

Some Buried Treasures

Tales of Fabulous Sums Lost in Ocean Wrecks and the Innumerable Efforts That Have Been Made to Recover Them

By **BROUGHTON BRANDENBURG**

THE knowledge that great wealth lay somewhere close under their feet seems to have kept whole communities in turmoil for centuries, and the certainty that a huge treasure reposed in a marked location where a few hours of digging should disclose it seems to have driven many searchers to the very verge of insanity. For instance, Ducasse, the greatest of all treasure hunters, who died in 1897 after making, finding, losing, and recovering several fortunes, certainly shortened his life in his mad hunt for gold.

No more alluring or more baffling quest can be imagined than the great King John Treasure buried near Lynn in Norfolkshire. When the profligate monarch was finally driven to exile and death in Scotland, he took with him the entire royal treasure collected after his last burial of treasure, and all the royal regalia of the Norman Kings, including the crown of King Alfred. A British Museum expert has estimated the total value at twenty-two million dollars. It cumbered his flight, and he was compelled to bury it, according to his own account, before his death, "where the road from Lynn to Swinehead crosses Wellestre." To a certainty it has never been recovered, though in the reign of Queen Victoria men sinking a well struck a peculiar implement shod with a hook, and, pulling it out, brought with it a coronet. Stupidly, they did not pursue their search further, and now no one knows where the well was sunk.

Quite as tantalizing is the history of the Treasure of Guerdon, as it is called. It takes its name from the famous old convent of this town, and here in the sixth century great stores of wealth were collected from smaller ecclesiastical establishments to prevent their falling into the hands of Norman pirates. This was just before the death of Clovis. When the invaders sacked the place, they failed to find anything but minor works of art and the commoner things of value. Following their custom, their captives were put to death, and fire and weather effaced the marks which had been put on stones to guide the owners of the treasure to its recovery.

Hunted for a Thousand Years

WITH the return of some who had escaped, the search was begun, and has been nearly continuous for more than a thousand years, as it was known beyond all question that the treasure was in the ruins. The estimates of it made on the inventories collected by the monks averaged the great sum of forty-six million dollars. In the reign of Louis XIV. the Government contracted with adventurers who spent seven million dollars, eventually losing all the fruits of their work in the Revolution. Finally, great sums having been spent, many noblemen ruined, and many lives lost, the Government sent a scientific party to investigate. They reported that every possible spot had been explored to great depths, and that it was a physical impossibility that there could be any treasure in the ruins. Thereupon a law was published forbidding anyone to make further search.

As if in mockery, evidence of the treasure's existence suddenly appeared. One night a girl, having fled from home to avoid parental punishment, took refuge in a hollow of the sand by the wayside. The earth gave way slightly as she crouched against it, and revealed a small opening, stone-lined, in which was a solid gold salver, a paten, and a flagon studded with emeralds and rubies. These were worth many thousand dollars and now repose in the Louvre. Under the Republic the search was resumed, but since Brugere died no really intelligent hunt has been made.

In the outworks of Stirling Castle or the purlies thereof lies buried a treasure that for its historical associations alone would be worth a great sum in the open market. In 1561, when Mary Queen of Scots returned to Scotland she brought many objects of virtue, and a large fund said to have been gathered by French Cardinals, which was a trust fund to be used only in extreme need and for the cause of the church. When after seven stormy years she fled across the border to plead with Elizabeth, trusty friends concealed her personal treasure somewhere near Stirling Castle. There is no proof that it was exhumed during her eighteen years' imprisonment.

Both Jedburgh Castle and Kirkstall Abbey have their romantic stories of treasure, but the clues to its whereabouts are faint. The history of the treasure



Returning With His Pistols Empty.

is that a party of Cavaliers, fleeing from Marston Moor, hid at the abbey and temporarily interred a military treasure which they guarded for Charles I. They were pursued by three troops of horse, many were killed, many captured, and none was ever able to return for the recovery of the money.

Quite as compelling is the story of the great Treasure of Orval. It was collected during a long period in many abbeys and finally removed to Orval, as the monks were driven out elsewhere. When they were forced from their greatest stronghold, they left the wonderful collection of gold and silver images, plate, coin, jewels, etc., most cunningly concealed, the single clue to its whereabouts being the one word "Nemo." This was hastily carved on the tomb of the last abbot, and is without doubt the key to certain cabalistic letters cut with evident intention on all the other tombs.

