

The Carpet from Bagdad

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The MAN ON THE BOX etc.
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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—George Percival Algernon Jones, vice president of the Metropolitan Oriental Rug company of New York, arrives at Cairo on a business trip.

CHAPTER II.

An Affable Rogue.

The carriage containing the gentleman with the reversible cuffs drew up at the side entrance. Instantly the Arab guides surged and eddied round him; but their clamor broke against a composure as effective as granite. The rear was almost directly succeeded by a low gurgle, as of little waves receding. The proposed victim had not spoken a word; to the Arabs it was not necessary; in some manner, subtle and indescribable, they recognized a brother. He carried a long, cylindrical bundle wrapped in heavy paper variously secured by windings of thick twine. His regard for this bundle was one of tender solicitude, for he tucked it under his arm, cumbersome though it was, and waved aside the carriage-porter, who was, however, permitted to carry in the kit-bag.

The manager appeared. When comes he not upon the scene? His quick, calculating eye was not wholly assured. The stranger's homespun was travel-worn and time-worn, and of a cut popular to the season gone the year before. No fat letter of credit here, was the not unreasonable conclusion reached by the manager. Still, with that caution acquired by years of experience, which had culminated in what is known as Swiss diplomacy, he brought into being the accustomed salutatory smile and inquired if the gentleman had written ahead for reservation, otherwise it would not be possible to accommodate him.

"I telegraphed," crisply.
"The name, if you please?"
"Ryenne; spelled R-y-a double e. Have you ever been in County Clare?"
"No, sir." The manager added a question with the uplift of his eyebrows.

"Well," was the enlightening answer, "you pronounce it as they do there."
The manager scanned the little slip of paper in his hand. "Ah, yes; we have reserved a room for you, sir. The French style rather confused me." This was not offered in irony, or sarcasm, or satire; mining in a Swiss brain for the saving grace of humor is about as remunerative as the extraction of gold from sea-water. Nevertheless, the Swiss has the talent of swiftly subtracting from a confusion of ideas one point of illumination; there was a quality to the stranger's tone that decided him favorably. It was the voice of a man in the habit of being obeyed; and in these days it was the power of money alone that obtained obedience to any man. Beyond this, the same nebulous cogitation that had subdued the Arabs outside acted likewise upon him. Here was a brother.

"I will see, sir." The manager summoned a porter. "Room 208."

The porter caught up the somewhat

collapsed kit-bag, which had in all evidence received some rough usage in its time, and reached toward the roll. Mr. Ryenne interposed.

"I will see to that, my man," tersely.

"Yes, sir."

"Where is your guest-list?" demanded Mr. Ryenne of the manager.

"The head-porter's bureau, sir. I will see if you have any mail." The manager passed into his own bureau.

It was rather difficult to tell whether this man was an American or an Englishman. His accent was western, but his manner was decidedly British. At any rate, that tone and carriage must be bastioned by good English sovereigns, or for once his judgment was at fault.

The porter dashed up-stairs. Mr. Ryenne, his bundle still snug under his arm, sauntered over to the head-porter's bureau and ran his glance up and down the columns of visiting-cards. Once he nodded with approval, and again he smiled, having discovered that which sent a ripple across his sleeping sense of amusement. Major Callahan, room 206; Fortune Chedsoy, 205; George P. A. Jones, 210.

"Hi! I see that you have the Duke of What-d'ye-call from Germany here. I'll give you my card. Send it up to Mr. Ryenne. No hurry. I shall be in again after dinner."

He bustled off toward the door. He was purdy, well-fed, and decently dressed, the sort of a man who, when he moved in any direction, created the impression that he had an important engagement somewhere else or was plying minutes from time-tables. For a man in his business it was a clever expedient, deceiving all but those who knew him. He hesitated at the door, however, as if he had changed his mind in the transit—odd notion it had

mitted his eyes to open their widest. "Tut, tut; that's all right, porter. I am cursed with the habit of speaking my inmost thoughts. Some persons are afflicted with insomnia; some fall asleep in church; I think orally. Beastly habit, eh?"

The porter then understood that he was dealing not with a species of mild lunacy, but with that kind of light-hearted cynicism upon which the world (as porters know it) had set its approving seal. In brief, he smiled faintly; and if he had any pleasure to pass in turn, the approach of the manager, now clothed metaphorically in deferentialism, relegated it to the limbo of things thought but left unaided.

"Here is a letter for you, Mr. Ryenne. Have you any more luggage?"
"No," Mr. Ryenne smiled. "Shall I pay for my room in advance?"
"Oh, no, sir!" Ten years ago the manager would have blushed at having been so misunderstood. "Your room is 208."

