

mine. But let me tell it calmly or I shall be accused of romance and perjury.

The first things I noticed were several leathern bags at the bottom of the chest; half buried in shreds and dust. As I clutched one it broke in pieces like an eggshell and disclosed a heap of golden coins, larger than I had ever seen and of greater value than any I had ever owned. There must have been forty of these heaps in all, each containing two hundred pieces. This alone was fortune, but in addition were massive pieces of plate, golden goblets, diamond-studded sword-hilts and crucifixes, boxes containing necklaces and bracelets of precious stones and rings; while among the dust and shreds were hundreds of loose pearls, evidently the trimming of some decayed fabric, many of them of great size and beauty, and worth fabulous sums. Long before I realized the value of my find, my head was whirling. Here was wealth a king might envy.

What should I do with it? I who had slaved all my life from hand to mouth. I would gratify every wish. I would study art and improve my poor profession. I would do some great charitable deed to cover my multitude of sins and hand my name down to posterity. And yet, how to protect it for all this? It must not be left in the cliff. I must get it secretly to a hiding place of my own. I didn't want the Cape overrun with sightseers.

Hastily I emptied my creel of its silver fish, and filled it with glittering gold. What a frightful weight it was, but what a glorious burden! This all took time, working as I was with one hand. I had quite forgotten where I was, and thought only of Captain Kidd and his generosity to me, when I was brought to the sense of my danger by a wave dashing over my left foot and washing away the lower niche on which it rested. My whole weight was on it and the top of the chest. The sudden jerk as I slipped made the lid cave in. It was a miracle that I did not loose my hold. Another wave released my right foot and left me hanging by both hands to the chest's rotten timbers. The waves crept higher, lashing me furiously as though they knew I