

# THE FOUNDERED GALLEON.

BY WEATHERY CHESNEY AND ALICK MUNRO.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE YELLOW MANUSCRIPT.

Two men sat and smoked in a small room in Shaftoe street, Bristol. It was an untidy room, and through the pungent incense of ship's plug, which one of them was smoking, there struggled another and more unpleasant odor, the musty spirituous smell of a badly kept anatomy museum. Human skulls and arm bones littered the tables, monstrosities in wide mouthed bottles jostled other stuffed and moldy monstrosities on the shelves, and a couple of bloated serpents twined themselves into slimy knots in a glass case in one corner. And where there were none of these things there were books—books everywhere—even in the corners of the deep armchair in which one of the men (he of the ship's plug) was sitting. Their sharp edges made dimples in the comfortable roundness of his figure, but he was excited, and if they hurt him he did not seem to notice it.

He was a big man, red faced and heavy, and the hair growing in a close mat down over his wrists gave a suggestion of burly outdoor strength strangely incongruous in such a room as this. His dress, which was that of a captain in the merchant service, bore out this appearance of incongruity.

Presently he removed the pipe from his mouth and, leaning forward, tapped the other man's knee with the stem.

"Can we do it, doctor?" he asked anxiously. "The gold must be there; enough of it to make us both millionaires, most likely. The point is—can we lay our hands on it?"

At this question the other man rose from his chair and walked over to the glass case where the serpents were. For fully five minutes he watched their slow, purposeless contortions without speaking. Then he returned to the table, reached for the tobacco jar and rolled himself a thin and very tight cigarette. Now, whether it was that Dr. Tring did not share his comrade's excitement or that his leathery brown face was too thickly seared with deep, permanent lines to allow any passing emotion to affect his expression it is impossible to say, but the fact remains that even Captain Nicholas Colepepper's sailor's eye was unable to read anything, whether of encouragement or the reverse, on the shriveled, chartlike face of his friend.

The doctor took a long pull at his cigarette, drew the smoke deep down into his lungs and kept it there for about half a minute; then he spoke, and with each word the impenetrable smoke crept furtively in broken spurts from his mouth and went to join forces with the heavy clouds which the captain was blowing with impatient energy from his pipe.

"Captain Colepepper, sir, you ask me whether we can raise that Spanish gold (a whole shipload of it, if your story is true) from where it now lies, imbedded deep in the ooze of the Atlantic. I answer you that I don't know."

The captain had evidently expected a more encouraging reply, and the vicious way in which he bit at his pipe-stem showed how much he was disappointed.

"You've thought over what I told you?" said he.

"Yes, I've thought it over."

"And you don't think it can be done? Man, it's bound to be a million at least! And it's there, I tell you, just waiting for us to take it."

"I don't go so far as to say that it can't be done," replied the doctor with some hesitation. "It may be, Colepepper, it may be. But I don't like to commit myself until I'm sure."

"Oh, come, that's better!" exclaimed the captain with returning animation. "If you say it's possible at all, that's enough for me. If Dr. Tring says a thing can be done, then Dr. Tring and Captain Colepepper between 'em will do it."

"Umph!" said the doctor shortly. "A million of gold—or two millions, maybe," went on the other, mousing the big numbers as though the very manner of saying them would make them bigger. "We shall be able to do things with that."

"No doubt," said the doctor dryly, "if we get it, but it seems to me that if we try we're more likely to lose the little we have and our lives, too, perhaps."

"But the manuscript, doctor, the manuscript!" It's all down there as plain as the rule of the road at sea."

"Who was this Nicholas Colepepper, and where did you find his log?"

"I found the log in a lumber chest down at our old farmhouse in Devonshire, and the Nicholas Colepepper who wrote it was an ancestor of mine. I expect," added the captain meditatively, "I'm called after him in a way, as my name's Nicholas too. But, for the matter of that, my grandfather's name was Nicholas. There always has been one in the family, you see."

"And this Nicholas the First—what was he?"

"Pirate," replied the captain shortly. "He doesn't say so himself, of course. Calls himself an honest buccaneer in his log, but I expect pirate was about the real size of it."

"Yes," said the doctor. "The law was not so squeamish in those days as it is now. I don't fancy you need be afraid that you are doing an injustice to your ancestor's memory. Piracy was

an eminently respectable calling in the time of good Queen Bess."

"Of course it was!" agreed Captain Colepepper excitedly. "And, don't you see, that's just what makes me so cocksure that the story is true!"

