

## ISLANDS OF TREASURE.

## EAGER SEARCH FOR GOLD WHICH THE PIRATES BURIED.

Many Useless Quests in Lonely Places of the Caribbean Sea—Fabulous Tales of the Amount Supposed to be Hidden—Poor Success up to Date.

Santa Catalina is a little point of sand and rock rising out of the Caribbean Sea, ninety miles off the Mosquito Coast of Central America, and forming one of the little group known as the islands of San Andres and La Providencia. It is about a mile in circumference, and contains a network of caverns. Morgan was the most successful of the buccaniers that preyed upon the Spaniards in America, and his raid upon Panama in 1670-71 was his greatest enterprise. After settling the affairs of the expedition he was able to retire from business with a fortune, returned to England, and was knighted by King Charles II. Nothing accurate is known of the value of his plunder at Panama, but history says that it included about everything of value on the Isthmus at the time when the wealth of Peru flowed through Panama on its way to Spain. According to the legend, one ship load of it was lost by Morgan. It seems that he was in the habit of increasing his own share of the spoils taken in his various raids by clearing his companions in the division. On the occasion of the sack of Panama, the story goes, the crew of one vessel took the precaution of running away with the treasure with which it was laden in order to prevent Morgan from indulging in the practice referred to. Morgan captured them subsequently, but not until they had disposed of their spoils, and they died under torture rather than reveal the hiding place. For a couple of centuries legendary stories have been current that the treasure was buried on Santa Catalina. Additional facts have been supplied with the lapse of time until now so small a detail as the exact number of dead pirates buried with the treasure is stated.

Two men are reputed to have found treasure on Santa Catalina in the last twenty years. One may be dismissed briefly. He is described as Alexander Archibald of Old Providence, an island of the same group, and he is said to have discovered a jar containing \$15,000 while digging a well. The story has simply never been verified, nor has the existence of Mr. Archibald been demonstrated.

There is a good deal more to be said about the other man, John Currie, trader of Kingston, Jamaica. He at least accomplished the feat of making intelligent men of the world believe in his discovery. He first brought himself into notice at Kingston by getting up an expedition to go after the treasure. This was his story: He landed upon the island from a Spanish vessel one day in search of wood and water. While there he came across an iguana and chased it. The animal ran into a hole. He put his hand into the hole, felt some masonry, and discovered the walled-up entrance to a cavern. Making his way in, this was the glorious thing he beheld: Nine earthen jars as tall as a man, filled to the brim with Spanish doubloons; cases filled with jewels, and goldware and silverware strewn about. Wishing to conceal the existence of the treasure from the Spaniards on the vessel, he contented himself with taking about \$10,000 in gold and some jewelry. Then he replaced the masonry and sailed away. Whatever may have been his motives in organizing this first expedition, it was not successful, and he does not appear to have derived any pecuniary profit from it. His version of the failure was that an enterprising American learned of the expedition in Kingston, aroused the natives of the neighboring islands against him because he refused to consent to a division of the treasure, and had him sent as a prisoner to Colon. At Colon he certainly did arrive as a prisoner. It is alleged that the authorities there tried to make him disclose his secret. In other days he might have been tortured. As it was the British Consul, Mr. Compton, interfered, secured Currie's release, and there by brought about his own ruin.

Currie went back to Kingston, and there the late Earl of Londale came upon the scene. In the winter of 1879-80, while cruising in his yacht in the West Indies, he heard about Currie, looked him up, and got him to tell about the discovery. Currie exhibited as proofs that his story was true some ancient Spanish doubloons and some very curious ornaments set with diamonds in an antique fashion. The Earl was soon convinced, and an agreement was entered into between the two by which Londale was to contribute his yacht for the purpose of an expedition and Currie was to disclose the opening to the cavern. At the last moment Currie brought the projected expedition to a standstill by disappearing.

