

Buried Treasure

by Pinkney Gage



Gold Substitutes May Be More Valuable Than Gold

"It's not gold," the jeweler said. "It happens to be genuine pinchbeck." There was a little awe in his voice and he looked at the sword hilt admiringly.

"Pinchbeck?" I asked, my disappointment edged with curiosity.

"Exactly," the jeweler said, "and very probably made by old Christopher himself. The date looks authentic, and that would be when Christopher Pinchbeck was in his early forties."

The date, etched into the heel of the blade where it entered the grip, was 1710.

"But suppose it was made by Pinchbeck himself, what then?" I asked.

The jeweler looked at me pityingly and began to explain that pinchbeck, an imitation gold named for its inventor and made of copper, zinc and tin, had been one of the most important alloys for jewelers.

"Old Pinchbeck was a great artist," the jeweler said. "He invented his metal merely because he saw it was the only

way people could get satisfactory jewelry without paying the exorbitant price of gold. "He never deceived anyone about it. He warned against his imitations of whom he had plenty."

"But the metal kept its golden color longest, and sometimes he improved upon it by washing a pinchbeck product in gold—which is undoubtedly what was done with this sword hilt. It's been heavily washed."

I looked at the hilt with new respect. The blade it held was broken off about a foot down. I had bought it for \$10, thinking of having it converted into a hunting knife. I said so.

The jeweler didn't like the idea at all. "This is a relic," he said. "You should have a new blade put in or this one mended. Think of the collectors of Pinchbeckiana."

I thought of them. It was obvious the jeweler was one. When he finally offered me \$50 for the hilt, I took it.

BEAUTIFUL PENDANT PROVES TO BE OLD PERSIAN COIN

Hank, who had recently become engaged, wanted me to see a gift he had just bought for his fiancée.

"It's a medal of some kind. I'm pretty sure it's gold—I've given it the acid test—and I know it's the sort of thing that will appeal to her."

The piece was on a short gold chain. As far as I could tell by looking at it, it was a medal.

On one side was the portrait bust of some ruler—a shah probably, judging from the hat he wore, which had the kind of jeweled featherburst often worn by oriental rulers.

On the other side was some kind of an inscription, probably in Arabic, which was enclosed by a magnificent wreath.

Hank had bought the piece in Havana while visiting there some weeks before. It had cost him \$50, and though he felt that possibly he had paid too

much, he believed it was something that would so delight his sweetheart that he would have paid half as much again if necessary.

"Have you any idea what it is and what it says," he asked. I told him that it might be a coin and suggested we enter a nearby coin dealer's where we could look it up.

It didn't take long to find it, once I had got my hands on a copy of Coins of the World, a catalogue of 20th century items.

It was a Persian piece, of 10 tomans denomination, about like our \$20 gold piece. The bust of the ruler was that of Ahmed Shah who ruled from 1909 to 1925.

There was nothing in the catalogue about what the inscription said, but even if there had been, it could not have been such good news as the price. The value given for the piece was \$100!

PISTOL VALUE JUMPED WITHIN A FEW YEARS

It is probably impossible to tell what American weapon has had the biggest increase in curio value during the past decade, but whatever it is, the pepper-box-type pistol is not far behind it.

A friend of mine who bought one in 1946 for \$10 thought he had found a bargain.

It was an 1848 Leonard in good workable condition. He expected to turn it over for a fast profit. When he discovered that \$15 was all he could then expect to get for it, he decided to keep the gun for its decoration value and as a reminder not to be too hasty in buying.

The pepper-box-type is not a handsome one, and this one seemed less handsome than most. It was a .31 calibre, four-shot job, the handle almost at right angles to the block which was bored for the four charges. The block, which measured a little over three-and-a-half inches, was a removable one—

a condition that presumably made it easier to apply the caps for firing.

The weapon was a hammerless equipped with two ring triggers—one for pulling the spring-operated firing pin into position and the other for releasing it. The firing pin, by the way, was of the revolving kind.

