

## A HIDDEN TREASURE.

MANY HAVE SEARCHED FOR IT IN VAIN.

FROM the beginning of civilisation, when people commenced to find that they had a past and to sift their legendary lore and decipher the crude records of their barbaric forefathers, nothing has taken so strong a hold upon the human race as the tales of hidden treasure that have been handed down from generation to generation. Doubtless the old Egyptians searched for the tombs and records of forgotten peoples with as keen a zeal as modern explorers, under the cloak of science, pierce the Pyramids and open the sarcophagi of the Upper Nile; and there is little doubt that the races which come after us will be possessed of an arduous no less vigorous in defining the boundaries of our ruined cities and despoiling our tombs.

**RICH IN TALES OF BURIED TREASURE,** but they are mostly of a vague and unsatisfactory sort, which will not stand investigation, and can usually be traced to the bar-room utterances of some dissipated miner or to the shameless fabrications of some unscrupulous citizen. It seems to be left for Santa Barbara, which already has the best of everything in the way of climate, scenery, products and people, to lay just claim to several of the most enticing and authentic tales of hidden treasure that one often hears.

I came across the first of these while exploring a canyon some ten miles out from town, variously known as Gatos (wildcat) and Lewis Canyon, and which contains, several miles from the point where the wagon road terminates, some interesting prehistoric traces in the shape of Indian paintings on the faces of two sheer cliffs, through which the tiny stream, moving with gigantic force during the winter torrents, has slowly through the ages carved its way. There is a cave high up on the face of one of these cliffs, and this cave, no less than the strange inscriptions, was one of the objective points of our party.

Perhaps you'll find the old priest's lost treasure,' was the quickening remark of a rancher who was gravely contributing directions for our guidance, and who evidently had little respect for people who were led by no more dignified motives than a desire to unravel the lost history of a prehistoric race. 'They say it's hidden in a cave somewhere along this range,' he added, tentatively.

This led to queries and explanations. His knowledge was vague but beguiling. Some time during the early occupation of the mission there had been a great treasure concealed, for the purpose of safety, in a cave in the mountains, and the secret of its hiding-place had been lost.

We reached the cliffs, but not the cave, which was thirty-five feet up in the air, in the face of a straight rock, having no ladder and no means of constructing any save from timbers too heavy for our exploring party to handle. If the treasure is there it still awaits the discovery of some enterprising individual who has the courage to follow the windings of Lewis Creek nearly to the crest of the range, with the aid of ropes, scaling several falls and slippery ledges high in the air, and who then has sufficient courage and enterprise reserved to fell a couple of sycamores and construct a ladder that will lift him to this opening.

Again and again, sometimes from old Mexicans, whose scant knowledge of English and my own scant store of Spanish made conversation difficult; sometimes from prosaic ranchmen, who regarded all energy as misapplied that is directed outside of a barley field or a kitchen, vague references to this fascinating tale again came to us. It was not until I came across a German, who has his home in San Roque Canyon, that the story was spread before me, full and complete, to the last detail.

'Very early in this century,' my German acquaintance began, 'about the year 1808, the Santa Barbara Mission, at that time very wealthy, and with

## GREAT STORES OF GOLD AND PRECIOUS JEWELS,

as well as church ornaments worth a pile, was endangered by pirates, who at that time threatened the port. The priests decided to move these treasures to a place of safe-keeping. Now you can see for yourself that if they had merely sent them off in somebody's keeping they would have been easily traced. So they determined to make believe they had another purpose when they carried off the jewels. They put up an adobe building here in the canyon, where

there were many Indians. I will show you the foundation of this chapel by and bye. But they pretended it was a dairy they were building, and they brought along all their cattle and pastured them here. If the pirates had guessed that they had the treasure here it was a good place to defend it, you bet!

We had been walking slowly up the canyon, and my informant turned and with a significant wave of his hand bade me take in the situation. He evidently was an authority upon military matters, as well as upon all other subjects. The place seemed fitted by nature for an impregnable fortress, with its narrow, rocky walls and its slight eminence, commanding the only approach from the valley. He showed me the half-obliterated foundation of the old chapel, or dairy as he would have me believe, which was easily traced, indicating the former existence of a quadrangular building, probably some sixty feet in width and perhaps 150 feet in length.