A French Girl the Medium

THERE is a growing belief that one portion of the treasure has been found. Some seventy years ago a young French girl, called "La Blonde Camille", among the Parisian scientists, developed remarkable powers of clairvoyancy in the hands of a "magnetic physician." This man isolated the girl after a study of her phenomenon by many learned men and sought to gain through her unusual gifts a knowledge of the Orval Treasure. This was unsuccessful for sometime, and the girl wasted away under the strain. At last she appeared to get some clue, and the physician hurried her to the ruins of the abbey. A few days later the girl's mother received a letter from the physician, in which he declared that the child was dead and her body would be found on one of the tombs of the abbots. The letter went on to state that the mother would re-

ceive a certain sum annually during her lifetime, but that the physician would never be seen again. The

authorities were notified and a detachment of soldiers was sent to the ruin, where they found the girl's body without mark of violence stretched on a sarcophagus. The promised money came regularly to the woman through a Parisian solicitor, and about twenty years ago a son of the physician, who had been in moderate circumstances, appeared in Paris and is now living there, the possessor of a splendid income.

More fascinating than a romance are the bare facts of the vast treasure now called the Rouviere Quest, getting its name from the Marquis of Rouviere. Behold a man who received most strangely the exact location of a long forgotten treasure attested by a King and a dozen of his nobles, and yet the indicated spot rewarded him nothing for a lifetime of digging. The young marquis was in the last century an attaché at the court of St. James, representing France. One day there came to him a stranger, who introduced himself as a French savant making research by royal permission in the Tower of London. The antiquarian said he had found in the bottom of a chest of trophies in the Tower a small locked and sealed copper box. To this a key was attached, but the key was bound by a parchment which was covered with heraldic seals, and with each seal, of which there were fourteen, was the signature of an illustrious Frenchman. Among the others the savant showed the seal and signature of the marquis's grandfather, who had been guillotined in 1793. When the contents of the box were disclosed, there was great excitement among those present.

The papers within set forth that when Saint Louis founded Sainte Chapelle he was the possessor of the whole treasury of France. In his pious enthusiasm, he had made to be placed in the nave heroic figures of the twelve Apostles formed from virgin gold and solid silver and set with precious stones. Dark days drew down on France.

Hiding the Treasure

THOSE who knew the worth of the statues became alarmed; and on the night of the sacking of St. Denis the statues were removed and hidden in a secure place. When the mob broke into the Sainte Chapelle the images of the twelve Apostles had vanished. Those now in place are replicas in less costly material.

The probable value of the treasure was set by the finders of the box at the amazing sum of fifty-one million dollars. The inclosures contained a map showing the boundaries of France at the time of the interment, and said that the statues would be found at a point where the lines of latitude and longitude crossed. The marquis and the descendants of other nobles whose names were on the outer parchment determined to recover the treasure, and decided that the exact spot was near the village of Viviers, in Normandy, which spot as it happened was a part of the property of the Orleans family.

When the eager young men sought the place they found a newly plowed field, but in the center was a clump of poplars with rank undergrowth and brambles at their roots. A peasant who was plowing was questioned as to why that spot was allowed to exist, and answered that it was by command of his father, who had received a like command from his father. They had revered the spot and often prayed there. He recalled that his grandfather had spoken of the place as the *sainte coigne*, at which statement the young nobles were greatly excited, for that was the phrase used to designate the hiding place in the parchment. The field was quietly purchased and operations were begun. They have been nearly continuous down until the present day under many different companies and societies. Many millions of francs have been expended, and where the poplars stood a hole over two hundred feet in depth was sunk. Also reckoning from the old meridian, there are three other points in France where the lines of latitude and longitude cross, and no one has thought of looking there.

A little over eighty years ago five million dollars' worth of treasure, now worth much more, was hidden by Chilean pirates in a ravine of the little island of Trinidad, and it is there yet, awaiting a finder. The treasure is part of the wealth of the Spanish colonies. Early in 1821 Peru revolted against Spain, and the Bishop secretly conveyed