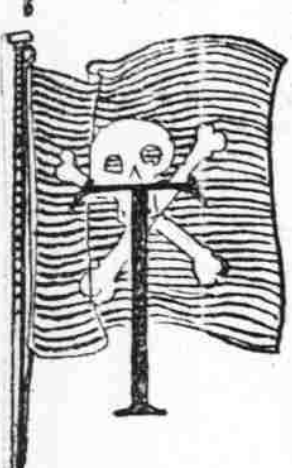


# The TREASURE OF COCOS ISLAND

## The Romantic History of a Pirate Hoard on an Island in the Pacific

By WALTER NOBLE BURNS

Copyright, 1911, by W. G. CHAPMAN



HE good bark Hesperus will spread her white wings at Eagle Harbor, Wash., in a few weeks and sail away across the blue Pacific into the heart of the most fascinating romance of all pirate stories.

Capt. Frederick Hackett, in command of the vessel, claims to be the only man in all the world who knows the secret of the buried treasure of Cocos Island. He plans on this expedition to lift the vast wealth plundered by sea rovers in the early part of the last century and hidden on the island in a cave, the exact location of which has been lost and for which adventurers have sought in vain for many years.

He is equipped with hydraulic mining machinery and has sufficient provisions to remain for a year if necessary on the island, which lies 300 miles off the western coast of Central America. That a score of former expeditions have proved failures does not discourage him. The treasure hunters who have gone before have depended upon pick and shovel. He will be the first prepared to use hydraulic mining methods. Earthquakes, he says, have shaken down landslides upon the treasure cave and changed the topography of the island. He will wash the earth away with streams of water powerful enough to uproot trees and burst rocks asunder. He is confident of success.

"When I return to the United States," says Captain Hackett, "I shall have the entire Cocos Island treasure batted down beneath the hatches of the Hesperus."

The story of Cocos Island makes Robert Louis Stevenson's "Treasure Island" seem true in comparison, so much stranger are the facts of this real romance of buried treasure than the dream-adventures, highly colored as they are, wrought by the imagination of the novelist. The marvelous tale has its beginning in the days when savage buccaneers, flying skull-and-crossbones at their mast-heads, harried the Spanish main and plundered tall galleons on the high seas. It fairly glitters from beginning to end with a fairy wealth of doubloons, pieces-of-eight, louis d'ors, moldores, sequins and double guineas. In its crowded episodes, blind-folded victims walk the plank, bronzed and turbaned cutthroats swarm over the bulwarks of captured ships and lay about them with cutlass and dragon pistol, sea rogues are strung up at yard-arms, towns are sacked and looted, vessels are left to welter to their ruin in flame and smoke. It centers about a lonely island, palm-shadowed in tropic seas, whereon lies buried a treasure beyond the dreams of Monte Cristo. It rings with the clash of battle on the island beaches and with the death cries of the men murdered that they might never betray the treasure's secret hiding place. Finally it hands down to the far-off time of romance to prosaic modern days a great golden mystery which, like a siren beckoning through the years from purple southern seas, has lured men to ruin and death.

According to well-authenticated accounts, \$23,000,000 in pirate treasure is buried on Cocos Island. Of this sum \$12,000,000 in money, bullion and plate is supposed to have been hidden in 1821 by Benito Bonito, the last of the great pirates who, even after Lafitte had passed away, kept alive upon the ocean the lawless traditions of L'Olonnois, Pierre Le Grand, Roche Brazilliano, England, Hawkins and Sir Henry Morgan.

The remaining \$11,000,000 is said to have been concealed in the same cave in 1838 by "Bugs" Thompson, one of Bonito's old pirate crew, who sailed away with the treasure from the harbor of Callao when the government authorities of Peru entrusted it aboard his vessel to save it from capture by revolutionists. It consisted of money from the public treasury, ingots of gold from Inca mines, plate, chalices, ornaments and golden statues belonging to the churches and cathedrals of Lima.

