

the older settlements in Acadia, had been in the habit of constant intercourse with the New England States for nearly a century previous to Kidd's death, it is reasonable to suppose that wild tales of pirates and their doings, such as were then popular in the New England States, found eager listeners and fervent believers among the settlers of the colonies further east.

It is matter of fact that traditions of this kind are common in many parts both of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia, and that parties provided with divining rods and other mysterious implements, have frequently been detected searching for hidden treasures in secluded places along the coast and elsewhere.

The neighborhood of Lunenburg and Mahone Bay had experiences of its own in the way of piratical adventure, some seventy or eighty years later than Kidd's time; though the freebooters on those occasions were of a class somewhat more civilized than the ruffians of the Kidd and Morgan order. In the month of March, 1782, a piratical sloop carrying six guns captured a schooner in Mahone Bay, and carried off eighty pounds in money, besides a part of her cargo of produce. A few months afterwards, five or six privateers, the largest mounting sixteen guns, made a descent upon the town of Lunenburg, plundered the inhabitants of everything deemed worth the trouble of carrying away, and were only prevented from burning the houses by a bond for one thousand pounds which they extracted from the principal people of the town. *

These events, doubtless well enough understood by the more intelligent, as the natural results of the lawlessness incident to a time of war, would probably be confounded in the minds of an illiterate peasantry, with the regular piracies of earlier years, and would no doubt serve to strengthen the popular belief that Mahone Bay had always been a favorite resort of freebooters of the sea.

Somehow or other the conviction at length seems to have become pretty general, that Oak Island in Mahone Bay was one of the spots selected by Kidd in which to

deposit his ill-gotten wealth, and there is no doubt of the fact that such a belief was of very long standing. The alleged origin of the tradition is somewhat shadowy; though it rests upon as solid a foundation, probably, as most other tales of a similar class.

It is proper for the writer of this paper here to state, that he is indebted for the main facts of the Oak Island affair to a minute and detailed history of the whole transaction published anonymously, in a local newspaper some few years ago, and evidently prepared by one who was well acquainted with all the circumstances connected with the undertaking.

At the close of the 18th century, three men named Smith, McInnis and Vaund, emigrated from the New England States to Chester, in Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia. These persons brought with them a story to the effect that, some years before they came to Chester, an old man had died somewhere in the Northern States, who had confessed on his death-bed that he had been one of Capt. Kidd's crew, and that he had assisted the pirate to bury a large amount of treasure on a small island to the eastward of Boston.

The three emigrants had in the meantime taken up land, at that time in a wilderness state, upon Oak Island. Rambling over the locality one day, McInnis discovered a spot which gave evidence that the wood had been cut down at some time long previous, and the stumps of ancient oak trees were still visible. Further search revealed the fact that the ground in the neighborhood of these stumps was sunk and hollow, while from the forked branch of a large oak growing near the spot there hung a block and tackle—the leather articles rotten with age.

Putting all these circumstances together, McInnis and his friends, fully believing they had fallen upon the spot alluded to in the "last dying speech and confession" of Kidd's colleague, brought their shovels and picks over from the main land, and set to work in a very confident spirit. They found the hollow place mentioned to be the closed mouth of an old pit, about seven feet in diameter, protected at a distance of two feet from the surface by a layer of flag-

* Murdoch's History of Nova Scotia. Vol. 3, p. 4.