



Beryl Shinn (right) holds Drake's brass plate, while A. L. Chickering, president of the California Historical Society, points to a photo of the spot where Shinn found it.

BECAUSE an Oakland department store clerk stopped to change a tire on a rocky hill overlooking San Francisco Bay, and amused himself by tumbling rocks down the hillside after the job was done, California historians have come into possession of a long-lost memento of great importance—and the clerk has come into possession of \$3500.

And, by the same token, there is a certain Oakland chauffeur who is kicking himself very earnestly these days. For he let the memento slip through his fingers, and thereby lost his chance



When the Golden Hind anchored in the bay, the frightened Indians sent out a lone envoy in a canoe, to appease the supposed wrath of the god-like visitors. . . . Above, Sir Francis Drake, by a contemporary.

brasse, fast nailed to a great and firme post; whereone is engrauen her graces name, and the day and year of our arriual there, and of the free giuing vp of the prouince and kingdome both by the king and people into her maiesties hands; together with her highnesse picture and armes in a piece of sixpence currant English monie shewing it selfe by a hole made of purpose through the

When SIR FRANCIS DRAKE'S long-lost "CALLING CARD" was discovered

to get the tidy sum which finally went to the clerk.

The memento is a brass plate, measuring some five by eight inches and inscribed with rudely engraved letters. It is California's lone reminder of the visit of one of the greatest sailors of all time—Sir Francis Drake, doughty sea rover of Queen Elizabeth's day, who sailed up the coast three and one-half centuries ago, careened his ship in a little harbor some 30 or 40 miles from San Francisco Bay, put the brass plate up on a pole to announce that he had been there and had claimed the country for Queen Elizabeth, and then sailed on across the Pacific for home.

The clerk who found the plate was Beryle Shinn, who had stopped to fix a tire on a rocky little hillock outside the town of San Rafael, overlooking San Francisco Bay. Relaxing after his job was done, he got to prying up loose rocks and rolling them down the slope; under one of them he found the long-lost plate.

Mildly curious, he put it in his car and took it home. When he washed it he discovered printing on it; so, eventually, he took it to the University of California, where he submitted it to Dr. Herbert E. Bolton, professor of American history, for inspection.

DR. BOLTON examined it, cleaned it some more, examined it still further—and suddenly realized that California's greatest lost historical treasure had come to light.

For the ancient plate bore these words—which aren't so hard to read if you bear in mind the old Elizabethan habit of using "I" in place of "J" and "V" in place of "U":

"Bee it knowne vnto all men by these presents

"Ivne 17, 1579

"By the grace of God and in the name of herr maiesty Qveen Elizabeth of England and her svccessors forever I take possession of this kingdome whose king and people freely resigne their right and title in the whole land vnto herr maiesties keepinge now named by me and to bee knowne vnto all men as nova albion

"Francis Drake."

Back of this plate there lies one of the grandest buccaneering stories of all time—the story of Drake's great voyage around the globe.

Drake had set out from England on Dec. 13, 1577, with five small ships and 166 men, to "singe the beard" of the King of Spain.

By the summer of the next year he had reached the southern coast of what is now The Argentine. There he abandoned two of his ships, which had become unseaworthy, hanged a mutinous subordinate, and set out for the tortuous Straits of Magellan. Two other ships went astray there, concluded that Drake had been lost, and went back to England. In his now famous ship, the

Golden Hind, Drake pushed on and entered the Pacific.

Up he went, past Mexico and along what is now the California coast. He sailed, apparently, as far as the present boundary between California and Oregon, found no passage, and concluded that he would have to cross the Pacific and go home around Africa. But first he must find some safe harbor.

THIS is where the brass plate comes in. When it was first identified, people assumed that it proved Drake had really gone into San Francisco Bay.

But after the papers had been full of this news for some days, William Calderia, chauffeur for an Oakland banker, came forward and said that he had originally found the plate—on the shores of Bodega Bay, after all. He had carried it around in his car for several days, but at last had got tired of it and had thrown it away.

This was Calderia's hard luck; for the California Historical Society thought so much of the find that it gave Shinn \$3500 for the plate.

After Drake had got back to England his chaplain, one Fletcher, wrote an account of the voyage under the title, "The World Encompassed." His account of the landing in the bay and the erection of the plate follows:

"Before we went from thence, our generall caused to be set vp a monument of our being there; as also of her maiesties and successors right and title to that kingdome, namely, a plate of

plate; vnderneath was likewise engrauen the name of our generall, etc."

In Chaplain Fletcher's quaint document, mention is made of "the free giuing vp" of the land by "the king and people." Reference apparently is had to some sort of deal with the local Indians and their chief.

IT is related that the natives, attracted to the scene by the firing of a gun on the Golden Hind, were filled with terror and assumed that the gods had come to earth to punish them for their sins. So before going out to visit the ship they held a prayer-dance to appease whatever powers they had offended.

This accomplished, they sent a messenger to the ship, bearing a basket of vegetables and fruits as a peace offering.

The next day he came again with another offering. After this sort of thing had gone on for a couple of days, both sides were satisfied that the other fellow had no evil designs. The Englishmen went ashore and the Indians all came down to the beach; and after several days of powwowing—in which neither side could understand a word that the other was saying—the Indians finally comprehended that their visitors were out to take possession of their country. Happy to get off with their lives, they were agreeable to this, and their chief at length formally surrendered to Drake a big black stick which seems to have been his badge of office.