A tragedy followed this fiasco. Currie had exhibited his Spanish doubloons and diamond ornaments to Mr. Compton, the British Consul at Colon, who had secured his release from prison. Mr. Compton, like others, was finally convinced of the truth of the story and risked his whole fortune in a new expedition in search of the treasure at Santa Catalina. To guard against renewed interference on the part of the natives, Mr. Compton secured through the influence of his friends, the services of a British man-of-war to act as convoy.

Currie could not avoid accompanying this expedition, but, like the others, it was a failure. After reaching the island Currie announced that he had decided to refuse to show where the treasure was hidden, because he was afraid that in the division he would not receive his right share. Threats and promises alike proved useless to make him alter his determination. His refusal to lead the way to the cavern seems incomprehensible upon any hypothesis save the one that he had no secret to reveal; but even that theory is not altogether satisfactory, for he does not seem to have benefited in any way from the expedition. As to his fear of unfair treatment, the presence of the officers and crew of a naval vessel, and his ability to appeal later to courts of justice ought to have been sufficient guarantees that right would be done him. But he persisted in his refusal to show where the treasure lay. After this the crew of the man-of-war searched the little island industriously for three weeks and explored every nook and cranny without coming across a vestige of a pirate or a treasure. Then they sailed away, and Mr. Compton blew out his brains in despair.

Three years later Santa Catalina turned up in a new cast and was the object of an expedition sent out from New York in search of a treasure that came from another source. One ex-Judge A. J. Davidson of San Francisco was sailing around the world some years before. In an Australian port he received on board an aged sailor stricken with consumption and penniless who longed to be taken home to die in his native land. So Mr. Davidson accommodated him. Like Mr. Davidson, the sailor was a mason, which was an additional tie between them. Grateful to Mr. Davidson for the kindness shown to him, the sailor told his secret and died. In his youth, on a cruise from Demerara to Newburyport, his brig was captured by a pirate who massacred all the crew but him. He served on board the pirate ship several years. One day the pirate was attacked by a British man-of-war, and escaped. The pirate that he had undergone in the encounter decided the pirate Captain to bury the booty he had on board on a desert island. Thirty-six kegs of Spanish doubloons, the fruit of bloodshed and rapine, were accordingly placed in a pit in the sand, under a layer of conch shells, and the bodies of two dead pirates were laid on top. Then the pirates sailed away from the desert island, tell in with the man-of-war again, and was destroyed. The crew perished fighting, with the exception of Mr. Davidson's sailor. His explanation of his presence upon the pirate vessel was deemed satisfactory, and he was set at liberty. It is to be observed that the sailor's age would make his pirate one of the South American privateers referred to.

Mr. Davidson did nothing about the treasure until he had first lost his fortune in speculation. Then he went to look it up. His desert island was Santa Catalina, although the treasure he sought was not Sir Henry Morgan's. Proceeding part of the way by steamer and part alone in a sailboat, Mr. Davidson went to the island with the chart the dead sailor had given him to locate the treasure and dug up the sand until he came to the two dead pirates lying on the layer of conch shells. Then the sea water flowed into the holes so rapidly that he could not get down to the thirty-six kegs of doubloons. The dead pirates and the conch shells satisfied him of the good faith of his sailor friend, and so he went to New York and organized a syndicate to provide a coffin and to keep out the sea water. He does not seem to have had much difficulty in getting his syndicate together. Among the members were several men more or less well known in one way or another. They subscribed \$10,000, which was not very much, seeing that Dr. Davidson estimated the thirty-six kegs of doubloons at \$1,000,000. The steam yacht Maria was chartered for the trip to Santa Catalina, and Capt. John B. Peck, a special agent of the United States Treasury, who was interested in the enterprise, got leave of absence to command the expedition. His days of glory were short. On the way to Santa Catalina the syndicate was riven by a quarrel, the cause of which was the old difficulty of treasure seekers—mutual distrust. At Kingston, Mr. Davidson and some of the others quit the Maria, taking the dead sailor's chart with them. Capt. Peck thought he could find the treasure any how, chart or no chart, and spent three weeks at Santa Catalina working that theory out. When he had reached the end of it he cruised about the Caribbean Sea in pursuit of other will-o'-the-wisps until his adventures were brought to a close for the time being by the foundering of the Maria. So far as is known, the thirty-six kegs of Spanish doubloons have not been removed yet from Santa Catalina. Anybody wishing to continue the search can doubtless make an arrangement with Mr. Davidson to advance money for an expedition, although the sole right to hunt for treasure on Santa Catalina is now claimed by a company holding a concession from Honduras.