'Here they had the treasure safely housed,' he went on. 'But one night one of the very young fathers—not one of the old ones, as some people say—one Father Pedro, he got sick and they didn't know it. You see, it was one of those kind of fevers that come on with a little twist in the brain. And he got to worrying over the treasure, and fearing that the pirates might find it there. And one night he got up when the others were asleep and he gathered it all together, and he went out in the night somewhere up in the hills and he hid it away, and the next morning he was very sick, and the very next night he died; died without telling one of them where he had put the treasure.'

There was an impressive pause. The story, told in that solitary place, amid the wild hills with their tangle of chaparral, their stately oaks and their maze of rocky fastnesses, carried conviction with it.

'They hunted for it a long time.'

## OF COURSE THEY HUNTED FOR IT.

It was the wealth of the mission. Without it they were poor,' the Dutchman went on. 'They went all over and over the hills. They dug up the ground in all directions. They hunted in the rocks and caves. They hunted for fifty years. They never found it.'

'I—wouldn't say. Sometimes on moonlight nights I see people with spades on their shoulders,' in a voice of mystery. 'But you speak of it to the priests at the mission and not one word will they say about it to admit or deny. If you want to hear about it you go to the old Greasers—half-Indians. They know all about it. I learn much from my mother-in-law. She is half Mexican, half Indian. She is old, and she remembers the talk about it when she was a child and everybody knew about it. There is scarcely a Spanish man in this town who has not dug for it. And Americans—they come, too, all the time. I tell them, "Go ahead." You find any treasure you are welcome to it. You can see the holes about here where they have been digging.'

There were certainly a great many holes bearing the marks of a spade or a shovel. Some of them, in our immediate vicinity, looked as if they might have been opened that morning. Yet the canyon was deserted, and in all the times we have visited it we had never so far encountered a soul besides the Dutchman. A sudden suspicion awoke.

'And you? Why don't you try and find it yourself when you have a little time to spare?' It would be a fine thing to come across such wealth these hard times.

This sympathetic enquiry encouraged him.

'Oh, me—I have dug a hole now and then, when I had nothing else to do,' he said, with affected indifference.

'And what is your theory? Do you think the treasure is hidden in the ground, or in a cave, or in a tree?'

'In the rocks,' he said firmly and notwithstanding the evidence of the freshly-turned sod.

'You see it stands to reason,' he went on with warmth, 'that the sick priest could not have dug a hole deep enough to hide the treasure that night. And if he had, the chances are they would have found the place as soon as they found that the treasure was gone. He couldn't have gone very far, and he couldn't have done much work. If he had gone all the way on the ground they could have followed his steps. I believe he put it in the rocks.'

In this arm of the San Roque, which is locally known as Tebbett's Canyon, named after an old newspaper man who once had his residence there, the rocks and boulders and ledges belong for the most part to what might be called a cave formation, and which is traceable in every gulch and canyon of the Santa Ynez range. It is a soft sandstone, which seems to have been interspersed in its formation by

nature with soft nodules, which wear away, leaving frequent hollows and cells. Sometimes whole ledges are honeycombed in this peculiar fashion, and where the soft spots are exposed to the weather or the wash of water caverns from eight to thirty feet result. Aside from this ledges in this vicinity have enormous fissures.

## CAVES WHERE THE TREASURE MAY BE.

There were probably a thousand caves and fissures in which a man or band of men might have found shelter, within a quarter of a mile of the foundations of the old mission building. There are a hundred thousand where a small treasure might be securely hidden from sight. Some of these holes and caverns are in places inaccessible, unless a man chose to risk his life in the climb and descent; yet there is a possibility that one in the delirium of fever might have reached them and found his way down again without injury.

But my informant's confidence was at full tide, and had reached a momentum where not all his prudent resolves of secrecy could interrupt it.

'Do you think that treasure was ever hidden without some sign to find it again?' he demanded, earnestly. 'I tell you, wherever that was hidden, there are marks to find it by. I've been hunting for those marks. They may be on trees or on rocks. Come with me and I will show you what I found!'

He led the way a hundred yards or more up the beautiful canyon, twice crossing a crystal brook as it came tumbling down from the heights above. He finally stopped in a glade of live oaks, under a noble tree.