Captain Hackett is fourth in what may be christened the royal line of the holders of the golden secret of Cocos Island. This secret has been handed down in a sort of lineal descent from Thompson. The former ocean freebooter for years carried about a chart of Cocos Island drawn upon a piece of yellow parchment showing the exact location of the cave in which his own and Bonito's treasure is hidden. He gave this chart to a fisherman of St. John's,

N. F., named Keating, with full directions how to find the treasure. Thompson died under mysterious circumstances a little later and the suspicion grew that Keating killed him. However that may be, Keating sailed to Cocos Island in 1844 with Captain Bogue, a seaman of sufficient means to finance the expedition. They found the treasure, but Bogue never returned. Keating said he was drowned in the surf while attempting to climb into a boat with his boots and pockets stuffed with gold. It is generally believed that Keating murdered him.

Keating made a second visit to the island four years later and again found the treasure. In both trips he is supposed to have brought away gold and jewels to the value of \$150,000. He was prevented from recovering the entire treasure by mutinous crews on both voyages. Keating and Bogue are the only men, so far as is known, who ever recovered treasure from Cocos Island.

Keating passed his secret on to the Hackett brothers, both seamen and his neighbors in St. John's. Keating had lost or destroyed the chart which he had obtained from Thompson. But he drew another chart which he gave to the Hacketts with explicit instructions how to find the cave. Keating died in 1883 and Capt. Thomas Hackett, the elder brother, sailed in 1885 on an expedition bound for Cocos, but the voyage ended with his death in Havana from yellow fever.

Capt. Frederick Hackett, who is about to undertake the latest Cocos Island treasure hunt, has himself made two former unsuccessful expeditions.

Captain Hackett was formerly a whaling skipper. He has been a seaman all his life. He formerly sailed out of St. John's, Newfoundland, where he was born and grew to manhood. For the last ten years he has made his home in Vancouver, British Columbia, where he is engaged in the fishing trade. He is a bluff, ruddy, bearded old sea dog, hale and vigorous despite his three score years, and full of a boyish enthusiasm over a project that has been his one dream for a quarter of a century. So many expeditions to Cocos Island have failed to find treasures that Captain Hackett has had difficulty in raising funds for his present expedition. He succeeded in getting together \$100,000, and with this sum he has been able to provision his ship properly for a year's voyage and to take along hydraulic mining machinery, in which he is sure lies the only hope of ever unearthing the Cocos Island treasure.

"I have stood over millions," said Captain Hackett recently as he sat by the skylight on the quarter-deck of the Hesperus and watched his sailors busy with final preparations for the expedition. "It was not lack of knowledge that caused me to fail in my two former voyages, but lack of equipment and supplies. I knew after my first expedition that picks and shovels would not do in Cocos, and that the only chance to get the treasure was to tear up the earth with streams of water thrown by a hydraulic mining engine. I have the latest hydraulic machinery with me now, and I shall set out with perfect faith in the successful outcome of my voyage."

The landslide that now lies on top of the treasure cave probably occurred in the middle of the last century during the violent earthquakes that shook the western coast of South and Central America. Forest trees have grown upon it, and the appearance of that part of the island is vastly changed since the days of Bonito, Thompson and Keating. But with my bearings and chart and the instructions given me by Keating in many long interviews, I believe I can locate within a radius of 30 feet the spot beneath which the treasure is buried.

"I knew Keating from youth up," Captain Hackett continued. "He was a rough, ignorant man who had been a fisherman and a sailor all his life."

"It was because my brother and I befriended him when most everybody else looked askance at him that after advancing years made it pretty certain that he never would be able to divulge his secret to us. My brother and I owned the collier, Lord Dufferin, which was kept busy cruising up and down the coasts of Newfoundland and New Brunswick. On one of our voyages we took Keating with us. One stormy night as the old man sat by the table in the cabin over a glass of stiff grog, he first told us how to find the treasure. He began his strange story with an account of his first visit to Cocos with Captain Bogue."