The N. Y. Sun reprinted a story from the San Francisco Chronicle the other day which told about a rumor at Panama that somebody had found \$1,000,000 in Spanish gold and silver upon Cocos Island. This island is made the bank of deposit of pirates of this century by the legend of the hidden treasure. It is in the Pacific, some 400 miles from Panama, fertile, stocked with goats, and generally uninhabited otherwise. Some exact details are given of its treasure. There are 175 tons of silver dollars, \$15,000,000 of gold bricks (genuine gold bricks, not a kind sold to countrymen), a collection of gold-hilted and jeweled swords, and bushels of diamonds, rubies and emeralds. So that the Panama people, if they really found anything, have reason to be surprised by their own moderation. The accounts of how the treasure got to the island are mixed. One story says that "Dampier and other pirates" did it. Poor Dampier! he was unlucky all his life, was tolerably honest, though he helped occasionally in an attack upon a Spanish ship, and lived and died poor. A second ascribes it to "the pirate brig R-lampago," in 1822. This would have been contemporary with the pirate ship of Mr. Davidson's friend, and the possibility that the two vessels may have been the same is strengthened by the fact that a similar story is told of the destruction of the R-lampago after the burial of the treasure and the survival of only one

sailor. A third account gives the credit of the treasure to a privateer and slave ship named the Lark. As told by Charles Henderson of Weuseon, O., the events occurred "before the war." Had his knowledge of history been greater he would probably have fixed them earlier in the century. His story includes the usual combat with a man-of-war, only this time it is a ship of the United States Navy and not a British cruiser. In trying to escape the Lark was run upon a rock and sank, and only eight men escaped in a boat. The captain had \$72,000 in gold on board the ship, and this he took with him and buried in a cave on an island supposed to be Cocos. While on the island all the survivors except himself died. He has been trying to get people to take him to the island to get the money ever since, but in vain. Doubtless before he dies he will confide the secret of the treasure cave to some one who has befriended him, and thus the resemblance between his story and the others will be complete. A fourth account was started for the purpose of an inquiry into the nature of the treasure legend. It embraces the treasure plunder taken from coast cities of Peru by the English schooner Mary Deer, during the civil disturbances and revolutions about 1810. A couple of years ago, Mrs. Richard Young, wife of a Boston shipbuilder, told the story to the newspapers about as follows:

"My father was John Keating, a native of St. John's N. F., and one of the crew of the Mary Deer. After burying the treasure the schooner was captured by a Peruvian man-of-war and all the crew but two were shot. The survivors were my father and William Thompson, who jumped overboard and was picked up by an American whaler. For three years they cruised for whales. Then they went to England and secured a vessel, the Edgecomb, Capt. Boag, and went to Cocos Island and got some of the treasure. Returning they were shipwrecked near Panama, and Capt. Boag was eaten by a shark. Then Thompson died of fever, leaving my father sole survivor. My father reached Newfoundland with \$7,500 in gold. Merchants of Newfoundland built a vessel, the Gauntlet, and he sailed again for Cocos Island. Putting in at Panama, he was recognized by the authorities and arrested, and he would have been executed but for the intervention of the British Consul. Then he gave up and returned home. On his deathbed he gave my husband a chart and directions for finding the place of burial of the gold. Mr. Young went to the island and found it inhabited by fifty-five Spanish convicts and he cared nothing. Mrs. Eliza Knight, a wealthy resident of Brooklyn, bought charts and papers of the widow of Mr. Keating, but we have the only correct ones."

