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**THE BOOK  
OF BURIED  
TREASURE**

**RALPH  
D. PAINE**



# ***THE BOOK OF BURIED TREASURE***

**Ralph D. Paine**

# **The Book of Buried Treasure**

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H.M.S. *Lutine* leaving Yarmouth Roads, Oct. 9, 1799, on her last voyage. (*From the painting by Frank Mason, R.A., in the Committee Room of Lloyd's, London.*)  
See Chapter XI.

## THE BOOK OF BURIED TREASURE

Of all the lives I ever say,  
A Pirate's be for I.  
Hap what hap may he's allus gay  
An' drinks an' bungs his eye.  
For his work he's never loth:  
An' a-pleasurin' he'll go;  
Tho' certain sure to be popt off,  
Yo, ho, with the rum below!

In Bristowe I left Poll ashore,  
Well stored wi' togs an' gold,  
An' off I goes to sea for more,  
A-piratin' so bold.  
An' wounded in the arm I got,  
An' then a pretty blow;  
Comed home I find Poll's flowed away,  
Yo, ho, with the rum below!

An' when my precious leg was lopt,  
Just for a bit of fun,  
I picks it up, on t'other hopt,  
An' rammed it in a gun.  
"What's that for?" cries out Salem Dick;  
"What for, my jumpin' beau?  
"Why, to give the lubbers one more kick!"  
Yo, ho, with the rum below!

I 'llows this crazy hull o' mine  
At sea has had its share:

Marooned three times an' wounded nine  
An' blowed up in the air.  
But ere to Execution Bay  
The wind these bones do blow,  
I'll drink an' fight what's left away,  
Yo, ho, with the rum below!

—*An Old English Ballad.*



Chapter I.

# **The World-Wide Hunt for Vanished Riches**

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The language has no more boldly romantic words than *pirate* and *galleon* and the dullest imagination is apt to be kindled by any plausible dream of finding their lost treasures hidden on lonely beach or tropic key, or sunk fathoms deep in salt water. In the preface of that rare and exceedingly diverting volume, "The Pirates' Own Book," the unnamed author sums up the matter with so much gusto and with so gorgeously appetizing a flavor that he is worth quoting to this extent:

"With the name of pirate is also associated ideas of rich plunder, caskets of buried jewels, chests of gold ingots, bags of outlandish coins, secreted in lonely, out of the way places, or buried about the wild shores of rivers and unexplored sea coasts, near rocks and trees bearing mysterious marks indicating where the treasure was hid. And as it is his invariable practice to secrete and bury his booty, and from the perilous life he leads, being often killed or captured, he can never revisit the spot again, therefore immense sums remain buried in those places and are irrevocably lost. Search is often made by persons who labor in anticipation of throwing up with their spade and pickaxe, gold bars, diamond crosses sparkling amongst the dirt, bags of golden doubloons and chests wedged close with moldores, ducats and pearls; but although great treasures lie hid in this way, it seldom happens that any is recovered."<sup>1</sup>

In this tamed, prosaic age of ours, treasure-seeking might seem to be the peculiar province of fiction, but the fact is that expeditions are fitting out every little while, and mysterious schooners flitting from many ports, lured by grimy, tattered charts presumed to show where the hoards were hidden, or steering their courses by nothing more tangible than legend and surmise. As the Kidd tradition survives along the Atlantic coast, so on divers shores of other seas persist the same kind of wild tales, the more convincing of which are strikingly alike in that the lone survivor of the red-handed crew, having somehow escaped the hanging, shooting, or drowning that he handsomely merited, preserved a chart showing where the treasure had been hid. Unable to return to the place, he gave the parchment to some friend or shipmate, this dramatic transfer usually happening as a death-bed ceremony. The recipient, after digging in vain and heartily damning the departed pirate for his misleading landmarks and bearings, handed the chart down to the next generation.

It will be readily perceived that this is the stock motive of almost all buried treasure fiction, the trademark of a certain brand of adventure story, but it is really more entertaining to know that such charts and records exist and are made use of by the expeditions of the present day. Opportunity knocks at the door. He who would gamble in shares of such a speculation may find sun-burned, tarry gentlemen, from Seattle to Singapore, and from Capetown to New Zealand, eager to whisper curious information of charts and sailing directions, and to make sail and away.