The piece was marked "G. Leonard Jr. Charlestown, Patented 1849." Its only ornamentation consisted of silver grips instead of the usual wooden ones.

Recently my friend decided he no longer needed the weapon and offered it for sale.

He named \$75 as an asking price, expecting to be beaten down. Instead, the first prospect paid without protest. The reason is that values of pepperbox guns have so increased during the past ten years that the \$75 price was somewhat on the low side.

(Released by the McClure Newspaper Syndicate)



CAMERA SHY—Mrs. Margaret Lydia Burton, 51, tries to shield her daughter, Sheila Joy, 20, from photographers as they are led from U. S. Marshal's office in Tulsa, Okla. Described by the FBI as an elusive international thief, Mrs. Burton was arrested with her daughter in connection with a \$100,000 embezzlement in Georgia.

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Some Ducks Fly East Instead of South

Lansing, Mich.—The popular belief that all migrating ducks fly directly south to escape cold winter weather is not necessarily so, says the Michigan Conservation Department.

Recovery of birds banded on the lower Detroit River since 1949 indicates several species of diving ducks use a west-to-east flight route for fall migrations to the Chesapeake Bay area on the Atlantic coast.

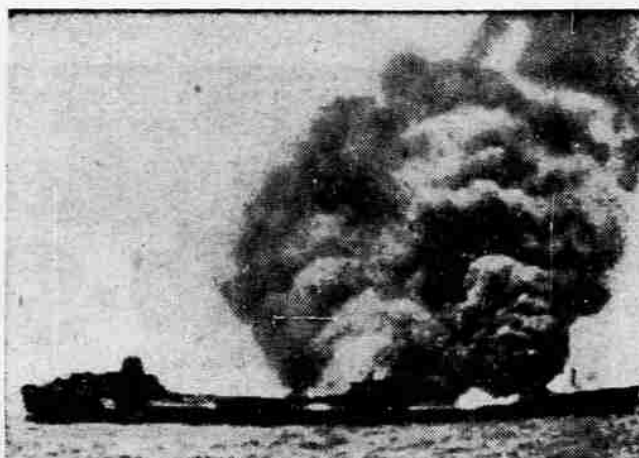
"Diving ducks" include the canvasback, redhead, ringneck, scaup, teal, gadwall and widgeon.

The investigation showed black ducks have a split migration pattern, with some of the species going to the Atlantic coast while others move south along the Mississippi Valley.

Band recoveries also demonstrate that the life expectancy of ducks is comparatively short. Of the banded birds killed, the largest percentage was taken in the first year after banding.

The annual Fiesta of Santa Fe, N.M., is believed to be the oldest community festival in America. The Fiesta was begun in 1712 by the Spanish governor to commemorate the re-conquest of New Mexico from the Indians.

The raven, nearly twice as big as its common relative, the crow, is similar in build and has glossy black feathers. It eats almost anything animal or vegetable. It carefully stays out of shotgun range. Individuals have lived more than 50 years.



MYSTERY BLASTS DOOM TANKER—Just 30 miles from the safety of Gibraltar, the explosion-ravaged Liberian tanker World Splendor begins to sink under massive clouds of smoke. Five of the ship's 32 surviving crewmen were hospitalized. None of the crew was able to explain how the two explosions and flash fire that rocked the 25,000-ton vessel, which was en route to the Persian Gulf from Southampton, Eng., carrying nothing but ballast.

DRAMATIC SAVINGS STARTS MONDAY

SEE PAGE 3, SECTION 1

The little village of Apache Tejo (TAY-ho), in southeastern New Mexico, was once the scene of yearly "olympic games." Apache Indians in the region met there annually to play quoits, and champions from the various tribes defended their aures in the tejo (quoits) pits.

Oklahoma is the only state in the union to have memorials honoring both the Confederacy and the Union.

The 1957 World's Conservation Exposition and Ploving Contests will be held in Adams County, Ohio, Sept. 17-20.

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