The points about this narrative to be noted are: First, the inevitable fight of the pirate schooner with a man-of-war, a Peruvian this time, and the survival of one man eventually. Second, the first expedition to Cocos and the finding of a little treasure, which sounds like Currie's only successful visit to Santa Catalina. Third, the arrest of Keating at Panama and his liberation through the intervention of the British Consul, which is Currie's experience again. Fourth, Keating's act in delivering the chart to Young on his deathbed suggests Mr. Davidson's sailor. Perhaps the police might be most interested in the mention of that "wealthy resident of Brooklyn, Mrs. E. Eliza Knight." In his book on the "Professional Criminals of America," ex-Chief Brynner devotes much space to another resident of Brooklyn, Mrs. E. E. Peck, whom he describes as one of the most successful and ingenious of swindlers among women. One of Mrs. Peck's aliases is given as "Mrs. Eliza Knight."

The manner in which the treasure got to Cocos having thus been clearly set forth, a little may be said of the attempts to find it. Its reputation as a treasure island has long been spread on the Pacific coast, and the people out there are hustlers. So the island has been thoroughly ransacked. The search has been so thorough that it would seem as if the only thing remaining to do were to adopt the proposition of one treasure hunter and subject the island to the process of hydraulic mining, until the island was either washed away completely or the treasure was found. In 1892 an expedition, in which an ex-mayor of Santa Barbara and others of like standing took part, spent four months digging and exploring on Cocos, but without result. The following year other enthusiasts chartered the steamer Acapulco, loaded her with excavating machinery, and spent weeks trying to dig up the treasure. These two expeditions are mentioned to show that the search has not been superficial, and that had there been any treasure it would probably have been found.—N. Y. Sun.

Huxley on a Liberal Education.

"That man has a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that, as a mechanism, it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold logic engine, with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth working order, ready, like a steam engine, to be turned by any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of nature and of the laws of his operations; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to halt by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience; who has learned to love all beauty, whether of