Some of them are still seeking booty lost on Cocos Island off the coast of Costa Rica where a dozen expeditions have futilely sweated and dug; others have cast anchor in harbors of Guam and the Carolines; while as you run from Aden to

Vladivostock, sailormen are never done with spinning yarns of treasure buried by the pirates of the Indian Ocean and the China Sea. Out from Callao the treasure hunters fare to Clipperton Island, or the Gallapagos group where the buccaneers with Dampier and Davis used to careen their ships, and from Valparaiso many an expedition has found its way to Juan Fernandez and Magellan Straits. The topsails of these salty argonauts have been sighted in recent years off the Salvages to the southward of Madeira where two millions of Spanish gold were buried in chests, and pick and shovel have been busy on rocky Trinidad in the South Atlantic which conceals vast stores of plate and jewels left there by pirates who looted the galleons of Lima.

Near Cape Vidal, on the coast of Zululand, lies the wreck of the notorious sailing vessel *Dorothea*, in whose hold is treasure to the amount of two million dollars in gold bars concealed beneath a flooring of cement. It was believed for some time that the ill-fated *Dorothea* was fleeing with the fortune of Oom Paul Kruger on board when she was cast ashore. The evidence goes to show, however, that certain officials of the Transvaal Government, before the Boer War, issued permits to several lawless adventurers, allowing them to engage in buying stolen gold from the mines. This illicit traffic flourished largely, and so successful was this particular combination that a ship was bought, the *Ernestine*, and after being overhauled and renamed the *Dorothea*, she secretly shipped the treasure on board in Delagoa Bay.

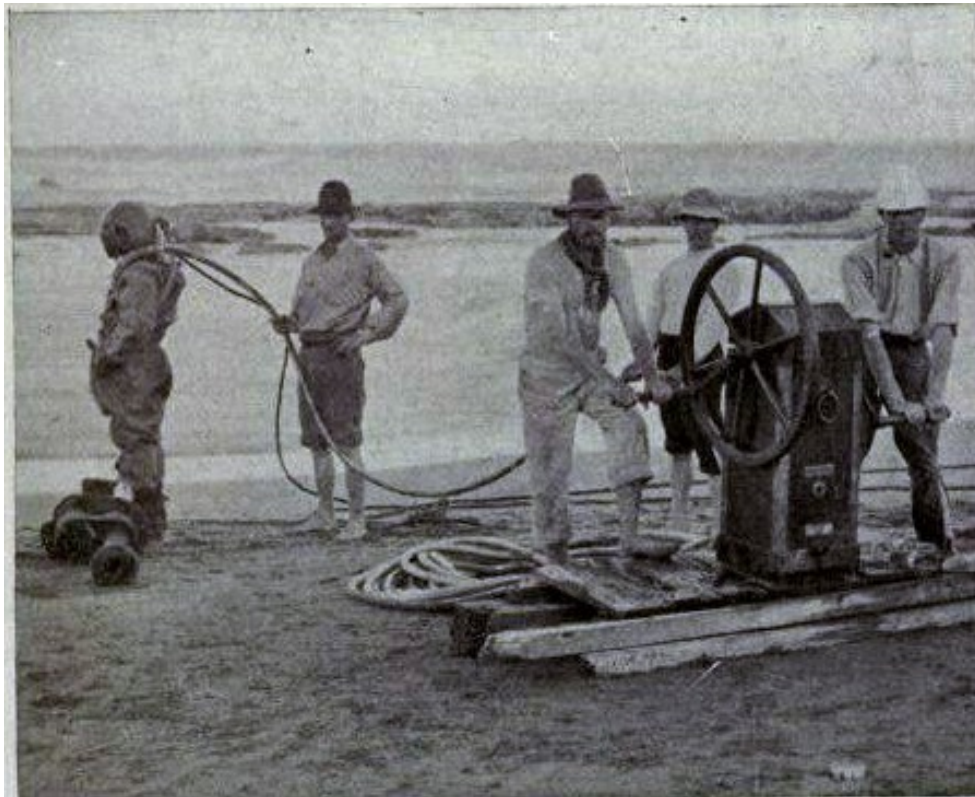
It was only the other day that a party of restless young Americans sailed in the old racing yacht *Mayflower* bound out to seek the wreck of a treasure galleon on the coast of Jamaica. Their vessel was dismasted and abandoned at sea, and they had all the adventure they yearned for. One of

them, Roger Derby of Boston, of a family famed for its deep-water mariners in the olden times, ingenuously confessed some time later, and here you have the spirit of the true treasure-seeker:

"I am afraid that there is no information accessible in documentary or printed form of the wreck that we investigated a year ago. Most of it is hearsay, and when we went down there on a second trip after losing the *Mayflower*, we found little to prove that a galleon had been lost, barring some old cannon, flint rock ballast, and square iron bolts. We found absolutely no gold."



