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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Old Clipping Recalls Pirate Treasure Hunt

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MANY STORIES have been told of attempts to dig for Captain Kidd's buried treasure, but one of the most humorous concerns one that was located in the West Cape area of this province.

A man whom I'll name Pat Kelly – his real name is not given – had an extraordinary interview with a departed spirit, I read in an old clipping of nearly 100 years ago, from Alf Egan's scrapbook.

He met this ghost one night as he was rambling along alone. The ghost told Kelly if he would give five pounds in cash to a decrepit old woman in Lot 8, a cow to the poorest man on the O'Leary Road, and other articles of value to some other needy persons nearby, he would find the money of Captain Kidd in a certain spot. Kelly could have the money for himself after digging for it.

SEEING THE chance of a profitable investment, Kelly immediately delivered one of his cows as suggested by the ghostly advisor. Kelly was able to deliver some wheat for the needy person mentioned in the unusual arrangement, but he had to borrow the five pounds, as he could not raise it otherwise. However it gladdened the heart of the old lady of Lot 8, even though it was borrowed.

So Mr. Kelly began to dig for the treasure, having had the location revealed to him. AS he was nearing the buried treasure, however, the very heavens appeared to be torn apart, and he was forced to stop digging, because of the tremendous and most unnatural storm that developed almost instantaneously.

Understandable annoyed at this breach of faith – his bargain with the visitant from the spirit world had been made in good faith, and the terms rigidly adhered to by him – Kelly declared he would find the reason or slay all of the ghosts in creation, or wherever these inhabitants of the spirit world reside.

One evening soon afterwards he was met by a bony skeleton who informed him that the time which the first spirit had appointed for the search for the treasure had expired, and a new spirit had taken charge who knew nothing of the arrangement which Kelly had made with the other ghostly visitor.

Kelly figured he had been robbed by the ghostly representatives, and decided against entering into any further arrangements which would entail further gifts to various persons.

Beautiful Vision Of Kidd Treasure

JOHN CAMPBELL of Lot 12 in the summer of 1866, says The Island Argus of August 21, 1867, was known to possess "second sight". And that was a gift which was recognized by the original settlers and their descendants.

Campbell had a beautiful vision of a treasure of the famous Kidd and a divining rod pointed to the exact spot Campbell had seen in his vision.

A party of 16 persons was organized, complete with pumps, shovels, spades and other equipment. They continued to dig through a day and a night, the old story says.

Finally they struck the cover of an iron chest with the point of a crowbar wielded by a husky digger. Hearing the ring of metal on metal, one of the crew shouted jubilantly "We have found it" and immediately terrible and frightening things happened.

There were loud and frightening noises. There was thunder and lightning. Noises of firing were heard "as though 10,000 muskets were being discharged at once. "There were indications of swords hanging over the pits, suspended from a single thread. Skeletons of human forms were walking to and fro, "fleshless and horrible".

Sights "Indescribably Awful"

"SO INDESCRIBABLY awful were the developments that even the stoutest hearts quailed, and they fled from the horrors which surrounded them." And thus failed another attempt to take possession of the fabled sea pirate's money, observed the newspaper of 91 years ago.

The old theory which tradition has built up concerning Captain Kidd's treasure was that he garnered his gold and other treasure plundering vessels somewhere in this general area, and on being suddenly overpowered he sought a place to bury his treasure, intending to return and reclaim it later.

The money, in an iron chest, was buried somewhere along the shore. Kidd killed one of his men, after swearing him to defend the treasure until he was released from the oath by none other than Kidd himself.

Then the pirate buried the body nearby – some old tales said he buried the murdered sailor atop the treasure – and this sailor's spirit, true to the oath, has been guarding the treasure ever since.

This belief was actually held by many who searched for the treasure, or heard about it. The most curious part of the old belief was that the spirit was believed to have had the power to produce the thunder and the lightning, the cannonading, the hanging of swords, and the numerous other frightening actions accredited to the treasure guardians, reportedly seen and heard by those who hunted at times for the treasure.

There are many versions of the Capt. Kidd treasure. One I read recently suggested there never was any Kidd treasure, that the fabled pirate had never been successful in amassing the treasure with which old stories credit him. But the old belief in the Kidd treasure persists to this day. Perhaps the most amazing thing is that the pirate's treasure was reported to have been buried in so many, widely scattered locations. But that, too, is a part of the wonderfully interesting though mostly unbelievable stories that have been told through the years about the buried treasure.

MacAulay's Memory Described

BACK IN the days at Prince of Wales College, Principal Dr. Samuel N. Robertson was fond of quoting from Thomas Babington MacAulay. Many unusual capabilities were credited to this man, but the most unusual, in my estimation at least, concerned his reportedly fabulous memory.

Charles S. MacDonald, Lower Montague – he celebrated his 100th birthday anniversary recently – loaned me a book Meiklejohn's "English Literature" which says in part:

"At the age of eight he (MacAulay) could repeat the whole of Scott's poem of "Marmion". He was fond at this early age, of big words and learned English; and once, when he was asked by a lady if his toothache was better, replied 'Madam, the agony is abated'.

"He knew the whole of Homer and Milton by heart; and it was said with perfect truth that, if Milton's poetical works could have been lost, MacAulay would have reported every line with complete exactness."

Joey's Bow Tie Recovered

GEORGE MACCALLUM from the Brackley area was in Halifax recently for a period of hospitalization. The Island man got the idea he'd write to Newfoundland's Premier Smallwood for one of his bow-ties. He did just that, and Mr. MacCallum is proudly wearing a black bow tie which came from the Newfoundland capital, a gift of the colorful Premier.

Buffalo Bill Town Of 'Cody'

A POST CARD from Souris historian, George Leard, written in Cody, Wyoming says in part:

"Buffalo Bill is overworked in this town, but his ghostly remains are still interesting, and quite profitable to the natives."

George and Mrs. Leard had had a grand trip to British Columbia and California, when he wrote in early October. They were then starting their homeward trip.

A NOTE from Jeanette Huntley Holmes comes from Barkerville, B.C. and says in Barkerville Historic Cemetery she found the grave marker of "James R. Bovyer, died January 31, 1870, of Charlottetown, P.E.I. aged 32 years."

"I was touched to see that it was the only grave which had a bouquet of flowers", she wrote. And this will be cheering to relatives of Mr. Bovyer who may be living here.