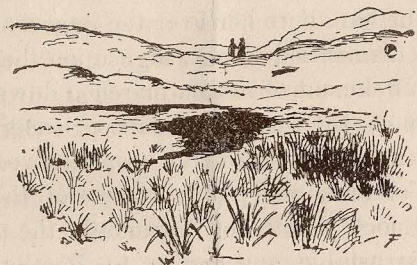


the Provincetown and Truro men over the division of the spoils. This is denied by some of the local accounts, but it is certainly not strange that after years of pillage and impoverishment, the Cape people felt like doing a little plundering in return when such a good opportunity presented itself. After a while the general Court appointed a sheriff to take charge of the wreck, and rewarded the salvors. Under the direction of the Board of War everything of value was stripped from the ship. The guns remaining on board were removed and utilized in the fortifications at Gloucester and on the coast of Maine. The small arms, ammunition and stores of every description were devoted to the use of the Continental troops. When the wreck had been abandoned by the authorities the local wreckers took her in hand again. They wrenched off her chain plates; they tore up her decks for fire-wood; they pried her timbers apart to get at her iron bolts; then they set fire to the hull; but her heavy wooden walls which had for so many years withstood the stress of storm and battle, could only be charred by the flames. Finally, in the course of years, the drifting sands charitably buried the remains of the old frigate.



DEAD MEN'S HOLLOW.

The approach to the scene of the wreck is through the most barren and desolate tract imaginable. After leaving the wooded hills at the rear of the town one comes upon a

region of great sand dunes and gullies, where in the wild winter nights the gales play fantastic freaks with the topography. The hills here at least are not everlasting. They are often shifted in a season and deep gulches dug at their base. Ravines are choked up, towering terraces of sand piled up across the valleys, and all the features of the landscape jumbled together by the wind like the toys of a fretful child. No trace of vegetation can be seen except an occasional batch of sinewy beach-grass, whose long tufts, whisked by the breeze, describe curious circles in the sand as though drawn by a pair of compasses. Here and there the yellow waste of sand is disfigured by an upturned strata of the black subsoil with projecting stumps and roots of trees that flourished centuries ago before the ocean of sand had buried everything beneath it. Trudging over this barren waste and through Dead Men's Hollow, where several of the Somerset's crew are said to have been buried, and about which many ghostly stories are told, we come to an ancient wreck.

A week or two since only a few black heads of the timbers of the frigate projected above the beach, but within a few days the sand has been dug rapidly away by the combined efforts of the waves and the shovels of the relic-hunters, and the outlines of the hull are becoming more plainly visible. There seems to be no question as to the identity of the wreck. All accounts and traditions agree as to the location. During the early part of the century the old hulk was partly uncovered several times, and was always regarded as the wreck of the Somerset. Certainly no merchant ship of those days had such ponderous timbers of live-oak so closely wedged together, with such heavy outside planking and inside sheathing. Several apertures on the lower port deck have every resemblance to portholes, and are thought by some to conclusively establish the identity of the wreck. Some sixty feet of the hull is now above the sand, and at the present rate of excavation every timber will soon be visible. The top of