

Floyd Gibbons'

ADVENTURERS' CLUB

HEADLINES FROM THE LIVES OF PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELF!



"Behind the Curtain"

YOU know, boys and girls, Old Lady Adventure has some funny ways of sneaking up on a guy. Sometimes she just comes up behind your back, and sometimes she drops on you from above. And there are times, too, when she comes walking right up to you from the front, and you don't try to get out of her way because she is in disguise and you don't recognize her.

That's the way it was with John Hoven, New York city. You know, John started his adventuring career as a sailor before the mast, and every sailor has half a dozen or more adventures he can tell you about. But the one John remembers best is his first one—a thrill he got in 1894, and still remembers.

It happened when John's ship called at the port of San Lucar, Spain, to take on a cargo of lead. It was the 18th of November when they arrived there, but the weather was still warm and balmy. In the evening, most of the crew went ashore to see the sights of the town, John went too—and that's when Old Lady Adventure walked up and grabbed him.

You know, I said that the old girl with the thrill bag sneaked up on John in disguise. She did. She came in the clothes customarily worn by another lady known to the world as Little Rosie Romance. And John never knew the difference until it was too late.

On their way into town, the sailors from the ship stopped to watch a group of Spanish señoritas and senors dancing their native dances. John says he thinks the dance they were doing was the fandango. Anyway, it was the sort of dance in which a señorita who wants a new partner, just throws her shawl around the neck of some bird on the sidelines who looks good to her. John was standing pretty close to the platform where the dancing was going on, and the first thing you know a shawl was looped around his neck.

John Adds Fandango to His Accomplishments.

Now John says he never was much of a dancer, and fandangos were way out of his class. But this girl was a beauty, and one look from her big round eyes had John feeling that he'd dance in a barrel of red hot nails if it would please her any. "I got away with the dance



On that bed lay a dead man, his throat slashed, and blood dripping all over the floor.

somehow," he says, "and then she left the platform and motioned me to come along. She led me to a little cafe—a two-story building with a lot of tables and chairs out in the open and a big canopy sloping down the side of the wall. There was a big bay window above this canopy and a small side entrance led to the room above."

The girl led John into that side entrance. He followed her up the stairs and into a big room on the second floor. "She spoke to me in Spanish," John says, "but I couldn't understand a word. However, I said, 'Si, Si,' to everything she said. She smiled, and so did I. Then she opened a cupboard, brought out some wine glasses and an empty bottle and made a motion meaning that she was going to take the bottle and have it filled. Then she left the room."

John could hardly believe his luck. When the girl was gone he began to look around the room. There was an alcove at one end, with portiers drawn across it. He walked over and peeped through those curtains—and right there John got the shock of his life. In the alcove was a bed, and on that bed lay a dead man, his throat slashed, and blood dripping all over the floor!

"I felt a chill run up my spine," he says, "and for a minute I was so stiff I couldn't move. I turned away from the grisly sight in the alcove and ran toward the door. I turned the knob, but the door didn't give. It was locked!"

John ran to the window—and what he saw there made the hair stand straight up on his head. Down below in the street was the girl, coming back—and with her were two big husky Spanish policemen. John says that thousands of thoughts ran through his head then, but the principal one was the realization that he was the victim of a frame-up. That girl had killed a man and was going to put the blame on him!

Says he: "I knew my only chance lay in getting out of that room. The girl and the policemen were almost to the door now. I waited until they were all in the hallway, and then I threw open the window. They would be opening the door of the room at any moment, and I had to hurry. Swiftly climbing through the window, I slid down the canopy below it."

John Finds Dagger in Coat Pocket.

"It was only a drop of about ten feet to the ground, and the minute I felt earth under my feet I ran like a deer for the waterfront. I reached it all out of breath, for I had never stopped running the entire distance of almost a mile. I went aboard ship and sneaked below. Once in the forecabin I stopped to catch my breath again. I was still shaking like a leaf. I started to remove my coat and felt something in the pocket. I took it out. It was a double-edged dagger, about eight inches long, with a hollow groove in the middle."

Just another link in the chain of evidence against John. The girl had planted that knife in his pocket to make the case against him all the stronger. He hid the thing under his mattress and tried to calm his jumpy nerves. And just then one of John's shipmates came into the forecabin. "Say, what's the matter with you?" he wanted to know. "You look pale as a ghost, and I saw you running."

Well sir, John says he knew he could trust this pal of his so he blurted out the whole story. And his shipmate laughed. "Why," he said, "you just fell for an old swindle. I thought it had been played out long ago in these parts. That was only a dummy you saw in the room, and the blood was probably catsup or something. The police were fakers, and they wanted to do was make you give them all your money to keep them quiet. Don't play around with any of those Spanish señoritas. You're playing with fire if you do."

