



Tales of Treasure

Folk-Lore And Legends: Scandinavia

Scandinavian

Advanced
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Author's note: This story comes from Denmark.

There are still to be seen near Flensborg the ruins of a very ancient building. Two soldiers once stood on guard there together, but when one of them was gone to the town, it chanced that a tall white woman came to the other, and spoke to him, and said—

“I am an unhappy spirit, who has wandered here these many hundred years, but never shall I find rest in the grave.”

She then informed him that under the walls of the castle a great treasure was concealed, which only three men in the whole world could take up, and that he was one of the three. The man, who now saw that his fortune was made, promised to follow her directions in every particular, whereupon she desired him to come to the same place at twelve o'clock the following night.

The other soldier meanwhile had come back from the town just as the appointment was made with his comrade. He said nothing about what, unseen, he had seen and heard, but went early the next evening and concealed himself amongst some bushes. When his fellow-soldier came with his spade and shovel he found the white woman at the appointed place, but when she perceived they were watched she put off the appointed business until the next evening. The man who had lain on the watch to no purpose went home, and suddenly fell ill; and as he thought he should die of that sickness, he sent for his comrade, and told him how he knew all,

and conjured him not to have anything to do with witches or with spirits, but rather to seek counsel of the priest, who was a prudent man. The other thought it would be the wisest plan to follow the advice of his comrade, so he went and discovered the whole affair to the priest, who, however, desired him to do as the spirit had bidden him, only he was to make her lay the first hand to the work herself.

The appointed time was now arrived, and the man was at the place. When the white woman had pointed out to him the spot, and they were just beginning the work, she said to him that when the treasure was taken up one-half of it should be his, but that he must divide the other half equally between the church and the poor. Then the devil entered into the man, and awakened his covetousness, so that he cried out—

“What! shall I not have the whole?”

Scarcely had he spoken when the figure, with a most mournful wail, passed in a blue flame over the moat of the castle, and the man fell sick, and died within three days.

The story soon spread through the country, and a poor scholar who heard it thought he had now an opportunity of making his fortune. He therefore went at midnight to the place, and there he met with the wandering white woman, and he told her why he was come, and offered his services to raise the treasure. She, however, answered that he was not one of the three, one of whom alone could free her, and that the wall in which was the money would still remain so firm that no human being should be able to break it. She also told him that at some future time he should be rewarded for his good inclination; and, it is said, when a long time after he passed by that place, and thought with compassion on the sufferings of the unblest woman, he fell on his face over a great heap of money, which soon put him again on his feet. The wall still remains undisturbed, and as often as any one has attempted to throw it down, whatever is thrown down in the day is replaced again in the night.

Three men went once in the night-time to Klumhöi to try their luck, for a dragon watches there over a great treasure. They dug into the ground, giving each other a strict charge not to utter a word whatever might happen, otherwise all their labour would be in vain. When they had dug pretty deep, their spades struck against a copper chest. They then made signs to one another, and all, with both hands, laid hold of a great copper ring that was on the top of the chest, and pulled up the treasure. When they had just got it into their possession, one of them forgot the necessity of silence, and shouted out—

“One pull more, and we have it!”

That very instant the chest flew away out of their hands to the lake Stöierup, but as they all held hard on the ring it remained in their grasp. They went and fastened the ring on the door of St. Olaf's church, and there it remains to this very day.

Near Dangstrup there is a hill which is called Dangbjerg Dons. Of this hill it is related that it is at all times covered with a blue mist, and that under it there lies a large copper kettle full of money. One night two men went there to dig after this treasure, and they had got so far as to lay hold of the handle of the kettle. All sorts of wonderful things began then to appear to disturb them at their work. One time a coach, drawn by four black horses, drove by them. Then they saw a black dog with a fiery tongue. Then there came a cock drawing a load of hay. Still the men persisted in not letting themselves speak, and still dug on without stopping. At last a fellow came limping up to them and said—

“See, Dangstrup is on fire!”

When the men looked towards the town, it appeared exactly as if the whole place were in a bright flame. Then at length one of the men forgot to keep silence, and the moment he uttered an exclamation the treasure sank deeper and deeper, and as often since as any attempt has been made to get it up, the trolls have, by their spells and artifices, prevented its success.

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