"It was a hot day in June, he said, when he and Bogue landed. They struck off through the tropical jungle

with Thompson's chart to guide them. "The cave, Keating said, was 15 feet long by 12 feet broad, with a ceiling high enough to permit a man to stand upright. It was full of bars of gold and sacks of money. Many of the sacks bore the stamp of the Bank of Lima. There were many golden crucifixes, chalices and church ornaments. A statue of the Madonna of solid gold lay upon the floor. It was so heavy that Keating and Bogue together could not lift it, but could only push it along. The glitter of the piles of gold, Keating said, fairly made him reel and seemed to fill the cave with a ghostly radiance that at first struck him with awe.

"Bogue and Keating tied a few coils in a handkerchief and rowed back to their ship. They told the sailors, they had found a spring of fresh water, but they were so excited with what they had seen that they acted unnaturally and the crew, may be, had suspicions of the truth, anyway. One word led to another, and Bogue and Keating told as little as possible, but it was enough for the crew, who made them promise to go shares."

"Right here Keating and Bogue began to play their game more shrewdly. They served out unlimited grog, as if to celebrate treasure trove. Long before night the whole outfit was gloriously drunk except Keating and Bogue, who took care to remain strictly sober. All hands turned in early to sleep off their potatoes and were ready to bring the treasure aboard next morning. As soon as they were asleep, Keating and Bogue slipped off to shore in a whale-boat. They beached their boat and again made their way to the cave. They filled their pockets with doubloons and pieces-of-eight and louis d'ors. Not satisfied with the money, Bogue, stuffed bar gold into his sea-boots so that he could hardly walk for the weight. In launching the boat, Keating said Bogue went under and was drowned."

"Keating," Captain Hackett went on, "escaped to sea with his plunder, leaving the ship to its fate, and the men never were seen or heard of afterward. Four days later he was picked up by a Spanish coasting vessel which landed him safely near Punta Arenas. He slowly worked his way back to Newfoundland and deposited much money in the St. John's bank."

"Keating made a second voyage to Cocos island four years later. He told us of this adventure too. I wrote the tale out afterwards in Keating's own language as nearly as I could remember it."

The first treasure was buried on Cocos Island by Benito Bonito a few months before his death in 1821. Bonito was born in 1788. He was a Spaniard of supposed gentle blood. His real identity is not known—Benito Bonito was an assumed name. He began his career as a lieutenant of a Spanish privateer. At the close of the Napoleonic wars he became mate of a Portuguese trading brig. In 1816 he quarreled with his captain, murdered him and seized the vessel. From that date he followed the life of a pirate. One of his first prizes taken in West Indian waters was an English slaver named the Lightning. Having cut her out of Matanzas, where she was lying at anchor one night, he burned his own brig and, transferring his flag to the British vessel, renamed her the Relapago, which is Spanish for chain-lightning. Most of the crew of the slaver were made to walk the plank. Two pleaded for their lives and offered to join Bonito. On this condition Bonito spared them. These two men were Thompson, known in Cocos Island traditions as "Bugs," and a Frenchman named Chapelle, who also figures later in the story of Cocos Island.

In the long, low, rakish Relapago, which could show a clean pair of heels to anything sailing the Spanish main, Bonito had a busy and prosperous career as a pirate. From Rio to the Bahamas he became a scourge and collected an immense amount of booty. When the Spanish government sent warships to hunt him, Bonito slipped around Cape Horn to fresh pastures in the Pacific.

The wealth of the churches of Spanish America is still considerable, but in the early days of the last century the richness of the plate and ornaments with which they were adorned was amazing. Bonito sacked cities

and towns up and down the western coast, pillaging the cathedrals and laying tribute upon the citizens. His fame as a cruel and rapacious sea robber spread from the Horn to the Spanish settlements in California. In hunting for a spot in which to bury his growing treasure, he chanced upon Cocos Island.

Cocos Island is a volcanic speck in the Pacific ocean and belongs to Costa Rica. It is 300 miles off the Costa Rica coast, 500 miles from Panama, and 5 degrees north of the equator.

