

THE END OF KIDD'S TREASURE

The Story of a Strange Adventure

By E. M. YEOMAN



AK ISLAND, about three miles from Chester, in Nova Scotia, has long been held by the people of those parts to be the place where the notorious pirate, Captain Kidd, buried the vast treasure accumulated in many of his piracies. That some persons have been strongly convinced of the

truth of this tradition is readily proved by the expensive shafts which have been sunk on the island, and which may be seen to-day, and by the rusty old pumping-engines that lie about; for when these shafts reached a certain depth, they invariably filled with water, necessitating the use of pumps.

I had always considered this an idle tradition, until the day when I visited the wigwam of Joe Abraham, the Micmac Indian. Whilst walking one day near Chester, I met this Joe, and strolled with him to his wigwam, to talk of trout-streams and the woods; and it was whilst so talking that I noticed a strange little stone jar in a corner of the wigwam.

"Is this a tobacco jar?" I asked, picking it up. "No!" said Joe, sharply snatching it from me, and putting it in its corner again.

My curiosity thus being stimulated, I questioned Joe about the jar; whereupon I learned that it had been in his family for generations, and that it had never been opened, and that it never would be opened. Moreover, Joe deemed the jar sacred.

These facts were not of a nature to reduce my curiosity; so that, to be brief, after many minutes' persuasion, I finally beguiled Joe to permit me to open it, winning his permission by the aid of a little money.

The jar was carefully sealed with a hard, resinous substance, which I removed with some difficulty. Within the jar, there was a packet, wrapped in soft leather. This packet I opened, and found to contain four large sheets of discoloured yellow wrapping-paper, covered with a multitude of words written in some brown fluid. I could make nothing of the words in the darkness of the wigwam; but when I went out into the clear afternoon sunshine, it was with no little interest that I found the writing to be as follows:

THE NARRATIVE OF JOHN DALE, OF HUNTLY HALL,
IN SURREY.

Written in September, 1699.

My good friend, old Wejek, has promised to deliver this packet to the first worthy Christian he meets; and let that Christian, as he respects the supplication of a heart in anguish, deliver it again to the nearest British settlement, to be sent to Jeremy Dale, of Huntly Hall, in Surrey, or, if he be dead, to Sir Tobias Burton at Portsmouth.

In the last week of August, in the year of our Lord 1699, I sailed from Virginia in the ship *Black Bird*, 400 tons burthen; and with me there was Rose Burton, daughter of Sir Tobias Burton, of Portsmouth, but who was then in Virginia inspecting his great estates.

Heaven knows we were happy in that day, for we were faring to England to be married, and to live with my old father, whose last days I had hoped to brighten with affection and attention.

Rose, my betrothed, carried with her prodigious wealth of jewels, which her good father had bought of a Mexican Spaniard. Where this Spaniard came by them I know not; but their great value was known through all Virginia; and ere we sailed, a thousand times were we warned to keep them about our persons, for fear of robbery.

Our ship, being laden with great store of costly merchandise, sailed in consort with the *White Arrow*, sloop-of-war; and together we ploughed through the curling waves towards Portsmouth.

In the second day out, we saw a strange ship standing off and on, far away to the south. She flew no ancient, and seemed to be watching us; so that we had had some misgivings had the *White Arrow* not been with us.

But the precautions of man may not prevail against the purposes of Providence; and in the night of that second day, a mighty gale sprung up from the south-west, and raged for two full days; and in the night of the fourth went away as speedily as it had come.

But in the morning we had small cause to be thankful for aught, for the *White Arrow* was not to be seen, and a league astern was the strange ship

we had seen in the second day out, coming up with us swiftly, with the black flag at her masthead.

We had trusted to the protection of the *White Arrow*, and had not a gun on board; so that, an hour later, when the pirate came up with us, and sent a shot across our bows, we had no choice but to commend ourselves to God's care and come to.

Five minutes later a company of savage fellows put off from the pirate, and ere long clambered to our decks.

"Get to the bows!" cried the leader of the buccaneers; and thereupon our ship's company was roughly driven to the bow of the ship, and whilst some of the cut-throats kept guard over us, others examined the *Black Bird's* cargo.

It was not long before the leader, a bold, dark man, came from the hold, and advanced to us. "A pretty capture!" he cried, looking upon us. "Which of these ladies is Mistress Rose Burton? and which of these gentlemen Master John Dale?"

"I am John Dale," I said, boldly advancing. "And I am Rose Burton," said gold-haired Rose, advancing to my side.

"Ah!" said the fellow, "I think Mistress Rose has a present of jewels for me. I have come a long way to receive it."

"Pray, what do you know about my jewels?" asked Rose, quietly.

"Everything," he answered simply. "Please deliver them!"

We had no escape, and we gave him all the jewels, which were concealed about our persons. We hoped that the *White Arrow* would come up presently, and that we would then recover the jewels.

"And methinks I'll carry Mistress Rose away with me, too," said the fellow. "I need a wife, and I'll find no fairer. She'll grow to like me presently, and we'll marry. And as for you, Master Jack, we need men, and you can come along, if you will."

So enraged was I that I could not speak; but sweet Rose's voice whispered in my ear: "Jack, Jack, come with me! You will not leave me alone!"

Her words calmed me, and as resistance would have been vain, I answered quietly: "I will come."

"Well said, lad!" cried the pirate captain, putting his hand on my shoulder. "We'll make your fortune for you."