Dr. Tring nodded, and, toying absently with a human thigh bone which was lying on the table, smoked for a little time in thoughtful silence. Captain Colepepper meanwhile fidgeted incessantly in the big chair, and with fumbling fingers cut another fill of plug and rammed it into his pipe with so much unnecessary violence that the shining black clay was in imminent danger of breaking under the strain. All of which is merely an evidence that the captain's agitation was overpowering, for he loved his cutty, and would have grieved for a month if he had broken it.

His action in filling his pipe was, however, apparently just as unconscious as the doctor's in playing with the thigh bone, for when he had done he did not light it, but laid it on the table, and, resting his elbows on his knees and his chin in his hands, leaned forward and anxiously watched his companion's face. His whole attitude betokened an excitement the suppression of which was actually painful.

Dr. Tring's face, however, betrayed nothing. He might have been engaged in deciding what he would have for dinner, so utterly calm was his expression. It was a terribly anxious moment for the sailor, for on his friend's decision rested everything. Excellent seaman though he was, Captain Colepepper knew well enough that without the other's assistance he could do nothing. He could fit out a ship, it is true, and take her to the very spot where the galleon with all her precious freight had foundered; that much he knew he could do, but that was not enough. And for the rest he relied absolutely on the scientific skill of his friend Dr. Tring. If Dr. Tring said "No," then the Spanish gold must stay where it was, and Captain Colepepper would spend his life in the sailing of ships and die at last a humble merchant cap-



The captain spread the yellow manuscript out on the table.

tain. If Dr. Tring said "Yes," Captain Colepepper would cheerfully spend every penny he had in the world in fitting out a vessel in which to make the venture and would be content to die in the end a pauper, if only he could first have a fair shot at being a millionaire.

Mennwhile the suspense was slowly driving him frantic. Beads of perspiration were rolling unheeded down his nose and dripping on his beard. At last he could stand the strain of inaction no longer, and, throwing himself back in the chair, began, utterly unconscious of what he was doing, to whisper strange sailor oaths beneath his breath.

These turgid mutterings had the effect of rousing Dr. Tring to speech: "Have you got your respected ancestor's log with you?" he asked.

For answer the captain produced the stained yellow sheets from his pocket and handed them across to his companion.

"Read it to me again," said the doctor. "I want to get a clear grasp of all the details."

"The whole of it?"

"No. Only where he tells about the plashship."

The captain spread the yellow manuscript out on the table before him and read as follows:

"From the log of Nicholas Colepepper, Esq., master of the snow [brig] Lucky Venture.

"THURSDAY, 11<sup>th</sup> February, 1591.

"The night had been a thick one, and mayhap our lookouts, being somewhat tired of their task, had not been overspy in their watch. Three weeks of peering through the weather for a vessel that never heaves in sight dulle the fresh glances of any mariner's eye, and we had been lying hove to or standing on and off for the galleon for five days over that time. So when dawn sickled over the waters, and the great ship was spied bowling along good five miles to windward, I was at first minded to shoot the fellow on the foreyard for keeping such lubberly watch, but remembering that we should presently need all the hands we could get I appointed him with a few shrewd blows from a calker's mallet, lying handy, and set the watch to trim and make sail, that we might get all the pace out of our

tight little snow of which she was capable.

"The Spaniard's lookout was smart enough. His sail trimmers were hard at work when first we espied him, so he must have known of our presence before we knew of his. Now, it is the custom of the yearly plashship to sail only during the day and to remain hove to during the night hours, but this fellow must have been under weigh all through the darkness, having been advertised of our snow's presence, probably, and so from this departure from custom we judged that he feared us, and our lads took heart accordingly.

"A chase to windward is always tedious work, but as we sailed better and faster on every point than the Spaniards, 'twas only a matter of time, and we could tell the hour to a nicety when we should be able to bring them into action. The thing that vexed some of my men was the disparity in numbers. We had been at sea, off and on, for two years, and had lost half our number through wounds, scurvy, calentures and other sickness, and so could muster but a poor 83 all told, and many of them half disabled and brought scurvy rotten from their bunks by the rustle of preparation. The don was a 1,000 ton galleon newly out of port, with all her complement hale and sound, and with well nigh 500 men fit to carry arms.

"As we rose her hull above the plain of ocean we saw it was pierced for ordnance innumerable, for pieces both great and small; but, though this was somewhat disconcerting, her lowness in the water was such that fears were swamped as they rose to the surface, for there was surely yellow ballast enough in her holds to make us all rich men for life, even supposing that none of us was killed, and as out of our small 83 a third, or perhaps a half, might lose the number of their mess during so hot an engagement as the one whereon we were entering promised to be, there would be the greater share for the survivors. So all were eager for the cast of fortune's dice box, which might bring them their death or might render them independent of mariner's trafficking for the remainder of their natural lives.

