



TEACHERS WHO ATTENDED THE SESSIONS OF THE JUNIOR NORMAL SCHOOL AT NORTH PLATTE.



INSTRUCTORS IN CHARGE OF THE WORK AT THE NORTH PLATTE JUNIOR NORMAL.
Names from left to right: T. A. Butcher, Miss Grace Greves, W. H. Gardner, president; James E. Deizell, Joseph Sparks, Miss Elizabeth V. Burke.



Names from left to right: O. W. Neale, A. Softly, Wesley Tressler, State Superintendent W. K. Fowler, W. E. Smith.
SUPERINTENDENTS OF COUNTIES TRIBUTARY TO THE NORTH PLATTE JUNIOR NORMAL.

Pirate Gold--The Will-o'-the-Wisp of the New World

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THE new world's will-o'-the-wisp—pirate gold—is still luring many a man to madness and death, many a fine ship to destruction. Expeditions are continually being fitted out at ports along the Atlantic seaboard to search the palm-covered islands and coral cays of the West Indies for the hoards of old Spanish gold and pirate booty which are supposed to be hidden there. At this moment several expeditions are searching for them and every year expeditions search, as they have searched for many generations.

Not long ago a private yacht was secretly fitted out in New York for a West Indian treasure hunt. Other expeditions have started recently from Philadelphia, Boston, Newport News, New Orleans and other ports. Nor is the hunt confined to Americans. A year does not pass without expeditions leaving London, Glasgow, Liverpool or other British ports, while the West Indians themselves, living in the atmosphere of treasure stories, are naturally the keenest of all the hunters of phantom gold.

Sometimes these expeditions never return. The ship is reported missing and another is added to the long roll of ocean tragedies of which the public hears little or nothing. Years afterward a few bleached bones on a remote islet or a derelict floating in the track of shipping tells a grim tale of shipwreck, mutiny or death by those diseases most dreaded by sea-faring men—yellow fever and beriberi.

Some months ago no fewer than five treasure-hunting expeditions were reported at Kingston, Jamaica. The earl of Crawford and Balcarres had brought his magnificent yacht into the harbor on a West Indian cruise and it was said that he was combining business with pleasure and meant to search for a pirate treasure reported to be buried on the tiny island of Anegada, in the Virgin group. His lordship apparently had no luck.

The second expedition was headed by an English gentleman, who hoped to find the secret hoard left by King Christophe of Hayti. The third was a small affair gotten up by a Jamaican planter, who aimed at locating the treasure of that buccaneer king, Sir Henry Morgan. This is said to be buried in a cave in Gun hill, Trelawny, Jamaica, and to be guarded, like Captain Kidd's, by the devil in person—hoofs, horns, tail, pitchfork and all.

The other two expeditions were working in Santo Domingo and the Cayman Islands.

This was a period of special activity in the treasure-hunting line, but such enterprises are so familiar to the Creoles that they hardly excite comment. Some men waste their lives and fortunes flitting all over the Caribbean sea, from one reported pirate haunt to another, and digging for buried gold. When the man once gets hold of a man it never seems to leave him until it has soured his temper and ruined his life.

Barbadoes is a favorite resort of the treasure seekers. Several caches of doubloons and pieces-of-eight have been found there in digging among old ruins. Captain Kidd once ran his ship ashore at Barbadoes when chased by a cruiser. He left a paper after his death describing a spot in a small wood near Bridgetown, the island capital, where he said he had buried an immense treasure.

Whether this was a post-mortem joke or not it is impossible to say. If it was, it succeeded to perfection. "For acres round the spot indicated," says Hesketh Bell, a colonial official, "the soil has been perfectly honeycombed by the excavations of treasure-seekers. No one knows whether the booty was secured or not, as the finder would in all probability have been most careful to keep his success a secret, so as not to have to share with the government and the owner of the land besides. Even now, when any one is noticed to become suddenly well off and flush of money, he is at once set down to have discovered a buried jar of gold, when, perhaps, the reason of his affluence may be much more questionable."

In Hayti not long ago a hidden treasure was brought to light in the picturesque town of Gonaives in a rather curious way. A mulatto lived there who, as the saying goes, was not worth 30 cents. He inhabited a desolate ruin which had once been a fine old planter's chateau in the days when the French owned the islands, and he eked out a miserable existence by cultivating a feeble yam-patch.

Suddenly this mulatto blossomed out as a man of wealth. He bought a fine house, a provision store, a rum shop, and horses and mules galore. Little sums like a hundred dollars "cut no ice" with him. Everybody wondered where he had got his money but only one man, another Haytian mulatto, had sense enough to figure the matter out.

"See here," said the second mulatto, "I've taken a fancy to that old ruin of yours. Kind of picturesque, isn't it? I'll give you \$500 for it."

The first mulatto jumped at the offer. As soon as the deal had been perfected the purchaser had the house carefully pulled down, brick by brick, and the foundations dug up. As the result, he found nine small iron-bound chests filled with treasure. They contained a great deal of French gold and silver coin of the eighteenth century, gold and silver plate, jewelry, church ornaments and other valuables. Altogether, the nine chests were valued at over \$500,000.