On the trip to Cocos Island destined to be Bonito's last, a number of his men became dissatisfied. Having rowed their treasure to the cave they gathered on the beach in sullen temper, and soon came to open mutiny. They were tired of piracy. They demanded that the entire treasure be divided among them and that they be set upon the mainland and permitted to shift for themselves. Bonito refused. A pitched battle was fought with cutlass and pistol, and in the hand-to-hand engagement many were killed.

Bonito was victorious. With the mutiny suppressed, he sailed for the West Indies. Off Valparaiso, some one suggested a carouse ashore. Bonito gave his consent. Seventeen men were landed and Bonito agreed to lie off and on near a certain headland and wait for them. With the 17 were all that were left of the mutineers, including Thompson and Chapelle. But Bonito proved treacherous. He sailed away and left the recalcitrants to their fate. The 17 were recognized in Valparaiso as pirates and captured. They were convicted and all except Thompson and Chapelle were hanged. Thompson and Chapelle escaped by representing that they had been forced into Bonito's service and offered to guide a warship to Bonito's secret haunts among the West Indian islands.

The British government was just then planning a campaign of extermination against Bonito and his buccaneers. Sent to England for the purpose, Thompson and Chapelle guided a British corvette to one of their old chief's places of refuge in the Caribbean. Bonito's ship and crew were captured, but the grim old sea wolf, seeing ahead the loom of the gibbet on Execution dock, blew out his brains on his own quarter-deck.

Of the subsequent fate of Chapelle little is known.

Thompson drops out of sight until 1838 when he reappears as Captain Thompson, master of an English trading brig, the Mary Dear, which at the opening of the second chapter of the romance of Cocos Island was lying in the harbor of Callao, Peru. A revolution was under way in Peru. Lima, the capital founded by Pizarro, was in a state of siege. Just before the beleaguering lines of the revolutionists were drawn about the city, the government authorities removed the money from the treasury, and from the churches the plate and ornaments dating back to the golden days of the conquest, and sent them for safe keeping to an old stone fortress at Callao. When the revolutionary army learned of the removal of the treasure, which was valued at \$11,000,000, it marched on Callao with the determination of capturing the rich hoard. In this crisis, the commandant of the fortress, seeing an English flag fluttering from the peak of the Mary Dear, bethought him that under the folds of the union Jack Lima's treasure would be safe. Captain Thompson gave his consent to the proposition. The treasure was soon stowed snugly under the Mary Dear's hatches, and four Peruvian soldiers were left on board to guard it.

The Peruvian authorities, of course, did not dream that Captain Thompson, who so bravely flaunted the English flag, had sailed in earlier days under the Jolly Roger with Benito Bonito's cut-throat crew. But with \$11,000,000 batted down in his hold the old lawless spirit of his buccaneering days flamed up anew in Thompson, and he could not resist the temptation to turn robber again. In the night watches he and his men slit the throats of the guardians of the treasure, slipped their cables and put to sea.

The Mary Dear bore up for Cocos Island and dropped anchor in Water bay. Some portion of the spoil was distributed among the crew. The remainder Thompson carried in 11 boat-loads around the headland which separates Water bay from Chatham bay and there landed it upon the beach. He sent the boats back to the brig, keeping two men with him. With their assistance he carried the treasure into the tropical brush and stowed it in Benito Bonito's old treasure cave. Then he shot the two men.

He spread to the winds every stitch of canvas and headed the brig westward in a mad hurry to escape pursuit, but before the tall peaks of Cocos Island had dropped below the horizon a Peruvian gunboat hove in sight and sent a shot across his bow. When capture seemed inevitable, Thompson surrendered. Perhaps his cunning brain foresaw the immunity that must be granted to the sole possessor of the key to the hiding place of millions of dollars. At any rate he and the mate of the Mary Dear were spared that they might guide the Peruvians back to the Cocos Island treasure. The other ten men of the Mary Dear's crew were strung up at the yard-arm.