"Will you have a boy show me the way?"
"I shall myself attend to that. If the room is not what you wish it may be exchanged."

"The room is the one I telegraphed for. I am superstitious to a degree. On three boats I have had fine state-rooms numbered 208. Twice the number of my hotel room has been the same. On the last voyage there were 208 passengers, and the captain had made 208 voyages on the Mediterranean."

"Quite a coincidence."
"Ah, if roulette could be played with such a certainty."

Mr. Ryenne sighed, hitched up his bundle, which, being heavy, was beginning to wear upon his arm, and signified to the manager to lead the way.

As they vanished round the corner to the lift, the head-porter studied the guest-list. He had looked over it a dozen times that day, but this was the first instance of his being really interested in it. As his chin was freshly shaven he had no stubble to stroke to excite his mental processes; so he fell back, as we say, upon the com-



Ran His Glance Up and Down the Columns of Visiting Cards.

soling ends of his abundant mustache. Curious; but all these persons were occupying or about to occupy adjacent rooms. There was truly nothing mysterious about it, save that the stranger had picked out these very names as a target for his banter. Fortune Chedsoy; it was rather an unusual name; but as she had arrived only an hour or so before, he could not distinctly recall her features. And then, there was that word bucolic. He mentally turned it over and over as physically he was wont to do with post-cards left in his care to mail. He could make nothing of the word, except that it smacked of the East Indian plague.

Here he was saved from further cerebral agony by a timely interruption. A man, who was not of bucolic persuasion either in dress or speech, urban from the tips of his bleached fingers to the bulb of his bibulous nose, leaned across the counter and asked if Mr. Horace Ryenne had yet arrived. Yes, he had just arrived; he

was even now on his way to his room. The urban gentleman nodded. Then, with a finger slim and well-trimmed, he trailed up and down the guest-list.

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to reach it. He stared for a long period at the elderly gentleman who was watching the feluccas on the river through the window. The white mustache and imperial stood out in crisp relief against the ruddy sunburn on his face. If he was aware of this scrutiny on the part of the purdy gentleman, he gave not the least sign. The revolving door spun round, sending a puff of outdoor air into the lounging-room. The elderly gentleman then smiled, and applied his thumb and forefinger to the waxen point of his imperial.

In the intervening time Mr. Ryenne entered his room, threw the bundle on the bed, sat down beside it, and read his letter. Shadows and lights moved across his face; frowns that hardened it, smiles that mellowed it. Women hold the trick of writing letters. Do they hate, their thoughts flash and burn from line to line. Do they love, 'tis lettered music. Do they conspire, the breadth of their imagination is without horizon. At best, man can indite only a polite business letter, his love-letters were adjudged long since a maudlin collection of loose sentences. In this letter Mr. Ryenne found the three parts of life.

"She's a good general; but hang these brimstone efforts of hers. She talks too much of heart. For my part, I prefer to regard it as a mere physical function, a pump, a motor, a power that gives action to the legs, either in coming or in going, more especially in going." He laughed. "Well, here is the inspiration and here is the law. And to think that she could plan all this on the spur of the moment, down to the minutest detail! It's a science." He put the letter away, slid out his legs and glared at the dusty tips of his shoes. "The United Romance and Adventure Company, Ltd., of New York, London, and Paris. She has the greatest gift of all, the sense of humor."

He rose and opened his kit-bag doubtfully. He rummaged about in the depths and at last straightened up with a mild oath.

"Not a pair of cuffs in the whole outfit, not a shirt, not a collar. Oh, well, when a man has to leave Bagdad the way I did, over the back fence, so to speak, linen doesn't count."

He drew down his cuffs, detached and reversed them, he turned his folding collar wrong-side out, and used the under side of the foot-rug as a shoe-polisher. It was the ingenious procedure of a man who was used to being out late nights, who made all things answer all purposes. This rapid and singularly careless toilet completed, he centered his concern upon the more vital matter of finances. He was close to the nadir: four sovereigns, a forin, and a collection of battered coppers that would have tickled the pulse of an amateur numismatist.

"No vintage to-night, my boy; no long fat Havana, either. A bottle of stout and a few rags of plug-cut; that's the pace well travel this evening. The United Romance and Adventure Company is not listed at present. If it was, I'd sell a few shares on my own hook. The kind Lord knows that I've stock enough and to spare." He laughed again, but without the leaven of humor. "When the fool-killer snatches up the last fool, let rogues look to themselves; and fools are getting scarcer every day."