"The don was ablaze with banners and ancients [ensigns], and on the ample belly of her forecouse was depicted the head of St. Catherine, her patroness, with all the gauds and embellishments of the master painter's art. She was replete with carvings and gildings, with high fore and after castles, with close quarters and with all the Spanish devices for naval fortification, and in good sooth she was as brave a ship as ever breasted Atlantic or lured honest English buccaneer to plunder.

"Thus far had I writ before we came within shot range. Our fellows, as is always their wont, had set a cask of strong ale aboard in the waist and were feasting and making merry, for fear lest the hap of war should take from them other opportunity of doing that same again. The don, seeing that his heels were too dull to give us the slip, triced boarding nettings up to his lower yards, opened his ports and ran out the guns, and in fine made all ready for action. He was willing enough to run had chance been given him to do so, but now that he was cornered had no notion of yielding his treasure without a battle. But as this fell out as we had anticipated we were in nowise dismayed nor surprised, but cleared our pipes with a loud voiced drinking song, worked round to windward of him and held on to within musket range without throwing a shot.

"The don had been burning powder for a good half hour before our culverins and falconets hurtled back their message. Indeed his great ordnance on both broadsides had been spitting away at one and the same time, so that we guessed at the confusion that was raging in his 'tween decks and took comfort therefrom mightily, remembering that one small ball driven home is worth a dozen score of heavy ones which miss their bourne. Owing to the closeness of our approach, the don's gunners could not well depress the muzzles of their pieces, by reason of the narrowness of the gun ports; so that even the few shot whose direction was true had too great elevation and whistled harmlessly over our mastsheads or sang through the upper rigging, and save for a cheesehole punched in the main topsail and a lee fore topmast backstay shot in twain we were not a whit the worse for his pelting when at length we began our own.

"Having run up into such short range before I gave the word to fire, we hacked him through and through with our very first broadside, and the groans and yells from his 'tween decks told us that we had made commendable slaughter, but by this time the arquebusers in his roundtops had steadied down to their work and were browning my gun crews somewhat too cavalierly. So I bade my fellows load up with bar and chain shot, knock out some of their quoins and have at the don's rigging for all their skins were worth, which salute the galleon acknowledged by bowing to us with his foremost head, which had been twice hit by a shot from my main deck culverins. Roundtop and sharpshooters, foreyard and the great belling course with its gaudy painting came down by the run; the galleon slid up head to wind, in spite of her timoneer's every effort, and we had her at our mercy.

"After this I ran ahead and in a series of short tacks raked her with alternate broadsides, to which she could hardly reply with a gun; for her bow chasers were masked by the raffle of wreckage, and when any of her people sought to remove this they, too, were mown down by our incessant fire. And had the fates permitted me to carry on this game of long bows, she must perforce have yielded unconditionally.

"But when another half dozen broadsides must have reduced her word was passed that the powder had run completely out, for we had come into action with but a poorly stocked magazine, not having found opportunity to re-

plenish it of late. Forgetful of this, we had been burning the precious grains with feverish haste, and the grinning little powder monkey who brought me the tidings declared that there was not another tub left.

"'Tis truly vexations when an honest buccaneer finds himself in a strait like this, but there was no help for it. We could not get more powder by mere wishing, and we could not fire shot without it. We had naught therefore but cold steel left to rely upon, but cold steel had laid many a Spaniard low at my hands (and will, please heaven, do the like to many more). So, trusting in that, I sang out, 'Up helm!' and cried for boarders.

"We ran down alongside and threw our grapple. The Spanish gunners poured in a fierce fire to our deserted 'tween decks, but armed with pike, hanger and boarding ax we scaled their lofty upper works and hacked our way through the nettings inboard.

"Flushed with victory and nerved with strength by thoughts of the golden hoard below, my fellows were not to be resisted, and save for a party headed by the Spanish commandant—who re-



"You agree?" cried the captain, treated beyond the break of the poop and held the after castle in spite of all our efforts to dislodge them—save, I say, for these few, the whole crew was beaten below, and we thought the vessel our own. But this pestilential hand-ful kept stubbornly at bay, and so, when, tiring at length of their resistance, they called for a parley, we staid our arms for a moment, being willing to make a truce and grant them quarter.

