

The Spirit and the Treasure

By Unknown

You know the Southern people are very superstitious. My friend from Georgia, Carrie Dunbar, told me of a family lived close to her, who had a cow and a bunch of hens and a little strip of land. The husband was going to market the next morning and he told her to get the butter and eggs ready. He wanted to make an early start, I suppose to get home early. And she got up and got his breakfast and got him started early. Then after he went she laid down—it was too early to go out to the barn and milk the cow and feed the chickens. And she heard a thunder. And she looked up, she raised up on her elbow—she thought it was going to rain and her husband would get wet. And she saw this big man covered with fish scales, standing by her bed. He spoke to her, and told her not to be afraid, that there was a pot of money buried under the hearth, and he showed her the flat stone. “Take that stone up and dig.” (We had a flat stone hearth like that in Essex County, Canady. where I was born. My father, he was from the South; he built us a stick chimney and a stone hearth.) It thundered again, and the man disappeared.

She got up and went out, stayed outdoors most all day, fed the chickens, milked the cow. Her husband came back in the evening, and she told him about the man and the pot of money buried under the hearth. He told her she’d been asleep and dreamed that. She said, no, she hadn’t been asleep. Then she worried him until finally he did dig down under that stone. (If she’d been asleep it would have passed like a dream, you know.) He dug under the stone, just to satisfy her curiosity, and found the pot, and it was all filled with silver, black silver. Carrie told me she’d had some of it, from change in buying her groceries.

They bought ’em a little farm, and a big span of black mules. (They was great for mules in the South, I heard my father tell it.) He could plant what he pleased and it was his.

At that time of the Rebellion them rich planters buried these treasures and then the heirs got to living away, and the houses fell to rock and ruin. When the Northern armies was coming, you see, they’d take possession of the plantations, kill the stock and cattle, just take everything. So the planters buried their money and their solid silver.

Carrie used to tell me that while she was peeling apples.