"Percival Algernon! O age of poets! I wonder, does he wear high collars and spats, or has he plumed him accurately? She is generally right. But a man changes some in seven years. I'm an authority when it comes to that. Look what's happened to me in seven years! First, Horace, we shall dine, then we'll smoke our pipe in the billiard-room, then we'll softly approach Percival Algernon and introduce him to Sinbad. This independent excursion to Bagdad was a stroke on my part; it will work into the general plan as smoothly as if it had been grooved for the part. Sinbad, I might just as well have assumed that name; Horace Sinbad, sounds well and looks well." He mused in silence, his hand gently rubbing his chin; for he did possess the trick of talking aloud, in a low monotone, a habit acquired during periods of loneliness, when the sound of his own voice had succeeded in steadying his tottering mind.

What a woman, what a wife, she would have been to the right man! Odd thing, a man can do almost anything but direct his affections; they must be drawn. She was not for him; nay, not even on a desert isle. Doubtless he was a fool. In time she would have made him a rich man. Alack! It was always the one we pursued that we loved and never the one that pursued us.

"I'm afraid of her; and there you are. There isn't a man living who has gone back of that Mona Lisa smile of hers. If she was the last woman and I was the last man, I don't say." He hunted for a cigarette, but failed to find one. "Almost at the bottom, boy; the winter of our discontent, and so sun of York to make it glorious. Twenty-four hundred at cards, and to lose it like a tyro! Wallace has taught me all he knows, but I'm a booby. Twenty-four hundred, firm's money. It's a falling of mine, the firm's money. But, damn it all, I can't cheat a man at cards; I'd rather cut his throat."

He found his pipe, and a careful search of the corners of his coat-pockets revealed a meager pipeful of tobacco. He picked out the little balls of wool, the ground-coffee, the cloves, and pushed the charge home into the crusted bowl of his briar.

"To the devil with economy! A pint of burgundy and a perfecto if they hale us to jail for it. I'm dead tired. I've seen three corners in hell in the past two months. I'm going as far as four sovereigns will take me. Fortune Chedsoy." He had

eyes became less hard and his mouth less defiant. "I repeat, the heart should be nothing but a pump. Otherwise it gets in the way, becomes an obstruction, a bottomless pit. Will-power, that's the ticket. I can face a lion without an extra beat. I can face the various countenances of death without an additional flutter; and yet,



Everything Worth While Seemed to Have Slipped Through His Fingers.

here's a girl who, when I see her or think of her, sends the pulse scurrying from seventy-seven up to eighty-four. Bad business; besides, it's so infernally unfashionable. It's hard work for a man to keep his balance 'twixt the devil and the deep blue sea; Gioconda on one side and Fortune on the other. Gioconda throws open windows and doors at my approach; but Fortune locks and bars hers, nor knocks at mine. That's the way it always goes.

"If a man could only go back ten years and take a new start. Ass!" bellowed his fist at the reflection in the mirror. "Suave and whine over the bed of your own making. You had your opportunity, but you listened to the popping of champagne-corks, the mutter of cards, the insane drivel of chorus-ladies. You had a decent college record, too. Bah! What a guileless fool you were! You ran on, didn't you, till you found your neck in the loop at the end of the rope! And perhaps that soft-footed, estimable brother of yours didn't yank it taut as a hangman's? You heard the codicil; into one ear and out the other. Even then you had your chance; patience for two short years, and a million. No, a thousand times no. You knew what you were about, empty-headed fool! And today, two pennies for a dead man's eyes."

He dropped his fist dejectedly. Where had the first step begun? And where would be the last? In some drab corner, possibly; drink, morphine, or starvation, he'd never have the courage to finish it with a bullet. He was terribly bitter. Everything worth while seemed to have slipped through his fingers, his pleasure-loving fingers.

"Come, come, Horace; buck up. Still the ruby kindles in the vine. No turning back now. We'll go on till we come bang! against the wall. There may be some good bouts between here and there. I wonder what Gioconda would say if she knew why I was so eager for this game?"