'Look there!' he said. Deeply marked in the gnarled trunk at a height of some six feet was a large cross with a square base, the whole some four feet high and three or more feet across.

'And look here, again!'

On a tree some twenty feet away was

## THE RUDE OUTLINE OF A TOMAHAWK,

almost obliterated by time and growth.

'Now, it may be,' said the Dutchman, 'that if one would dig beneath these trees in a direct line between them he would come upon that treasure. I dug a little, as you see, but maybe I didn't dig deep enough. And, perhaps, if one should cut down the tree,' indicating the tree with the cross, 'they'd find it was hollow at one time, but the bark closed around the hole, and something may be inside of it; or perhaps it is high up, where the big limb joined the trunk. What I think is this: Somewhere else there was a third sign; perhaps it is on a rock, and it washed, so it doesn't show plain after all these years; perhaps it was on another tree, that was burned down when fires swept this gulch. If anybody can find that third sign, and draws a line between the three, the place where those lines intersect they may dig, and they will find the treasure.'

He said this with great conviction, and one could not but wonder how many weary hours or days he had spent in hunting for this third sign. But there was that about the cross on the tree that made it well worth regarding; so deep had it been cut in the gnarled trunk, so many years had the bark grown and striven to cover the ugly wound.

'One might think it had been

PUT OUR THREE TWO OR THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO,' said our guide, eyeing the tree with cool interest. 'I myself can scarcely see how it had time to grow so much since 1808. I am only a tenant here, and I can't cut down a tree unless it is dead. If I could cut that down we could count the layers of bark and tell to a year just when that was made.'

He said this with an air of triumph in his scientific lore and a little impatience that it should be necessary to take such a painstaking step to perfect his stores of exact knowledge. But more important thought was taking shape in another mind. Was it possible that this man, in his search for a treasure of gold and jewels, had stumbled across another and much more important discovery? The scar, as he had rightly said, bore the evidence of centuries of growth above it. Can it be that here, in a Santa Barbara canyon, we have a new and indisputable evidence of the existence of the prehistoric cross, antedating the introduction of the Christian religion, which discovered in Mexico half a century ago, caused such a wrangle among theologians?

## THE OBJECT IS CERTAINLY WELL WORTH INVESTIGATION.

Before another fire, such as has raged all around it the past summer, shall have swept this ancient landmark from the face of the earth, this tree should certainly be felled, and a cross-section made through the deeply grooved cross, with a view to ascertaining the exact number of layers of bark above it. That it has been made by the hand of man, its exact lines and elaborate delineation place beyond a question of a doubt.

In this same canyon, not many rods away, there is another arboreal curiosity that may well claim the consideration of thoughtful minds. This is a great oak which has one enormous limb, apparently of a different species, growing out of it at a height of some ten feet from the ground, and which has plainly been grafted by artificial means, the line of the cutting and the swell beyond it being distinctly visible. This, too, would seem, by its prodigious growth, to have been the work of a century or more ago. What could be the object of such elaborate task, performed on this hardwood tree in this lonely and uninhabited canyon?

FLOIA HAINES LOUGHEAD.

## TOMATOES PICKLED.

In choosing green tomatoes for pickling, reject all which have a tinge of ripeness, as they soften too easily in the cooking. Slice them very thin and as even as possible. To half a bushel of tomatoes take a dozen large onions, also sliced very thin. As they are cut, place in jars, and strew over them two small teacups of salt. Let them stand over night. Then drain well and cook until tender in one gallon of weak vinegar. Drain well again, and pack them loosely in the jars or bottles in which they are to be kept. Seal now six quarts of fresh vinegar and add two pounds of brown sugar, two ounces each of ground cinnamon and allspice, one ounce of ground cloves, quarter ounce of white mustard seed, two ounces of ground mustard, and a tablespoonful each of cayenne and celery seed. Tie the ground spices loosely in a bag, add the celery seed and ground mustard to the scalding vinegar. A little horse-radish cut up fine helps to keep the vinegar. Pour the vinegar hot over the pickles, and at once cover closely.



Cramer, photo. Honolulu.

NEW BOARDING SCHOOL FOR HARA-TONGA—OPENED JAN., 1895.  
See 'Our Illustrations.'