The warship proceeded to Cocos Island and Thompson and the mate were landed under an armed escort. But the desperado was a man of resource, and he and the mate contrived to escape and kept in hiding in the caves and undergrowth. For four days armed parties searched for them through the length and breadth of the island, pouring volleys into every piece of thick scrub or likely hiding place. At the end of this time, thinking that perhaps the fugitives had been killed by the broadsides with which the jungles had been raked, the captain of the gunboat sailed away.

The two marooned men eked out a precarious existence on berries and birds' eggs until a vessel called at Cocos for water. Passing themselves off as shipwrecked sailors, they were given passage to the mainland. The mate died soon afterwards of yellow fever at Punta Arenas. Thompson escaped. One story has it that he went to Samoa where he lived under the name of MacComber. According to another tale he made his way to England.

Nothing was heard of Thompson again until 1844, when on a voyage from England to Newfoundland he fell in with Keating, who was to become heir to the secret of the Cocos Island treasure.

Soon after Thompson had confided his secret to Keating he died. His death aroused no suspicion at the time, but long afterwards in the light of events Keating was suspected of having murdered him. Keating took over Thompson's effects, including his map of Cocos Island. By Thompson's death, Keating became the sole possessor in all the world of the secret of the Cocos Island treasure. How Keating lifted the treasure on two voyages to the island already has been told.



**SPRING FOG,**  
Stretchy, Drowsy,  
stupid, tired, head-achy  
—"not sick, but don't  
feel good."

Just a few signs that  
you need that most effective  
tonic, liver-stirring  
Spring Remedy—

**OXIDINE**

—a bottle proves.

The Specific for Malaria, Chills and  
Fever, and a reliable remedy for  
all diseases due to a torpid  
liver and sluggish bowels  
and kidneys.

50c. At Your Druggist

THE BEEHIVE DRUG CO.,  
Waco, Texas.

WANTED TO KNOW.



Life Insurance Solicitor—If you  
live 20 years you get the \$10,000—but  
if you don't, then your widow will  
get it.

Mr. Kutting Hintz—How will I  
know that she got it?

Literary Criticism.

They were discussing a certain authoress at dinner, and a well-known critic raised a laugh by remarking: "Well, her hair's red, even if her books are not."

The mild young man in the corner made a mental note for the sally for future use, and at another party shortly afterward he carefully guided the conversation into literary channels. "T. Bits informs its readers: 'Fortunately, some one mentioned the desired name, and he triumphantly cried out: "Well, she's got red hair, even if her books haven't!'"

More English Humor.

The first night Walter Kelly, known to vaudeville as the "Virginia Judge," walked up the Strand he complained to his English companion that the famous street in London was dark at nine o'clock. "Why," said he, "at this hour Broadway is as bright as day. There is one sign alone, 'The Chariot Race,' in which there are 50,000 electric lights." "But I say, old top," said his English friend, "wouldn't that be rather conspicuous?"

THE TEA PENALTY.  
A Strong Man's Experience.

Writing from a busy railroad town the wife of an employe of one of the great roads says:

"My husband is a railroad man who has been so much benefited by the use of Postum that he wishes me to express his thanks to you for the good it has done him. His waking hours are taken up with his work, and he has no time to write himself."

"He has been a great tea drinker all his life and has always liked it strong."

"Tea has, of late years, acted on him like morphine does upon most people. At first it soothed him, but only for an hour or so, then it began to affect his nerves to such an extent that he could not sleep at night, and he would go to his work in the morning wretched and miserable from the loss of rest. This condition grew constantly worse, until his friends persuaded him, some four months ago, to quit tea and use Postum."

"At first he used Postum only for breakfast, but as he liked the taste of it, and it somehow seemed to do him good, he added it to his evening meal. Then, as he grew better, he began to drink it for his noon meal, and now he will drink nothing else at table."

"His condition is so wonderfully improved that he could not be hired to give up Postum and go back to tea. His nerves have become steady and reliable once more, and his sleep is easy, natural and refreshing."

He owes all this to Postum, for he has taken no medicine and made no other change in his diet.

"His brother, who was very nervous from coffee-drinking, was persuaded by us to give up the coffee and use Postum and he also has recovered his health and strength." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pgs. "There's a reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.