A few minutes later we were led to a longboat, together with three other men who had offered to join the pirate crew, including my honest servant, Blake; and we were pulled to the pirate ship, the *Quentagh Merchant*, that had been an Armenian ship.

Once on board, the captain led us below, and assigned Rose and me quarters very near together, in a corridor off the great cabin.

And six hours later, when a great part of the *Black Bird's* cargo had been transferred to the pirate, the ships stood away and parted.

As I write, my hand is weak and my brain grievously clouded, so that I must speak briefly of all things.

Our first day amongst the pirates was uneventful. The captain I found to be the notorious Captain Kidd, who, God grant, has suffered on the gallows ere this! He spoke genially to me at all times, and seemed glad of my company. Albeit I preserved a cold and haughty manner with him.

But in the third and fourth days of our durance he fell to uttering jests to Rose about their marriage, and he bade her presently choose a marriage-day.

My blood and temper were ever warm; and surely I had murdered the fellow with a knife, or my fist, had not gentle Rose often reminded me that if any evil befell me she would be left without any protector. So, for that reason, I forbore to call the fellow to account, and surely it is written in Heaven that it was not cowardice or lack of desire that withheld my hand.

Whilst at dinner in the fifth evening, this Kidd, with cold cruelty in his eyes, bade Rose be prepared for marriage in the next evening.

"I am at your mercy," she answered haughtily. "That you are," he replied. "But you'll grow to love me—won't she, Master Jack?"

For Rose's sake I forbore to answer him, and so kept silence. But that evening, when chance offered, I crept to Rose's cabin to persuade her to leap into the sea with me; for I knew that it were better to trust ourselves to the waves than to the whims of such a pirate dog.

"Jack, Jack!" she cried softly, when I entered the room; and leaning on my shoulder, she burst into tears. But soon she dried her eyes. "Jack," she said, "in the morning you must find me a dagger, and if he persists in this matter, I shall have an escape."

"That I will!" I said, with my hand upon her yellow hair. "But pray God some good thing will befall us before to-morrow evening!"

So, in the next day, as I walked about the decks, I looked for a dagger; but it was not until early evening that I found my quest, but then I came upon a drunken fellow asleep on the deck, and from his belt I took a jewelled dirk and a small pistol. This dirk I gave into Rose's sweet hand; and God knows the tears in our eyes were bitter as I did so.

Immediately after dinner that night, Kidd cried that the marriage-hour had arrived, whereupon a miserable creature appeared, one Enoch Minch, a captive divine, who sweated night and day in a perpetual ague of fear.

But when all was ready, sweet Rose suddenly raised the dirk that lay hidden in her bosom, and sought to pierce her heart with it. But Kidd was too quick for her, and grasping her slender hand, he wrenched the dirk from it.

"Not yet, my pretty!" he said, with a snarling smile.

"Then Jack!" she cried, stepping towards me, beautiful and supplicating.

Heaven has judged me, whether I did right or wrong; but when she cried to me, I whipped out my pistol, and sent a bullet through her fair forehead.

I expected to be murdered at once for my deed, and I craved no other fate. But it was not to be so. The captain drew a pistol, as if to slay me; but after a moment's thought, he put it in his belt again.

"Well done, Jack!" he said, with a cruel glint in his eyes. "Thou's a daring lad, and I like thee for it."

Nor was anything more said about the matter and I went to my room unmolested.

Let me not speak of the agony of my spirit that night!

In the next morning we were very near the coasts of some wild land, wholly covered with forests. And that morning we entered a great bay, and for three hours sailed amidst a multitude of wooded islets, finally dropping anchor half-a-mile from an island very near the shore, that had on it a grove of young oak trees.

"Come ashore with me, Jack," said Kidd, when we had dropped anchor.

I went with him and we were rowed to the island where the oak trees were. When we were arrived, we left the boat and the men, and Kidd led me along the shore, finally stopping before a great bank of earth and rocks.

"Lend a hand, lad!" said Kidd, bracing himself against a great rock; and when I did so, the rock rolled aside, and revealed a passage in the bank.

Then he took two candles from his pocket and lighting them, he gave me one, and descending to his knees, he crawled into the passage and bade me follow. Without speaking, I crawled after him for a few yards, when, the passage becoming loftier, we were enabled to walk upright. And thereafter we went forward, through mud and water, for full thirty yards, when the passage ended in a cavern twenty feet in diameter, that the water had eaten out of the solid rock.

"Sit down, lad!" said Kidd, when we were come into this cavern; and when I had obeyed him, he likewise sat, and looked about him. "To-night, lad," said he, "I will hide a great treasure here—more pounds sterling, Jack, than you could count in a night. We will come at low tide, for the place is full of water at high. Then I'll light a barrel of powder, about five yards from here, lad, and the ceiling, which is full thirty feet thick, will fall, and make a pretty hiding-place for my fortune. You will help me, Jack, because I can trust you."

I made him no answer, and a minute later we returned to the boat.

And that night at two o'clock the captain called me. "All is ready, Jack," he said, and straightway led me to the deck, where, in the faint moonlight, I could see the longboat waiting for us, manned by only three men—my honest servant, Blake, and two fellows that had joined the pirate from the *Black Bird*. When we got into the boat, I found it laden with two vast iron chests.

"We'll all row, Jack," said Kidd; and handing

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