He went down to dinner, and they gave him a table in an obscure corner, as a subtle reminder that his style was passe. He didn't care; he was hungry and thirsty. He could see nearly every one, even if only a few could see him. This was somewhat to his advantage. He endeavored to pick out Percival Algernon; but there were too many high collars, too many monocles. So he contented himself with a mild philosophical observance of the scene. The murmur of voices, rising as the wall of the violin sank, sinking as the wall rose; the tinkle of glass and china, the silver and linen, the pretty women in their rustling gowns, the delicate perfumes, the flash of an arm, the glint of a polished shoulder; this was the essence of life he coveted. He smiled at the thought and the sure knowledge that he was not the only wolf in the fold. Ay, and who among these dainty Red Riding Hoods might be fooled by a ruspine grandmother? Truth, when a fellow winnowed it all down to a handful, there were only fools and rogues. If one was a fool, the rogue got you, and he in turn devoured himself.

He held his glass toward the table-lamp, moved it slowly to and fro under his nose, epicureanly; then he sipped the wine, appreciating like! It ran across his tongue and down his throat in tingling fire, nectarious; and he went half way to Olympus, to the feet of the gods. For weeks he had lived in the vilest haunts, in desperate straits, his life in his open hands; and now once more he had crawled from the depths to the outer crust of the world. It did not matter that he was

destined to go down into the depths again; so long as the spark burned he was going to crawl back each time. Damn him! He could have lived like a prince. Twenty-four hundred, and all in two nights, a steady stream of gold into the pockets of men whom he could have cheated with consummate ease, and didn't. A fine wolf, whose predatory instincts were still riveted to that obsolete thing called conscience!

"Conscience? Rot! Let us for once be frank and write it down as caution, as fear of publicity, anything but the white guardian-angel of the immortality of the soul. Heap up the gold, Apollyon; heap it up, higher and higher, till not a squeak of that still small voice that once awoke the chap in the Old Testament can ever again

beard. Now, no more retrospection; no more analysis; the vital passion simmers down to this: If Percival Algernon balks, how far will our sovereigns go?"

(next week.)

CHEER OF THE OLD HOME

Something Which Every Man and Woman Should Be Able to Look Back Upon.

It would be a blessing if we parents could just reflect that it may be that the only cheer in life which our children will get is the cheer of the old home, writes Frank W. Gurnasalus. They are hurrying out into the world which has no time to make them happy. If they are fortunate, as the world says, they will probably have homes, where old-fashioned and romping cheerfulness would skin its shins against the furniture or break the Louis XIV. chair. Blessed old days, and most wholesome to look back upon, are those when the hearty laugh of father would not split the lace curtains, and when mother could have two big, healthy children upon her lap while she was sitting down, with safety to all parties, in her rocker. No coin on earth costs so little to mint and goes so far in paying life's heavy expenses as Good Cheer. Pessimists are made before children are ten years of age, and pessimism comes when a child cannot turn a golden laugh into ready cash for life's poverty and its relief. We talk about the cruelty of a father's depriving a child of sufficient clothing. It is too bad; but a child's toes would better be ruddy and his ears tingle with cold than to have a home with winter in the atmosphere and the smiles all freezing to death.

No child is prepared for the supremely serious things of life who cannot laugh away all the goblins and ghosts and break with the shining wand of Good Cheer the circle drawn around him by any giant.

LETTING THEIR LIGHT SHINE

But College Girls as Expert Launderesses Do Not Appeal to One New York Housewife.

College girls who have studied laundering in their domestic science course may some time find an opportunity to apply their knowledge without inconveniencing anybody, but they have not yet reached that idyllic stage.

"Just at present they are an intolerable nuisance," said a woman who has had indirect dealings with the young graduates. "Since they have undertaken to uplift the world through the medium of the washtub I haven't had a stitch of clothes fit to put on."

"That is because they are trying to teach my laundress how to wash and iron. The poor soul has made a living at the washtub for 13 years and has brought up four children, yet these scientific laundresses have concluded that she doesn't know her business."

"There isn't a laundress in town that is safe from intrusion. Some women with Irish tempers won't be bothered, but my washerwoman is too gentle-mannered to refuse instruction, so for the last month she has been turning out her weekly wash with some sweet thing just out of college pottering around bossing the job."

"The poor woman is nearly crazy, and so are her customers. Maybe if left to themselves the girls can do a decent job at laundering; I know my washerwoman can, but when their methods clash both make a botch of the job and linen comes home buttonless, scorched, and torn."—New York Times.

CLING TO OLD DESIGNATIONS

Sporting Language That Was Used in the Middle Ages is Still Good Form Today.

Much of the language used in various sports is our inheritance from the middle ages. Different kinds of beasts when in companies were distinguished by their own particular epithet, which was supposed to be in some manner descriptive of the habits of the animals. To use the wrong form of these words subjected the would-be sportsman to ridicule.