Treasure-seekers' Camp at Cape Vidal on African coast.



Divers searching wreck of Treasure ship Dorothea, Cape Vidal, Africa.

The coast of Madagascar, once haunted by free-booters who plundered the rich East Indiamen, is still ransacked by treasure seekers, and American soldiers in the Philippines indefatigably excavate the landscape of Luzon in the hope of finding the hoard of Spanish gold buried by the Chinese mandarin Chan Lu Suey in the eighteenth century. Every island of the West Indies and port of the Spanish Main abounds in legends of the mighty sea rogues whose hard fate it was to be laid by the heels before they could squander the gold that had been won with cutlass, boarding pike and carronade.

The spirit of true adventure lives in the soul of the treasure hunter. The odds may be a thousand to one that he will unearth a solitary doubloon, yet he is lured to undertake the most prodigious exertions by the keen zest of the game



itself. The English novelist, George R. Sims, once expressed this state of mind very exactly. "Respectable citizens, tired of the melancholy sameness of a drab existence, cannot take to crape masks, dark lanterns, silent matches, and rope ladders, but they can all be off to a pirate island and search for treasure and return laden or empty without a stain upon their characters. I know a fine old pirate who sings a good song and has treasure islands at his fingers' ends. I think I can get together a band of adventurers, middle-aged men of established reputation in whom the public would have confidence, who would be only too glad to enjoy a year's romance."

Robert Louis Stevenson who dearly loved a pirate and wrote the finest treasure story of them all around a proper chart of his own devising, took Henry James to task for confessing that although he had been a child he had never been on a quest for buried treasure. "Here is indeed a willful paradox," exclaimed the author of "Treasure Island," "for if he has never been on a quest for buried treasure, it can be demonstrated that he has never been a child. There never was a child (unless Master James), but has hunted gold, and been a pirate, and a military commander, and a bandit of the mountains; but has fought, and suffered shipwreck and prison, and imbrued its little hands in gore, and gallantly retrieved the lost battle, and triumphantly protected innocence and beauty."

Mark Twain also indicated the singular isolation of Henry James by expressing precisely the same opinion in his immortal chronicle of the adventures of Tom Sawyer. "There comes a time in every rightly constructed boy's life when he has a raging desire to go somewhere and dig for buried treasure." And what an entrancing career Tom had planned for himself in an earlier chapter! "At the zenith of his fame,

how he would suddenly appear at the old village and stalk into church, brown and weather-beaten, in his black velvet doublet and trunks, his great jack-boots, his crimson sash, his belt bristling with horse-pistols, his crime-rusted cutlass at his side, his slouch hat with waving plumes, his black flag unfurled, with the skull and cross-bones on it, and hear with swelling ecstasy the whisperings, 'It's Tom Sawyer the Pirate!—The Black Avenger of the Spanish Main.'"

When Tom and Huck Finn went treasure seeking they observed the time-honored rules of the game, as the following dialogue will recall to mind:

"Where'll we dig?" said Huck.

"Oh, most anywhere."

"Why, is it hid all around?"

"No, indeed it ain't. It's hid in mighty particular places, Huck, sometimes on islands, sometimes in rotten chests under the limb of an old dead tree, just where the shadow falls at midnight; but mostly under the floor in ha'nted houses."

"Who hides it?"

"Why, robbers, of course. Who'd you reckon, Sunday-school superintendents?"

"I don't know. If 'twas mine I wouldn't hide it; I'd spend it and have a good time."

"So would I. But robbers don't do that way. They always hide it and leave it there."

"Don't they come after it any more!"

"No, they think they will, but they generally forget the marks or else they die. Anyway, it lays there a long time and gets rusty; and by and by somebody finds an old yellow paper that tells how to find the marks,—a paper that's got to be ciphered over about a week because it's mostly signs and hy'roglyphics."