When the first owner heard of it he was furious. It then came out that one day by accident he had found a similar chest hidden in the wainscoting of the hall and had realized upon it. It never struck him that there might be more behind, so he gladly sold the house, fondly imagining that it was an empty shell from which he had extracted the kernel. He raved like a madman when he heard the news, but the other mulatto possessed political "pull" and soon quieted him by the simple ex-

pedient of having him thrown into jail.

There is a firm belief throughout the West Indies that there are many other hidden treasures of the same character in Hayti and Santo Domingo. When the negroes rose in insurrection against their French and Spanish masters the latter had to fly to the towns or to the woods for refuge. In most cases they could not take their valuables with them and they concealed them somewhere about their chateaux. These fine old mansions are now mere ruins, overgrown by the rank luxuriance of tropical vegetation and inhabited only by the goats and the vultures. If a man must go treasure-hunting, these are the places he should select, in preference to mythical pirate lairs vaguely indicated by legend or by some incomprehensible chart drawn in blood on a piece of rag, after the fashion of "King Solomon's Mines."

In the Bahamas they tell a queer story of a big haul recently made there by a mysterious American. He arrived in his own schooner off West Caicos, an islet in the Bahama group, and dropped anchor. There he stayed for some days, doing nothing and telling nobody his business. He evidently had not come for salt or sponges or coral or any of the other things that seafaring men ordinarily visit the Caicos for. Nobody could imagine why he was there, for West Caicos is the last place a man would think of visiting unless he had business there.

One day the American lowered a boat from the schooner, hired a couple of negroes from the shore, and made them row him to another islet about four miles off. According to the story which the negroes told on their return, he walked straight up to a lone palm on the islet, measured a distance by paces to the southeast after consulting a chart, and then made them dig, morning, noon and night, all around a large circle he marked out. When they grew tired and stopped he foamed at the mouth and threatened them with his rifle.

After two days' hard digging they found a big sea chest, so heavy that the three of them could hardly drag it to the boat. They rowed back to the schooner, and as soon as the chest had been hoisted aboard the American weighed anchor and sailed away north.

There is much speculation in West Caicos and throughout the Bahamas as to who the American was, what he found and how he learned that it was there. It is supposed that he got a big pirate treasure and some people even think he secured the famous hoard of Captain Kidd, but nobody has ever found out anything about the matter.

One of the queerest West Indian treasure stories was told by the skipper of a Grand Cayman schooner in Kingston, Jamaica. The story is too wildly improbable for any writer of fiction, but its absolute truth can be attested to by hundreds of people in Jamaica and Grand Cayman.

A bark had been wrecked on a reef near the Cayman islands and the skipper had

taken his schooner there to hunt for salvage. While his men were busy on the bark he looked over the side of his vessel and saw, about eight feet below on a shelving ledge of the reef, a curious yellow gleam. He thought it was a piece of copper sheathing and told one of his men to dive for it. The man came up with his hands full of gold coin—Spanish doubloons and pieces-of-eight, dating back to the early days of the conquistadores. The ledge was simply covered with loose gold. All day the crew dived for it and when they had skinned the place bare they found they had over 2,000 gold pieces, besides a few score of silver coins, all Spanish. The skipper showed several of the coins to prove his story. They were all in a remarkably fine state of preservation. He sold the lot afterward for nearly \$20,000 to a Jamaican Jew.

How the coins came on the reef nobody knows. A hundred explanations have been suggested, but none of them quite meets the case.

There is an Englishman now living in a fishing hamlet in Kent, England, who was driven mad by his vain search for treasure in the West Indies. He is hopelessly insane. Formerly he was a colonel in the British army and served with distinction in several wars. Late in life he caught the treasure-hunting fever and sold all he had in order to fit out a yacht and hunt for a hoard buried, so legend says, by Mansvelt, the famous buccaneer, on Anguilla island. He searched for years, until in the end disappointment turned his brain.

In the British West Indies, more especially in Barbadoes and Grenada, large holes dug in the earth apparently for no purpose are frequently seen. Inquiring the reason of them, the reply is that they have been made by the blacks digging for buried money.

It is a curious fact that a West Indian negro rarely, if ever, sets about looking for treasure of his own accord.

An "obeahman" (witch doctor) comes to him and says:

"Obi, the all-seeing, has told me in a dream there is money buried beneath the roots of the old cottonwood tree, which you are to dig up and keep. But hearken to my warning! When that treasure was buried the owner killed the slave who dug the hole and buried his body on top of the gold. Unless you pay me ten dollars to put 'good obeah' on the ground the 'duppy' (ghost) of that slave will go on sinking the money deeper and deeper into the earth, so that you will never find it."

It is said that a West Indian negro will believe anything except that which is true. At any rate, he believes the obeahman and parts with his ten dollars. It goes without saying that the obeahman is the only person who gets any treasure.

This is a common incident. It happens every day in some of the West Indian colonies. These illiterate old African witch

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