

LOCAL NEWS

X OCEAN MARY. X

A GRAVE AT HENNIKER RECALLS A STRANGE STORY.

Born on Shipboard the Babe Melted a Pirate's Heart and Ransomed the Company—She Was Married in the Silk He Gave Her, Now Preserved by Her Descendants.

In the village burying round at Henniker, says a writer in the Boston Sunday Globe, may be seen standing among a dozen slabs of like design a small slate stone whose inscription, in common with the others, in no manner suggests that the story of the one in whose memory it was set was different from the ordinary affairs of the hillside pioneer.

It is the grave of Ocean Mary. It was years and years ago that the baby mascot of the sea won a pirate's heart.

Previous to 1720, the year in which the principal events of this narrative occurred, many families of Scotch peasantry crossed the North channel and found, for a time, homes in the larger towns on or near the coast of Ireland. Thus Londonderry became the residence of a large number of Scotch yeomanry.

In those old times of slow ships and many perils of the sea, it was a far cry from Londonderry in Ireland to Londonderry in the granite state; still Scotland and the Emerald Isle had already sent sturdy pioneers to the new world on the Merrimack.

Tradition, often the truer part of history, has failed to save from oblivion the name of the ship which sailed from Londonderry for Boston in July, 1720, but she is said to have been in many respects vastly superior to others of her class in those times. At any rate long before she dropped anchor off the picturesque coast many well-to-do families had prepared for the long voyage. Of those who from the deck of the departing ship watched the green shores of Ireland fade from view a large proportion were not only strong of limb, but thrifty and provident.

Out through Lough Foye, past Iniskowen Head and far beyond Giant's Causeway, with favoring winds, sailed the fated ship.

Among the passengers were James Wilson and his young wife. A year before Wilson married Elizabeth Fulton, and they were now on their way to Londonderry, N. H., where land had been laid out to James Wilson as one of the grantees of that town.

Wilson ordered all captives unbound, all goods and valuables restored to the places from which they had been taken; then with his crew he left the ship and pulled to his own vessel. But the emigrant ship had scarcely got under way when a new alarm came to them. The pirate was returning.

If they were dismayed at his reappearance they were surprised to see him come on board alone and go directly below to the cabin. There he took from a parcel a piece of brocaded silk of marvelous fineness of texture and beauty of design. Seen at a little distance the effect of the pattern is as of a plaid combining in wonderfully harmonized tones nameless hues of red and green softened with lines of what evidently was once white.

Time has, perhaps, somewhat mellowed its color of tone, but the richness of its quality is as the richness of pearls.

"Let Mary wear this on her wedding day," the pirate said, as he lay the silk on the berth.

The pirate left the ship and was seen no more. In the fullness of time the emigrant ship reached Boston without further incident. There James Wilson died soon after landing. Elizabeth Wilson, with Mary, soon after went to live in Londonderry, where friends were waiting for them. Here the widow married James Clark, great-great-grandparent of Horace Greeley.

For years the people of the little hamlet religiously kept July 28 in thanksgiving for the deliverance of their friends from the hands of pirates.

Some time early in the year 1732 Thos. Wallace emigrated to America and settled in Londonderry, where, on Dec. 18 of the same year, he was married to Ocean Mary by Rev. Mr. Davidson of that town. Her wedding gown was the pirate's silk.

A granddaughter and a great-granddaughter have also worn the same dress on like occasions.

Four sons were born to Mary Wallace, three of whom removed to Henniker. There, on a slightly hill, Robert built the house which in his day was far and away the grandest mansion in all the country around. He was a man of large hospitality and intelligent strength of character.

Here Ocean Mary lived many years, and died in 1814 at the age of 94. Her grave is in the Center burying ground, about half-way down the middle walk, a bowshot distant from the railroad station. The curious visitor may if he choose read the inscription on the slate:

"In Memory of Widow Mary Wallace, who died Feb'y 13, A. D., 1814, in the 94th year of her age."

The likeness tradition has left of Ocean Mary is that of a woman symmetrically tall, with light hair, blue eyes, and florid complexion, together with a touch of the aristocracy of nature and a fine repose of manner in her

which Wilson and his wife were traveling were friends under whose hands profitable harvests were sure, and a generation was springing up whose influence was to be felt long years after.

Concerning the earlier part of the voyage of the immigrant ship, tradition is nearly silent, although certain fragmentary accounts hint of a protracted calm and following storm of such violence that the vessel was driven from her course. However that may be, it is reasonably certain that the passage was about one-third accomplished when events transpired that made the voyage memorable in the lives of all on board.

One sultry evening the lookout saw on the horizon a sail standing like a gray silhouette against the early rising moon. All through the hot summer night the strange craft wore nearer and nearer, and when morning came her low hull could be seen like a black shadow under her full set of canvas.

The pirate was within gunshot of the emigrant ship.

To fight or run away was not to be thought of. The slow ship had not a dozen muskets. They simply waited. They had not long to wait, for boats were soon alongside, and swarming upon the deck, the robbers fell to work as men who knew how to plunder and kill. Crew and passengers were bound, and some were left lying where they were captured, and some were rolled into corners, just as suited a momentary freak of the invaders.

None were killed. Valuables were gathered into parcels convenient to be transferred to the pirate ship. The robber captain going below to search the officers' quarters, threw open the after-cabin door with a rough hand, but seeing a woman lying on the berth, stopped.

"Why are you there?" demanded the ruffian.

"See." The terrified woman uncovered a baby's face.

Then the pirate drew near. "Is it a boy or a girl?"

"A girl."

"Have you named her?"

"No."

The pirate went to the cabin door and commanded that no man stir until further orders. Then, returning, he went close to the berth where the woman lay, and said gently, "If I may name that baby, that little girl, I will unbind your men and leave your ship unharmed; may I name the girl?"

"Yes."

Then the rough old robber came nearer still and took up the tiny unresisting hand of the baby. "Mary," was the name the woman heard him speak. There were other words, but spoken so low she could not hear. Only his Maker and his own heart knew; but when the child drew its hand away the mother saw a tear on the pink fingers.

There have been other knights than Bayard. He was one.

As good as his word, the pirate cap-

energetic, determined and many ways. The house is four miles from Henniker village and about the same distance from Hillsborough. The visitor, if he have an eye for the picturesque, though he regret the decay that has overtaken the old manse, can but be charmed by the beauty of the landscape in the midst of which it is set.

It may be added that Judge Robert M. Wallace of Milford of the state supreme court is a lineal descendant of Ocean Mary and bears the Christian name of her husband which has been a frequent one in the family.

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