Hunting lost treasure is not work but a fascinating kind of play that belongs to the world of make believe. It appeals to that strain of boyishness which survives in the average man even though his pow be frosted, his reputation starched and conservative. It is, after all, an inherited taste handed down from the golden age of fairies. The folk-lore of almost every race is rich in buried treasure stories. The pirate with his stout sea chest hidden above high-water mark is lineally descended from the enchanting characters who lived in the shadow land of myth and fable. The hoard of Captain Kidd, although he was turned off at Execution Dock only two hundred years ago, has become as legendary as the dream of the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

Many a hard-headed farmer and fisherman of the New England coast believes that it is rash business to go digging for Kidd's treasure unless one carefully performs certain incantations designed to placate the ghostly guardian who aforetime sailed with Kidd and was slain by him after the hole was dug lest the secret might thus be revealed. And it is of course well known that if a word is spoken after the pick has clinked against the iron-bound chest or metal pot, the devil flies away with the treasure, leaving behind him only panic and a strong smell of brimstone.

Such curious superstitions as these, strongly surviving wherever pirate gold is sought, have been the common property of buried-treasure stories in all ages. The country-folk of Japan will tell you that if a pot of money is found a rice cake must be left in place of every coin taken away, and imitation money burned as an offering to any spirit that may be offended by the removal of the hoard. The negroes of the West Indies explain that the buried wealth of the buccaneers is seldom found because the spirits that watch over it have a habit of whisking the treasure away to parts unknown as

soon as ever the hiding-place is disturbed. Among the Bedouins is current the legend that immense treasures were concealed by Solomon beneath the foundations of Palmyra and that sapient monarch took the precaution of enlisting an army of jinns to guard the gold forever more.

In parts of Bohemia the peasants are convinced that a blue light hovers above the location of buried treasure, invisible to all mortal eyes save those of the person destined to find it. In many corners of the world there has long existed the belief in the occult efficacy of a black cock or a black cat in the equipment of a treasure quest which is also influenced by the particular phases of the moon. A letter written from Bombay as long ago as 1707, contained a quaint account of an incident inspired by this particular superstition.

"Upon a dream of a Negro girl of Mahim that there was a Mine of Treasure, who being overheard relating it, Domo, Alvares, and some others went to the place and sacrificed a Cock and dugg the ground but found nothing. They go to Bundarra at Salsett, where disagreeing, the Government there takes notice of the same, and one of them, an inhabitant of Bombay, is sent to the Inquisition at Goa, which proceedings will discourage the Inhabitants. Wherefore the General is desired to issue a proclamation to release him, and if not restored in twenty days, no Roman Catholick Worship to be allowed on the Island."

A more recent chronicler, writing in *The Ceylon Times*, had this to say:

"It is the belief of all Orientals that hidden treasures are under the guardianship of supernatural beings. The Cingalese divide the charge between the demons and the cobra da capello (guardian of the king's ankus in Kipling's story). Various charms are resorted to by those who wish to

gain the treasure because the demons require a sacrifice. The blood of a human being is the most important, but so far as is known, the Cappowas have hitherto confined themselves to the sacrifice of a white cock, combining its blood with their own drawn from the hand or foot."

No more fantastic than this are the legends of which the British Isles yield a plentiful harvest. Thomas of Walsingham tells the tale of a Saracen physician who betook himself to Earl Warren of the fourteenth century to ask courteous permission that he might slay a dragon, or "loathly worm" which had its den at Bromfield near Ludlow and had wrought sad ravages on the Earl's lands. The Saracen overcame the monster, whether by means of his medicine chest or his trusty steel the narrator sayeth not, and then it was learned that a great hoard of gold was hidden in its foul den. Some men of Herefordshire sallied forth by night to search for the treasure, and were about to lay hands on it when retainers of the Earl of Warwick captured them and took the booty to their lord.

Blenkinsopp Castle is haunted by a very sorrowful White Lady. Her husband, Bryan de Blenkinsopp, was uncommonly greedy of gold, which he loved better than his wife, and she, being very jealous and angry, was mad enough to hide from him a chest of treasure so heavy that twelve strong men were needed to lift it. Later she was overtaken by remorse because of this undutiful behavior and to this day her uneasy ghost flits about the castle, supposedly seeking the spirit of Bryan de Blenkinsopp in order that she may tell him what she did with his pelf.