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

150-Year-Old Paintings Found Under Wall Paper

Murals apparently painted in the days just after the American Revolution have been uncovered in an old Rockport, Mass., home. Buried under four layers of wallpaper for several generations, the murals, quaint in design and of antiquarian value, were found when decorators cleaned the walls preparatory to re-papering.

Mrs. Marian J. Cooney, whose family owned the house for many years, was unaware of the murals' presence. The stock of new wallpaper she had selected to cover the parlor's walls never will be used. Identity of the artist who created

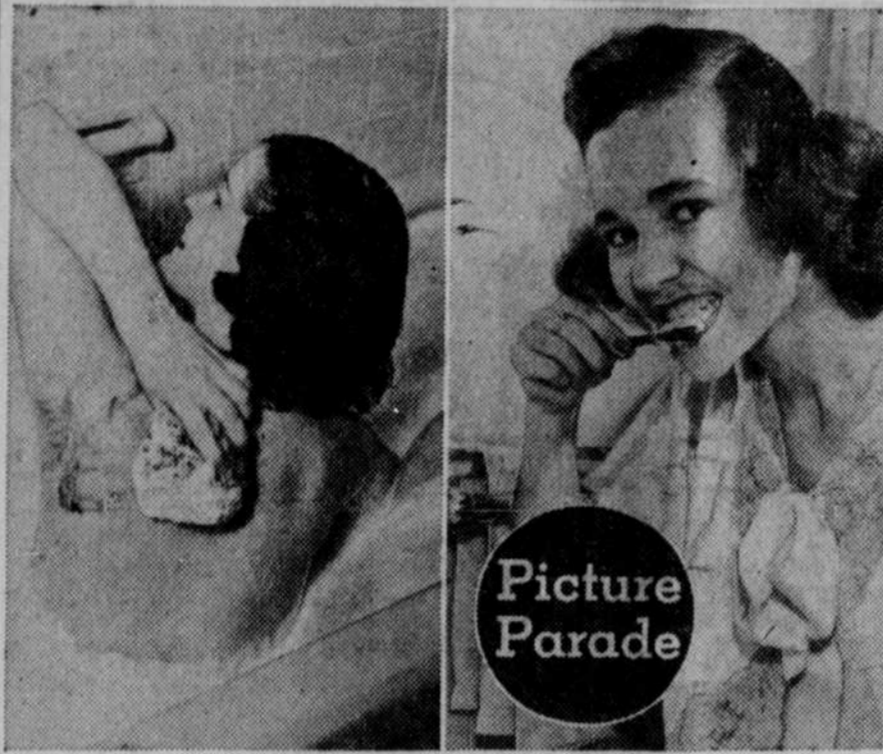
the work is not known, although Mrs. Etta S. Moore, 80 years old, recalled that the builder, George Knowlton, had a daughter who was artistically inclined.

The paintings were believed to have been executed about 150 years ago as the two flags crossed over an apple tree and a brace of doves, contained 13 stars and 10 bars each. Figures in this mural and those on the other three walls are stiff, but attractive.

Most interesting of the panels is one depicting a farm worker at a well who lifts an oaken bucket to his lips as a small blue dog looks on.

I Guess It's—No It Isn't!

Artificial Christmas? You might call it that, for modern chemistry has pulled all sorts of synthetic rabbits out of industry's hat for this year's gifts. In fact, today's fashionable miss will find in her Christmas stockings enough synthetics to keep her busy from morning 'til night. Give a look!



The morning tub with mountains of suds and a generous-sized bath sponge! What, not a sponge? No, this "sponge" is made of paper, but it works just as well.

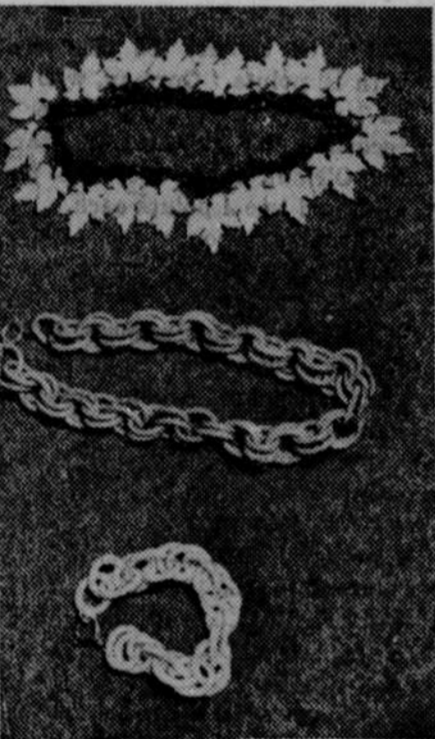
Surely there are no synthetics in this picture. Guess again. The bristles in that tooth brush never had a speaking acquaintance with any animal.



