're coming this way!"

Jemmy got up and grabbed the shotgun. He stuck it up the chimney and pulled the trigger, letting off both barrels. On going out, he discovered that he had downed nine plump ducks. A while later he was relating this story to a man to whom he had told it previously. This time he told the man he had downed ten ducks. The man said, "Jemmy! The last time you told me that story it was nine ducks." Jemmy replied, "Sure you wouldn't call me a liar for the sake of one duck!"

Jemmy said he was an expert cyclist. He said that one Sunday he decided to go to Warrenpoint for the day, but he had no bicycle. He went down to Scarva and borrowed a bicycle belonging to the police sergeant there. At the railway bridge in Scarva, just as he was about to mount the bicycle, a man on a motor-bike came along and stopped beside him. The motor-cyclist said he was going to Clare and challenged Jemmy to a race. Jemmy accepted the challenge. He gave the motor-cyclist a start to the fork of the road and then jumped on the bicycle and gave chase. He pedalled furiously out Station Road, across the main road and up Aughlish Hills. He overtook the motor-bike at Acton Crossroads and pedalled on at great speed. However at Ballyrgan Chapel he was forced to stop as his right leg had got very hot. It was only then that he realised that the chain of the bicycle was so red-hot that it had burned a hole through the leg of his trousers.