When Corfe Castle in Dorsetshire was besieged by Cromwell's troops, Lady Bankes conducted a heroic defense. Betrayed by one of her own garrison, and despairing of holding out longer, she threw all the plate and jewels into a



very deep well in the castle yard, and pronounced a curse against anyone who should try to find it ere she returned. She then ordered the traitor to be hanged, and surrendered the place. The treasure was never found, and perhaps later owners have been afraid of the militant ghost of Lady Banks.

From time immemorial, tradition had it that a great treasure was buried near the Kibble in Lancashire. A saying had been handed down that anyone standing on the hill at Walton-le-Dale and looking up the valley toward the site of ancient Richester would gaze over the greatest treasure that England had ever known. Digging was undertaken at intervals during several centuries, until in 1841 laborers accidentally excavated a mass of silver ornaments, armlets, neck-chains, amulets and rings, weighing together about a thousand ounces, and more than seven thousand silver coins, mostly of King Alfred's time, all enclosed in a leaden case only three feet beneath the surface of the ground. Many of these ornaments and coins are to be seen at the British Museum.

On a farm in the Scotch parish of Lesmahagow is a boulder beneath which is what local tradition calls "a kettle full, a boat full, and a bull's hide full of gold that is Katie Nevin's hoord." And for ages past 'tis well known that a pot of gold has lain at the bottom of a pool at the tail of a waterfall under Crawfordland Bridge, three miles from Kilmarnock. The last attempt to fish it up was made by one of the lairds of the place who diverted the stream and emptied the pool, and the implements of the workmen actually rang against the precious kettle when a mysterious voice was heard to cry:

"Paw! Paw! Crawfordland's tower's in a law."

The laird and his servants scampered home to find out whether the tower had been "laid law," but the alarm was only a stratagem of the spirit that did sentry duty over the treasure. When the party returned to the pool, it was filled to the brim and the water was "running o'er the linn," which was an uncanny thing to see, and the laird would have nothing more to do with treasure seeking.

The people of Glenary in the Highlands long swore by the legend that golden treasure was hidden in their valley and that it would not be found until sought for by the son of a stranger. At length, while a newly drained field was being plowed, a large rock was shattered by blasting, and under it were found many solid gold bracelets of antique pattern and cunningly ornamented. The old people knew that the prophecy had come true, for the youth who held the plow was the son of an Englishman, a rare being in those parts a few generations ago.

Everyone knows that Ireland is fairly peppered with "crocks o' goold" which the peasantry would have dug up long before this, but the treasure is invariably in the keeping of "the little black men" and they raise the divil and all with the bold intruder, and lucky he is if he is not snatched away, body, soul, and breeches. Many a fine lad has left home just before midnight with a mattock under his arm, and maybe there was a terrible clap of thunder and that was the last of him except the empty hole and the mattock beside it which his friends found next morning.

In France treasure seeking has been at times a popular madness. The traditions of the country are singularly alluring, and perhaps the most romantic of them is that of the "Great Treasure of Gourdon" which is said to have existed since the reign of Clovis in the sixth century. The chronicle of all the wealth buried in the cemetery of this

convent at Gourdon in the Department of the Lot has been preserved, including detailed lists of gold and silver, rubies, emeralds and pearls. The convent was sacked and plundered by the Normans, and the treasurer, or custodian, who had buried all the valuables of the religious houses under the sway of the same abbot, was murdered while trying to escape to the feudal seignor of Gourdon with the crosier of the lord abbott. "The head of the crosier was of solid gold," says an ancient manuscript, "and the rubies with which it was studded of such wondrous size that at one single blow the soldier who tore it from the monk's grasp and used it as a weapon against him, beat in his brains as with a sledge-hammer."

Not only through the Middle Ages was the search resumed from time to time, but from the latter days of the reign of Louis XIV until the Revolution, tradition relates that the cemetery of the convent was ransacked at frequent intervals. At length, in 1842, the quest was abandoned after antiquarians, geologists, and engineers had gravely agreed that further excavation would be futile. The French treasure seekers went elsewhere and then a peasant girl confused the savants by discovering what was undeniably a part of the lost riches of Gourdon. She was driving home the cows from a pasture of the abbey lands when a shower caused her to take shelter in a hollow scooped out of a sand-bank by laborers mending the road. Some of the earth caved in upon her and while she was freeing herself, down rolled a salver, a paten, and a flagon, all of pure gold, richly chased and studded with emeralds and rubies. These articles were taken to Paris and advertised for sale by auction, the Government bidding them in and placing them in the museum of the Bibliotheque.