"But the knave commandant, aping an insolence that would have sat ill on his betters, must needs dictate terms to us—to us, who held his ship and his shipmates' lives at our swords' mercy. 'I yield to pirates on no terms whatever,' quoth he. 'Get you gone, and your lives are spared,' quoth he, 'or stay and press your present advantage and I will rid the world of your thievish hands and minds forever, even at a large cost to myself and my following. And ye have not left my ship before this minute glass hath drained its sand I swear to you on my honor as a caballero that I will send you and the Santa Catarina and myself and my crew skyward in one smoky shower. Beware, accursed English picaroon! A volcano is underfoot! At this instant I turn the glass. If in a minute's time you and your robber band have not made retreat, I fire my magazine,' quoth he.

"His speech was in Spanish, and but few of my lads understood it. For myself, I never thought the fellow would be as good as his threat, and so, unwilling to be worsted by mere bravado, ordered a couple of main deck culverins to be hauled in, loaded, slowed round and trained so as to sweep his defenses. 'Thou truculent bragart,' quoth I, 'down on thy marrow bones and sue for quarter, or I blow thee and thy handful of ironclads out through the stern ports and into the sea!' But scarce had the words left my beard when there came a roar from underfoot, the deck heaved, and we were all shot skyward together.

"Beshrew me if the knave Spaniard had not been as good as his word! 'For myself, I fell into the water amid a shower of other solids, unhurt by twice a miracle, and gained the snow with some trouble, and there I was joined by five and twenty of my fellows, all with their hides more or less singed and dented. The remainder of the crew had gone skyward in pieces that no surgeon, be he never so skillful, could join.

"But worse remains to tell, and surely gentlemen of fortune were never entreated so evilly. The port side of the galleon—that furthest from us—was blown completely out, and she foundered incontinently; foundered, I declare upon my manhood, before we could spoil her of anything; foundered without yielding us a solitary piece of eight, no not a maravedi; foundered in 200 fathoms of water, in latitude—"

"Stop!" interrupted Dr. Tring sharply.

The captain looked up from his reading. "We're just coming to the point," said he.

"Exactly!" was the reply, but for the present we will allow the precise latitude and longitude of the treasure to remain a secret, or, better still, commit your bloodthirsty ancestor's figures to memory, and I will do the same, and then you can destroy that part of the manuscript which contains them, and," added the doctor, laughingly, "even in your dreams remember that there may be listeners waiting to steal the secret, if you but whisper it."

At these words Captain Colepepper sprang up, and, seizing the other's hand, wrung it hard for fully a minute, laughing hysterically all the time. It is, moreover, to be recorded that the doctor's leathery face was at last surprised into betraying an emotion; for under that grip he winced with pain.

"You agree?" cried the captain, when his delight allowed him to become coherent.

"Yes," was the answer. "I do. We'll have a try for the Spaniards' gold, Colepepper."

"Hurrah!" shouted the captain. "I

thought you would. We shall be millionaires, doctor!"

"Or paupers, captain," said the doctor quietly.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE FIRST RECRUITS.

The crew that Nicholas Colepepper and Dr. Tring got together for the expedition to raise the foundered galleon came about in this wise:

First there was Alan Guthrie, a young Oxford student, who had been "plucked" on his examinations, was heavily in debt and had been discarded by his father. On the day of his dismissal he was standing on the beach of Weston-super-Mare pondering on his future and reluctantly came to a decision to accept the queen's shilling and go for a soldier. Before seeking the recruiting sergeant he resolved to have a bath. So pulling off his clothes he waded into the ocean, and when over his depth he, as to swim. As he swam a curious fancy took possession of him—that he had had only to go on swimming and his fortune would come open armed to meet him. Giving way to the fancy he swam on, but presently the water grew colder, and, turning, he noticed what a very long way it seemed to the beach. He pulled on, but made no headway. His heart sank; he was being carried out to sea. Still he struggled, but at last, overcome, with a despairing cry, he fought the waters that were mastering him.

Now, Dr. Tring and Captain Colepepper had chartered a vessel to take them where the treasure lay and had fitted it with various ingenious engines of Dr. Tring's invention for coping with the enormous difficulties of a dive which would be far bigger than anything any one had as yet dreamed of, but they had got no farther than Bideford before their crew, learning of the purpose of the expedition, mutinied to a man, and the order was given to 'bout ship for Bristol, where the crew left in a body. Dr. Tring and Captain Colepepper, having cooled from their disappointment, were out for a row with fiddle and flute practicing duets and heard Alan Guthrie's cry. Pulling in the direction from which it proceeded, they found him about to sink and hauled him aboard unconscious. As soon as he came to himself and learned of their intended expedition they found no difficulty in enrolling him as their first recruit.

Then the captain's daughter, Dolly, took it into her head that she must go on the expedition, but met with a flat refusal from her father. Both Dr. Tring and Alan Guthrie pleaded in her behalf, but the captain was obdurate, avowing that they must not be hampered with women.