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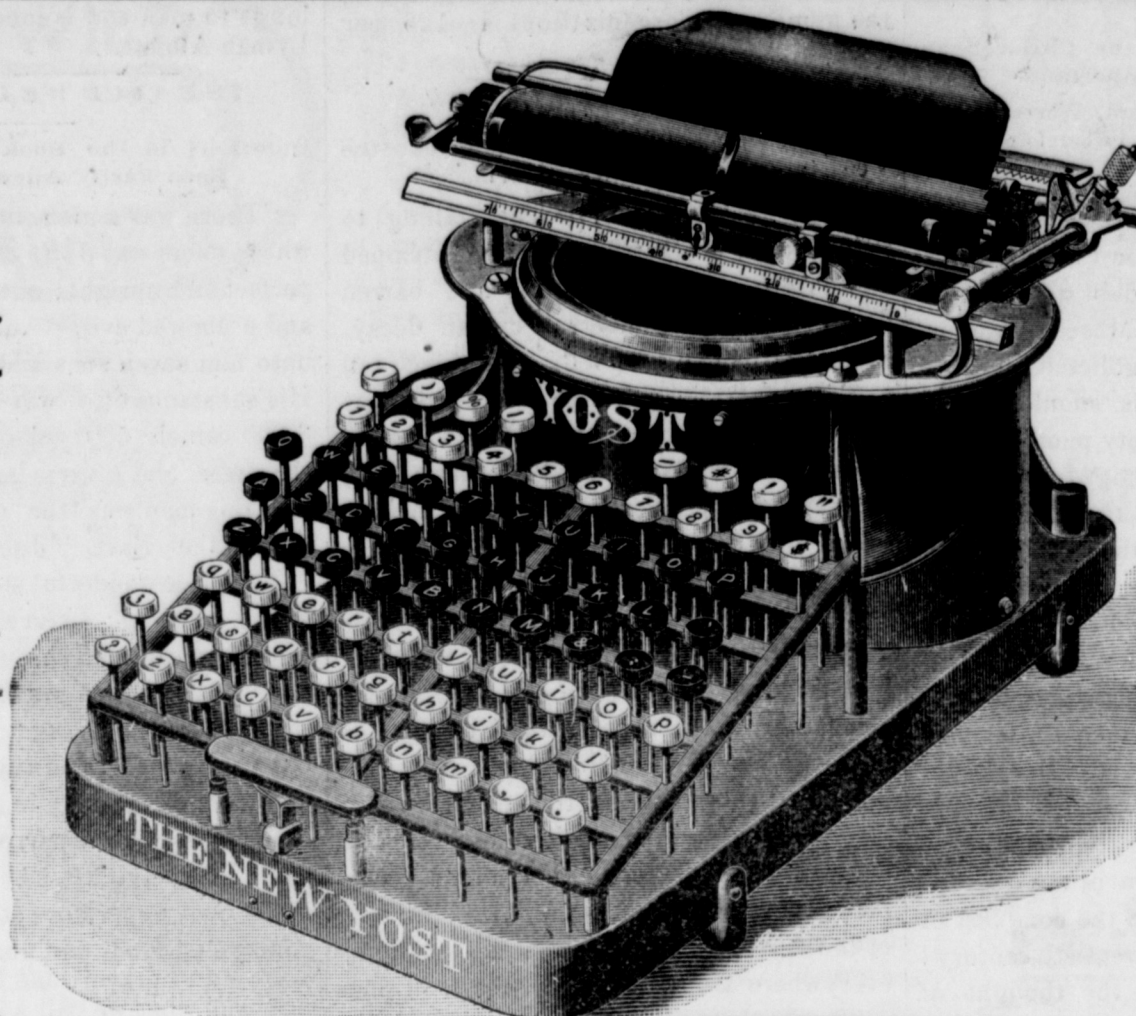
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That was an interesting idea of an interesting Western business firm which advertised not long ago that it would give a silk dress to the woman making the most logical and acceptable answer to the question: What is the most necessary article used in woman's dress? The prize was awarded to Miss Emma Belford, of Birmingham, Conn. With the gown Miss Belford received a letter in which the firm declared that her answer was the most acceptable and the only one of the kind received. Just two words covered it: "A pin."

## His Great Luck.

Nelson—Well, I'm the luckiest chap in the world. Stanley—How so? Nelson—It appears that Madge broke with me about the same time she did with Jack Boodles, and now she's sent me back his presents instead of my own.

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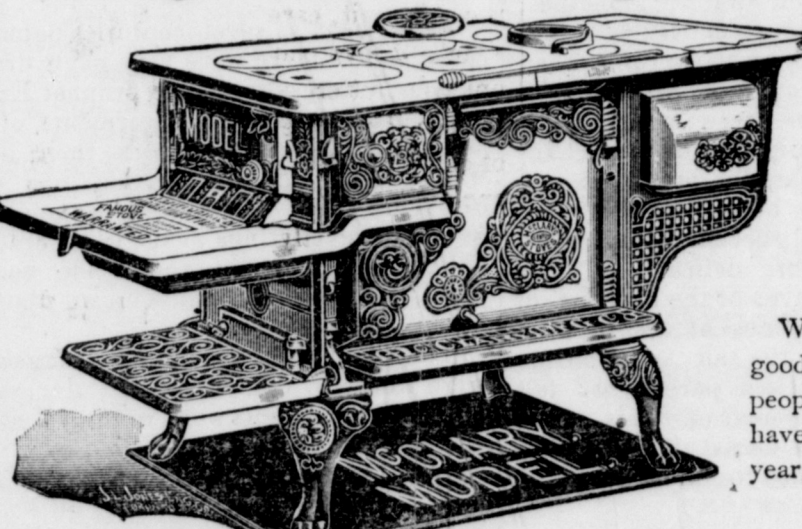
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