During the reign of Napoleon III there died a very famous treasure seeker, one Ducasse, who believed that he was about to discover "the master treasure" (*le maitre tresor*) said to be among the ruins of the ancient Belgian Abbey of Orval. Ducasse was a builder by trade and had gained a large fortune in government contracts every sou of which he wasted in exploring at Orval. It was alleged that the treasure had been buried by the monks and that the word NEMO carved on the tomb of the last abbott held the key to the location of the hiding-place.

In Mexico one hears similar tales of vast riches buried by religious orders when menaced by war or expulsion. One of these is to be found in the south-western part of the state of Chihuahua where a great gorge is cut by the Rio Verde. In this remote valley are the ruins of a church built by the Jesuits, and when they were about to be driven from their settlement they sealed up and destroyed all traces of a fabulously rich mine in which was buried millions of bullion. Instead of the more or less stereotyped ghosts familiar as sentinels over buried treasure, these lost hoards of Mexico are haunted by a specter even more disquieting than phantom pirates or "little black men." It is "The Weeping Woman" who makes strong men cross themselves and shiver in their serapes, and many have heard or seen her. A member of a party seeking buried treasure in the heart of the Sierra Madre mountains solemnly affirmed as follows:

"We were to measure, at night, a certain distance from a cliff which was to be found by the relative positions of three tall trees. It was on a bleak tableland nine thousand feet above the sea. The wind chilled us to the marrow, although we were only a little to the north of the Tropic of Cancer. We rode all night and waited for the dawn in the darkest and coldest hours of those altitudes. By the light of pitch pine

torches we consulted a map and decided that we had found the right place. We rode forward a little and brushed against three soft warm things. Turning in our saddles, by the flare of our torches held high above our heads we beheld three corpses swaying in the wind. A wailing cry of a woman's voice came from close at hand, and we fled as if pursued by a thousand demons. My comrades assured me that the Weeping Woman had brushed past us in her eternal flight."

This is a singular narrative but it would not be playing fair to doubt it. To be over-critical of buried treasure stories is to clip the wings of romance and to condemn the spirit of adventure to a pedestrian gait. All these tales are true, or men of sane and sober repute would not go a-treasure hunting by land and sea, and so long as they have a high-hearted, boyish faith in their mysterious charts and hazy information, doubters make a poor show of themselves and stand confessed as thin-blooded dullards who never were young. Scattered legends of many climes have been mentioned at random to show that treasure is everywhere enveloped in a glamour peculiarly its own. The base iconoclast may perhaps demolish Santa Claus (which God forbid), but industrious dreamers will be digging for the gold of Captain Kidd, long after the last Christmas stocking shall have been pinned above the fireplace.

There are no conscious liars among the tellers of treasure tales. The spell is upon them. They believe their own yarns, and they prove their faith by their back-breaking works with pick and shovel. Here, for example, is a specimen, chosen at hazard, one from a thousand cut from the same cloth. This is no modern Ananias speaking but a gray-bearded, God-fearing clam-digger of Jewell's Island in Casco Bay on the coast of Maine.



"I can't remember when the treasure hunters first began coming to this island, but as long ago as my father's earliest memories they used to dig for gold up and down the shore. That was in the days when they were superstitious enough to spill lamb's blood along the ground where they dug in order to keep away the devil and his imps. I can remember fifty years ago when they brought a girl down here and mesmerized her to see if she could not lead them to the hidden wealth.

"The biggest mystery, though, of all the queer things that have happened here in the last hundred years was the arrival of the man from St. John's when I was a youngster. He claimed to have the very chart showing the exact spot where Kidd's gold was buried. He said he had got it from an old negro in St. John's who was with Captain Kidd when he was coasting the islands in this bay. He showed up here when old Captain Chase that lived here then was off to sea in his vessel. So he waited around a few days till the captain returned, for he wanted to use a mariner's compass to locate the spot according to the directions on the chart.

"When Captain Chase came ashore the two went off up the beach together, and the man from St. John's was never seen again, neither hide nor hair of him, and it is plumb certain that he wasn't set off in a boat from Jewell's.