One morning the captain, the doctor and the first recruit were sitting in the captain's room at Bristol, smoking and wondering where more men, reckless enough to embark with them, were to come from. An organ grinder had taken up his position in front of the window and was commencing to grind out "The Last Rose of Summer" at a pace so funereal that the homely old tune sounded as though it were a dirge, and had the three men been fanciful they might have taken this dismal wail as an ominous commentary on the doctor's last words. It may be, perhaps, that some such thought did occur to Dr. Tring. Anyway, his distress was acute.

The man dawdled slowly through the "Rose," and then started another tune, and this time he elected to add his own voice to be worsted by mere bravado, ordered a couple of main deck culverins to be hauled in, loaded, slowed round and trained so as to sweep his defenses.

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"You agree?" cried the captain, when his delight allowed him to become coherent.

"Yes," was the answer. "I do. We'll have a try for the Spaniards' gold, Colepepper."

"Hurrah!" shouted the captain. "I

shy. Never mind your rig out lad. Unship your torture box and stow it down here in the gangway and then come into my stateroom. Why couldn't you have just knocked at the door and asked for me?"

"Why, you see, gents all," said the man, with bashful hesitation, "I hardly liked. If there'd been a back door, it would have been all right. But I tacked about and couldn't find one, and it's hardly the place for the likes of me to come pounding at a big brass knocker when I wasn't expected, specially when I was wanting to ask a bit of a favor."

"What! You don't mean to say that you've come here to volunteer for the enterprise, Tom Jelly, do you?" inquired the captain, with obvious amazement. "I thought you'd given up the sea for good."

"With permission," said Tom, with a grin, "I'd like to change my mind."

"You're a good lad, Tom Jelly—a good lad!" roared the captain delightedly. "Sit down and tell us why you didn't turn up before. Been thinking the matter over?"

"Only just heard about it, cap'n," said the man, sitting on the extreme edge of the chair which Captain Colepepper pushed to him. "Me and 'Enrietta trudged into Bristol day afore yesterday and brought up at our old moorings. We went to the Admiral Blake for a chat and a smoke and a drop of ale in the evening and heard tell of how you'd got a wonderful scheme on and for weighing the dollars from out of a craft which foundered after a fight with a pirate some years ago—how many they didn't seem to rightly know at the Admiral Blake. But everybody said it was a mad idea that nobody but a fool would believe in and that you and the doctor 'u'd never get a single soul to join you. Now, the doctor—no disrespect meant, sir—I didn't know, never having heard of him afore. But Cap'n Colepepper I'd sailed with, boy and man, nigh on five and twenty year, and I knowed he was too good a seaman, in a manner of speaking, to put to sea in dirty weather without seeing a good chance of weathering it all safely. So, gentlemen all!"—Tom lifted the glass of beer which the captain had handed him—"here's 'ealth and success."

The beer vanished into some aperture hidden among the thick jungle of black hair, and the glass was set down empty on the table.

"This is a very different sort of trip, Tom, from any other we've had together," observed Captain Colepepper. "Are you sure you know what it is you are offering to join?"

"I know, cap'n, I know; they told me all about it at the Admiral Blake, but I says to them, I says: 'There ain't a man in the merchant service that knows how to handle either square rig or fore and aft like Cap'n Nick's las Colepepper. At either seamanship or navigation show me the man that can beat him,' says I. 'I'll freely own,' I says, 'that he's learned his experience atop of the ocean and not inside it, but if he's made up his mind to try a trip below the waves, instead of above 'em, in the ordinary way, as you tell me he has, then you may stake your shoes on it Cap'n Colepepper knows what he's about.' And that's just what I says to 'em, sir."

The captain had let his pipe go out and his screwed up eyes were twinkling with pleasure under the heavy thatches of their brows. Dr. Tring, however, not being the recipient of the eulogy, had leisure for criticism and kept looking rather pointedly at the new arrival's empty left sleeve, wondering to himself, perhaps, whether half a recruit was better than no recruit at all.

Jelly noticed these glances and, turning to the doctor, said earnestly, "I've been at sea with Cap'n Colepepper, sir, since I lost my wing, and, though folks think there's only half of me left, some of 'em have found out I'm worth ten dead men yet."

"That's a solid fact, doctor," commented the captain.

"Which being so," continued the seaman, "I'd just like to sign on now for self and 'Enrietta."

"For self and what?" roared Dr. Tring.

"Self and 'Enrietta," repeated the man stolidly.

"Quite so," assented Captain Colepepper; "for himself and 'Enrietta."

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