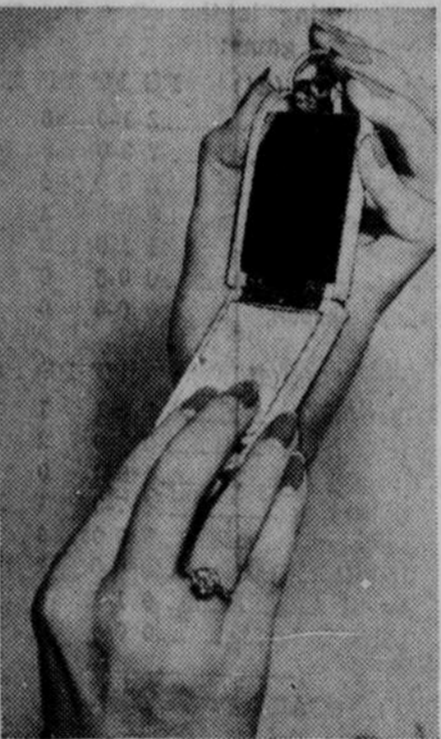
Something new in hats. This smart little number is made of plastics and wood. Everything from African mahogany to New England silver birch goes into feminine headgear.



Miss 1940 steps forth on a rainy day in her smart ensemble, waterproofed by a new substance made of coke, limestone and salt, which chemical science has made into a magic material called koroseal.



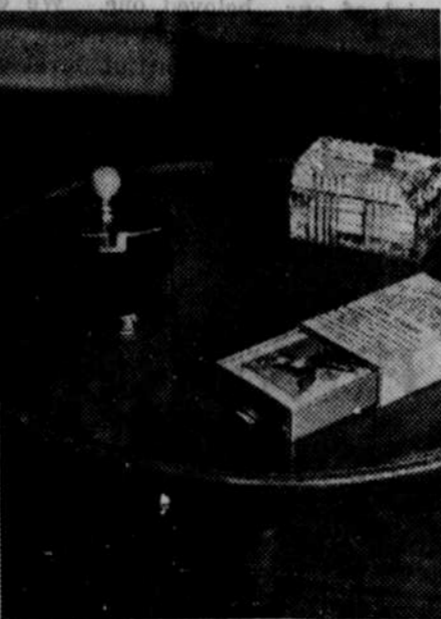
This Christmas costume jewelry all comes from the chemist's laboratory.



As does this tricky vanity with a tiny light at the top for better makeup.



When milady retires, her traditional hundred strokes with the brush are accomplished with a combination brush-comb made of plastics.



More chemical magic: A pack of playing cards of synthetic paper; a cigarette lighter which looks like metal but was really made of plastics.



Glass backgammon board? Not a bit... it's also plastic.

How Other Lands Mark Christmas

A melting pot of the world, America has created its Christmas traditions from countless customs brought across the seas from foreign lands. In these far-away places the Yuletide symbols of bygone ages still endure. Here are a few of them:

ENGLAND:

Christmas to rural Englishmen means not only the observance of Christ's birth, but also a parting of the ways between the old year and the new. Preparations are started for the next year's farm work, which begins right after Christmas. Throughout the island such traditions as the holly and mistletoe remain undying traditions, nor is any Christmas complete without the Yule log burning. On clear frosty nights the carol singers raise their voices over the countryside. To many Englishmen's despair, such American customs as the turkey dinner are gaining a foothold.

GERMANY:

Two years ago storm troopers in Berlin lit bonfires in the public squares as a revival of the pagan custom of celebrating the winter solstice. But this distraction will not stop the Christmas-loving Germans from decorating their trees in every town and village, and joining in the famed Christmas hymn, "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht."

ITALY:

Most Italian families celebrate Christmas eve and spend the following day quietly in their homes. Here it is a feast more for grown-ups than for children, whose merry-making day comes 12 days later, on January 6. On Christmas eve fami-



IN ITALY—Children of the Italian Alps at Christmas Time, praying before a wayside shrine.

lies gather around the "ceppo" or Christmas log blazes. At nine p. m. begins the "cenone," or big supper, at which no meat may be served. Gifts for children, which come on Epiphany, are brought not by Santa Claus but by an ugly witch whose name is "Befana."

FRANCE:

Exchange of gifts comes not on Christmas but mostly on New Year's day, which in France is the big family day for reunions of cousins, aunts and uncles. Santa Claus is "Pere Noel," who leaves his gifts in wooden shoes. Christmas eve is not spent at home but in revelry and feasting.

BELGIUM:

Neither Santa Claus nor Pere Noel visit children here—but St. Nicholas makes the rounds, surprisingly, on December 6! A quaint Belgian custom is the putting up of the chimney of a few carrots for the little donkey on which St. Nicholas makes his visits.