"The folks here found a great hole dug on the southeast shore which looked as if a large chest had been lifted out of it. Of course conclusions were drawn, but nobody got at the truth. Four years ago someone found a skeleton in the woods, unburied, simply dropped into a crevice in the rocks with a few stones thrown over it. No one knows whose body it was, although some say,—but never mind about that. This old Captain Jonathan Chase was said to have been a pirate, and his house was full of underground passages and sliding

panels and queer contraptions, such as no honest, law-abiding man could have any use for."

The worthy Benjamin Franklin was an admirable guide for young men, a sound philosopher, and a sagacious statesman, but he cannot be credited with romantic imagination. He would have been the last person in the world to lead a buried treasure expedition or to find pleasure in the company of the most eminent and secretive pirate that ever scuttled a ship or made mysterious marks upon a well-thumbed chart plentifully spattered with candle-grease and rum. He even took pains to discourage the diverting industry of treasure seeking as it flourished among his Quaker neighbors and discharged this formidable broadside in the course of a series of essays known as "The Busy-Body Series":

"... There are among us great numbers of honest artificers and laboring people, who, fed with a vain hope of suddenly growing rich, neglect their business, almost to the ruining of themselves and families, and voluntarily endure abundance of fatigue in a fruitless search after imaginary hidden treasure. They wander through the woods and bushes by day to discover the marks and signs; at midnight they repair to the hopeful spots with spades and pickaxes; full of expectation, they labor violently, trembling at the same time in every joint through fear of certain malicious demons, who are said to haunt and guard such places.

"At length a mighty hole is dug, and perhaps several cart-loads of earth thrown out; but, alas, no keg or iron pot is found. No seaman's chest crammed with Spanish pistoles, or weighty pieces of eight! They conclude that, through some mistake in the procedure, some rash word spoken, or some rule of art neglected, the guardian spirit had power to sink it deeper into the earth, and convey it out of their

reach. Yet, when a man is once infatuated, he is so far from being discouraged by ill success that he is rather animated to double his industry, and will try again and again in a hundred different places in hopes of meeting at last with some lucky hit, that shall at once sufficiently reward him for all his expenses of time and labor.

"This odd humor of digging for money, through a belief that much has been hidden by pirates formerly frequenting the (Schuylkill) river, has for several years been mighty prevalent among us; insomuch that you can hardly walk half a mile out of the town on any side without observing several pits dug with that design, and perhaps some lately opened. Men otherwise of very good sense have been drawn into this practice through an overweening desire of sudden wealth, and an easy credulity of what they so earnestly wished might be true. There seems to be some peculiar charm in the conceit of finding money and if the sands of Schuylkill were so much mixed with small grains of gold that a man might in a day's time with care and application get together to the value of half a crown, I make no question but we should find several people employed there that can with ease earn five shillings a day at their proper trade.

"Many are the idle stories told of the private success of some people, by which others are encouraged to proceed; and the astrologers, with whom the country swarms at this time, are either in the belief of these things themselves, or find their advantage in persuading others to believe them; for they are often consulted about the critical times for digging, the methods of laying the spirit, and the like whimsies, which renders them very necessary to, and very much caressed by these poor, deluded money hunters.

"There is certainly something very bewitching in the pursuit after mines of gold and silver and other valuable

metals, and many have been ruined by it....

"Let honest Peter Buckram, who has long without success been a searcher after hidden money, reflect on this, and be reclaimed from that unaccountable folly. Let him consider that every stitch he takes when he is on his shopboard, is picking up part of a grain of gold that will in a few days' time amount to a pistole; and let Faber think the same of every nail he drives, or every stroke with his plane. Such thoughts may make them industrious, and, in consequence, in time they may be wealthy.

"But how absurd it is to neglect a certain profit for such a ridiculous whimsey; to spend whole days at the 'George' in company with an idle pretender to astrology, contriving schemes to discover what was never hidden, and forgetful how carelessly business is managed at home in their absence; to leave their wives and a warm bed at midnight (no matter if it rain, hail, snow, or blow a hurricane, provided that be the critical hour), and fatigue themselves with the violent digging for what they shall never find, and perhaps getting a cold that may cost their lives, or at least disordering themselves so as to be fit for no business beside for some days after. Surely this is nothing less than the most egregious folly and madness.