Many of these terms have passed away, but some of them are still retained. This list from the middle ages is still good usage today. A "pride of lions," a "loope" of leopards, a "herd" of harts and of all sorts of deer; a "bevy" of roses, a "sloth" of bears, a "singular" of boars, a "sunder" of wild swine, a "route" of wolves, a "harras" of horses, a "ray" of colts, a "stud" of mares, a "pace" of asses, a "barren" of mules, a "team" of oxen, a "drove" of kine, a "flock" of sheep, a "trite" of goats, a "skulk" of foxes, a "down" of hares, a "next" of rabbits, a "clowder" of cats, a "abrewdness" of apes and a "labor" of moles.

Also of animals when they retired to rest, a hart was said to be "harbored," a roebuck "bedded," a hare "formed," a rabbit "set." Two greyhounds were called a "brace," but two harriers were called a "couple." There was also a "mote" of hounds for a number, a "kennel" of raches, a "litter" of whelps and a "cowardice" of curs.

This kind of descriptive phraseology was not confined to birds and beasts, but was extended to the human species and the various propensities, natures and callings.

DEMOCRACY MUST BE A WORTHY INSTRUMENT

People Trust It, Says Woodrow Wilson, and It Must Make Good.

Sea Girt, N. J.—Woodrow Wilson at the "Little White House" at Sea Girt is daily called upon to demonstrate his ability as a ready speaker.

There is not a day passes but what he meets various delegations who call to assure him of their support.

In speaking of political machines to the Brooklyn Democratic Club Governor Wilson said: "Machines are bad, but an organization may be very essential. For instance, I have been surrounded by an organization here in New Jersey while doing my best work. A machine sees its political opportunities for the selfish ends of its members. No members of our organization would ever think of doing that. Public opinion in New Jersey has drawn the distinction. It has killed the machines, and it is going to keep the organization going."

"It seems to me that we are standing in the presence of something higher than allegiance to the Democratic party. The country has been disappointed in the Republican party, and it is turning to the Democratic party. That party is willing to show the way toward those things which must be realized."

"Some gentlemen seem to find it easy to make personalities out of politics, but it seems to me that whenever that is done politics is debased."

"Men who are in search of reform are now resorting to the Democratic party, because, for my own part, I do not know where else they will turn to expect the results. There is no discounting the strength and serviceability of a united party, and the splendid part is that the Democratic party is united."

"Speaking seriously, nothing affords me more genuine pleasure than to receive such greetings from men in Jersey who have at least tested my qualities. Because you have known me at close range and if you will be kind enough to vouch for me perhaps the rest of the country will be credulous of your report."

"I have spent a great deal of time since I became governor of New Jersey defending your character. It was supposed in the old days, when the board of guardians was in charge of the state, that you were all of you disposed to give the most monopolistic trusts of the country a great ringing welcome in New Jersey."

"New Jersey was known as the mother of trusts—a very troublesome and questionable family—and I had to spend my time outside New Jersey assuring the people of the Union that it had not been the fault or the disposition of the people of New Jersey that there were certain gentlemen who had undertaken to carry the Republican party in their pockets and to administer independently of the rank and file of Republicans in the state."

"New Jersey is progressive, but the United States is progressive, and we have here merely a delightful sample of the people of the United States."

"Now, these people are not bent on destroying anything, but they are bent on setting everything in order; they are bent upon justice; they are bent upon seeing to it that the people in general are partners of the government, as I was trying to show the other day. And the Democratic party is now placed under a peculiar responsibility. It has to prove that it is the worthy instrument of that seal on the part of the people of the United States. If it does not prove it now it will never be given another chance to prove it. No party that proves unfaithful to that ideal will ever again be trusted by the people of America. And therefore we are standing at a turning point in our politics. We must make good or go out of business. In the vernacular, it is a case of 'put up or shut up,' because words are going to be discounted. Nothing will be honored except the actual carrying out of such programs as sensible men may unite in for the common benefit."

THE GREAT DUTY OF ADJUSTMENT.

We are servants of the people, the whole people. The nation has been unnecessarily, unreasonably at war with itself. Interest has clashed with interest when there were common principles of right and of fair dealing which might and should have bound them all together, not as rivals, but as partners. As the servants of all we are bound to undertake the great duty of accommodation and adjustment.—From Woodrow Wilson's Speech Accepting the Democratic Nominations.

Wilson Will Make the Most Accessible President who has ever occupied the White House. He is typically a Democratic man.

Wilson is the best equipped man nominated for the presidency since Lincoln.

George W. Perkins is sure a "Solid" Progressive.