RUSSIA:

This anti-Christian nation forbids celebration of the Yuletide but no longer compels foreign residents to import their own Christmas trees. Making an about-face, the Soviet government uses this emblem of childhood for its New Year's celebrations when Dadja Moroz, or Uncle Frost, appears with gifts for good children.

POLAND:

This Christmas celebration lasts until February 2 and is preceded by fasting which is not broken until the first star appears on Christmas eve. In all homes the tablecloth is placed over a layer of fragrant hay in commemoration of the manger.

HUNGARY:

St. Nicholas leaves boxes of candy for children early in December, after which the youngsters must be on their good behavior. They write letters to the angels, who, they believe, bring the presents. If they find bits of tinsel on the floor, they claim this is angel's hair and proof that the angels are everywhere, observing which boys and girls are good.

HOLY LAND:

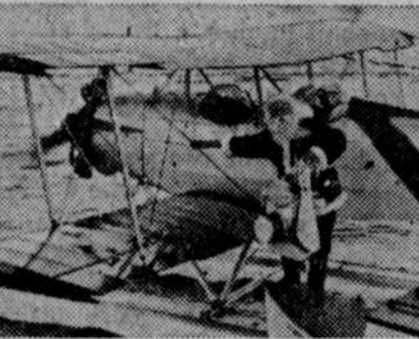
Where it all began nearly 20 centuries ago, worshippers reverently hail each Christmas at the church of Nativity which is built over Christ's traditional birthplace. It has remained unchanged more than 1,500 years. There pilgrims gather from all over the world to intone "Glory to the New-Born King."

Santa Claus Gets Around

● Busy Kris Kringle doesn't fight modern inventions—he uses them!



Down Florida way where the chambers of commerce require that everything be different, Santa goes to work on an aquaplane.



Donner and Blitzen can't fly through the air like a plane, so old St. Nick tries a new wrinkle.



Here he pops up in a railroad engine—



Then, again, he abandons his toy bag and travels in an automobile—



But in the end he goes back to reindeers. Can't get along without 'em!

3 Christmas Islands, Harbor, Cove, Sound, Are Found in Atlas

Not one, but three Christmas islands will celebrate the Yuletide this year, all of them under the British flag. The first is located in mid-Pacific and is really a submerged mountain 15,000 feet high with only its top above water. The second, in the Indian ocean, is forest-covered and had a population of 40 when the last census was taken in 1898. The last Christmas island is near Cape Breton in the maritime provinces of Canada.

France has a Christmas harbor on Desolation or Kerguelen island about 2,000 miles southwest of Australia. The United States has a Christmas cove near Boothbay harbor, Maine, which is a summer resort.

There is also a Christmas sound near the southern tip of South America about 120 miles northwest of Cape Horn and located in an island belonging to Chile.

1939 Toys Sprout Wheels As Kids Imitate Parents

Today's civilization-on-wheels has revolutionized the Twentieth century toy industry. Several decades ago children played with paint sets and cut-out dolls. Now girls and boys want wheel goods. The desire to have an automobile like dad's is so great that toy auto manufacturers must change their designs as soon as new models appear. Velocipedes must be streamlined, scooters must have pneumatic tires, and doll carriages must be of the latest baby buggy designs.

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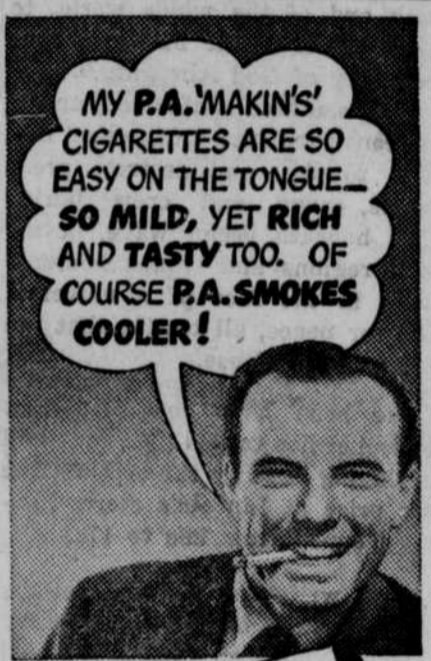
Strange Facts

8-Year Salvage Job Nurses Out of Sky Pontiffs Train Sky

The greatest salvage job in history, to which the British navy devoted eight years, making more than 5,000 dives, was the recovery of \$24,800,000 worth of gold from the wreck of the White Star liner *Laurentic*, which struck a mine and sank in 120 feet of water off the north Irish coast in 1917.

France now has a volunteer corps of approximately 200 "flying nurses," women skilled in parachute-jumping as well as nursing who are ready at a moment's notice to be flown and dropped, with their medical kits, at points where their services are urgently needed.

The only Pontiff of the Roman Catholic church who ever rode on a railroad train while pope was Pius IX, who reigned from 1846 to 1878.—Collier's.



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