"I shall conclude with the words of the discreet friend Agricola of Chester County when he gave his son a good plantation. 'My son,' said he, 'I give thee now a valuable parcel of land; I assure thee I have found a considerable quantity of gold by digging there; thee mayest do the same; but thee must carefully observe this, *Never to dig more than plough-deep.*'"

For once the illustrious Franklin shot wide of the mark. These treasure hunters of Philadelphia, who had seen with their own eyes more than one notorious pirate, even

Blackbeard himself, swagger along Front Street or come roaring out of the Blue Anchor Tavern by Dock Creek, were finding their reward in the coin of romance. Digging mighty holes for a taskmaster would have been irksome, stupid business indeed, even for five shillings a day. They got a fearsome kind of enjoyment in "trembling violently through fear of certain malicious demons." And honest Peter Buckram no doubt discovered that life was more zestful when he was plying shovel and pickaxe, or whispering with an astrologer in a corner of the "George" than during the flat hours of toil with shears and goose. If the world had charted its course by Poor Richard's Almanac, there would be a vast deal more thrift and sober industry than exists, but no room for the spirit of adventure which reckons not its returns in dollars and cents.

There are many kinds of lost treasure, by sea and by land. Some of them, however, lacking the color of romance and the proper backgrounds of motive and incident, have no stories worth telling. For instance, there were almost five thousand wrecks on the Great Lakes during a period of twenty years, and these lost vessels carried down millions of treasure or property worth trying to recover. One steamer had five hundred thousand dollars' worth of copper in her hold. Divers and submarine craft and wrecking companies have made many attempts to recover these vanished riches, and with considerable success, now and then fishing up large amounts of gold coin and bullion. It goes without saying that the average sixteen-year-old boy could extract not one solitary thrill from a tale of lost treasure in the Great Lakes, even though the value might be fairly fabulous. But let him hear that a number of Spanish coins have been washed up by the waves on a beach of Yucatan and the discovery has set the natives to searching for the buried



treasure of Jean Lafitte, the "Pirate of the Gulf," and our youngster pricks up his ears.

Many noble merchantmen in modern times have foundered or crashed ashore in various seas with large fortunes in their treasure rooms, and these are sought by expeditions, but because these ships were not galleons nor carried a freightage of doubloons and pieces of eight, most of them must be listed in the catalogue of undistinguished sea tragedies. The distinction is really obvious. The treasure story must have the picaresque flavor or at least concern itself with bold deeds done by strong men in days gone by. Like wine its bouquet is improved by age.

It is the fashion to consider lost treasure as the peculiar property of pirates and galleons, and yet what has become of the incredibly vast riches of all the vanished kings, despots, and soldiers who plundered the races of men from the beginnings of history? Where is the loot of ancient Rome that was buried with Alaric! Where is the dazzling treasure of Samarcand? Where is the wealth of Antioch, and where the jewels which Solomon gave the Queen of Sheba? During thousands of years of warfare the treasures of the Old World could be saved from the conqueror only by hiding them underground, and in countless instances the sword must have slain those who knew the secret. When Genghis Khan swept across Russia with his hordes of savage Mongols towns and cities were blotted out as by fire, and doubtless those of the slaughtered population who had gold and precious stones buried them and there they still await the treasure seeker. What was happening everywhere during the ruthless ages of conquest and spoliation<sup>2</sup> is indicated by this bit of narrative told by a native banker of India to W. Forbes Mitchell, author of "Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny":

"You know how anxious the late Maharajah Scindia was to get back the fortress of Gwalior, but very few knew the real cause prompting him. That was a concealed horde of sixty *crores* (sixty millions sterling) of rupees in certain vaults within the fortress, over which British sentinels had been walking for thirty years, never suspecting the wealth hidden under their feet. Long before the British Government restored the fortress to the Maharajah everyone who knew the entrance to the vaults was dead except one man and he was extremely old. Although he was in good health he might have died any day. If this had happened, the treasure might have been lost to the owner forever and to the world for ages, because there was only one method of entrance and it was most cunningly concealed. On all sides, except for this series of blind passages, the vaults were surrounded by solid rock.

"The Maharajah was in such a situation that he must either get back his fortress or divulge the secret of the existence of the treasure to the British Government, and risk losing it by confiscation. As soon as possession of the fortress was restored to him, and even before the British troops had left Gwalior territory, masons were brought from Benares, after being sworn to secrecy in the Temple of the Holy Cow. They were blindfolded and driven to the place where they were to labor. There they were kept as prisoners until the hidden treasure had been examined and verified when the hole was again sealed up and the workmen were once more blindfolded and taken back to Benares in the custody of an armed escort."